

## P. Ovidii Nasonis

Aeneidos argumenta decasticha  
cum argumentis monostichis Herennii Modestini  
trans. et ed. Carla Schodde

### PRAEFATIO

Virgilius magno quantum concessit Homero,  
tantum ego Virgilio Naso poeta meo.  
nec me praelatum cupio tibi ferre poeta;  
ingenio tantum si loquor, hoc satis est.  
argumenta quidem librorum prima notavi,  
errorem ignarus ne quis habere queat.  
bis quinos legerent, feci, quos carmine versus,  
Aeneidos totum corpus ut esse putent.  
adfirmo gravitate mea, me crimine nullo  
livoris titulum praeposuisse tibi.

#### I

*Aeneas primo Libyae adpellitur oris.*

Vir magnus bello, nulli pietate secundus  
Aeneas, odiis Iunonis pressus iniquae,  
Italiam quaerens Siculis erravit in undis.  
iactatus tandem Libyae pervenit ad oras;  
ignarusque loci, fido comitatus Achate,  
indicio matris regnum cognovit Elissae.  
quin etiam nebula saeptus pervenit ad urbem,  
abreptosque undis socios cum classe recepit.  
hospitioque usus Didus per cuncta benignae,  
excidium Troiae iussus narrare parabat.

## Publius Ovidius Naso

Decastich arguments of the Aeneid  
with the monostich arguments of Herennius Modestinus  
trans. and ed. Carla Schodde

### PREFACE

Vergil defers as much to the great Homer,  
as I, the poet Naso, defer to my Vergil.  
And I do not desire to hold myself preferable to you as a poet –  
if I speak with such talent, that is enough.  
Indeed I noted down the first arguments of the books,  
so that no-one unawares shall be able to make an error.  
I made twice-five verses for each, for people to read with song,  
the whole corpus of the Aeneid so they would consider how it is.  
I declare that I, with my seriousness, and with no fault of envy,  
have laid out before you the summary.

#### I

*In the first, Aeneas is driven to Libyan shores.*

A man great in war, second to none in piety,  
Aeneas, oppressed by the hatred of hostile Juno,  
Seeking Italy, went astray on Sicilian waves.  
Hurlled about, he at last arrived at the shores of Libya;  
Not knowing the place, and accompanied by faithful Achates,  
At his mother's direction, he observed the kingdom of Elissa.  
Yes indeed, enveloped in a cloud, he arrived at the city,  
And kept his companions, carried off on the waves, back with the fleet.  
And, getting the benefit of kind Dido's hospitality through it all,  
Bidden, he prepared to tell the story of the Fall of Troy.

## II

*Funera Dardaniae narrat fletusque secundo.*

Conticuere omnes. tunc sic fortissimus heros  
fata recensebat Troiae, casusque suorum;  
fallaces Graios; simulataque dona Minervae;  
Laucontis poenam, laxantem claustra Sinonem;  
somnum, quo monitus acceperat Hectoris, atrum;  
iam flammam caeli Troiam, patriaeque ruinas,  
et regis Priami fatum miserabile semper;  
impositumque patrem collo; dextraque prehensum  
Ascanium, frustra a tergo comitante Creusa;  
ereptam hanc fato; socios in monte receptos.

## III

*Tertius errores pelagi terraeque requirit.*

Post eversa Phrygum regna, ut fuga coepta moveri:  
utque sit in Thracen primo devectus: ibique  
moenia condiderit, Polydori caede piata.  
regis et hospitium: ut Phoebi responsa canebant,  
coeptum iter in Cretam: rursus nova fata reperta.  
naufragus ut fuerit Strophadas compulsus ad undas.  
inde fugam, et dirae enarrat praecepta Celaenus:  
liquerit utque Helenum praeceptis ordine fatis.  
supplicem Achaemeniden Polyphemo urgente recepit,  
amissumque patrem Drepani, atque hinc inde quievit.

