

VERGIL'S LEAF- AND BIRD-SIMILES OF GHOSTS

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IN HIS COMMENTARY on the sixth book of the *Aeneid* Eduard Norden has argued that Vergil's two similes of ghosts (*Aen.* 6.309–312) must have been taken together by Vergil himself from the lost *Catabasis of Heracles*, an early epic account of Heracles' journey to the world of shades.¹ An article published recently in *Phoenix* undertakes to review Norden's views on this matter and also to clarify the problem with new evidence.² The purpose of this article is to reopen the whole question.

Norden's thesis is as follows. The point of comparison in the two similes is *primarily* number (the italics are mine); the multitude of leaves and birds illustrates the great number of souls.³ However, the similes carry another connotation, for they also have to do with the nature of the objects compared. For example, the leaves of trees fall; likewise, life's bloom fades away. Two Greek poets, Bacchylides (*Epinicians* 5.63 ff.) and Sophocles (*OT* 175 ff.), have compared the souls of the dead to leaves and birds respectively. On the other hand, we find in Homer two passages which look like the two Vergilian similes, although the object of comparison in these passages (*Il.* 6.146 ff., 3.2 ff.) is not souls, but mankind in the first case and warriors in the second. Norden asks himself whether we should assume that Vergil borrowed the leaf-simile from Bacchylides and the bird-simile from Sophocles, while glancing at the same time at Homer, but dismisses the notion as improbable. Instead, he thinks that Bacchylides, Sophocles, and Vergil found their similes side by side in the *Catabasis of Heracles*. Bacchylides borrowed the leaf-simile, Sophocles borrowed the bird-simile, and Vergil took them both. Moreover, Norden assumes, if I am not mistaken, that the author of the *Catabasis of Heracles* fashioned his two similes out of the Homeric models cited above.

One way of testing the credibility of Norden's view is to start with the *Catabasis of Heracles*, examine all evidence of its existence and content, its possible connections with Homer, its influence on later poetry, especially Bacchylides, Sophocles, and Vergil, and finally focus attention on the two similes and decide whether it can be said that they were taken by

¹*P. Vergilius Maro: Aeneis Buch VI*⁴ (Stuttgart 1957) 223–224.

²R. J. Clark, "Two Virgilian Similes and the 'Ἡρακλέους Κατάβασις,'" *Phoenix* 24 (1970) 244–255. It will be clear from what follows that I disagree with Clark's conclusions.

³This crucial point has been overlooked by Clark in his statement of Norden's views on the similes, and so does not play the major part that it ought to have done in his subsequent research into Vergil's models.

Vergil from that work.⁴ Another method, sounder I think, is to start from the very beginning and examine all possible examples from Greek poetry which relate to Vergil's passage, with the purpose of determining whether Norden was right in citing the instances which he cites, and whether he has overlooked other instances of such similes that could shed more light on our problem. In view of Vergil's capacity for subtle analogy, we must not assume that only similes in which ghosts are compared to leaves and birds should be taken into account.⁵ The primary aspect of Vergil's similes, number, will inevitably direct us to other similes where the subject of comparison is other than ghosts. Let us look first at the leaf-simile.

In Homer, besides the well-known simile of *Il.* 6.146 ff. (cited by Norden), *οἷη περ φύλλων γενεή, τοίη δὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν*, we find the following four leaf-similes:⁶

ἔσταν δ' ἐν λειμῶνι Σκαμανδρίῳ ἀνθεμένοντι
μυριοί, ὅσσα τε φύλλα καὶ ἄνθεα γίγνεται ὥρη [Il. 2.467-468]

λίην γὰρ φύλλοισιν ἐοικότες ἢ ψαμάθοισιν
ἔρχονται πεδίῳ μαχισόμενοι προτὶ ἄστν [Il. 2.800-801]

