

FLORILEGIUM 10, 1988-91

AENEAS'S TREASON AND NARRATIVE CONSISTENCY IN THE MEDIAEVAL IRISH *IMTHEACHTA AENIASA*

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I

In 1907, the Irish Texts Society made generally available a late mediaeval "translation" of Vergil's *Aeneid*, apparently the work of one Solomon O'Droma, an esteemed copyist of the fourteenth century.¹ The manuscript was edited, and an accompanying English translation prepared, by George Calder, a Scots minister of considerable learning. The erudite Calder even provided his readers with a column of Vergilian references down the right margin of every page. This could not have been an easy task, for the notion of translation was quite liberal in the Middle Ages, embracing (along with some portion of the original text) incidental glosses, alternative versions, adjustments to current taste, and even Christian "updating" of symbols and manners. The Irish *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, or *Adventures of Aeneas*, is actually rather chaste in this regard. Its most recurrent liberty with Vergil is to encapsulate or radically rephrase his narration in the Irish heroic style, as Eleanor Hull observed long ago.² Seldom is the Roman *Aeneid* simply abandoned.

Under the circumstances, Calder and subsequent analysts were perfectly correct to stress the close connection between the original and its translation. In this paper, I shall join them in accepting the obvious fact that the Irish adheres extraordinarily well to the Latin. In fact, the Irish tale is surely one of the most faithful attempts of its era to revive Vergil's epic in a vernacular romance. In deference to this accomplishment, however, scholars have persistently brushed aside a gross paradox in the text's first lines. Solomon's peculiar beginning is actually the chronological start of Aeneas's journey — an innocent departure from Vergil, perhaps, but not a very classical approach to an epic yarn. Vergil accepted the "medias in res" opening of the *Odyssey* as his model. We do not discover the origins of the wandering Aeneas's journey until they are recounted to Dido in books 2 and 3. Kevin O'Nolan has proposed that the Irish text's more linear reportage reflects the influence of native oral traditions upon its author's style.³ His thesis is not implausible, especially since Solomon's diction and rhetoric also have a home-grown oral flavour, as we shall find. But the *Imtheachta* does not disrupt the Vergilian order of events at other times when it might have done so with less risk to the essential story.⁴ The fact is that a true reshuffling of Vergil's narrative order here would have posed several major problems later, since, if we learn of Aeneas's tragic past long before he meets Dido, no content is left for the hero's dramatic retrospective in Carthage. The translation, it turns out, is not primarily rearranging Vergil's time at all: it uses nothing whatever from *Aeneid* 2 and 3, or from anywhere in Vergil. Instead, the curtain rises on the Greek generals in conference, trying to decide the fate "of the people who had betrayed the city" ("arin forind ro-mairn in cathraig," 5-6). Nestor delivers a long, reminiscing speech worthy of his character in Homer, but fraught with un-Homeric details. We learn, among other things, that Aeneas accompanied Paris on a plundering expedition to Greece, which ended in Helen's abduction (27-29). The ultimate shock strikes, however, when we find Aeneas mentioned with Antenor as a traitor who made the Greek victory possible (39). Nestor proceeds to advise against trusting this inveterate enemy without ever suggesting wherein lay his treason (41-46). The other Greeks feel honour-bound to release the traitors with their lives, and Agamemnon enjoins Aeneas to go west or suffer the consequences (47-52). So begins the epic journey.

Now, the unflattering tale about Aeneas's betrayal of Troy had circulated in late antiquity and persisted into the Middle Ages.⁵ One mediaevalist has even affirmed that the *Imtheachta*'s beginning "presupposes acquaintance on the part of the reader with the version of the capture given in the

De Excidio Troiae," a sixth-century Latin narrative ascribed to the mythical Dares.⁶ This is not the place to retrace the lengthy, intricate, and often obscure chain of circumstances that made such salacious variants familiar even to Shakespeare and Marlowe. We need only recognize that Solomon could easily have heard or read of these supplementary accounts. In fact, one of the two versions of the *Togail Troi* (*Siege of Troy*) that have reached us from mediaeval Ireland describes Aeneas and Antenor's treason in approximately the terms of Dares (though the other fails to go beyond Hector's death).⁷ Granted, then, that an abundance of marginalia, esoterica, and apocrypha had found its way from late antiquity into the mediaeval mainstream along with (or sometimes instead of) the classics themselves, is the *Imtheachta's* opening scene simply one example of this motley heritage? The mediaeval Celtic tradition features many tales whose documented form is a quiltwork of variants, perhaps in obedience to time-honoured oral technique, perhaps in a fully literate display of new cataloguing abilities.⁸ Is the Irish *Aeneid* just another instance of such unreflective splicing?

In the first place, to repeat the major point, Solomon's Irish translation strives to render a genuine and exact copy of Vergil's epic, at least by mediaeval standards. For the very reason that so much conflicting material was available to him, we must wonder at his adherence to the original text; or, if we assume that this remote Irish monk could have read little beyond Vergil's *Aeneid* itself (an assumption belied by the internal evidence), the conclusion is no less insistent that he had devoted himself to rendering Vergil's Latin.⁹ Surely he would not have renounced his undertaking at a crucial moment — the initial scene — merely to squeeze in a popular variant of the story for which he shows such respect elsewhere.

In the second place, while much of mediaeval Europe was amused by the *Aeneas traditor* theme, the Irish narrative's style treats him like another Cú Chulainn, so that a particularly shocking clash results if the two are brought together without modification. Professor Rowland echoes the judgments of Hull and others when he writes, "Aeneas was transmuted into a traditional Irish hero . . . somewhat more humane, chivalrous, and heroic than he originally was."¹⁰ To confuse matters further, the account which the Irish Aeneas gives Dido of his last day in Troy is quite Vergilian, and no other illusion is made anywhere to any kind of deal or connivance between the hero and the Greek invaders. Was Dido listening to a pack of lies, in the translator's opinion, or to the truth but not the whole truth — or had the translator himself spoiled Vergil's consistency with his own excessive liberties?

It seems unlikely that so polished a story-teller and faithful a translator would commit so gross an error. The handwriting in the manuscript does not suggest that any intruder forced the opening anecdote upon the text: therefore Solomon must have had some purpose in mind. In the next section, I shall offer proof of Solomon's taste, learning, and devotion to Vergil. With the textual facts before us, we shall be able not only to resolve this particular question, but to appreciate better the general mediaeval view of fidelity.

II

Of one point we may be certain from the outset: the Irish translator had before him a fairly authentic text of the Latin *Aeneid*. Though his rendition may sometimes reshuffle the Vergilian sequence of events — and even suppress or discard some of those events — it has at the same time meticulously preserved Vergil's diction and structure in several passages. The tempest which wrecks the Trojan fleet on the shores of Carthage (239-240), for instance, is described in Vergil's own dramatic terms: the mighty waves reach the firmament, then the deep troughs reveal the very ocean bed, and the ships' sails are pounded and their oars shattered by the mountains of water. *Aeneid* 1.102-07 employs each detail of this imagery, though not in the same order. The translator also renders Vergil's controversial "cingor fulgentibus armis" (*A.* 2.749) quite faithfully as "gebim m'armgaiscibh form" (624), preferring to follow the master rather than brood over Aeneas's having already assumed arms in 337.²¹ (While the Irish skips through the scene where the earlier line occurs, Aeneas has presumably armed himself before charging into battle.) A much more sustained adherence to the Latin text appears in Dido's fulminous speech to Aeneas upon learning of his planned departure (*A.* 4.305-30). This inclusion may justly be attributed to Solomon's good taste, for he has a distinct tendency to summarize speeches elsewhere, even taking them out of quote entirely sometimes; but Vergil's representation of warring emotions here simply cannot be summarized with effect. The opening reproach (305-06), the argument about winter's inclement weather (309-13), the appeal to their past love (316-19), the attempt to stir guilt by mentioning Iarbas and the enraged African princes (320-26), the pathetic regret that no child has been conceived between them as a memento (327-30) — all of the Latin text's conflicting surges of passion have been reproduced carefully in Irish. Even the order, this time, is the same. Another instance of adherence to Vergil which, in its own way, is just as impressive occurs when the Trojans and the Italians wage war during the final episodes.

