

THE COMPOSITION OF *AENEID* 2 AND 3: A NEW ANALYSIS*

Abstract: A century ago it was claimed that nothing but rewriting the whole of the third book of the *Aeneid* could bring it into harmony with the rest of the poem. This judgment has happily been largely reversed over the many intervening years. In this paper, I set out to demonstrate that, despite the great progress that has been made in interpretation, the full structural coherence of books 2 and 3 has not been appreciated. In particular, I argue that the second and third books of the *Aeneid* have been accommodated to a ring compositional arrangement of correspondences. This pattern functions to indicate the progressive development of Aeneas' journey in book 3. I then draw additional conclusions from the existence of this structure.

Keywords: Vergil; *Aeneid* 2; *Aeneid* 3; ring composition

Book 3 of Vergil's *Aeneid* has often been deemed a lesser achievement than the other books. Points of inconsistency with the other books have been noted,¹ prompting Mary Crump to write in 1920: "Nothing short of rewriting the whole [of book 3] could bring it into harmony in style and matter with the rest of the poem."² Robert Lloyd's seminal 1957 article 'Aeneid III: A New Approach', which analyzed the themes of divine omens throughout book 3 and its neighboring books, proved an important work in

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1) See esp. Saunders 1925 for a comprehensive and reasonably balanced account of these inconsistencies, some more serious than others. My essay will not be concerned with rehashing the debates of previous scholars on these questions. I do, however, direct the reader's attention to O'Hara 2007, 77–103 and Horsfall 2016, 79–94 which both rightly caution against making too much out of 'inconsistencies' in the *Aeneid*. The fact that many complete works also contain these suggests that we should restrain "scholarly confidence about our ability to identify parts of the *Aeneid* Vergil would have 'corrected had not death intervened'." (O'Hara 2007, 83–5).

2) Crump 1920, 29–30.

reinstating it as part of a coherent whole.³ While this did not stop Kenneth Quinn from writing just over a decade later that “Book 3 attempts, unsuccessfully, to provide ... continuity”⁴ between the narratives of the *Iliupersis* and the Trojan arrival on Carthaginian shores, the third book has since continued to receive more positive attention from scholarship as is evident most recently by the publication of Nicholas Horsfall’s 2006, Christine Perkell’s 2010, and Stephen Heyworth and James Morwood’s 2017 commentaries on it. This paper will justify and reinforce the growing appreciation for the book, and it will do so by means of a structural analysis. A previous and not fully convincing attempt at providing a structural model of the third book tried to show that it resembled an “Aeneid in parvo”.⁵ My approach will be different: I will analyze both books in which Aeneas narrates to Dido the sack of Troy and his subsequent wanderings, showing that book 3 is tied to book 2 by a subtle and complex pattern of ring composition.

Ring composition as a structural design found a firm place in the Homeric epics⁶ and since pervaded much of later Greek and Latin poetry and was employed by authors on the smallest and largest scale and all levels in between.⁷ While this compositional technique probably began as a mnemonic device for oral poets, it is already in Homer, especially when employed on the macroscale, an architectonic and aesthetic principle that brings a sense of coherence and resolution to an extended narrative.⁸ It is my intention to suggest

3) Lloyd 1957a.

4) Quinn 1968, 122.

5) Hershkowitz 1991. I have strong reservations concerning this scheme. Several episodes in book 3 (Delos, Scylla and Charybdis, and for all intents and purposes, Polydorus) find no correspondence, and some other alleged links strike me as very tenuous. Also, I see no clear motive on Vergil’s part for organizing the book in such a manner.

6) An endless list could be provided, but on the *Iliad*, see esp. Lohmann 1970, 12–30, and for a larger analysis, Stanley 2014.

7) For a broad discussion of ring composition in Greek literature, see van Otterlo 1944.

8) Minchin 1995 challenges this traditional picture and compares Homeric ring composition to everyday story-telling techniques such as attested in 20th cen. U.S.A., but, while she is partly convincing in her analysis of smaller chiasmic patterns, she clearly underrates (31–3) the highly artistic architectonic planning that goes into especially the large-scale Homeric ring compositions.

that Vergil accommodated the lengthy narrative of his hero Aeneas to this structural pattern. First, I will lay out the outline of my argument and the method by which I will proceed in my demonstration. Following this, I will examine whether our hypothesis stands up to analysis. Finally, I will draw conclusions from the results.

I now lay out the structure of my argument. I first present the motivation of our hypothesis that Vergil would have fit the second and third books of his *Aeneid* into a ring structure. Most basically, these two books are both recited by Aeneas, and as such, it would be entirely natural and hardly unexpected for there to be a structural coherence to the whole of the narrative – a coherence that up to now has not adequately been found. But why should we surmise that Vergil would have had in particular a chiasmic model of arrangement in mind? After all, there are various other ways to order one's material. The main reasons for this assumption are two. It is significant that Homerists have detected ring composition as the guiding structural principle of the *apologoi*, Odysseus' narration in the *Odyssey* which extends over four books (Od. 9–12) and details his past journeys to the court of the Phaeacians.⁹ Aeneas' stay in Carthage clearly mirrors Odysseus' stay among the Phaeacians in many ways, and many episodes in *Aeneid* 3 are intricately modelled on Odysseus' journey.¹⁰ Glenn Most correctly says that the Odyssean ring composition is “remarkably simple”,¹¹ so it is likely that Vergil, with his deep knowledge of Homer's poetry, would have noticed it. We could therefore legitimately wonder if Vergil was inspired to arrange his material in a similar manner. But furthermore, scholars have already long noticed that the beginning of book 2 corresponds to the end of book 3. Book 2 opens with the lines

*Conticuere omnes intentique ora tenebant;
inde toro pater Aeneas sic orsus ab alto* (2.1–2),

9) See Niles 1978 and Most 1989, 21–2, for the scheme. Roughly it is (see Most's article for a better layout): Cicones | two-day storm | Lotus-eaters | [Cyclopes | Aeolus | Laestrygonians] | Circe | Nekyia | Sirens | [Scylla (Charybdis) | Thrinacia | Charybdis (Scylla)] | Calypso | two-day storm | Phaeacians.

