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VIRGILIO
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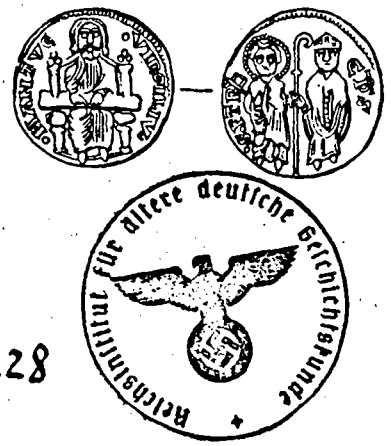
MEDIO EVO



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Some notes on Virgil, mainly in English authors, in the middle ages.

Virgil was, of course, the most widely known of all the classical Latin writers in the Middle Ages. Wherever there was any study of the Latin language, and however strictly the attempt might be made in some cases to limit that study to the minimum necessary for ecclesiastical purposes, Virgil was an author who never lost his pre-eminence. This was due not so much to any instinctive feeling for his transcendent genius as to the fact that his works had always been employed as an instrument for grammatical and rhetorical instruction in the schools. This tradition was an inheritance from the ancient world. Virgil was read in the monastic and cathedral schools just as he had been read in the schools of the pagan Empire, and for the same reasons (1).

He became a text-book, because he was regarded as a model of good taste and of grammatical correctness, as well as a master of rhetorical style.

So wherever, in the course of the medieval centuries, even a tincture of literary culture survives, Virgil is read and Virgil is quoted. Out of the darkness of sixth century Britain comes the voice of Gildas with Virgilian echoes to lend a further pathos to his lamentable dirge on the destruction of his unhappy country (2). And there is a legend about Gildas's friend St. Cadoc, which pictures

(1) On the use of Virgil in the schools during the Empire, see COMPARETTI, *Virgilio nel medio evo*, i, 37 sqq.

(2) *De excidio et conquestu Britanniae*, ed. Mommsen, *M. G. H.: Auct. antiq.*, III, p. 30, 34, 40; see Mommsen's remarks on p. 6, about Gildas's knowledge of Virgil.

him as sorely troubled about the fate of one who had sung in this world as the angels sing in heaven, and had died without the grace of baptism (1). Cadoc and Gildas were talking by the Breton sea about the joys of heaven. Cadoc held in his hand a volume of Virgil and as he wept to think on the fate of his beloved poet, Gildas asked him the reason for his tears. « I weep », said he, « because the author of this book may be in torment ». « He assuredly is », said the uncompromising Gildas. At that moment a gust of wind blew the book into the sea. That night in his cell Cadoc vowed that he would not eat or drink until he received assurance about the heathen poet's fate. As he slept he heard a voice which cried: « Pray for me, pray without ceasing, that I may sing for ever the mercies of the Lord ». Next day, a fisherman brought the saint a salmon, in which they found the lost volume of Virgil. So perhaps, as the prayers of Gregory the Great delivered the righteous Emperor Trajan, did the supplications of the gentle Cadoc avail for the poet who had sung:

> Ultima Cumaei venit iam carminis aetas,
> magnus ab integro saeclorum nascitur ordo.
> iam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna,
> iam nova progenies coelo demittitur alto,

and had, all unknowingly, become a prophet and a witness to Christ.

In the remote island of Iona, the monk Adamnan (d. 704) writing the life of the great Columba, could not refrain from Virgilian reminiscences (2), and there is reason to believe that he possessed the Philargyrian and other commentaries on Virgil, which may have been brought to England in the time of Theodore and Hadrian (3).

