humanitas

Vol. III

HVMANITAS

VOLUME III

COIMBRA

MCML-MCMLI

New Principles in Vergilian Commentary

The solution of Vergilian problems depends on a willingness to face facts. If the words in the text are what we plainly see there, it is no use pretending that they mean what they cannot mean, even if this pretence seems to be the only hope of defending Vergil against the charge of writing nonsense. If he wrote nonsense, then he wrote nonsense, and scholarship, which must at all costs be honest, must admit that he wrote nonsense. But there is not much danger of that. There is, however, a strong probability that Vergil may have imagined some meaning which his commentators have not been able to imagine. The first error, then, is to impose limits on Vergil, and to decide in advance that he must have imagined one of a small number of possible meanings. He may equally well have imagined some meaning which we have not yet guessed. A second error is to think that there can be only one meaning; there has long been some recognition of Vergil's poetic ambiguities, but they are more important than was till lately supposed. A third error is to believe that a word used by Vergil means the same thing throughout any one context. It may mean one thing during the first half of a verse and something else during the second. A fourth error is to assume that Vergil first decided what he meant, and then found words to express his meaning. Very often he was positively led to his meaning by the very words, and phrases, and sounds, which he refnembered and altered and recombined to provide the expression of his meaning, when he had reached it.

It is easy now to see that these errors are errors. Indeed, it his hard to explain why they were lately so generally committed, and still committed. The Ancient Egyptians would not have committed them; that is clear from Henri Frankfort,

Kingship and the Gods, Chicago, The Chicago University Press, 1948, pp. **165-169,** and elsewhere. There are native Africans to-day who would not commit them; that is attested by Geoffrey Gorer, *Africa Dances*, London, Pelican Edition, **1944,** p. '16ï, and some other material which I have collected in *Poetic Inspiration*, An Approach to Vergil, Exmouth, The Raleigh Press, 1946. Giambattista Vico, Goethe, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge would note have committed these errors either. Perhaps they are due to the notable success of European languages during recent centuries in limiting meanings to the static contours of definable words. Or perhaps they are the result of what has been called the limitative function of present human consciousness, which modern discoveries concerning precognition, telepathy, and psychic facts, with the vast proliferation of potential experience which they reveal, are leading thinkers to recognize.

So   far as I have observed it, the change has come during this century. Important contributions were made by F.-X. M. J. Roiron, S. J., who proved at length Vergil's «*imagination auditivey*>, by E. Cartault, who faced the facts, by Robert Seymour Conway, who has perhaps done more than any other recent scholar to teach a profounder insight into Vergil, to William Empson, who has examined ambiguity in English Literature, to W. Bedell Stanford, who has investigated it in Greek Literature, to M[lle] A. M. Guillemin, who justly classified the nature of Vergil's method of work, to C. M. Bowra, who well observed some important combinations by Vergil of earlier variants, to Edward Kennard Rand, who applied to Vergil the discoveries concerning Coleridge's poetic method of John Livingstone Lowes, to Livingstone Lowes himself, [7]who by comparing the notebooks of Coleridge with his poems shewed that imagination w[T]0rks from and through memories of w[7]ords, phrases, and sounds, to William James[3] whose work he used, to Corso Buscaroli, a close examiner of Vergil's language, to Wolf-Hartmuth Friedrich, whose researches into Seneca's tragedies illumined poetic method, and to poets, especially to Paul Valery, A. E. Housman, and T. S. Eliot, who have related their own poetic experience. References to them are indicated in my book *Roman Vergil*, 3 London, Faber, 1946 and, in the Italian

translation of Orsola Nemi and Henry Fürst, *Virgilio Romano*, Milan, Leo Longanesi, 1949, especially chapters in and iv, where I explore what I consider to be the new principles of interpretation. Some later researches are Robert W. Cruttwell, *Vergil's Mind at Work*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1947, a book of genius, E. J. Stormon, S. J., *Meanjin* (Melbourne, Australia), vi, i, 1947, pp. 6-15, where YergiFs treatment of time is well noted, J. H. Waszink, *Mnemosyne,* Fourth Series, Vol. 1, 1948, pp. 43-56, Jens S. Th. Hanssen, *Symbolae Osloenses*, XXVI, 1948, pp. 93-112, a notable review of recent advances, and L. A. S. Jermyn in papers read to The Virgil Society in London on 17 January 1948 and on 15 January,) 949, of which the first was published in *Greece and Rome*, xvm, 1949, pp. 49-69, and the second is to be published in *Greece and Rome* soon.

