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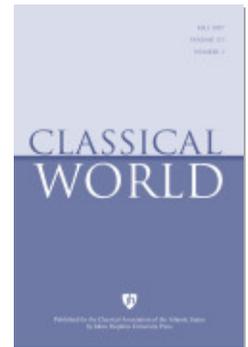
The Harvard Vergil: Memoir of *The Black Sheep*

Hans-Peter Stahl

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and lows. Neither pro- nor anti-imperial, the *Aeneid* as a poem offers glimpses of the complex web of contingencies that engages both sides: of the beauties of the new land at Carthage and the sorrow of the Troades on Sicily who have seen too many new lands; of the deaths of Dido and Turnus and the survival through it all of Aeneas and Ascanius; of the overbearingness of Jupiter and of his careful consolation of Venus. These are complex characters in real-life scenarios, not allegories in barren landscapes, and their decisions and choices are enriched by indecision and doubt.

This particular approach may not be that of the Harvard School, since it denies the preeminence of loss and argues instead for the presence of ongoing debate, but it would not have been possible without the insistence of those readers, and the poets who followed their lead, on the poetic and often elegiac nature of the *Aeneid*.

MEDIEVAL ACADEMY OF AMERICA

The Harvard Vergil: Memoir of *The Black Sheep*

HANS-PETER STAHL

The influence the Harvard School has had on my scholarship? Among the questions you ask, this is a challenging one indeed, Professor Hejduk, and it comes at an (in)opportune time: I have recently published a monograph on the *Aeneid* (Stahl 2016, subtitled a *Recovery Study*), which along its way is widely critical of the Harvard School. The book is not written for short-distance readers who pick decontextualized passages, scenes, and “verbal echoes” for their “reading,” but it pays attention to the artifice’s long-distance organization (the existence of which it has lately been fashionable to deny, with “desiderated” results). So one might of course, with equal justification, ask your question also the other way around. The long-range answer there, I’m afraid, would probably be, to use a Harvard School code word, “disturbing.”

Considering the long gestation period of my book over many decades and the guiding track it lays on the Latin side of my scholarship,

it appears appropriate to fill in some pertinent autobiographical details with which its history is interwoven. Well, my first acquaintance with Harvard was a rather cheerful affair. I was fortunate in being awarded a Junior Fellowship at the Center for Hellenic Studies. When, in the fall of 1961, I arrived from Germany in Washington, D.C., I found that there was no Center for Hellenic Studies, at least not as a physical entity. Instead, there was an almost empty house on Whitehaven Street, N.W., whose owner, a Mr. Paul Mellon (said to be a sponsor), resided next door.¹ There was no permanent director (Bernard Knox was taking a year off), but a young scholar (a *Latinist*, working on *Vergil!*), Michael C. J. Putnam, was filling the position in Knox's absence. And, there was only one single book in the house—a mystery story.²

However, when I mentioned my return ticket to Germany, the never-failing Michael quickly arranged for me a trip to Harvard and Elliot House, where I both could explain to John Finley my reservations about his prognosticating *Thucydides* (the enthusiastic young [New Deal?] democrat turning conservative with age), and in two weeks' time went through the Thucydidean holdings of Widener Library (my work had just reached the point where I needed a vast amount of secondary literature)—and cut a deal with the helpful but wary librarians: they would always send me the next package of literature *before* I had returned its predecessor. So I would always have a sufficient supply at hand in D.C. It worked out splendidly, and I could work through my bibliography faster than I had ever hoped.

The cheerful Junior Fellows proved a more than lively group, especially when, under Michael's helpful instructions, playing croquet. The peacocks in the adjacent gardens of the British Embassy uttered loud screams whenever a mallet hit the ball. Soon there came a request from the Embassy, transmitted via the Mellon residence, please not to play

¹ That neighbor impressed the young German scholar by having (and so did his wife) a set of Mercedes Benz limousines (his black, hers grey), all with a tiny red horse painted on their trunks. Mr. Mellon would have a chauffeur, of course—predominantly for the smaller cars. The large one he liked to drive himself, on occasion taking the young foreign scholar along on my way to the Library of Congress, while he might be headed for the National Gallery or to select flowers with Mrs. Kennedy for the White House gardens.

² Soon welcome news arrived: we would shortly receive a professor's large personal library, as soon as his university's librarians had finished screening the books. A disappointing rumor spread later said the books would not come because the librarians had found that too many books were already the property of the university.

croquet during nighttime (under floodlights). Discussions were similarly vivid: I recall Anna Morpurgo's and Garry Wills's lively disagreements on Sophocles' *Antigone*; Kenneth Reckford and myself hotly discussing Euripides (we both intended writing a monograph on this author, but neither of us ever got around to it); and the ever-joking Doug Parker writing epitaphs on each Fellow (mine went somewhat like this: while walking on a glacier immersed in *Classen-Steup*, I stumbled into a ravine. It ended: "Maybe/I see/Hans-Peter/später").

