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Notes on Homeric *hapax legomena* and Vergilian *unica*

The interplay between ancient scholarship and ancient poetry is just one of Carlo Santini's many interests. It is also one in which I can say I have become more involved than I might have done, thanks to his example and leadership. This paper is a very small token of my gratitude and esteem, offered in partial recompense for his much-appreciated inspiration.

Appropriately, perhaps, since the offering is a small one, so is the topic, at least from one point of view. Words that occur only once: what topic could be smaller or slighter than that? And yet we know that such words possessed a certain glamour and prestige among ancient scholars and poets, some of whom were fascinated by lexical oddities, especially in Homer, to the point of fetishizing them in a way that most modern readers find difficult to understand.[1] But if we take the idea of the fetish seriously, and not just as a term of disapproval, we may gain some perspective on this phenomenon. According to Freud, the fetish is an object of desire that displaces or substitutes for other kinds of desire.[2] We might therefore understand the desire of Hellenistic poets to rival Homer as being displaced onto his fetishized *disiecta membra* in the form of words that are important only because they are peculiar in the context of Homeric usage. From a Marxist perspective, the fetish circulates as a kind of commodity item with an exchange value well beyond its intrinsic worth; and this too seems an appropriate model for understanding the *hapax*.[3] For the circulation of these lexical markers among poets, readers, critics, and other *cognoscenti* evidently conferred an exaggerated status on anyone who ascribed value to these words.

It would be worthwhile to develop the metaphor of the fetish in this regard; and I believe it is quite likely that the fetishized *hapax,* from either of these perspectives, speaks to the attitude of Latin as well as Greek poets. But since not everyone shares this belief, there is more basic work to be done. It has long been standard procedure in commentar-

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[1]   On the phenomenon itself, see Kumpf 1984, Reece 2009.

[2]   Freud 1927.

[3]   Bottomore 1991, 102 *s.v.* 'Commodity fetishism,' with further references.

ies on Hellenistic poetry to take note of passages that feature Homeric *hapax legomena* and other rare words.[4] This practice is much less common, however, in work on Latin authors.[5] Vergil obviously offers the most favorable conditions for such a study: the *hapax* is, after all, an oddity of Homeric vocabulary, and the *Aeneid* is the most detailed and extensive imitation of Homer ever undertaken. Investigating the specifically lexical influence of a Greek poem on a Latin one is complicated, but the discoveries that have been made prove that such work is not impossible. To date these discoveries are very few and have been treated only individually. My approach will therefore be to review those examples before moving on to some new ones that I have collected. My hope is that this work will be useful to anyone who might in future undertake a fuller and more systematic study of this material.

1. πτύω *and* spuo, *«to spit»*

οἵ μιν ἄγον δι' ἀγῶνος ἐφελκομένοισι πόδεσσιν	
<u>αἷμα παχὺ πτύοντα</u> κάρη βάλλονθ' ἑτέρωσε	*Il.* XXIII 696–97
μηδ' ὅκ' ἀφ' αὐαλέων στομάτων <u>πτύωμες</u> ἄπαστοι.	Callim. *Cer.* 6
cum uenit et sicco terram <u>spuit</u> ore uiator	*Geo.* IV 97
ast illum fidi aequales genua aegra trahentem	
iactantemque utroque caput <u>crassumque cruorem</u>	
<u>ore eiectantem</u> mixtosque in sanguine dentes	
ducunt ad navis	*Aen.* V 468–71

I begin with an old contibution of my own, to which I can now add new information.[6] In *Georgics* IV, Vergil unexpectedly uses a verb meaning 'to spit.' Commentators, sensitive to a possible breach of decorum, discovered precedents in Varro and Callimachus; and the verb Callimachus uses, πτύω, happens to be a Homeric *hapax*.[7] The Homeric, Callimachean, and Vergilian contexts are all very different; but in *Aeneid* V, Vergil returns to the Homeric source — the boxing match of *Iliad* XXIII, in which the vanquished Euryalus spits up blood as his friends lead him to safety — as a model for the very similar scene in which the vanquished Dares spits up blood as his own friends lead him to safety. Here Vergil does not reuse the verb *spuo,* thus preserving its

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[4] Cf. such specialized studies as Chryssafis 1981 and Kyriakou 1995.

