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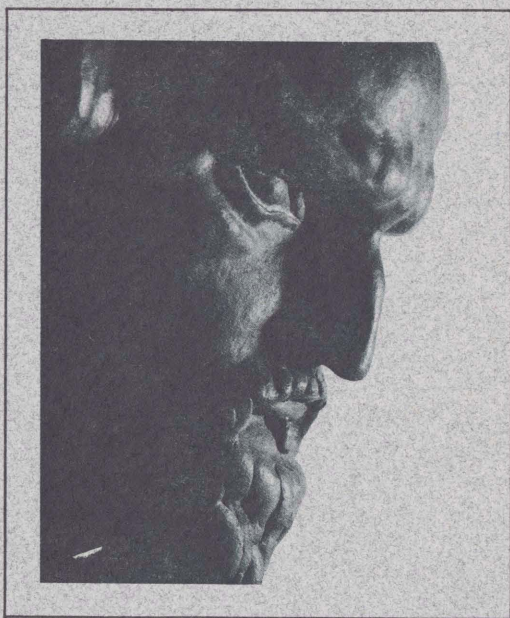
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Hoffman, Arthur W. "Dryden's Virgil: Some Special Aspects of the First Folio Edition." The Courier 19.2 (1984): 61-80.

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VOLUME XIX, NUMBER 2, FALL 1984

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
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Dryden's Virgil: Some Special Aspects of the First Folio Edition

BY ARTHUR W. HOFFMAN

A Heroick Poem, truly such, is undoubtedly the greatest Work which the Soul of Man is capable to perform. The Design of it, is to form the Mind to Heroick Virtue by Example; tis convey'd in Verse, that it may delight, while it instructs: The Action of it is always one, entire, and great.¹

With these sentences John Dryden, in 1697, began the dedication of his translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Milton's lofty conception of the epic form and its didactic purposes as well as his massive example in *Paradise Lost* inspired such a statement; though, indeed, all the way through the seventeenth century a critical consensus had been assigning preeminent prestige to this poetic form and spurring writers to attempt to write in it. In 1900, W. P. Ker reminded his readers of the extraordinary role of epic over a span of more than two centuries:

What influence those ideal patterns [of epic] had, what reverence they evoked, is scarcely conceivable now, and is seldom thought of by historians. The 'Heroic Poem' is not commonly mentioned in histories of Europe as a matter of serious interest: yet from the days of Petrarch and Boccaccio to those of Dr. Johnson, and more especially from the sixteenth century onward, it was a subject that engaged some of the strongest intellects in the world (among them, Hobbes, Gibbon, and Hume); it was studied and discussed as fully and with as much thought as any of the problems by which the face of the world was changed in those centuries. There might be difference of opinion about the essence of the Heroic Poem or the Tragedy, but there was no doubt about

1. John Dryden, "The Dedication of the Aeneis", in *Poems*, ed. James Kinsley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), vol. 3, 1003. I cite Kinsley's edition here because the Dedication in the George Arents Research Library folio edition is not only unpaginated but bound out of sequence.

their value. Truth about them was ascertainable, and truth about them was necessary to the intellect of man, for they were the noblest themes belonging to him.²

With these attitudes as context, this essay will focus on Dryden's translation of the *Aeneid*, of which Syracuse University's George Arents Research Library for Special Collections has a first folio edition. The story of Dryden's Virgil, at least what can be known with some certainty, sheds light on curious and often surprising facets of a remarkable publishing enterprise. But first, for those who are not acquainted with the era, let me briefly sketch Dryden's career and particularly his situation after 1688.

John Dryden was born in Northhamptonshire in 1631 and died in London in 1700. His life spanned the Civil Wars of the 1640s, the Restoration and reign of Charles II, the Exclusion crisis in the late 1670s and early 1680s, and the Glorious Revolution of 1688, which deposed Charles II's Catholic brother, James II, after his reign of less than three years. Dryden was appointed Poet Laureate in 1668 and held that office until 1688. He had become a Catholic in 1685, the year of Charles II's death, and in 1688 he was ousted from his post as Laureate when the Catholic James was deposed and Protestant William of Orange was brought to the English throne as William III, to rule jointly with his wife, Mary, the Protestant daughter of James II. Dryden was prominently involved in the turbulent public events of three decades, largely because of his official role as Laureate. In the 1690s, though no longer the Laureate, he continued to be involved, but his stance now was one of opposition, because he belonged to a minority which did not support King William.