Michael invited visitors for us, among them Wendell Clausen from Harvard, and, for me specifically, Adam Parry. The two of us discussed Thucydides. I do not remember whether we also touched upon Adam's "Two Voices" theory on the *Aeneid*. (Almost a decade later, upon reading my *Thucydides*, Adam would persuade me to join the Classics Department at Yale.)

All the while, Michael Putnam was working on his *Aeneid* book. I myself had studied Vergil under a reinstated Nazi professor (by then a conservative democrat; his writings of the 1930s are largely suppressed in his *Gesammelte Schriften*); also, I had already, when a pupil in Lübeck's venerable *Katharineum*, developed a degree of skepticism toward the glorifying and rhetorically exorbitant *Aeneid*. Learning, in conversations with Michael, about his humane and anti-imperial Vergil, I said to him: If you are right, you save Vergil for me. But when his book arrived in 1965 in Münster (where I myself was by then teaching the *Aeneid* and considered working on Vergil), I was not so sure that imagery and verbal echoes can override logic and politically adapted plot structure.

A decade and a half on (after Adam Parry's tragic accident and Christopher Dawson's sad demise, I had left Yale for the A. W. Mellon Chair at the University of Pittsburgh): Putnam's 1981 edition of his Harvard School-affiliated Vergil conference at Buffalo. My contribution took issue with Clausen's influential concept that Aeneas in Juno's storm at sea (after all, the hero's programmatic entrance into the epic) utters "a strange speech for a hero, especially a hero sailing towards a new world: Aeneas thinks only of the past, of those who fell under Troy's high wall, and wishes he too had died there."⁵ I had understood the

⁵ Clausen 1964: 140. This understanding—together with Putnam's concept of Aeneas' mind-blowing rage—has defined the Harvard School and its affiliates through the decades. It reached, after Barchiesi's (1984: 103) "eroe esule e desideroso di morire" ("hero in exile and longing to die"), a new, wondrous climax in Quint's (1993) Freud-influenced

passage rather differently: Aeneas, believing his fated mission frustrated, wishes he too could, instead of anonymously and ingloriously drowning out here at sea, have died at the hands of *the bravest* enemy fighter, *o Danaum fortissime gentis*, under the walls of Troy, on the battlefield, “before the eyes of the fathers,” *ante ora patrum* (1.95–98), thus earning highest paternal recognition and glory. He is fashioned both on Odysseus, who hates an inglorious death at sea, and on Achilles, who does not want to drown in the swollen river “like a swineherd boy,” but at the hands of *the best* enemy fighter (*Il.* 21.279). *Achillean* Aeneas here sets the tenor for the whole epic, his creator challenging Aeneas’ Homeric namesake’s inferiority to Achilles. From the opening Vergil makes clear that, in leaving Troy, brave, fate-guided, forward-looking Aeneas was not perhaps motivated by cowardice (or even treason, as one branch of the tradition had presented him).

Also, I briefly laid out how, *in the author’s eyes*, Aeneas acts justly in killing King Turnus in the work’s final scene. In spite of Ralph Johnson’s far-reaching agreement, my paper earned me from one participant (I forego mentioning the name) the (sticking) title of being *The Black Sheep* of the conference. There followed, together with his taking issue with my emphasis on *iusta ira* and *furiae iustae* in the *Aeneid*,⁴ a surprise phrasing in Putnam’s summary of my paper: that the killing of Turnus points to a “. . . suitable anticipation of Roman glories to come.” My paper envisaging—*suitably anticipating*—“Roman glories”? Here, it seemed, a suit was being tailored for me, which it has been impossible to shed: that of a (as Harvardians, tending to identify the scholar’s results with his own convictions,⁵ so strangely call it) pro-Augustan *optimist* (as if it were a cause for optimism to observe the poet lending his voice to an imperialist usurper . . .).

Another four years on. In the interim I had twice spent a year in Princeton as a member at the Institute for Advanced Study, generously supported by Guggenheim and NEH fellowships. The extended freedom

book with his extra-textual conceit of Aeneas’ “regressive deathwish [*sic*]” (73) of “an anonymous immersion [?!] in the waves of his native Simois”; so “the *Aeneid* must wage a campaign against this death wish, drawing its hero away from the womblike [!?] waters of death,” for Quint “the greatest of Eastern temptations” (29). Perhaps Vergil should better have made an appointment for his hero on Doctor Freud’s couch?

