

JUNO'S WRATH AGAIN: SOME VIRGILIAN ECHOES IN OVID, *MET.* 3. 253–315

An ongoing, self-consciously intertextual negotiation with Virgil's *Aeneid*, either in terms of narrative structures, verbal reverberations or blatantly appropriative gestures (the miniaturized *Aeneid* of Books 13.623–14.582), has been recognized by recent scholarship as one of the most distinctively unifying features of the protean world of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.¹ In particular, the dramatic events of the Theban cycle of Books 3 and 4, with their stories of exiles, fratricidal wars, vengeful gods and the ominous foundation of Thebes, have been brilliantly interpreted by Hardie as the haunting mirror-image of the city of Rome, casting retrospectively a darker shadow on the already conditionally charged balance of powers which ends the Virgilian epic.² In charting the structural and thematic symmetries (and lack thereof) between the *Aeneid* and Ovid's Theban saga, Hardie singles out, among other elements, the prominent role played by Juno's vengeful intervention in the Semele (3.253–315) and Ino (4.416–542) episodes.³ It is within this broader framework that I should like to pay detailed attention to some not yet fully explored Virgilian reminiscences surfacing in Ovid's tale of Semele's punishment by Juno. It is my hope to show that to unravel more explicitly some of these Virgilian reverberations will prove

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¹ See above all P. Hardie, 'Ovid's Theban history: the first "anti-*Aeneid*"?', *CQ* 40 (1990), 224–35 and id., *The Epic Successors of Virgil. A Study in the Dynamics of a Tradition* (Cambridge, 1993), *passim*; S. Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext. Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge, 1998), 104–22 (esp. 104–6, 119–22); and R.F. Thomas, *Virgil and the Augustan Reception* (Cambridge, 2001), 78–83; for the exile theme in both epics cf. M.J.C. Putnam, 'Ovid, Virgil and Myrrha's metamorphic exile', *Vergilius* 47 (2001), 171–93 (esp. 187–93). On Ovid's 'Little *Aeneid*' see now A. Papaioannou, *Epic Succession and Dissension. Ovid, Metamorphoses 13.623–14.582, and the Reinvention of the Aeneid* (Berlin–New York, 2005). A general survey of Ovid's indebtedness to Virgil is provided by H.H. Huxley, 'Ovid's debt to Virgil', *Vergilius* 42 (1996), 83–102; cf. recently also B. Weiden Boyd, '“When Ovid reads Vergil...”: a response and some observations', *Vergilius* 48 (2002), 123–30.

² Hardie 1990 (n. 1), esp. 228–9; for the possibility of interpreting Ovid's Thebes not only in terms of an anti-model subverting Rome's foundation but also as an alternative response to it, cf. now I. Gildenhard and A. Zissos, 'Ovid's "Hecale": deconstructing Athens in the *Metamorphoses*', *JRS* 94 (2004), 47–72 (esp. 70–1). For the reconciliation scene between Juno and Jupiter at *Aen.* 12.791–842 and its inherent ambiguity, see D.C. Feeney, 'The reconciliations of Juno', *CQ* 34 (1984), 179–94 (= reprinted in P. Hardie [ed.], *Virgil. Critical Assessments of Classical Authors*, vol. 4 [London–New York, 1999], 392–413); R.O.A.M. Lyne, *Further Voices in Virgil's Aeneid* (Oxford, 1987), 94–9; D.P. Fowler, 'First thoughts on closure: problems and prospects', *MD* 22 (1989), 75–122 at 100–1; D. Quint, 'Repetition and ideology in the *Aeneid*', *MD* 23 (1989), 9–54 at 44–6.

³ Hardie 1990 (n. 1), 231–5.

to be a productive foil to enhance Ovid's personal re-reading of the end of Virgil's *Aeneid*.⁴

The core of the Semele episode is easily summed up: a raging Juno bitterly complains about Jupiter's serial affairs (Europa, pregnant Semele: 256–61),⁵ and while claiming her status as wife and sister of the Olympian god (263–6)⁶ powerfully asserts her own desire to destroy Semele by submerging her in the Styx (271–2).⁷ Juno's destructive desire is effectively carried out: the goddess, disguised as Semele's old nurse Beroe (273–8), deceitfully persuades the naive Semele to ask Jupiter to reveal himself to her in all his divine power (279–95). Hence, Jupiter's heavenly thunderbolt, even if just a second-rate one (l. 307 *tela secunda vocant superi*), burns her down (308–9), the embryo of the would-be Bacchus being rescued by Jupiter (310–12).

