

# Wolf at the Gate: Gavin Douglas Translates the Animals of *Aeneid* 2\*

Newlin, Robert

## [Abstract]

Gavin Douglas' 16<sup>th</sup> century translation into Middle Scots of Virgil's *Aeneid* provides insight into how a good translator works. Highly competent in the language, theory and commentary tradition surrounding Virgil's canonical work, Douglas nevertheless produces a version that is at the same time accurate, deeply thoughtful, at times expansive, and recognizably Scottish. How he does this can be approached by focusing on his version of the *Aeneid's* Book Two, and especially on what Douglas does with natural and animal imagery. This paper will consider Douglas' small but significant changes in the original's descriptions of, respectively, the deer, the wolf, the (wooden) horse, and the snake. Drawing on late-antique and medieval theories of animals in literature, especially the fable, as well as the "textual community" of Virgilian commentary and Greek and Roman reception in Douglas' age, we will consider how the Scottish poet negotiates the sometime conflicting requirements of verisimilitude or "naturalness" and faithfulness to what he saw as Virgil's "sentence" or full intended (or accrued) meaning. For Douglas, the *Aeneid's* animal imagery provides miniature opportunities—often through a single word or two—to signal

---

\* Research for this paper was supported by the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies Research Fund for 2015-2016.

or echo what he saw as larger patterns and themes in the poem. What results is a work that engages its source with sympathy and agency both: a living participant in a text's history.

**Key Words:** Gavin Douglas, Virgil. *Aeneid*. Translation. Animals.

Douglas has long been celebrated for the accuracy of his translation of Virgil's epic. His language is colloquial and direct; above all, it sounds natural and unforced. This all the more remarkable considering what we modern readers might call the layered "indeterminacies" of the poem he translates.<sup>1)</sup> Douglas' precise source for the Latin is unknown: he probably had several different early 16<sup>th</sup> century texts and commentaries before him as he worked, and his translations often reflect more than one of variant readings. A 1501 text of the *Aeneid* with commentary by Ascensius has been suggested as a main source, as has a 1502 edition; throughout his translation and in his own commentaries, Douglas refers often to Servius.<sup>2)</sup> More broadly if less definably, there lies in the late medieval background an industry of classical exegesis, authoritative in presentation, ambitious in interpretative scope, and often encyclopedic. Texts such as the *Ovide Moralisé*, Boccaccio's *Genealogia Deorum Gentilium*, or Thomas of Walsingham's *De Archana Deorum* may lie in the near background: wider still, Douglas makes frequent and often incisive allusions to earlier interpreters of "the matter of Rome" such as Macrobius and Augustine.<sup>3)</sup>

Thus the simplicity or naturalness of Douglas' rendering is not at all naïve. Threaded through the narrative and more explicitly in his own prologues is a sort of metacommentary: Douglas' expressions of his awareness of the

relationship between this poem, its main model, and also the many other texts that come between or in some way influence the encounter between poet and translator. That threading, we should note, is so deftly done that the commentary rarely comes across as a sort of gloss, and certainly not a marginal one: it seems integral, as if expressing thoughts always present or potential in Virgil's text.

One particular aspect of this dynamic may help us see how Douglas works. What he does with Virgil's animal imagery—small augmentations, subtle refinements in focus or emphasis—is at first reading so minor that it may seem insignificant. Taken together, though, a sampling of Douglas' changes works to reveal a translator's mind. We ourselves, as we go back and forth between texts—first Latin (or modern translations), then Middle Scots, then back again—begin to realize just how much this translator offers: he does not supplant the original text, but does irreversibly change all subsequent returns.

We can approach our theme by way of a moment that, while it does not mention beasts, is very much about the animal. Our setting is right in the middle of all the chaos within Troy after the Greeks have tricked their way within the walls. Flames, death and destruction are everywhere. The Trojans already sense that their cause is lost, even as the fighting continues. However, a small group led by Aeneas surprises and defeats a team of Greeks. A trick is proposed: let us, suggests one of the Trojans, put off our armor and wear instead these Greek arms. Such a deceit will allow a few more chances to kill enemies before the inevitable defeat.

In Virgil's text, this proposal is accepted and carried out immediately. The sequence is quickly told. First one, then another, then all the young men change into new arms and—in several senses—into new identities.

hoc Ripheus, hoc ipse Dymas omnisque iuventus  
laeta facit; spoliis se quisque recentibus amat. (394-395)

So Does Ripheus, so Dymas too, and all the youth in delight; each man  
arms himself in the new-won spoils.<sup>4)</sup>

Characteristically, Virgil has packed more than one mood into the scene.<sup>5)</sup> The overall context is as dark as can be: we, and the young men themselves, are quite aware that they are about to die; incongruously but not unrealistically, the youths take great pleasure in the trick and adventure. *Our* response is appropriately complex—and to this bundle Douglas adds a small but telling adjective.