I shall deal with these passages later in a different context. We may simply note here that details as precise as the names of victors and victims in *Aeneid* 9.569–76, the four Rutulians who first rush through the fortress gates in 9.684–85, and the combatants slain on both sides during the heated fray of 10.310–425 are accurately recorded in Irish (2236–41, 2270–72, and 2505–26: see also 2611–17, 2836–38, 3023–25, and 3072–76). Solomon could not possibly have summoned such insignificant material from memory, nor would an inferior Latin text have kept it intact.

Or consider the funeral games in honour of Anchises in *Aeneid* 5. The Irish version of this interlude could only have been produced by a close consulting of Vergil's text, for a remarkable amount of relatively petty and forgettable detail is kept straight. All of the games appear — the ship race, the foot race, the boxing match, and the archery contest — and preserve their Vergilian sequence, but the *Imtheachta's* fidelity goes even farther. The names of all four competing ships and their captains, for instance (975–80), are correctly rendered, and the numerous changes of position which follow as the contestants jockey for the lead (993–1026) accord perfectly with Vergil's account in 151–243. The same holds true of the foot race: besides reproducing the intricate series of events which allows Euryalus to win, the translator has even listed the many competitors who in no wise contribute to the race's little drama (1041–42) from *Aeneid* 297–300. (He finds Euryalus's name a more formidable obstacle, apparently, offering four versions in four uses.)¹² The boxing match, too, attempts a verbatim rendition of the Latin where Dares issues his arrogant challenge, Acestes fumes, and Entellus reminisces himself into action (1069–87 from *A.* 382–420). The translator's only real departure from Vergil is, ironically, a misguided effort to elucidate the event for the mediaeval Irish audience; for the *cesti* which he describes extend "co roichtis a formna ocus a slinnena ocus cengal etaru tiar fora formna ocus ialla a cendaib a mer ocus mill luadi forrthaib" (1064–65) — they are massive leather sleeves, that is, tying behind the shoulders and trailing lead pellets from their fingers!¹³ Dares is understandably spitting blood and teeth as he is dragged from the ring (1120), just as in *Aeneid* 469–70, and the succeeding lines in both cases show Entellus impressively clouting his prize bull between the eyes.

The archery contest, again, features several competitors, and the translator, again, correctly records their names and deeds. But the observance of fine detail seems nonetheless inadequate here to capture the Vergilian effect, and mainly for one reason: the scene's religious significance has almost been trimmed away. In the *Aeneid*, Eurytion says a quick prayer to

his brother Pandarus before transfixing the target (514); and when Acestes subsequently looses an arrow into empty space that bursts into flames, the miracle, along with the bystanders' wonder and Aeneas's acknowledgement of the good omen, consumes more than a dozen lines (525-38).¹⁴ By contrast, the translator ignores Eurytion's prayer and remarks vapidly of the rest, "lasaigh in tsoighet isin aer amal soighnen, ocus roinnantaigh na sloigh inni sin" ("the arrow flamed in the air like thunder, and the throngs marvelled at it"), whereupon Aeneas declares, "Is maith in celmuine ut" — "That's a good omen" (1139-41).

Does the translator, then, begrudge the pagan gods their efficacy in the story? Hull noticed a "tendency to minimise or altogether to eliminate . . . the supernatural element" in the Irish *Aeneid*, while Dottin claimed that "les dieux païens n'apparaissent guère dans les adaptations gaéliques de Virgile et de Lucain."¹⁵ Such a de-emphasis of the Roman hero's primary motive for leaving Troy would certainly open the way to doubts about his loyalty and courage. Without question, Aeneas's piety in obeying the gods is downplayed (the Irish Aeneas is adorned with his Vergilian epithet *pius* a single time, *craibthech* in 1576). There is more substantial evidence of the gods' shrunken role elsewhere. The storm scene which opens Vergil's *Aeneid* is followed by a long conference between Venus and Jupiter, wherein the latter reveals the future glories of Rome (l. 257-96) by way of soothing his daughter. For the ancient audience, this proclamation of their empire's manifest destiny had the utmost significance: the mediaeval translator utterly discards it. Likewise, the divinely inspired dream which exhorts Aeneas to lead his people on from Crete (*A.* 3.154-71) earns about half a dozen words in Irish: "Fagait inis Creid do reir faistine Apail" ("they leave the island of Crete in accordance with Apollo's prophecy" [98-99]). The ensuing adventure with the Harpies is more indulgently portrayed, but is cut short just before the dire prophecy of Celaeno, as the translator again summarizes blandly, "Gabait na Troiandaigh a sciathu ocus a claidme, ocus nos-discuirit uaidibh a l-los comluind" ("the Trojans seize their shields and swords, and repel them with a struggle" [115-16]). When Aeneas and Dido rashly consummate their love in *Aeneid* 4, Vergil has the scene attended by Tellus, Juno, and the wood nymphs (166-68) in a grim parody of the normal Roman ceremony. The Irish translator includes the passionate union in the cave, naturally (731-33), but adds nothing about the gods. Another of Vergil's scenes of maternal intercession, where Venus pleads with Neptune to give her son safe passage to Italy (*A.* 5.789-826), also fails to appear in the *Imtheachta*, as does the Sibyl's harrowing possession (*A.* 6.42-76);

and Anchises's lesson in metaphysics at the end of the same book (6.724-51) is not even hinted at. Amata's enlisting of Lavinia in a Bacchic rite (*A.* 7.385-91) becomes a mere attempt to hide her in the hills (1663-64). Evander's annual sacrifice to Hercules so minutely explained in *Aeneid* 8 has been obliterated, and the council of the gods which begins *Aeneid* 10 has suffered the same fate. So goes the list, which could run for several paragraphs.

Ultimately, however, such evidence must be considered rather weak. After all, the Irish translation contains perhaps a third as many words as the Latin *Aeneid*: almost every scene of any sort is curtailed.¹⁶ For example, the 'Trojans' wanderings immediately after they leave their ruined homeland preserve only the skeleton of Vergil's detailed account even when no prophecy is involved. The drouth of *Aeneid* 3.135-46 passes unmentioned; and, as we have seen, the rousing fight with the Harpies appears quite colourless in Irish. Furthermore, the Irish relays the prophecy of Helenus quite accurately in its essentials (129-35), though in the usual unadorned style, but entirely overlooks the poignant scenes of arrival and departure between Aeneas and Andromache (*A.* 3.300-45 and 482-505). In Irish, too, the lying tale of Sinon contains no explanation of how he managed to be left behind, and the pitiable murder of Priam in *Aeneid* 2.526-58 is related thus: "Brisid in rigdae ocus dathoit Priaim do laimh Pirr meic Achil" ("they broke into the palace and Priam perished by the hand of Pyrrhus son of Achilles" [565-66]). As for *Aeneid* 8, the diverting tale of Hercules and Cacus has been trimmed out along with all the festival's specifically religious references; while, a little later, the omen of the trumpet blasts encountered by Aeneas and his new allies (*A.* 8.523-31) is actually reproduced rather thoroughly in Irish (1939-42). Similarly, the review of Etruscan worthies in *Aeneid* 10.163-214 has vanished as utterly from the Irish as the divine council in the book's opening scene. At worst, one may say that the translator simply does not understand some of the pagan myths, rites, and lore that he is faced with rendering — not that he finds paganism repulsive and untouchable. In fact, he is quick to avail himself of a chance to twine Christianity into ancient myth as the Aeneades pass Mount Aetna and observe its fires burning: "Dia fhis do dainib conad do suthine tine iffirn dogni dia sin" — "It is to make men know that the fire of hell is eternal that God does that" (143-44; see also n. 17).

