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THE SENSE OF GAMES AND UNDESERVED SUFFERING SOME COMMENTS ON BOOK V OF VERGIL'S *AENEID*

KEYWORDS: Virgil, Aeneid, Aeneas, Palinurus, undeserved suffering, games on Sicily, Anchises, Acestes, *fortuna*, *fatum*, ecphrasis

SUMMARY: Many scholars believe that literary and artistic level of Book V of Vergil`s *Aeneid* is much lower than in the neighbouring books four and six. Nonetheless a detailed analysis of the contents and composition allows, in my opinion, to treat Book V as interesting and valuable. Vergil concentrated primarily on the sense of suffering which often befalls innocent people. The most vivid is the example of Palinurus whose undeserved and sacrificial death permits Aeneas to continue with his mission. The death of Palinurus and Dido is, I think, a symbolic farewell of Aeneas with the Trojan past and the wandering on the sea. The participants in the games are all secondary characters. By introducing them Vergil, I believe, wished to stress the importance of every man of Aeneas` crew in the fulfilling of the task set by destiny. The importance of *fatum* and *fortuna* increases exponentially in the instances where human strength and abilities fail.

Book V of the *Aeneid* by Vergil gives rise to numerous controversies amongst the scholars[1]. Many believe that its literary and artistic level is much lower than in the neighbouring books four and six. Naturally the close proximity of the two probably most important books of the *Aeneid* ensures that such an opinion may seem well founded. Nonetheless a detailed analysis of the contents and composition allows, in my opinion, to perceive Book V as interesting and valuable.

At first I would like to retell and interpret the most important events described in the book. Aeneas, having left Carthage hurriedly, sails to the open sea, yet he looks back at the city where the pyre of unhappy Elissa (*infelix Elissa*)[2] is still burning. Narrator underlines here that Aeneas and his crew know nothing about what took place in Carthage, though they suspect the worst, being aware how much evil can be caused by woman's madness and spurned love (*duri magno sed amore dolores / polluto, notumque furens quid femina possit,* V 5-6)[3]. It is possible that this is an attempt on Vergil's part to defend Aeneas in his conflict with Dido[4]. Meanwhile the sea becomes restless, foreshadowing another catastrophe[5]. Helmsman Palinurus says that they will not be able to reach Italian shores in such stormy weather. The mighty goddess Fortuna forces them to acquiesce to her wishes and to change

[1] This is attested to by R.D. Williams, 'Preface', [in:] *P. Vergilii Maronis Aeneidos liber quintus*, edited with a commentary, Oxford 1960, and M.C.J. Putnam, *Unity and Design in Aeneid V, Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 1962, 66, p. 205: "For the most part, Book V is not one of the more powerful or dramatic sections of the *Aeneid*". The remarks of R.D. Williams regarding the time of Book V composition are noteworthy, R.D. Williams, *op.cit.*, Introduction, p. XXIV: "Book V seems to have been written comparatively late, perhaps when Virgil was working on the second half. It presents certain similarities of style with the later books; the directness and vigour of narrative and the relative rareness of Alexandrian motifs and descriptive phraseology link it with Virgil's later style"; G.K. Galinsky, 'Aeneid V and the Aeneid', *The American Journal of Philology* 1968, 89, p. 157: "Like the Eighth Book of the Aeneid, Aeneid V is one of the episodic books of the epic".

[2] Note the last words of Dido: *hauriat hunc oculis ignem crudelis ab alto / Dardanus, et nostrae secum ferat omina mortis* (IV 661-662).

[3] *Furor* has an important function in this book, e.g. V 670, 788, 801. Cf. J. Korpanty, '*Furor* in der augusteischen Literatur', *Klio* 1985, 67, p. 248-257.

[4] For general remarks on the subject see idem, 'De Didone ab Aenea deserta quaestiones selectae', *Classica Cracoviensia* 2008, 12, p. 59-93.

[5] Cf. S. L. Mohler, 'Sails and Oars in the Aeneid', Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association 1948, 79, p. 46-62.

their destination (*superat quoniam Fortuna, sequamur, / quoque vocat vertamus iter*, V 22-23)[6]. In close vicinity there are the shores of Eryx, Aeneas's brother and the ports of Sicily. Aeneas himself advises the helmsman to change the course and head to the shores where the Dardanian companion Acestes dwells and where the bones of father Anchises have found their resting place (*patris Anchisae gremio complectitur ossa*, V 31). Favourable Zephyrus fills the sails and they joyfully arrive at a well-known shore. Severe Acestes, dressed in the fur of Libyan she-bear, is amazed at the sight of friends, welcomes them again and entertains them with all the best his land has to offer, mindful of their ancient descent. This scene ends the first part of the book (V 41).