Full gladly in thae recent spoils warm  
Belyve ilk man did himself enam.  
Amang the Greeks middlit then went we,  
Nacht with our ain taiken nor deity. (2.7.59-62)<sup>6)</sup>

Douglas imagines the scene with precise realism, and adds the detail that the armor is still warm when the Trojans don it. As far as verisimilitude, this is of course reasonable—and we may notice and enjoy it for that alone. But the warm armor also signals broader themes about Douglas' approach to Virgil: corporeal, sensory, corporeally transitive, it adds a degree of the organic to the exchange—and underscores that the exchange is essentially metamorphic.

For our understanding of Douglas, the implications are both subtle and far-reaching. Virgil's original describes a trick of war: once the Trojans discuss the idea among themselves, the transfer of arms is essentially something that we see or do not see. Trojan armor comes off, Trojan youths are revealed,

Greek armor goes on, men's faces are hidden. A transformation occurs. As our eyes turn to Douglas' version, it helps to recall what Caroline Walker Bynum has written about metamorphosis.

A hybrid is a double being, an entity of parts, two or more. It is an inherently visual form. We see what a hybrid is; it is a making of two-ness, and the simultaneity of two-ness, visible. Metamorphosis goes from an entity that is one thing to an entity that is another. It is essentially a narrative. (30)

A less elegant way of saying this is that the visual or hybrid is primarily appositional: we see things (or not) by separating them from something else, then juxtaposing the parts. Different, but only in degree, is metamorphosis: Bynum describes it as a sort of process. Speaking very broadly, all reading involves such a metamorphic process; this especially when we read translated texts, and most especially when one of the translators is as consciously reflective as Douglas.

My point is, initially, simple enough: when Douglas adds in the detail "warm," he adds both a new sensory dimension (our feeling for hot or cold) and a moment of physical and temporal precision. It is a very short time that these soldiers take in changing arms: the leather, metal and cloth have no time to cool. That warmth, we might reasonably argue, is present in Virgil's text ... but not explicitly stated. Douglas merely "spells it out."

This spelling out, however, has other effects, also temporal, but in ways that go beyond narrative immediacies. The warmth of a body is visceral and universal: our thoughts, first on the finely articulated time-sequence suggested by Virgil's narrative and then as it is particularized by Douglas, may well leap beyond this scene—and out of the text. Supported by an essential,

corresponding heat, they range far forward: to Douglas' time of warmth, perhaps, and likely past that and to our present selves.

Above all, the warmth of the Greek amour, a finely realized link between the only just-dead Greeks and the soon-to-die Trojans, is a means of transition. Because it links things formerly separate, because it is corporeal and organic, because it alters identity, and because it signifies as much as it does, the warmth is essentially metamorphic. This helps to initiate an essential theme for this paper: that of the body that signifies, increasingly, even as it may lose or alter its corporeal identity. For Virgil and especially for Douglas' translation, animal bodies are significant participants in this dynamic.

Before turning to the wolf, horse and serpents of Book 2, we may wish to consider one of Douglas' own appended notes to his translation. Deceptively straightforward, the note engages both a considerable commentary tradition and a potential for controversy.

Though some wald say, perchance, that in Africa been nae harts, thereto answers Landinus that, albeit perchance now there be nane, in thae days they were not to seek; or though in the further parts of Africa be nane, in the hither parts, whereto was Aeneas drive, there been mony. (2.744)

We can approach the controversy by way of Servius, who suggests that the unnatural idea of deer in Africa can be explained away as poetic fiction, permissible by tradition.<sup>7)</sup> Douglas, who refers to Servius often, would almost certainly have that commentator's thoughts as well as Landinus in mind even as he turns to a more realistic, even ecological explanation, one that shows consciousness of the passage of time in both the larger world and between texts.

The controversy, somewhat absurdly reduced, might be this: what duty has a poet—and especially a poet who translates another poet—to tell the truth—especially as he or she may see it? Or, put another way, does it matter if a translator of a given tradition, knowing full well that there are no deer in Africa, puts them there in the text? These are well-worn questions, especially (but not exclusively!) to grammarians of Late Antiquity, for they engage and challenge fundamental definitions of genre and writerly procedure. Paule Demats makes a useful comment on Servius’ perspective, one that would seem to privilege the story-teller, that the phrasing in the above passage leads a reader to believe that “Servius définit ici la fable et l’histoire comme *subjects* de composition poétiques ou dramatiques” (29: Demats’ emphasis). The oddly indefinable narrative type of *argumentum*, best known perhaps through Quintilian’s discussions, looms close by.<sup>8)</sup> Fable or history: once made *subjects* (note the hierarchic implications) of a narrative, become almost moot categories.

Moot or not, verisimilitude in natural details characterizes Douglas’ approach. Virgil’s original introduces the simile of wolves:

sic animus iuvenum furor additus. inde, lupi ceu  
 raptores atra in nebula, quos improba ventris  
 exegit caecos rabies catulique relict  
 faucibus exspectant siccis, per tela, per hostis  
 vadimus haud dubiam in mortem mediaeque tenemus  
 Urbis iter; nox atra cava circumvolat umbra. (2.355-360)

Thus their young spirits were spurred to fury. Then, like ravening wolves in a black mist, when the belly’s lawless rage has driven them blindly forth, and their whelps at home await them with thirsty jaws; through swords, through

foes we pass to certain death, and hold our way to the city's heart; black night  
hovers around with sheltering shade.

