SHORTER NOTES

VIRGIL, *AENEID* 2.121*

ABSTRACT

This paper argues for Madvig's conjecture paret. *The subject of the verb is either* quae uox *or* Apollo*, and this allows* fata *to function as the needed direct object: 'for whom this oracle (or Apollo) was preparing death'. It is demonstrated that attempts to defend transmitted* parent *are either wholly inadequate or not quite satisfactory and that, as Housman argued long ago, textual conservatism is not the risk-free policy some imagine it to be.*

Keywords: Virgilian textual criticism; rustic-capital manuscripts; transitive verbs used intransitively; textual conservatism; causes of corruption

> "sanguine placastis uentos et uirgine caesa,
> cum primum Iliacas, Danai, uenistis ad oras:
> sanguine quaerendi reditus animaque litandum
> Argolica." uulgi quae uox ut uenit ad auris,
> obstipuere animi gelidusque per ima cucurrit 120
> ossa tremor, cui fata parent, quem poscat Apollo.

121 cui: quid *Peerlkamp, cl. Luc. 6.783* paret *Madvig, at* parent *ui absoluta positum, quasi sit 'cui fata insidientur'*

I have transcribed this portion of Sinon's speech from the second edition of Conte's Teubner.[1] The purpose of this note is to argue for *paret*, a conjecture published by Madvig in 1873.[2] The problem it addresses is that most take *fata* as the subject of the verb. This leaves transmitted *parent* without an object although it is *prima facie* transitive. The Loeb translation[3] reads: 'For whom is fate preparing this doom? Whom does Apollo claim?', but to make *fata* function as both subject and object is obviously impossible. It is this lack of an object that Madvig's conjecture addresses. I will set out the substantial case in its favour and also answer some ineffective defences.

Here is the argument in favour of *paret*: *fata* becomes object, not subject, of the verb, and the meaning it has as object is precisely the meaning the Loeb translation calls for,

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[1] G.B. Conte (ed.), *P. Vergilius Maro: Aeneis* (Berlin and Boston, 2019).

[2] J.N. Madvig, *Adversaria critica ad scriptores latinos. Vol. II. Emendationes latinae* (Copenhagen, 1873), 34. Madvig notes that he made this conjecture before he learned that it had been anticipated by an anonymous scholar in the Dutch journal *Miscellaneae observationes in auctores veteres et recentiores* 2.1 (1733), 86.

[3] H.R. Fairclough (ed.), *Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I–VI*, revised by G.P. Goold (Cambridge, MA and London, 1999). By contrast P.H. Peerlkamp, *P. Virgilii Maronis Aeneidos Libri I–VI* (Leiden, 1843), changes *cui* to *quid*, but this is unsatisfactory sense: the Argives already know *what* is in store, and the only question is *for whom* it is in store.

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'doom'. For *fatum* as a synonym for 'death', see *OLD* s.v. 6 and add *Aen*. 4.20 and 12.507, both of these employing the plural. For the precise collocation *fata parare alicui*, 'to prepare death for someone', see Ov. *Met*. 14.213 *talia fingebam misero mihi fata parari*, Valerius Flaccus 1.649 *miseris tu gentibus, Argo, fata paras*, and Stat. *Theb.* 5.714 *mirandaque fata parabas*. The corruption arose from the commonest of causes, the influence of a neighbouring word. *fata* occurs often in the *Aeneid* as the subject of verbs (more than thirty times, twice in the phrase *fata uiam inuenient*), and it is entirely natural that a scribe should unconsciously alter *paret* to *parent* in order to make *fata* its subject. Once we have undone his work, the meaning of the passage clear: 'When this utterance came to the ears of the crowd, their hearts were dazed, and a cold shudder ran through their inmost marrow (as they asked themselves) to whom it [*sc.* this utterance] was bringing death, whom Apollo was claiming as victim' (or 'to whom Apollo was bringing death, whom he was claiming as victim').

Three defences of *parent* must be mentioned. One, that of Forbiger,[4] cites a passage that is supposed to show that the lack of an object for *parent* is normal, although it shows no such thing. He says that *pararem* in [Quint.] *Decl.* 17.5 also lacks an object. But there the speaker, who had been about to do away with himself by poison when interrupted by his father, reports that the latter wanted to know *quid tererem, cui pararem*, 'what I was grinding up, for whom I was preparing it'. The object of *pararem*, though implicit, is clear. The defence fails.

Austin[5] takes the same line but dispenses with parallels entirely: 'The lack of an expressed object to *parent* … is no real difficulty, and makes the picture more sinister: the Greeks shiver as they wonder for whom the oracle is "making preparations".' But *parare* is a transitive verb, and an editor who wishes to treat it here as intransitive has an obligation, I suggest, to produce other passages that are plausible parallels.[6]

A third line of defence is not as obviously wrong as these two. This treats *parent* as a deliberative question with 'the Greeks' as its subject: 'for whom they were to prepare death'. Madvig, however, notes 'neque Graecis tremor per ossa currebat, cogitantibus, cui ipsi mortem parare deberent, nec, qui dei iussu aliquem occidere coguntur, fata ei parare recte dicuntur. omnis est cogitatio de oraculi sensu deique consilio …'. For the sake of clarity I paraphrase Madvig's objections. (1) The extreme emotion of cold shudders running through the body is more likely to be felt by people who are contemplating that *they themselves* may be the victim than by people worrying about others they may be required to kill. (2) The verb *parare* suggest something undertaken voluntarily, not under duress. (3) The emphasis of the description is on the god's

[4] *P. Vergili Maronis Opera ad optimorum librorum fidem edidit perpetua et aliorum et sua adnotatione illustravit … Albertus Forbiger* (Leipzig, 1872–5), 2.193–4.