οἳ φύλλοισιν ἐοικότες, ἄλλοτε μὲν τε
ζαφλεγέες τελέθουσιν, ἀρούρης καρπὸν ἔδοντες,
ἄλλοτε δὲ φθινύθουσιν ἀκήριοι [Il. 21.464-466]

ἦλθον ἔπειθ' ὅσα φύλλα καὶ ἄνθεα γίγνεται ὥρη,
ἡέριοι [Od. 9.51-52]

⁴Such a pattern of investigation is indicated at the beginning of Clark's article, which cites Norden's explanation, with reference to a hypothetical *Catabasis of Heracles*, of two structural problems in *Aeneid* Book Six, one involving the location of Cerberus in hell, and the other the scene in which Aeneas draws his sword against the unsubstantial shades. With regard to the first problem, while admitting the ingenuity of Norden's interpretation of *Aen.* 6.395-396 in connection with the *Catabasis of Heracles*, I would not go as far as to say that Vergilian commentators have been wrong to take *ipsius a solio regis* with *traxitque* instead of with *petiuit*. The two interpretations of Servius *ad loc.* seem to me legitimate, each in its own right. In fact, the first one suits the context better than Norden's idea; for it is more natural for Charon to be angry at an unauthorized abduction of Cerberus than at an act which Pluto had himself authorized.

⁵Cf. n. 23.

⁶Of the four similes Clark accords a passing reference to the first, second, and fourth (247, n. 9), without considering them in relation to Vergil's similes. His reference reflects, I think, Knauer's listing; cf. G. N. Knauer, *Die Aeneis und Homer* (Göttingen 1964) 395. Of the other commentators on Vergil J. Conington, *P. Vergili Maronis Opera* 2 (London 1884) 467, points to *Il.* 2.467-468 in connection with Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 4.216-217, but does not relate the passage to Vergil's simile; H. E. Butler, *The Sixth Book of the Aeneid* (Oxford 1920) 155, does not refer to Homer at all, while F. Fletcher, *Vergil: Aeneid VI* (Oxford 1955) 57, seems to follow Norden in citing only *Il.* 6.146 ff. Cf. also the leaf-simile of *Od.* 7.105-106.

Of these four similes the third plainly resembles that of 6.146 ff.; both illustrate the frailty and brevity of human existence by comparing it to leaves.⁷ The function of the simile of *Il.* 6.146 ff. is to introduce, and act as a foil to, the genealogy of Glaucus, given by Glaucus himself in response to the challenge of Diomedes. A genealogy, being in its very nature a reminder of the cyclic quality of human life and of the relative unimportance of any individual, is aptly preceded by such a simile. The function of the simile of *Il.* 21.464 ff., which is also part of a speech (Apollo's to Zeus), acts similarly as a mirror of human mortality. The other three similes express numerosity: the multitude of leaves represents the multitude of fighting men. By this criterion (i.e., that of multitude) all three leaf-similes should in any discussion of Vergil's similes be cited ahead of the passage cited by Norden,⁸ although the other aspect of Vergil's leaf-simile, the transience of life expressed by the mortality of leaves, harks back to the other two similes.⁹ Thus the function of Vergil's leaf-simile combines the functions of both sets of Homeric leaf-similes.

The number-type leaf simile is found after Homer in Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*:

ἥ ὅσα φύλλα χαμᾶζε περικλαδέος πέσεν ὕλης
 φύλλοχόῳ ἐνὶ μηνί—τίς ἂν τὰδε τεκμήραιτο;
 ὥς οἱ ἀπειρέσιοι ποταμοῦ παρεμέτρεον ὄχθας,
 κλαγγῇ μαιμώνοντες [4.216–219]

The subject of the comparison to leaves is, as in Homer, warriors. In

⁷Cf. M. Hügi, *Vergils Aeneis und die hellenistische Dichtung* (Bern 1952) 30, n. 1. See the discussion in n. 9 below.