[5] Harrison 1991 is a notable exception, although this is not reflected in the index to the commentary.

[6] Farrell 1991, 241–43.

[7] Hopkinson 1984, 84 ad loc.

status as an *unicum* in his poetic corpus. He may also have felt that the word, even if it passed muster in the *Georgics,* was beneath the dignity of heroic epos.[8] But the word that replaces it, *eiecto,* is itself a Vergilian *unicum.* In addition, the grammatical form of *eiectantem* is identical to that of πτύοντα, and the two words occupy similar positions in their respective lines. So Vergil 'borrows' this Homeric *hapax* twice, but differently in two different poems, first perhaps via Callimachus and with no reference to context, prosody, or grammatical form, and second 'directly' from Homer with significant attention to all three factors.

This example suggests, at the most basic level, that Homeric lexicography plays some role in Vergilian intertextuality and that, while lexical rarities may be the focus of Vergil's interest, they may also function as part of a contextual allusion. In this instance, when Vergil 'reuses' a *hapax legomenon,* he does so with increased attention to dramatic and thematic relevance while maintaining or even intensifying his interest in the purely lexical element. Of course, since Homer was so important a model of the *Aeneid,* any such 're-use' of a *hapax* imitated in the earlier works is almost certain to involve a closer contextual relationship; so perhaps we should not make too much of that. Still, this pattern may have something to tell us about Vergil's working method and its development over time.

2. σκύφος *and* scyphus*, 'drinking cup'*

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δείπνησε καὶ ἤραρε θυμὸν ἐδωδῇ,
καί οἱ πλησάμενος δῶκε <u>σκύφος</u>, ᾧ περ ἔπινεν,
οἴνου ἐνίπλειον· ὁ δ' ἐδέξατο, χαῖρε δὲ θυμῷ   *Od.* XIV 111–13

καὶ τὺ δίδου τὰν αἶγα τό τε <u>σκύφος</u>, ὥς κεν ἀμέλξας
σπείσω ταῖς Μοίσαις. ὦ χαίρετε πολλάκι, Μοῖσαι   Theocr. *Id.* I 143–44

dixerat, Herculea bicolor cum populus umbra
velavitque comas foliisque innexa pependit,
et sacer implevit dextram <u>scyphus</u>. ocius omnes
in mensam laeti libant divosque precantur.   *Aen.* VIII 276–79

A case in point is this example, discovered by Jeffrey Wills and subsequently discussed by me; but once again something new can be added.[9] As Wills argued, Homer uses σκύφος only once (*Od.* XIV 112), for the cup that Eumaeus offers Odysseus. Theocritus also used it only once (*Id.* I 143), in the same metrical *sedes* (just before the bu-

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[8]   *Eiecto,* while not obviously polite, continues to be used in the 'higher' genres of poetry (Ovid, Lucan, Silius, Statius, and Valerius), while *spuo* does not (only in Cels. II 8.25.1 and VIII 9.1c6, Petron. 74.13, and Plin. *Nat.* XXVIII 36.3).

[9]   Wills 1987; cf. Farrell 1997, 25–28.

colic diaeresis), for the cup that the Goatherd gives to Thyrsis. And Vergil uses *scyphus* just once (*Aen.* VIII 278), to name a cup from which Evander pours a libation.[10] From a purely lexical point of view, this example could hardly be clearer or less complicated. But the word also functions as an intertextual signpost with respect to theme and genre. Theocritus uses it not only because of its rarity, but also because of its proto-bucolic provenance: the Eumaeus episode is a rich source of 'humble' motifs within Homeric epos that Theocritus uses to create his bucolic world.[11] The point is emphasized when the Goatherd describes his σκύφος as being embossed with scenes emblematic of that world (27–60). At the same time, his description of the cup alludes to the ecphrasis of Achilles' shield in *Iliad* XVIII, signalling to the reader that both the cup and the word that names it are emblems of Theocritean poetics, which draws on choice Homeric elements in unexpected ways to create something quite different from heroic poetry.[12] For Vergil, both the Homeric and the Theocritean associations of word and cup are important. Odysseus' sojourn with Eumaeus is a model for Aeneas' visit to Pallanteum, where Evander reigns over a community of herdsmen. But Aeneas has come to seek a military alliance, and he will not be disappointed. The lexical and poetic history of Evander's *scyphus* thus sums up the character of his people, who are both peaceful shepherds and able warriors. Finally, it is in book VIII that Aeneas receives his divine armor, including a shield; and the ecphrasis of that shield is obviously modeled on Homer's exphrasis of Achilles' shield — which, as I have said, is also the model for the ecphrasis of Theocritus' σκύφος.