⁴ Putnam 1981: 14n8. The point is made again by Putnam 1995: 165, 171n33. On this mistaken understanding, see Stahl 2016: 45–49.

⁵ On the problem of subjectivism in Vergil studies, see Stahl 2016: 457.

from university duties and close communications with Harold C. F. Cherniss, my venerated U.S. mentor (since 1957 or 1958, when he had read my dissertation on Plato's propositional logic), allowed me in 1985 to publish *Propertius: Individual and State under Augustus*, a study analyzing the love poet's reservations toward (and surface surrender to) the Augustan regime, numerous poems born from sorrowful civil war experience. The volume was designed to be a preparatory companion piece for the later *Aeneid* book. If we do not listen to the voice of Propertius, Vergil's contemporary, we as interpreters may deprive ourselves of an available premise that may a priori protect our work against ahistorical literary constructs, such as the assumption of an anti-Augustan, "subversive" *Aeneid*. I was happy to learn that Michael Putnam found my monograph a convincing interpretation, joining me in seeing Propertius as even "opposing the intellectual values of his great colleagues Vergil and Horace."⁶ As in the case of Vergil, scholars cannot hope to fathom the poet's political stance if they retreat into exclusively investigating "literary models."

Five years later, in 1990, I published the more detailed version announced in 1981, entitled "The Death of Turnus: Augustan Vergil and the Political Rival." Thereafter, in 1998, I edited the papers of two conferences held in Pittsburgh and Oxford, under the title *Vergil's Aeneid: Augustan Epic and Political Context*. As one of the speakers at the first conference, I had invited Harvard's Richard Thomas. He delivered a barrage of attacks on my 1990 chapter, presenting an "alternative reading" of Vergil's Turnus, "a sort of 'companion' piece," because Stahl's chapter "may well reach wide general readership" (1998: 271). What did this mean? *Protecting* a "wide" reading public from the non-Havardian Turnus as Stahl had found him written by the poet? For fairness' sake, I accepted his paper into the 1998 conference volume.

Thomas, without supplying any confirming quote for his reader and using rather religious-Manichaeian terms, ascribes (in this not unlike Putnam) to Stahl an Augustus who "is to *sweep aside all the dark forces* threatening his own mission" (271; my italics. Is such an Augustus the Harvard School template of "the other"?). Illogically reading Stahl's *introductory premises* as "the substance" of the chapter ("Stahl's

⁶ Putnam's comment on the book jacket.

conclusions are presented at the outset,” 271–72), Thomas further on misquotes him (276), changing his printed words (and meaning), and he takes issue with Stahl’s pointing to King Turnus’ close association with Etruscan monster King Mezentius, the *contemptor divum*, whom his cruelly tortured citizens had expelled. “One could argue with Stahl’s details” (273). Thomas again: “Vergil in fact keeps the two apart. . . . The two never meet in the *Aeneid*” (298n6). “In fact,” however, the opposite is true. Vergil has his Turnus play host to the exiled monster, even defend him with his military (*et Turni defendier hospitius armis*, 8.493) against his own maltreated citizens. They are justifiably outraged (*furiis iustis*—the voice of pious King Evander, who also cites *iustus . . . dolor* and *merita . . . ira* [500f.] from the Etruscan seer’s fateful message, *fata*, 8.499), and they demand their king’s extradition for the death penalty (*ad supplicium*, 495). What was happening here? A Harvard School member launching an attack on Stahl’s scholarship while neglecting part of the evidence—evidence that may well lead a “wide general readership” to conceive doubts about the Harvard Turnus?⁷

Another three years on. Thomas (2001:295–96), in his concluding pages, repeats verbatim some of his 1998 objections. He does concede that a (pro-Augustan) “reading which vilifies Turnus is a possible one.” Why “vilifies”? Classifying scholarly findings by judging a “reading” in *moral* terms? In the 1998 volume Stahl’s “procedure” was already said “to carry out a sustained attack on the character of Turnus” (271). So a scholar whose detailed work fails to confirm and toe the Harvard line can freely be said to practice character assassination? *The Black Sheep*’s coat appeared about to be painted an even-deeper black.