⁸On the numerosity aspect of Homer's and Vergil's similes cf. M. Coffey, "The Function of the Homeric Simile," *AJP* 78 (1957) 125; K. Preston, "Aspects of Autumn in Roman Poetry," *CP* 13 (1918) 276; Hügi, *loc. cit.* Cf. also E. S. McCartney, "Vivid Ways of Indicating Uncountable Numbers," *CP* 55 (1960) 79.

⁹The leaf-simile of *Il.* 6.146 ff. has been recognized to be a unique simile in Homer, since it does not spring out of an immediate action or situation in the way most of the other similes do. It is a "general example" illustrating human mortality. Cf. Coffey, *op. cit.*, 128; B. Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind* (Harvard 1953) 216; J. H. Gaisser, "The Glaucus-Diomedes Episode," *TAPA* 100 (1969) 168. M. Treu, *Von Homer zur Lyrik* (Munich 1955) 230, notes that the tone of the simile is akin to elegy. This particular Homeric simile was in fact popular with Greek elegists and other poets; cf. Mimnermos 2.1 ff. D.; Semonides 29.1 f. D.; Ar. *Av.* 685 ff. See H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums* (Munich 1962) 230 f., 240 f.; E. Römisch, *Studien zur alteren griechischen Elegie* (Frankfurt 1933) 57 f.; G. Perrotta and B. Gentili, *Polinnia: Poesia Greca Arcaica* (Messina 1965) 39; J. Taillardat, *Les Images d'Aristophane* (Paris 1962) 45; V. d'Agostino, "Figurazioni Simboliche della Vita Umana nelle Opere di Luciano," *RSClass* 4 (1956) 204 f. In general see A. Morpurgo, "Οἷη περ φύλλων . . . (*Iliade*, VI)," *Atene e Roma* 8 (1927) 81–87. On mortality and leaves cf. also Aesch. *Ag.* 79–80. Horace, in a remarkable simile which he may have derived from *Il.* 6.146 ff., likens the generation of leaves to human speech (*Ars P.* 60–62).

this instance they are the Colchian troops, who are also compared to the countless waves of the sea in the two lines preceding the passage. Apollonius' *ῥσα* corresponds to Homer's *ῥσα* (*Il.* 2.468) and Vergil's *quam multa* (*Aen.* 6.309). It is also noteworthy that Apollonius' leaf-simile is one and a half lines long, as in Vergil. Now, comparing Vergil's simile to those of either Homer or Apollonius, we find that it is superior to them in that the autumnal aspect of the leaves aptly expresses the insubstantial nature of shades.¹⁰ The leaf-similes of Homer and Apollonius are by contrast one-dimensional; numerosity is the exclusive point of comparison. Vergil probably found the general idea of such a simile in Homer, but he may have considered also the more particularized version of Apollonius.¹¹

Vergil may have also known Bacchylides' leaf-simile,¹² for which, as far as I am aware, no certain model can be pointed to in Homer, although the function of Bacchylides' simile, set as it is before Meleager's speech in which the dead hero both parades his genealogy and illustrates the transience of human life and the superiority of the divine will over human wishes (cf. 129 ff.), could be said to be comparable to the function of *Il.* 6.146 ff.¹³ and *Il.* 21.464 ff. This simile has much in common with Vergil's leaf-simile. In both cases we have ghosts compared with autumnal leaves, and their locale also is similar.¹⁴ But, apart from the fact that the leaves of Bacchylides do not behave exactly like Vergil's leaves, we no longer have *ῥσα* but *οἶα*. It may be that Bacchylides did not have in mind "multitude" as the point of comparison in his simile,¹⁵ but simply wanted to illustrate the frailty of ghosts with the image of the dried autumnal leaves which are at the mercy of the wind. This observation is not intended to disqualify Bacchylides' leaf-simile as a possible model for Vergil's, but merely to point out that it does not deserve this title any more than Homer's or Apollonius' similes.¹⁶ Norden's contention that

¹⁰Cf. Hügi, *op. cit.* 30; Conington, *op. cit.* 467.