10) Knauer's work remains the authoritative treatment on Homer's influence on the *Aeneid*. See esp. Knauer 1964, 147–199. See also Cova 1994, lxxiv.

11) Most 1989, 21.

and book 3 closes with:

*Sic pater Aeneas intentis omnibus unus
fata renarrabat divom cursusque docebat.
Conticuit tandem factoque hic fine quievit* (3.716–8).

Both use the epitheted phrase *pater Aeneas*, and *conticuere omnes intentique* corresponds closely to *intentis omnibus ... conticuit*.¹² Furthermore, the similarity of the Sinon episode with the Achaemenides episode has been examined by many.¹³ Combining these reasons together, we can form an in principle plausible hypothesis that Vergil may have had an eye toward ring composition over the course of the entirety of the two books.

Such is so far speculation. We must establish a method to test our hypothesis. It will not do to simply find correspondences between the books that happen to be in a mirroring arrangement. For if we ignore significant and highly meaningful tracts of text between our discovered correspondences, we would thus only be forcing links that fit our preconceived notion of ring composition. This would amount to a circular form of argumentation. Independent criteria must be established for the blocks of text that ought to be compared with one another. Only after this can we then apply a test to the correspondences. The first criterion for the subsequent test will be straightforward: do the resulting correspondences in fact correspond thematically and/or verbally? I should stress especially the broad thematic link, as it will hardly suffice that there be merely a few stray parallel expressions. Secondly, do the correspondences create or expand meaning, i. e. are they interpretatively significant? If we can answer in the affirmative to both, we can conclude that Vergil did in fact intend to accommodate his second and third books to a ring compositional structure. Let me add some words to this. Our conclusion, if correct, by no means excludes other links that have (or will in future be) discovered between episodes that do not fit within the ring compositional pattern. With rare exceptions,

12) See Moskalew 1982, 116–7.

13) Cf. Ramming 1991, 53–4 n. 4, 5 where he lists the work of various previous scholars. Horsfall 2006, xv: “At the end of bk. 3, ample ring-composition that echoes the beginning of bk. 2, and Aeneas’ original address to Dido will be noted.”

I will therefore not treat other links. Our conclusion would only show that Vergil, motivated by a concern for structure, thought it fitting to make it such that his nexus of correspondences would also fit a coherent logic and pattern. Our results, if accepted, would not limit the extent of Vergil's allusive capacities but, on the contrary, add to them by demonstrating that he could impose structural order even on the most intricate, polymorphic allusive webs.

We must now propose criteria for selecting the episodes in books 2 and 3 that should correspond to one another. In this, I will follow the distinction made by Kenneth Quinn between two kinds of episodes. "The first type", he writes, "have a well organized, coherent structure . . . These are the Episodes that stick in the memory, because in them some one thing which is important or exciting takes place . . . Some of the Episodes are long . . . some quite brief".¹⁴ The second type, according to Quinn, consists of episodes that are "less tightly coherent". They provide a link between episodes of the first type and provide "the things we need to be told for the story to possess continuity, depth and variety".¹⁵ In my analysis, I will compare only episodes of the first type against one another. There is an element of subjectivity in distinguishing intermediate cases, but this does not defeat the core truth that lies at the basis of this distinction. I present my schema accordingly below, but first I give several comments on the list. For book 3, one will find the exact same list of nine major episodes provided by a number of scholars, including Lloyd.¹⁶ Rightly, they do not grant the Dark Storm (192–208) – to name one example – the status of being a full-fledged episode. For it is transitional, an ominous foreboding of the events that will transpire at the next stage of the journey. Lloyd and others furthermore exclude the epilogue (to which we will return toward the end of the paper). For book 2, the determination of organic episodes is more difficult, and one will find less consensus between the various outlines that have been proposed, especially from the

14) Quinn 1968, 72. The last part is important. Length is not a dominant factor in determining coherent episodes, nor correspondences between episodes.

15) Ibid.

16) Lloyd 1957a, 136. Cf. also Duckworth 1962, 27.

appearance of Hector's shade to the appearance of Venus.¹⁷ I have highlighted in the chaotic sequence between those events two distinct self-standing episodes: the Androgeos episode and the heat of the battle around and in the palace. The section 2.298–369 before the Androgeos episode is, despite its length, not a coherent episode; rather, the fast-paced course of action sets the stage for the following events.¹⁸ The section from verses 402 to 437 is also not organic in its own right. It both brings to a close the fates of many of Aeneas' companions involved in the Androgeos episode and steers the narrative into the subsequent slaughter in the palace (cf. 2.437: *protinus ad sedes Priami clamore vocati*). On the issue of the Helen episode later on, I can only say here that while it goes beyond the scope of this paper to enter into the large controversy on the question of the episode's authenticity,¹⁹ I myself am inclined against supposing Vergilian authorship of the episode, mainly on grounds of the language, including the unusually unrestrained and repetitious style. Defenders generally explain these abnormalities as a result of the Helen episode being a Vergilian rough draft, but Charles Murgia shows, on the whole convincingly, that those features which defenders say would later have been removed or cleaned up are in fact "integral parts of the poet's [carefully crafted] plan and the very features of which he would be most proud".²⁰ The likely conclusion is that we are dealing with the work of a very learned poet but one who, in imitating Vergilian style, could not

17) Note, regarding the beginning of book 2, that we notice a first appearance of the horse (2.13 ff.), then a first mention of Laocoon (2.41 ff.), then the Sinon episode (A), Laocoon's death (B), and then the bringing in of the horse into the city (C), a sequence which forms a smaller chiasmic circle. Cf. Horsfall 2008, xv–xvi. I do not treat the first appearances of the horse and Laocoon as coherent episodes.

18) Note the introduction of the Androgeos episode (370–1: *Primus se . . . Androgeos offert nobis*) which marks it off as the first major point of action for Aeneas in the sack of Troy.

19) In favor of its inauthenticity, see esp. Goold 1970; Murgia 1971; Murgia 2003; Horsfall 2008, 553–67. In favor of its authenticity, see esp. Conte 2016, 69–87 for a renewed vigorous defense. I do not find myself, however, much persuaded by Conte's arguments that the episode shows certain unnoticeable Vergilian ticks which a clever imitator could not have perceived himself.