The day after Aeneas calls for his companions from the whole coast and announces to the gathered host that a year has passed since the day when they interred the bones of his divine father (*reliquias divinique ossa parentis*, V 47). The anniversary shall forever remain both sad and worthy of reverence. It is due to gods' will (*haud equidem sine mente, reor, sine numine divum*, V 56), Aeneas surmises, that they have gathered near the ashes and bones of the father on this day, hurried by the wind to the friendly harbour. Aeneas prays for the favour of his father, so that he can build a city and each year offer sacrifices in the temples dedicated to Anchises[7]. Next he announces that when the ninth Aurora arrives, he will proclaim to the Teucri the games in honour of his deceased father. Let them all come and contest for the palm of victory. After Aeneas offers proper sacrifices – he pours on the ground

[6] In Vergil *fortuna* usually means good or bad luck, e.g. *Aen.* XII 405-406; VIII 15; VII 559; XI 761; XII 920; XI 252-254; XII 593; XI 108. In many passages *fortuna* oscillates between 'accident' and 'destiny', e.g. V 356; V 709-710; V 604 – passages that will be discussed further in this paper. Sometimes *fortuna* seems not to differ in the slightest from the notion of *fatum* understood in its main three aspects, i.e. as μοιρα, εἱμαρμένη, πρόνοια, e.g. VI 681-683; VI 95-96; VIII 333-334.

[7] Cf. R.D. Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 48: "In the description of the religious ceremony, Virgil (as so often elsewhere) mingles Roman and Greek traditions. Essentially Aeneas is celebrating the normal Roman ritual at the tomb on the anniversary of a father's death (*parentatio*, see on 60); but this simple ritual is given added mystery and majesty by the interweaving of elements from the Greek hero-cult. Hellenistic ideas about the deification of dead heroes had considerable influence in Rome already by Virgil's time, and a number of features in Virgil's description of the ceremonies suggest the conception of the deified hero"; J. Bayet, 'Les cendres d`Anchise: dieu, héros, ombre ou serpent (Virgile, Enéide V 42-103)', *Aparchai* 1961, 4, p. 39-56.

two chalices of pure wine, two of fresh milk and two of blood from sacrificed animals, and scatters purple flowers – he addresses again holy father (*sancte pater*) with regret that they were not granted an opportunity to seek together the fated meadows of Italy and the Ausonian Tiber. His words are confirmed by a curious behaviour of a serpent who calmly, without harming anyone, slithered past the mound and crept between the altars[8]. Aeneas is unable to decide whether the serpent is a genius of the place or a spirit serving his father.

I believe that the role of the games is to provide an interlude, to tone down the emotions[9]. Naturally they are inspired by the games after Patroclus's death in the Book XXIII of the *Iliad*[10]. The first and undoubtedly the most important competition is the ship race. Vergil describes it in verses 114-285[11]. There are four ships selected from the whole fleet, of equal capability and with heavy oars, being prepared for the contest: the commanders are Mnestheus, Gyas, Sergestus and Cloanthus. Differently than Homer who made Ajax and Odysseus the main competitors, Vergil describes less known, peripheral characters[12]. Vergil once again uses a diversified palette of colours. On the stern

[8] The description of the snake is very vivid: blue and green spots shine on its back, scales emit golden radiance, as a rainbow which glitters in the sun with thousands of colours (V 87-89). The harmless snake is naturally the complete opposite of the two snakes which strangled Laocoon and his sons (II 199-233). And one more example from Book V: long simile of Sergestes's boat, which lost its oars, to a wounded snake (V 273-279).

[9] Cf. R.D. Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 66: "In deciding to include an account of athletic contests in the *Aeneid* Virgil had a number of motives apart from the Homeric precedent: to relieve the emotional tension between Book IV and Book VI; to concentrate attention on Anchises and the religious honours duly paid in filial reverence by Aeneas to his father (see note on 42 f.); and to serve as a prototype for current Roman customs and institutions, especially for the revival of interest in athletics fostered by Augustus"; W.H. Willis, 'Athletic Contests in the Epic', Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association 1941, 72, p. 392: "In all the classical epics extant from Homer downwards the narrative is interrupted, usually for the space of a whole book, to accommodate the account of some athletic contest".

[10] Cf. R.D. Williams, *op. cit.*, Introduction, p. XIII-XIX.

[11] Cf. E.N. Gardiner, *Athletics of the Ancient World*, Oxford 1930, p. 95-96; A. Feldherr, 'Ships of State: 'Aeneid' 5 and Augustan Circus Spectacle', *Classical Antiquity* 1995, 14, p. 245-265.

[12] Cf. Servius in his commentary to Book V 389, 704 says that Hyginus and Varro wrote work titled *De familiis Troianis*.

of each vessel the commanders shine with the splendour of gold and purple, poplar leaves adorn heads of the crew and naked backs glisten, anointed with oil. The ships bear original names: *Sea Dragon* (*Pristis*), *Chimera*, *Centaurus* and *Scylla*. The race is preceded by description of a rock which is to be the turning point for the ships (*meta*). They await the start signal in great tension (Vergil uses here elision three times! – *intenti exspectant signum, exsultantiaque haurit*, V 137) and their hearts are filled with anxiety and desire for glory (*pavor pulsans laudumque arrecta cupido*, V 138). Oars plough the foamy waters and the trident bow rents the sea asunder. After a series of dramatic events Cloanthus emerges the victor, yet Aeneas gives prizes also to the remaining commanders. Interestingly, Cloanthus was allowed to win only due to the intervention of god Portunus: *et pater ipse manu magna Portunus euntem / impulit: illa noto citius volucrique sagitta / ad terram fugit et portu se condidit alto*, V 241-243).