¹¹Cf. Hügi, *op. cit.* 31; Conington, *loc. cit.*; Butler, *op. cit.* 156. Hermann Fränkel, *Noten zu den Argonautica des Apollonios* (Munich 1968) 473, points out the similarities between the Vergilian and Apollonian similes: *Aen.* 6.309 *autumni frigore primo*: Ap.Rhod. 4.217 *φυλλοχόρῳ ἐνὶ μηνί*; *Aen.* 6.310 *lapsa cadunt*: Ap.Rhod. 4.216 *χαμᾶζε . . . πέσεν*. Cf. also *Aen.* 6.305 *huc omnis turba ad ripas effusa ruebat*: Ap.Rhod. 4.218 *ἀπειρέσιοι ποταμοῦ παρεμέτρεον ὄχθας*.

¹²Butler, *op. cit.* 155, thinks that this is Vergil's primary model. Cf. also B. Gentili, *Bacchilide: Studi* (Urbino 1958) 32, n. 1.

¹³Mary R. Lefkowitz, "Bacchylides' *Ode* 5: Imitation and Originality," *HSCP* 73 (1968) 65, and Gentili, *op. cit.* 32, connect Bacchylides' passage with *Il.* 6.146 ff.

¹⁴Cf. Clark 250 f.; Fränkel, *op. cit.* (above, n. 11) 473.

¹⁵Although a multitude is implied by the sequence of the passage, where the "spear-wielding" Meleager is singled out from the crowd of souls.

¹⁶Lefkowitz, *op. cit.* 66, n. 25, justly criticizes Jebb for adding "countless" to his translation of Bacchylides and then using his translation in order to force a comparison with Vergil.

Vergil and Bacchylides took their leaf-similes from the *Catabasis of Heracles* cannot easily be assumed to be sound, or even "substantially strengthened," by the supposititious evidence of a poetic fragment preserved in *POxy.* 2622 and attributed (perhaps hastily) to Pindar.¹⁷ For, on the one hand, the very existence of the *Catabasis of Heracles* is based on conjecture, while on the other, the evidence of the papyrus fragment amounts to no more than a trace of a simile which *may* have been preceded by another simile in which ghosts were compared to leaves. Such a simile is conjectured there, it appears, because the names of Meleager and Heracles occur in the sequence of the papyrus fragment as well as in Bacchylides,¹⁸ and it is therefore presumed that both sources describe a similar scene in Hades in which the ghosts were compared to leaves. Be that as it may, no leaf-simile is evident in the papyrus fragment as it stands, and we cannot argue on the basis of its supposititious existence.¹⁹

Homer offers three bird-similes where numerosity is either expressly stated or implied as the main point of comparison.²⁰ Norden has cited one (*Il.* 3.2 ff.) as the archetype of Vergil's bird-simile; but we have also *Il.* 2.459 ff.:

τῶν δ', ὥς τ' ὀρνίθων πετεηνῶν ἔθνεα πολλά,
 χηνῶν ἢ γεράνων ἢ κύκνων δουλιχοδείρων,
 Ἄσιψ' ἐν λειμῶνι, Καῦστρίου ἀμφὶ ῥέεθρα,
 ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα ποτῶνται ἀγαλλόμενα πτερύγεσσι,
 κλαγγηδὸν προκαθιζόντων, σμαραγεῖ δέ τε λειμῶν,
 ὥς τῶν ἔθνεα πολλά νεῶν ἄπο καὶ κλισιάων
 ἐς πεδῖον προχέοντο Σκαμάνδριον, αὐτὰρ ὑπὸ χθῶν
 σμερδαλέον κονάβιζε ποδῶν αὐτῶν τε καὶ ἵππων

¹⁷Cf. Clark 247.

¹⁸Cf. n. 15.

¹⁹Similarly, since there is no apparent evidence of a bird-simile in the Papyrus fragment, we cannot use the fragment to further the discussion on birds, as Clark attempts to do (250). The statement "the survival of *POxy.* 2622 at least suggests that in Pindar Vergil had a precedent for including a pair of similes in a ghost-passage" is devoid of foundation.