While unanimously recognizing in 265–66 ([...] *si sum regina Iouisque / et soror et coniunx – certe soror* [...]) Ovid's witty correction of Juno's self-representation in her first direct speech in the *Aeneid* (1.46–7 *ast ego, quae diuum incedo regina Iouisque / et soror et coniunx*),⁸ critics have usually focussed on another element of Ovid's 'Virgilian' reading of Juno's reaction: Allecto's transformation into an old woman (the priestess Calybe) before approaching Turnus in *Aen.* 7.415–19 and Iris' disguise, by Juno's order, as the Trojan Beroe⁹ and her *Trugrede* to the Trojan women to persuade them to burn the Trojan ships at 5.605–63.¹⁰ In comparing the Ovidian text with the Virgilian passages above mentioned, Hardie has already explored on a comprehensive scale Ovid's readerly awareness of the structural links underlying Book 1 and 5 of the

⁴ For the possibility of reversing the direction of intertextual reference (from the 'alluding text' back to the 'model text'), see D.P. Fowler, 'On the shoulders of giants: intertextuality and classical studies', *MD* 39 (1997), 13–34 at 26–8 and Hinds (n. 1), 13–14, 100–10. On this 'retroactive intertextuality' activated by Ovid's re-working of Juturna's rape in *Fast.* 2.585–616, against the background of *Aeneid* 12, see most recently P. Murgatroyd, 'Ovid, *Fasti* 2.585–616 and Virgil, *Aeneid* 12', *CQ* 53 (2003), 311–13.

⁵ Cf. esp. 259–61 [...] *subit ecce priori / causa recens, grauidamque dolet de semine magni / esse Iouis Semelem*. On the 'double' cause of Juno's grievance, temporally distinguished in an 'earlier' and 'later' stage, see below.

⁶ '*ipsa petenda mihi est; ipsam, si maxima Iuno / rite uocor, perdam, si me gemmantia dextra / sceptris tenere decet, si sum regina Iouisque / et soror et coniunx – certe soror* [...]'. On Juno's afterthought (*certe soror*), diminishing ironically her role to the status of mere sister of Jupiter (a gleam of self-consciousness more opaquely emerging also in *Fast.* 6.27–8 *est aliquid nupsisse Ioui, Ioui esse sororem: / fratre magis, dubito, glorier, anne uiro*), see below. More generally, on the ironic exploitation by Ovid of the Homeric *κασιγνήτην ἄλοχόν τε* (*Il.* 16.432) said of Juno, see S. Casali, *P. Ovidii Nasonis Heroidum epistula IX. Deianira Herculi* (Florence, 1995), 42 with relevant bibliography.

⁷ *Fallat eam faxo, nec sum Saturnia si non / ab Ioue mersa suo Stygias penetrabit in undas.*

⁸ See e.g. W.S. Anderson, *Ovid's Metamorphoses, Books 1–5* (Oklahoma, 1996), 363–4, F. Bömer, *P. Ovidius Naso, Metamorphosen, Buch I–III* (Heidelberg, 1969), 518–19.

⁹ Ovid's geographic accuracy in qualifying his Beroe as *Epidauria* (l. 278) is part of the intertextual play: in *Aen.* 5.620 Virgil calls Beroe *Tmarii coniunx longaeva Dorcyli*; see L. Galasso et al., *Ovidio. Opere, vol. 2. Le metamorfosi* (Turin, 2000), 879.

