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Rhymes and Assonances in the *Aeneid*

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obvious word to use for the sheathing or lining of a galley's bows.

I have said that the meaning given to the passage in Thucydides by the commentators involves, in my opinion, a misuse of the preposition *πρός*. If Thucydides had intended to express 'extending from the *ἐπωτίδες* to the ship's sides' he must, I think, have written *εἰς τοὺς τοίχους*, not *πρὸς τοὺς τοίχους*. The preposition *πρός*, when used in a physical sense with the accusative, means either 'motion to' or 'attachment to' a thing. The former meaning is out of the question; but the latter is exactly what is required. It will be noticed that the words *πρὸς τοὺς τοίχους* follow *ὑπέτειναν*. It seems to me hardly possible to read these words together without giving them the meaning 'they attached to the ship's sides.' It is scarcely necessary to illustrate this, not uncommon, use of *πρός*. I will merely quote three instances: Sophocles, *Ajax* 108, *δεθεῖς πρὸς κίον' ἐρκείου στέγης*, Plato, *Phaedo* 83 D, *προσηλοὶ πρὸς τὸ σῶμα*, and *Timaeus* 82 D, *κολλᾷ πρὸς τὴν τῶν ὀστέων φύσιν*. Also Thucydides himself in iv. 110, 3 has *οὔσης τῆς πόλεως πρὸς λόφον*, and in vi. 101, 3 *τὸ πρὸς τὸν κρημνόν*.

I will only add, in confirmation of what I have said, (1) that it is inconceivable to me that the Syracusans should have omitted to strengthen their bows, or that Thucydides should have omitted to mention the fact; (2) that there was no necessity to add 'props' or 'stays' to the *ἐπωτίδες*, for Thucydides tells us that they were made *παχέαι*, and 'props' carried to, or through,

the ship's sides would have given them no additional strength; (3) that Thucydides himself, in section 3 of the chapter, implies that the bows were made thicker than usual, for he says that the bows of the Athenian galleys were *λεπτά, κοῖλα* and *ἀσθενή*, in comparison with those of the Syracusan galleys which were *στέριφα* and *παχέα*. These epithets are admirably chosen, if the view I take of the passage is correct; but they certainly are not very well chosen if they only describe the difference between *ἐπωτίδες* with props and *ἐπωτίδες* without props. (4) Finally in chapter 40, where he describes the action, he tells us that, owing to the special build of the Syracusan galleys, they stove in the Athenian triremes and carried away a great part of the oarsmen's galleries (*παρεξείρεσας*).¹ This effect would be produced, not by the beaks, or prows, which were shortened for the very purpose of bringing the strong bows into play, nor even, completely, by the *ἐπωτίδες*, but by the broad part of the strengthened bows, grinding against and tearing away the thinner bows and sides of the Athenian triremes.

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¹ I am aware that the meaning which I here give to *παρεξείρεσας* is different from that usually given. This is a matter which requires more than a short note for its discussion. I may mention, however, that I have the authority of E. Assmann, in Baumeister's *Denkmäler*, for the meaning I have given; and I have other stronger reasons which I may perhaps take another opportunity of explaining.

RHYMES AND ASSONANCES IN THE *AENEID*.

In the *Aeneid* I have noticed about sixteen accurately rhyming couplets, not reckoning about half-a-dozen others in which the same word or words are repeated for an ending. There are other examples too where the rhyme is almost perfect; with yet others where verses which accurately rhyme alternate with others which do not. Further, there are series of two, three, or more verses whose endings, though not in strict rhyme, are more or less assonantal.

Now rhyme is a thing so comparatively rare in Latin verses, that the question naturally suggests itself: Are these examples mere oversights, which would have

been removed on revision, or were they inserted of set purpose and for special effect? That the latter is the true reply will become evident upon examination of the cases. In the first place the verses of each couplet are arranged to correspond in time, rhythm and general effect. Secondly, the sounds chosen for rhyme are practically but two—the 3rd pers. of an imperfect tense, and the sound *-entem* or *-entum*. The ending *-ator* occurs once; and there is besides one case where the reading is doubtful. Thirdly, all these verses have trisyllabic terminations, and, in accordance with Virgil's usual practice in such case, have mostly the strong caesura in

the 4th foot. Lastly, such rhymes are not peculiar to the *Aeneid*.

