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Serpentine Bonds: the Anonymous *Querolus* and the Virgilian Underworld

Lee Fratantuono

ABSTRACT

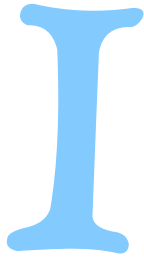
The late third- or early fourth century anonymous comedy *Querolus* contains an extended scene replete with allusions to the depiction of the underworld in Book 6 of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Close consideration of the reception of Virgil's presentation of the threshold of the realm of Dis and the monsters that are said to lurk there may reveal that the comic author had access to a Virgilian text that contained verses on the Gorgon Medusa, lines of disputed authenticity known otherwise only from the commentary tradition.

KEYWORDS

Virgil; *Aeneid*; *Querolus*; Gorgon; Medusa; Gates of Sleep.

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In the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, Virgil's description of Aeneas' approach to the threshold of the underworld contains both vivid imagery and an interesting textual controversy: the story that four verses on the Gorgon Medusa were deleted by Virgil's *emendatores*, presumably the enigmatic Varius and Tucca.¹ These verses have languished for centuries in the grammatical tradition, posing a mystery not unlike the puzzle of the more famous Helen episode from Book II.

The underworld scene is a dramatic one: the Trojan hero is at the very entryway of the dark realm, about to cross into the abode of the dead. As Aeneas and the Sibyl Deiphobe enter the kingdom of Dis, they encounter a number of terrible personifications of ills, alongside the very *thalami* of the Eumenides, and the insane goddess Discord with her viperous hair:

*Vestibulum ante ipsum primisque in faucibus Orci
Luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia Curae,
pallentesque habitant Morbi tristisque Senectus
et Metus et malesuada Fames ac turpis Egestas,
terribiles uisu formae, Letumque Labosque;
tum consanguineus Leti Sopor et mala mentis
Gaudia mortiferumque aduerso in limine Bellum
ferreique Eumenidum thalami et Discordia demens,
uipereum crinem uittis innexa cruentis.*²

It is a passage of baroque horror, replete with an ominous *tableau*, and the grim visages of all too familiar specters.³ Much indebted to Hesiod's roster of the offspring of Night and Eris, it is a brilliant reworking of its archaic predecessor.⁴ It challenges Homer's depiction of the same environs in *Odyssey* XI. "The terror of the place, which is implicit in Homer, is specified by Virgil in painful detail."⁵ Virgil's frightening commencement of his description of Pluto's domain offers "deformities and agents of deformity."⁶ It is a highly alliterative *tour de force*,⁷ a good example of the poet's catalogue art.⁸ The vision offers as its climactic supernatural horror

the crazed figure of Discordia, whose snaky locks are bound with bloody fillets.⁹ The Furies are perhaps absent for the moment, their iron *thalami* presumably empty.¹⁰

Just as when he takes his leave of the underworld, Aeneas will face both dream and reality, as it were, in the matter of the twin Gates of Sleep (VI, v. 893-899), so when he walks into the infernal realm, he encounters monsters both real and imaginary.¹¹ After the all too real presence of the various mortal banes, the hellish, ironbound home of Eumenides, and Discordia with her snakes, he encounters figures from a dream world, in what amounts to a second alliterative¹² catalogue of scary images that confront the protagonist:

[I]n medio ramos annosaque bracchia pandit
ulmus opaca ingens, quam sedem somnia vulgo
vana tenere ferunt foliisque sub omnibus haerent.
multaque praeterea uariarum monstra ferarum
Centauri in foribus stabulant Scyllaeque bifformes
et centumgeminus Briareus ac belua Lerna
borrendum stridens flammisque armata Chimaera,
Gorgones Harpyiaequae et forma tricorporis umbrae.¹³