20) Murgia 1971, 216. The Helen episode, he shows, is crafted according to a tightly knit ring composition, and this unusually repetitive style is essential to hold up this structure.

conceal his own tastes and mannerisms. Without further ado, here is the resulting scheme of corresponding episodes.²¹

Book 2

- A) Sinon (2.57–198)
- B) Laocoon and sons killed by two snakes (2.199–233)
- C) Trojans bring the wooden horse into Troy (2.234–67)
- D) Hector's shade appears to Aeneas (2.268–97)
- E) Encounter with Androgeos and his companions (2.370–401)
- F) The heat of the battle (2.438–558)
- G) Venus appears to Aeneas (2.559–633)
- H) Aeneas and family (2.634–729)
- I) Creusa's shade (2.730–94)

Book 3

- i) Polydorus (3.13–68)
- h) Delos (3.69–120)
- g) Crete and the Penates (3.121–91)
- f) Harpies at Strophades (3.209–67)
- e) Aeneas dedicates arms at Actium (3.274–88)
- d) Aeneas meets Andromache and Helenus at Buthrotum (3.289–505)
- c) Omen at Castrum Minervae (3.521–50)
- b) The Trojans avoid Scylla and Charybdis (3.554–69)
- a) Achaemenides (3.570–681)

Note the standard tripartite divisions of the two books independently recognized by previous scholarship. For book 2, we have the thematic division into the 'Wooden Horse' episodes (A–C),

21) The line numbers provided are meant as helpful guides for the reader but should not be taken with absolute strictness. In a few cases, the barrier between where one episode ends and another starts may be debatable. But also, if there is a reference to something which technically occurs in an episode (immediately) before the one in question but which naturally blurs or continues into the next episode as well, I will have no problem when treating the latter episode to cite the reference which strictly occurs before the stated verse limits. Common sense will be my judge for when this is appropriate.

the ‘sack of Troy’ episodes (D–F), and the ‘domestic / departure’ episodes (G–I).²² For book 3, we have the geographical division into ‘Aegean’ episodes (i–g), ‘Greek’ episodes (f–d), and ‘Italian’ episodes (c–a).²³

We have before us a correspondence scheme. In what follows, I will go through the episodes of book 3 in order, elucidating their links to the matching episodes of the ring compositional scheme.

After the destruction of Troy, Aeneas and his men set sail from near Antandros, in the Troad, at the start of summer, and make their way to Thrace. Here, Aeneas, plucking cornelwood and myrtle close to the shore, discovers to his horror that Priam’s son Polydorus lies beneath the earth and that the spears which were used to stab him have transformed into the plants that he now plucks.²⁴ While this episode has been linked to several other scenes, from the death of Priam in book 2 through the verb *obtruncat* (3.55, cf. 2.557,663),²⁵ to the Harpies and Achaemenides scenes in book 3 with the shared emphasis on perverted hospitality,²⁶ it also has striking parallels to the episode which just preceded it, namely, Aeneas’ encounter with Creusa’s shade. In broadest terms, in each episode Aeneas meets someone who is neither fully dead, it seems, nor indeed fully alive. Richard Heinze writes on the state of Creusa, who is detained by the Magna Mater: “Aeneas erfährt nur, daß sie [i. e. Creusa] die Mater *his detinet oris*; das läßt darauf schließen, daß sie nicht gestorben ist – obwohl die Ausdrücke *simulacrum*, *umbra* und *imago* im Grunde nur für die Erscheinungen Verstorbener, deren eigentliches Selbst zu Grunde gegangen ist, passend

22) Austin 1964, xi.

23) Williams 1962, 15; Duckworth 1962, 27.

24) Cf. Coe 2008, 193–4.

25) Biow 1996, 22.

26) Gibson 1999, 359 makes the further connection that “[e]ach of these episodes not only emphasizes recurring motifs of *Aen.* 3 – *hospitium*, prophecy, and blindness – but also interlinks these motifs in interesting ways by recalling Greek myths of punitive blinding”. See also Hübner 1995, 106, who tries to link the events of the Polydorus and Harpies episodes: “Beidemale geschieht ein Wunder dreimal, beidemale schließt sich eine unheimliche Stimme an, die den Trojanern das Blut erstarren läßt.” I would, however, say that especially the terror of Aeneas in the Polydorus episode is more like his reaction in the Creusa episode (see our following discussion in the main text).

und geläufig sind.”²⁷ The case for Polydorus is quite similar: he has been stabbed and buried, suggesting he is dead, but his speech points eerily to the fact that he is somehow alive, especially when one considers that he does not speak as a shade. There are other more detailed parallels. Aeneas describes his initial emotion at seeing Creusa as follows: *Obstipui steteruntque comae et vox faucibus haesit* (2.774). Then there are the three futile attempts of Aeneas to embrace his wife (2.792), before she vanishes. These correspond to points in **i**. In **i**, Aeneas only prompts Polydorus’ cries on his third attempt at plucking the plants. And after Polydorus’ lament, Aeneas describes his reaction at 3.48 by repeating verbatim verse 2.774 (above).²⁸ Lee Fratantuono also mentions as a link between the two episodes the cypress, a tree associated with mourning and death, which plays a role as a backdrop to Creusa’s loss by being mentioned (2.713–16) as near the mound and temple of Ceres at which the fleeing Trojans should meet – but which Creusa fails to reach – and which bedecks in turn the funereal altars erected for Polydorus by Aeneas and his companions (3.64).²⁹ The cypress makes its appearance often enough elsewhere, but it is, I think, no accident that in both of these cases the cypress is also found precisely one verse after reference to a mound (*tumulus*, cf. 2.713–4 and 3.63–4). The order of these corresponding points is furthermore significant. In book 2, the cypress tree is mentioned early on as a prelude to the death of Creusa; Aeneas’ stupefied reaction occurs before Creusa speaks, and the three attempts to embrace her follow. In book 3, the three attempts at plucking the plant prompt the speaking, and the stupefied, appalled reaction follows. The cypress is referenced at the close of the Polydorus episode. Thus, not only do the scenes mirror one another in general terms, even the individual parallel subcomponents are arranged according to a ring pattern. Hence, to claim a correspondence between **I** and **i** is well justified.