Reception, both antique and modern, helps in contextualizing Douglas' version. Servius points out negative or ignoble associations for the wolf (she can be a type of whore) in Roman minds and slang; a recent editor tells us that the word "raptores" had not, before Virgil's use here, been associated with "elevated style."<sup>9</sup>) In a more positive strain, Servius notes the appropriateness of a wolf metaphor for anything having to do with war: *et bene belli negotium lupo comparavit, qui est in tutela Martis, dei bellici*— "and certainly the business of war can be likened to that of the wolf, which is associated with Mars, god of war" (2.355).<sup>10</sup>) Keeping in mind this range of exegesis as well as our notion of metamorphosis as a story, we can see how a very small addition by Douglas can give rise to a host of associations and narrative threads.

Sae with thir words the young men's courage grew  
That in the dark, like ravenous wolves on raws,  
Wham the blind fury of their empty maws  
Drives furth of their den to seek their prey  
(Their little whelps left with dry throats till day)—  
Sae through the weapons and our faces went we  
Upon the deith undoubtit, and wald not flee. (2.6.108-114)

The loss of identity theme that we noted in the warm armor passage actually begins a short time before. Virgil's text describes the confusion of the first moments and hours after the Greek entry (by way of the horse, which we will consider shortly) and citywide assault. Douglas' lines are, overall, a close and accurate translation, but he adds a single, significant qualifier: the notion

that the wolves to which we compare the Trojan soldiers go *in rows* as they move about their wild landscape. Virgil's text does not have this detail, natural as it may seem.<sup>11)</sup>

Above all, the image of wolves in rows adds an element of order to a particularly chaotic scene. Even though a small group, Aeneas' band undertakes their raiding as a military unit. This has a range of implications. If we think in terms of temporal or historical structure, the image of soldiers in orderly ranks looks toward subsequent Roman history—especially, perhaps, and considering the associations of wilderness, with the century just before Virgil's time—and past that toward European culture up until Douglas' day.<sup>12)</sup> If we continue to think in terms of history but also about animal metaphors within the poem, an immediate correspondence is suggested by the extended comparison between Turnus and a wolf in Book Nine. An organizing concept for all this is that of viability: the animal is always a vibrant thing. Which among such energetic creatures will best survive translation?

My distressingly gnomic question has this point: if we recall that "translation" does, etymologically and more, suggest a "carrying-across," we can keep in mind my earlier suggestion that, for Douglas, there is a parallel between animal metaphor's or metamorphosis' transfer of meaning and that of translation.

Or, to engage Caroline Walker Bynum again, metamorphosis should imply not only survival, but evolution: a narrative moves forward.

We find a corresponding, opposing image of wolf metaphor in Book Nine's extended description of Turnus as the predator outside the sheepfold. Seen with the help of a number of figures clustered around Book Two's wolves, the Turnus passage will suggest devolution rather than growth.

Consider the wolf cubs left thirsty in their dens. If we look at Virgil's Latin, *catuli relictī*, we may note that *relictī* suggests abandonment.<sup>13)</sup> In this aspect, Douglas' translation ("whelps *left* with dry throats) is a degree fuller than the Loeb.<sup>14)</sup> This image of lupine domestic economies may hint at more difficult strictures for the humans. The hard truth of the matter is that many of the Trojan children will not survive the night. On an only slightly more abstract and expanding level, the abandoned wolf-whelp metaphor suggests an initial, difficult but necessary stage in the long process from Trojan to Italian to Roman—a necessary loss or death, as it were, before rebirth and regrowth—the severing of domestic ties before flight from the city and voyage to a new world and nation.

Here we might note a moment that comes a few lines before the change into wolves. Facing the catastrophe suddenly around them, Aeneas famously says: *moriāmur et in media arma ruāmus* (2.353): "let us die and rush into the midst of arms." Servius somewhat pedantically dismisses this as *hysteroproteron*, or the reversion of natural order, and tells us that the actual order of business is to rush into arms first, then die (1.277). Douglas, in a brilliant piece of non-interference, keeps the Virgilian sequence.

There is nae mair, let us together dee  
And in amid our enemy's army shoot. (2.6.104-105)

A very different picture and dynamic is made by the Greeks, as a group and individually. What Virgil (and his European readers, from antiquity on) see in them is an opposing pattern of stasis, a devastating state of "non-growing." We can take one example from another animal: the famous horse that brings Greek soldiers into the city. In a passage directly following our description of Aeneas

and his followers donning Greek armor, we watch as the newly emboldened Trojans chase their foes here and there. Many of the Greeks fall fighting; others flee back to their ships; a few cravens crawl disgracefully back into the horse's wooden belly.