The running competition takes place in a charming place, a theatre amidst hills and forests. Among the contestants the poet enumerates in the first place Euryalus and Nisus, as well as Diores, Salius, Patron, Panopes, Helymus and others whose names have been forgotten over the ages. Narrator enumerates the original gifts for all the competitors: two Cretan arrows shining with polished steel, a double-edged axe ornamented with silver – the first three will receive these prizes and have their heads wreathed in yellow olive leaves. The first shall receive a steed with ornamental harness, the second, an Amazonian quiver full of Thracian arrows, fastened with broad golden belt and a clasp with a cut precious stone; the third shall rejoice over an Argive helmet. The third competition is a boxing match. Only two competitors take part, Dares and Entellus. Dares, as Vergil reminds us, defeated near Hector's tomb a giant Butes who was boasting of his home country Bebrycia and his descent from the line of Amycus. None of the assembled men has courage to face him in combat. Finally, Aeneas persuades Entellus to take up the challenge. He asks ironically where is the divine Eryx whom he once called his teacher (*magister*), where is his fame once trumpeted all over Italy, where are the spoils of war, which used to hang in his abode? If he could have his youth returned to him, he would accept the challenge not giving even a thought to the gifts. Heavy gloves which Eryx used to fight in (they have lead and

iron sewn in) frighten Dares. Consequently, Entellus throws them away and the combatants start the match wearing the same gloves. Entellus prevails and chases Dares all over the arena. Finally Aeneas steps in and puts the end to the fight, saving Dares from certain death. He asks Dares what madness (*dementia*) took hold of him. Does he not feel the strength of his opponent and the changed will of gods, before which he should concede defeat? Instead of Dares Entellus kills a bull and makes a sacrifice of an animal's life. He takes off the gloves and simultaneously declares never to practice the boxing art again[13]. The next contest is archery[14], with four competitors. A dove tied to a mast serves as target. The dove is killed in flight by Eurytion, yet it is Acestes's arrow which proves more important. It combusts while flying through the air, trailing flames in its wake and disappearing from sight, as comets do, which separated from the firmament race across the sky and leave behind a fiery tail (*namque volans liquidis in nubibus arsit harundo / signavitque viam flammis tenuisque recessit / consumpta in ventos, caelo ceu saepe refixa / transcurrunt crinemque volantia sidera ducunt*, V 525-528). Trinacrians and Teucri freeze in astonishment and pray to the celestial gods. Aeneas does not deny this fortunate sign and says that Acestes has surely deserved an extraordinary gift. The father of Olympus gave them a sign that Acestes needs to be honoured, therefore he receives from Aeneas an engraved crater which was gifted to Anchises by Cisseus of Thrace as a memento and token of love.

The games end in a parade of youth on horses, led by Ascanius, the so called *lusus Troiae*[15]. The description serves an aetiological purpose. The young boys ride in an even column and shine before their proud fathers' eyes. The last rides Iulus on a beautiful Sidonian steed, given to him as a memento and token of love by noble (*candida*) Dido. Dardanians welcome them, give them an applause and find their ancestors in the lines of the young people's faces. Once the boys have ridden a full circle in front of their compatriots, Epytides gives a sign from

[13] This boxing match undoubtedly inspired Valerius Flaccus who in his *Argonauticon libri* devoted a long passage to the brutal fight of Pollux with Amycus, the king of Bebrycians (IV 99-343). See also Hom. *Il.* XXIII 653f.; Ap. Rhod. II 1f.; Theocr. 22.

[14] Archery competition is inspired by Homer, *Il.* XXIII 850f.

[15] Cf. E. Mehl, 'Troiaspiel', *Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 1956, supp. VIII, p. 888f.; G.K. Galinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

afar, cracks his whip and the columns disperse in various directions. Ones take arms against the others and feign a battle. The young riders confuse their steps, run away with uncovered backs, turn aggressively their spears against each other or ride together peacefully (*alternosque orbibus orbes / impediunt, pugnaeque cient simulacra sub armis; / et nunc terga fuga nudant, nunc spicula vertunt / infensi, facta pariter cum pace feruntur*, V 584-587).

Here Vergil uses a significant and variously interpreted simile. On Crete in times of yore there was a path in a labyrinth woven amid dark walls, a maze of countless tracks, where one error was unsolvable and inextricable (*indeprensus et inremeabilis error*)[16]. The youths are also as dolphins which plough the Carpathian and Libyan seas and dance amid the waves. Vergil adds that Ascanius reintroduced these horse games when he built a wall around Alba Longa. He taught this custom to the ancient Latins, Albans passed the tradition to their children and from them the mightiest Roma learned the custom, currently calling the youths Troy and the parade Trojan games[17]. Thus the games in honour of deceased father were celebrated[18].