Vergil was on the whole like other great poets in his methode of creating poetry. But he carried the method to great lengths. In interpreting poetry it is normally wise to discover as well as possible, and to remember, the method by which it was created. In interpreting Vergil's poetry it is not only wise but it is also necessary to do so.

It is known that Vergil's thoughts were guided by associations of sound. He remembered earlier poetry, and fragments of earlier poetry, created by himself or by other poets. Syllables, words, and phrases, with their sounds, rhythms, and thoughts, remained in his mind. When he was creating his poetry he regularly recalled a memory, or many memories, retained from earlier poetry. A thought could suggest a sound, or a sound a thought. Verses which Vergil eventually accepted as new verses for his own poetry were often, or perhaps always, partly decided by retained mental associations from earlier verses, alike in some way but often very different in context and meaning. Vergil's thoughts were regularly redirected by his memories, especially memories of sounds. This redirection by memories could change the expression, and the meaning, of Vergil's poetry while he was creating it.

Therefore, to understand the meaning of a passage of Vergil it is not always enough to examine the passage as it is. It is often necessary to examine parts of it, not as they now

are, but as they were, before the passage was finished, if it
ever was finished, and at different stages of its creation. To do
that, an attempt must be made to decide what thoughts were
in Vergil's mind, and how one thought suggested another.
That might well seem impossible; but it is not, or not entirely.
Indeed, it is usually very easy to identify some of the thoughts
which most urgently need to be identified. The reason why it
is easy is in the knowledge, now quite certain, that Vergil
allowed his thoughts to be directed and redirected by associa-
tions of sound and rhythm.

Interpreters and commentators, therefore, should attempt to
follow the process, or the processes, of thought and association
which Vergil himself used, when he created the passage under
investigation.

They cannot assume that any passage is intelligible at one
point of time. It may be intelligible only as a total aggregate
of many meanings, which were actual at different times while
Vergil was creating it. The passage, as it stands in the text,
may be, according to the grammatical relations between the
words, neither clear nor coherent. It may be self-contradictory.
But the same passage, understood as the permanent result of
a succession of meanings, or perhaps of several parallel succès-
sions of meanings, is sure, or almost sure, to be clear, cohe-
rent, and rich with a great wealth of content.

Vergil was economical, and made the utmost use of remem-
bered verbal elements, often adapting them with very slight
changes to carry new, complex, and concentrated meanings.
It may therefore be expected that a phrase in Vergil's poetry
will prove to stand in a certain kind of relation with other simi-
lar phrases both in the poetry of Vergil himself and in other
poetry which he is likely to have known. It is accordingly
wise to collect parallels, and to arrange them in a certain
sequence, setting similar usages side by side, so that all stand
together in an ascending and significant order of difficulty or
abnormality, if there are many, or simply considering the har-
der phrase in the light of the easier phrase, if there are only
two. There may have been a unilinear development oí phrase
from phrase, as Vergil exploited a group of words, sounds,
and rhythms for increasingly difficult problems of expression.

Or there may have been a convergent development, as Vergil combined two sequences into one final phrase, which owed something to both. Or two sequences may have been partly combined, without perfect convergence, so that the meaning or meanings of the text as Vergil left it only seem coherent if the apparent developments, and their implications, are all held present, and re-expressed at length, in the mind of the reader.

The late R. S. Conway found in Vergil's poetry two supreme characteristics or tendencies. They are tendencies towards alternation and reconciliation. Strangely, or perhaps naturally, these two tendencies proved to dominate the patterns of fourth-foot stress-rhythm to which I called attention in *Accentual Symmetry in Vergil*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1939. Conway also observed, and his observation was confirmed by the view of Professor T. J. Haarhoff, that Vergil tended also to create «wholes», in the sense propounded by the great statesman General Jan Smuts in his famous book *Holism and Evolution*, The Cambridge University Press, 1926.

These identifications and comparisons indicate the further nature of Vergil's method and Vergil's art. He regularly worked with pairs of derivations, memories, or thoughts, and combined them to form something new. In fact, he chose two alternatives, he reconciled them, and he created out of them a *new* whole. These tendencies are deep in Vergil. It may well be that he developed them as a sublimation of the impulse to creation by physical union in marriage. Such would be the judgement of psycho-analysis. It is not irrelevant to his art that Vergil's life earned him the name of Parthenias.