But the careful correspondence of sound

and arrangement will best be felt by glancing at a few examples.

I. 625-6.

Ipse | hos | tis | Teuc | ros | in | signi | laude | fer | ebat
Seque | or | tum | anti | qua | Teuc | rorum | a | stirp | vol | ebat.

Here note in both verses the heavy spondaic rhythm, the elision in first foot, and the (exceptional in these rhyming verses)

bucolic caesura: as well as the italicized resemblances in sound.

II. 124-5.

Flagitat | et | mihi | iam | mul | ti cru | dele | can | ebant
Artifi | cis | scelus | et | taci | ti ven | tura | vid | ebant.

Here note pair of initial dactyls, strong caesura followed 'y disyllabic word in 2nd foot.

II. 456-7.

Saepius | Androma | che | fer | re | incomi | tata | sol | ebat
Ad | socer | os, | et | av | o | puer | um Astyan | acta | trah | ebat.

Here again we have the pair of initial dactyls, and the long penultimate words of

identical structure; both, too, united to the preceding word by elision.

VI. 843-4.

Scipiad | as | clad | em | Liby | ae? | par | voque | pot | entem
Fabrici | um | ? vel | te | sul | co, | Ser | rane, | ser | entem?

Here note initial quadrisyllabic proper name, and the similarly alliterating terminations.

VIII. 620-1.

Terribil | em | cris | tis | gale | am | flam | masque | vom | entem
Fatifer | umque | en | sem, lor | icam | ex | aere | rig | entem.

Here the correspondence is so close and neat as to be strikingly obvious.

The rhymes are very unequally distributed among the different books of the *Aeneid*. In the 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th, 10th and 11th, I have noticed but single couplets (i. 625, iii. 656, v. 385, vii. 187, ix. 182, x. 804, xi. 886); two instances occur both in the 2nd (124 and

456), and in the 8th (620 and 646); three in the 4th (189, 256 and 331); while the twelfth is the only book from which they seem to be altogether absent.

Finally, there occurs in book vii. (796) a peculiar case:

Rt | Sac | ranae | aci | es, | et | picti | scuta | Lab | ici
Qui | sal | tus | Tiber | ine | tu | os sac | rumque | Num | ici.

Here the first verse will be seen to be in many respects exceptional, not to say suspicious, taking together the elision, division in middle,¹ lack of caesura in it. Then, too, the reading *Labici* seems to be doubtful. Perhaps *Lanini* was written. However, there stands the couplet, such as it is. The rhyme is not at all like the other instances

in the *Aeneid*, for it is a meaningless termination of a proper name, whereas the rest form significant syllables denoting action (usually sustained) which the poet desires to emphasize by repetition.

As for those rare cases in which the terminations of the verses in the couplet are formed by identical words, I have noticed half-a-dozen: none in the first six books, one each in the 7th (653), 9th (544), and

¹ Though this is not at all so rare as some books would have us believe.

11th (204), the other three in the 8th (271, 396 and 568), which book indeed is remarkable for the number and emphatic character of its rhymes and assonances; while from this class as well as the former the 12th is free.

In this class we note: 1st foot does not end with end of word unless in shape | — | ˘ ˘ |; 2nd foot has always caesura, strong with one exception; 4th has strong caesura, but, unlike the first class, the ending is as often disyllabic as trisyllabic.

VII. 653-4.

Mille		vir		os		;	dig		nus,		patri		is		qui		laetior		esset
Imperi				is		,	et		cui		pater		haud		Me		zentius		esset.

Here the identity consists best in the final pair of verses the same similarity of structure as we found in the true rhyming couplets.

VIII. 396-7.

Quo		tibi				Diva		me		i?		Simil		is		si		cura		fu		isset
Tum		quoque				fas		no		bis		Teuc		ros		ar		mare		fu		isset.

Here the identity reaches one syllable further. The similarity is again clear.