Some part also, for shameful cowardice,  
Clam up again in the great horse's maw  
And hid them in that belly weel-beknaw. (2.7.68-70)

I suspect that Douglas is writing on more than one level here: that "weel-beknaw" takes on a force that extends beyond the Greek soldier's familiarity. It is a figure known to all of us, a trick so old that it has no power to deceive or surprise. Douglas' translation of the Latin *nota* well conveys the sense, noted by editors, that the interior of the horse is something like a home and hearth to some of the Greeks.<sup>15)</sup> For a translator, a subtle and perilous parallel arises: the possibility that *this* reiteration will be no more than that, a museum-like familiarity, and not a living growth. Between Virgil's text and Douglas are commentators like Servius, who makes a characteristically grammarian, useful comment, that Virgil's wording of the Greek re-entry into the horse conveys something a good deal more serious than some brief dodge: ... *non dum eunt, sed cum esse coeperint: unde et ablativo usus est, non accusativo* (283)—"they did not so much go in as much as they began to be; thus we have the ablative and not the accusative case." On a simple interpretive level, the Greek soldiers return to deceitfulness. On something more metaphysical and indeed infernal, they are trapped there. Historically, they indict a culture.

We can find a corresponding figure, this time an individual with a name (or,

rather, names), in Neoptolemus or Pyrrhus. Pyrrhus' cognomen, or "New Warrior," is provocatively open-ended. For a largely positive, Greek perspective, we can recall Odysseus' report, in the *nekylia* of Odyssey 11, to Achilles of his son's singular bravery within the horse and after. Pyrrhus is his father's son—almost as fierce and skillful at arms. However, and especially through a Latin filter, he is something less as well. Virgil's description of Pyrrhus' first appearance is nightmarish, almost hallucinogenic in its alternation of shadow and glittering brightness, in its extended simile of a snake that sloughs its skin:

“Vestibulum ante ipsum primoque in limine Pyrrhus  
 Exsulat telis et luce coruscus aëna;  
 quails ubi in lucem coluber mala gramina pastus,  
 frigida sub terra tumidum quem bruma tegebat,  
 nunc positus novus exuviis nitidusque iuventa  
 lubrica convolvit sublato pectore terga,  
 arduus ad solem, et linguis micat ore trisulcis. (469-475)

“Just before the entrance-court and the very portal is Pyrrhus, proudly gleaming in the sheen of brazen arms: even as when into the light comes a snake, fed on poisonous herbs, whom cold winter kept swollen underground, now, his slough cast off, fresh and glittering in youth, with uplifted breast he rolls his slippery length, towering towards the sun and darting from his mouth a three-forked tongue!”

Connotations are as multiple and conflicted as the imagery: the unpleasant picture of a turgid serpent juxtaposed with glittering highlights from metallic scales and sunshine; the mildly bucolic sense of *pastus* or “fed” followed by a jarring image of “bad grains” ... the heroic and humanistic picture of “striving”

(*arduus*) toward the sun coupled with a snake's forked tongue. As Austin points out, *trisulcis* or "three-forked" has associations in Roman literature with lightning—a detail that only adds to the weirdly metamorphic feel to the passage. Austin also notes that Servius (and, following him, Isidore of Seville: a good indicator of wide currency) describes the superlative speed with which a snake flicks that forked tongue (Austin 188). The tongue gives us an entry point into Douglas' rendering, which while a degree less flamboyant, follows closely.

And first of all, before the porch in ran  
 Hard to the entry, in shining plate and mail,  
 Pyrrhus, with weapons fiercely to assail.  
 Like to the adder, with shrewit herbs fed,  
 Comes furth to licht, and on the ground lies spread,  
 (Wham winter lang hid under the cauld eard):  
 Now slippit her slocht with shining skin new-breard,  
 Her slithery body in hanks round all round,  
 Heich up her neck streaking foregain the sun,  
 With forkit tongue intil her mouth whittering. (2.8. 54-63)

A small but telling change: while Virgil's description is, to this point, entirely visual, Douglas adds a subtle element of sound. "Whittering" is onomatopoeic, and conveys both rapidity and an aural dimension. On the simplest level, this change is characteristic of Douglas' colloquial realism. Considered in other ways, it suggests elements of what might broadly be called Virgilian reception; and, more narrowly, both metamorphic and specifically Ovidian ways of signifying. Metamorphosis is not exclusive to Ovid, of course: Virgil's description of Pyrrhus works on several levels to describe him as something other than

simply human. However, Douglas' detail of sound, highly characteristic of Virgil's younger contemporary Ovid, underscores and arguably completes the metamorphosis. The Pyrrhus-snake construct is given a voice, but not language: the sound is unformed and bestial.<sup>16)</sup>

This is the creature who cuts down both a son and then his father, Polites and Priam, one who boasts himself as "degenerate" (549: *degeneremque*), a word that Servius glosses as *non respondentum moribus patris*: not acting in the manner of his father" (1.302). Douglas' addition of voiced voicelessness only strengthens this reading. Stepping back, we again sense hints of a translator's disquiet: the notion that a tongue, no matter how precisely it is articulated (*trisulcis*) or how subtly it articulates (*whittering*) it is always a step away from nonsense, or even madness. The image of the Greek re-entering the horse repeats—it is a familiar place, but made strange and unfruitful through that very familiarity.