Aeneas and his men sail on from the Thracian shores and arrive at Delos (**h**), where they are welcomed by the elder Anius, priest of Apollo. This scene has important parallels with **H**, where

27) Heinze 1903, 58.

28) Fratantuono 2007, 76 also noticed that there was a likeness between the Creusa and Polydorus episodes and mentions this verbal repetition as an example.

29) *Ibid.*

Anchises refuses to leave Troy, wishing only to meet his end as quickly as possible at the hands of the Greeks; the pleas of his family are initially of no avail, but his mind is changed when a flame appears on the head of Ascanius, which Anchises promptly recognizes as an auspicious omen. His subsequent prayer for confirmation of the omen is answered by Jupiter sending a shooting star across the sky. Both episodes emphasize the role of the family, but more specifically Anchises' prayer to Jupiter and the subsequent response

‘...
da deinde auxilium, pater, atque haec omina firma.
Vix ea fatus erat senior, subitoque fragore
intonuit laevom et de caelo lapsa per umbras
stella facem ducens multa cum luce cucurrit (2.691–4)

are matched closely by his son's prayer to Apollo and the reply:

‘...
da, pater, augurium atque animis inlabere nostris.
Vix ea fatus eram: tremere omnia visa repente (3.89–90).

Both scenes share clear verbal parallels (*da ... auxilium, pater, atque ... Vix ea fatus erat ... subito ... cf. da, pater, augurium atque ... Vix ea fatus eram ... repente*) and both also include striking physical portents: thunder and a shooting-star in book 2, an earthquake in book 3.³⁰ Both events are further followed by a reply of Anchises and a subsequent departure from the location. Moreover, both episodes offer similar messages. Although **H** does not include a verbal prophecy, the flame which appeared on the head of Ascanius foretells the future greatness of Aeneas', or Anchises', line, as would be clear to Vergil's contemporary audience who knew the story of the flame which appeared on the head of Servius Tullius when he was a boy, a mark of divine favor which presaged his kingship.³¹ Apollo's

30) The fact that Vergil here clearly draws from Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo*, cf. Heyworth 1993, does not exclude these additional intratextual references. This principle applies to other intertexts, and as such I have not felt the duty to mention them.

31) A connection made already by Servius ad v. 2.683.

prophecy in **h** makes this explicit, proclaiming the future dominion of Aeneas' lineage over all the shores (3.97–8). It is also noteworthy that Anchises acts as an interpreter in both episodes. Something important which **h** includes that **H** does not have is the additional command to seek one's original fatherland. Yet in **h**, at Delos, this is not understood, and we will have to wait until **g**, in Crete, before Aeneas understands what his original fatherland is.

In **g**, the Trojans, at the mistaken advice of Anchises, who does not grasp the hint in Apollo's address *Dardanidae duri* (3.94) to seek out the land of Dardanus, make their way to Crete to found a new colony. They are blighted there by a plague from the star Sirius, and while at the brink of despair and about to return to Delos, Aeneas is visited in his sleep by the Penates. This scene of the visit of the Penates is mirrored by Venus' appearance to Aeneas in book 2. For one, they both take place amidst the peak of the destruction of Aeneas' cities, the fatherland and the colony.³² Also, directly before both appearances³³ we find a reference to enfeebled bodies (2.565–6: *corpora ... aegra*; 3.140–1: *aegra trahebant / corpora*); in book 2, the men cast their weak bodies into the flames that consume Troy; in the corresponding scene in book 3, the men drag their sickly bodies around in the settlement scorched by Sirius (cf. 3.141: *exurere Sirius agros*). Furthermore, both appearances are theophanies, in contrast to **H/h** (in **h** Apollo does not properly appear), or **I/i**. Also, in book 2, Venus appears to her son in full radiance (2.589), which can be compared to the Penates' appearance, where they stand clear in the moonlight before Aeneas as he sleeps (3.150–2). Finally, both Venus and the Penates warn of higher divine powers which cause the destruction of the cities (2.601–18; 3.171). The cumulative evidence makes apparent our correspondence. It is only fair to note, however, that the Penates scene has at least one other important link, namely, the appearance of Hector's shade in book 2. Both Hector's shade and the Penates appear to him in his sleep (unlike Venus' appearance), and lines 3.150–2 are in fact closer to 2.270–1 (describing the appearance of Hector's shade). This does not negate, however, the comparisons between

32) Episodes **H** and **I** of course also occur during the sack of the city, but in **G** this theme of the destruction of the city is most in the foreground.

33) That is, if we ignore the Helen episode, on which see above.

our episodes that we have already made, since many of the similarities that we pointed out between our two episodes are absent from the appearance of Hector's shade. Notably, the appearance of Hector occurs right at the beginning of the sack, but our two scenes occur both after the demises of the cities are well underway (and see the immediate contextual similarities mentioned above); Hector is not divine; moreover, his shade's appearance lacks any reference to bright light, while the image of luminous splendor shining forth in nocturnal darkness is a key feature of both theophanies; and while Aeneas addresses Hector's shade, he is only a passive recipient of the words of Venus and the Penates.