These are the *vana somnia*, the insubstantial and empty dreams that haunt one's fitful sleep.¹⁴ Perched amid the branches and leaves of a huge elm tree, nightmares keep eerie sentinel.¹⁵ Soon enough, Aeneas will prepare to use his sword to check the perceived advance of these specters.¹⁶ Aeneas essays to fight the Centaurs, Scyllas, rebellious giant, Hydra, Chimaera, Gorgons, Harpies, and Geryon – all standard, stock foes of heroes in the annals of epic and lyric alike – only to be reminded by Deiphobe that they are not real.¹⁷ At VI, v. 260 the Sibyl had instructed Aeneas to draw his sword, a supposed inconsistency given her later direction not to engage with the ghosts. One solution to the perceived problem is to imagine that Aeneas is to arm himself against the first group, and not to fight with the second, insubstantial array.¹⁸

Four additional verses that expand on the mention of the Gorgons are attested here, lines that Servius Danielis says were the

work of the poet and left by him in this place, only to be removed by his *emendatores*.¹⁹

*Gorgonis in medio portentum immane Medusae,
uiperae circum ora comae cui sibila torquent
infamesque rigent oculi, mentoque sub imo
serpentum extremis nodantur uinacula caudis.*²⁰

These lines have been almost universally condemned as spurious, and it is the rare editor who includes them in his text.²¹ They have been the subject of scholarly inquiry, mostly for the obvious questions of authenticity and provenance.²² It is likely (though not certain) that anyone who read these lines in late antiquity did so via the grammatical tradition, and not in a manuscript of the poet (*e.g.*, the Vatican Vergil). In his edition of the epic, Remigio Sabbadini was of the view that these verses were written by Virgil, who chose to delete them and to replace them with v. 282-289 – perhaps the best theory and explanation that has been offered.²³ The “*in medio*” of v. 289a was thus replaced by the “*in medio*” of v. 282, and in the “original” text, there would have been something of a tricolon of female demonic figures: the Eumenides, Discordia, and the Gorgon Medusa.²⁴ Rigid iron and fix eyes would mark the framing figures, with serpents explicitly associated with Discordia and Medusa.

As for the content of the verses, the mention of the *uiperae comae* of Medusa echoes that of the *uipereum crinem* of Discord.²⁵ If we include these four lines, then the climax of the nightmare comes with the apparition of Medusa, who like Discordia has a serpentine coiffure, with no bloody fillets to restrain her locks, but rather snaky bonds that are knotted under her chin: there is a reminiscence of v. 281 *innexa* in v. 289d *nodantur*.

The four “Medusa” verses offer a contrasting portrait both of terrible motion and of equally horrid lack thereof. The monster has viperous, snaky locks of hair, and the serpents that serve as her hair emit a terrible hissing. Her infamous eyes are fixed (*infamesque rigent oculi*), and under her chin there are bonds that are knotted together, bonds made from the ends of the serpents’ tails ([...]

mentoque sub imo / serpentum extremis nodantur uincola caudis). To the degree that the syntax is torturous and in part “not very pretty” (so Horsfall *ad loc.*), the poet has enacted the repulsive picture of the hissing horror.²⁶ Medusa causes those who see her to be petrified, and her snakes threaten those near her (at least until they are reduced to stone); in the description, the horror is made worse by imagining the monster as something of a victim herself, with her eyes fixed as if she were the one frozen, and her neck bound by serpents.

Gorgon imagery marks not the beginning, but the end of the underworld journey of Odysseus in Homer.²⁷ The archaic hero is worried that Persephone might appear with the head of the Gorgon; the Augustan one sees an insubstantial dream, a phantom Medusa. Aeneas does not engage with the real monsters at the threshold of the underworld. He does, however, draw his sword to do battle with the *uana somnia*, the dream apparitions – only for the Sibyl to dissuade him from such pointless pursuits (VI, v. 290-294), just as Hermes was said to have done with Heracles.²⁸

The sixth book of the *Aeneid* was an influence on a curious work that has survived from classical literature: the anonymous prose comedy *Querolus sive Aulularia*, the only extant Latin comedy apart from the dramas of Plautus and Terence.²⁹ This brief play presents a number of puzzles, not least questions of authorship, date, and provenance.³⁰ “The reference in the title Plautus’ *Aulularia* does not mean that we have here a reworking of a classic. The *Querolus* is, if anything, the sequel to the *Aulularia* [...]”³¹ Certainly the work is of particular interest to those concerned with the Plautine *Nachleben*,³² and it was itself the inspiration for later, medieval dramatic composition.³³ It has also attracted the attention of students of Stoicism, concerned as it is in part with the question of the immutability of fate.³⁴ It has been mined for evidence of the social and economic realities of its age, despite the significant perils of such pursuits (especially given the uncertainty of the work’s provenance).³⁵ The *Querolus* is, however, redolent with the spirit of the late fourth and early fifth centuries, not least in its intertextual engagement. “The comedy is wholly characteristic of the age in

which it was written and brings to a conclusion the history of Greek and Roman comedy in antiquity.”³⁶