A parallel dynamic can be seen in another aspect of the Neoptolemus passage: I refer to the jarring disorientation of landscape and perspective upon the moment of his entry into Priam's courtyard. His arrival is described by Aeneas, who though not present describes the scene from the perspective of someone inside.<sup>17)</sup>

The oddity is this: described from inside a collapsing building, Pyrrhus is pictured as if *he* is emerging from a closed interior (the snake hole) and looking from there upon a wider, sunlit world. What results is a type of mirror or speculum: both watchers look out upon facing wider landscapes that are also, depending upon position and subjectivity, just the opposite—narrow, unpromising, noxious holes. For a conveyor-of-tradition such as Virgil, and even a degree more for his 16<sup>th</sup> century translator (both intermediaries, especially in

specular dimensions) this provides a moment for reflection.

It is this perspective—more than Aeneas’ as he tells the tale—that allows us to see that it is Neoptolemus, in all his vibrancy, who looks toward and enters a dying world. The Trojan, even from that place of death, can look out upon ever-broadening vistas. However, this is no absolute divide. Greek and Trojan are never that far apart, as people and as cultures, especially in Virgil’s view. We cannot forget that the essential action of a mirror is to show sameness—or at the very least, similitude, mediated by the glass. This picture of Pyrrhus is in many senses a larger version of an earlier passage, just before our moment with wolves. There we witness a Greek soldier who, against his expectations, finds himself among enemies even after he calls out a friendly greeting.

Thus said he, when that suddenly and anon  
 He felt himself happenit amid his fone,  
 For we him gave answer nocht traist eneuch.  
 Astonished with the word, aback he dreuch,  
 As wha unware tread on a ouch serpent  
 Ligging in the bush, and for fear backward spreit,  
 Seeing her (ready to stang and to infect)  
 Set up her venomous yellow boldin neck. (2.7.32-39)

Douglas’ is a close rendering of Virgil’s text—with one odd difference. The Latin describes the snake as one with *caerulla colla*: a blue or at most purple neck. Why would so careful a Latinist as Douglas change the color? The simplest explanation is natural and localized: the only snake natively known to Douglas would be the adder, which is indeed a brown and yellow creature. This might be taken as an example of Douglas’ realism—of how he has made the ancient text “Scottish” even as he has stayed accurate as a translator.

However, this realism is both problematic and potentially revelatory.

The problem is this: Virgil's snake is blue, and Douglas renders it yellow. Various explanations are possible—each, to a varying degree, compromises or complicates our confidence in the translator. The simplest explanation, that Douglas mistranslates *caerulea* through linguistic ignorance or oversight, is the least likely. It is not an obscure word, and Douglas knows what he is about with Latin. Another explanation brings us back to the adder: Douglas may intend that his readers *picture* the snake through recourse to the natural world and actual experience. On one hand, this can yield a better translation: a reader who connects this snake to a genuine, personal memory may enjoy a more vivid reading. On the other hand, however, this yields inaccuracy, or at least potential for such: Douglas has misrepresented the color of Virgil's snake, a beast that perhaps gets that color from its real brethren in Italy's forests. To a herpetologist, this might be a significant crime. For most of us, our interest is more in the soldier than the snake—less on the animal and more on Virgil's portrait of a startled man.

Such a dynamic or division evokes the fabular. There are differences, of course: as we know from our Aesop or Renart, fables usually involve animals that speak with human voices. Isidore of Seville provides a classic definition in his *Etymologiae*:

Fabulas poetae a fando nominaverunt, quia non sunt res factae, sed tantum loquendo fictae. Quae ideo sunt inductae, ut fictorum mutuum animalium inter se conloquio imago quaedam vitae hominum nosceretur (1.40.1).

Poets named fables from fando, to speak, for these are not things

achieved through deeds, but rather are made up through speech. But fables are so designed that, from invented mute beasts speaking amongst themselves, an image of human life can be known.

But the situation here is oddly apposite. It is through their speech that the Trojans are recognized as such; it is through that mechanism that the transformation to serpent begins. Douglas, by making this animal yellow, recognizes its essential agency, and even gives it more of that capability—simply by reminding us, through a realistic detail, of its active (and, here, I would argue, increasing) presence.

A useful word in Isidore's discussion is *imago*; it is the somewhat difficult crux, grammatically and thematically, of the last sentence. It "images" or pictures both the animals and certain human lives, and juxtaposes the clearly fictive with the natural or palpable. When Douglas surprises us by coloring his serpent in a different way, he reinvents the image. Narrative essentials are unchanged, of course: the Trojans and Greeks proceed just as Virgil wrote it. What does change (and this may seem an over-fine point) is both the way we see the snake and the way we see ourselves as readers of the scene. We are both inside it and out—at once farther away, yet closer than before.

