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P. Vergili Maronis Opera

With a Commentary

VOLUME 2

EDITED BY JOHN CONINGTON
VIRGIL



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P. VERGILI MARONIS OPERA.

WITH A

COMMENTARY

BY

JOHN CONINGTON, M.A.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

WHITTAKER AND CO. AVE MARIA LANE;

GEORGE BELL, FLEET STREET.

1863.

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P. VERGILI MARONIS
OPERA.

THE WORKS OF VIRGIL,

WITH A

COMMENTARY

BY

JOHN CONINGTON, M.A.

PROFESSOR OF LATIN, AND FELLOW OF CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE;
LATE FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.

VOL. II.

CONTAINING THE FIRST SIX BOOKS OF THE AENEID.

LONDON:

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PREFACE.

LIKE its predecessor, this volume is the result of considerable labour, labour too of a kind which tends to diminish an author's confidence in his work. A commentator on Virgil is not likely to feel that those difficulties which weighed heavily on him while engaged on the Eclogues and Georgics have become fewer or less formidable when he passes to the Aeneid. To grapple with his subject thoroughly, he is still required to be an aesthetical judge of language, a Latin scholar, if not a philologist, a competent textual critic; and though no longer expected to display a knowledge of agriculture and rural life, he has to exhibit instead an acquaintance with mythology and legend, with Roman antiquities and Roman history. Virgil is confessedly one of the most learned of poets: and a commentator who would do him justice ought to be still more learned. The learning of a poet, even when extensive and multifarious, may be desultory, uncritical, inexact: he may show ignorance as well as knowledge, but he will be a learned poet still. It is the business of a commentator to understand both that knowledge and that ignorance: and his learning accordingly ought to be accurate, searching, and profound. I need not say how little I profess to approach the ideal which the nature of my work keeps of necessity continually before my mind. Virgil interests me

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chiefly because he is a Latin poet: as a student of poetry, I take delight in tracing, word by word, his delicate intricacies of expression, which stimulate curiosity while they baffle analysis, as well as in endeavouring to appreciate the broader features of his work as a whole and its place in the history of literature: as a student of Latin, I am interested in comparing his language with that of his predecessors and successors, and in observing the light which his use of his native tongue throws on the various unsolved or half-solved problems in Latin grammar. Other questions, whatever may be their relative importance to the scholar, I have ventured to regard as subordinate: they appear to me to be less immediately connected with the interpretation of Virgil, as they certainly have less affinity to my own tastes and the course of my studies. I have not neglected them: when they have crossed my path, as they have in almost every page, I have sought to obtain the requisite information about them: but I have generally been content to trust the knowledge which has been accumulated by others without trying to add to it, or indeed affecting to form an independent judgment.

Among the various notices (the generality of them, I may be allowed to say, very kind and appreciative) with which my first volume has been honoured, the only one to which I need advert here is that in the *Journal of Classical and Sacred Philology* by my friend Mr. H. A. J. Munro, of Trinity College, Cambridge. It is a really valuable and instructive piece of criticism, and I am truly grateful to a writer who has pointed out my shortcomings in such a manner as to raise my conception of the standard to which I must endeavour to attain. I hope to profit by some of his remarks in the event of a new edition of the first volume: I have, I trust, profited by others in preparing the present. In one respect indeed, as he is himself now aware, he has misunderstood the object which I proposed to myself. I spoke in my preface of