The truth is that the translator's worship of a different god and ignorance of Roman religion could easily have led him much farther from Vergil

than they do. He lets slip many an opportunity to discredit the ancient pantheon by tampering with the story. In those same funeral games wherein the miracle of Acestes's arrow seems so lacklustre, the winner of the ship race, Cloanthus, clearly achieves an advantage because of his prayer to the "deamuiridhi" (1023), the "di quibus imperium pelagi" of *Aeneid* 5.235; and in the same scene from which Anchises's doctrine of reincarnation has been purged, the translator carefully preserves the substance of what happens, identifying name by name the generations of illustrious Romans waiting to be born (1435-49). The pagan gods and the pagan system, in other words, continue to enjoy that efficacy which Vergil saw in them. In contrast, the Norman *Eneas* not only curtails but expunges any scene where Vergil's deities are not dealing directly with mortals, and some where they are. For example, Neptune's calming of the seas, Jupiter's comforting of Venus, Venus's encounter with her son, and Cupid's substitution for Ascanius in *Aeneid* 1 are all missing from the French: it seems genuinely suspicious of the pagan influence. Even the funeral games of *Aeneid* 5 which we have just examined in Irish have been entirely omitted, presumably because the French romancier found their frequent religious allusions embarrassing.¹⁷ Celtic scribes as a group are remarkable for their relative indulgence, probably because they themselves grew up in a tradition featuring remnants of many pre-Christian gods and beliefs.¹⁸

Perhaps there is a danger of making too much out of the translator's departures from the *Aeneid*: perhaps they are clumsy, innocent mistakes. This is certainly true in some cases. Lapses of concentration can occur, as when Aeneas's staunch comrade Mnestheus is rendered from *Aeneid* 4.288 as Nestor in *Imtheachta* 782! Scarcely less awkward is Aeneas's designating Pallas "the only son of Carthage" ("aenmaccam na Cartago," 3202) as he makes ready to slay Turnus. Perhaps "Cartago" was written for "Carmenta," Pallas's grandmother (see *A.* 8.336) — or his mother, according to some sources — and a minor spelling error seems more plausible than a moment of extreme inattention at the story's climax. In another passage, Anchises gazes at the shooting star which points the way out of Troy's fiery ruins (603), Solomon apparently having forgotten about the old man's blindness; and in another, he completes Latinus's mythological genealogy (*A.* 7.48-49) with a succession of Old Testament patriarchs (1478-80).¹⁹ Sometimes Vergilian epithets constructed from proper nouns are so obscurely allusive that the translation stumbles, as when Beroe is identified as the wife of Timorus ("Brea seitig Timoire," 1159-60) on the basis of *Aeneid* 5.620 ("Tmarii coniunx longaeva Dorycli"), when the Sibyl's cave is located

on Euboeia (1243) on the basis of *Aeneid* 6.42 (“excisum Euboicae latus ingens rupis in antrum”), or when the wounded Aeneas is attended by two surgeons (3027) because of a misunderstood patronym in *Aeneid* 12.392. The lack of geographical knowledge implicit in the second blunder is confirmed by another mistake which Calder noted in his introduction (xv-xvi): Scylla and Charybdis are presented as dangerous shoal waters where the Aeneadae actually seem to run aground (138-39), though the phrase, “rogabsat co mur,” may mean something else. In any case, the encounter with the straits comes at the wrong point — right after leaving Helenus (whose warning is not translated) rather than while fleeing the Cyclopes; and it is probably Vergil’s 3.685, “utrimque viam leti discrimine parvo,” rather than 3.420 ff., as Calder thought, which gave rise to the Irish versions’s talk of being stranded. Still another scene divides rather than conflates Vergil’s descriptions: the Trojan stalwarts who man the ramparts in *Aeneid* 10.123-29 appear to be on opposite sides in 2356-62, their patronyms and family ties having created the confusion, no doubt.

Some such confusion also reigns over the translation’s makeshift epilogue. Lacking any Vergilian precedent, it can only emphasize Aeneas’s fruitful, empire-building marriage. He lives three years, we are told, and begets Silvius shortly before his death (3208-10). Afterward, it seems that Ascanius marries his widowed stepmother and himself sires a future sovereign names Ilus or Iulus. Since this is Ascanius’s own true name, we must assume that the Latin epic’s tortuous prophecies, with their frequent mention of Iulus’s kingly destiny and their paradoxical exclusion of him from the rollcall in *Aeneid* 6.760 ff., simply taxed Solomon’s imagination beyond any credible answer. His misunderstanding was actually rather innocuous: even when we know Iulus’s true identity, Vergil leaves us no clues about how Silvius comes to succeed him. The narrative need to blazon the hero’s glorious progeny at just the point where Vergil’s help gave out has merely brought an already muddled issue to the fore.²⁰

In summary, then, the translator’s Latin is in excellent trim, but his ignorance of the *Aeneid*’s historical and mythical backdrop hampers him at times. He has the occasionally profound, but nonetheless incomplete, classical learning of a well-read late-mediaeval cleric. We must consider two important points, however, before we condemn the translator even for mild incompetence. In the first place, his style displays a great deal of polish — not always Vergilian polish, but such as would have impressed his Irish audience and would surely have required much more than a slap-dash exercise in copying to produce. The Celtic love of alliteration manifests itself

frequently in scenes of feverish action or passion. Aeneas's exhortation of his troops freshly disembarked from Alba Longa rings with such phrases as, "Ad laecha ledmeacha londgarga bar laith gaili. Ad croda calma curata bar cathmilid" — all of this simply to remind them that they are brave soldiers (2456-58); and the combat scenes resonate with strings of adjectives like "tren, talchar, taebchirrthi, dimsach, deglamaigh, doedragana" (2014-15). The deserted Dido, choking with outrage, prays that the gods may bring upon Aeneas "coimerghi bagach, brigach, borrfudach le tuathaib na hEtaille co fergach, fegh, fuilechdha" ("uprisings perilous, heated, and hateful with the Italian tribes in wrathful, bitter, bloody manner" [913-14]). These effusions of consonant clusters appear throughout the Old Irish manuscripts of the *Táin* and other such lively, bellicose tales.²¹ They were undoubtedly a relic of the oral tradition, as was the related feature of stringing together synonyms.²² Solomon definitely had the knack of stretching one simple idea into several words, as in the translation of Ilioneus's speech to Latinus from *Aeneid* 7.213-48: within about half a dozen lines (1576-82), we find three synonymous doublets, two of which are alliterated ("gal ocus gaisgidh," "catha ocus comlaind," and "crichi ocus feraind"). Latinus answers with two pairs of his own ("aigideacht ocus failti" and "a ndan ocus a tairngire") in 1596-99, with a near miss in the elegant hendiadys, "tresi ocus caradrad." A little later, Amata reacts furiously to the new treaty in the phrase, "ros-gab fualung ocus dasacht ocus dochuaid a cond ocus a ciall uaithi" (1662-63), while Turnus registers his wrath in the string of near-equivalents, "bruth ocus brith ocus ferg ocus londus ocus saint catha" (1693-94). In an oral context, such clever mustering of alliterated epithets or congeries of synonyms would invariably show little descriptive finesse, being primarily cultivated for its spoken effect. Yet it also came to characterize the colourful literary style, as here — which creates no paradox if we remember that the compositions of literate romanciers were often read aloud to their audience until early modern times.²³

Another stylistic touch common to both oral performance and literary text is the chain of daring metaphors, itself often alliterated and redundant in content. These concatenations usually occur in martial circumstances. Cú Chulainn is introduced in the *Táin*, for example, as "in leom letarthach ocus in bráth bidbad ocus in bidba sochaide ocus in cend costuda ocus in cirriud morshluaig ocus in lám tidnaicthi ocus in chaindel adanta" (395-97: for a translation, see O'Rahilly 148). Nisus and Euryalus make a scarcely less ornate entrance on the ramparts of the besieged fortress just before meeting their doom: "da ainle, da tren, da tretill, da rind aga ocus imgona,

da uaitni catha, ocus da ord esairgne ocus bruite bidbud ("two heroes, two strongmen, two darlings, two blades of combat and wounding, two pillars of battle, and two hammers of pounding and crushing enemies" [2061-63]); and Aeneas himself attracts one particularly glorious burst of alliterated metaphors, courtesy of Tarchon (2384-91).²⁴ Our translator took extreme pains to incorporate such devices in the *Imtheachta*, and the result would have been judged thoroughly artistic. We cannot for a moment imagine, then, that his attitude was one of carelessness.