I have admittedly treated only superficially an important element in episodes **I/i** and **G/g**, namely, the content of the prophecies. Where I mentioned them, I was particularly selective and avoided some of the more general messages contained in the prophecies. While it is strictly unnecessary for us to account for every aspect of the episodes, as we only need to show that Vergil has made some broad and meaningful thematic links between the corresponding episodes, I nonetheless address this point as I think this aspect can be given a fruitful position in our structural considerations. If we examine these episodes more closely we notice that while in speaker and context the prophecies share interesting correspondences in the chiasmic mirror arrangement, they do not really do so in content. In fact, Venus' appearance to Aeneas is not a true prophecy but an explication of the causes of Troy's downfall culminating with the injunction, *Eripe, nate, fugam* (2.619). Similarly, Polydorus utters no prophecy but urges flight (3.44). The message of the omen in **H**, although non-verbal, matches, as we have already demonstrated, the prophecy of **h**. Creusa's prophecy, for a true prophecy it is, speaks famously (or perhaps infamously) of Hesperia: *terram Hesperiam venies ...* (2.781). Why Aeneas does not seem to heed her words has long vexed scholars,³⁴ but for our purposes it is import-

34) I personally side with the position that Aeneas remembered but did not understand Creusa's words (*Hesperia* could mean simply a 'western land' and *Lydius ... Thybris* [3.781–2] would be only a source of confusion for Aeneas – yet remember he did, for at Buthrotum he mentions the Tiber, which only Creusa had previously), and that the Penates' fuller explanation is thus not inconsistent with Creusa's prophecy. For this position, see, for instance, Saunders 1925, 85–6.

ant that Hesperia is picked up again by the Penates (3.163 ff.), who explicate it more fully to Aeneas.³⁵ From this, we see that Vergil has chosen to combine in these first three ‘Aegean’ episodes a ring structure on the main narrative level with a doublet construction³⁶ on the sublevel of the verbal/prophetic content. Why so? The answer lies in understanding Vergil’s aim in accommodating books 2 and 3 to a ring structure. As will become more apparent over the course of the essay, the ring composition does not simply depict the Trojans ‘reliving’ over the span of years the devastation of one day and night. It also helps to give a sense of progress in their ability to cope with recurring obstacles. The doublet construction at the beginning helps give a sense that despite the backtracking consisting of reliving episodes in reverse order, there is a forward-moving push that gives purpose to the Trojans’ journeys. The sequence of flight (G | Venus) – hope (H | Aeneas and family) – direction (I | Creusa) is a logical one and to reverse it would completely violate the sense of building progress. And whereas in book 2, the direction was not understood at I, this misunderstanding is transposed into h (Delos) to allow its reversal in episode g (Penates), the corresponding episode in the doublet pattern.

Next, we have the ‘Greek’ episodes, occurring in the Strophades, Actium and Buthrotum. These correspond to the three ‘sack of Troy’ episodes (see above), and the Greek locations of the episodes in book 3 already tighten the connections between the corresponding episodes in book 2 where Greeks take on a very prominent role. After braving a dark storm, the Aeneadae arrive at the Strophades (f), the next landing after Crete, where they find a welcome sight of cattle. Some of these they slaughter, evoking the slaughter of the cattle of the Sun by Odysseus’ crew, before being surprised by the Harpies who befoul their food. After a second failed attempt at eating the cattle, Aeneas rallies his men, ordering them to prepare an ambush on the Harpies:

... *Sociis tunc arma capessant*
edico et dira bellum cum gente gerendum (3.234–5).

35) It is worth noting also that the Penates’ speech is introduced with the exact same line as Creusa’s (2.775 = 3.153).

36) By ‘doublet construction’, I refer to what may also be called ‘parallel composition’: A B C; a b c.

It may appear odd to refer to this as war, and Heyworth and Morwood in their commentary remark on the phrase *bellum cum gente gerendum*, “the formality of the language, enhanced by the incantatory repetitions, associates this skirmish with war more generally, and especially that which the Trojans will fight in Italy”.³⁷ But can we not (also) link this battle with the Harpies to the heat of the battle that the Trojans experienced in their own city? In both cases, the Trojans find themselves utterly overwhelmed. It is noteworthy that these two battle scenes are indeed unique in the *Aeneid* for being so one-sided (against the Trojans). The uselessness of their weapons in face of the Greek onslaught (cf. 2.459: *tela . . . irrita*, and 2.544–5 on Priam’s harmless spear cast) is matched by their weapons’ even greater ineffectiveness against the Harpies (3.242–3). Moreover, the language of pollution is prominent in both scenes: 2.501–2: *sanguine foedantem*, 2.539: *patrios foedasti funere vultus*. Cf. 3.216–7: *foedissima ventris / proluviis*, 3.227: *omnia foedant*, 3.241: *foedare volucres*, 3.244: *vestigia foeda relinquunt*. From this we can see that the episode on the Strophades is in part a condensed reliving of the heat of battle at Troy. Finally, in this dark episode, there is little sign of the previous slow-but-steady progress, if not for the important fact that the consequences of this episode are on the whole not grievous, since Celaeno’s prophecy will not be fulfilled in a significantly harmful way.

The Trojans sail on past Zacynthus, Dulichium, Same, Neritus and Ithaca (3.270–2) before reaching their next stop, Actium (e). The stop in Actium has a link to Aeneas’ initial entry into battle (E), where he and a few companions encounter the Greek Androgeos and his men. Androgeos at first cannot discern their Trojan identity in the darkness, but when he does it is too late. He and his troop are overwhelmed, and at the advice of Coroebus, *mutemus clipeos* (2.389), the Trojans with Aeneas decide to change gear with the Greeks to disguise themselves and avoid thereby immediate detection. At Actium, Greek shields again play a role when Aeneas dedicates one:

37) Heyworth / Morwood 2017, 145.

*Aere cavo clipeum, magni gestamen Abantis,
postibus adversis figo et rem carmine signo:
AENEAS HAEC DE DANAIS VICTORIBUS ARMA
(3.286–8).*

It is not directly relevant to whom this ‘shield of the great Abas’ belonged,³⁸ but rather that these scenes are linked by Greek shields in the possession of Trojans. Whereas in E the Trojans strip Greeks of their arms, in e they perform the next step of dedicating Greek shields.³⁹ The scenes are connected further by a verbal reminiscence. In e, Aeneas says, *iuvat . . . mediosque fugam tenuisse per hostis* (3.282–3), which recalls, while differing in a crucial point from, the description of Androgeos at the moment when he realizes all too late his peril: *sensit medios delapsus in hostis* (2.377). This verbal connection highlights an important reversal: while Androgeos found himself in the midst of the Trojans and met his unfortunate end, the Trojans in contrast manage to avoid the same fate when themselves surrounded by Argive cities. But another element of progress consists in the fact that the use of Greek shields for cowardly fighting is replaced in e by an act of piety, with additional clear Augustan undertones. At Actium we thus look backwards to the sack of Troy and the partial (for the Danaans are still called victors: *DANAIS VICTORIBUS*) progress made in the meantime, as well as to the future in which an even more complete progress will be achieved at the same location.