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[16] A labyrinth can be found as well in an ecphrasis in Book VI: *hic labor ille domus et inextricabilis error* (VI 27). Cf. R.D. Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 155: "This conveys a strange feeling of monotony and sameness, and the long verbs help in giving an unforgettable and magnificent representation of the feeling of being lost in an interminable maze"; P.A. Miller, 'The Minotaur Within: Fire, the Labyrinth, and Strategies of Containment in Aeneid 5 and 6', *Classical Philology* 1995, 90, p. 225-240. Catullus was the inspiration, 64, 114-115: *ne labyrintheis e flexibus egredientem / tecti frustraretur inobservabilis error*.

[17] Cf. Suet. *Aug.* 43, 2: *Sed et Troiae lusum edidit frequentissime maiorum minorumque puerorum, prisci decorique moris existimans clarae stirpis indolem sic notescere*; idem *Iul.* 39, 2: *Troiam lusit turma duplex maiorum minorumque puerorum*; idem: *Tib.* 6; *Cal.* 18; *Claud.* 21; *Nero* 7; Tac. *Ann.* XI 11. See also R.D. Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 146: "It seems most unlikely that the *lusus Troiae* was originally connected with Troy. Lejay (on 5. 553) cites Festus' explanation of the archaic verbs *amptruare, redamptruare*, as describing the movements of dancing, which would suggest a noun *troia* meaning 'movement', 'evolution'; and on a sixth-century oenochoe found at Tragliatella there are figures of horsemen and a labyrinth, and the Etruscan word *Truia* (see E. N. Gardiner, *Athletics of the Ancient World*, [Oxford 1930], p. 126-127). When the legend of Rome's Trojan origins became widespread, the *lusus Troiae* would easily be associated with Troy".

[18] Naturally apart from Homer Vergil was inspired by Roman *ludi funebres*, mentioned multiple times by Livy: XXIII 30, 15; XXVIII 21, 10; XXXI 50, 4; XXXIX 46, 2;

From verse 604 the calm and favourable events suddenly come to an end due to the intervention of Fortuna who breaks the rule of faithfulness (*fides*). During the rites in honour of Anchises Iuno, daughter of Saturn, full of treachery and with a pained heart, sends Iris[19] to the Ilion ships. Iris, cunning when she plots harmful deeds, insinuates herself among the Trojan women and takes shape of Beroe, wife of Doryclus of Tmaros, advanced in her years. She complains that Fortuna concocted another nefarious scheme for the Trojans who survived the great fire (*o gens / infelix, cui te exitio Fortuna reservat?*, V 624-625). Now they are here, in the land of Eryx, their brother, where the hospitable Acestes dwells. Here they should build a city and pass it to their compatriots[20]. In her dream she saw the phantom of prophetess Cassandra who gave her flaming torches, urging to put the fire to the accursed ships. She took the torch and threw it. Suddenly Pyrgo,

XLI 28, 11. Cf. W.H. Willis, *op. cit.*, p. 404: "The first on record were imported in 186 BC by M. Fulvius Nobilior. Sulla, in 81 BC, so depleted Greece of athletes in order to celebrate his triumph, that the Olympian games of the 175th Olympiad were reduced to a solitary race. M. Aemilius Scaurus introduced Greek contests into the regular Roman games in 58 B.C. Pompey held similar games at the dedication of his theatre in 55. Gladiatorial exhibitions had long formed a common element in Roman funeral customs; but G. Scribonius Curio was apparently the first to introduce Greek contests when commemorating his father in 53. To celebrate his triumph in 46 Caesar held a three day festival of athletic contests. Augustus, fortified by his natural leanings toward Greek culture, set himself to encourage athletic contests of the Greek type at the expense of the more brutal Roman games, and himself held such games three times. Most important were the Actian games. Long before the battle of Actium, the Greek inhabitants of the neighborhood had celebrated a local festival, termed 'αγὼν στεφανίτες. On this old stock Augustus grafted his foundation of the great new Actian Games in honor of Apollo, to take their place as a fifth beside the four great national games of Greece (Str. 7. 7. 6)".

[19] Cf. F.A. Sullivan, 'Virgil and the Mystery of Suffering', *The American Journal of Philology* 1969, 90, p. 170: "In the *Aeneid*, Juno has a multiple symbolic role: she symbolizes those various forces in Roman history which opposed and retarded the realization of Rome's imperial mission in the world as willed by Jupiter. All through the poem we see her at work arousing *furor* in her human agents".