Justification for over-fine readings comes from Douglas himself. Douglas published his translation with an accompaniment of prologues—his gateways, if we wish to remind ourselves of this paper's title—to the text proper. Like that wolf at the gate, Douglas makes his presence known, and with some fierceness, as he announces a right to be there.

Be weel advisit, my work ere ye reпреif,  
Consider it warely, read offer than aince:

Weel at ae blenk slee poetry nocht tane is. (P.106-108)

Douglas cites various authorities (most notably Saint Gregory) in support of the idea that he must avoid being slavishly literal in translating if he wishes to truly convey the “sentence” or full meaning of any work of art, especially one as layered and nuanced as Virgil’s.

Saint Gregory eik forbids us to translate  
Word after word, but sentence follow algate;  
‘Wha haulds’, quod he, ‘of words the properties,  
Full oft the verity of the sentence flees’. (P. 395-398)

As we have seen, however, what changes or liberties Douglas makes are small: thus the exhortation to read closely. More wolfishness is revealed by Douglas’ sense of himself in relation to other translators: he castigates Caxton on an inaccurate, impressionistic, selective, incomplete and unscholarly translation, and then promises:

Traist on nae wise that this my work be sic,  
Whilk did my best, as my wit nicht attain,  
Virgil’s verse to follow, and naething feign. (P. 264-266)

Characteristically, Douglas resorts to a metaphor from nature to describe the fine balance he must maintain between loyalty to Virgil’s text and his immediate need to convey, in living and scrupulously honest language, his full understanding.

Wha is attachit until a stake, we see,  
May gae nae further, but wrele about that tree.  
Richt sae am I to Virgil's text ybound:  
I may nocht flee, less than a fault be found;  
For, though I wald transcend and gae beside,  
His work remains, my shame I can nocht hide. (P. 297-302)

The tension remains: Douglas feels “attachit” to a stake at the same time he feels a capacity to “wrele” or move about, even within limits. This is a fine metaphor, especially for our author, especially since we have seen that he negotiates this standoff between fixity and contiguous growth by means of small movements and small details within his translation.

Another way toward fuller translation is through the prologues as commentary on not only a theory of translation but as a teasing-out of Virgil's text and “sentence.” In a remarkable invocation that makes up part of his prologue to Book Two, Douglas calls to the old god Saturn.

The dreary fate, with tears lamentable,  
Of Troy's siege wide-where ower all is sung;  
But following Virgil—if my wit were able—  
Another wise now shall that bell be rung  
Than ever was before heard in our tongue.  
Saturn, thou auld father of melancholy:  
Thine is the cure my waeiful pen to guy!. (2.P.8-14)

This seems, at first reading, an entirely appropriate nod to the overall sadness—perhaps what is widely known as the Virgilian *lacrimae rerum*—of the book. But Douglas has a wider perspective than that—certainly more than the

anxious and harried Aeneas who narrates most of the book, and (as we have seen) in certain respects more than Virgil himself. It is Virgil who originally puts a different reference to Saturn, this time in Book Six, in the mouth of Anchises' ghost as he speaks to his son of the broad coming history of Rome and a culminating, glorious, near-paradisiacal age of Saturn.

Douglas translates this, faithfully and well, and with words (especially *frith* and *fold*) that go a long way in situating this exotic and expansive geography within a recognizably Scottish landscape.

Whilk shall again the golden world begin  
As umwhile was in time of Saturn auld;  
Through Italy reign baith by frith and fold,  
And his empire shall dilate and wind  
Ower Garamantes and the further Ind:  
The land lies without the stars blink,  
Outwith the year's course, and the sun's rink. (6.13. 83-87)

But Douglas' perspective is different from Virgil's. The Roman poet applies this image to his own political world: specifically, to realities of (and ambitions for) Augustus. For Douglas, this is a history, in part completed and in part still continuing, but a history that is inescapably as different as it is shared.

Saturn is famously mixed in qualities: perhaps most significant for our discussion of Douglas is the god's association with time returning upon itself. Thomas of Walsingham, whose *De Archana Deorum* makes a useful compendium of mythography, describes Saturn as a sort of Worm Ouroboros: a dragon that eats its tail, a parent that devours its own children, just as

... tempus, quecumque gignit, genita devorat et consumit.

—Time: whatever it engenders, it devours what is born. (6)

Douglas brings this fierce and beneficent god into his prologue as a reminder of the mixed profits and perils that come with such a looking back. Above all, he brings a reminder that time can, especially among readers and their authors, be circular, even if not smoothly or predictably so. Unlike the wolf of popular lore, this translator can change.<sup>18)</sup>

By way of closing, let us return to that beast. Long months and miles after the final hours of Troy, Aeneas and his followers have landed upon Italian shores. There they have made camp—an armed camp, for war with the chief of the native kings is under way. Virgil describes the frustrated Turnus as he wheels about the Trojan’s hastily made fortifications.