His removal from the position of Poet Laureate was actually a rather misleadingly dark prelude to his last and highly productive decade, a decade during which some of Dryden's finest work was to be accomplished. In 1697 his translation of the works of Virgil was published and in 1700 another fine folio volume, *The Fables*, with its superb preface, appeared.

Dryden began his translation of the works of Virgil in 1693. In these last years of his life he was, of course, deprived of the modest security—£300 per annum—of his stipend as Laureate. Even though under free-

2. John Dryden, *Essays of John Dryden*, ed. W. P. Ker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), vol. 1, xvi.



William III as portrayed on a medal struck to commemorate the occasion of his becoming a stadtholder in 1672. From *The Life of William III. Late King of England, and Prince of Orange.* (London, 1703).

wheeling Charles II payment of the Laureate's stipend had often been in arrears and secured only by rather dogged petitioning, Dryden had had, nevertheless, a basic annual income. Now, as age brought gradually increasing infirmity, Dryden faced the apprehension of want and turned energetically to measures to supply his needs. In agreeing to translate Virgil, Dryden was responding to an informal mandate. There had been a steady accumulation of public suggestion that he, the most highly acclaimed poet of his day, undertake to translate all of Virgil. In past years many translations had been published, but none had achieved a concurrence of critical approval. It was felt that a Virgil done by Dryden had a very real chance of accomplishing the perfect result.

Jacob Tonson, the well-known bookseller and publisher, formally proposed the project to Dryden. Dryden accepted, encouraged by a number of friends: most notably, Henry St. John, Knightly Chetwood, William Congreve, and Joseph Addison—several of whom were of significant assistance.³

A fundamental decision by Dryden was to publish the translation by subscription. That the project made money for Dryden, in fact quite a substantial sum, is instructive as well as unexpected. Dryden had reason, however, to be careful in his dealings with Tonson, and it became clear as the Virgil translation proceeded that a variety of incipient disagreements might best be contained, if not resolved, by a formal contract. The contract was signed in June 1694. One of two witnesses to the contract was William Congreve, a young friend of acknowledged writing ability, of whom Dryden thought highly—indeed, he considered him his own literary heir apparent. Congreve's presence as witness was desirable not only because he had studied law before becoming a playwright, but because he was on friendly terms with both Tonson and Dryden. The careful detailing of the contract suggests that Congreve had a part in drawing up the document.⁴

Jacob Tonson was a major force in publishing in that era. The loss of vast stocks of books in the London fire of 1666 had opened up some considerable opportunities, and Tonson became a pioneer in the publication by subscription of the work of major English literary figures. Publication by subscription was not in itself a novelty; it had been employed through much of the century as a way of meeting the costs of unusually handsome editions, such as Ogilby's *Iliad*, or of major works which were expensive to produce, such as atlases, important or even essential but unlikely to be widely bought. Tonson, however, was doing something almost brand new when, in the face of the limited sale of *Paradise Lost*, he brought out by subscription in 1688 a fine edition of Milton's epic. The timing, of course, was good, but Tonson ardently admired Milton and cherished his success with this particular publication. In Kneller's Kit-Cat portrait of him, Tonson holds a copy

3. Addison supplied the Preface to the *Georgics* and all of the summary arguments for the whole translation; Congreve reviewed Dryden's translation of the *Aeneid*, the text of which was based on the Latin Delphin edition, the work of Charles de La Rue (Ruaeus) for the Dauphin of France.

4. This plausible suggestion is advanced by Congreve's biographer, John C. Hodges. See William Congreve, *Letters and Documents*, ed. John C. Hodges (London: Macmillan, 1964), 76.

of this edition of *Paradise Lost*. By 1720 Tonson alone had projected the publication by subscription of twenty-one works. These publications were aimed not at achieving a break-even income for ponderous and expensive volumes but at bringing in a profit for the author and the publisher. Tonson was an intelligent man and very able publisher with a wide and diverse circle of friends. He was also a man warm in his Whig sympathies. It should be noted that despite the serious tensions of the 1690s, Dryden did not leave Tonson. He feared as well as respected Tonson's business acumen. He may, indeed, have judged it prudent to stay with a Whig publisher.