Without doubt, the anonymous author of the *Querolus* was a person of considerable learning.³⁷ Various allusions to the Virgilian underworld occur in the play, namely in the extended sequence in which the parasite Mandrogerus assumes his fanciful role as a *magus* and *mathematicus*.³⁸ These intertextual passages have not received systematic attention. We shall consider closely these Virgilian allusions, in particular the possible evocation by the author of imagery from *Aeneid* VI, v. 289a-d.

Mandrogerus speaks of the *planetae potentes* – what one of his fellow parasites refers to as the *uaga sidera* – and notes that it is not easy to approach them, and impossible to depart from them:

MAND.: *Adire <non> facile es, abire impossibile.*

With this caveat we may compare the Sibyl’s admonition to Aeneas at VI, v. 126b-29:

[...] *facilis descensus Averno;
noctes atque dies patet atri ianua Ditis;
sed reuocare gradum superasque euadere ad auras,
hoc opus, hic labor est [...].*

We should note here that in the *Querolus*, the insertion of the negative *non* is due to the Teubner editor Rudolf Peiper.³⁹ It is possible that the text *adire facile es* is correct, in exact imitation of Virgil’s *facilis descensus Averno*; there could, too, be a deliberate “misremembrance” of the *Aeneid* text (that is, as part of the comic humor, with pseudo-intellectual characters thinking that they know their Virgil), or a reversal thereof. The decision to accept Peiper’s addition depends in part on the following exchange, in which additional interesting problems emerge. The sycophantic parasite asks for more information, and Mandrogerus provides it:

SYCOPH.: *Quam ob rem?*

MAND.: *Mysteria sunt in aditu diuersa et occulta, quae nos soli nouimus: harpyiae, cynocephali, furiae, ululae, nocturnae striges.*

*Absentes hydris congregant, praesentes uirgis submovent. Ita neque abesse licitum est nec adire tutum.*⁴⁰

Here Mandrogerus recalls Virgil's description of the *ianua Ditis*. In the approach to the *planetae potentes*, there are diverse and occult mysteries (theriomorphic and other), including Harpies, Furies, and other monstrous creatures. It is not permitted to depart from them (sc., because they lasso you with serpentine ropes), and it is not safe to approach them (sc., on account of how they beat with rods those who are ensnared, apart from the constraining, snaky whips). This is why it is not possible to depart from them, and not safe to draw near. Mandrogerus sums up the paradox: "*Turbas abigunt et turbas amant*".⁴¹ The monsters drive off the throng, and they are attracted to it. The hapless unfortunates are the ones who find themselves bound with snakes, only to be struck with staves. It is a savage scene of pointless, sadistic labor and movement.

The sentence *Absentes hydris congregant, praesentes uirgis submovent* thus describes two distinct yet related actions, in balanced parataxis. Even as the monsters attempt to drive you off with the *uirgae*, the *hydrae* with which they drew you in impedes and prevents your escape. The *Furiae* in particular are renowned for how they pursue their quarry relentlessly, such that it is indeed impossible ever to escape them (and we may recall that the *planetae* are *uaga sidera*, celestial bodies that are in motion). But these Furies and assorted dread creatures have no need to pursue their victims – they have snaky whips with which to bind and secure their prey. The reference to the *hydrae* seems to be to some sort of serpentine lassoing, where those who come too close to the wandering stars are at risk of being drawn in with the flagellant water snakes wielded by the Furies and other bogeys. Once you are reeled in, as it were, you are beaten with the *uirgae*, so as to restrain you further and to coerce you into remaining. There are no Gorgons in the *Querolus*, but the Gorgon Medusa and the Furies have affinities, not least the serpent as virtual avatar.