[20] This motif resembles the famous speech against moving the capital from Rome to Veii, made by Camillus in Livy's *Ab urbe condita* (V 50, 1 – V 55, 5). Good fortune of the place (*fortuna loci*) where Rome is situated is extraordinary because the gods accompanied the beginnings of the city. Cf. Ch.S. Kraus, '"No second Troy": Topoi and Refoundation in Livy, Book V", Transactions of the American Philological Association 1994, 124, p. 267-289.

the nurse of kin Priam's sons, cries that this is not Beroe, as she has fallen ill and grieves that she was unable to take part in the rites honouring Anchises. The Trojan women look at each other uncertainly, torn between wretched love to Sicilian land and the kingdom destined by fate (*miserum inter amorem / praesentis terrae fatisque vocantia regna*, V 655-656). Then the goddess takes to the air, unfurling her wings, and the women, shocked by the terrifying sight and fallen into madness (*furor*), take torches from the home fires and throw them at the ships. Eumelus comes running to the spectators gathered in the theatre, bearing news that the ships are aflame. Ascanius leaves the formerly joyous parade and is the first who runs to the shore, hurrying his horse. He cries that the women are burning not the camp of hostile Argives, but their own hopes. In succour runs Aeneas and the hosts of Teucri. The women hide in caves and forests, disgusted by their deed, they shy from light of the day, they change and recognise their relatives, as Iuno has departed from their hearts. Yet the fires do not abate. Underneath the damp oak wood embers smoulder, the heat consumes hulls, the whole structure of the ships is blighted by the pestilence. Neither the strength of the heroes nor the water poured on the ships can stop the conflagration. Pious (*pius*) Aeneas begs Jupiter for help. Let the fleet cease to burn and the remains of Trojan forces be saved or, if they have deserved it, let them be struck by a thunderbolt. He has barely spoken the words when a frightening storm began. The storm shook the mountains and dales, the half-burned wood was soaked through, the embers were extinguished. The whole fleet, with the exception of four ships, survived intact.

Father Aeneas, shocked with this dreadful misfortune, long pondered whether he should forget his destiny (*oblitus fatorum*) and stay on Sicily or seek Italian shores. Old Nautes, who was taught by Tritonian Pallas more than any other and shown what the great anger of gods portended and what the order of fates demanded, heartened Aeneas saying that one should go there where the fate leads (*quo fata trahunt retrahuntque sequamur*, V 709)[21]. Whatever happens, every misfortune should be persevered through (*superanda omnis fortuna*

[21] Cf. Sen. *Epist. ad Luc.*, 107, 11-12: *ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt. sic vivamus, sic loquamur; paratos nos inveniat atque inpigros fatum.*

ferendo est, V 710). These words can be perceived as a motto not only for Book V, but for the whole *Aeneid*! Let Aeneas take the counsel of the well-meaning Acestes, descendant of Dardani, of divine blood, and entrust to him people whose ships have been destroyed and those who no longer can bear (*pertaesum est*) the magnitude of this undertaking and the difficulties of Aeneas's fate. All the infirm and timid can stay in the new Sicilian city, called Acesta[22]. At night, Aeneas receives further counsel from a phantom of Anchises who speaks to him thusly: "Son, once more precious to me than my life, subjected to a trial by the Trojan fate. It was Jupiter who saved the ships from fire and showed mercy from the high heaven. Listen to advice given by old Nautes, take selected youths and lead them to Italy. In Latium you will have to conquer a barbaric and cruel people. First though you need to descend into the subterranean kingdom of Dis and find your father who dwells in Elysium, the blessed land of the pious. Sibyl will lead you there and you shall discover your family line and your fated city"[23]. With these words spoken, he disappeared. Aeneas immediately calls for his companions and, most importantly, Acestes, and retells them Jupiter's order and his dear father's advice. Acestes does not go against his wishes and in a separate location they gather these who are not eager to win great glory (*animos nil magnae laudis egentes*, V 751)[24]. Sailors renew the ship benches, replacing the wood consumed in the fire, prepare the oars and the rigging. There are few of them, yet they prepare for war with great enthusiasm (*bello vivida virtus*). Meanwhile, Aeneas marks with a plough the boundaries of a future city, distributes houses by lots, then calls the city Ilion and the land around it Troy. Acestes, glad of his

[22] Greeks call this city Egesta, Romans – Segesta. The conviction that Trojans settled in this part of Sicily was deeply rooted, see Thuc. VI 2, 3; Cicero *in Verr.* II 4, 72: *Segesta est oppidum pervetus in Sicilia quod ab Aenea fugiente a Troia atque in haec loca veniente conditum esse demonstrant*; Diod. Sic. XXIII 5. See also R. Heinze, *Virgils epische Technik*, 3rd ed., Leipzig–Berlin 1915, p. 165f.; G. K. Galinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 169, 179, esp. p. 180: "Rome, by manipulating the legend for political purposes, tried to appeal to the Greeks and tie them to Rome as allies so as to counter the Carthaginian influence on the island".

[23] Cf. F.A. Sullivan, *op. cit.*, p. 173: "In this crucial test of his moral courage his *pietas* to his father and his prayers to Jupiter (V, 687-92) bring their reward".