There are some things that no contract, no matter how carefully drawn, can anticipate with perfect adequacy. With respect to what may be called political issues, both Tonson and Dryden managed to win some points in the folio *Virgil*, though whether either actually pulled the wool over the other's eyes is difficult to judge. Tonson, warmly favoring King William and, perhaps also, with a shrewd eye towards lively sales, had his craftsmen tinker with the plates in order to depict heroic Aeneas in the likeness of King William. For his part, Dryden inserted into passages of his translation lines and words not only flattering to the king over the water—the exiled Stuart—but strongly antipathetic to King William, who, after the death of Mary in 1694, was seen both by Tories and Whigs with decreasing sympathy as the Dutchman on the English throne. In addition, Dryden held his own against pressure by Tonson to dedicate the finished volume to King William, a move which undoubtedly would have mitigated the disadvantages of Dryden's failure to renounce his Catholicism. As a result, the frontispiece remains awkwardly undedicated. Almost certainly by Dryden's direction, the first plate was dedicated to the Prince of Denmark and the second to Princess Anne of Denmark, the Stuart who in the end succeeded William. Anne was the focus of Tory hopes for the future. Trevelyan remarks that "Anne was always on bad terms with William, whom she and her friend, Sarah Churchill, familiarly spoke of as 'Mr. Caliban'."⁵

The terms of the subscription provided for two categories of subscribers. A subscriber at the rate of five guineas would have one of the 101 remaining plates dedicated to her or him, with her or his name and coat of arms at the bottom of the page in the large-paper

5. G. M. Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne* (London: Longmans, Green, 1930), vol. 1, 110.

folio. A subscriber at the rate of two guineas would be listed on a page set aside for such a subscription list in the front matter of the volume, the copies for these subscribers to be on the same fine paper, with the same print and engravings as those going to the five-guinea subscribers. It was stipulated that Dryden would translate the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid* “with all convenient speed” and that he would set aside all but a few minor literary undertakings for the duration of the Virgil project. He was to be paid in installments: £50 for the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*; £50 upon completion of the first four books of the *Aeneid*; £50 at the end of the eighth book; £50 when the twelfth book was completed. Tonson was to solicit the five-guinea subscribers and was to bear responsibility for the full cost of the subscribers’ titles and coats of arms. These subscribers were to pay three guineas in advance and two upon delivery of the book. (At a later date Dryden and Tonson agreed that the two-guinea subscriptions were to be paid one guinea at the time of subscription to Francis Atterbury, acting as agent for Dryden, and the second guinea to Tonson upon receipt of the book.)⁶

The plates to be used in this translation were to be those designed for John Ogilby’s translation of Virgil, published in 1654. John Ogilby (1600-1676) was a Scotsman of unusual industry and ingenuity, who first attracted notice as a dancer. He later became a dancing master who composed interludes and choreographed dances for plays. Like most persons associated with the theater, he experienced hard times during the Civil Wars and their immediate aftermath. After lessons in the classics, he turned to translation to improve his situation. In 1649 he published his own heroic-verse translation of Virgil and in 1651 his first translation of *The Fables of Aesop*. He also translated and published both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, as well as a series of atlases, one for each of the continents. Of the 1654 edition of his translation of Virgil, Katherine Van Eerde says:

As early as 1652, Ogilby must have been planning. . .the great Virgil folio of 1654. For this he commissioned prints from some

6. This summary of the contract is based on the carefully detailed account given by Kathleen Lynch in her book, *Jacob Tonson, Kit-Cat Publisher* (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1971), 30. For accounts of Tonson, see also Harry M. Geduld, *Prince of Publishers: A Study of the Work and Career of Jacob Tonson* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1969) and George F. Papali, *Jacob Tonson, Publisher* (Auckland, N.Z.: Tonson Publishing House, 1968).

of the best artists then working in England, such as Francis Cleyn, Wenceslaus Hollar and William Faithorn.⁷

These commissioned prints were so beautifully conceived and executed that Dryden more than forty years later, despite a vigorous disdain for Ogilby's poetry, allowed Tonson to use them for his own edition of Virgil. Certainly, Ogilby's merits as a translator were secondary to his importance as an entrepreneur. During his lifetime he published sumptuous folios, their ample margins filled with annotations in Greek and Latin, and enhanced their attractiveness by securing the best artists of the day to design and execute the plates.

These plates of Hollar and Cleyn for the 1654 Virgil edition had a special role in one of the basic disagreements between Dryden and Tonson, namely, the previously mentioned matter of Tonson's tinkering. By refusing to dedicate his monumental translation of Virgil to the obvious person, King William, Dryden may have felt that he had achieved a small Tory victory over Tonson. But Tonson, not so easily put down, arranged, without consulting Dryden, to have the plates in which Aeneas appears altered so that the face of the epic hero would bear an unmistakable resemblance to that of King William.