¹⁰ Cf. e.g. Anderson (n. 8), 365; Bömer (n. 8), 522–3. A very perceptive analysis of the manifold parallelisms between the Iris scene of *Aen.* 5 and Ovid's Juno/Beroe, via the unifying counterfoil of *Aen.* 1, can be found in Hardie 1990 (n. 1), 232. More recently the correspondences between the Virgilian and Ovidian Beroe have been investigated by P. Pappa, '*Erat Beroe* (Ov. *Met.* 3.278): *Βιργιλίανες επιδρασεις*', *Dodone* 31 (2002), 263–76: Pappa's interpretation of *Met.* 3.273 *fulua recondita nube* (ibid., 268) is still heavily conditioned by Bömer's analysis, cf. id. (n. 9), 521. On the resonances conjured up by *fulua* [...] *nube* and its Virgilian precedent (*Aen.* 12.791–2 *Iunonem interea rex omnipotentis Olympi / adloquitur fulua pugnans de nube tuentem*), see below.

Aeneid.¹¹ I should like here to investigate what I believe to be another case of Ovid's informed alertness, in the Semele episode, to intratextual correspondences within the *Aeneid*, namely between the beginning of Book 1 and the end of Book 12. To enhance Ovid's technique of allusion to *sets* of Virgilian patterns more than to isolated source-passages will help us to shed further light on the process by which Ovid's tendentious reading of the *Aeneid* lays bare tensions already embedded, though only latently, in the model text.

In fact, the very same 'corrected' version, in *Met.* 3.265–6, of the Virgilian quotation from Book 1, together with other scattered hints, prompts the reader to see Juno's revenge on Semele *also* through the filter of another complementary Virgilian scene, and a momentous one: Juno's and Jupiter's final dialogue and compromised reconciliation at *Aen.* 12.791–842.

Let us start, once again, from the most conspicuous allusion. It has already been observed that Juno's initial self-definition at *Met.* 3. 265–6 as *Iouisque / et soror et coniunx*, together with the distinction between a more recent and older cause for her anger (259–61), clearly points towards *Aen.* 1, where Juno refers to both an older 'mythological' reason of her anti-Trojan feelings (the judgement of Paris and its aftermath: *Aen.* 1.23–8) and to a later 'historical' one (her concern for the fate of Carthage: *Aen.* 1.12–22).¹² Thus Ovid's Virgilian tag '*Iouisque / et soror et coniunx*' embedded in Juno's vengeful direct speech¹³ conjures up the quintessentially Virgilian *Leitmotif* of Juno's mighty wrath. A further hint that, to a certain extent, Ovid's Juno is here re-casting herself *once more* as the well-known Virgilian goddess of unquenchable hatred is the adverb *totiens* at 3.262 (*profeci quid enim totiens per iurgia?*): the description of the last (vain) quarrel merges into the history of a long series of past *iurgia*.¹⁴

It is nevertheless worth noticing that in the Semele episode *Iouisque / et soror et coniunx* is only the *first step* in Juno's self-representation.¹⁵ Her bitterly ironic after-thought of l. 256 (*certe soror*) defines and limits her status to that of Jupiter's sister and it is as such, that is, as Saturnus' raging and vengeful daughter, that she comes to reveal and assert her truer self (271–2 [...] *nec sum Saturnia si non / ab Ioue mersa suo Stygiis penetrabit in undas*). It is thus difficult to resist the temptation to read Juno's self-definition not only through the magnifying glass of *Aen.* 1.46–7 but also through the twin scene of Jupiter's final address to Juno in *Aen.* 12.830–1 (*es germana Iouis*

¹¹ Hardie 1990 (n. 1), 231–2.

¹² See esp. Hardie 1990 (n. 1), 231–2 and Feeney (n. 2), 183–5; D. Feeney, *The Gods in Epic. Poets and Critics of the Classical Tradition* (Oxford, 1991), 148–9 and 201.

¹³ The only other passage in the *Aeneid*, apart from 1.46–7, where Juno herself defines her divine pedigree by marriage in direct speech is 7.308 *ast ego, magna Iouis coniunx* (the goddess, returning from Argos, complains about her vain efforts to destroy the Trojans). She is twice addressed as Jupiter's wife by Venus, respectively at 4.113 *tu coniunx, tibi fas animum temptare precando* (said of Juno's desire to persuade Jupiter of a possible marriage between Aeneas and Dido) and 10.44–5 ([...] *coniunx/dura*), and once by Aeneas at 12.178 (*et tu Saturnia coniunx*). At 10.607 it is Jupiter who mockingly addresses Juno as *o germana mihi atque eadem gratissima consors*: on the 'mocking affection' of this form of address, *pace* C.W. Amerasinghe, '“Saturnia Iuno”'. Its significance in the *Aeneid*, *G&R* 22 (1953), 61–9 at 66, see Lyne (n. 2), 97, n. 57 and S.J. Harrison, *Vergil: Aeneid 10* (Oxford, 1991), 22 ad loc. For Juno's as Jupiter's wife said by the authorial voice, see 4.91 *cara Iouis coniunx* (for the irony underlying the passage cf. Amerasinghe [above], 68), 7.287 *saeva Iouis coniunx*. On *Aen.* 12.830 see below.