To such formal marks of style might be added several stylistic "embellishments" of content — touches which we may not find improvements upon Vergil, but which at least show, once again, that the translator was not racing carelessly through his labours. The funeral games commemorating Anchises, for example, are delayed for nine days of celebration after Aeneas's announcement (956). The Irish audience was very much attuned to the holiness of threes, in various multiples, since their own pagan traditions as well as Christianity exalted the triad.²⁵ To them, this sacred marking of time would have seemed only natural. Another of the translator's liberties which would have appealed to a Celtic audience (but this time more amenable to modern taste, too, no doubt) has Dido displaying her gems, silks, and treasures to Aeneas (710-12). Iarbas's prayer (*A.* 4.206-18) has also been changed so that Aeneas appears therein as a dreaded enemy (751-55) rather than Vergil's "ille Paris cum semiviro comitatu." Iarbas is more frightened and less contemptuous of the redoubtable champion.²⁶ Throughout the translation's later scenes, too, fine adjustments are made. When fashioning Diomedes's response to the Latin ambassadors (*A.* 11.252-93), Solomon shows off a familiarity with Homeric narrative (as opposed to Dictys and Dares) by having the hero remark that he once struck Aeneas with a stone (2741); and when Aeneas retires from the field after being foully wounded (*A.* 12.324), the Irish Turnus dares to suppose that he himself has caused the hero to flee (3020-21).

Furthermore, the Irish author occasionally displays an eye for detail even more acute than Vergil's. Sometimes he allows himself an editorial comment that has no counterpart in Latin. When the Rutulians parade the impaled heads of Nisus and Euryalus before the Trojans, for instance, Solomon observes that their exultation is really rather foolish, considering how many of their own troops were lost in the exchange (2170-71); and when Turnus rushes alone into the Trojan fortress (*A.* 9.728), the translation adds that his comrades deserted him unwittingly, having lost track of him in the fray (2291-93). In indulgence, perhaps, of the same tendency,

there is a rather involved portrayal of the Trojans' despair as they anticipate annihilation in the weakened fortress (2338-50), a picture on whose account Solomon may have neglected the divine council of *Aeneid* 10.1-117.²⁷ Original and ornate, too, are the Etruscan council's deliberations in 2384-95, an episode to which Vergil devoted very little space. When Aeneas returns to his beleaguered comrades with reinforcements, we again find an un-Vergilian concern with his marshaling and exhorting of the troops, which operations are matched, through more briefly, by Turnus (2438-76). Finally, an especially poignant addition to the Irish has the Trojans triumphantly bedding down in the Rutulian camp after routing the enemy, only the body of the hapless Pallas being taken back into the fortress (2669-70).

The descriptive imagery of the Irish tale can also be quite elaborate. The Trojans' landfall at the mouth of the Tiber, a pleasant enough picture in *Aeneid* 7.25-36, looks downright idyllic in Irish (1465-73); and, a few lines later, the merely marriageable Lavinia (*A.* 7.53) becomes an alliterated paragon of young womanhood (1484-86). Pallas is her male equivalent: a dozen lines utterly without Vergilian precedent (1924-37) portray him in a manner reminiscent of the Welsh *Mabinogion*'s Culhwch.²⁸ A few of these slight alterations seem to aspire to a higher level of verisimilitude. For example, when Aeneas emerges from his visit to the Underworld, he can remember his vision only as a dream (1453-54). In another flicker of realism, we read that Agamemnon, having led his fleet back stealthily from Tenedos, lit a torch to alert the treacherous Sinon of his return (510-11).²⁹ Of course, Vergil may have reflected that Aeneas, who is recounting this incident to Dido, could not possibly have known just how the Greeks penetrated the citadel - not, at least, unless he were looking without raising the alarm. Here again, as at the very beginning of the *Imtheachta*, we face the question of whether the translator has violated consistency in his zeal to add a little something new or has set about deliberately, rather, to indict Aeneas's credibility with subtle clues. We shall consider the matter directly in section III.

The second major reason for respecting the translator's competence is that, while he seems obligated to abridge practically everything in the *Aeneid*, several abridgements are engineered with great care. In fact, a few short scenes of the *Aeneid* are rendered with the utmost precision. It was noted above that occasional passages or verbatim translation prove the presence of a good Latin text in the Irishman's hands, but we should also note the good taste implicit in selecting the scenes to receive this special attention. Not only is Dido's frenetic last speech to Aeneas very close to

the Latin, for instance, but also the entire love affair is traced with similar fidelity. Aeneas and Achates encounter the same marvelous frieze of Trojan scenes (311-18, from *A.* 1.456-93), the "decorum caesariem" with which the Vergilian Venus showers her son (*A.* 1588-93) is almost surpassed by the intricately alliterated Irish description (345-51), the tragic misadvice which Anna offers her sister (*A.* 4.31-53) is replicated meticulously (686-705), Dido's lovesick state of mind is minutely sketched (705-18, from *A.* 4.54-89), and so forth. The attention paid to this episode, in short, is not lax or careless by any standard. We should not be surprised, of course, that the tale of Dido and Aeneas thrilled a mediaeval Irish student of literature. After all, Celtic myths and legends abound in such sad affairs of the heart. Tristan and Isolde, Deirdre and Naoise, Diarmuid and Grainne, and Lancelot and Guinevere are some of the better known examples. Add to this the popularity of the *matière de Bretagne*, especially when it involved star-crossed lovers, throughout Europe in the late Middle Ages, and a picture of our translator as a child of his times begins to emerge. He is a very astute littérateur emphasizing those parts of the *Aeneid* that are best suited to the reigning tastes while de-emphasizing others which have grown obscure or uninviting. Comparetti demonstrated long ago that all of *Aeneid's* mediaeval translators may be portrayed in much the same way.

I would contend, however, that Solomon is singularly faithful to Vergil even though he justifies Comparetti's judgment. Granted that the Dido episode drew his special attention, it remains nonetheless extraordinarily Vergilian. Several other episodes show the same fidelity when contrasted with the French *Eneas* and its like. Consider the general category of military scenes. The taste for wartime adventures was both Celtic and, more correctly, mediaeval. The Old Irish heroic narratives may seem particularly brutal, but then, Chrétien's sophisticated romances are even more occupied with blood-letting in some respects.³⁰ Hence the *Imtheachta* is catering to a fully European taste again when it swells upon Aeneas's campaign in Italy, and it does stray from Vergil in its enthusiasm sometimes: e.g., the visit to Alba Longa in *Aeneid* 8 has nothing to compare with Evander's grand review of his cavalry in the Irish (1904-18). On the other hand, the author of the *Eneas* can only be said to have rewritten the entire adventure.³¹ As for deletions, we have seen that Solomon all but discards the first part of book 8, yet he pays close attention to the summit conference between Aeneas and Evander which leads to their treaty (cf. the precise reproduction of kinship ties in 1853-55, from Vergil's 8.134-40). Similarly, the prophetic scenes on Aeneas's divinely forged shield would have made little sense to

someone without a profound knowledge of the Augustan age, and Solomon might reasonably have declined to reproduce them. Instead, he makes a valiant effort to summarize them (1960-64) after cataloguing the specific arms mentioned by Vergil, omitting only the greaves (*A.* 8.624) and adding such alliterative flourishes as we have observed above (1954-59). The *Eneas*, in contrast, equips the hero with state-of-the-art mediaeval armour, and, far from suggesting the shield's Vergilian adornment, portrays it as smoothly bossed and lavished with precious stones (4415-42).