## II

*He narrates the ruin and mourning of Dardania in the second.*

All fell silent. Then thus the hero most brave  
Recounted the fate of Troy, and the fall of its people;  
The deceitful Greeks, and feigned gifts for Minerva;  
Laocoon's punishment, Sinon opening the gates;  
A black dream, by which he had received omens of Hector;  
Then the flames of the sky of Troy, and the ruins of his homeland,  
And the ever miserable fate of king Priam;  
And that his father was placed upon his neck, and how he grasped  
Ascanius by the right hand, with Creusa following behind in vain;  
How she was snatched away by fate; and that he reconvened with his  
comrades at a hill.

## III

*The third concerns the wanderings of land and sea.*

Afterwards the kingdom of the Phrygians was overwhelmed; the beginning  
of flight was set in motion:  
He was first carried to Thrace, and there he had built  
Walls, after the murder of Polydorus was expiated.  
And there was a king's hospitality; the oracles of Apollo sang out,  
A journey was begun into Crete, again new fates discovered;  
There was a shipwreck, driven upon Strophadian waves.  
Then he narrated his flight, and the commands of the dreadful Celaeno;  
And that he had left Helenus by the order of fated commands.  
He took Achaemenides as a suppliant with Polyphemus bearing down,  
And lost his father at Drepanum. And then thereupon he fell silent.

#### IV

*Uritur in quarto Dido flammisque fatetur.*

At regina gravi Veneris iam carpitur igni.  
consultitur soror Anna: placet succumbere amori.  
fiunt sacra deis: onerantur numina donis.  
itur venatum. Veneris clam foedera iungunt.  
facti fama volat. monitus tunc numine divum  
Aeneas classemque fugae sociosque parabat.  
sensit amans Dido, precibus conata morari.  
postquam fata iubent, nec iam datur ulla facultas,  
conscenditque pyram, dixitque novissima verba,  
et vitam infelix multo cum sanguine fudit.

#### V

*Quintus habet ludos et classem corripit ignis.*

Navigat Aeneas: Siculas defertur ad oras.  
hic manes celebrat patrios una hospes Acestes.  
ludos ad tumulum faciunt: certamina ponunt.  
prodigium est cunctis ardens delapsa sagitta.  
Iris anum Beroen habitu mentita senili  
incendit naves, subitus quas vindicat imber.  
in somnis pater Anchises, quae bella gerenda,  
quoque duce ad Manes possit descendere, monstrat.  
transcribit matres urbi, populumque volentem,  
et placidum Aeneas Palinurum quaerit in undis.

#### IV

*Dido burns in the fourth, and reveals her flames.*

But the queen was consumed by the fire of grave Venus.  
Anna, her sister, was consulted: it was pleasing to succumb to love.  
There were sacrifices to the gods; the divinities were loaded with gifts.  
They went to a hunt. Secret covenants of Venus joined them.  
The deed's rumour flew. Then, warned by the will of the gods,  
Aeneas began to prepare both his fleet and his companions for flight.  
Amorous Dido got wind of it, delayed his endeavour with prayers.  
After the fates ordered him, and now with nothing left,  
She mounted the pyre, and said her final words,  
And, unhappy, shed her life with much blood.

#### V

*The fifth has games, and fire assails the ships.*

Aeneas sailed: he was brought to Sicilian shores.  
Here he honoured his father's shade, together with Acestes his friend.  
They held games for the barrow, set up contests.  
A fallen burning arrow was a prodigy for all.  
Iris, imitating the old woman Beroe in elderly guise,  
Set fire to the ships, which an unexpected rainfall rescued.  
In dreams father Anchises revealed what wars must be waged,  
With what guide Aeneas could descend to the shades.  
He transferred mothers to the city, and willing people,  
And Aeneas sought for gentle Palinurus in the waves.

## VI

*Quaeruntur sexto Manes et Tartara Ditis.*

Cumas deinde venit: fert hinc responsa Sibyllae.  
Misenum sepelit: mons servat nomen humati.  
ramum etiam ante deum placato numine portat.  
at vates longaeua una descendit Avernum.  
agnoscit Palinurum, et ibi solatur Elissam.  
Deiphobumque videt lacerum crudeliter ora.  
umbrarum poenas discit narrante Sibylla.  
convenit Anchisen, penitusque in valle virenti  
agnoscitque suam prolem monstrante parente.  
haec ubi percepit, graditur, sociosque revisit.