Accordingly, Vergil was dominated by these two habits; one was derivation, often by means of sound and rhythm, remembered from earlier poetry, and the other was combination. There are many aspects of these habits.

Early in Vergiss life there are sure signs that he was not content with direct description and logical statement. There are in the *Bucolics* twelve important examples of a certain dreamy inattention to exact grammar, syntax, and formal logic. The passages are sometimes elliptic, and sometimes they clearly display the result of a combination of imperfectly harmonized thoughts. The best example is *Cretae Oaxen* at *Bucolics* 1, 65.

I discussed the passage in *The Classical Review*, xli, 1937, pp. 212-213.

In the *Georgics* Mr. L. A. S. Jermyn, in papers which I cited above, has found results of combination, similar to results which I had myself found elsewhere in Vergil, by applying the same method. Even when Vergil wrote of the sights and sounds of the country he combined reminiscences from earlier works in verse or prose, and sometimes, in his search for a new poetic whole, he neglected the facts of observed nature. That is how, for example, he created a quite imaginary bird, th *t fulica ?narina*, at *Georgics* 1, 362-363, by combining memories of Aratus and Cicero.

The combination in the *Aeneid* are often on a far greater scale. They have begun to be rightly observed. I think that I shewed in *The Classical Quarterly* , xxvi, 1g32, pp. 178-188, that the second book of the *Aeneid* is mainly composed by a combination of a lost poem which was afterwards used by Quintus Smyrnaeus with another lost poem which was afterwards used by Tryphiodorus ; and later in *The Classical Journal* (of Malta, G. C.), hi, Christmas 1948, pp. 34⁻, that Allecto in the seventh book is an elaborate integration of particulars from Greek tragedies now lost and perhaps more than one passage of Ennius. Professor J. H. Waszink in *Mnemosyne*, Fourth Series, 1, 1948, pp. 43-56, has acutely shewn that the Cumaean Sibyl in the sixth book of the *Aeneid* is a combination of three different Sibyls, known in tradition, not one of whom was a Sibyl at Cumae. He might have added that the name of Vergil's Sibyl, Deiphobe, looks very like a combination of the sound of the names of some of the earlier Sibyls, such as Phemonoe, with the significant content of the names of others, such as Alexandra. But he notes that Vergil's alterations of tradition were more radical than the alterations of other writers, such as Tibullus, to whom no alteration of any earlier version can yet be imputed. As he also notes, so good, and so recent, a scholar as Eduard Norden was still prepared to find Vergil following a single tradition concerning a Sibyl. He seems to have been prepared to find Vergil following a single tradition concerning Allecto also. But that is not Vergil's way. He constructed his poetry so that in it many various tra-

diticns are knotted into new, complex, Vergilian wholes. The traditions might be said to be concentrated and focussed, as many rays of light are focussed through a glass lens, burningly, on to a narrow point of impact.

This selective combination and concentration of earlier elements is, after all, like the process by which Vergil chose his words, phrases, and verses. It is on account of that process that Vergil furnishes so many apt quotations, exactly right for even unusual and unexpected situations. This is indeed clearly the reason why Vergilian *centones* were so easily composed for very various subjects, Christian and pagan alike. It is the reason why the *Sortes Vergilianae* came into use, and in fact have always been, and are still, useful. And it is the reason why, to this day, those who know Vergil well habitually find a Vergilian quotation the best, or the only, expression for their own thoughts and feelings, when they have any which are peculiarly urgent or peculiarly difficult to express.

To create an expressive name, or a powerful phrase, or a character, or a story, Vergil regularly combined elements derived from earlier literature, and, further, he combined them in rightly balanced proportions. By the sure sense of rare genius he found an intricately exact balance in his combinations. On this question much work remains to be done. But enough is known already to shew that a person, animal, or thing described or indicated by Vergil must not be interpreted on the assumption that Vergil was representing an actual reality. He may have been creating an ideal reality. That implies, for example, that it may be waste of time to enquire whether the poet-prophet at *Aeneid* vi, 645 is Orpheus or Musaeus, or to ask who is the Roman who will overthrow Argos at *Aeneid* vi, 838, or, indeed, who is his Aeacid adversary in the next verse. It may well be wrong to expect the Gates of War at *Aeneid* vn, 607 to represent one actual edifice exclusively, whichever edifice it may be supposed to have been, or to seek some actually believed superstition to account for Vergil's departure from Aristotle's zoology in what he says of the foal's love-charm at *Aeneid* iv, 515-516. In such matters, as in the phrases which are always fresh and always applicable to new situations, Vergil was in fact faithful to Aristotle's best

