

basis for the reconstruction of the archetype. A is a hasty and careless copy of (R), but it occasionally preserves a reading of (M) which has been omitted, or is not explicit, in P and B.

L. D. R.

## VIRGIL

It is not surprising that such a poet as Virgil should be in many ways a law unto himself. Greatness of that order has its own destiny and this has affected in some respects the very manner in which his poems were handed down to posterity. No poet became the pastime of grammarians and commentators as soon or to such a degree; no other text, whether by accident or design, has reached us in manuscripts written in the lapidary script more appropriate to monuments of stone; no other author with a full-blooded medieval transmission has a text which is so largely built on surviving ancient codices, as imposing as the monuments and ruins of Antiquity itself.

una legge  
in se  
il modo  
stesso

'Itur in antiquam silvam'<sup>1</sup> were the words with which Sir Roger Mynors aptly began the preface to his Oxford Classical Text,<sup>2</sup> and any account of Virgil's transmission must begin with the impressive parade of the ancient books, written in their capital scripts,<sup>3</sup> which are the main witnesses to his text. First come three manuscripts which, though they have all lost some leaves, preserve the bulk of the poems and are the editor's mainstay:

massa  
quantitativa

**V** M Florence, Laur. 39. 1 + Vatican lat. 3225, f. 76, known as the 'codex Mediceus'.<sup>4</sup> Written in Italy in the fifth century in rustic capitals, it

<sup>1</sup> *Aen.* 6. 179.

<sup>2</sup> Oxford, 1969 (reprinted with corrections, 1972). The most recent critical edition is that of M. Geymonat (Turin, 1973). Based on R. Sabbadini<sup>2</sup> (Rome, 1930-1) and drawing on Castiglioni (Turin, 1945) and Mynors, it has a larger apparatus than is necessary or even convenient for normal purposes, but where extra information may be found. Editors still lean on O. Ribbeck's great edition (Leipzig, 1859-66 and 1894-5). Where the dates assigned to the manuscripts are not those given in *CLA* I have relied on Bischoff (*Mitt. Stud.* ii. 316, *Paläographie des römischen Altertums und des abendländischen Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1979), 77 n. 35) and Seider (see n. 14, below).

<sup>3</sup> Known in the early Middle Ages as *litterae Virgilianae*: Bischoff, *Mitt. Stud.* i. 4-5.

<sup>4</sup> *CLA* I, p. 5, III. 296; Chatelain, plate LXVI. A complete facsimile was published by E. Rostagno (Rome, 1931).

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bears a subscription<sup>5</sup> recording that it was corrected at Rome by Turcius Rufius Apronianus Asterius, consul in 494. It found its way to Bobbio, and was still there in 1467. Shortly after this it was taken to Rome and was in the hands of Pomponio Leto by 1471.<sup>6</sup>

- P Vatican, Pal. lat. 1631, the 'codex Palatinus'.<sup>7</sup> Written in Italy in s. V/VI, it was at Lorsch by the ninth century. Rustic capitals.
- R Vatican lat. 3867, the 'codex Romanus'.<sup>8</sup> Written in Italy in s. V/VI, it was in the thirteenth century, and probably from the early Middle Ages, at Saint-Denis. There, or possibly while sojourning at Fleury, it was used by Heiric of Auxerre.<sup>9</sup> When at the Vatican, it was consulted by Politian. It is written in rustic capitals and contains a number of miniatures, including a portrait of the author.

The four other ancient codices are in a more fragmentary state:

