

In the 1950s and 1960s the middle ground between the positive German view and the pessimistic American view of the *Aeneid* can be said to have been held by the British, and (to a lesser degree) the French. The variety of the modest number of French contributions to Vergilian literature is remarkable. The much-read work of Sainte-Beuve in the nineteenth century (cf. n. 11 above) found few immediate followers, but a number of works of interest have emerged periodically from France: Cartault's provoking study (1926) should be read as a continuous commentary on the poem,²⁷ Guillemin, stressing with Heinze the originality of the *Aeneid* in the epic tradition,²⁸ took a moderately positive attitude to the poem, as did Brisson in his rather speculative historical and biographical view of Vergil's works.²⁹ More recently, the strong French interest in the technicalities of the Latin hexameter has been extended to a concept of 'rhythmical composition' in the *Aeneid* by Lesueur.³⁰ Perhaps the most stimulating French study of the *Aeneid* to date is Jacques Perret's *Virgile* (1952), a short book which contains an interesting analysis of the poem, which owes much to Pöschl, and particularly stresses the humanity of the hero and the poet; much more recently, Perret has also produced a useful Budé edition of the *Aeneid* with some interesting endnotes.³¹

The British moderation of these years was evident and characteristic. The chief scholarly interpreters of the *Aeneid* for a UK readership were the commentators R. G. Austin and R. D. Williams, who between them wrote commentaries on each book of the first half of the *Aeneid* from 1955,³² Williams also producing much else, including a school commentary on the whole of the poem and a final book which summarized his views.³³ Williams's outlook on the *Aeneid* was influenced by the Harvard School (he talks of the tension between the 'public voice' and 'private voice' of the poem),³⁴ but sensibly avoided the views of some of its more extreme advocates on existential pessimism and the removal of

the divine element from its essential role in the poem. Austin's outlook was more characteristically English, and essentially followed influential judgements by English men of letters in the previous century—Tennyson's address to Vergil, 'Thou majestic in thy sadness / at the doubtful doom of humankind', and Matthew Arnold's discovery of 'an ineffable melancholy' and 'a sweet, a touching sadness' in the *Aeneid*;³⁵ Vergil was primarily a poet of supreme *humanitas*, and though the *Aeneid* did indeed celebrate as great the victories of Aeneas, Rome, and Augustus, it also expressed a simultaneous sympathy with the sufferings of both victor and victims—a sensitive Aeneas, a noble and tragic Dido, a Turnus who is youthfully impetuous and unfortunate. Here we have Vergil the musingly melancholic, a picture which has continued to appeal to many British scholars.

As noted above, the most extensive recapitulation of the traditional/German view of the *Aeneid* using the methodology of Pöschl was in fact that of the American Brooks Otis. The second half of his major study of Vergil, published in 1964,³⁶ is a book-by-book description of the *Aeneid*; two earlier chapters encapsulate Otis's real contribution to the criticism of the *Aeneid*, stressing Vergil's 're-invention' of epic through the 'subjective style', following up points made by Heinze and Klingner. A particular feature of the work is its continual concern with episodic structure within the poem, an expansion of the concerns of Heinze. Dido and Turnus are treated as guilty parties, though not wholly unsympathetically; echoes of Heinze and the German tradition are seen in the characterization of the central concern of the *Aeneid* as 'the formation and victory of the Augustan hero'.³⁷ Otis's powerful restatement of the traditional view for our time, though not always well expressed, has become duly influential.

²⁷ A. Cartault, *L'Art de Virgile dans l'Énéide*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1926).

²⁸ A.-M. Guillemin, *L'Originalité de Virgile: Étude sur la méthode littéraire antique* (Paris, 1931); the same author produced a general study, *Virgile poète, artiste et penseur* (Paris, 1951).

²⁹ J.-P. Brisson, *Virgile: Son temps et le nôtre* (Paris, 1966).

³⁰ R. Lesueur, *L'Énéide de Virgile: Étude sur la composition rythmique d'une épopée* (Toulouse, 1975).

³¹ J. Perret, *Virgile: L'Homme et l'œuvre*, Paris, 1951 (1966); id., *Virgile: L'Énéide*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1977–80). For more recent French work cf. n. 103 (below).

³² R. G. Austin: commentaries on Book 4 (1955), Book 2 (1964), Book 1 (1971), and Book 6 (1977), all Oxford.

³³ R. D. Williams: separate commentaries on Book 5 (1960) and Book 3 (1962), both Oxford; 2-vol. school commentary on the *Aeneid* (London and Basingstoke, 1972–3); and *The Aeneid* (London, 1987).

³⁴ e.g. pp. xx–xxii of the introduction to his school commentary (above).

³⁵ Tennyson, *To Virgil* (1882); Matthew Arnold, 'The Modern Element in Literature', inaugural lecture as Oxford Professor of Poetry, 1857.

³⁶ Brooks Otis, *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford, 1964).

³⁷ *Ibid.* 313–19.

³⁸ V. Buchheit, *Virgil über die Sendung Roms* (Heidelberg, 1963); G. Binder, *Aeneas und Augustus: Interpretationen zum 8. Buch der Aeneis* (Meisenheim, 1971).