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having followed the orthography of Wagner's small edition, meaning that published with short Latin notes for the use of schools: he supposed me to be speaking of the fifth volume of the larger work, which contains the text reformed orthographically. I fear that the further insight which I have obtained into the subject from the perusal of his article and from a private correspondence with him has only convinced me that it is one which I had better leave as I have hitherto left it, so far as the present work is concerned. The question is one for special study; and appears to me to present peculiar difficulties, though the research necessary for mastering them will doubtless be greatly abridged for the future by the publication of the great work on Latin inscriptions, of which the first part is just issued at Berlin, as it has been already abridged to some degree by the critical editions of Latin authors which have appeared during the last twenty years on the continent. At any rate, though scholars may tolerate and even desire a thorough reform, ordinary students will probably be better satisfied with a gradual change: and of a compromise of this sort Wagner's school edition is probably a fair specimen. Even as it is, I find considerable dissatisfaction has been felt at the spelling 'Vergilius,' though not greater than, I trust, is likely to be removed by a little familiarity with the innovation. In this volume then I have followed Wagner's guidance not generally but invariably, withdrawing the very few alterations which, while unaware of the difficulty of the subject, I had ventured to introduce from my own sense of fitness. I ought to say that I am speaking of the former editions of Wagner's school work, not of the latest, which only came into my hands after I had begun to print. Mr. Munro is unquestionably right in insisting on the necessity of being "awake to the enormous advances which have been made during the last twenty or thirty years in so many branches of Latin criticism and grammar." One whose tastes lead him to the

careful study of a very few classical authors rather than to the diffusive reading of a large number is in danger of overlooking precepts about Latinity which are to be found only in commentaries on particular books, and have not yet filtered through into the best accredited grammars and dictionaries. I trust this volume will show that I have not been wanting in attention to Lachmann's commentary on Lucretius, and that I have weighed carefully the various remarks on Virgil that are scattered through that masterly work. Perhaps there are some minds which may not at once appreciate the *obiter dicta* of a critic who, even in the typography and external arrangement of his notes, seems to profess that he writes only for the initiated, and who rather provokes dissent by the trenchant and dogmatic brevity of his imperial rescripts. Sometimes he seems to make too little allowance for the exceptional usages of individual authors: sometimes, on the other hand, he perhaps tends to merge general considerations in the variety of individual usage. But no one, I think, can study his observations without being instructed and enlightened in no common degree, or without feeling that he has to do with a really commanding intellect, which, like Bentley's, can walk erect under a weight of erudition beneath which others stoop, and must have possessed in an extraordinary measure that power of asking the right question, which has been truly said to constitute one half of knowledge.

Much of what was said in the Preface to the first volume holds equally true in the case of the present. I have however had some advantages in the latter case which I had not in the former: and of these I must say something.

Since I last wrote, the criticism of the text of Virgil has been placed on a new basis by the publication of Ribbeck's edition, of which the third volume, completing the Aeneid, has just appeared. Previously, as I observed in my former Preface, though we had reports of the readings of a great variety of copies, we were unhappily

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without accurate collations of several of the most important; in the case indeed of one of them, the Palatine, we seem to have been without a collation at all. We now possess collations of all the uncial MSS., fragmentary and entire, and of four or five of the most important of the cursives, which for minute and painstaking accuracy apparently leave but little to desire: and great care has been taken not only in collecting the testimonies of the different grammarians who quote passages from Virgil, but in noting the readings of the various MSS. of each witness. In the absence of Prolegomena, we are still left in some doubt about the comparative importance to be attached to these various authorities and about other details connected with them: in particular I would mention that we do not seem to have the means of distinguishing those different classes of readings, which in the case of the Medicean MS. Wagner discriminates respectively as 'prior' and 'posterior lectio' and 'lectio a manu prima' or 'secunda.' But there can be no doubt that we already possess critical materials surpassing most of those with which we have had to content ourselves till now, not only in degree but in kind, and that their use is likely to effect a considerable change even in that text of Virgil which, since the time of Nicholas Heinsius, has been generally accepted as the best. That text indeed has now but little to fear from the competition of the text or texts which it superseded: the authority which they were supposed to derive from the Palatine has disappeared for ever now that that copy has been actually examined, and their real support is apparently to be found in most cases partly in copies of no name or weight, partly perhaps in the arbitrary conjectures of early editors. But the testimony of the Medicean, on which Heinsius chiefly rested, has been considerably weakened by the results of the new collations: in very many instances the other uncial MSS. are seen to be arrayed against it, while its readings may not unfrequently be accounted for by the