Thomas pleads for “sympathy” or “support for Turnus” (1998: 272; 2001: 295). *Sympathy? Support?* Does Thomas ask his colleagues to practice *advocacy philology*? His partisan vocabulary appears to strike at the roots of our discipline. This subjectivism (which the Harvard School shares with much contemporary literary criticism) also shows

⁷ Thomas (1998: 273) proceeds in similar eclectic fashion when, to support the Harvard School’s thesis of Aeneas’ rampaging conduct in book 10, he fails to observe the provocations to which the author makes his hero *respond* in kind when pursuing his young ally’s killer and trying to rescue the endangered Trojan camp (with his son inside). For the textual evidence, see Stahl 2016: 132–36. So much here for “Stahl’s details,” which, Thomas claims (1998: 271), “[o]ne could argue with.” (Why didn’t he?)

in his arbitrary substitution for linguistically precise, text-based interpretations: “I decided to go looking for *my* Virgil elsewhere in the Virgil tradition” (2001: xi; *my* italics)—as if a reception history (mis)reading had any proof value for a correct understanding of the original.

Thomas’s unfounded attacks (“Lest it be felt that Stahl is simply being used as a straw man” [1998: 272], he conveniently adds a few additional names) as well as his interpretative approach influenced my situation as a scholar (other Harvard School affiliates were perhaps no less critical, but certainly less confrontational). Now those cheerful and idyllic days that characterized the scholarly community of my first Harvard year were definitely gone forever. The Harvard School representative (in his 2001 volume, Professor Thomas identifies his position by having, on the title page, the words “Harvard University” printed next to his name), when obviously lacking a scholar’s counterarguments, had publicly resorted to critique in moral terms (apart from creating a schizophrenic Vergil, author of two contradictory “companions,” both named Turnus: “I will look . . . at the Turnus who keeps him [i.e., the ‘Augustan’ Turnus] company,” 1998: 274; 2001: 296).

Professor Thomas might have been more careful in picking whose scholarship to criticize. To protect my work-in-progress against future unfounded attacks on my scholarship, it was no longer sufficient if I endeavored to offer a strictly text-based and methodologically sound interpretation. In addition, I could no longer avoid along my way to show up mistaken premises, disciplinary inadequacy, and logical as well as linguistic laxity of some current approaches. On this road also some wishful accoutrements bestowed on the historical *Aeneid* had to fall by the wayside—accoutrements bestowed from the (after all, humanly only too understandable, but ahistorical) desire to “de-Augustanize Virgil” (Thomas 2001: xviii).

So, to answer the original question, the Harvard School’s influence on my work is that it has stimulated me to include in my monograph a critical review of, and cathartic reflections on, the philological method. And that turns out to be not so bad after all.

When reclaimed from interpretative aberrations as the Julian trailblazer he is, Vergil appears to offer an obituary on, rather than congratulations to, both the Harvard Aeneas and the Harvard Turnus. It would be rewarding if my scholarship were to help raise “awareness of the moral dilemma inherent in uncritically endorsing persuasive Vergil’s terms of right and wrong” (Stahl 2016: 459).

Dear Professor Hejduk, you can now see (and I think you will now understand) why, when accepting your invitation, I warned that the title of my contribution would be something like “Memoir of *The Black Sheep*.”⁸

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH, EMERITUS

Circle Games from Pharr to Stahl

RICHARD F. THOMAS

Unlike Tennyson—“I who loved thee since my day began”—I came to Virgil relatively late in life. I think we read bits of the *Aeneid* in school in New Zealand, but frankly don’t remember having done so. For better or worse, I did not share the experience of countless U.S. schoolchildren, and generations of their teachers, who read selections from *Aeneid* 1–6 in the innovative school commentary of Clyde Pharr, first published in 1930, the preface stating that “the author is much pleased to offer this little volume in homage to the spirit of the bard of Mantua at a time when all the world is uniting to pay him tribute” (1998: xii).¹ Pharr, a specialist in Roman law, wrote nothing on Virgil beyond a preface, which has been read and absorbed for the past eighty-five years by many schoolteachers of Virgil, and presumably passed on to their charges. This textbook was later used, and in some cases still is, in the teaching of the AP Latin syllabus (“Vergil” until 2012, “Vergil and Caesar” since the 2012–13 school year). Pharr’s anachronistic introduction sees all through the eyes of Augustus, reflecting the Servian and Suetonian focus that seems to be the ultimate source (2):

The poem was undertaken at the request of Augustus. . . . Vergil and Augustus were both interested in thus giving divine sanction and the

⁸ Should I perhaps brace myself now for a new name (“*the wolf in <black> sheep’s clothing*”)?

¹ See Thomas 2001: 235–36 for a similar reaction from the President of the American Classical League, who wrote to Mussolini, congratulating him on the bimillennium, and received the *Duce’s* response to the effect that Virgil’s love of country and countrymen is the “basis of that spiritual movement that we have called *Fascismo*.”