For one Adananus, an Irishman, and not improbably to be identified with Adamnan, made extracts from Philargyrius, Gaudentius and Titus Gallus, three commentators. Adamnan, in adapting his work for the use of his pupils, added material of his own, as when, in commenting on the Fourth Eclogue, he refers

(1) This story is told in MONTALEMBERT, *Les Moines d'Occident*, III, 70 sqq.; H. DE LA VILLEMARQUÉ, *La légende celtique et la poésie des clottres en Irlande, en Cambrie et en Bretagne*, Paris, 1861, pp. 201 sqq.; GRAF, II, 208 sq. This legend is not found in any published life of Cadoc and I cannot trace its source.

(2) Cf. ROGER, *L'enseignement des lettres classiques d'Ausone à Alcuin*, Paris, 1908, p. 262.

(3) G. THILO, *Beiträge zur Kritik der Scholiasten des Virgilius*, in *Rhein. Mus.*, XV, 1860, p. 133.

to the interpretation of the ' nova progenies ' as a prophecy of the birth of Christ (1).

Even if these excerpts do not go back to Adamnan, they are still a witness to the manner in which Virgil was studied in the Irish schools (2).

For the Irish scholars seem to have busied themselves greatly with Virgilian studies. They enter into the MS. tradition of the *Vitae Virgilianae*, which Irish masters like Johannes Scottus expounded to their students (3). There is also an eighth century MS. in an Irish hand, which contains a life of Virgil composed from various sources but mainly from Jerome and Donatus (4). It is a strange mixture, but it shows clearly the active interest taken in the poet whose works were read then as now by schoolboys in the first stage of their Latin studies. ' Virgilium ', so this Irish life ends, ' ... parvuli legunt, ut videlicet poeta magnus, omnium praeclarissimus atque optimus teneris ebibitus animis non facile oblivione possit aboleri, secundum illud Horatii: « quo semel est inbuta recens, servabit odorem testa diu » ' (5).

But perhaps the best testimony to the Irish love for Virgil is to be found in those beautiful verses of Colman, a ninth century Irishman settled on the continent, who writes to a friend, another Colman, then returning to his native country. Here Colman borrows and makes his own that Virgilian pathos,

> The sense of tears in mortal things,

for he is giving us no mere school-exercise, but a true personal poem, a fragment of life (6). He begins:

> Dum subito properas dulces invisere terras,
> deseris et nostrae refugis consortia vitae,
> festinas citius precibus nec flecteris ullis,
> nec retinere valet blandae suggestio vocis.

(1) Ib., p. 121 and p. 125.

(2) M. Esposito, *Hiberno-Latin MSS. in the Libraries of Switzerland, Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, XXX, C. I, 1912, p. 6, says without hesitation that this Adananus is no doubt identical with the celebrated Adamnan of Hy.

(3) Cf. *Vita Gudiana*, I, in *Vitae Virgilianae*, ed. J. Brummer, Leipzig, 1912, p. 62, 'set Johannes Scottus has breviter scripsit periochas dicens... '; see Brummer, *Zur Ueberlieferungsgeschichte der sogenannten Donat-Vita des Virgil, Philologus*, LXXII, 1913, p. 289, 297.

(4) Text. Brummer, *Vitae Virgilianae*, pp. 54 sqq.; see M. Petschenig, *Eine Vita Vergilii, Wiener Studien*, IV, 1882, p. 168 sqq.

(5) Brummer, *Vitae Virgilianae*, p. 55; from Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, I, 3.

(6) Text in M. Esposito, *The poems of Colmanus ' Nepos Cracavist ' and Dungalus ' Praecipuus Scottorum '*, *Journal of Theological Studies*, XXXIII, 1932, pp. 116 sqq., and in Raby, *A History of Secular Latin Poetry*, Oxford, 1934, I, 237.

vincit amor patriae. quis flectere possit amantem?
nec sic arguerim deiectae taedia mentis.
nam mihi praeteritae Christus si tempora vitae,
et priscas iterum renovaret ab ordine vires,
si mihi quae quondam fuerat floresceret aetas
et nostros subito faceret nigrescere canos,
forsitan et nostram temptarent talia mentem.....