While the corralling of unfortunates by means of staves or batons is readily comparable to the actions of those engaged in crowd control, the striking image evoked by *absentes hydris congregant*

is more difficult to parallel.⁴² The closest Virgilian parallel to the picture of the use of serpents to bind individuals is the picture provided at VI, v. 289d, of the binding in knots of snaky locks under Medusa's chin – the monster is both a peril to others, and a victim herself of serpentine confinement and binding.

We should note that of the horrors listed by Mandrogerus – the *harpyiae*, *cynocephali*, *furiae*, *ululae*, and *nocturnae striges* – only the *Furiae* have associations with serpents. Likewise, Virgil's Allecto – his most prominently described Fury – has *hydri* at VII, v. 446-447 *At iuueni oranti subitus tremor occupat artus, / deriguere oculi: tot Erinys sibilat hydri*, in a passage that has affinities to VI, v. 289a-d with respect to the effect of Allecto on Turnus' eyes, and the hissing of her serpents; we may compare too VII, v. 346 and 450.⁴³ In Virgil's description of the hellish threshold, the serpents are mentioned in connection with Discordia, who is named at once after the Eumenides. “Snakes are attributes familiar among deities of this type.”⁴⁴ The Furies pursue their quarry with snakes, chasing them relentlessly with viperous flogging and ghastly, living whips. Allecto is not Medusa, but like the Gorgon she causes the virtual petrification of Turnus' eyes. At VI, v. 289c *infamesque rigent oculi* [...] the poet referenced the notorious eyes of Medusa, describing them as fixed and staring (i.e., as they seek to petrify their prey). At VII, v. 447, Turnus is as if a victim if a Gorgon, his eyes frozen as the Fury Allecto reveals herself to him in her true and horrifying visage. Virgil thus highlights the aforementioned affinities that link Furies and Gorgons.

In the *Querolus*, we find snaky whips used to draw in and bind those who come too close to the *planetae potentes*. This image is not found in Virgil, except, we might think, in the four spurious Gorgon verses that describe the snakes that bind Medusa's locks. Allecto throws a snaky lock at Amata (VI, v. 346-347 *Huic dea caeruleis unum de crinibus anguem / conicit inque sinum praecordia ad intuma subdit*), where the snake is not used to lasso someone, but to infect them with venom.⁴⁵ Nicholas Horsfall *ad loc.* argues against the sense of tossing or throwing for *conicit*, noting that “the Furies do not, in the vast iconographic tradition, hurl their serpents to afflict their victims”. He considers it likelier that the action of

Allecto with Amata (and of the Fury with her torch in attacking Turnus) is one of thrusting the serpent in one's face and not of hurling it, while acknowledging that *conicere* can mean either.⁴⁶ In either case, Mandrogerus' *congregant* of the action of the monsters offers a rather different image, one of binding and restraint. The snakes of Virgil's Furies are used to flagellate and to threaten their quarry; the *Furiae* and other horrors cited by Mandrogerus use serpents to bind their victims. It is fitting, we might add, that the fraud Mandrogerus speaks of bogeys and other horrors that in Virgil are, after all, nothing but nightmares and insubstantial dreams.

It may also be observed in passing that while the *Querolus* author does not have Mandrogerus name Gorgons among his imagined horrors, the emphasis on how one can never escape once one draws too close may evoke the inability of the Gorgon's petrified victims to flee.

We may note that there is an additional allusion in the extended passage to Virgil's underworld, one which seems to be a comic, intentionally faulty recollection of the poet's text: "*SARD.: Felices nos qui non cynocephalus pertulistis! Ego autem ipsum uidi Cerberum, ubi, nisi ramus aureus adfuisset, Aeneas non euaserat*".⁴⁷ The parasite Sardanapallus asserts that he himself saw Cerberus, and he recalls how Aeneas would never have escaped the dire canine, were he not in possession of the Golden Bough. In Virgil, the hound of hell is put to sleep by a honeysweet morsel offered by the Sibyl (VI, v. 417-425); the dog is no sentinel to be feared once it is lulled to slumber.⁴⁸ Certainly the Golden Bough has nothing to do with Aeneas' safe passage past the beast. Sardanapallus would seem to know his Virgil less well than Mandrogerus: there is a hierarchy of literary knowledge among imposters and frauds. Sardanapallus alludes to the classical canine underworld guardian, as well as to the enigmatic Bough. His "error" in recalling Virgil is a learned one: while the Bough has nothing to do with Cerberus in *Aeneid* VI, it is presented by the Sibyl as a warning to the ferryman Charon at VI, v. 405-407 – and Deiphobe refers contemptuously to Charon as *latrans*, i.e. "barking" – as if were a pesky, irritating hound nipping at their feet (VI, v. 401).