Like as we see, watching the full sheepfald,  
The wild wolf (owerset with showers cauld  
Of wind and rain) at midst of the nicht,  
About the boucht (plet all of wands ticht)  
Bays and gims; therein bleating the lambs  
Full soverly ligs under their dams. (9.2.61-66)

Again, let us focus on a small, naturalistic detail added by Douglas: to the palisade made of sticks (*wands ticht*) with which a shepherd might pen his sheep. This description is entirely Douglas’—Virgil gives only *pleno ... ovili ... caulas*—essentially, “sheepfold.” As with the yellow-brown snake, this may serve to situate the scene for Douglas’ audience—even more than an adder, a stick fence would be a familiar and homely sight. So, homely, in fact, that some might accuse Douglas of smuggling rusticity into the epic.

At the end of the day (or poem), much comes down to taste: you may have your Douglas or your Dryden. If you do choose the former, keep in mind another piece of medieval wolf lore, reported by Bartholomeus Anglicus and translated by John Trevisa:

And so I haue yradde in a booke that a strenge ymade of a wolues gutte ydo amonge harpestrengees ymade of the guttes of scheep destroyeth and corrupeth hem, as an egle fether ydo amonge coluere fetheres pileth and gnaweth hem if they ben ylefte togidres longe in oon place, as he seith.<sup>19)</sup>

The conceit and parallel I would like to make is this. Let a translator, especially one as lively as Douglas into your collection of texts and re-texts, and you may have a situation not unlike the wolf-gut among sheep strings. He may, in significant and even devastating ways, affect the instrument. For some, after reading this translation, the Latin version is forever changed: Douglas helps us to better see things already there.<sup>20)</sup> Along with the pleasure, there is pain involved: with each reading, certain inveterate complacencies die away. A new life always comes from some sort of death—a difficult and wolfish guest indeed ... but oh what a music the parts together make.

---

### Notes

- 1) An exemplar of recent approaches to Virgil might be Don Fowler in the *Cambridge Companion to Virgil*: “As song, the Aeneid aspires to transcend the indeterminacies of its nature as a text, as written text it embodies those indeterminacies” (269).
- 2) For a brief discussion of the literature on Douglas’ Latin sources, see Kendal xvii. C.S. Lewis’s appreciation of Douglas in *English Literature in the 16th Century* remains a very useful introduction. See especially pages 76-90.
- 3) See for instance P. 163-165, where Douglas castigates Caxton for superficial use of Boccaccio; compare 204-206 for Douglas’ own use. We need have some caution,

however: while Douglas may cite an “auctor” at will and often with an apparent depth of understanding, the particulars if not the extent of his first-hand knowledge of various books is open to question.

- 4) Loeb text and translation. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from the *Aeneid* are from this edition.
- 5) As Charles Martindale notes (while speaking of a passage in Lucretius) in *Virgil and his Influence* (10), “One could make a similar observation about many of Virgil’s similes, where, to an extent unusual in his predecessors, the language used tends to blur the distinction between the two things compared.”
- 6) All references to Douglas’ translation of the *Aeneid* are to Gordon Kendal’s edition: by book, chapter and line, or by prologue and line.
- 7) 1.74. “Fictum ... secundum poeticum morem.”
- 8) See *Instituto Oratoriae* 2.4 where Quintilian explores a grey area between fable and what he appears to privilege as “history.”
- 9) See Servius 1.277-278, note to 2.355, Austin 155.
- 10) My translation. Translations not otherwise noted are mine.
- 11) Wolves do move in packs, and usually in an orderly and structured—indeed hierarchic—fashion. See for instance Lopez 60-65.
- 12) While the literature on Roman military history and practice is of course vast, Gibbon remains a good source on the organization, from top to bottom, of Roman armies during (for instance) the conquest of Gaul. What Gibbon well pictures is an extraordinary mix of energy (or ferocity) and discipline. See 1.12-22.
- 13) As the 18th century British poet and classicist George Dyer glosses this line in the *Heynian Virgil* (page 2521): “relictī ... deserti et destituti.”
- 14) Nor does Robert Fitzgerald include this element in his translation.
- 15) See Austin 167 and 120 (discussing line 401 and 256).
- 16) The change from speech to incoherent noise as sign “devolution” of man into beast is paradigmatic in Ovid: for instance, compare the transformation of Lycaon in Book One of the *Metamorphoses*.
- 17) As a Trojan—and at this point of telling, arguably the Trojan, this is of course quite appropriate for Aeneas. An important quality of Aeneas’ narrative (in Dido’s hall) is that it is both intensely personal and the story of a whole people as well: a sort of privileged

and variable perspective.