So much was already known; here I can add a few details.

ἐμμεμαυῖα θεά· μέγα δ᾽ ἔβραχε <u>φήγινος ἄξων</u>
βριθοσύνῃ· δεινὴν γὰρ ἄγεν θεὸν ἄνδρά τ᾽ ἄριστον.   *Il.* V 838–39

Τίν με, λεοντάγχ᾽ ὦνα συοκτόνε, <u>φήγινον ὄζον</u>
   θῆκε — 'τίς;' Ἀρχῖνος. 'ποῖος;' ὁ Κρίης. 'δέχομαι.'   Call. *Epigr.* XXXIV Pf

verum, id quod multo tute ipse fatebere maius,
insanire libet quoniam tibi, *pocula* ponam
<u>fagina</u>, caelatum divini opus Alcimedontos   *Ecl.* III 35–37

In *Eclogue* III, long before he deployed the word *scyphus* in the *Aeneid,* Vergil had already imitated the Goatherd's description of the σκύφος from the first *Idyll.* Did he

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[10]   Homer and Theocritus also use κισσύβιον in referring to these vessels (*Od.* XIV 78, *Id.* I 27), and this may be what drew the attention of ancient scholars to these passages. Wills (1987, 456 n. 7) notes that Ath. XI 477 and Macr. *Sat.* V 21.15–19 both discuss the differences between σκύφος and κισσύβιον, and it is possible that this *zetema* goes back to a much earlier period.

[11]   Halperin 1983.

[12]   Hunter 1999, 76–77, with further references.

then take note of the word's status as a *hapax?* The evidence suggests that he did, in several ways. First, Vergil doubles the number of Menalcas' cups, then doubles them again when Damoetas claims to have an identical pair.[13] Does the motif of doubling acknowledge that these Vergilian cups derive from a pair of 'singular' literary σκύφοι, one in Homer and one in Theocritus? If so, it may explain why the poet, rather than borrowing the Greek *hapax,* calls these cups *pocula* (36), the most ordinary possible Latin word. For that matter, σκύφος itself is actually a common word that just happens to be a Homeric (and Theocritean) *hapax.* But perhaps to acknowledge the word's special status in the tradition of Homeric *aemulatio* (and nowhere else),[14] Vergil endows these run-of-the-mill *pocula* with another sort of lexical uniqueness. In specifying that they are made of beechwood, Vergil eschews the ordinary Latin word, *fagineus,* in favor of *faginus* (37)*,* a Greek word (φήγινος) that actually means 'oaken' but that, like σκύφος, is a Homeric *hapax* (*Il.* V 838). Also like σκύφος it was subsequently used just once by a Hellenistic poet, Callimachus, in the same metrical *sedes* as Homer, just *after* the bucolic diaeresis. In fact, Callimachus' clausula as a whole (φήγινον ὄζον) is clearly modeled on Homer's (φήγινος ἄξων). So, although Vergil 'ignores' here the unique status of σκύφος in Homer, he 'compensates' by introducing an *unicum* to describe these lexically unremarkable *pocula.*

There is, then, a bit more to Vergil's use of *scyphus* and *faginus* than first meets the eye. But even that is not all. About a century after Callimachus, the critic Aristarchus would delete from his text of Homer the passage where φήγινος occurs.[15] There is no indication it had been impugned before Aristarchus, so that when Callimachus fashioned a new clausula on that of Homer, he may have been interested in φήγινος only as a *hapax,* and not because he wanted to register an editorial opinion. Elsewhere, however, both he and other Hellenistic poets do comment on disputed passages in this way.[16] Could Vergil, then, be using *faginus* to defend the Homeric paradosis against Aristarchus? This doesn't seem impossible, even if in the *Eclogues* the word occupies a different *sedes* at the beginning, not the end, of a line.