Immediately following on this passage, we find one final allusion to Virgil's underworld book, as the sycophant asks about *simiae*:

SYCOPH. *Quid de simiis?*

MAND. *Istae sunt quae futura scribunt, gesta quae uos dicitis, hominumque fata leuibus uoluunt paginis.*⁴⁹

With this description of how the monkeys record human fates, we may compare the description of the methodology of the Cumaean Sibyl in Virgil that was foretold to Aeneas by Helenus at Buthrotum: “[F]ata canit foliisque notas et nomina mandat”.⁵⁰ Remembering this warning, Aeneas asks the Sibyl not to entrust her song to fragile leaves, lest her messages about his destiny be reduced to a plaything of the winds:

[...] *foliis tantum ne carmina manda,
ne turbata uolent rapidis ludibria uentis:
ipsa canas oro [...]*⁵¹

The author of the *Querolus* thus offers another recollection of a scene from *Aeneid* VI, in reinforcement of the significant range of allusions to Virgil's underworld that we find in relatively brief compass in the play.

These various recollections of the sixth book of the *Aeneid* in the *Querolus* may offer more than simply an example of how the immensely popular Augustan epic was being read in the waning days of classical Latin literature. The Virgilian commentator Ettore Paratore thought that Dante knew a text of Virgil that included v. VI, v. 289a-d, on the strength of his description of the Furies at *Inferno* IX, v. 38-52 (and we may note IX, v. 90 in particular, of the bright green serpents that are said to bind the waists of the three infernal women).⁵² Horsfall is “less sure” of the idea that Dante was familiar with the Gorgon lines, though he concedes that the Florentine poet may have encountered the four verses either in marginalia to a Virgil text, or in some “unidentified, unknown” commentary.⁵³ Dante's Furies hope that Medusa will come to petrify the poet sojourner; his guide Virgil warns him to shield his

eyes (IX, v. 52-60). The scene is reminiscent of the aforementioned close of *Odyssey* XI, with Odysseus in fear of the Gorgon head wielded by Persephone.

In Dante the serpents are associated in particular with the Furies and not the Gorgons; in Virgil's indisputably authentic underworld vision, there is a mention of both Eumenides and Gorgons, but serpents are connected explicitly to Discordia. In the spurious Gorgon passage, snakes are mentioned, with the specific detail of how they are bound under Medusa's chin.

Whether or not Paratore was correct in his judgment on Dante's sources, it seems likely that the anonymous author of the *Querolus* knew of VI, v. 289a-d, and that the gruesome image of the knotted serpents around Medusa's neck provided a suitable herpetological horror for the charlatan Mandrogerus to evoke in his description of the Furies with their serpentine, binding lassos. We are in the dark as to the nature of the mysterious Gorgon verses, uncertain as to whether they should be ascribed to Virgil, or to some anonymous poetaster. But around the same time that Servius was composing his commentary on the *Aeneid*, another unknown author was composing his *Querolus*, and it is likely that he knew of these four lines (either from a text of Virgil, or – likelier – from the Virgilian commentary tradition), with their horrid, novel reference to the use of serpents as hellish, inextricable knots.⁵⁴ Virgil had already shaded together Gorgon and Fury imagery in his depiction of Allecto's petrifying effect on Turnus, and the author of the *Querolus* was free to recall the striking *tableau* of the virtually lassoed Medusa from the deleted Virgilian Gorgon passage in his description of the risks to those who draw near to the serpents shared by several female demonic specters.