## VII

*Septimus Aenean reddit fatalibus arvis.*

Hic quoque Caietam sepelit, tum deinde profectus  
Laurentum venit: hanc verbis cognovit Iuli  
fatalem terram. 'Mensis en vescimur,' inquit.  
centum oratores veniam pacemque petentes  
ad regem mittit lectos tum sorte Latinum:  
qui cum pace etiam natae connubia pactus.  
hoc forte Alecto Iunonis dissipat ira.  
concurrunt dictis, quamvis pia fata repugnent.  
belli causa fuit violatus vulnere cervus.  
tum gentes socia arma parant: fremit arma iuventus.

## VI

*In the sixth, the shades of Dis and Tartarus are sought.*

Then he came to Cumae. From here he demanded the oracles of the Sibyl.  
He buried Misenus: the mountain preserves the name of the interred.  
Also he carried the branch before the goddess, her will placated.  
And together with the aged prophetess he went down to Avernum.  
He recognised Palinurus, and there he consoled Elissa.  
And he saw Deiphobus, cruelly mutilated in the face.  
He learned of the punishments of the souls, as the Sibyl so told.  
He met Anchises, and deep within the lush green valley  
He recognised, too, his own offspring, as his father pointed them out.  
When he had perceived these things, he went on, and rejoined his  
companions.

## VII

*The seventh brings Aeneas back to fated lands.*

Here also he buried Caieta, then ventured forth  
And came to Laurentum: by the words of Iulus he knew  
That this was the fated land. 'Lo, we are eating our tables,' he said.  
A hundred spokesmen seeking kindness and peaceful terms  
He sent, chosen then by lot, to king Latinus:  
With peace they even agreed to the marriage of his daughter.  
As it happened, Alecto scattered this plan with the rage of Juno.  
They rushed together with words, however much the pious fates disagreed.  
The cause of the war was a deer, violated with a wound.  
Then the clans readied their allied arms: the armed youth roared.

### VIII

*Praeparat octavo ad bellum quos mittat in hostis.*

Dat belli signum Laurenti Turnus ab arce.  
mittitur et magni Venulus Diomedis ad urbem,  
qui petat auxilium, et doceat, quae causa petendi.  
Aeneas divum monitis adit Arcada regem  
Evandrum, Arcadia profugum, nova regna petentem.  
accipit auxilium. huic natum et socia agmina iungit  
Evander. Pallas fatis comes ibat iniquis.  
iamque habilis bello, et maternis laetus in armis,  
fataque, fortunasque ducum, casusque suorum  
sortitus clipeo, divina intentus in arte est.

### IX

*Nonus habet pugnas nec adest dux ipse tumultu.*

Atque ea diversa penitus dum parte geruntur,  
Iunonis monitu Turnus festinat in hostem.  
Teucrorum naves, Rutulis iaculantibus ignem,  
nympharum in speciem divino numine versae.  
Euryali et Nisi coeptis fuit exitus impar.  
pugnatur. castra Aeneadae vallumque tuentur.  
audacem Remulum dat leto pulcher Iulus,  
fit via vi. Turnus Bitian et Pandaron altum  
deicit, et totis victor dat funera castris.  
iamque fatigatus recipit se in castra suorum.

### VIII

*In the eighth he prepares for war those he sends to the enemy.*

Turnus of Laurentum gave the signal for war from the citadel.  
And to the city of great Diomedes Venulus was sent,  
To seek help, and to inform them about his reason for seeking.  
Aeneas, by the portents of the gods, went to the Arcadian king  
Evander, a fugitive from Arcadia who sought new realms.  
He received help. Evander joined to his cause a son and allied troops.  
Comrade Pallas went with hostile fates.  
And now, equipped for war, and rejoicing in his mother's armaments,  
The fates, the fortunes of leaders, and the affairs of his people,  
He was allotted on his shield, eager in divine craftsmanship.