- 18) Brunetto Latini (*Li Livres dou Tresor*, 167) reports of the wolf: “son col ne puet pas pliiier ariere”—“he cannot bend his neck backward.” Medieval commentators received this pseudo-science as a symbol of inflexible—usually, in stubborn error—mental and ethical character.
- 19) Trevisa 1224-1225. For printing purposes, I have emended thorn to th.
- 20) As C.S. Lewis puts it, “To read the Latin again with Douglas’ version fresh in our minds is like seeing a favorite picture after it has been cleaned” (84).

## Works Cited

- Bartholomaeus Anglicus. *De Rerum Proprietatibus*. 1601. Frankfurt: Minerva G.M.B.H., 1964. Print.
- Brunneto Latini. *Li Livres dou Tresour*. Ed. Francis J. Carmody. Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1998. Print.
- Bynum, Caroline Walker. *Metamorphosis and Identity*. New York: Zone Books, 2001. Print.
- Demats, Paule. *Fabula: Trois Études de Mythographe Antique et Médiévale*. Geneva: 1973. Print.
- Douglas, Gavin. *The Aeneid*. 2 vols. 1513. Ed. Gordon Kendal. London: The Modern Humanities Research Association, 2011. Print.
- Gibbon, Edward. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. 6 vols. Everyman's Library. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1995. Print.
- Isidore of Seville. *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum Sive Originum*. Ed. W.M. Lindsay. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1911. Print.
- Lewis, C.S. *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1954. Print.
- Lopez, Barry. *Of Wolves and Men*. New York: Charles Scribner's, 1978. Print.
- Martindale, Charles, ed. *Virgil and his Influence*. Exeter: Bristol Classical P, 1984. Print.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997. Print.
- Quintilian. *Institution oratoire/Quintilien (M. Fabii Quintiliani Instituto Oratoriae)*. Ed. Jean Cousin. Paris: Société d'édition les Belles lettres, 1975-80. Print.

- Servius. *Servii Grammatici Qui Feruntur in Vergilii Carmina Commentarii*, vols. 1-2. Ed. Georg Thilo and Hermann Hage. Leipzig: Teubner, 1881; rpt. Cambridge, 2011. Print.
- Trevisa, John. *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's Translation of Bartholomeus Anglicus De Proprietatibus Rerum*. 2 vols. Ed. M.C. Seymour. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1975.
- Virgil. *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos, Liber Secundus*. Ed. R.G. Austin. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1964. Print.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *P. Virgilii Maronis Opera Omnia: ex edition Heyniana cum notiset interpretatione in usum Delphini, variis lectionibus, notis variorum, excursibus Heynianis, recensu editionum et codicum et indice locupletissimo accurate recinsita*. London: A.J. Valpy, 1819. Print.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI*. Trans. H. Rushton Fairclough. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1994. Print.
- Walsingham, Thomas. *De Archana Deorum*. Ed. Robert A. Van Kuyve. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1968. Print.

## 국문초록

### 대문 앞의 늑대 - 개빈 더글러스의 『아이네이스』 번역

로버트 놀린 (한국외국어대학교)

개빈 더글러스가 베르길리우스의 『아이네이스』를 16세기에 중세 스코틀랜드어로 번역한 사건은 훌륭한 번역에 대한 통찰을 제시한다. 더글러스는 베르길리우스의 걸작을 둘러싼 어휘와 이론, 주석 전통에 뛰어난 능력을 보이면서도, 정확하고 깊이 있으면서 동시에 편협하지 않게 스코틀랜드 풍취를 드러내는 번역물을 창조한 것이다. 특히 『아이네이스』 2권 중 자연과 동물 이미지를 사용한 방식을 주목하면 이러한 점을 추적할 수 있다. 본고는 더글러스의 번역 묘사 중 사슴, 늑대, (목)마, 뱀을 묘사할 때 드러나는 원전과의 사소하지만 중요한 차이점에 주목한다. 더글러스 시대에 와서 베르길리우스 주석의 “텍스트 공동체”와 그리스 로마의 수용 뿐 아니라 문학작품, 특히 우화에 등장한 동물들에 대한 후기고대 및 중세의 이론에 기대어, 우리는 스코틀랜드 시인 더글러스가 베르길리우스의 “문장” 즉 온전히 의도된(축적된) 의미로 본 것을 그럴듯함(즉 자연스러움)과 충실함이라는 때로는 상충하는 필요조건과 어떻게 타협하는지 알게 된다. 더글러스가 보기에 동물 이미지는 『아이네이스』에서 큰 패턴과 주제를 표출하고 반항하는, 종종 한 두 단어짜리 미니어처 세계 역할을 한다. 그 결과 더글러스의 번역은 원전에 공감으로 작용하는 작품, 즉 하나의 텍스트 역사에서 살아서 관여하는 걸작이다.

주제어 : 개빈 더글러스, 버질, 『아이네이스』, 동물, 번역

논문접수일: 2016.01.21

심사완료일: 2016.02.01

게재확정일: 2016.02.05

이름: Newlin Robert

소속: 한국의국어대학교

주소: (02450)서울시 동대문구 이문로 99 한국의국어대학교

이메일: rnewlin@gmail.com