Naturally, the actual combat scenes receive the greatest attention. The assault which Turnus leads upon the Trojans' earthworks in *Aeneid* 9 is translated into Irish with heated flourishes of alliteration, once again. The same episode is also the occasion for one of Solomon's rare renderings of a Vergilian simile: the hungry wolf prowling around the sheep fold in *Aeneid* 9.59-66 reappears in 2002-06. The translator could easily have omitted several other details of the siege — and indeed would have, were he simply trying to suppress traces of paganism or project a more "manly" heroism — but he does not. Berecynthia's intercession for the woodland spirits in the Trojan ships, for instance, is recounted with little loss of finesse, and the Irish even preserves Vergil's astute remark that the grim Messapus is shaken by her portentous voice (2037, from *A.* 9.123-24).

The *Imtheachta*'s original touches in such scenes as these usually involve adjustments of style rather than content. When it comes time for Nisus to die avenging Euryalus, the scene's rhetoric grows very lively (e.g., the alliterated synonymy of 2144-47); and we must also note Nisus's burst of heroic fury as he hacks down one hundred Italians on his way to Volscens (2147), an episode worthy of Cú Chulainn during one of his distortions. The next morning's siege, whose climax is Turnus's audacious penetration of the Trojan fortress, must simply be viewed in Irish for the entire scene's drum-like sound effects to be appreciated (2195-337). At one point in this sequence, the doughty Helenor, selling his life dearly, like Nisus, seems again to invoke a passage from the *Táin* when his heroic defense leaves rows of corpses lying sole against neck and neck against neck, alternately, in a grotesque kind of tidiness (2229-30; see *TBC* 2316, "bond fri bond ocus méide fri méide" — the exact diction, if not quite the same description, as in the *Imtheachta*); and the havoc wreaked by Turnus when he is trapped in the fortress repeats the same echo (2315-16), as does Aeneas's *aristeia* when he leads his new Etruscan allies into battle (2502-03).

This last scene — the pitched battle before the fortress with both sides at full power — may be Solomon's finest hour. No other episode so resonates

with phonetic effects. Furthermore, heroic motifs are borrowed freely from earlier combat scenes. Besides strewing the field sole-to-neck with corpses, Aeneas earns himself a simile in the Irish which, surprisingly, has no Latin parallel: he is likened to an enraged bull (2512–13). When Pallas wades into the fray shortly thereafter, he, like the vengeance-bent Nisus, makes himself a “gap” (*bearn*) through a hundred unfortunate Rutulians. The death of Pallas incites Aeneas yet further, and the Irish continues to rise to the occasion. Frequently alliterated runs portray the hero’s wrath (e.g., “doerigh a bruth ocus a brig” [2566]), and wild metaphors (2567–69) connect him with a lion, a snake, and even “the bird of valor” (*en gaile*). The simile of the enraged bull is reinvoked (2571–72 — though, strictly speaking, the bull has become an ox, *damh*), and again no parallel exists in Latin: Vergil draws only on a rather bizarre comparison between Aeneas and the mythical hundred-handed Aegaeon (*A.* 10.565–68).³²

Certainly our modern taste recoils at the thought of Vergil’s masterpiece, so often cramped, shaved, and twisted in mediaeval translation, receiving attentive care at the most brutal moments of the story. I must repeat, however, that Solomon emphasizes these moments more by simply preserving them intact than by embellishing them with his own grim details: unlike other “translators” of the time, he used selectivity, not gross liberty, to produce an *Aeneid* compatible with his audience’s interests. While he often indulged his cultivated originality when reworking descriptive passages, he almost never allowed it to draw him away from the Vergilian narrative’s flow of events. In short, he proved himself a humble, tasteful mediator in this labour as well as an erudite, disciplined scholar.

III

So dignified a portrait of the man behind the pen forces us to ponder again, and more earnestly, how the *Imtheachta*’s flagrantly un-Vergilian beginning fits into the total endeavour. It cannot be attributed to a poor Latin text or an incompetent reading of the Latin because the evidence vindicates both the manuscript source’s quality and its translator’s skills. We cannot assume that the translator simply incorporated an alternative version of the beginning because we do not have a single instance of his including extraneous material elsewhere. At most, he might undertake a brief comment upon some curiosity or other, such as the *cestus* match, or inject a note of enthusiasm, as with Lavinia’s beauty. Only his rendition’s closing words, which really say nothing more than that Aeneas lived peacefully ever after

and founded a glorious line, depart wholly from Vergil again; and this is less a departure from the Latin than a step beyond it, since Vergil's twelfth book was never intended as an ending. Why, then, did this exceptionally tactful translator choose to cast a slur on his hero's character right from the start?

That other translators and romanciers had attributed treason to Aeneas all the way back to antiquity is not irrelevant, but the solution which it implies — that Solomon was merely doing with Aeneas what others before him had done — is simplistic. I have concentrated on internal evidence throughout this essay precisely because Solomon's literacy and fidelity to Vergil (except in the opening scene) invalidate the image of a clumsy scribe mingling popular variants and classic original indiscriminately. Most mediaeval raconteurs, for instance, judged Aeneas's desertion of Dido harshly, so harshly that they readily endorsed the old rumour about his political treachery. In the French *Eneas* the hero's planned departure "en larrecin" (1646, 1670) from Carthage is bluntly branded "traïson" (1667, 1673), and his initial defense of his plans to the Queen has more than a tinge of the cowardly, blatant deceit so evident in Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage* (cf. 1678–80).³³ Yet we have seen that Solomon remains true to Vergil throughout this tragic adventure: while Aeneas conceals certain events from Dido, he does not outrightly lie to her and on the whole retains his Augustan identity as a victim of fate, a sincere lover called away by duty. In fact, the Irish text adheres as closely to Vergil's book 4 as to any other section of the *Aeneid*.

The Irish text, then, utterly declines to parallel Aeneas's shirking his duties at Troy with his evasion of Dido. On the contrary, the Irish Aeneas, whatever his foibles, deserves to be loved as a courageous warrior and an honourable leader. Solomon actually seeks to emphasize his hero's martial valour (with alliterated runs, vivid adjectives, limited editing of combat scenes, etc.), as Rowland and others have consistently maintained; and the Irish Iarbas is as afraid of his rival's might as Marlowe's Iarbas is contemptuous of his rival's slickness. The Aeneas of the *Imtheachta*, in short, is no coward or schemer in the depths of his strange treason. Indeed, Nestor's principle reason for wanting him destroyed in the opening scene is not that he has committed a despicable act against his own, but that he may in the future commit some irresistible aggression against the Greeks.

So in what sense, ultimately, are we to interpret the treachery of this valorous and dutiful figure? Could such a man have been capable of turning a blind eye to the Greek plot, as may possibly be hinted by his clear description of Agamemnon's signal to Sinon (510–11)? I take that particular

embarrassing detail to be a slip, not of Aeneas's narration, but of Solomon's. It cannot be an allusion to Dares Phrygius, as Professor Murphy might wish to assume (see n. 6), because the conspirators originate the torch-signal from within the citadel in the *De Excidio Troiae*. Solomon's Aeneas goes on to tell Dido (as in Vergil's *Aeneid*) that he only awakened much later (530-31); and if his whole yarn is thus to be questioned because of one suspiciously sharp description, then he must be the sort of consummate trickster which the rest of the story refuses to make of him.