RESUMO

O texto cômico anônimo *Querolus*, do final do terceiro ou início do séc. IV, contém uma cena estendida repleta de alusões à descrição do submundo no livro VI da *Eneida* de Virgílio. Uma consideração cuidadosa da recepção da apresentação de Virgílio do limiar do reino de Dis e dos monstros que se dizem espreitar lá pode revelar que o autor cômico teve acesso a um texto virgiliano que continha versos sobre a Górgona Medusa, linhas de autenticidade disputada conhecidas apenas de outra forma a partir da tradição de comentários.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Virgílio; *Eneida*; *Querolus*; Górgona; Medusa; Portões do sono.

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- ¹ “Servius records only four cases of passages being rejected [...]” (CRUMP, 1920, p. 114).
- ² VI, v. 273-281. For the text see CONTE, 2019 (*editio altera*).
- ³ On these lines note especially NORDEN, 1995, AUSTIN, 1977 and HORSFALL, 2013, *ad loc.*; cf. BINDER, 2019, p. 531-535 (who cites *inter al.* RAABE, 1974, p. 142 ff.).
- ⁴ See here PASCHALIS, 1997, p. 177, and cf. WEST, 1966, *ad* 211 ff.
- ⁵ MILLER, 1994, p. 25.
- ⁶ So GREEN, 2007, p. 272 (amid her argument that Virgil’s passage evokes aspects of the rites of Diana Nemorensis).
- ⁷ *cubilia Curae; Metus [...] malesuada; Letumque Labosque; mala mentis; Discordia demens; vipereum crinem vittis [...] cruentis* (AB-AB).
- ⁸ It is not considered by BASSON, 1975.
- ⁹ On the various descriptions of the figures, see KIVUILA-KIAKU, s.d., p. 58-59.
- ¹⁰ OTIS, 1964, p. 198 takes the view that all of the horrors are insubstantial. But the Harpies are not in the underworld, for example (cf. the Celaeno episode of *Aeneid* III), whereas the Furies do make their home there (and the iron may point to the reality). But rigid schematization is rarely to be found in Virgil’s underworld.
- ¹¹ On the identification of the Ivory Gate with this site (*i.e.*, as if Aeneas’ journey were circular rather than linear), see HIGHBARGER, 1940, p. 78-79.
- ¹² [*S*] *edem Somnia; vulgo Lvana; ferunt foliisque; stabulant Scyllaeque; Briareus [...] belua.*
- ¹³ VI, v. 282-289.
- ¹⁴ Note here STEINER, 1952, p. 85-88.
- ¹⁵ For speculation on the significance of the *ulmus*, see JENKYNS, 1998, p. 459-460; cf. ARMSTRONG, 2019.
- ¹⁶ On the significance of the locus of the arboreal abode of the false dreams, see QUINT, 2018, p. 98, n. 29.
- ¹⁷ WRIGHT, 1993, p. 49 offers a reproduction of the image of the illustration that accompanies this scene in the celebrated manuscript, wherein the artist depicts Bellum with a sword, ready to face Aeneas (*i.e.*, all the Virgilian horrors are depicted as ready to attack the hero, not just the classic monsters).
- ¹⁸ For other ideas, see HORSFALL *ad* VI, v. 291 *offert*.
- ¹⁹ “*sane quidam dicunt versus alios hos a poeta hoc loco relictos, qui ab eius emendatoribus sublati sint.*” For the Servian text (with commentary) see GUILLAUMIN, 2012.
- ²⁰ VI, v. 289a-d.
- ²¹ One exception is CUSSEN, 2018. Cf. the view of BUTLER, 1920, p. 149: “These lines have the true Vergilian ring, and were probably an alternative draft, bringing the passage more closely into line with the legend, making Hercules draw his sword upon Medusa”.
- ²² Note especially here GOMEZ GLANE, 2009, p. 175-190.
- ²³ “*hos v., credo, Vergilius ipse delevit in eorumque locum postea v. 282-289 suffecit.*” (The text is cited from L. Castiglioni’s 1944 emended Paravia edition of Sabbadini’s 1930 Roman P. *Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Libri XII*).
- ²⁴ On such figures cf. further CULLICK, 2016.
- ²⁵ On this see PEIRANO, 2012, p. 250.
- ²⁶ It cannot be excluded that the passage may have been among those marked for deletion by the poet on account of dissatisfaction. Note LA PENNA, 1979, p. 175-177, with sober analysis and a guide to construing the serpentine mess.
- ²⁷ *Odyssey* XI, v. 628-640. On the Virgilian appropriation of Homer’s Medusa imagery, note FRATANTUONO, 2022, p. 163-179; on the subject more generally, cf. FRATANTUONO, 2020, p. 71-81, as well as the basic bibliography assembled there: PELLETIER, 1985, p. 784-786, WESTERVELT, 2014, p. 569, MURGATROYD,