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[13]   On the motif of doubling see Cucchiarelli 2012, 213 *ad* 32–42. Moreover, in Theocritus there is just one mother (μάτηρ 16), but in Vergil a second, at least (*noverca* 33), and where in Theocritus father and mother count sheep 'in the evening' (ποθέσπερα 16), in Vergil father and stepmother 'both' (*ambo* 34) count them 'twice a day' (*bisque die*), and one (*alter*) performs a second count of goats. This emphasis on doubling and counting ought to put the alert reader on notice as to the doubling and counting of the cups in this wager. See further Farrell 1992 and 2012, 288–90.

[14]   Apart from the single occurrence in Theocritus, it is found in Hellenistic poetry only in Phaedimus (Ath. XI 498e = *SH* 669).

[15]   On Aristarchus' athetization, see Aristonicus, *De signis Iliadis ad Il.* V 837–39 with Kirk 1990, 146 *ad Il.* V 838–9; cf. Kirk 1985, 38–43. κισσύβιον occurs in two other Homeric passages, both from the *Odyssey* (IX 346, XVI 52).

[16]   Farrell 1991, 13–14, with further references.

Here another passage comes into play. Vergil uses *faginus* only once in the *Eclogues,* but he uses it again in the *Georgics,* and not just in its original *sedes,* but in a translation of the entire clausula with additional reference to the Homeric context:

> ἐμμεμαυῖα θεά· μέγα δ᾽ ἔβραχε <u>φήγινος ἄξων</u>
> <u>βριθοσύνῃ</u>· δεινὴν γὰρ ἄγεν θεὸν ἄνδρά τ᾽ ἄριστον.　　　*Il.* V 838–39

> post ualido nitens sub pondere <u>faginus axis</u>
> <u>instrepat</u>, et iunctos temo trahat aereus orbis　　　*Geo.* III 172–73

The virtually identical clausulae guarantee the allusion and turn the oaken axle of a heroic chariot, groaning under the weight of Athena and Diomedes, into the beech-wood axle of an ordinary farm implement, groaning under the weight of cargo too mundane to be mentioned.[17] Beechwood of course is hardly the right material for an axle: Homeric allusion was much more important to Vergil here than verisimilitude.[18] But it is the perfect material for Menalcas' cups in the *Eclogue* III, since the beech tree (*fagus*) has rightly been called, «beyond all others, perhaps, the tree of the Eclogues.»[19] Thus in his reuse of *faginus* we see in miniature how Vergil's ambition takes him from humble pastoral beginnings to more ambitious georgic essays. And, in this example at least, these ambitions have a lot to do with Homer.

Once again, however, Vergil does something unexpected. By using *faginus* a second time, he 'sacrifices' its status as an *unicum* in his poetic corpus. This is in contrast to his careful treatment of πτύω/*spuo*/*eiecto.* But in view of the care with which he had signaled the motif of doubling in *Eclogue* III, it seems unlikely that Vergil reused *faginus* thoughtlessly.[20] Remembering that he had used it as a 'compensatory' *unicum* (to modify *pocula,* the ordinary word that 'replaced' *scyphus*), we may note that in the passage where he reuses it, the verb *instrepat* — another Vergilian *unicum* — translates the (common) Homeric ἔβραχε. And while ἔβραχε directly precedes the clausula φήγινος ἄξων, *instrepat* follows *faginus axis* at the start of the next line, in the position of Homer's βριθοσύνη — which is itself a Homeric rarity. It occurs only once again, at *Il.* XII 460 in the same *sedes,* but a very different context. (Hector uses a weighty stone to smash the gates of the Greek encampment.) Apollonius of Rhodes also uses it, just once, in a context that

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[17]　Noted by Thomas 1988 and Mynors 1990 *ad loc.*

[18]　As Mynors 1990 notes *ad loc.,* Pliny (*Nat.* XVI 229) specifies oak, ash, or elm as suitable material for axles.

[19]　Ross 1975, 72.