[24] Differently Entellus: *non laudis amor nec gloria cessit / pulsa metu* (V 394-395). Such contrasts are characteristic of Vergil's poetic art.

leadership (*regnum*), establishes a forum and laws for the called up senators. Another aetiological motive appears. Vergil underlines that at this time the temple of Idalian Venus was founded at the top of mountain Eryx[25], near to the stars, and the tomb of Anchises received a priest and a sacred grove[26]. Nine days have passed on such pursuits and Auster is calling the sailors to the deep sea. Even those who could no longer look at the sea or hear about it, now want to sail and brave all the toils of exile (*fuga*). Good (*bonus*) Aeneas strengthens them with kind words and tearfully entrusts them to his kin Acestes. After making a sacrifice of three calves to Eryx and a lamb[27] to Tempests (*Tempestates*), he unties the mooring ropes. His head crowned with olive leaves he stands on the bow, raises a goblet, throws the sacrificial entrails in the salty waters and pours a stream of wine into the sea while wind blowing from the stern sets them on their path.

In the meantime Venus complains to Neptune on Juno's conduct: her anger is appeased by neither the passage of time nor piety (*pietas*). She is obstinate in her resistance against both Jupiter's will and the fates. She destroyed the city and condemned the survivors to the greatest torment, she persecutes even the ashes and bones of the slain Troy. Surely only she herself knows the reason for this madness (*furor*). Committing a crime she urged the Trojan mothers to burn the ships and the Teucri, after losing part of their fleet, had to leave behind their companions on an unknown shore. Let the ones who are left (*quod superest*) be given safe passage over the sea till they reach Laurentine Tiber, if this plea is congruent with the fates, if Parcae give these walls. Neptune responds that Venus has every right to trust his kingdom. Many times he has restrained the fury and rage (*furores et rabiem*) of sea and sky, and on land he always looks after Aeneas. When Aeneas was to fight Achilles and neither his own strength nor the gods were in his favour, he enveloped him in a cloud, despite his wish to destroy the walls of unfaithful Troy, built with his hand. Aeneas will reach the haven

[25] Cf. Thuc. VI 46, 3; Theoc. 15, 100f.; Tac. *Ann.* IV 43, 5. Cf. D.A. Traill, 'Boxers and Generals at Mount Eryx', *The American Journal of Philology* 2001, 122, p. 405-413.

[26] Cf. R.D. Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 185: "the deification of Anchises is implied rather than stated".

[27] Cf. *Aen.* III 120; Hor. *Epod.* 10, 23-24; Cicero *Nat. Deor.* III 51; Ovid. *Fasti* VI 193.

in Avernum as his mother wishes. Only one man will need to be sacrificed and swallowed by the sea, one will die to save many (*unum pro multis dabitur caput*, V 815). Turbulent sea billows part under the roaring axis of the chariot. Aeneas takes heart and orders the crew to hasten, raise masts and unfurl sails. Palinurus sails at the forefront of the host[28]. The night has already crossed half of the sky in her journey, the sailors are peacefully asleep on the hard wooden benches under the oars, when Somnus[29] descends lightly from the heavenly stars, slashes through murky air and disperses shadows in search of Palinurus. He plagues the innocent man (*insonti*) with pernicious dreams. Somnus takes the shape of Phorbas and tells Palinurus that the sea will carry the fleet by itself; it is time for him to rest (*fessos oculos furare labori*, V 845) and Phorbas can take over his duties for a while. Palinurus is angered at such a proposal and asks whether he tells him to enjoy the calmness of the sea and silent waters or whether he wants him to trust this monster (*monstrum*). He will not allow Aeneas to trust the treacherous winds as many a time the deceptively serene sky betrayed them (*quid enim fallacibus auris, / et caeli totiens deceptus fraude sereni*, V 850-851). With these words he keeps standing fixedly at the helm and observing the stars. Yet Somnus shakes over his temples a twig immersed in the somniferous power of Styx, from which the dew of Lethe drops. As soon as the unexpected calmness overpowers the fatigued body of the helmsman, Somnus gives a shove to Palinurus who falls into the sea with the severed part of the stern and helm. The god flies away, but the fleet sails on safely, as it was promised by Neptune. Nearby there are the rocks of Sirens, dangerous even from afar, shining with white bones of countless sailors and thundering under the siege of waves. Father Aeneas suddenly feels that the ship must have lost the helmsman as it drifts in the sea current. He takes the helm himself and sheds tears over the fate of Palinurus, shaken with his misfortune and ignorant of

[28] Cf. R.D. Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 199: "The construction of this final episode in the book is a masterpiece of verbal economy, and excellently illustrates Virgil`s ability to describe a scene in the most telling way, combining sensitivity and pathos with restraint".

[29] Regarding the god of sleep, Somnus, cf. Statius *Silvae* 5, 4.

reasons behind his death (*o nimium caelo et pelago confise sereno, / nudus in ignota, Palinure, iacebis harena*, V 870-871)[30].