¹⁴ For this kind of 'regressive repetition' constantly characterizing post-Virgilian Juno see A. Schiesaro, *The Passions in Play. Thyestes and the Dynamics of Senecan Drama* (Cambridge, 2003), 213–14.

Saturniaque altera proles, / irarum tantos uoluis sub pectore fluctus). If earlier on, during the reconciliation scene, the gods' king has addressed Juno as his own wife (12.793 *quae iam finis erit, coniunx?*), it is as Saturnus' unremittingly wrathful daughter (and thus his own sister) that Juno's identity is eventually recognized and authenticated by Jupiter.¹⁶ Ovid's Juno is here paradoxically forced to define herself by re-appropriating Jupiter's words in *Aen.* 12.830–1, that is, she is compelled to deny her status as wife at the very moment in which she is acting (quite successfully) as such. And this is not an isolated one-off clue: Ovid's whole narrative of Juno's outraged reaction is built on a sophisticated exercise of mirroring (and 'correcting'), via the prompting clue of *Aen.* 1.46–7, the reconciliation scene between Juno and Jupiter in *Aeneid* 12.

First of all, the *fulua nubes* which surrounds Juno's descent to the earth in *Met.* 3.273 is another explicitly Virgilian tag:¹⁷ at the very beginning of the reconciliation scene Jupiter addresses Juno *fulua pugnans de nube tuentem* (*Aen.* 12.793)¹⁸ and at the very end of it Juno's qualified acquiescence is signposted by her leaving her own element, the clouds (12.842 *interea excedit caelo nubemque relinquit*).¹⁹ But what in Virgil is a gesture of partial accommodation on Juno's part (cf. Jupiter's reproach *aut*

¹⁵ Elsewhere in the *Metamorphoses* Juno is said to be *socia generisque torique* (1.620) and *ipsa Iouis coniunxque sororque* (13.574); Juno portrays herself as *magna Iouis coniunx* at 7.308.

¹⁶ On the much debated sense, already in antiquity, of 12.830–1, see Feeney (n. 2), 183 with nn. 27–8 and Lyne (n. 2), 96–7 with n. 56. On Virgil's ideologically marked use of the epithet *Saturnia* referring to Juno, see above all W.S. Anderson, 'Juno and Saturn in the *Aeneid*', *SPhNC* 55 (1958), 519–32; M. Wigodski, *Vergil and Early Latin Poetry* (Wiesbaden, 1972), 67–8 and P.A. Johnston, 'Vergil's conception of Saturnus', *CSCA* 10 (1977), 57–70. For the para-etymological wordplay *Saturnius/saturo* in Virgil and Ovid, see Anderson (above), 523–5 (esp. 521, n. 5, where he quotes *Met.* 3.271 as evidence for the fact that Servius' interpretation of *Saturnia* as 'cruel' 'probably goes back to the time of Augustus'); Feeney (n. 12), 201 and A. Michalopoulos, *Ancient Etymologies in Ovid's Metamorphoses: A Commented Lexicon* (Leeds, 2001), 154–5 s.v. *Saturnia*. Juno's epithet *saeua* and its problematic reception in antiquity have been convincingly discussed by P.E. Knox, 'Savagery in the *Aeneid* and Virgil's ancient commentators', *CJ* 92 (1997), 225–33 (esp. 228–9).

¹⁷ Which does not exclude the fact that Ovid is certainly playing here with the traditional association of *fulvus* and similarly with the lightning of Jupiter's thunder; cf. e.g. Pind. *Pyth.* 3.58 αἰθῶν δὲ κεραυνός, *Ol.* 10.83, etc. See also Pappa (n. 10), 267–8.