[20]　It may be relevant that he uses it once in the *Eclogues* and once in the *Georgics,* thus making it like those words that occur just once each in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey.* The category is attested in ancient criticism: see Σ T *in Il.* V 219, πρίν γ᾽ ἐπὶ νώ] τὸ νώ βαρυτονητέον. ἅπαξ δὲ ἐν Ἰλιάδι, καὶ ἅπαξ ἐν Ὀδυσσείᾳ (XII 475).

recalls the groaning axle of *Iliad* V. (Logs groan — στενάχοντο, another common verb — under the weight of the Argo as it is rolled down to the shore, I 388–90.) So, Vergil's *unicum* stands where Homer and Apollonius had used another rare word.[21]

What initially looked like a relatively straightforward case of borrowing σκύφος for use in the *Aeneid* turns out to be implicated in a web of imitations and lexical borrowings across Vergil's oeuvre. Some of these involve contextual imitation, and some do not. Previous interventions by Theocritus, Apollonius, and Callimachus all play their roles. In several cases 'compensatory' lexical borrowing is also involved.

In all respects, our second example reinforces and extends the tentative conclusions suggested by the first. We obviously cannot treat inferences drawn from such a small number of examples as if they were rules; we can, however, use them as points of reference in evaluating further cases. In addition, lack of strict consistency even in what we have seen so far suggests that we must allow Vergil a certain flexibility while remaining alert to the unexpected.

Space does not permit me to multiply examples, but in what follows, I will adduce just a few more cases of Vergilian *unica* that appear to be related to Homeric *hapax legomena*.

3. γωρυτός *and* gorytus, *'quiver'*

ἔνθεν ὀρεξαμένη ἀπὸ πασσάλου αἴνυτο τόξον
αὐτῷ <u>γωρυτῷ</u>, ὅς οἱ περίκειτο φαεινός   *Od.* XXI 53–54

quique urbem liquere Cosas, quis tela sagittae
<u>gory</u>tique leves <u>umeris</u> et letifer <u>arcus</u>.   *Aen.* X 168–169

This is one of several cases involving a Greek loan-word.[22] It appears to be a straightforward instance of lexical borrowing, and is noted as such by Harrison *ad loc.* The word γωρυτός occurs in Homer only here and is not common elsewhere.[23] The Homeric and Vergilian contexts are dissimilar: Penelope takes Odysseus' bow from the peg where it hangs along with its quiver (αὐτῷ γωρυτῷ); in the catalogue of Aeneas' Italian allies,

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[21] This Vergilian coinage never occurs again until Apuleius (*Met.* II 27.6), though it becomes common in later antiquity, probably thanks to Vergil's authority.

[22] A few examples: κύμβαχος (*Il.* V 585–86 with Σ bT *ad loc.* and Call. *Iamb.* V, fr. 195.28–29 Pf; cf. *Il.* XV 535–38) and *cernuus* (*Aen.* X 892–94; cf. XII 491–93), 'bending forward; head-first'; λύχνος (*Od.* XIX 34) and *lychnus Aen.* I 726), 'lamp'; τάλαρος (*Il.* XVIII 568; cf. *Od.* IV 125, 131, IX 247 with Σ *in Od.* IV 125 τάλαρον] κάλαθον) and *calathus* (*Aen.* VII 805), 'a basket (for holding unworked wool).'

[23] Attested in Aeschylus' lost *Threissae* (frr. 292b and d Mette), Rhianus (fr. 66.3 Powell, *A.P.* VI 34.3), and Lyc. *Alex.* 458.

Massicus' troops carry bows and quivers full of arrows on their shoulders.[24] Vergil is the first to use the word in Latin, and after him it appears only in Silius and Statius. Recognizing and maintaining its status as an *unicum* may have mattered to the former, who also uses it just once (XV 773), but evidently not to the latter, who uses it four times (*Theb.* IV 269, VII 660, IX 730, XII 527).