In this not very subtle political tussle it is hard to say whether either party considered himself really outdone. In a letter addressed to his sons in Rome, Dryden's account of the affair defines the contest as a draw: John Dryden did not dedicate to King William and Tonson's alteration of the plates consequently lacked some of the force it could have had. Dryden's language is surprisingly restrained:

I am of your opinion that by Tonsons meanes, almost all our Letters have miscarried for this last year. But however he has missd of his design in the Dedication: though he had prepard the Book for it: for in every figure of Eneas, he has causd him to be drawn like K. William, with a hookd Nose.⁸

The fact that both Dryden and his sons suspected that Tonson was interfering with their letters might account for Dryden's rather mild

7. Katharine S. Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times* (Folkestone, England: Dawson, 1976), 35-6.

8. John Dryden, *The Letters of John Dryden*, ed. Charles E. Ward (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1942), 93.

language and claim of a draw in this matter. This is the sole Dryden letter addressed to Rome that has survived, presumably because it was simply not carried out of England. The letter is dated September 3 and belongs to the year 1697. Ward is of the opinion that Tonson was merely careless in choosing his messengers.

In the plates used for Ogilby's translation, Aeneas is shown with a straight or sometimes turned-up nose. In the plates as altered by Tonson, there is a startling change to a prominent aquiline nose, a nose clearly modeled after that of King William. But close comparison of the original with the altered plates discloses a further, closely related change. In some of the unaltered plates, the upper lip of Aeneas is more or less distinctly adorned with a neat, sometimes wispy, lightly traced mustache in a style to be seen in mid-seventeenth-century portraits of Cavaliers. In the plates as revised by Tonson, Aeneas' mustache has vanished.

But another rather interesting feature of the treatment of the plates (and one that appears not to have been commented upon before) is that many of the plates were *not* altered by Tonson. In this category are plates in which Aeneas is seen at such an angle or at such a distance that the shape of his nose is not obvious or readily discernible, as well as, of course, the plates in which Aeneas is simply not represented. However, there are five or so plates in which Aeneas' face does appear clearly, and which, nevertheless, have not been altered by Tonson. Several of these plates are of Aeneas in Carthage, under the spell of Dido, and in grievous danger of failing to carry out his god-given mission of founding Rome. Tonson decided, apparently, that where Aeneas was behaving in an undutiful and unheroic manner, or when he was emphatically in disfavor with the gods, it would be a mistake to make him look like King William. The disparities between the original Aeneas and the King William Aeneas are laughable to say the least. For example, Aeneas as honored guest seated beside Dido at a royal feast is garbed rather like a Cavalier (especially in the style of his conspicuous hat). Even more striking is the plate in which Aeneas, working for Dido and directing the building of walls and fortifications of Carthage, is visited by Hermes bringing a stern warning from the gods:

Arriving there, he [Hermes] found the *Trojan Prince*,
New Ramparts raising for the Town's defence:
A Purple Scarf, with Gold embroider'd o're,



Aeneas receives a kind entertainment from Queen Dido. Book I. (Plate unaltered)

(Queen *Dido's* Gift) about his Waste he wore;
 A Sword with glitt'ring Gems diversify'd,
 For Ornament, not use, hung idly by his side.
 Then thus, with winged Words, the God began;
 (Resuming his own Shape) degenerate Man,
 Thou Woman's Property, what mak'st thou here,
 These foreign Walls, and *Tyrian* Tow'rs to rear?
 Forgetful of thy own? All pow'rful *Jove*,
 Who sways the World below, and Heav'n above,
 Has sent me down, with this severe Command:
 What means thy ling'ring in the *Libyan* Land?
 If Glory cannot move a Mind so mean,
 Nor future Praise, from flitting Pleasure wean,
 Regard the Fortunes of thy rising Heir;
 The promis'd Crown let young *Ascanius* wear.
 To whom th'*Ausonian* Scepter, and the State
 Of *Rome's* Imperial Name, is ow'd by Fate.
 So spoke the God; and speaking took his flight,
 Involv'd in Clouds; and vanish'd out of sight.