So, in this charming way, the poem proceeds, gathering Virgilian flowers and breathing Virgilian fragrance.

The Anglo-Saxons took up the study of Latin literature with a practical aim. The decisive event in their intellectual history was the appearance of Theodore and Hadrian, whom Pope Vitalian sent in 667 to reform the English Church (1). They reorganised the monastic schools in England on continental models, and they found apt pupils among the Anglo-Saxons. If the aim of education was regarded as subservient to the study of divine things, great interest was taken in grammatical and metrical questions and in the fabrication of quantitative verses.

Aldhelm of Malmesbury, Bishop of Sherborne, who was the first Anglo-Saxon poet to write in Latin, had studied in his youth under Irish masters, but it was at Canterbury under Hadrian that he seriously studied the Latin authors. He had a thorough knowledge of Virgil, and in his *De metris et enigmatibus ac pedum regulis* (2), an epistle addressed to Aelfrid, king of the Northumbrians, he quotes the Roman poet again and again in illustration of his metrical discussion. Aldhelm's citations have been collected by Manitius, who shows that a few of them are derived from Donatus and other sources, but most of them directly from a manuscript of the poems (3).

Like Aldhelm, Bede was a student and a teacher; 'semper aut discere aut docere aut scribere dulce habui', he says in the autobiographical note with which he concludes his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (4). His aim was to provide for his pupils a thoroughly Christian education, and he looked upon the study of the profane authors solely from the point of view of its practical utility as an aid to the study of divine things. So, in his treatise, *De metrica*

(1) RABY, *Secular Latin Poetry*, I, 169.
(2) ED. EHWALD, *Aldhelmi Opera, M. G. H.: Auct. antiq.*, XV, pp. 61 sqq.
(3) *Zu Aldhelm und Beda, SB. der kaiserl. Akad. der Wissenschaften in Wien*, CXII, 1886, pp. 546 sqq.
(4) V. 24.

arte (1), he prefers to choose his metrical examples from the Christian poets, though he does make use of Virgil and, once, of Lucan (2). Commenting on the parable of the Prodigal Son, he could even say that the fables of the poets were the 'husks that the swine did eat' (3). But Virgilian passages were so stored in his memory that he produced them quite naturally in his Scripture commentaries (4). Many of his quotations from other classical authors can be traced to Isidore of Seville or to the grammarians, but, as Prof. Laistner has said, the one poet of the classical period whom Bede can be safely said to have known at first hand was Virgil (5).

In his epanaleptic and alphabetical hymn on St. Etheldreda, which he inserted in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (6), Bede uses the *Aeneid* as the type of that secular poetry which he contrasts unfavourably with the matter of his own poem, — the praise of virginity:

Bella Maro resonet, nos pacis dona canamus:
Munera nos Christi, bella Maro resonet.
Carmina casta mihi, foedae non raptus Helenae,
Luxus erit lubricis, carmina casta mihi.
Dona superna loquar, miserae non proelia Troiae,
Terra quibus gaudet: dona superna loquar.

And this is really his last word on the subject, for Bede never greatly felt the Virgilian enchantment.

Neither, for that matter, — so far as we can see — did any of the medieval men (with the possible exception of some of the Irish) feel so deeply the beauty or the haunting pathos of Virgil's lines that it would draw them to say quite naturally and from the heart,

Tale tuum carmen nobis, divine poeta,
quale sopor fessis in gramine, quale per aestum
dulcis aquae saliente sitim restinguere rivo.

For Augustine's seems to be the last authentic voice raised to tell of a true feeling, in his youth, for the magic of Virgil's story;

(1) KEIL, *Grammatici Latini*, VII, 217 sqq.; R. DAVIS, *Bede's early reading*, *Speculum*, VIII, 1932, p. 188 sq.

(2) See RABY, art. *Bède le Vénérable*, in *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, VII, 396 sq.

