

*Divum inclementia* is a suitable Latin equivalent for θεῶν ἀγνωμοσύνη. First of all the model is one with which Vergil is demonstrably familiar.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the poet provides unmistakable indications of his source since the expression *divum inclementia* ‘translates’ θεῶν ἀγνωμοσύνη; *inclementia*, a Vergilian coinage already used in *G.* 3.68, is the semantic equivalent of the Greek ἀγνωμοσύνη since it combines the notions of ruthlessness and iniquity and it is modelled etymologically on ἀ-γνωμοσύνη (*in* = the privative prefix corresponds to the privative *a-* / *clementia* contains the *mens* which is to be connected with γνώμη).<sup>4</sup>

Vergil by using Sophocles’ θεῶν ἀγνωμοσύνη (*Trach.* 1266) as the model for his *divum inclementia* (*Aen.* 2.602) introduces into his text a multiplicity of points of view. *Divum inclementia*, by referring to the human utterance of Hyllus, incorporates into Venus’ apocalyptic speech human viewpoints concerning the downfall of Troy, and as a result it refers to the tragic dimension of the cosmic and historical process.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. B. Heiden, ‘*Laudes herculeae*: suppressed savagery in the Hymn to Hercules (Verg. *A.* 8. 285–305)’, *AJPh* 108 (1987), 666.

<sup>4</sup> The term ἀγνωμοσύνη has been rendered as ‘the great harshness of the gods in the deeds’, ‘the cruelty shown by the gods’ which is equivalent to *inclementia*: *inhumanitas*, *crudelitas*, *saevitia*. See R. C. Jebb, *The Plays and Fragments. Part V, The Trachiniae* (Amsterdam, 1962), 182; J. C. Kamerbeek, *The Plays of Sophocles, Part II, The Trachiniae* (Leiden, 1959), 254 on 1264–5; and *TLL*, vol. 7, s.v. *inclementia*.

## VERGIL’S AENEAS AND YEATS’S ANECDOTE

In an article on the *Aeneid* Wendell Clausen made the following observation: ‘Being an instrument of fate, Aeneas is almost devoid of passion or personality. The impression he makes on the reader can be illustrated by one of W. B. Yeats’s favourite anecdotes, as reported by Ezra Pound in his *A B C of Reading* (London, 1934, 29): ‘A plain sailor man took a notion to study Latin, and his teacher tried him with Virgil; after many lessons he asked him something about the hero. Said the sailor: “What hero?” Said the teacher: “What hero! Why, Aeneas, the hero!” Said the sailor: “Ach, a hero, him a hero? Bigob, I t’ought he waz a priest.”’ We may have our suspicions of Yeats’s ‘plain sailor man’, but the story does suggest an experience that most of us have in reading the *Aeneid*. Aeneas’ actions may be described as valiant, patriotic, devoted: but more and more he becomes the hero who acts in some other higher interest, like a priest.’<sup>1</sup>

Clausen’s treatment of the story he cites ought perhaps to be questioned. After all, what is introduced as one of Yeats’s favourite anecdotes turns out to be nothing more than an account of how ‘a plain sailor man’ after much coaching in Latin proves to have a view of Vergil’s hero much like that which ‘most of us’ have. That scarcely

<sup>1</sup> W. Clausen, ‘An interpretation of the *Aeneid*’, *HSCP* 68 (1964), 141.

seems to qualify as the stuff of anyone's favourite anecdote, nor does it show any appreciation of the dramatic impact of the climactic 'Bigob, I t'ought he waz a priest.'

Although he does not actually refer to the term *pius*, which is applied to Aeneas eighteen times in the epic, Clausen seems to have it in mind when he describes the hero as becoming more and more one 'who acts in some other higher interest'.

In considering the anecdote afresh, however, perhaps we should bear in mind another epithet that runs *pius* close: *pater Aeneas* occurs in the epic seventeen times.<sup>2</sup> I would suggest, then, that as the mythical Irish sailor struggled manfully to translate passages of the *Aeneid* (with presumably generous assistance from his equally mythical tutor) the recurring sound of 'Father Aeneas' would bring back to him memories of a certain Father Geoghegan (or perhaps a Father Malone) he knew in earlier days, not to mention some Father Mulvaney who figured in later years, when retirement left time for those Latin tutorials ashore. For Yeats's 'plain sailor man', then, Vergil's hero would naturally become just an additional name in a familiar sequence—'Father Aeneas'. And Clausen's suspicions regarding the man's alleged lack of sophistication were misplaced: he was not really a Vergilian critic in the making after all.

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. R. G. Austin (ed.), *Vergil: Aeneid I* (Oxford, 1971), ad l. 580: 'The term marks Aeneas as responsible leader.'

## OVID *TRISTIA* 2.549: HOW MANY BOOKS OF FASTI DID OVID WRITE?

In his apologia in *Tristia* 2, Ovid shows that he has produced serious poetry by referring to *Fasti*, *Medea* and *Metamorphoses*; of the first he supposedly writes at 549ff.:

sex ego Fastorum scripsi totidemque libellos,  
cumque suo finem mense libellus<sup>1</sup> habet,  
idque tuo nuper scriptum sub nomine, Caesar,  
et tibi sacratum sors mea rupit opus;

It is certain that *sex . . . totidemque libellos* in the passage as we have it, would mean twelve books;<sup>2</sup> cf. *Fasti* 6.725, *iam sex et totidem luces de mense supersunt*, which

<sup>1</sup> The citation is from J. B. Hall's Teubner text (Stuttgart & Leipzig, 1995); he prints *libellus* with a minority of his primary MSS rather than the majority's *volumen*. Ovid loves to repeat words wherever possible, and he would have no motive to change from *libellos* to *volumen* here; besides he is quoting *Fast.* 1.724, which has *libellus*; *volumen* is easily explicable as a gloss designed to make it clear that the reference is to each individual papyrus roll rather than to the *Fasti* as a whole.

<sup>2</sup> It is hardly necessary to remark that if Ovid had had occasion to mention twelve books, he could have employed other expressions, e.g. *bis sena volumina*.