It is time to comment on the plot of Book V. I believe Vergil concentrated primarily on the sense of suffering which often befalls innocent people. The most vivid is the example of Palinurus whose undeserved and sacrificial death allows Aeneas to continue with his mission[31]. I fully agree with R.D. Williams[32]: "Here again is a theme of the whole poem; achievements are counterbalanced by suffering, sometimes involving Aeneas and his companions, sometimes those who find themselves in opposition to the divine will, like Dido and Turnus". Moreover, the character of Palinurus is like a frame which begins and ends Book V.

In a sense the suicide of Dido[33], whose tragic fate is described with much compassion by Vergil (verses 571-572), is necessary as well. The death of both of them is, I think, a symbolic farewell of Aeneas with the Trojan past and the wandering on the sea, to which the poet dedicated so many verses[34]. Aeneas is treated as father (*pater*) of the whole community (e.g. V 130, 348, 358, 461, 545, 690, 700). The extraordinary role of Acestes needs to be underlined as well. He is also a link between the Trojan tradition and the future city on Tiber[35]. He welcomes Aeneas

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[30] The long vowels 'a' in words *ignota* and *harena*, expressing the depth of despair, are very emphatic. The description of Salius's fall is very similar (Nisus has unfairly crossed into his path): *ille autem spissa iacuit revolutus harena* (V 336).

[31] Differently M.C.J. Putnam, The Poetry of the Aeneid, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1965, cited by G.K. Galinsky, op. cit., p. 157, n. 2: "Putnam, in my opinion, somewhat overstates the importance of the Palinurus episode for the unity of the book, and his definition of the unifying theme of Aeneid V as 'the necessity of sacrifice through suffering' (p. 65) is not always applicable" .

[32] See R.D. Williams, *op. cit.*, Introduction, p. XVIII.

[33] I would like to point out that Book IV also ends in death – Dido's.

[34] Cf. G.K. Galinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 173: "Before the hero, however, can arrive at a full awareness of what the future holds for him, he has gradually to be freed from the bonds that tie him to the past"; *ibidem*, p. 173, n. 33: "This is further confirmed by Putnam's (p. 68) observation that Aeneas in V, 3 looks back (*respiciens*) to Carthage as he did when he was leaving Troy (II, 741)"; *ibidem*, p. 165: "while Book V – the most 'Iliadic' Book of the 'Odyssean' half – signals Aeneas' turning away from the past of Troy and Dido and his progressively increasing orientation in Books V to VIII toward his Roman mission, it also is firmly linked to the preceding books, IV in particular'.

[35] Cf. J. Perret, *Les origines de la légende troyenne de Rome (281-31)*, Paris 1942.

and his companions with unusual warmth and finally he takes charge of those who no longer have strength to continue with the journey and do not desire great glory. It is his arrow which took flame which has been correctly interpreted as a sign from gods, an omen very similar to the fire which appeared over the head of Iulus in Book II 679-684[36].

The participants in the games are all secondary characters. By introducing them Vergil, I believe, wished to stress the importance of every man of Aeneas's crew in the fulfilling of the task set by destiny. Cicero claimed that the flourishing of Rome was not accidental but caused by conscious effort and discipline of the citizens. This belief of *homo Arpinas* is most fully expressed by Scipio Aemilianus in the dialogue *De re publica* II 2:

> *is* [scil.Cato] dicere solebat ob hanc causam praestare nostrae civitatis statum ceteris civitatibus,quod in illis singuli fuissent fere quorum suam quisque rem publicam constituisset legibus atque institutis suis, ut Cretum Minos, Lacedaemoniorum Lycurgus, Atheniensium, quae persaepe commutata esset, tum Theseus tum Draco tum Solo tum Clisthenes tum multi alii, postremo exsanguem iam et iacentem doctus vir Phalereus sustentasset Demetrius, nostra autem res publica non unius esset ingenio sed multorum, nec una hominis vita sed aliquot constituta saeculis et aetatibus[37].

Fatum and *fortuna*[38] intervene in the course of events multiple times, e.g. in verses 22-23, 82, 356, 604, 624-625, 656, 703, 707, 709--710, 725, 784. The importance of these irrational agents increases exponentially in the instances where human strength and abilities fail.

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[36] *namque manus inter maestorumque ora parentum / ecce levis summo de vertice visus Iuli / fundere lumen apex, tactuque innoxia mollis / lambere flamma comas et circum tempora pasci* (- v. 681-684).

[37] Cf. Cicero, *Rep*. II 30: *intellegesque non fortuito populum Romanum sed consilio et disciplina confirmatum esse nec tamen adversante fortuna*.

[38] Cf. C. Bailey, *Religion in Virgil*, Oxford 1935, p. 234-240, esp. 240: "It seems that *fortuna* had for Virgil a wide range of meaning. It was not infrequently used in the popular sense of 'luck', especially with the notion of 'good luck' or 'bad luck'. In other passages it appears to be verging towards the meaning of destiny, though still retaining the notion of 'chance'. In yet a third group it is the equivalent of *fatum*, with which it is often combined, in references alike to the destiny of individuals, to the world destiny, and to the divine providence".