- F Vatican lat. 3225, known as the 'schedae Vaticanae'.<sup>10</sup> A magnificent book written in Italy in rustic capitals towards the end of the fourth century; it has fine illustrations and looks like a product of the professional booktrade. It later belonged to Gioviano Pontano, Pietro Bembo, and Fulvio Orsini. Seventy-five leaves survive.
- V Verona XL (38), s. V, rustic capitals.<sup>11</sup> It was in Gaul about 700, when it was rewritten, in Luxeuil minuscule, with Gregory's *Moralia*. By the ninth century it had reached Verona. Forty-nine leaves survive.
- A Vatican lat. 3256 + Berlin (West) lat. 2° 416, the 'codex Augusteus'.<sup>12</sup> A highly calligraphic and de luxe edition which, with its imposing square capitals and an estimated weight (when complete) of nine kilograms, well deserves its name. Written in the late fifth or early sixth century, it is the oldest extant manuscript with decorated initials. Of Italian origin, it probably spent the Middle Ages, like R, at Saint-Denis. Only seven leaves remain.
- G St. Gall 1394, s. V, likewise written in square capitals and of Italian origin.<sup>13</sup> In the fifteenth century it was taken to pieces at St. Gall and used for binding and repairing books. Twelve leaves and a number of fragments have been recovered.

<sup>5</sup> Though superimposed upon the manuscript, it is not clear that the subscription is an autograph: see, e.g., O. Ribbeck, *Prolegomena critica ad P. Vergili Maronis opera maiora* (Leipzig, 1866), 223.

<sup>6</sup> For Pomponio Leto's work on Virgil see *Survival*, nos. 26–8 (pp. 11–17).

<sup>7</sup> *CLA* I. 99; Chatelain, plate LXIV. A facsimile was published by Sabbadini (Paris, 1929).

<sup>8</sup> *CLA* I. 19; Chatelain, plate LXV; partial facsimile published by F. Ehrle (Rome, 1902).

<sup>9</sup> L. Traube, *Vorlesungen und Abhandlungen*, iii (Munich, 1920), 220.

<sup>10</sup> *CLA* I. 11; Chatelain, plate LXIII; facsimile by F. Ehrle (Rome, 1899). A new colour facsimile has been published, *Codices selecti* 71 (*Codices e Vaticanis selecti*, 40), Graz, 1980.

<sup>11</sup> *CLA* IV. 498; Chatelain, plate LXI. Lowe tentatively assigned it to Gaul, Seider regards it as being of Italian origin.

<sup>12</sup> *CLA* I. 13, VIII, p. 9; Chatelain, plate LXI. The facsimile published by Sabbadini (Turin, 1926) has been superseded by that of C. Nordenfalk (Graz, 1976).

<sup>13</sup> *CLA* VII. 977; Chatelain, plate LXII.



To these ancient witnesses must be added a number of papyri,<sup>14</sup> of less textual value than usual because of the abundance of the other ancient testimony, and the tangled mass of the indirect tradition, furnished by the writers, grammarians, and scholiasts of Antiquity.

Behind the ancient codices, but just ahead of the legions of later manuscripts, come two manuscripts which predate the great revival of the ninth century. The first is Munich Clm 29216 (7 (olim 29005 (18))), a fragment of the late eighth century, written in northern Italy in pre-Caroline minuscule and later at Tegernsee.<sup>15</sup> This is our oldest medieval manuscript of the *Aeneid*. The other is Paris lat. 7906, written in early Caroline minuscule in western Germany, s. VIII/IX.<sup>16</sup>

When we reach the ninth century, the 'antiqua silva' becomes the 'silva immensa' in which even Virgil's stout hero needed divine assistance to pluck the lurking gold. We have a clearer idea of what this forest is like, at least in parts, than we did before, for Mynors picked out thirteen ninth-century manuscripts, which he cites alongside the older witnesses. Largely from French centres, they allow one to form an impression of the Carolingian tradition. It is striking how many of the early manuscripts of Virgil had been drawn to northern Europe in the early Middle Ages, and it must be true that others, now lost, made similar journeys and survived long enough to contribute something to the medieval vulgate text. But the Carolingian scholars made such a thorough job of editing their texts of Virgil, correcting them, comparing one manuscript with another, drawing, as we do, on scholia and ancient learning, that there can be little hope in that mêlée of identifying and tracking down strains of text not otherwise attested. It is difficult enough to see the relationship between the medieval text and the ancient codices which have survived, but here Mynors was able to isolate some interesting and useful lines of descent. One of the ninth-century manuscripts, Berne 172 + Paris lat. 7929, from Fleury (= a), so faithfully follows R in the *Eclogues* and the latter part of the *Aeneid* that it can stand in for R in places where R is now missing. Wolfenbüttel, Gud. lat. 70 (s. IX, written at Lyon, = γ) mirrors the text of P so closely in the *Aeneid* that it must have descended from it and thus becomes a useful, if makeshift, witness when P is defective. P had certainly reached Lorsch