Aeneid, IV, 382-403

The plate that illustrates this scene, though not faithful to such details as the scarf about the waist and the begemmed sword, nevertheless represents a decidedly non-martial Aeneas in a broad, flat squash hat with curled plume and what appears to be an embroidered or brocaded and slightly flaired coat. His nose is not the assertive William nose but a recessive one, and there is the clear trace of a mustache. His dandified appearance is something of a shock when compared to the martial Aeneas of the other *original* plates; and when compared to the altered plates of Roman-nosed martial Aeneas, this unaltered plate forces one to notice the nearly complete transformation of the hero. In Ogilby's *Virgil*, the Aeneas of Book IV is indeed surprisingly different from the standard *pious* Aeneas, the hero who in most plates elsewhere in the *Aeneid* conforms to the image of a leader loyal to his responsibilities. In Dryden's *Virgil*, Tonson, by not altering the original plate for this scene, has made the difference from the plates in which Aeneas' face is altered—and these are the majority—so sharp that it verges on the ludicrous. One should emphasize at this point, however, that the ethical and instructive purpose of epic was so thoroughly ac-



To John Walkden of  Inner Temple Esq.

NON EST MORTALE QUOD OPTO

Hermes bids Aeneas to forsake the Tyrian Court with speed. Book IV.
(Plate unaltered)

cepted by Ogilby and Dryden that both would have found an alteration in Aeneas' physical appearance while he is under Dido's influence very much to the point and quite appropriate. Nevertheless, political considerations apart, the glaring visual impropriety of these contrasting figures must have disturbed Dryden considerably.

We find another example of our Cavalier hero in Book III, where Aeneas is in disfavor with the gods in the episode of the Harpies. He and his storm-tossed men have landed in the Strophades and slaughtered the oxen and goats of the Harpies. As they feast, they are attacked by these hideous and loathsome creatures, one of whom, Celaeno, proclaims to Aeneas the consequence of the violation which he and his men have committed:

Yet one remain'd, the Messenger of Fate;
 High on a craggy Cliff *Celaeno* sate,
 And thus her dismal Errand did relate. }
 What, not contented with our Oxen slain, }
 Dare you with Heav'n an impious War maintain,
 And drive the Harpies from their Native Reign? }
 Heed therefore what I say; and keep in mind
 What *Jove* decrees, what *Phoebus* has design'd:
 And I, the Fury's Queen, from both relate:
 You seek th' *Italian* Shores, foredoom'd by Fate:
 Th' *Italian* Shores are granted you to find:
 And a safe Passage to the Port assign'd.
 But know, that e're your promis'd Walls you build,
 My Curses shall severely be fulfill'd.
 Fierce Famine is your Lot, for this Misdeed,
 Reduc'd to grind the Plates on which you feed.