After leaving Actium and sailing up the western coast of Greece, the Trojans arrive at Buthrotum (d). Word has it that Helenus is ruling, and Aeneas, piqued with curiosity, makes his way from the harbor inland where he finds Andromache offering gifts at an empty tomb of Hector by a pretend Simois to commemo-

38) For this discussion, see Miller 1993.

39) In fact, Servius and Servius Danielis ad v. 3.286 say that we can understand Abas to have been killed with Androgeos at Troy. This argues for a very direct connection on the plot level, which is completely speculative, while I argue for a looser connection based on narrative parallelism between the two scenes. (The very fact, however, that Servius understood e by reference to E supports my own independent intuition that the two episodes are to be linked.) Whether they were the same Greeks whose shields are present in both scenes does not affect my argument.

rate his death. Andromache sees Aeneas and, terrified by his sight, asks him if he is alive or dead (3.310–1), thinking in her fright that he may be a ghost. Whereas at Buthrotum Andromache, weeping (3.312), imagines that she sees a ghost, at **D** Aeneas, also weeping (2.279), sees what is in fact the ghost of Hector. Furthermore, Aeneas' excited questions fired off one after another in quick succession to Hector's shade (2.282–6) are also matched by Andromache's to Aeneas (3.337–43). Aeneas, at the beginning of the episode in Buthrotum, thus fills the role of Hector,⁴⁰ but it does not take long before Helenus, being both husband to Andromache, who once of course was Hector's wife, as well as Hector's brother, takes over this position. Hector's message, namely, that Troy has entrusted her Penates to Aeneas and that he must found a new city after wandering the sea (2.293–5), is greatly elaborated by Helenus. For Helenus, although prohibited to say certain things by the Parcae and Juno (3.379–80), explains to the Trojans the signal for founding their city in Italy, a white sow with 30 piglets,⁴¹ as well as things to avoid on their voyage at sea (the Scylla and Charybdis), and he gives advice on meeting the Sibyl at Cumae. Helenus' prophecy is a clear progress from the bleak warning of his deceased brother Hector (for instance, while Hector foretells the imminent destruction of Troy by the Greeks, Helenus gives advice how to avoid similar misfortunes at the Greeks' hands) and also fits into the logical pattern of the previous prophecies (for once the final destination is made clear, it is only fitting to provide detailed advice on how to get there). Whereas **f**, we found, was a tight condensation of the material of **F**, **d** is a positive elaboration of **D**. Finally, when Anchises calls for a renewal of their journey, Andromache loads gifts onto Ascanius, emotively comparing him to her deceased son Astyanax (3.489–91).

40) On one level. Of course, Andromache, by the very fact of who she is, also links to Hector.

41) This prophecy of Helenus regarding the sow is another point of debate for scholars. Helenus' prophecy appears to suggest that the sow will indicate the future site of Lavinium, but in book 8.47f. we hear that the sow signals the future site of Alba Longa. Horsfall 2016, 89 is at a loss for a solution to this puzzle, but fortunately this enigma is not directly relevant for my argument. What matters for my argument is Helenus' prophecy as a progression from Hector's. Whether Vergil in the case of a change would have altered these lines in book 3 or those in book 8 makes no difference for the more general point I am making here.

We never hear directly of Astyanax' death, but in Homer his death is deeply linked to the death of his father (cf. *Iliad* 24.725–30). The ghastly wounds on Hector's shade forebode the destruction of both city and child. The line of Hector ends with the destruction of Troy, and, as Andromache's words now show, the line of Aeneas takes its place in history. This scene is one of reliving a miniature Troy. Yet it is at best bittersweet. It by no means restores Troy to its original glory, and Andromache's new husband can only ever be an incomplete 'Ersatz'.⁴² Nonetheless, despite its many imperfections, including its unhealthy obsession of clinging to what has been lost, the episode demonstrates some initial steps of rebuilding from the sack of Troy. This episode most clearly of all the episodes in book 3 evokes Troy and her fall,⁴³ but it is only the most poignant example in a long journey which constantly reexperiences Troy's end.

Next, we proceed to analyze the 'Italian' episodes. Crossing the Adriatic Sea from Buthrotum, the Trojans finally approach the land of Italy, at a place lying below the so-called *Castrum Minervae* (cf. 3.531: *in arce Minervae*) (C). Here the Trojans spot an omen of four white horses on the grass. Having been forewarned of hostile Greek presence in the region by Helenus (3.396–402), Anchises interprets the omen, first stating that the horses are a sign of war, before backtracking, giving voice to the possibility that it might be the reverse, namely that they are a hope for peace (3.539–543). A similarity with the four white horses of a triumphal chariot is what is often noted in commentaries on these verses, but little to no mention (as far as I can see) is made of what seems an even more potent intratextual link. In C, the Trojan horse is dragged into the city. It enters the city after lurching to a halt four times (2.242–3), and at night releases the Greek warriors inside; the destruction of the city ensues. It would be facile to say that merely the prominence of horses – in one case, not even a real one – links the two episodes, but the thematic correspondence is much deeper than this. For both episodes are marked by the Trojans interpreting

42) See Bettini 1997, esp. 11.

43) Parts of the episode at Buthrotum have also been linked to other points in the fall of Troy. For instance, Aeneas' words to his hosts at Buthrotum, *nullum maris aequor arandum* (3.495), recall the words of Creusa's shade to Aeneas: *vastum maris aequor arandum* (2.780), cf. e. g. d'Anna 1957, 78–9.

a (wooden) horse or horses specifically to discern potential Greek hostility. The parallelism is even further reinforced by the role and presence of Minerva in the background of both scenes. The Trojan horse was crafted by Minerva's divine art (2.15), and Sinon would have us believe that it is a gift of expiation to her (cf. 2.171–94), but there is one even more striking link to Minerva that is especially relevant for our argument. It is, namely, that the citadel of Troy (mentioned in 2.245) is dedicated to none other than Minerva (cf. 2.226). We cannot but connect this to the citadel of Minerva in **c**, which like in **C**, overlooks the whole scene. And yet despite these strong similarities, the difference in attitude to these two encounters with horses (in one case, only a wooden model) is striking. In book 2, caution gives way to vain hope and gullible trust. Here, it is not excluded that the horses are a sign of peace, but caution ultimately prevails. They go on shore only to perform religious duties to Juno but then quickly return to the safety of their ships and sail on.