parallelism of other passages in Virgil, which the transcriber apparently remembered. Probably however it is premature as yet to decide on the whole question: we shall learn the real value of our newly collated MSS. better as we become used to them, and there may be a danger of accepting novelties of reading simply as novelties—a danger which I seem to see exemplified in Ribbeck's text, and which my readers will perhaps find to be exemplified in mine. The general result certainly confirms what I ventured to assert in my former Preface, both as to the existence of many varieties of reading which can hardly be accounted for on palaeographical or other external grounds, and which must often be estimated by the somewhat wavering measurement of individual preference, and as to the sufficiency of a text made up from one or other of the MSS. or early authorities without critical conjecture. In the more important of the two instances in the Eclogues where, following others, I had ventured to depart from the MSS., I have now learnt from Lachmann and Madvig that no change was necessary: and if there are any places in the present volume where a word has been introduced from the dictum of a critic without some ancient authority, it will be found, I think, to be in a case which, to a transcriber, was really a case of spelling, such as 'Cyclopius' for 'Cyclopeus,' or 'deripere' for 'diripere.' Here I am sorry to say Ribbeck is still less to be commended than in the choice of MS. readings. In several places he has introduced emendations into the text, generally conjectures of his own, which are in every case, in my judgment, worse than needless: nor is he in general more happy in his attempts to point out interpolations or to indicate lacunae. Hitherto the text of Virgil has enjoyed a singular immunity from arbitrary criticism. In the last century, while Horace was being transformed alternately by the splendid audacity of Bentley and the more formal and pedantic dogmatism of Cunningham, Virgil remained nearly in the state in

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which Heinsius had left him. Cunningham indeed proceeded from Horace to Virgil, whose text he reformed in obedience to certain canons which he supposed himself to have drawn from a scrutiny of the best MSS. ; but his edition, though curious and interesting, seems to have produced no effect, whether as being a posthumous publication, or from the absence of the eclat which attended a controversy with an adversary like Bentley, even when that adversary declined to reply, or perhaps because the labours of Heinsius rested on a basis too firm to be easily disturbed. Gilbert Wakefield, towards the end of the century, edited both Horace and Virgil: but his attempts at innovation were too desultory seriously to affect either. Probably the greatest amount of misapplied ingenuity that has been bestowed on Virgil, till we come to Peerlkamp in the present century, is to be found in the conjectures of Schrader, which I know only as reported by Heyne and Ribbeck. They are always, or almost always ingenious, showing that degree of insight which is required to perceive an anomaly of expression, and that degree of tact which hits on a word that might possibly have been used instead; but there their praise must cease. Such ingenuity is, I believe, almost wholly inapplicable to an author like Virgil, whose text, supported as it is by an ample variety of testimony, requires not emendation but illustration. If he has hitherto escaped the fate of Sophocles, whose peculiarities of expression, so curiously analogous to his, have too often been changed by critical licence, the gain is his and that of Latin literature. Whether it would be desirable that our knowledge of MS. materials should be still further extended by an equally accurate collation of the cursives not examined by Ribbeck, I do not presume to say. There can be no doubt that an apparatus criticus like Ribbeck's is far preferable to one like Heyne and Wagner's: as little doubt can there be that to collate the remaining copies satisfactorily would be an almost endless task. In the Bodleian