Aeneid, III, 321-36

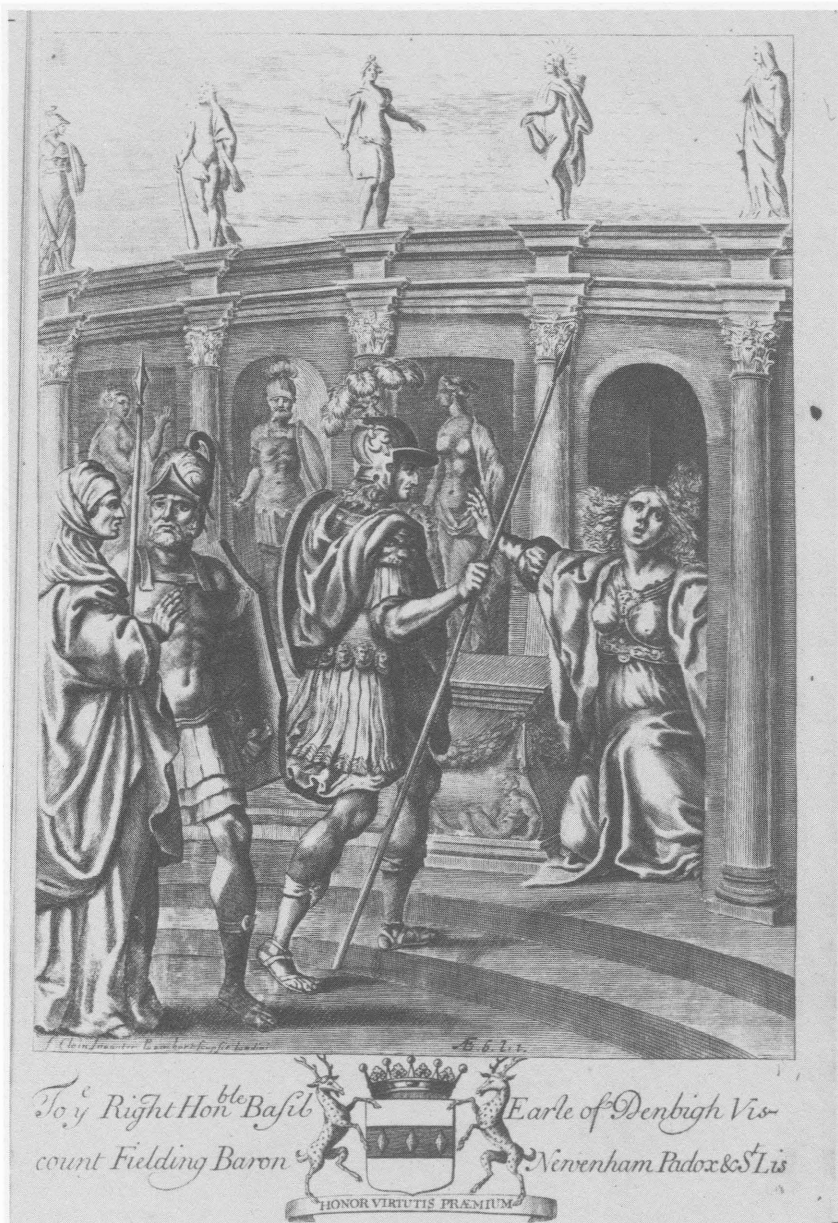
The plate associated with this passage has not been altered by Tonson. Aeneas here is branded with guilt, and the plate represents him full-face, without a strongly aquiline nose, and quite clearly with a mustache. In leaving such a plate intact, Tonson once again was pressing his view upon the public. King William could not be portrayed in the role of one being soundly cursed by a Harpy.

Sir Walter Scott, in his *Life of Dryden*, takes note of Tonson's Whig sympathies and suggests, in his description of the alteration of the plates,



To y^e Right Reverend, D.^r John Hartstonge B.^p
of Osery in Kilkenny Son of S^r Standish Hartstonge Bar.^t

Celaeno relates her dismal errand. Book III.
(Plate unaltered)



The Sibyl foretells the adventures Aeneas would meet with in Italy. Book VI. (Plate altered)

something of the temperature of political passions; Tonson, says Scott, had the engraver “aggravate the nose of Aeneas in the plates into a sufficient resemblance of the hooked promontory of the Deliverer’s countenance”. Scott quotes a bit of satiric verse that became current at the time, and which Edmond Malone says Dryden circulated:

Old Jacob [Tonson], by deep judgment swayed,
To please the wise beholders,
Has placed old Nassau’s hook-nosed head
On poor Aeneas’ shoulders.

To make the parallel hold tack,
Methinks there’s little lacking;
One took his father pick-a-pack,
And t’other sent his packing.⁹

Scott’s point of view here shows clearly that some dimensions of political reference were recognized at an early date as present in Dryden’s translation of the *Aeneid*. George R. Noyes, in the introduction to his edition, *The Poetical Works of John Dryden* (revised, 1950), deals with a number of politically inspired liberties that Dryden took with the translation itself. In these instances, the translator quite blatantly sharpened phrases or lines to strike at the British monarch of the 1690s, or to make the reader think of deposed James as well as of William on the throne. The following lines in Dryden’s translation of Book VI contain a crucial half-line which has no warrant in the Latin:

Then they, who Brothers better Claim disown,
Expel their Parents, *and usurp the Throne . . .* [italics mine]
Aeneid, VI, 824-25

In the *Georgics*, Dryden considerably alters the portraits of the rival kings of the bees, and they quite clearly suggest James and William:

With ease distinguish’d is the Regal Race,
One Monarch wears an honest open Face;
Large are his Limbs, and Godlike to behold,

9. Sir Walter Scott, *Lives of the Eminent Novelists and Dramatists*, “Life of Dryden” (London and New York: F. Warne, 1887), 329.

His Royal Body shines with specks of Gold,
And ruddy Skales; for Empire he design'd,
Is better born, and of a Nobler Kind.
That other looks like Nature in disgrace,
Gaunt are his sides, and sullen is his face:
And like their grizly Prince appears his gloomy Race...