<sup>14</sup> R. A. Pack, *The Greek and Latin Literary Texts from Greco-Roman Egypt* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1965), nos. 2935–52; R. Seider, 'Beiträge zur Geschichte und Paläographie der antiken Vergilhandschriften', in *Studien zum antiken Epos*, ed. H. Görgemanns and E. A. Schmidt (Meisenheim am Glan, 1976), 129–72, plates IV–XVI. Notable among the papyri are fragments of a magnificent fourth-century papyrus codex (Oxford, Ashmolean Museum P. Ant. 29; *CLA* Suppl. 1708); a third manuscript in square capitals (Cairo, Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, P. Oxy. 1098; *CLA* x 1569; s. IV); P. Strasb. Lat. 2, assigned to s. IV by Lowe (*CLA* VI. 833), but which Seider would put as early as s. I/II, making it our oldest Virgil manuscript. Milan, Ambros. Cimelio 3, ff. 113–20 (*CLA* III. 306; s. V/VI), has a bilingual Latin–Greek text, a format which crops up more often than not among the papyri.

<sup>15</sup> *CLA* IX. 1327.

<sup>16</sup> *CLA* Suppl. 1744; Chatelain, plate LXVI.

m

p

collectio  
NE GOLA

Ra

Py

ABBATIA  
Pisa  
Germania

variant

provisiono

by the ninth century. If, as has been suggested,<sup>17</sup> it can be identified with the *Liber Vergili* which came to the monastery from the library of its former monk Gerward, it may, like its owner, have spent some time at the Carolingian court, well placed to exercise an influence on the medieval tradition and making an early bid for its title of Palatinus. If more discoveries of this sort can be made, there are obvious gains for Virgil's text. But Mynors has covered more of the ground than he modestly maintains, and his thirteen manuscripts must be a small selection of those he had examined. It is important to know what the medieval text of Virgil was like, but it has an almost negligible part to play when it comes to deciding what our poet wrote; it is so thoroughly conflated, so full of shifting alliances, that it must be wistful to hope that more gold can be disentangled from that thicket. Further study of Virgil's manuscripts will doubtless yield a rich, if at times hard-won, harvest for those who wish to illuminate specific aspects of medieval and Renaissance culture, and indeed the wider *Fortleben* of Virgil himself, but such problems as his text still presents<sup>18</sup> are as old as Antiquity and their solution, if there is a solution, lies in the ancient evidence and a critical understanding of his poetry. Q. Caecilius Epirota, who founded his school at Rome about 26 BC, put Virgil into the curriculum; he became a classic during his own lifetime, and his text the subject of scholarly discussion as soon as it could be questioned without fear of authoritative rebuttal. Virgilian scholarship was soon a thriving industry, and the problems lie in judging how much weight should be given to scholars with their own axes to grind – like Hyginus and Probus,<sup>19</sup> who supported their dubious emendations with even more dubious manuscripts 'ex domo atque familia Vergilii' or 'manu ipsius correctus' – and in sorting the grain from the chaff in scholiasts who preserve much of value but blankly misunderstood what great poetry is about.

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<sup>17</sup> Bischoff, *Lorsch*, 56. For another book which may have come from Gerward's library, see JUSTINUS.

<sup>18</sup> For a recent and stimulating discussion of some of these problems see E. Courtney, 'The Formation of the Text of Vergil', *BICS* 28 (1981), 13–29.

<sup>19</sup> For a refreshingly sceptical view, see G. P. Goold, *HSCP* 74 (1970), 161–2; J. E. G. Zetzel, *ibid.* 77 (1973), 233 ff.; on Probus in particular, Courtney, 24 ff.