12

guidance, for he was achieving a poetry more philosophical
than history just because he preferred the essential to the acci*
dental, and the universal to the particular. Indeed, again by a
combination, he obeyed Aristotle by agreeing with Plato, and'
by seeking not actualities but ideal forms. He expressed the
truth which is hidden beyond the facts. There is, indeed, much
mystery to penetrate in the problem approached, with rare
qualification for the task, by Professor T. J. Haarhoff, *Vergil
the Universal*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1948. To solve it
would be to define poetic genius.

Vergil's practice of combination is organic and essential to
the whole structure of the *Aeneid.* That is now known from
R. W. Cruttwell, *Vergil's Mind at Work*, Oxford, Basil Black-
well, 1947, a book in which the writer, in spite of a very
painful and an incurable illness from which he has suffered
for thirty years, applied to the revelation of Vergil's elaborate
symmetries of construction and symbolism an intellectual power
scarcely matched by any other contemporary Vergilian scholar.
He exposes a pervasive system of mutual symbolism, which
controls the shape of the *Aeneid.* He writes on p. 40:

> «The symbolism of the *Aeneid* is therefore axial,
> revolving as it were spherically about one central line
> between two poles—the one pole being a Troy whose
> symbols are Roman, the other pole a Rome whose
> symbols are Trojan; and the subjectively Roman thought
> of the poet travels from Rome to Troy, while the objec-
> tively Trojan theme of the poem travels from Troy to
> Rome.»

That is a simple statement indicating the method. An exam-
pie of the detailed presentation is needed. Mr. Cruttwell wri-
tes on pp. 44-45:

> «Thus Anchises was in point of fact both Teucrian
> and Dardan ; Teucrian, as descended from Bateia's Cre-
> tan-Troadic father Teucer; and Dardan, as descended
> from Bateia's Italian-Troadic father Dardanus — a two-
> fold descent and double parentage (in, 180) implied

in Dido's first welcome to Aeneas at Carthage: [4]'Art thou that Aeneas whom gracious Venus bore to Dardan Anchises...? Yea, I remember Teucer's coming to Sidon' (1, 617-619). Bateia, therefore, although never verbally named in the *Aeneid*, was mentally important to Vergil as representing the maternally Teucrian descent of the Dardanians ; and it is clear that, like the learned Byzantine scholar Eustathius *(ad Hom.* p. 351), Vergil himself followed an ancient tradition which identified Bateia, as Teucer's daughter and Dardanus'wife, with the Homeric Myrine whose tomb outside Troy was commonly called ᶜBatieia'.»

He quotes *Iliad* 11, 811-815, 819-821, and 862-863, and continues on p. 45 :

«.. .identifying the Homeric 'Batieia' with the ancestral mound of Bateia, mother of Teucer's grandchildren by Iasius' brother Dardanus, he not only conflates this human Bateia with her divine sister-in-law Ceres, mother of Vesta's Penates by Dardanus' brother Iasius, but also — through the sudden magic of a mentally kalei* doscopic twist — transfers Bateia's mound to Ceres, bestows the name of Bateia's Teucrians upon Ceres' Penates, and musters the Penates as 'Teucrian' at Ceres' ancestral mound, together with Ascanius and Anchises and their household, under Aeneas' leadership... (ll, 712-717, 721, 725, 742-748).»

That must be enough quotation. So much only is perhaps enough to shew how intricate and pervasive is the symbolic structure now revealed, and how organic and essential in Vergil's art is the habit of combination. Probably it would be impossible to find any scale or level on which this combination is not cardinal in Vergilian poetry. Everything is now altered for commentators and interpreters. The light in which anything said by Vergil can be compared with anything otherwise known is now a different light. All the perspectives have changed.

Bernard Rehm, *Das Geographische Bild des alten Italiens in Virgils Aeneis*, *Philologus*, Supplementband, χχιν, ii, 1932, has proved precisely that Vergil often preferred literary schematic descriptions of topography when realistic descriptions would have been equally easy. But many questions of detail remain open.