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Library at Oxford alone there are about twenty MSS. of Virgil, hardly any of which seem to have been collated (I except of course the Canonician MS. which Mr. Butler has examined so thoroughly); the College Libraries too contain a few, the readings of one of which, a copy in Balliol College Library, No. 140, referred by Mr. Coxe to the fifteenth century, have been noted with scrupulous care by my friend Mr. E. Palmer, and placed at my disposal. I myself examined ten or eleven of the Bodleian MSS. to discover the authority for the readings 'litus arenosum Libyae' in Aeneid 4. 257 (see Additions and Corrections at the end of the volume) and 'Trinacriis' in Aeneid 5. 573 (see note there), doubts having arisen about the existence of each; but almost the only other passages I turned to were Aeneid 1. 668, where all agreed with the Medicean in giving 'iniquae,' and the celebrated lines about Helen in the Second Book, which they were unanimous in omitting in the text, one of them adding the passage in the margin. On the whole it would seem that while it may be advisable to apply to an inferior MS. in a case like that which I have mentioned, to ascertain a reading not otherwise certified, it would be waste of time to perform partially a work which, to have any value, should be performed entirely. It is one thing to find that a particular reading which seems necessary to the sense has probably some better support than mere conjecture: it is another to collect all the readings of a copy without knowing what place it holds among the members of one or other of the various families of MSS. through which the text of a popular classical author has been transmitted to us, or indeed before it has been distinctly ascertained what those families are, and what their history has been. A critic of the New Testament may be laudably employed in establishing a theory of recensions inductively by the examination of cursive no less than uncial MSS.; but in the present state of classical studies we shall probably have to wait long before any

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one will think it worth while to qualify himself for writing a detailed history of the text of Virgil.

The commentaries which I have used have been in general the same as those employed for the Eclogues and Georgics. I have lost the companionship of Mr. Keightley, and have gained that of Gossrau and Dr. Henry. Gossrau's commentary is neat and compendious, more convenient than Forbiger's, though not so full, and with more traces of independent judgment. He has studied Servius with care, and quotes him at times very appositely: and he has paid considerable attention to his author's peculiarities of language and metre, to the latter of which subjects he has devoted an elaborate appendix. His fault is an occasional tendency to see insuperable difficulties and suspect interpolations: but it is kept within bounds, and may perhaps only operate on the student as awakening a wholesome spirit of inquiry. Dr. Henry's work is rather a collection of copious observations on numerous detached passages ('Notes of a Twelve Years' Voyage of Discovery,' as he somewhat quaintly calls it) than a regular commentary: but I have found it of the greatest use, as my frequent references to it will show. The form is perhaps a little cumbrous, and the endeavours after precision not always successful: but there is freshness and originality in every page: a large number of the views are at once novel and sound: and the illustrations from other authors are good and apposite, though we may sometimes feel that the more obvious sources have been neglected for the less obvious. I am only sorry that he has not 'explored' as yet beyond the Sixth Book.

For the notices I have given from time to time of varieties in the Trojan legend and the story of Aeneas' migration unknown to Virgil, or recognized only in the way of distant allusion, I have been indebted almost entirely to Heyne's Excursuses, which seem to me to present a rare union of learning, sagacity, and sobriety.

I have also referred to the first volume of Sir George Lewis' Inquiry into the Credibility of Early Roman History. My introductions to the several books of the Aeneid are naturally longer in some cases than those prefixed to the several Eclogues and books of the Georgics: indeed, the Introduction to the Sixth Book has grown into a short Essay. In the general Introduction I have controverted Mr. Gladstone's view of the relation of the Aeneid to the Homeric poems, as expressed in the third volume of his 'Studies.' In my former volume I was thought, I believe, to have disparaged unduly Virgil's claim to originality: I may now be considered to be taking the opposite side, in vindicating his right to be criticized independently of Homer. Both views are, I believe, true, and therefore consistent: but it is possible of course so to maintain either as to appear unmindful of the other.

The translations introduced into the notes of the former volume were intended to a certain extent as specimens or experiments. They have been, I believe, in general favourably received, so as to encourage me to think whether some day they might not be presented to the public in a more extended form; and I have accordingly been less anxious to introduce them in the present commentary.

My obligations to my former colleague, Mr. Goldwin Smith, are unfortunately confined in the present volume almost wholly to the notes on the First Book, which we originally composed together in 1853: and even they have since been so completely recast that it would be difficult now to point to any part of them as specially due to him. I need not say that I have still had the benefit of Mr. Long's assistance.

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