4. στόμαχος *and* stomachus, *'belly'*

ἦ, καὶ ἀπὸ στομάχους ἀρνῶν τάμε νηλέϊ χαλκῷ   *Il.* III 292

     ὃ δὲ δεύτερος ὄρνυτο χαλκῷ
Ἀτρεΐδης Μενέλαος ἐπευξάμενος Διὶ πατρί·
ἂψ δ' ἀναχαζομένοιο κατὰ στομάχοιο θέμεθλα
νύξ', ἐπὶ δ' αὐτὸς ἔρεισε βαρείη χειρὶ πιθήσας·
ἀντικρὺ δ' ἁπαλοῖο δι' αὐχένος ἦλυθ' ἀκωκή   *Il.* XVII 45–49

ἦ, καὶ ἀπὸ στόμαχον κάπρου τάμε νηλέϊ χαλκῷ   *Il.* XIX 266

     volat Itala cornus
aëra per tenerum stomachoque infixa sub altum
pectus abit: reddit specus atri volneris undam
spumantem, et fixo ferrum in pulmone tepescit   *Aen.* IX 698–701

Homer uses στόμαχος only in the *Iliad,* not once, but three times. Two of these, however, are formulaic descriptions of animal sacrifice; in the third passage, Menelaus slays Euphorbus. This is the passage that interested Vergil, who uses *stomachus* just once, when Turnus slays Antiphates. Although the word is neither a Homeric *hapax* strictly speaking nor uncommon in Latin before Vergil (it is found in a variety of senses in Plautus, Terence, Lucilius, and not infrequently in Cicero), it seems likely that Vergil regarded it as a Homeric quasi-*hapax* and on this basis used it as a deliberate *unicum*.

5. οὐ παλινάγρετον *and* inreparabilis, *'irrevocable; irreversible; unreplaceable'*

τοῦτο γὰρ ἐξ ἐμέθεν γε μετ' ἀθανάτοισι μέγιστον
τέκμωρ· οὐ γὰρ ἐμὸν παλινάγρετον οὐδ' ἀπατηλὸν
οὐδ' ἀτελεύτητον ὅ τί κεν κεφαλῇ κατανεύσω   *Il.* I 525–27

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24   The description paraphrases Apollo's plague-bringing advance on the Greek army (τόξ' ὤμοισιν ἔχων ἀμφηρεφέα τε φαρέτρην *Il.* I 45).

ἢ δ' οὐ παλινάγρετός ἐστιν.
αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ δαίμων χαλεποὺς ἐπετέλλετ᾽ ἀέθλους   Hes. *Sc.* 93–94

κὤτι γηράλεοι πέλομεν πρὶν ἀπύπτυσαι
καὶ ῥύσσοι, νεότατα δ᾽ ἔχην παλινάγρετον
οὐκ ἔστι· πτέρυγας γὰρ ἐπωμαδίαις φόρει   Theoc. *Id.* XXIX 27–29

Αἰσονίδη, τὸ μὲν οὐ παλινάγρετον οὐδέ τι μῆχος
ἔστ᾽ ὀπίσω, κενεαὶ γὰρ ὑποσμύχονται ὀπωπαί·   A.R. *Arg.* II 444–45

δῖα γύναι, τὸ μὲν οὐ παλινάγρετον αὖθι γένοιτο
ἔργον, ἐπεὶ Μοιρᾶν ὧδ᾽ ἐπένησε λίνα   Call. *Lav. Pall.* 103–4

sed fugit interea, fugit inreparabile tempus   *Geo.* III 284

stat sua cuique dies, breue et inreparabile tempus   *Aen.* X 467

Any reader with an ounce of sensitivity for Vergil's style must feel that *inreparabile tempus* is one of his most beautiful phrases. He uses it in the *Georgics* to declare that he must hurry if he is to finish his task, then in the *Aeneid* when Jupiter declares that everyone's span of life is fixed and that, once spent, it can never be got back. *Inreparabile* appears first in Vergil and was undoubtedly coined by him. General avoidance of it thereafter, especially by poets, is a clear sign of homage to the sublimity of Vergil's conception.[25]