IX. 544-5.

Transfos				si		lig		no		veni		unt.		Vix				unus		Hel		enor
Et		Lycus				e		lap		si:		quo		rum		pri		maevus		Hel		enor

The termination is here of four syllables. But the most striking example is :—

VIII. 271-2.

Hanc		a		ram		lu		co		statu		it		quae		Maxima		semper		
Dice				tur		no		bis		et		er		it		quae		Maxima		semper.

where the identity extends to the full half of the verse.

Next let us look at that class of cases which includes verses not strictly rhyming indeed, yet in which there is a certain assonance. This assonance may approach very closely to a perfect identity of sound, or may fade away by imperceptible degrees to the point where it ceases to attract our notice.

Then as to the structure of the verses, there may be, as in the true rhyming verses, a similarity so close as to force us to the conclusion that the poet's intention was thus to emphasize some idea; or the resemblance may be so slight as to leave it doubtful whether he had any definite end in view.

X. 904-5.

Corpus		hu		mo		pati		are		teg		i.		Scio		ac		erba		me		orum
Circum				stare		odi		a		hunc		o		ro,		de		fende		fur		orem.

Here we have a similarity of termination closely approximating to identity, while the *or* sound is still further emphasized by its additional occurrence in the middle of the second verse. Then, too, the assonantal imitation throughout is very noticeable. I may add that the line previous to these ends 'hostibus

oro,' that following 'sepulcro,' and the next but one 'cuore,' echoing the *are* in the previous one; each too in a leading position before an important caesura.

It is remarkable that while Virgil's favourite rhyme is *ebat* or *ebant*, his favourite assonance is *orem*, *ore*, *ora*, &c.

So again iv. 178-9.

Illam				terra		par		ens		ira		irrit		ata		de		orum		
Extrem				am		ut		perhib		ent		Coeo		Encela		doque		sor		orem.

where the correspondence is sharply marked. Another example of a nearly perfect rhyme, though not quite so much so as these, is such an one as xi. 544-5 :—

Ipse | sin | u | prae | se | por | tans | iuga | longa | pet | ebat
Solor | um | nemor | um : | te | la | undique | saeva | prem | ebant.

In these cases the identity of the first of the two final syllables is perfect; it is in the second that the divergence occurs. Thus we have instances of the contrary arrangement, such, for example, as ix. 250 :—

Pectora. | Sic | memor | ans, | humer | os | dex | trasque | ten | ebat
Ambo | rum, | et | vul | tum | lacrim | is | at | que ora | rig | abat.

In neither of the two last couplets is the correspondence and assonance throughout the verses very marked; it is much more so in, for example, i. 278-9 :—

His | ego | nec, | me | tas | re | rum | nec | tempora | pono :
Imperi | um | sine | fine | ded | i. | Quin | aspera | Iuno.

Here we see the assonance not only in the latter half of the final spondee, but also of the final dactyl, with other agreements. Somewhat similar is x. 597-8 :—

Per | te, | per | qui | te | ta | lem | genu | ere | par | entes
Vir | Tro | iane | sin | e | hanc | anim | am | et | miser | ere | prec | antis.

Then we find again the closeness of resemblance fade away by delicate gradations.

VI. 812-3.

Missus | in | imperi | um | mag | num. Cui | deinde | sub | ibit,
Otia | qui | rum | pet | patri | ae, | resid | esque | mov | ebit.

VIII. 423-4.

Hoc | tunc | ignipot | ens | cae | lo | des | cendit | ab | alto.
Ferrum ex | erce | bant | vas | to | Cyc | lopes in | antro.

X. 302-3.

Omnes | innocu | ae. | Sed | non | pup | pis | tua, | Tarcho.
Namque in | flicta vad | is | dor | so | dum | pendet | in | iquo.

It is not unworthy of notice that in those couplets where the similarity of ending is exact—true rhymes and word-repetitions—there is usually no pause at the end of the first line, the sentence running on into the second; or else there is merely that pause which occurs between two parallel or con-

trasted clauses. But in the case of a mere assonance there may be a distinct close coinciding with the end of the first line, and this even where the assonance approaches pretty nearly to the identity of rhyme. Thus x. 556-7 :—

Provolvens, super haec inimico pectore fatur :
Istic nunc, metuende, iace ! Non te optima mater.