²⁰The search for the models of Vergil's bird-simile of ghosts seems to be complicated by the widespread belief among the ancients in winged souls, on which see G. Weicker, *Der Seelenvogel in der alten Literatur und Kunst* (Leipzig 1902); O. Waser, "Über die äussere Erscheinung der Seele in den Vorstellungen der Völker, zumal der Griechen," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 16 (1913) 336-388; R. Turcan, "L'âme-oiseau et l'eschatologie orphique," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 155 (1959) 33-40. Cf. Norden, *op. cit.* 224; Clark 249, n. 14. But apart from the fact that there is a difference between speaking of bird-like souls and in a simile comparing souls to a flock of birds, the primary factor in our search for examples should be, as in the case of the leaf-simile, that of numerosity.

and *Od.* 11.605 f.:

ἀμφὶ δέ μιν κλαγγὴ νεκύων ἦν οἰωνῶν ὥς,
πάντοσ' ἀτυζομένων

In all three similes noise is as much a point of comparison as multitude. In the similes of the *Iliad*, in which warriors are likened to birds, the poet proceeds from the more general to the specific.²¹ The fact that the birds of *Il.* 3.2 ff. are migratory is probably what caught Norden's fancy, and led him to relate the simile to *Aen.* 6.311 ff. But it should be observed that the situation described in Homer is different from that described by Vergil. Homer's birds are on the attack, while Vergil's birds flee the winter cold. And the factor of noise, which in Homer may be more potent than that of multitude,²² is not stressed by Vergil. The same contrast can be made between *Il.* 2.459 ff. and Vergil's simile. In addition, the birds of *Il.* 2.459 ff. are pictured as flying around and even swimming, but not coming together as in Vergil's simile. The brief simile of the *Odyssey* again involves birds flying noisily from all sides, and thus differs from Vergil's.²³ In general, while *Od.* 11.605 f. likens ghosts to birds, as in Vergil, *Il.* 3.2 ff. is in some measure recalled by the movement of Vergil's picture, and the πολλὰ of *Il.* 2.459 ff. reminds us of Vergil's *quam multae*.²⁴

In his quest for Vergil's models Norden should not have overlooked the simile of Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*:

οὐδὲ κε φαίης
τόσσον νηίτην στόλον ἔμμεναι, ἀλλ' οἰωνῶν
ἱλαδὸν ἄσπετον ἔθνος ἐπιβρομέειν πελάγεσσιν [4.238–240]

Here again numerosity is the point of comparison, although the object compared to birds is ships,²⁵ and the situation described is in a sense the reverse of that described in Vergil. The ships are rushing out to the open sea like a noisy flock of birds,²⁶ while in the *Aeneid* the souls throng

²¹This is, of course, normal in epic. Cf. Verg. *Aen.* 7.699 ff.; G. 1.383 f. What is special in the simile at *Il.* 3.2 ff. is the combination in the mention of the Ocean and the Pygmies, of natural observation and mythology. Cf. A. Pischinger, *Der Vogelzug bei den griechischen Dichtern des Klassischen Altertums* (Eichstatt 1904) 17.

²²Cf. Pischinger, *op. cit.* 16.

²³Of the three Homeric similes Clark cites only *Il.* 3.2 ff., and refers, rather cryptically, to *Il.* 4.459 ff. (254, n. 26). He overlooks *Od.* 11.605 f., in spite of the fact that it refers to ghosts. The criticism, *mutatis mutandis*, applies to Norden as well. Cf. n. 5.

²⁴Numerosity is also expressed in epic by similes involving flies, bees, sand, waves, etc. See in general the article of McCartney (above, n. 8); on bees cf. Norden, *op. cit.* 306, and Hügi, *op. cit.* 29, n. 1 (a comment on *Aen.* 6.707–709).

²⁵For other similes in which ships are compared to birds see Pischinger, *op. cit.* 46.