### IX

*The ninth has battles, and the leader himself is not present in the tumult.*

And while inwardly these things were waged on opposite sides,  
Turnus hurried toward the enemy by the portent of Juno.  
The Trojan ships, as the Rutulians cast fire on them,  
Turned into the form of Nymphs by divine will.  
The departure of Euryalus and Nisus was inequitable in its undertakings.  
A battle was fought. The camp and rampart of Aeneas' son were defended.  
Handsome Iulus gave to death fierce Remulus;  
It was done by force. Turnus flung down Bitias and high Pandarus,  
And, victorious, gave cause for funerals to the whole camp.  
And so, worn out, he took himself back to his encampment.

**X**

*Occidit Aeneae decimo Mezentius ira.*

Consilium Divis hominum de rebus habetur.  
interea Rutuli portis circum omnibus instant.  
advenit Aeneas multis cum millibus heros.  
Mars vocat, et totis in pugnam viribus itur.  
interimit Pallanta potens in proelia Turnus.  
caedunturque duces: cadit et sine nomine vulgus.  
subtrahitur pugnae Iunonis numine Turnus.  
Aeneas perstat Mezenti caede piata,  
et Lausum invicta perimit per vulnera dextra.  
mox ultor nati Mezentius occidit ipse.

**XI**

*Undecimo victa est non aequo Marte Camilla.*

Constituit Marti spoliolum ex hoste tropaeum,  
exanimumque patri natum Pallanta remittit.  
iura sepulturae tribuit tempusque Latinis.  
Evander patrios affectus edit in urbe.  
corpora caesa virum passim digesta cremantur.  
legati referunt Diomedem arma negasse.  
Drances et Turnus, leges aequante Latino,  
concurrunt dictis. Aeneas imminet urbi.  
pugnatur. vincunt Troes. cadit icta Camilla.  
deinde duces, castris donec cessere, minantur.

**X**

*Mezentius is slain in the tenth by the wrath of Aeneas.*

An assembly was held by the gods about human affairs.  
Meanwhile, the Rutulians pressed around at every gate.  
Aeneas the hero arrived with many thousands.  
Mars called, and with full strength they went to fight.  
Turnus, mighty in battles, killed Pallas.  
Leaders were slaughtered, and the multitude without name fell.  
Turnus was carried off from the fight by the will of Juno.  
Aeneas held out against Mezentius with venged slaughter,  
And slew Lausus through wounds inflicted by his unvanquished right  
hand.  
Soon Mezentius, the avenger of his son, perished himself.

**XI**

*In the eleventh, Camilla is defeated with Mars unfavourable.*

To Mars he raised a trophy-monument of spoils from the enemy,  
And he returned the dead son Pallas to his father.  
He granted the rights and time for burial to the Latins.  
Evander bore forth fatherly laments in the city.  
The slain bodies of men scattered far and wide were cremated.  
Envoys reported that Diomedes had refused to take up arms.  
As Latinus saw to the equality of the laws, Drances and Turnus  
Clashed with words. Aeneas bore down on the city.  
A battle was fought. The Trojans won. Camilla, struck, fell.  
Then the leaders made threats, before retiring to camp.

## XII

*Duodecimo Turnus divinis occidit armis.*

Turnus iam fractis adverso Marte Latinis  
semet in arma parat, pacem cupiente Latino.  
foedus percutitur passuris omnia victis.  
hoc Turni Iuturna soror confundit et ambos  
in pugnam populos agit, ementita Camertem.  
Aeneas volucris tardatur membra sagitta;  
anxia pro nato servavit cura parentis.  
urbs capitur. vitam laqueo sibi finit Amata.  
Aeneas Turnum, campo congressus, utrimque  
circumfusa acie, vita spoliavit et armis.

## XII

*In the twelfth, Turnus is slain by divine arms.*

Now Turnus, with the Latins shattered by hostile Mars,  
Readied himself to arms, as King Latinus longed for peace.  
A treaty was struck (the conquered will suffer everything).  
Juturna, sister of Turnus, disrupted this and drove both peoples  
Into battle after she lied to Camers.  
Aeneas was checked in his limbs by a flying arrow;  
The anxious care of a mother for her son saved him.  
The city was captured; the snare, Amata, ended her life.  
Aeneas, having joined the field and with the battle line  
Spread about on either side, despoiled Turnus of his life and arms.

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