Georgics, IV, 137-45

“Nature in disgrace” reminds one of Mr. Caliban. This kind of activity on the part of the translator has been reviewed and evaluated recently by George Watson.¹⁰ Watson makes a persuasive case that Dryden—though cautious and legitimately apprehensive as a Catholic refusing to take the oaths of allegiance to the new king—had already begun to use his plays to convey very broad suggestions about monarchs and thrones, deposition of kings, kings in exile, and problems of allegiance. His publisher may have suspected that statements by Dryden about lying low and being quiet were something of a pose and that his well-established habit of commenting often bluntly, but sometimes surreptitiously, on public figures and issues might lead him to attempt to give a contemporary resonance to some features of the *Aeneid*, as earlier translators had at times done. According to George Watson, the persistent sounding of the name of *Rome* and extolling of *Roman* virtue provided Dryden with a multitude of easy opportunities. Dryden’s choice of words in one statement in the Postscript to his translation strikes me as worthy of attention in this respect: “’Tis enough for me, if the Government will let me pass unquestion’d.”¹¹

A letter Dryden wrote to Tonson as he neared the end of his work on the translation reflects the tensions of their relationship during the 1690s; the letter, in part, is as follows:

Upon triall, I find all of your trade are Sharpers and you not more than others; therefore I have not wholly left you, . . . not your Enemy, and may be your friend.

John Dryden¹²

10. George Watson, “Dryden and the Jacobites”, *Times Literary Supplement*, March 16, 1973.

11. John Dryden, *The Works of Virgil*, “Postscript to the Reader”, (London, 1697), 622.

12. John Dryden, *Letters*, ed. Ward, 80-1.

The tensions between the two men cannot have been eased by Dryden's intractability over the matter of his Catholicism. The agreement with Tonson had allowed that a fair portion of Dryden's profits would come to him through patronage. Contractually responsible for all prefatory and dedicatory material as well as for notes to the translation, Dryden decided to dedicate the *Eclogues* to Lord Clifford, a Catholic peer and son of his early patron, and the *Georgics* to Philip Stanhope, second Earl of Chesterfield, who had been prominent at court under the Stuart monarchs but who declined office under King William and retired to his estate in Derbyshire. The *Aeneid* he chose to dedicate to the Earl of Mulgrave, a poet as well as patron of the arts and by that time Marquis of Normanby. He wrote short dedications to Clifford and to Chesterfield, but the dedication to Mulgrave he developed into a long critical essay on the epic poem. These arrangements were described almost a century later in a rather predictably pungent way by Dr. Johnson, who relished opportunities to comment on literary patronage, particularly when a Chesterfield was involved:

[T]hat no opportunity of profit might be lost, [Dryden] dedicated the *Pastorals* to the lord Clifford, the *Georgicks* to the earl of Chesterfield, and the *Aeneid* to the earl of Mulgrave. This economy of flattery, at once lavish and discreet, did not pass without observation.¹³

The result of the contract with Tonson providing for a two-level subscription, as calculated in a careful and convincing analysis by John Barnard,¹⁴ was a return of between £910 (lower limit) and £1075 (upper limit). This means that the subscription and payments for the translation work yielded Dryden more than the gifts from his three patrons. If the figure for the total receipts came to approximately £1400, as both Charles Ward (Dryden's twentieth-century biographer) and Barnard agree that they did, then whatever the exact amount of these patrons' gifts might have been (and it is difficult to know for sure), they necessarily amounted to less for Dryden than the earnings brought in by translation work and subscription fees. A conversion of the £1400

13. Samuel Johnson, *Lives of the English Poets*, "Dryden", ed. George Birkbeck Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), vol. 1, 387.

14. John Barnard, "Dryden, Tonson, and Subscriptions for the 1697 *Virgil*", *The Papers of The Bibliographical Society of America*, vol. 57 (1963), 129-51.

total in 1697 into real purchasing power in dollars today gives a figure not far from \$100,000. This seems an extraordinary amount of income to be realized from a translation of the works of Virgil, but considered as income spread over three or four years the figure loses a good bit of its luster.