So too xi. 501-2, &c. Then again x. 506-7 :—

Impositum scuto referunt Pallanta frequentes.
O dolor atque decus magnum rediture parenti !

But perhaps more remarkable and striking than any of the rhymes and assonances hitherto cited are those which extend beyond the limits of a couplet. I have not noticed any such cases formed entirely of perfect rhymes, but the similarity of termination is yet frequently very marked. Thus, take the triplet xii. 138-140 :—

Extemplo Turni sic est affata sororem,
 Diva deam, stagnis quae fluminibusque sonoris
 Praesidet; hunc illi rex aetheris altus honorem.

Here, when all the endings are assonantal, the alternate ones form a perfect rhyme.

In the next example (v. 60-63) the second and fourth endings form an identity, while

the first and third are closely assonantal with one another, and also, though to a less degree, with the former pair:—

Urbe velit posita templis sibi ferre dicatis.
 Bina boum vobis Troia generatus Acestes
 Dat numero capita in naves; adhibete Penates
 Et patrios epulis et quos colit hospes Acestes.

Further on in the same book (v. 552-555) we have an example of four more closely assonantal endings:—

Infusum populum, et campos iubet esse *patentes*.
 Incedunt pueri, pariterque ante ora *parentum*
 Frenatis lucent in equis: quos omnis *euntes*
 Trinacriae mirata fremit Troiaque *iuventus*.

The alliteration harmony of the first two verses is striking; that of the second part is less so.

Proceeding yet further we meet a still more extended group (v. 744-751):

Pergameumque Larem, et canae *penetralia Vestae*,
 Farre pio et plena supplex *veneratur acer*ra.
 Extemplo socios primumque *arcessit Acesten*,
 Et Iovis imperium et cari praecepta *parentis*
 Edocet, et quae nunc animo *sententia constet*.
 Haud mora consiliis; nec iussa *recusat Acestes*.
 Transcribunt urbi matres, populumque *volentem*
 Deponunt, animos nil magnae laudis *egentes*.

In xii. 586 ff. we find the following endings: defendere muros; 587 pumice pastor; 588 implevit amaro; 589 cerea castra; 590 iras; 592 auras: then 599 turbata dolore; 600 caputque malorum; 601 effata furorem; (602 amictus); 603 nectit ab alta; 604 acceperere Latinae; 605 Lavinia crines.

Another example of extended assonantal connexion appears at v. 331 ff.: presso; 332 pronus in ipso; 333 sacroque cruore; 334 oblitus amorum; 335 lubrica surgens; 336 revolutus arena: then 339 Diore; 340 et ora; 341 clamoribus implet; 342 poscit honorem; 343 decorae; 344 corpore virtus; 345 voce Diore; (346 praemia venit); 347 honores.

It will have been observed, in such cases

for instance as that just cited (xii. 599 and 601, turbata dolore, effata furorem), that the assonance exists not only between the final spondees, but also between the preceding dactyls. Now sometimes, though rarely, we find the dactylic assonance without the spondaic. Thus in v. 706-7, portenderet ira, posceret ordo; or better, 649-50, gressus eunti, digressa reliqui. This assonance too, like the other, may continue through several verses: ix. 507-512, ascendere muros, [interlucetque corona], effundere contra, detrudere contis, defendere bello, pondere si qua, where a variety of assonances are tastefully combined. So here again we may even have an actual rhyme (compare the example already quoted, x. 597), as in x. 860-1:

Omnibus. Alloquitur maerentem, et talibus infit:
 Rhoebe, diu (res si qua diu mortalibus ulla est).

On the whole it plainly appears, not only from what has been pointed out as regards the actual rhymes, but from the number, variety and arrangement of the assonances—from which we have selected but a few 'leading cases'—that they form a not unimportant and an especially interesting instance of the means adopted by the poet for

harmoniously binding together the verses of his poem. Nor does he stand alone in his employment of this device. Other Latin poets too have made use both of rhyme and of various assonances, not without individual and characteristic diversities. Some instances of these may be given upon another occasion.
 H. T. JOHNSTONE.