(3) *Expositio in Lucae Evang.*, XV (Giles, XI, 214).

(4) See the references in M. L. W. LAISTNER, *Bede as a classical and a patristic scholar*, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 1933, p. 73 sq.

(5) Ib., p. 73.

(6) IV, 20.

if, indeed, we do not read too much into his rhetoric, with its snatches of pathetic lines from the *Aeneid* (1): ' Flebam Didonem extinctam, *ferroque extrema secutam*... (2) ', or ' dulcissimum spectaculum vanitatis equus ligneus plenus armatis, et Troiae incendium atque *ipsius umbra Creusae* ' (3).

Not with the eyes of Augustine, but through the distorted vision of a Macrobius or a Fulgentius did the Middle Ages learn to read and understand their Virgil. And this is true also of the twelfth-century humanists, those remarkable men, in France and England, who read the ' authors ' — poets, historians and philosophers — with a more calm and persistent intelligence than that of their predecessors. Among these humanists John of Salisbury stands easily first. He went to the classical writers for wisdom and for information, and so he quotes freely, not only from the *Aeneid* but from the *Georgics* and *Bucolics* (4). In addition, he made use of the commentaries of Servius and of Bernard Silvestris, and he knew Macrobius and Fulgentius (5). It was mainly from another Bernard, that Bernard of Chartres, whom he described as ' perfectissimus inter Platonicos saeculi nostri ' (6), that John of Salisbury learned how to read and value the classical authors.

He it was who saw the last of the modern scholars as ' dwarfs mounted on the shoulders of giants ' (7), and from him John acquired his profound but not slavish respect for the great writers of antiquity. So, in the spirit of his master he could say: ' Excute Virgilium aut Lucanum, et ibi cuiuscumque philosophie professor sis, eiusdem invenies condituram ' (8). Or again he speaks of the *Aeneid* as the book wherein the author ' investigates the secrets of all philosophy ' (9). John went to Virgil for things exactly observed and justly expressed, observed and expressed, as he would have readily admitted, in a manner beyond his own ability or that of any of his contemporaries. In this sense Virgil was for him ' the

(1) *Confessions*, I, 13.
(2) *Aen.* VI, 457.
(3) *Aen.* II, 772.
(4) C. C. J. WEBB, *Ioannis Sarisberiensis Policraticus*, Oxford, 1909, I, p. xxx. Cf. J. SCHAARSCHMIDT, *Johannes Sarisberiensis*, Leipzig, 1862, p. 98.
(5) Cf. WEBB, p. 307. I see no reason for doubt on this point.
(6) *Metalogicon*, IV, 35 (WEBB, p. 205).
(7) Ib., III, 4 (p. 136).
(8) Ib., I, 24 (p. 55).
(9) *Polic.* II, 15 (I, p. 90).

most learned of poets' (1); for he was not only learned in natural things, such as the signs of the weather to be observed from birds and fishes (2), and the habits of bees which are the image of the perfect commonwealth (3), but in his *Aeneid* he disguised high philosophical and moral doctrine under the veil of allegory and the vanity of poetical invention (4). Here John is following Fulgentius and Servius, and, of course, Bernard Silvestris, whose commentary on Virgil was accepted as of great authority. Fulgentius in his curious treatise *Expositio Virgilianae Continentiae* (5) had tried to show, in his blundering and confused manner, that the intention of Virgil in his *Aeneid* is to set forth a picture of human life from birth to age. This darkening of counsel overshadowed the Middle Ages. Fulgentius himself was an African Christian, who lived about the end of the fifth century, and succeeding generations accepted his interpretations. It was hardly to be expected that Bernard Silvestris, the Platonist who loved the *Timaeus* and the *Somnium Scipionis* as Macrobius presented it, and was at home with Apuleian and Pseudo-Apuleian literature, should be able to resist the fascination of the allegorical interpretation of the *Aeneid*.