Dr. Bertha Tilly, *Vergil's Latium*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1948, has lately compared Vergil's text with the topography of central Italy in an attractive and acute volume, and has advanced attractive equations. She shews correspondences, and offers new identifications. She has subsequently discovered even more evidence that Vergil had an attentive knowledge of peoples and places. But his symbolic combinations were peremptory, and so was his audial memory. It remains neces* sary to hold them present when comparisons are made. Dr. Anna Gesina de Tollenaer-Blonk (née Blonk), *Vergilius en het Landschap*, Groningen, T. B. Wolters, 1947, remembers this necessity in a fine and learned book. Don Angel Montenegro Duque, *La onomástica de Virgilio γ la antigüedad preitálica*, Salamanca, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1949, to some extent continuing the work of Catherine Saunders, *VirgiVs Primitive Italy,* New York, Oxford University Press, 1930, emphasizes the arguments for believing that Vergil was able and willing to use genuine ancient tradition, and that something like history is in fact to be found in his stories about very ancient times. Don Montenegro's book is very learned, thorough, and honest, and he weighs the possibility that sometimes Vergil invented what he has to tell. On p. 24 he includes in his bibliography Mr. Cruttwell's book, but I have not yet found any comments on it; and on p. 16 he agrees with me that «the art of Vergil consists in harmoniously integrating elements drawn from different sources», and he thinks that the Vergilian combination of contemporary reality with elements from tradition, a combination particularly seen in Vergil's choice of proper names, was on the whole coherent, and compatible with historical facts as they were then known.

Of this important book I shall have more to say. For the present, it may serve as an exemple of a work in which both sides of the question are recognized, though not of course

treated with equal attention, since the subject proposed does not allow such treatment. There is now more chance, and also more need, to effect a balance. It is necessary to remember both Vergil's elaborate processes of thought and also the some-times misleading success with which his poetry matches the perceived world, and to discover when his Muse is the daughter of Memory, and when she is the daughter of Observation. If, as I hope, 1 can eventually prepare a new edition of Vergil's works, I shall make the attempt. It is perhaps already safe to say that in Vergil the mental process of combination through derivation and audial memory is normally primary, and that when he achieves realism or exact representation of observed fact, it is normally reached through and after the process of combination. Of Vergil's purpose and intention, it is risky to speak. He must have understood to some extent how' his own mind worked; but he was probably dominated by inspira-tion and visionary experience, presumably often anterior even to the derivations and combinations, especially if the dominance was on the spiritual or the psychic rather than on the psycholo-gical plane. Unlike Tibullus, and also, as Mr. Cruttwell observes, unlike Ennius and Ovid, Vergil did not accept a story as he had heard it. Like Propertius, as explained profoundly by Professor Luigi Alfonsi, *L'elegia di Propertio,* Milan, Società Editrice Vita e Pensiero, 1945, Vergil apparently worked through personal and patriotic emotion to vision, that is, vision of another world than this. If his purpose in the *Aeneid* has to be shortly guessed, perhaps the nearest guess to the truth may be found in some words quoted in *The New York Times* by Mr. Murray Hickey Lee from Father Alan Watts, *Behold the Spirit*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1948,

> «We do not have to attain union with God. .. Vision is given us now... Here and now God (who is not niggardly in his self-revelation) exposes himself right before our eyes. Now'., the present moment (elusive image of eternity; so small that it has no temporal lenght and yet so long that we can never escape from it) is Reality.”

In this context, that is perhaps a paradox. But it is not an irrelevance.

This article is shamefully inadequate to the great subject which it dares to attempt. Too much attention is given in it to a small group of British writers on Vergil, and too little, or none at all, to an immense number of others. The arguments have not been precise, complete, or conclusive, and most of them have been more appropriate to some literary magazine with a psychological inclination than to a volume devoted to serious learning, where full documentation is naturally expected. It may even be said that «the new principles» are not even n e w ; something like that has already been said by* Dr. Giovanni Grassini, *La Ga^etta del Me\\ogiorno*, 18 September, 1949, citing Leopardi's description of Vergil's style.

Yet this statement, however imperfect, ought to be made, and made without delay. If it is erroneous, it should be available for contraversion. If it is a fair warning, the warning should be heeded. Nor would it be surprising if something which poets have always known needed now to be conveyed in prose to those who are not poets.