- 2007, p. 104-109, PANOUSI, 2009, p. 111-112, and LOWE, 2015, p. 102-105.
- ²⁸ Cf. Ps.-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* II, 5.12. See further ROBERTSON, 1980, p. 274-300.
- ²⁹ The standard edition now is JACQUEMARD-LE SAOS, 1994, with critical text, translation, and commentary. More generally on late republican and imperial comedy, see HANSES, 2020.
- ³⁰ O'DONNELL, 1980 (a vast compendium); also CORSARO, 1965. The language of the play has been studied exhaustively by JOHNSTON, 1900.
- ³¹ So CONTE, 1994, p. 670.
- ³² “[...] the memory of Plautus is watered down by school reminiscences of all the major classics, down to Cicero’s *o tempora o mores*” (FERRI, 2014, p. 780). Cf. MACLENNAN; STOCKERT, 2016, p. 24-25. On how the *Querolus* is not Terentian in spirit or content, see PAPAIOANNOU, 2014, p. 4, n. 4.
- ³³ Cf. SPONSLER, 2017, p. 115.
- ³⁴ On this see COLISH, 1990, p. 95 ff.
- ³⁵ See, e.g., GREY, 2011, p. 41; also SARRIS, 2011, p. 46-47.
- ³⁶ DUCKWORTH, 1952, p. 72.
- ³⁷ Cf. AUGOUSTAKIS, 2020, p. 420.
- ³⁸ Useful on the late antique Virgilian reception is REES, 2004.
- ³⁹ PEIPER, 1875.
- ⁴⁰ V, v. 55.
- ⁴¹ V, v. 55.
- ⁴² O'DONNELL, *op. cit.*, p. 95-96 is rightly critical of any suggestion that the water snakes and rods are related to lore of Osiris, Isis, and Serapis.
- ⁴³ The dream apparition of Clytemnestra at IV, v. 472 (“*armatam facibus matrem et serpentibus atris*”) may also be compared, on which see FRATAN TUONO; SMITH, 2022, *ad loc.* (with full bibliography on Virgilian snakes).
- ⁴⁴ So HORSFALL, 2000, *ad loc.*
- ⁴⁵ Cf. the different sort of assault described at VII, v. 456-457, where Allecto throws a fiery torch at Turnus.
- ⁴⁶ HORSFALL, 2000, *ad loc.*
- ⁴⁷ V, v. 57.
- ⁴⁸ CLARK, 2003, p. 308-309.
- ⁴⁹ V, v. 58.
- ⁵⁰ III, v. 444. On Helenus’ advice cf. WILLIAMS, 1962, HORSFALL, 2006, and HEYWORTH; MORWOOD, 2017, *ad loc.*
- ⁵¹ VI, v. 74-76.
- ⁵² PARATORE, 1992.
- ⁵³ As he notes, given that the *scholia Danielis* had not been rediscovered in Dante’s time, the poet did not find VI, v. 289a-d there.
- ⁵⁴ Given available evidence, we cannot be certain of the priority of the *Querolus* or of Servius; we are also unable to determine the exact provenance of the material preserved by the *scholia Danielis*, though it is certainly ancient in origin, and probably derived from the lost earlier fourth-century commentary of Aelius Donatus. It is important to remember that the spurious v. VI, v. 279a-d are known to us today solely from the Servian tradition, a point (*mutatis mutandis*) that G.P. Goold wisely took as the “first proposition” for his argument against the *Helenaszene* (vid. Servius and the Helen Episode. **Harvard Studies in Classical Philology**, v. 74, 1970, p. 101-102).