Sailing along the southern coast of Italy toward Sicily, the Trojans pass close by, at the Strait of Messina, to Scylla and Charybdis (**b**). The description of the two is detailed earlier by Helenus (3.420–32), and here the Trojans manage to steer clear of the double threats before experiencing them in person. Again, this episode has interesting links to the corresponding one in the pattern. In both, there is at least the potential of death by sea monsters, although only in one episode does that potential become a reality. Furthermore, both episodes employ similar phraseology.⁴⁴ Finally, in **B**, the Trojans witness gruesome death and are consequently terrified into allowing the horse into the city – to their great folly. In **b**, the Trojans avoid similar disaster and its consequences.

Lastly, we have the encounter with Achaemenides overlooked by Mount Etna. Numerous parallels have already been noted between this scene and the Sinon episode in book 2, and I make no claim to adding new substance on the specific points of correspondence between these two episodes. That granted, I would still do wrong if I did not lay out for the reader some crucial similarities.⁴⁵

44) In book 2 we have: *fit sonitus spumante salo* (2.209) and *clamoses simul horrendos ad sidera tollit* (2.222); in book 3: *ter scopuli clamorem ... dedere / ter spumam elisam ... vidimus* (3.566–7).

45) I draw these examples from Ramminger 1991, esp. 56.

In both episodes, the Trojans encounter a man with close ties to Ulysses. In **A**, Sinon pretends to have been betrayed by Ulysses and thus manages to deceive the listening Trojans. In **a**, Achaemenides tells, and we have no good reason to doubt his account, that he was a companion of Ulysses, left behind carelessly amongst the dwelling region of the Cyclopes. Verbal parallels are plentiful. Both admit that they are either of Argive birth (2.77–8) or of the Danaan fleet (3.602), tell the Trojans to take their vengeance on them (2.102–3, 3.604–5), and both describe their isolated lives led in darkness (2.92) or in the woods (3.646–7). A more complete list can be found in the referenced secondary literature, and I list these limited examples only to convey a general sense of similarity. This is, significantly, the clearest example of progress between any of the two corresponding episodes. In **c** and **b**, progress consisted mainly in avoiding the mistakes of the past. Here, past errors are not simply avoided, but rather they are transformed into a force for greater good. In this episode, we have an example of magnanimity on the part of the Trojans, who despite previous deception take in the wretched man, casting aside, as they should, a general prejudice against Greeks.⁴⁶ Heinze well expresses the change from the beginning of book 2 to the end of the book 3 as follows: “So tritt der kühnen Verschlagenheit des Odysseus die pietas der Troer ebenbürtig zur Seite”.⁴⁷ Book 3 relives step by step the whole destruction of Troy, and when the Trojans finally reach the culmination of this painful journey, they show not anger, not revenge, but rather pity for those who had once been their greatest enemies. To describe the Achaemenides episode as, in the words of one commentator, a “stitched-on piece”⁴⁸ is to fail to recognize the necessary place of the episode in completing the larger structure of Aeneas’ narration.

The above analysis confirms that there are strong thematic and verbal connections between the episodes when schematized in a ring compositional arrangement. I do not question the fact that a few parallels are not as compelling as others (in my mind, the parallelism between **G** and **g** is among the weaker ones), but

46) This will become more significant later, when the Trojans ally with Evander (cf. 8.127: *Optime Graiugenum*) in Italy.

47) Heinze 1903, 110.

48) Williams 1962, 181.

the fact that non-trivial and, in many cases, significant links can be drawn between all the corresponding episodes in the scheme is firm support for deliberate arrangement. I cannot conceive how this can be explained as a chance result of Vergil's more general tendency to link episodes with one another. The fact also that Vergil did not simply follow any one traditional Aeneas legend, but crafted his own story based on a synthesis of traditional stories with his own inventions, leaving out episodes where he deemed fit, adding new ones, combining others,⁴⁹ shows that the ring composition cannot be regarded as in any way an accident of the tradition.

We can now return to the second test of ring composition, namely, the test of whether form creates meaning. As we have seen, the ring composition of Aeneas' narration expresses an important message. That message, we have seen, is one of progress. The structure invites the reader to compare each episode with its corresponding one and to observe the reversals and differences.⁵⁰ In so doing, the reader will notice that in the process of reliving in reverse order the traumatic events of the past, the mistakes of the past are ever more positively suppressed and transformed. Over the course of their journey, Aeneas and his men constantly reencounter the ghosts of their past, but in so doing they learn to master them. The concept of progress, we can note, only makes sense over a continuum, not a sum of disparate parts. The power of the message is thus, in the final analysis, a testament to organic unity of the structural form which helped to create it.

It is at this juncture that we can also appreciate just how much Vergil's use of ring composition differs from Homer's use of the same device in Odysseus' *apologoi*. For between the mirroring ep-

49) See Lloyd 1957b, which offers an insightful analysis of Vergil's use of traditional myths in crafting *Aeneid* 3. Similarly, Vergil's book 2 could easily have been narrated quite differently, cf. Austin 1964, xv: "Virgil could have used a very different tradition." See also Horsfall 1986, esp. 16-7.