For Bernard, Virgil was at once a poet and a philosopher. As a poet, he tells in the *Aeneid* of the fortunes of Aeneas, and is a model of literary skill for those who desire to imitate him; as a philosopher, he affords moral and religious lessons and, indeed, sets forth the nature of human life under the veil of allegory (6).

In working out the hidden meaning in the poet's verses, Bernard, as a Neo-platonist born out of due time, was merely following the tradition of Porphyry who had thus interpreted the allegories buried in Homer.

Graf (7) and Comparetti (8) both point out that John of Salisbury is the earliest known writer who alludes to that Virgilian legend which was to take such deep roots in the learned and in the vernacular literatures of Europe. John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*

(1) Ib., VI, 21 (II, p. 60).
(2) Ib., II, 2 (I, p. 70).
(3) Ib., VI, 21 (II, p. 60 sq.).
(4) *Polic.* VIII, 24 (II, 417).
(5) Ed. R. HELM, *Fulgentii Opera*, Leipzig, 1898, pp. 83 sqq.
(6) Extracts from Bernard's commentary in COUSIN, *Ouvrages inédits d'Abélard*, Paris, 1836, pp. 659 sqq.
(7) *Roma nella memoria del medio evo*, II, 224.
(8) II, 36.

was published in 1159, the *Dolopathos* of John of Alta Silva can be assigned to somewhere about 1184, while Conrad of Querfurt, Gervase of Tilbury and Alexander Neckham, the other Latin sources for the Virgilian legend, likewise wrote in the later years of the twelfth century.

First, we must note that John tells the story how, when the Roman rulers (*principes*) set up a bronze statue to represent in the form of a woman Rome herself, with orb in hand, people said that its beauty was marred by one imperfection, — the legs were not made to support so vast a weight. The artist replied that they would last until the time when a virgin should bring forth a child, himself believing that such a thing was utterly impossible. But the saying was fulfilled at Christ's birth, for the statue fell and was broken (1).

In the *Mirabilia Romae*, the statue is a golden statue of Romulus set up by himself, with the proud boast ' non cadet, donec virgo pariet '. But there is no association of this legend with Virgil such as we meet with in other versions of the story.

A few years after John had written, Alexander Neckham had associated this story with the *Salvatio Romae* and with Virgil (2). The *Salvatio* was a noble palace in which were statues representing the various countries of the earth. When any region threatened the peace of the Empire, the appropriate statue sounded a bell, and a bronze horseman shook his spear in the direction from which the menace came. When the people asked Virgil how long that marvel would stand, he replied: ' Stabit usque dum pariat Virgo '. They all applauded the answer of the philosopher and said: ' It will stand for ever then '. But it fell at the Saviour's birth.

Nothing could be more natural than that the poet who had foretold the nativity of Christ should play his part in a legend which without his presence lacked the last touch of perfection.

Next, John of Salisbury tells us that he saw in Apulia a man, Lewis by name, who had stayed there a long time, so that ' after many vigils, long fastings, much toil and sweat, for so great profit of his unhappy and useless exile, he might bring back to France the bones rather than the understanding of Virgil ' (3).

(1) *Polic.* II, 15 (I, 91 sq.).

(2) *De Naturis Rerum*, ed. Wright, *Rolls Series*, London, 1863, p. 310. However in *De Laudibus divinae Sapientiae*, p. 447, Neckham does not associate the story with Virgil, although he had already done so in his earlier work, but he applies it to the Colosseum. On the date of the *De Laudibus* (1211) see MANITIUS, *Gesch. d. lat. Lit. d. MA.*, III, 787.

(3) *Polic.* II, 23 (I, p. 132).