That said, the word was inspired by a comparably impressive Homeric phrase and its reception. This phrase appears only at *Il.* I 526, where it refers not to lost time, but to the permanence of Zeus's word. The author of the ps.-Hesiodic *Scutum* altered Homer's prosody, joining the negative particle οὐ with the *hapax* παλινάγρετος and putting them in the *sedes* that Vergil would use. He also changed the frame of reference from the immutability of divine law to the impossibility of undoing what has once been done. It was Theocritus who first used it of the brevity of youth, without οὐ and with no apparent reference to the Homeric context. Apollonius 'restored' the word to its Homeric *sedes* but, like ps.-Hesiod, joined it with the negative particle and used it of a deed that cannot be undone, as if to acknowledge both of his archaic sources. Callimachus' prosody is identical to that of Apollonius, but for him what cannot be undone is once again divine law, as in Homer. The Apollonian and Callimachean passages are thus clearly related: as Bulloch argues, quite apart from shared phraseology, «there is a close affinity between the two contexts … In A.R. the seer Phineus is replying to Jason's suggestion that his sight might be restored; C. makes Athena convey the grim practical truth to Chariclo, that her son's [i.e. Tiresias'] eyes have been permanently put out,

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[25]   It is used just once by Columella (XI 1.29) and once by Seneca (*Epist.* 123.10; cf. 108.24), both times with clear reference to Vergil, and then more freely in late antiquity (cf. n. 21).

through tactful implication, by reminiscence of A.R.».[26] None of this has been noted by Vergilian commentators, but that is not hard to understand. The *Georgics* context has no obvious similarity to any of those in which the Greek phrase occurs. The *Aeneid* episode as a whole, in which Jupiter consoles Hercules for the impending death of Pallas, is so obviously modeled on Zeus's grief at the impending death of Sarpedon as to overwhelm any suspicion that some other Homeric passage might come into play. It may be significant, however, that after Zeus informs Hera in *Iliad* I that his will is irreversable, she turns the tables in book XVI when he wants to alter fate by saving Sarpedon from his appointed doom. In *Aeneid* X, Jupiter passes on the lesson to Hercules, who in the *Scutum* had taught Iolaus about the impossibility of undoing the past. But Vergil's Jupiter emphasizes jointly the inviolability of fate and the brevity of life and youth, the latter being the point that Theocritus made when he appropriated the relevant Homeric word. Thus Vergil's *inreparabile* effectively recapitulates the entire history of the phrase οὐ παλινάγρετον in learned poetry.[27]

6. Conclusion

I began by saying that the field is a small one, but in fact, the number of Vergilian *unica* is large. Not all of them are significant as such, and not all of those that might be significant find an obvious parallel in Homer.[28] Accordingly, no sweeping conclusions can be stated at this time. But I hope to have succeeded in suggesting that there may be in this humble topic something that would repay further study.

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[26]   Bulloch 1985, 214–25 *ad* Call. *Lav. Pall.* 103.

[27]   As a cautionary tale, one could cite πρώρη, which occurs once in Homer (the episode of Scylla and Charybdis, *Od.* XII 230) and once in Apollonius' imitation of this episode (the Argo passing through the Symplegades, II 556). Vergil too uses *prora* just once in the *Georgics* (IV 117), with no contextual relationship to Homer and Apollonius; but Nelis (2001, 45–48 and 461) shows that the Apollonian passage is a model for *Aen.* III 554–67, which also concerns Scylla and Charybdis, and *prora* occurs there again, 'restored' to its Apollonian and (by extension) its Homeric context. The problem, however, is that *proras* is far from being an *unicum* in the *Aeneid*. It occurs sixteen times, often merely as a poetic synonym for *nauis*. This means either that Vergil used *prora* in the *Georgics* because it is a Homeric and Apollonian *hapax,* but then utterly ignored its previous status as an *unicum* when writing the *Aeneid,* or else that it is an *unicum* in the *Georgics* by mere chance.

[28]   For instance, there are loan words that are otherwise parallel to *faginus, gorytus, scyphus,* and *stomachus* but are not found in Homer, such as δίκταμνον (Arist. *HA* 612a4) and *dictamnum* (*Aen.* XII 412), 'dittany,' καρχήσιον (e.g. Sapph. 51.3) and *carchesium* (*Geo.* IV 380, *Aen.* V 77), 'drinking cup,' ὀρείχαλκος (Hes. *Sc.* 122, A.R. IV 973) and *orichalcum* (*Aen.* 12.87), τερέβινθος (Nic. *Th.* 516) and *terebinthus* (*Aen.* X 136 with Harrison 1991 *ad loc.*), and χάλυψ (e.g. Aesch. *PV* 133, Soph. *Tr.* 1260) and *chalybs* (*Aen.* VIII 446) 'steel.'

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