50) Thus, it will not do to claim that book 3 generally 'gets better' independently of structure, for it is precisely the correspondences in the ring pattern that make poignant precisely how the Trojans reverse their mistakes. For instance, the arrival at Castrum Minervae is not a generically positive scene that contrasts to the negative scene of the Trojans bringing the Horse into their city. It is precisely the fact that in c the Trojans this time correctly interpret the sign of the horse(s), unlike in C, that makes apparent and tangible the development.

isodes of the *apologoi* there is little to no progress. The second half of the Odyssean narrative will appear to any reader just as bleak as the first. It is in fact in the second half that we witness the final destruction of Odysseus' crew. When Vergil most clearly imitates Homer is often when he shows his greatest originality.⁵¹ Book 3, of all the books of the *Aeneid*, is one of the most patently Homeric. And although Vergil has borrowed here on the microlevel of individual phrases, the middle level of episode plots, and, as I suggest, even the structural macrolevel, he provides meaning and significance to his structure which goes beyond the scope of his Homeric model.

In this analysis I have not yet accounted for the events after *a*. After the Trojans welcome Achaemenides on board and escape the Cyclopes' fury, they make an excursion along the coast of Sicily arriving, finally, in Drepanum. Here Anchises dies, a sorrowful end to the book. Why does Vergil leave this outside of the ring compositional scheme of Aeneas' story,⁵² making it instead a coda? The answer must lie in the seminal importance of Anchises' death. By setting this event apart from the major preceding episodes, Vergil gives it a more particular, individual significance. Moreover, Vergil removes it from the ring compositional structure to make it a doublet with the loss of Creusa at the end of the previous book.⁵³ But furthermore, it is a sombre cadence after a sequence of building progress from the bleak first encounter with Polydorus up to the magnanimous one with Achaemenides, a motif which the poet frequently employs to great effect, most notably at the end of books 6 and 12.

Finally, I wish to address some further implications of our results. A number of scholars were once fond of arguing that book 3's imperfections were due in large part to Vergil having written it as a third person narrative at the beginning of the poem (thus separated from the *Iliupersis* account narrated by Aeneas by at least one book), only much later changing its position to its current place in Aeneas' narration to Dido.⁵⁴ This position has already

51) Cf., for a recent example, Conte 2017, esp. 5–33.

52) I write 'of Aeneas' story' as opposed to 'of books 2 and 3', because, as mentioned at the outset, 2.1–2 and 3.716–8 are without a doubt to be connected.

53) Heinze 1903, 57–8.

54) These theories, especially popular in an earlier day, have found supporters in, inter al., Crump 1920, 34–6, d'Anna 1957, 66–79, and Williams 1983, 262–78. Hexter 1999, 64–5 conditionally accepts Williams' argument on the original com-

met with scholarly disapproval and is much less popular today,⁵⁵ and this new evidence, namely book 3's deeply rooted structural ties with book 2, shows manifestly that these two narratives must have been conceived together as a unit from a very early stage of the poem's composition. But perhaps more significantly, our stress on the theme of progress can offer a counterbalance to prevalent literary interpretations of book 3. "It is only when the past has been successfully repressed – when it ceases to repeat itself in its former version – that it can be repeated with a difference in order to be reversed and undone".⁵⁶ These words, which could very aptly express our major theme, are taken from David Quint, although he himself would be surprised to find them used in our context. According to his influential interpretation,⁵⁷ the *Aeneid* is divided into two fundamentally different ways of repeating the past. The first half of the poem is marked by "regressive repetition of the Odyssean wanderings", while the second half produces the "successful repetition-as-reversal of the Iliadic war".⁵⁸ Book 3 is indeed his star text to prove the first half of the poem's "regressive"

position of book 3, but adds: "this [i. e. the fact that Vergil may have transferred book 3 from its original place] suggests that Vergil's attention to Book 3 and to the issues it addresses was, if anything, greater and certainly no less than in other, more polished books."

55) Good arguments against the position can be found in Günther 1996, 55–8. Heyworth and Morwood 2017, x qualify as "entertainingly confused" the discussion in Williams 1983, 273–8.

56) Quint 1989, 31.

57) For scholars who have written in a similar vein, see, inter al., Gibson 1999, 366: "[M]etaphorical blindness comes upon the Trojans seemingly through no fault of their own, preventing them from recognizing their divine mission, allowing them to lapse into behavior unbecoming of civilized proto-Roman heroes, and constantly threatening to thrust them back into the dead world of Troy." Especially peculiar in Gibson's case is that he makes such a judgement immediately after discussing the Achaemenides episode, which can hardly be put in the same category with the Polydorus and the Harpies episodes as "underscoring the plight of the homeless, misguided, metaphorically blind Trojans" (366).

58) Quint 1989, 10. While it is true that Quint later does grant that the first six books "may already contain within it a 'working-through' that points the way out of this narrative to the teleological epic narrative of the second half of the poem" (30–1), he is vague on where precisely this is manifested, and it is clear that he still is too black-and-white in his analysis. For instance, he refers to the Trojans' progress in book 3 as only "apparent" (19).

relationship to the past, where the Trojans are like “victim[s] of an earlier trauma [who] neurotically re-enact [their] victimization over and over again”.⁵⁹ Our paper can, however, offer a correction of this interpretation. Book 3 itself already prepares gradually but resolutely the narrative of progress over the past which we find in subsequent books. Despite book 3’s bleak start, picking up from the sack of Troy, a teleology is embedded in the very structure of Aeneas’ narration.

On this note, I bring our discussion to a close. The second and third books of the *Aeneid* consist of an astoundingly complex web of interconnections, and it would be naïve to hope that one structural schema could do justice to the full richness and complexity of the innumerable links across episodes. But just as it would be foolhardy to deny this truism, so too would it be misguided to conclude from it that macrostructural patterns are ruled out. As I have demonstrated, Vergil has here designed his web of correspondences in such a way that it conforms, but is not limited, to a coherent, unifying ring compositional pattern – a choice likely inspired by his greatest predecessor in the epic tradition. Once this structure is observed, we are provided a deeper appreciation of the two books, and especially book 3. Problems in book 3 remain. Some of these Vergil might have resolved had he lived longer, others in fact maybe not – we cannot be sure. But, for one, the structural unity of the two books proves that *Aeneid* 3 cannot have been some early draft that was kept in a back closet and inadequately worked on – an impression that one might get especially from the earlier secondary literature. But most significantly, these problems should not take our eyes off the larger role of book 3 as presenting a reliving, with developing understanding and wisdom, of the experiences and horrors of book 2.

59) Ibid. 10.

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