And, in another passage (1), he refers directly to Virgilian legend, telling briefly, for the purpose of illustration only, the story, obviously well-known (though not recorded before his time in any writing now extant), of the brazen fly made by Virgil to keep away from Naples a plague of flies. 'The Mantuan bard is said to have asked Marcellus (2), when the latter was bent on the hunting of birds, whether he would prefer that a bird should be made by means of which birds might be taken, or a fly for the destruction of flies. Marcellus reported the question to his uncle Augustus, and on his advice chose the fly, to drive away the flies from Naples and deliver the city from an incurable plague'. The moral which John draws from the story is that the good of the many is to be placed before the private pleasure of an individual.

This same legend is referred to in the famous *Apocalypse of Golias*, a poem by a contemporary of John of Salisbury and perhaps of English origin (3).

Describing his vision, the poet says:

> Lucanum video ducem bellancium,
> formantem ereas muscas Virgilium,
> pascentem fabulis turbas Ovidium,
> nudantem satyros dicaces Persium.

The poet is clearly referring to a story which was already well-known to his readers, and we are entitled to assume that Virgilian legends had already circulated throughout the West in the latter half of the twelfth century, when, as never before, there was a demand for this kind of material for literary purposes. It was in this way that Gervase of Tilbury and Alexander Neckham, both Englishmen, gathered their marvellous stories about Virgil and swept them into their encyclopaedic treatises. The *Otia Imperialia* of Gervase of Tilbury, composed for the amusement and edification of Otto IV and published in 1212, is one of the chief literary sources for the Virgilian legend (4). Alexander Neckham's *De Naturis Rerum*, which was published towards the end of the

(1) Ib., I, 4 (I, p. 26).

(2) Marcellus was regarded as the governor of Naples, and Virgil as his minister; COMPARETTI, II, 36.

(3) RABY, *Secular Latin Poetry*, I, 215; text, p. 216, from K. STRECKER, *Die Apokalypse des Golias*, Rome, 1928.

(4) ED. LEIBNITZ, *Scriptores rerum Brunvicensium*, Hanover, 1707, I, 881 sq.; extracts in COMPARETTI, II, 188 sqq.

twelfth century, is a second prominent source. Gervase knew Rome and Naples well, but it has been doubted whether Neckham ever visited these cities (1). Manitius, however, points out (2) that there are passages in the *De laudibus divinae sapientiae* (3) which support the conclusion that he had visited Italy and had actually seen Rome.

But it is not my business to go over the ground so thoroughly covered already by Comparetti, or to attempt to unravel the problem of the origin and growth of the Virgilian legend, or even its manifestations in the English vernacular. I am concerned here only to show some aspects of the interest taken in Virgil by English scholars in the Middle Ages, and this interest is shown more vividly in the use made of his poems by writers of every kind than in the accidental circumstance that three Englishmen of letters contributed largely to our knowledge of the Virgilian legend.

In his story of Cnut, in the *De Nugis Curialium* (4), Walter Map, when he wishes to tell us how Earl Godwin feared the wiles of the Danish king, thinks at once of the apposite Virgilian tag and changes it thus, — ' non immerito metuens Danos et dona ferentes '. Or, when he is talking of his favourite theme, the avarice of the Roman Curia, he says: ' consilio soluto statim aperuit rugas oris sui domina bursa quae cum non sit amor, vincit tamen omnia Romae ' (5). And, again, speaking of the hated Cistercians, who wanted to live apart from the world and yet in the world, he quotes,

fugit ad salices, et se cupit ante videri (6).

In fact, Map could quote Virgil with unusual effectiveness. Others did it with heaviness and pedantry. Among these was Osbert of Clare, unfortunate Prior of Westminster, but happier in his devotion to St. Anne, whose cult he did his best to further (7).