The few researches here mentioned at least indicate that Vergilian commentary has become an even more exacting task than ever before. It now requires to be made fully scientific, and for that a far more comprehensive view of the whole problem, than even the best Vergilian scholars thought of taking twenty years ago, is essential. Assumptions, pardonable then, are not pardonable now. It may not now be roughly supposed that Vergil treated his sources more or less as other Latin poets treated theirs, or that the words of Vergil can be safely read, as words in prose are read, without regard to the method by which Vergil came to choose those words. It has become far easier to realize the overpowering difficulty of the task which Vergil created, and accepted as his duty; but far more difficult for any commentator to discharge his own duty to the transmitted text.

That Vergil achieved a scarcely intelligible degree of insight into the nature of observed actualities continues to become clearer and clearer. A good example was given by Professor Ruy Mayer, *Humanitas*1948-1949 ,\\¬, pp. 289-292; Vergil's observa-

tions concerning bulls at *Georgies* in, 219-236 correspond very closely indeed with the observations of an Andalusian picador, José Daza, in the time of Charles in of Spain. There are even notable verbal correspondences, certainly, according to Professor Mayer, not due to conscious derivation. But even so, Vergil had needed Sophocles to help him to gain, or at least to express, his insight. The problems still remain. The location of Albunea has been made attractively credible by Dr. Bertha Tilly. But any argument about that must recognize that to Vergil Albunea was, perhaps among much else besides, the name of «The Sibyl of Tibur », and that the phrase at *Aeneid* vn, 83 *nemorum quae maxima* is partly at least due to its appropriate occurrence at *Georgies* 11, 15. The logic may be in unexpressed associations rather than relations observed in actual topography. If Vergil never made it clear where the first Italian «Troy » was sited, or whether it was a camp or a city, that was at least partly because the camp of the Greeks in the *Iliad* had not quite ceased to be, in a partial sense, the town of Calydon which Meleager would not, until the last entreaty came, defend. Professor Ernst Howald's exposition of the sources of the *Iliad* must be read by Vergilian commentators not less than, for example, Dr. Bernard Rehm's account of Vergilian topography. Dr. Francesco Sforza's view that the whole *Aeneid* is a deliberate attack on Augustus, a view which he is continuing to develop with powerful eloquence, may or may not contain an important amount of truth. Here, again, there is an urgent need to explore Vergil's mind and his processes of thought, and to note, as exactly as possible, not only the direct, or allegorical, if the word is right, comparisons between Aeneas and Augustus which Vergil invites, but also all the less direct, and more subtle and secret, symbolic comparisons which are likewise implied.

To do what is needed now, some new method of research may be required. Certainly, it is not enough to take sides, and either to disregard Vergil's truth to fact on the ground that he was a poet, writing poetically, or to disregard the intricate mechanism of his imagination, on the ground that he was a sensible man and used his eyes. Nothing could be

worse than to exclude Mr. Cruttwell's disclosures from consideration because, for example, it is hard to express in the form of a logical syllogism precisely what he has proved with certainty. But it would be almost as bad to be led away by the fascination of symmetrical patterns, and perhaps even by psychological and psychic possibilities, into theoretical complexities which wider learning, applied with common sense, can soon shew to be needless, or indeed fallacious. *Entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem.* For a practically useful model of the required learning and common-sense, it is enough to cite H. J. Rose, *The Eclogues of Ver gil'*, Sather Classical Lectures, Volume Sixteen, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1942.

Even so, to specialized knowledge of any part of the subject there must always be added an ability to weigh against each other all parts of the subject. Very many peripheral kinds of knowledge are involved. It is· almost impossible to discuss Vergil profitably in compartments. As Professor Ettore Bignone argued many years ago, even classical scholarship, which demands great specification, must somehow^ break through the barriers dividing compartments of knowledge. It is hard to write about Vergil without writing about all Humanity, and about the whole question of man on earth, or even more than that. Nothing, according to St. Augustine, is more beautiful and more divine than equality and even, balanced symmetry; and yet in this life that symmetry is at its best when it is inexact, but inexact according to appropriate law. That is very like the main question concerning Vergil; or, indeed, concerning Humanity.

University College, Exeter (England),
December 194g.

W. F. Jackson Knight.