The income realized in this way was crucial to Dryden late in the final decade of his life. The decision to publish by subscription had broad importance. It was the act of a man who had fallen out of favor and whose minority status in a time of intense bitterness and suspicion with regard to religious and political allegiances made some of the usual sources of patronage uncertain. Furthermore, these sources could not be regarded as predictably reliable for a period stretching five or ten years into the future. With his three dedications, along with his handsomely stated acknowledgment in his Postscript of the continuing generosity of the great Whig lord, the Earl of Peterborough, and his subscription arrangement, Dryden was indeed working both sides of the street. Not only was he keeping open his traditional patronage sources of income but he was also broadening the basis of support very considerably by enlisting several hundred subscribers. This action by Dryden looks forward to developments early in the eighteenth century when Catholic Alexander Pope, at the beginning of his career as a poet (at age twenty-five; whereas Dryden, when he began his translation of Virgil, was fifty-five) issued proposals for a translation of Homer, the work to be supported entirely by subscription. Pope went further, however. He did not dedicate, in search of generous patronage, to the Queen or to a prominent nobleman but to William Congreve, who Dryden had hoped would translate the *Iliad* and whose Greek was a resource for Pope in translating Homer. Pope had departed quite deliberately from the norms of the patronage system and with an asserted independence presented the greatest of poems to William Congreve, a scholar and a writer.

Pope's Homer relied wholly on subscription and sale and, with the help of Swift and other friends who made the rounds of coffeehouses collecting subscriptions, achieved fairly wide support. Pope's enterprise was still more successful than Dryden's; the subscription brought in £5,000 (Barnard). Pope's total earnings can be set at about £9,000 (George Sherburn), or approximately \$645,000 in 1984 dollars. From this income Pope had to pay William Broome and Elijah Fenton, who collaborated with him on the translation of the *Odyssey*; but, even so,

a nice fortune remained. This was, moreover, a fortune acquired by a poet at the beginning of his career. Pope, with his severe physical disabilities as well as the serious legal restrictions that hampered him as a Catholic, was now provided a foundation of economic strength and security. The boldness of the satire that Pope increasingly devoted himself to in the latter part of his life owes something to the significant degree of security attained quite early.

Further movement toward a more widely based support for the writer is part of a complex process which developed through the first half of the eighteenth century. The rapidly rising tide of periodical literature and the emergence of the new long form, the novel, written in prose with direct appeal to a much wider, more diverse audience, continued the change away from dependence of the writer on wealthy and powerful individuals to dependence, for better and worse, on a broader, more democratic audience. The novel, of course, did not enjoy anything like the prestige of the epic. The format of a first edition of an epic—whether the large impressive folio or handsome quarto—was designed for prominence on the shelves of a gentleman's library.¹⁵ The early novel, a semi-disreputable form of literature, appeared in duodecimo editions partly because they could be read surreptitiously, rather easily concealed, and, in a library, readily hidden behind the respectable front of folios and even quartos.¹⁶ By the end of the eighteenth century, folio publication had become a monument of prestige and respectability, but a heavy monument, and no longer necessarily a wise format for an author to consider. When Boswell talked of bringing out his *Life of Johnson* as a folio volume, his great editorial friend, Edmond Malone, reacted bluntly: "You might as well throw it in the Thames."

To sit at a table with two folio translations of Virgil, Ogilby's and Dryden's, opened side by side is a rare privilege. One can compare two poets at work—their thinking, their selection of words: The physical character of the volumes conveys a sense of the prestige once enjoyed by epic. Knowledge of the rewards reaped by Dryden and Pope as translators of epic may cross one's mind. One looks at the manipulation of the plates and remembers, perhaps with a smile, how this Augustan heroic model was strangely recast into a vehicle for so many political and religious passions of the day. Both the plates and the

15. George Sherburn, *The Best of Pope*, rev. ed., (New York: Ronald Press, 1940), 460.

16. In the case of Pope's *Iliad*, his publisher was rushed into a duodecimo edition because of the prompt appearance of a pirated edition in Holland.

language affirm this. One remembers that for Virgil there was not only Aeneas but also Augustus. One can begin to see how the English Augustan writers, like their Roman counterparts, felt free to make Virgil say such things as he might have said had he written in seventeenth-century England. Because of the affinity that Dryden felt with his author, Virgil as translated came across as he was, both a man in society and a poet. Dryden understood that his poetical stride would vary from his master's, but that since *he* was himself a poet, he must follow his own poetic conscience. Therefore, he placed on his title page as epigraph the line from the *Aeneid*, Book II, describing Ascanius:

Sequiturque Patrem non passibus Aequis
(He follows his father but with different strides.)

With his 'different strides', Dryden, too, achieved a work of art, an English Virgil. Pope, in his later years, when he told Spence that as a young boy he had seen the great Dryden, used these words:

Tantum Virgilium vidi.
(I saw the great Virgil.)