(1) COMPARETTI, II, 31 sq.
(2) *Gesch. d. lat. Lit. d. MA.*, III, 784 sq.
(3) Ed. WRIGHT, *Rolls Series*, London, 1863, p. 449 sq. The Virgilian legends in the *De Naturis Rerum* are in the same volume, p. 309 sq.; on the story of the *Culex*, p. 190 sq. WALTER BURLEY (d. 1345) in his *Liber de vitis et moribus philosophorum et poetarum*, ed. Knust, *Lit. Verein in Stuttgart*, 1886, pp. 366 sqq, mainly follows Neckham.
(4) *Distinct.* V, cap. 4.
(5) *Distinct.* I, cap. 23.
(6) *Distinct.* I, cap. 24.
(7) Cf. WILMART, *Les compositions d'Osbert de Clare en honneur de Sainte Anne, Annales de Bretagne*, XXXVII, 1896, pp. 1, sqq.

It is indeed not clear whether his quotations are not taken from *florilegia*, or otherwise at second hand (1).

But a writer of first-rate ability like Joseph of Exeter, the author of the epic, *De bello Troiano*, from whom no secrets of ancient rhetoric were hid (2), knew Virgil as well as he knew Lucan or Statius (3), and we can be sure that Geoffrey of Monmouth, in spite of his sparing use of Virgilian quotations, was steeped in the poetry of the author of the *Aeneid* (4). Nigel Wireker, too, seldom allows himself to make use of tags from Virgil; he had too much original power to consent, as some poets did, to make his poems a patchwork of borrowed phrases.

Laurence of Durham (d. 1154), who was educated in the monastic school of Waltham and was an able scholar and skilful versifier (5), had a good knowledge of Virgil. In his most ambitious poem, the *Hypognosticon*, a versification of themes from the Old and New Testaments, with stories of saints and martyrs added, he makes use not only of the *Fourth Eclogue*, but also of phrases from the *Aeneid* to describe the first coming of the Prince of Peace. Lactantius, in the fourth century, had applied the prophetic verses of the *Fourth Eclogue* to the second Advent (6), but Augustine in the *City of God* (7) relates them to the Incarnation, and Laurence follows the latter in his description of how the Author of peace was meetly born in the time of peace (8). The passage in question is at the beginning of the eighth book of the *Hypognosticon*:

> Tempora temporibus primis postrema quieto
> respondere statu, pax operosa probat.
> pax viget, arma vacant, dum pacis nascitur auctor,
> dumque deus fit homo pace potitur homo.
> aspera depositis mitescunt secula bellis;
> ordine iam redeunt aurea secla novo.
> iam nova progenies celo demittitur alto,
> rex pater imperium cui sine fine dedit.
> iam domus Assarici devictis imperat Argis;

(1) Cf. WILLIAMSON, *The Letters of Osbert of Clare*, Oxford, 1929, p. 191; the quotations from Virgil are on pp. 59, 142, 170.

(2) See SEDGWICK, *The Bellum Troianum of Joseph of Exeter*, *Speculum*, V, 1930, pp. 49 sqq.

(3) Ib., pp. 66 sqq. MANITIUS, *Gesch. d. lat. Lit. d. MA.*, III, 652.

(4) Cf. RABY, *Secular Latin Poetry*, II, 138.

(5) Ib., II, 106 sqq.

(6) *Divin. Instit.*, VII, 24.

(7) X, 27; cf. also the Pseudo-Augustinian Sermon reproduced in K. YOUNG, *The Drama of the Medieval Church*, Oxford, 1933, II, 129.

(8) ' Quod pacis auctor tempore pacis iuste natus est ', marginal note in British Museum MS. Cotton, Vesp. D, XI, f. 84 *v*, from which I have taken this text, making a few obvious corrections. This extract is also to be found in Pitra, *Spicilegium Solesmense*, Paris, 1855, II, 322.