²⁶Cf. Pischinger, *loc. cit.*

together as migrating birds do on the shore after a long flight over the sea. Here no use of the *Catabasis of Heracles* by Apollonius can be convincingly argued.²⁷ Similarly, it is far-fetched to say that Soph. *OT* 175 ff. echoes the *Catabasis of Heracles*. Sophocles' dramatic passage is a vivid and poetic illustration of the destructiveness of the plague in legendary Thebes. The newly dead migrate swiftly and in vast numbers²⁸ to the world of shades like birds. We have no way of knowing whether Sophocles imitated Homer or whether he influenced Vergil on this matter. It is possible that he did neither, but simply drew from the common stock of poetic speech from which Homer and Vergil also drew.

Of the similes listed above we cannot on the whole point to any particular one as being *the* model of Vergil's bird-simile; especially as the sight of migrating birds was undoubtedly an ordinary phenomenon for ancient man, living as he did in surroundings somewhat more natural than ours.²⁹ The spectacle of vast numbers of migrating birds could easily suggest to a poet an analogy with human beings, and by extension with ghosts, that would be independent of literary models. The same would be true of the simile of leaves. Moreover, the concept of winged souls of the dead³⁰ and the fact that the motif of leaves in Vergil's leaf-simile belongs to that general line of autumnal features which have always carried associations of melancholy³¹ complicate our search for models even further. In other words, both Vergilian similes are hard to trace,³² and under these circumstances one should be hesitant to involve

²⁷Otherwise Clark's argument concerning Vergil and Apollonius (254) appears to be sound. See Hügi, *op. cit.* 31, n. 2.

²⁸Clark misses the point here when he says that "the birds are flying off one by one vigorously" (248). In fact, what Sophocles has in mind is the multitude of the dying people. Cf. Pischinger, *op. cit.* 15, n. 51, who draws our attention also to the adjective *ἀνάρθμος* at Soph. *OT* 179.

²⁹R. B. Sibson, "Birds at Troy," *GR* 8 (1938-9) 139-143, argues that plenty of birds can still be seen at Troy, as in the days of Homer. Alcaeus fr. 345 L.-P. describes the migratory birds with a sense of awe appropriate to a poet:

ὄρνιθες τίνες οἷδ' Ὀκεάνω γᾶς ἀπὸν πειράτων
ἦλθον πανέλοπες ποικιλόδαιοι τανυσίπτεροι

Cf. Ibycus fr. 9 D. See C. M. Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry from Alcman to Simonides* (Oxford 1961) 172, 265; McCartney, *op. cit.* 86. Cf. also Eur. *Hel.* 1479 ff., which is an extended image of the type *εἶθε ποτανὸς γενοίμην*. Cf. R. Kannicht, *Helena* 2 (Heidelberg 1969) 386. Pischinger, *op. cit.* 18, n. 62, connects this passage with *Il.* 2.459 ff.

³⁰Cf. n. 20.

³¹Cf. Preston, *op. cit.* 276.

³²We have no way of telling whether the coupling of the leaf- and bird-similes at *Il.* 2.459 ff. (in an order contrary to Vergil's) is what motivated the Latin poet to put his similes together. In view of the fact that of the two Homeric similes the bird-simile is echoed elsewhere in Vergil, at *Aen.* 7.699-701, as Hügi notices (*op. cit.* 31 f.), and also because Vergil's and Homer's similes have notable differences, as we have observed, we should not, I think, try to make too much of this. After all, the coupling of similes

the *Catabasis of Heracles*,³³ especially before examining all the extra evidence which pertains to the problem, and which Norden seems to have overlooked.