We must look for another kind of treachery, one such as even an extraordinarily upright and courageous man might blunder into, and the best place to find it is in just what Solomon sets before our eyes. His Aeneas is never implicated in smuggling information, sedating guards, purloining keys, or anything else which might be called an aggressive act of treason. The assembly of Greek generals at the beginning remains absolutely mute about what he is supposed to have done. All we know beyond the bare accusation is what he says of himself to Dido (in both Latin and Irish): he was awakened by a bad dream, saw the city ablaze, consumed several minutes in futile resistance, and finally led his own people to safety. Surely this last act, and nothing more, is the treason identified by Solomon. Specifically, in failing to defend the estate of his liege lord to his last breath, Aeneas was a deserter. Such is the conclusion which a mediaeval European would readily have drawn, without even imagining that he was distorting Vergil's account. Vergil relates that Aeneas left Troy rather than die among its ruins: therein lies the breach of duty.

In fact, the author of the *Eneas* evidently drew this very conclusion. The Norman text, like Solomon's opens with the sack of Troy, and once again the Vergilian details of the futile defense was mostly saved for the hero's colloquy with Dido. The French makes no mention of a Greek council or secret negotiations, and neither Antenor nor Aeneas is ever explicitly charged with any crime; yet we do read that Aeneas consulted with his folk "del retorner ou del foïr" (70) — a conference that never takes place in Vergil, of course — and that the people "miauz s'an volent o lui foïr / que retorner anz por morir" (75-76). They are obviously and literally running away, without even having been informed by their leader of his divine revelation touching their common destiny. In fact, Eneas recalls his less than staunch defense of Troy with such shame that, upon encountering the shades of slain countrymen in Hades, he shuns them:

Ne lor osot torner lo vis,
tant com pooit se resconsot

et envers ols se vergondot
 por ce qu'il s'en enbla fuitis
 d'entr'als, quant il furent ocis. (2683-84)

This scene is a deliberate departure from the joyful reunion in *Aeneid* 6.479-88. Later the French Amata (who remains simply "la reine") also vilifies Eneas, "qui s'en enbla par coardise / de la cité, quant al fu prise" (3366-67), over the same incident, and her slur, too, has no parallel in Vergil. We must conclude that, while no less heroic than his Irish counterpart throughout the rest of the tale, Eneas walks in the same shadow of doubt about his great journey's first steps.

Uniquely villainous as treason was in mediaeval morality, this very pre-occupation with numerous complex bonds of faith rendered betrayal on some level almost inevitable. Such, at least, seems to be the lesson taught by favourite heroes of the day. Most of them are at some point entangled in the same conflicting demands upon their fidelity as is Aeneas. All three of the romances preserved in the Welsh *Mabinogion*, for instance, ponder the intricacies of duty. Owein owes allegiance to Arthur and, more generally, to a knightly code of honour which requires frequent public appearances and a reckless disregard of personal safety: yet he suddenly incurs the responsibilities of defending his own small realm and being a husband, and the strain drives him temporarily mad. Gereint suffers a slightly less spectacular loss of coherence when he encounters the same problems, having erred on the side of attending his wife rather than on that of fulfilling his public function, like Owein. Peredur becomes the mightiest of knights but the most ungrateful of sons, a guilt which the many versions of his story seem to insist upon his working out. For that matter, of course, all three romances have extant parallels in the works of Chrétien de Troyes, and were common narrative coinage throughout Europe. Similar themes occur in the *Lais* of Marie de France: La Fresne's lover is torn between her and his obligation to produce a legal heir, Equitan remains true to his mistress but abuses his vassal in so doing, Eliduc must choose between the love of a maiden and the honour due his wife, and so forth. One need scarcely add to the list the anguished Lancelot, caught between the demands of fealty to Arthur and courtesy to Guinevere.

It was suggested long before Freud that we disavow most vehemently what we find most seductive. Perhaps mediaeval audiences so deplored broken faith precisely because, in their rigid hierarchical and intricately structured society, they fell short of duties and promises all the time. They could appreciate as we cannot the exquisite agony of one who is faced with

contradictory obligations. There is something almost classical about their concept of heroism — a heroism not of perfect might, but of momentary weakness or carelessness which incurs profound moral consequences.³⁴ In this light, the story of Aeneas looks particularly appealing. Like so many of the most popular mediaeval heroes, Aeneas must weight private obligations (to his friends and family, to his mistress) against public obligations (to his lord, to his race and destiny). Whether or not Solomon's audience would have regarded him as making the right choices is problematic, for the mediaeval value system was itself inconsistent in these matters. Lancelot submitted to the public disgrace of riding in a cart for the sake of his lady, and such later tales tend to rate fidelity in love above all else.³⁵ For better or for worse, however, Aeneas feels the pull in opposite directions and genuinely suffers. The Irish audience would at least have known the feeling.

I shall close by stressing that such an interpretation of the epic would not have struck Solomon as interpretation at all, but rather as a simple restatement of Vergil's ideas. It fully accords with our picture of the Irish scribe as devoted Vergilian trying to make his favourite author accessible to his countrymen. Others assumed the task of tying the flight from Troy and the flight from Dido as a single psychological flaw, or of allegorizing the work to represent the quasi-Christian rebirth of a faithless man-of-the-world into a faithful idealist.³⁶ Solomon remained content with rendering the Latin *Aeneid* into the idiom of his contemporaries. The bogus beginning already so familiar to them was as culturally poignant a way of saying, "Aeneas fled his ruined homeland," as the bold alliterative runs were of saying, "His blows fell fast and furious." And indeed, the notion of a hero who loses even when he wins — whose choices inevitably and tragically confine him — has a modern twist to it: we of the twentieth century should be able to recognize its merits. Especially in America and especially since the sixties, critics have begun to see Aeneas as a victim of his imperial ethos.³⁷ If, as this school maintains, he is doomed to sacrifice himself to dehumanizing values, he necessarily commits a kind of betrayal, no matter which course he takes. As unheroic as the word "traitor" sounds, then, it merely stated the obvious for Solomon's audience, and it hints at the frustration discerned in Vergil by some of today's most eloquent commentators.

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NOTES

¹ *Imtheachta Aeniassa: The Irish Aeneid*, tr. George Calder (London: Irish Texts Society, 1907). The line numbers cited throughout my essay are taken from Calder's text, which is that of the Book of Ballymote, the only known source. I have supplied my own less elegant translations of the Irish (except where otherwise stated), with Calder to guide me. I shall also refer occasionally to Calder's brief introduction, xi-xviii.

² See Eleanor Hull, *A Text Book of Irish Literature*, v. 2 (New York: AMS, 1974), 78-85. R.J. Rowland, "Aeneas as a Hero in Twelfth-Century Ireland," *Vergilius* 16 (1970), 29-32, provides references to most of the earlier material. Rowland professes a desire to analyze the *Imtheachta* at greater length, but has not done so. I agree with Calder that the text must have been composed shortly before 1400, based on its "many apparently late and even modern forms" (xii) as well as on its fairly fluid and literate style. Rowland accepts Gerald Murphy's brief case (offered in footnotes 3 and 4, 380) for a much earlier date in "Vergilian Influence Upon the Vernacular Literature of Medieval Ireland," *Studi Medievali* (1932), 372-81. In any event, I shall refer to the scribe as Solomon O'Droma for the sake of convenience: the validity of my remarks does not in the least depend upon this identification.

³ Kevin O'Nolan, "Homer, Virgil and Oral Tradition," *Béaloideas* 37-38 (1969-70), 123-30, states that "in the case of the Irish *Aeneid*, the translator has attempted a structural recasting of the story so as to relate the events in the order of their occurrence. . . . The only feasible explanation of the procedure adopted by the translator is that he found the 'in medias res' method strange and unacceptable, out of accord with Irish narratives which, however much they may have found refuge in manuscripts, are nonetheless oral in character" (129).

⁴ Solomon reproduced a few minor Vergilian flashbacks (e.g., Evander's recollection of Mezentius's cruelty [1880-86] and Aeneas's mission to the Etruscans [2373-424]), and he engineers no other major inversions of time. It should also be said that the linear plotting of events characterizes the whole genre of romance. While romance traditions typically drew upon popular sources, they also drew heavily upon one another. In short, the Irish *Aeneid's* order may have been shaped as much by the most popular contemporary narratives in writing as by local oral traditions.