¹⁸ Bömer (n. 8), 521, had already noticed that *Aen.* 12.793 is the model of *Met.* 3.273 but he failed to integrate this Virgilian intertext into a broader, coherent system of meanings. Furthermore, Bömer (n. 8), 521 glosses *fulua* saying that 'die Farbe bedeutet hier wie dort [that is, in the *Aeneid*] Neid, Zorn und Unglück' and quotes as parallels [Virg.] *Dirae* 38 *Eurus agat mixtam fulua caligine nubem* and Stat. *Theb.* 11. 727–8 (Diana) *uenit in medios caligine fulua / saepta globos*. Even apart from the fact that *fulua* in *Dirae* 38 is a long-standing textual crux (cf. A. Salvatore et al., *Appendix Vergiliana* (Rome, 1997), 12 in app.), Bömer's explanation is far from convincing. In *Theb.* 11.727–8 *caligine fulua* probably refers to the 'cloud gleaming with her [i.e. Diana's] divine light' (M. Dewar, *Statius Thebaid IX* [Oxford, 1991], 195 with parallels, esp. *Theb.* 10.125), as it is often the case in epiphanies of gods from Homer onwards (suffice it here to quote Hom. *Il.* 20.131 or *Hymn in Dem.* 275–80 for the radiance coming from a deity's body). T.E. Page, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos libri XII* (London, 1908), 95 already got it right: '*fulua*: "golden"'. For the equivalence *fulvus*=*aureus* in the Virgilian passage (and elsewhere), see R.J. Edgeworth, *The Colors of the Aeneid* (New York, 1992), 31 and more generally G. Rosati, 'Gellio, Servio e il colore di un diaspro (Verg. *Aen.* IV 261)', *Maia* 39 (1987), 139–441 on *Aen.* 4. 261–2.

¹⁹ On the allegoric equivalence Juno/ 'Ἥρα and Ἀθήρ, see J. Longrigg, 'Empedocles, Juno, and *De natura deorum* ii. 66', *CR* 24 (1974), 173 and Feeney (n. 12), 147 and 150. For the *fulua nubes* theme in the reconciliation scene as a 'formal sign to mark Juno's acquiescence', see Feeney (n. 2), 184.

*qua spe gelidis*²⁰ in nubibus haeres? at 12.796) in Ovid becomes the first step to bring fruitfully to completion Juno's revenge (her descent, in disguise, to Semele: *Met.* 3.273–4 *surgit ab his solio fulvaeque recondita nube / limen adit Semeles*, etc.).²¹ Virgil's latent anxieties surrounding the reconciliation between Jupiter and Juno eventually achieved at the end of the *Aeneid* are overtly exposed by Ovid's witty re-reading of the same: the teleology of the *Aeneid* is here amusingly questioned.

Scattered traces of a privileged intertextual dialogue with the 'other' end (Book 12) of the broader frame sketched above in the Semele episode emerge also from other apparently 'displaced' clues. In *Met.* 3.271–2²² Juno's desire for revenge (to make Semele drown in the waters, significantly enough, of the Styx)²³ is phrased in such a way as closely to resemble an actual oath.²⁴ The only passage of the whole *Aeneid* where we find Juno swearing by the Styx is in her reply to Jupiter in the very same final reconciliation scene, 12.816–17 (*adiuro Stygii caput implacabile fontis / una superstitio superis quae reddita diuis*). Once more, what in Virgil is a binding acknowledgment of (relative) innocence and (temporary) submission on Juno's part,²⁵ in Ovid's episode is Juno's confident display of her own power: Semele will eventually be destroyed. Semele's death is in fact caused by another, and this time more formally explicit, oath by the Styx, Jupiter's one (*Met.* 3. 290–1 *quoque magis credas, Stygii quoque conscia sunt / numina torrentis; timor et deus ille deorum est*).²⁶ Juno's original agency ironically resurfacing in the implied etymological wordplay of *donisue iugalibus arsit* (3.308).²⁷