The words of Cicero on *fatum*, found in dialogue *De divinatione* I 125, are highly relevant here:

> *fieri igitur omnia fato ratio cogit fateri. fatum autem id appello, quod Graeci ef marmšnhn id est ordinem seriemque causarum cum causae causa nexa rem ex se gignat. ea est ex omni aeternitate fluens veritas sempiterna. quod cum ita sit, nihil est factum, quod non futurum fuerit, eodemque modo nihil est futurum, cuius non causas id ipsum efficientes natura contineat.*

Everything which happens in the world has reasons and consequences. The great changeability of events is noteworthy. With 871 verses, this is one of the longest books of *Aeneid*[39]. The mood changes often and rapidly. Symptomatic here are the contests in the games held in honour of deceased Anchises[40]. The games probably foreshadow the future wars in Italy[41]. The change of leading vessels in the ship race (catastrophe of Gyas and Sergestus) and the leading contestants in the running race (unfortunate fall of Nisus) are both unexpected. The sea race abounds in humoristic elements, probably for the purpose of counterbalancing the serious nature of the competition. Gyas who cannot bear that Cloanthus starts to outstrip his ship, pushes the lazy helmsman Menoetes off the board and into the sea. Teucri have a hearty laugh at his expense, observing how Menoetes, advanced in years, climbs the rocks in drenched robes and vomits salty water. This description attests to the fact that Vergil uses a rhetorical figure called *evidentia* (ενεργεια by the Greeks), i.e. visualisation. Quintilian often spoke on this subject, e.g. VI 2, 32: *Insequitur* ενεργεια*, quae a Cicerone illustratio et evidentia nominatur, quae non tam dicere videtur quam ostendere; et adfectus non aliter, quam si rebus ipsis intersimus, sequentur*[42]. Acciden-

[39] Longer are only Books VI, X, XI, XII. Regarding the place of this book in the structure of the whole epos, see P.E. Kehoe, 'Was Book 5 Once in a Different Place in the Aeneid?', *The American Journal of Philology* 1989, 110, p. 246-263.

[40] Cf. W.H. Willis, *op. cit.*, p. 406.

[41] G.K. Galinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 183: "the games beneath their gay surface foreshadow the war in the second half of the epic. The footrace and the boxing contest in particular look ahead to the ultimate conflict in the poem, i.e. the combat of Aeneas and Turnus in Book XII. What was sportive rivalry in Book V will become deadly seriousness in XII (764-5)".

[42] Cf. VIII 3, 61.

tal though is the fall of Entellus in the boxing match - instead of ending the fight, it gave him spirit and he quickly overpowered Dares. The deceptive calmness (*quies*) of the night leads to the tragedy of Palinurus.

The elements of water and fire are described with great artistry. Sea storms are indeed a specialty of Vergil. Their descriptions in Book V are among his best, e.g. V 8-11, 695-699. I have already written about the element of fire, though good examples can be found in V 665-666 and 681-684. The actions of the pious Aeneas are preceded by making sacrifices to the spirit of his deceased father (e.g. V 80-81) and to gods (e.g. V 743-745, 772-773[43]). This is a clear example of *pietas erga patrem* and *erga deos*. Vergil does not forget about ecphrasis[44]. The most effective one is found in the description of chlamys bordered with meander of Meliboean purple. In the centre of the robe there is a king's boy (Ganimedes) who, breathing heavily, pursues swift deer on the leafy Ida. Suddenly Jupiter's squire (eagle) captures him in its claws and takes him away into the skies: the boy`s guardians extend their hands to the stars in vain and the dogs bark noisily (V 250-257)[45]. Catalogues of various gifts received not only by the winners, but in fact by all contestants, are also noteworthy. In-depth interpretation of Book V allows me to conclude that, despite the opinion held by numerous scholars who criticise the artistic level of this book, the artistry of Vergil attains here an excellence similar to the one present in Books IV and VI.

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[43] *tris Eryci vitulos et Tempestatibus agnam / caedere deinde iubet solvique ex ordine funem*.

[44] Regarding ecphrasis see e.g. R. Heinze, *op. cit.*, p. 396; G. Ravenna, 'L'ekphrasis poetica di opera d'arte in latino. Temi e problemi', *Quaderni dell'Istituto di Filologia Latina dell'Università di Padova* 1974, 3, p. 1-51; R.F. Thomas, 'Virgil's Ecphrastic Centerpieces', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 1983, 87, p. 175-184; A. Barchiesi, 'Rappresentazioni del dolore e interpretazione nell'Eneide', *Antike und Abendland* 1994, 40, p. 109-124; A. Barchiesi, 'Virgilian Narrative: Ecphrasis', [in:] Ch. Martindale (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, Cambridge 1997, p. 271-281. Other examples of ecphrasis in Vergil can be found in V 124f.; I 159f.; VII 563f.; IV 480f.

[45] Cf. I 466f.; VI 20f.; VIII 625f. See also Hom. *Il.* XVIII 478f.; Ap. Rhod. I 730f.; Theoc. I 27f.; Catull. 64, 50f.

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