⁵ For the sparing of Antenor we have several ancient sources, some of which even hint of treason. Homer's *Iliad* suggests in a single line (3.207) why Antenor might have escaped the sad fate of his countrymen in the epic tradition: he extended his hospitality to Menelaus and Odysseus during their embassy in Troy. Pindar confirms that the old Trojan's progeny survived, claiming that they accompanied Helen to the Peloponese and founded Cyrene (*Pythian Odes* 5.80-86), and Pausanias adds a few details about how this fortunate family escaped the common ruin (10.26.8 and 27.3). Vergil himself mentions Antenor's flight to Illyria (*A.* 1.242-49 — an aspect of his destiny that the *Imtheachta* [51] also recalls), but declines to implicate him in any sort of treachery. Even Seneca suggests in *Troïades* (l. 60) that Antenor received no special favours from the Greeks beyond being left alive. The less charitable accounts, therefore, obviously originated in the playful and melodramatic narratives of highly literate authors for whom ancient myth was a quaint curiosity. Such works often ruminated on real or imagined inconsistencies in the lore of the past and concocted, with a surprising absence of inhibition, their own alternative accounts. Indeed, sometimes they rearranged the tradition merely for lurid or ribald effect (cf. Ovid's claim that Peleus raped Thetis before their marriage

[*Metamorphoses* 11.221–65], or Parthenius's summary of various late romances detailing Odysseus's seductions and infidelities [*Peri Erot. Path.* 2 and 3]). Antenor, it appears, was a victim of changing tastes, and soon had a closet full of skeletons.

Aeneas himself was not immune to the prurient tendencies of antiquity's literate revisionists. According to Proclus, the *Iliou Persis* relates that he and his followers abandoned Troy upon witnessing Laocoön's ill-omened destruction — well before the sack which Vergil's Aeneas describes so minutely. Even Titus Livy (who was no frivolous scandal-monger) writes that both Antenor and Aeneas had won their safe departure through past hospitality and willingness to strike a peace (*Ab Urbe Condita* 1.1.1). Several sources of the early Christian era proceeded to exaggerate these accounts into a treacherous complicity. The *Ephemeris Belli Troiani* attributed to Dictys has Antenor and Aeneas rather needlessly (since a peace has just been reached) conniving at the wooden-horse stratagem, while the *De Excidio Troiae* presents the two traitors as actively opening a gate for the Greeks. See R.M. Frazer's useful introduction and translation of these texts in *The Trojan War* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1986). Nicholas Horsfall, "The Aeneas-Legend and the *Aeneid*," *Vergilius* 32 (1986), 8–17, notes that the most prolific scribal commentators on Vergil's *Aeneid* were in fact more keenly aware of the vicious rumours about its hero than the author would have been two centuries or so earlier (16). Domenico Comparetti's classic *Virgilio nel Medio Evo* also remains informative in this context (especially the beginning of the second part), though at no point does it mention the Irish *Aeneid*.

⁶ See Murphy (at n. 2) 381. The problem with this assumption, as I shall emphasize, is that Aeneas acknowledges none of the misdeeds attributed to him by Dares Phrygius (or by other late mythographers) to Dido or to anyone else, nor do his detractors (e.g., Iarbas or Amata) allude to any such ill fame. Hence the claim amounts to a charge of artistic ineptitude.

⁷ G. Dottin, "La Légende de la Prise de Troie en Irlande," *Revue Celtique* 41 (1924), 149–80, analyzes the distinctly Irish features of the H. 2.17 manuscript, most of which apply to mediaeval Irish literature generally. I disagree with his suggestion (157) that the Irish somehow goes beyond Dares's account of Aeneas's treachery. The text appears in *Irische Texte*, v. 2, ed. Whitley Stokes and E. Windisch (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1884), 1–142, including Stokes's English translation. The Book of Leinster manuscript (recently edited by R.I. Best and M.A. O'Brien [Dublin: Inst. for Advanced Studies, 1966]) awards Aeneas all of his Vergilian nobility of character, although its author is so ignorant of the *Aeneid* that he attributes to it the late story about Achilles's foul murder of Hector (32842–51).

⁸ For instance, the narrator of the Middle Welsh *Culhwch ac Olwen* "supplies a list of personages which is at once an index to cycles of lost story and the glimpse into his own teeming imagination" as well as "a list of some forty tasks, presumably each one of them the hook on which a story might be hung" (Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, *Mabinogion* [London: Dent, 1975], xxi). The narrator of *Breudwyd Ronabwy* even claims that "no one, neither bard nor story-teller, knows the Dream without a book" to show off his literacy (*ibid.* 152).

⁹ For instance, Solomon O'Droma has a fairly firm grasp of Homer, if only in translation — cf. his claim that the Circe turned Ulysses's men into wolves (1463–64), not quite correct but at least founded upon Homeric matter. By contract, the original Greek *Odyssey* bears virtually no resemblance to the mediaeval Irish *Meirugud Uilix*.

¹⁰ See Rowland (at n. 2) 29. I should stress that these adjectives are meant to be understood in the framework of mediaeval Ireland: Solomon was gallicizing Vergil's concepts of heroism and humanity, not inserting them where they did not exist before. Treason, on the other hand, would have seemed a heinous crime to both authors.

¹¹ John Conington's nineteenth-century edition of the *Aeneid* appended a puzzled note to this line, and it has been much vilified and defended since. Cf. A.S. McDevitt, "Hysteron-Proteron in Vergil's *Aeneid*," *Classical Quarterly* 17 (1967), 316-21, especially 320.

¹² Cf. Dottin's comments (at n. 7, 155) about the ambivalent orthography of classical names rendered into Irish.

¹³ Significantly, the mediaeval translation of Statius's *Thebaid* into Irish describes the *cestus* in precisely the same terms when Capaneus and Alcidas square off in book 6. Evidently, the Irish were familiar with these brutal, lead weighted gloves. See *Togail na Tebe*, ed. George Calder (London: Cambridge UP, 1922), 160 (ll. 2504-05).

¹⁴ Sharyn Lawler, "The Significance of Acestes' Flaming Arrow, *Aeneid* 5.522-28," *Vergilius* 34 (1988), 102-11, is one of the latest suggestions of how important this scene was for the original audience. The essay's notes amply document other scholarly views of the scene.

¹⁵ Hull (at n. 2) 79, and Dottin (at n. 7) 149. I particularly disagree with Dottin's generalization: it oversimplifies the *Imtheachta* and has little value with regard to Lucan, since Lucan himself did all he could to purge references to divinities from the *Bellum Civile*.

¹⁶ Though this remark may seem facile, the few scholars who have examined the *Imtheachta* closely have sometimes lost sight of the forest because of the trees. E.g., Rowland notes that Aeneas's desperate lament in *A.* 1.94-101 "is completely eliminated, presumably as being unsuited to a hero" (at n. 2, 30). But Solomon trimmed out many speeches longer than this one, few of which are clearly unheroic. In other words, he was trying to condense the text rather than rewrite it. To be sure, speeches suffered under his editing more than actions. All of the mediaeval Celtic tales on record suggest that the original audience enjoyed vigorous action but shared little of the classical taste for declamatory flourish.

¹⁷ In citing the *Encas* throughout this essay, I have followed the text edited by J.-J. Salverda de Grave (Paris: Champion, 1973). I join the editor enthusiastically (xxi-xxii) in discounting the view that the French text translates a prose *Aeneid* rather than Vergil's Latin verse. The argument in favour of this position boils down to the *Encas*'s having many divergences from Vergil — but that mediaeval "translators" could and did adapt their subjects to popular or native tastes is well known, and demonstrated yet further by a careful study of Solomon's rendition.