²⁰ The chilly clouds are in keeping with the allegorization of Juno as ἀήρ: for the opposition warm/cold of αἰθήρ/ἀήρ, cf. Menand. Rh. I. 5 p. 377 Spengel (quoted by Longrigg [n. 19], 173, n. 1). This juxtaposition may perhaps explain why Servius ad *Aen.* 8.28 glosses *gelidis sub aetheris axis* as *id est sub aere*. I owe to Alessandro Schiesaro the suggestion that the word *haeres* addressed by Jupiter to Juno at 12.796 might be a learned 'acoustic evocation' of Juno's pseudo-etymology (i.e. *aer es*, 'you are the air'). For this kind of 'acoustic intratextuality' in Virgil see R.J. Schork, 'Acoustic intratexts in *Aeneid* 7.122 and 4.408', *CPh* 91 (1996), 61–2.

²¹ An extra piquancy can be gained if we bear in mind that the cloud surrounding Zeus' and Hera's intercourse in *Iliad* 14 was a golden one (*Il.* 14.350–1 ἐπὶ δὲ νεφέλην ἔσαντο | καλὴν χρυσεῖην).

²² *Fallat eam faxo, nec sum Saturnia si non / ab Ioue mersa suo Stygias penetrabit in undas*.

²³ The paradoxical nature of this wish is well commented on by Anderson (n. 8), 364: 'Semele's destruction is to be a kind of downward plunge into the world below; but she is doomed to be consumed by fire'. Hardie 1990 (n. 1), 232 sees in l. 272 (*mersa*) 'an allusion to the Virgilian Juno's aim of sinking the Trojan ships', and quotes *Aen.* 1.40 *summergere*, 69 *submersa*.

²⁴ For *faxo* + subjunctive, sometimes accompanied by a swearing word, as equivalent to an oath-form, cf. e.g. Plaut. *Amph.* 510–11, *Merc.* 826–7; cf. also *Poen.* 910. Furthermore, the waters of Styx, since Homer onwards (*Il.* 15.37–8: Juno's speech), are proverbially associated with an especially binding oath. It is worth pointing out that in Hom. *Il.* 15.37ff. the oath by the Styx was followed, in Hera's speech, by a direct appeal to her/Zeus' marriage-bed (39–40: [...] καὶ νοῦττερον λέχος αὐτῶν | κουρίδιον, τὸ μὲν οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ ποτὲ μάμ' ὁμόσαιμι): on the ironic appropriateness of such an oath for Hera, see R. Janko, *The Iliad: A Commentary, Volume IV. Books 13–16* (Cambridge, 1992), 232–3.

²⁵ Juno is pleading here that she did not go so far as to ask Juturna to help Turnus by way of actively taking part in the battle (12.815 *non ut tela tamen, non ut contenderet arcum*). For Juno's conditional acquiescence see 818ff.

²⁶ It is part of the Ovidian intratextual referentiality that the serially adulterous Jupiter already swore fidelity to Juno by the waters of the Styx in *Met.* 1.735–8, cf. A. Barchiesi, *Ovidio. Metamorfosi, volume I, libri I–II* (Milan, 2005), 228.

²⁷ For the ancient etymology *Iuno < iungo* see Feeney (n. 12), 133–4 and R. Maltby, *A Lexicon of Ancient Latin Etymologies* (Leeds, 1991), 316 s.v. *Iugarius Vicus*.

All these elements seem to point coherently in one and the same direction: through the revisionary pressure, in the Semele episode, of his tendentious reading of the reconciliation scene of the *Aeneid*, Ovid's successfully vengeful Juno is the more truly Virgilian Juno, after all.²⁸

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²⁸ This is even more significant if we bear in mind that in the 'little *Aeneid*' of Book 13 and 14 of the *Metamorphoses* the reconciliation scene between Jupiter and Juno of Virgil barely takes place at all: the only hint we have in this direction are the two lines of 14.592–3 *adsensere dei, nec coniunx regia uultus / inmotos tenuit placatoque adnuit ore*. Here Ovid is certainly thinking of *Aen.* 12.841 *adnuit his Iuno et mentem laetata retorsit*, but the shift of context is remarkable: in the *Aeneid* Juno's reaction is a reaction to Jupiter's consent to let the Latin element overtake the Trojan one, whereas in *Met.* 14.592–3 Juno's behaviour is a reaction to Aeneas' apotheosis.