gens alias gentes una togata regit.
natus in orbe puer dominus tamen orbis et auctor
orbem romano subiugat imperio.
hic puer imperium romani principis alto
terminat oceano regnaque rex dat ei.
rex regum, rex iste, volens de virgine nasci,
uni cuncta viro regna subesse dedit.
orbis in urbis opes in principis unius omnes
obsequium certant. mittit et Indus ebur,
Sardius argentum, Ser vellera, Lidus et aurum,
huic Epirus equos mittit et Archas equas.
Persa Libis Ciprus gemmas far vina redonat,
arma rates guttam Gallus Hiberus Arabs.
mel palmas oleon Attis Fenix Lacedemon
Partus Hebreus Afer tela bitumen aves.
uni queque suos offert provincia fructus,
tota sub hoc uno terra quiescit hero.
hanc pacem pax orta quies hanc orta quietem
hancque salutis opem prebuit orta salus.
terris inclinans celum facturaque pacem
cum superis homini pax ea iam fit homo.
una fit hinc per eam respublica terra vel ether,
atque deo per eam pacificatur homo.
ergo iure deus et pacis amator et auctor
nascitur effectus tempore pacis homo.

This introduction of Virgil as a prophet of the coming of Christ is most impressive in the medieval religious plays. In the *Procession of Prophets*, the lector cries *Dic et tu, Virgili, testimonium Christo*, and the poet answers:

iam nova progenies coelo demittitur alto (1).

In another version, the Cantor sings:

Vates, Maro, gentilium,
da Christo testimonium,

and the reply is:

Ecce polo demissa solo nova progenies est (2).

Most charming is the scene in the Rouen play (3), where Virgil is introduced as a young and beautiful poet, — ' in iuvenili habitu bene ornatus '. None of these plays is actually English in origin, but versions of them were used in England, and Virgil's was a familiar figure in the liturgical or religious drama.

(1) K. Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church*, Oxford, 1933, II, 135 sq.
(2) Ib., II, 142.
(3) Ib., II, 164.

I cannot pursue further the fortunes of Virgilian studies in the English Middle Ages. The literary production of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries shows a decline in quality (1). The theological movement attracted the best minds, and the flowering of poetry takes place in the atmosphere of Franciscan mysticism and in the secular Latin lyrics. Richard de Bury in his *Philobiblon* speaks well and wisely of Virgil, but he is a precursor of the new humanism of the Renaissance; he died in 1345, a few years after the birth of Chaucer, and he was a contemporary of Petrarch.

Caxton's *Eneydos*, published in 1490, is a translation from the French version of the prose romance printed at Lyons in 1483 (2). With the sixteenth century we are in the full tide of Tudor translations, in which the names of Gawin Douglas in Scotland, and in England, Surrey, Phaer, Twyne, Fleming, Stanyhurst and Spenser appear as translators of Virgil (3). Since those days the poet has never failed of lovers in

> 'the Northern Island sunder'd once from all the human race'.

For here in England, especially since the Romantic Revival, we have tended to see in Virgil the romantic quality, the enchantment of distance, the human pathos, the feeling for landscape, for sights and sounds of natural things, seed-time and harvest and the circle of the changing year, which appeal most directly to our native temperament. And we see in the poet himself what Walter Pater would have us see in the young Raphael, who, as he reminds us, loved the faultless Virgil above all other classical poets, 'the transformation of meek scholarship into genius'.

Modest, studious and wise, devoted to ancient pieties but finding the deepest answer to the riddle of things in the religious mysticism into which the Stoicism of his time was falling, he is at once the prophet of the new political order, of Rome's majesty and Rome's destiny, as well as the shy retiring spirit set apart from his fellows, the chosen companion of the Muses, so that he still seems to us, after the lapse of many centuries, 'the prince of poets'.

F. J. E. RABY.

(1) Virgil, of course, still remained a favourite, as the works of John Garland, a foremost teacher, show; see index to L. J. PAETOW, *The 'Morale Scolarium' of John of Garland*, University of California, 1927, and cf. p. 110.

(2) H. B. LATHROP, *Translations from the Classics from Caxton to Chapman, 1477-1620, University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature*, No. 35, 1933, p. 26.

(3) See list in LATHROP, p. 311 sq.