In sum, Norden's thesis that Vergil borrowed the two similes of *Aen.* 6.309–312 from the lost *Catabasis of Heracles* is, if not completely untenable, at least impossible to prove, and as such it cannot be the basis of conclusions about the influence of this *Catabasis* on other authors. Investigation into the line of descent of Vergil's leaf- and bird-similes cannot ignore the evidence of *Il.* 2.467–468, 2.800–801, 21.464 ff., *Od.* 9.51–52, and *Ap.Rhod. Argon.* 4.216–219, with regard to the leaf-simile, and *Il.* 2.459 ff., *Od.* 11.605–660, and *Ap.Rhod. Argon.* 4.238–240, with regard to the bird-simile.³⁴ All this evidence suggests that, although we can speak of a well-defined tradition in ancient poetry in general, we cannot easily pinpoint the literary tradition of particular motifs like the two similes in question. Yet, if we want to be more precise on this matter and to trace the line of descent of the two similes from Homer to Vergil, we should speak of Homer-Apollonius Rhodius-Vergil, and Bacchylides-Vergil, rather than Homer-*Catabasis of Heracles*-Vergil, and Homer-*Catabasis of Heracles*-Bacchylides, with reference to the transmission of the leaf-simile, and Homer-Apollonius Rhodius-Vergil, and Sophocles-Vergil, rather than Homer-*Catabasis of Heracles*-Vergil, and Homer-*Catabasis of Heracles*-Sophocles, with reference to the transmission of the bird-simile.³⁵

A little more could be said about the function of the Vergilian similes. The leaf-simile which, as observed, combines the two different sets of Homer's leaf-similes and also surpasses the leaf-simile of Apollonius by

is fairly normal in ancient epic. Norden therefore, who was quick to assume that Vergil found his two similes together in the *Catabasis of Heracles*, should have noticed the Homeric use of both similes in the same passage.

³³If we do, we should also examine other works as potential sources for Vergil's similes, like the *Catabasis of Peirithous*, on which see R. Merkelbach, "Πειριθοῦ Κατάβασις," *Stilist* 24 (1950) 255–263 and R. Merkelbach—M. L. West, *Fragmenta Hesiodica* (Oxford 1967) 132 ff.; the *Orphic Catabasis* of the Bologna Papyrus, on which see R. Merkelbach, "Eine orphische Unterweltsbeschreibung auf Papyrus," *MusHelv* 8 (1951) 1–11; M. Treu, "Die neue 'orphische' Unterweltsbeschreibung und Vergil," *Hermes* 82 (1954) 24–51; T. Turcan, "La catabase orphique du papyrus de Bologne," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 152 (1956) 136–172. Cf. also P. Boyancé, *La religion de Virgile* (Paris 1963) 153, 159 ff.; B. Otis, "Three problems of *Aeneid* 6," *TAPA* 90 (1959) 169 f. The bird-like soul motif is found in fol. 1v, vv. 1–2, of the Papyrus. See Merkelbach 5.

³⁴With slight modifications our discussion of the bird-simile applies also to Vergil's bird-simile at *G.* 4.473–474, where numerosity is again the main point of comparison between birds and ghosts. Cf. E. K. Rand, *The Magical Art of Virgil* (Hamden, Conn. 1966) 332. For leaf-similes in Roman poetry after Vergil see Preston, *op. cit.* 277 ff.

³⁵Cf. Clark's conclusion, 254–255.

accentuating the brevity and fragility of life and the seasonal inevitability of death⁸⁶ expresses further the anonymity and equality of ghosts. Among the classes of souls (*Aen.* 6.305 ff.) begging to be ferried across the Styx the *insepulti* are unquiet like the unburied autumn leaves. And again, the ghosts are aptly likened to the defenseless birds that always fly from the seasonal chill of death but like the transmigrating souls eventually return to the shores of light.⁸⁷

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⁸⁶Cf. above, 240.

⁸⁷Cf. R. O. Hornsby, *Patterns of Action in the Aeneid* (Iowa 1970) 84-85; Fletcher, *op. cit.* 58. K. Quinn, *Virgil's Aeneid: A Critical Description* (London 1968) 432 ff., notices the greater complexity and intensity of Vergil's similes in comparison to those of Homer.