¹⁸ The monk who recorded our fullest version of the Old Irish *Táin Bó Cúalnge*, for instance, dutifully sets down the tale in all its savage glory before allowing himself to declare in a Latin postscript, "But I who have written this history — or rather fable — place no faith in it in certain respects. For some things here are diabolical distortions, some poetical figments, some with an air of truth, some not, and some suited to the delight of fools." See *Táin Bó Cúalnge*, ed. Cecile O'Rahilly (Dublin: Inst. for Advanced Studies, 1970), 136. Dottin (at n. 7, 168) actually believes that "les Irlandais chrétiens semblent avoir été moins choqués par le paganisme des Grecs et des Romains que par le paganisme celtique."

¹⁹ This, of course, is more properly an error of exuberance than of lapsed concentration, and it demonstrates once again Solomon's willingness to bring figures from pagan mythology within the Judaeo-Christian pale. In contrast, Ascanius's lineage in 2365-66) is nearly flawless — only Vergil never mentions his family tree! This time Solomon has added to the text, not on the basis of popular romance, but on that of a formidable erudition in the classics themselves.

²⁰ As Rowland notes (at n. 2, 29), the *Aeneid's* abrupt ending raised problems for virtually all of its mediaeval translators.

²¹ E.g., *TBC* 2205–2337 (at n. 18, 60–63), the episode of the Breslech Maige Murthemne where Cú Chulainn goes into his furious distortions and wreaks havoc upon the invaders.

²² Cf. the late Kevin O'Nolan's superlative article on this subject, "Doublets in the *Odyssey*," *Classical Quarterly* 28 (1978), 23–37, which also addresses Irish oral tradition.

²³ B.F. Roberts, "Oral Tradition and Welsh Literature: A Description and Survey," *Oral Tradition* 3:1–2 (January–May 1988), 61–87, remarks several of these oral attributes in the first written narratives of Middle Welsh (see especially 73–77); and cf. Proinsias Mac Cana, "Irish Literary Tradition," in *A View of the Irish Language*, ed. Brian O Cuiv (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1969), 35–46.

²⁴ Rowland (at n. 2, 31) remarks the translator's fabrication of this and another description (2565–74) intended to emphasize Aeneas's valour, but the debt of both descriptions to traditional Irish narrative technique is highly relevant to his point and deserves to be underscored.

²⁵ Cf. J. Vendryes, "L'unité en trois personnes chez les Celtes," *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions* (1935), 324–341. See also Rachel Bromwich, *Trioeidd Ynys Prydein: The Welsh Triads* (Cardiff: Wales University Press, 1961), for some practical applications of threes in Celtic culture and, in her introduction, some suggestions concerning the origins and antiquity of triadism; and, in a more general and controversial vein, the works of Georges Dumézil.

²⁶ See also Rowland (at n. 2, 31), who credits T. Hudson Williams with first noticing this discrepancy. There was a long history of suspicion in the western Mediterranean about the virility of men from the east, dating back at least to Rome's importation of the Magna Mater cult with its castrated priests. Solomon could scarcely have known it, but Vergil's Iarbas is registering some of this disdain.

²⁷ I must point out that this interpolated weeping and wailing compromises the theory that Solomon was simplistically "upgrading" the *Aeneid's* heroism to a manly mediaeval variety.

²⁸ See the excellent Jones and Jones translation of the *Mabinogion*, 97.

²⁹ Calder (at n. 1) refers his readers to a comment of Stokes's on the *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*, and see also Eleanor Knott's note on the word *caindel*, l. 882, in her edition of *TBDD* (Dublin: Inst. for Advanced Studies, 1975), 87. The "torch" in this case could possibly be the glint of a spear or spears.

³⁰ E.g., when in the *Táin* the invading host first reaches Ulster, Cú Chulainn badgers its progress by slaying a hundred men on two separate occasions (1360 and 1387), and he later kills an even hundred every night for three evenings (1467–68) and exacts a terrible revenge for the death of his foster-brothers (2300–23) — yet no word for blood or gore (*fuil*, *cró*, etc.) is used a single time, nor is any blow or wound described in detail. In contrast, when Chrétien's Yvain defeats the Knight of the Fountain, defends the chateau of Noroison, slays the giant, overpowers Lunete's accusers, and encounters the rude hosts of the Chastel de Pesme Avanture, his feats consume about a hundred lines on each occasion, and the detail is accordingly graphic. Cú Chulainn's exploits look so unrealistic beside Yvain's in fact, that one must wonder if the Irish raconteurs had entirely serious intentions. It would certainly be presumptuous to conclude on the basis of such texts that the Celts were stern, blood-thirsty warriors who could not appreciate Vergil's humanity.

³¹ Aeneas receives his armour even before he leaves for Alba Longa (following a thoroughly ribald exchange between Venus and Vulcan), the narrator supplies a version of the Hercules/Cacus tale which makes the latter resemble Homer's Polyphemus, and finally the two leaders of state meet and discuss their alliance in extremely formal terms. I might add here that O'Nolan's thesis concerning the oral/linear order of events in the *Imtheachta* (see n. 3) often applies much better to the *Aeneas*.

³² It has been suggested, however, that this comparison is not bizarre at all, but rather highly indicative of the inhuman depths to which pious Aeneas's fury has carried him. Cf. W.S. Anderson, *The Art of the Aeneid* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969), 84. R.J. Hardie, *Virgil's Aeneid: Cosmos and Imperium* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), traces the allegorical use of giants and the gigantic throughout the *Aeneid*.

³³ J.W. Jones, "Aeneid 4.238-278 and the Persistence of an Allegorical Interpretation," *Vergilius* 33 (1987), 29-37, argues the necessity of taking Mercury's embassy to Aeneas as a genuine divine intercession if the hero's treatment of Dido is not to be held against him. Though the article addresses modern critics, we should not be surprised to see that the mediaeval Christian translators who tried to allegorize or suppress this scene's paganism in just the fashion suggested by Jones did indeed confront some major character flaws in Aeneas as a result. Mediaeval translators would have profited from reflecting that "for Vergil, Mercury, *deus ex caelo*, is *deus ex machina*. We may seriously misjudge the character of Aeneas if we fail to recognize this" (36).

³⁴ Of course, the Middle Ages were also keenly aware that such tragedy could be turned to comedy in a Christian context, and the ancient tales were often made to attest this phenomenon in one way or another. Chrétien's Yvain manages to introduce a poise into his obligations after a clearly allegorical anointing of his moribund body, and Erec also awakens from a deathly torpor with a new and successful sense of proportion.

³⁵ Hence the tendency to view Aeneas's treatment of Dido in so dark a light. But contrast the view in earlier mediaeval works. E.g., Ganelon in the *Chanson de Roland* is by no means without honour, for in betraying Roland he merely repays an insult. By jeopardizing the cause of Charlemagne for the sake of this redress, however, he places his personal honour above his lord's and his religion's, and is accordingly guilty. In the *Nibelungenlied*, Kriemhild turns similarly unsympathetic when, in order to avenge Siegfried's foul murder, she sides with pagans against Christians and violates the laws of hospitality.

³⁶ Only a few modern critics have seen in Vergil's original a distinct maturing of its hero's character (as opposed to a mere uplifting of his mood). Brooks Otis, *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 393, concludes that "Aeneas had learned by experience, had ceased to be the furious warrior or reckless lover he had once been." Many mediaeval commentators wanted to reach a similar conclusion, and those of them who practised translation frequently helped it along textually. The *Aeneas*, for instance, not only sets up a contrast between the Dido affair and the courtship of Lavinia, but plays out the latter against a backdrop of innuendo about the former. Furthermore, the French Aeneas's desertion of Troy and its slain king is matched with his tenacity in Italy and his avenging of Pallas. Such programs of development contradict Otis's in some regards, yet they were credited in their time with just as much conviction.

³⁷ See, for instance, Adam Parry, "The Two Voices of Virgil's *Aeneid*," *Arion* 2 (1963), 66-80; M.C.J. Putnam, *The Poetry of the Aeneid* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1965); W.S. Anderson (*op. cit.*); and W.R. Johnson, *Darkness Visible: A Study of the Aeneid* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1976).