[5] R.G. Austin, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Secundus* (Oxford, 1964).

[6] *TLL* 10.1.423.12–32 discusses some intransitive uses. One is Cic. *Fam.* 1.9.25. (Both in Shackleton Bailey's *Cicero: Epistulae ad familiares*, vol. 1 [Cambridge, 1977] and in his Loeb, *Cicero: Letters to Friends*, vol. 1 [Cambridge, MA, 2001], *Fam.* 1.9 is letter 10). The Loeb renders *paraturum cum collega* as 'would come to an arrangement with his colleague', which is a long way from Austin's vague 'make preparations' and from *OLD* s.v. 7c, which translates 'to make arrangements'. Cassius Hemina (fr. 11 Peter, page 102), *ita ut de regno par<ar>ent inter se*, seems likewise to be 'come to an arrangement with each other about the kingship', also quite a distance from Austin and from *OLD*. Shackleton Bailey's commentary adds examples from Lindsay's Festus, page 265 and the Tabula Heracleensis, found at *CIL* 1.206, line 26. Conte's attempt to gloss *parare* with *insidiari* (see his apparatus above) receives no support here. *OLD* ad loc. also cites Cic. *Div.* 1.122, but here it is simpler to take the *ut* clause as the subject of *paratum esse* and regard the infinitive as transitive.

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demands, represented by *quae uox* or *Apollo*, not on the actions of those the god is addressing.

A further point in Madvig's favour is the contribution his *cui fata paret* makes to the characterization of Sinon. Consider how emphasizing the fear of the hearers that they might be sacrificed helps to reinforce the way Sinon presents himself in the rest of the speech. In 124–5 he says that people were telling him that *he* was the target of the prophecy:

> et mihi iam multi crudele canebant
> artificis scelus et taciti uentura uidebant.

In 130–1 he describes the relief felt by the others that *their* throats were not going to be cut:

> adsensere omnes, et quae sibi quisque timebat
> unius in miseri exitium conuersa tulere.

In 132–3 the fatal day comes, with the full horror of being sacrificed:

> iamque dies infanda aderat: mihi sacra parari
> et salsae fruges et circum tempora uittae,

where note that *mihi sacra parari* uses the same verb plus dative that we find in *cui fata paret*. And in 139–40 he imagines that his family will be sacrificed in his stead after his escape:

> quos illi fors et poenas ob nostra reposcent
> effugia et culpam hanc miserorum morte piabunt.

These are all, like Madvig's text of 121, written from the point of view of someone worried that he may be the victim. By contrast, the image of people worrying about others *they* might have to sacrifice contributes much less to Sinon's rhetorical purpose.

Madvig's conjecture solves a genuine problem, and defences of the transmitted text are either wholly inadequate or not fully satisfactory. Why do so few editors even mention this conjecture? Editors of Virgil are perhaps lulled into a false sense of security by their good fortune: they have manuscripts in rustic capitals dating from the fourth to sixth century of our era, and the early date of these confers the presumption that their witness will not often need to be corrected by later manuscripts or by conjecture. But it is illegitimate to conclude that because these manuscripts are comparatively error-free, they deserve our trust at all times. There are several places where the truth is preserved elsewhere or has been recovered by conjecture.[7] Where a conjecture addresses a real problem (as Madvig's does), and the postulated corruption can be easily explained, it is

[7] I examined the text and apparatus of *Aeneid* 1–6 as a sample. What emerged was that editors rarely have to turn to later manuscripts or the indirect tradition. But 'rarely' is not the same as 'never', and in my view there are plausible grounds at 1.104, 2.114, 2.727, 3.531, 3.659, 5.573, 6.20, 6.96, 6.254 and 6.383 for setting aside the witness of the *veteres*. Conjecture is rarely needed, but in my view Bentley's *apta* (1.429), Schaper's *ac secto* (3.464), Heinsius's *uidet et* (6.495), Reeve's *aut* (6.533) and Madvig's *Pirithoumque <et>* (6.601) seem highly attractive. (Different temperaments, of course, might add to or subtract from these lists.)

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irrational to prefer violent construal to the gentle medicine of a small and easily justified alteration.[8]

This conjecture has, at the very least, earned the right to a place at the bottom of the page. I believe that the case for promoting it to the text is strong.

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[8] A.E. Housman, *M. Manilii Astronomicon I* (London, 1903), xli writes that fear of following the current fashion of defending whatever is transmitted by the manuscripts has led him 'here and there to err on the side of caution, and timidly to alter what I might without rashness have defended'. Though Housman's language is deliberately paradoxical, his point is not. Textual conservatism is not the risk-free policy that some think it is. To be sure, it is risky to adopt violent conjectures, but it is also risky to acquiesce in a *paradosis* that cannot withstand scrutiny. Defences can be as violent as conjectures.

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