In this paper I examine the metalinguistic aspect and the self-referential quality of the diction used in Aen. 2.1-13. Expressions such as infandum ... renovare dolorem (3), fando (6), breviter Troiae supremae atque dolorem (11), meminisse (12), insipient (13) are used to emphasize the narratological dynamics of this passage by foregrounding the narrative activity of Aeneas. Therefore, I suggest that the ambiguity of Aeneas between narrator/bard and participant reflects the dualism of the poet's position between arthorial detachment and participatory subjectivity and it involves a language of overt poetic reflexivity.

In recent decades there has been a perceptible impact of narratological theories on the study of Graeco-Roman literature.¹ The methodological pillars on which this paper rests include narratological studies in the strict sense of the word (Genette, Bal)² and narratological approaches of epic

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¹ A Greek version of this essay was read at the 11th International Congress of Classical Studies held in Cavala, August 1999.

² For the influence of modern critical theory on the Classics, see Irene J.F. de Jong & J.P. Sullivan (edd.), Modern Critical Theory and Classical Literature (Leiden, New York & Köln 1994) 1-26, introduction by J.P. Sullivan. Some guidance on the reception of modern theories by classicists will be found in the volumes of Arthusa cited below: on Classical Literature and Contemporary Literary Theory see Arthusa 10 (1997); on Semiotics and Classical Studies see Arthusa 16 (1983); and on Audience-Oriented Criticism and the Classics see Arthusa 19 (1986). A good bibliography on the application of narratology in Classics is to be found in C. Segal, 'Philomela's web and the pleasures of the text: reader and violence in the Metamorphoses of Ovid', in De Jong & Sullivan (above) 282-83. For a narratological approach to the topic of apostrophe in the Aeneid see Francesca d'Alessandro Behr, 'The narrator's voice: a narratological reappraisal of apostrophe in Virgil's Aeneid, Arthusa 38 (2005) 189-221. Behr's narratological discussion of apostrophe's effects on the reader facilitates the task of assessing the Aeneid's degree of polyphony.

poetry (De Jong, Richardson, Rabel). In particular employing de Jong's very useful model, narratology can be shown to be an important interpretative tool in Virgil's Aeneid. A main aim of my inquiry is to make a contribution to the debate about the self-referential quality of some Virgilian narrative techniques. Don Fowler's essay 'Virgilian narrative: story-telling' is also focused on issues of Virgilian narrative such as focalisation, order, duration segmentation, self-referentiality etc. and it lays the groundwork for a far-reaching narratological analysis of Virgil's Aeneid.

In this paper I shall be particularly concerned with the initial 13 verses of Aeneid 2 by focusing on the metalinguistic aspect of the diction used in this passage. Expressions such as infan dum ... renovare dolorem (3), fando (6), brevi ter Troiae supremum audire laborem (11), meminisse (12), in epi om (13) are used to emphasise the narratological dynamics of the passage by foregrounding the narrative activity of Aeneas.

The metalinguistic character of the opening verses of Aen. 2 is reinforced by Dido's imperatives age and dic used at the end of Book 1 (753) as a formal request put to Aeneas to report a prima origine (753) – from the start which means ab uno – his past experiences. The terms age and dic by recalling the traditional invocation of the Muse serve as emblematic of this metalinguistic aspect. The talk is no longer on a private level (sermone, 748), but has a

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5 A good bibliography on the topic of narratology and focalisation is to be found in G.B. Conte, The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and other Latin Poets (Ithaca 1986) 154 n. 10 and D. Fowler, Deviant focalization in Virgil's Aeneid, PCPS 36 (1990) 42-63.


7 Age and dic are terms that recall the traditional invocation of the Muse used as a prelude to Aeneas' narrative in Book 2. In a sense Aeneas is his own Muse. Compare Hor. A.P 141: Dic mihi, Musa, virum, captis post tempora Troianae et Verg. Aen. 7.37: Nunc age ... Erato. This use of dicere to refer to the poet's metalinguistic consciousness, has a particular function in Virgil's Eclogues: 3.55; 5.2; 6.72; 8.62-63; 9.35-36; 10.2-3; 6, 34.

8 See E.L. Harrison, The structure of the Aeneid: observations on the links between the books', ANRIF 31.1 (1980) 360-61, who examines sermonae as the key term in the transition and remarks: Then quite suddenly, the voice of Dido is heard clearly above the general din of conversation, asking Aeneas to tell history to the company
formal and public character (dict... nobis, 753) similar to a bardic performance which is initiated at Aen. 2.1-2 by the careful organisation of the scenery-frame of the narrative. By placing continuere at the beginning and ora tenebant at the end of the very first hexameter, the poet constructs the frame of Aeneas' narrative. Thus the narrator's persona emerges prominently in line 2, since he is qualified as pater—a term that has many social, moral, and political implications.

Aeneas as a narrator of his past experiences cannot treat his subject with unemotional neutrality; for him, the sufferings of the past are still alive and his personal response to them is of that intense, painful involvement—expressions such as dolorem, lamentabile, miserrima, quis... temptet a larinis emphasise Aeneas' emotional involvement—as he participates, through memory (renovare, meminisse), in these sufferings that are the subject matter of his narrative.

By grounding the account of Book 2 in the direct autopsy of Aeneas (ipse... vidit), namely in the memory (renovare, meminisse) of Aeneas as an actual at large (1.753: nobis)... Thus Virgil carefully avoids the mere juxtaposition of 'blocks' and achieves instead the emergence of Books 2 and 3 as a culmination of activity already begun at the end of Book 1.' On the closures of the books of the Aeneid see D. Fowler, 'First thoughts on closure: problems and prospects', MD 22 (1989) 75-122. On the pausal effect of the verb continuere (Aen. 2.1) in the division of the first two books see S. Kyriakidis, Narrative Structure and Poetics in the Aeneid. The Frame of Book 6 (Bari 1998) 24-25.

In Aen. 1. 754-55 the narrative content is carefully defined as insidias Danaum — casus turam — errores tuis. This is equivalent to Genette's term 'histoire'. See Genette, Nouveau discours du réel (note 2) 72.

8 Compare Πέρσεφόνης καὶ άος άμωπος ἥπτο σωμή, / δέμηνος Αἰαίδη, ἵππος κλέεσθαι διόν (Hom. Il. 9.190-91); τοίοι δ' ἄοδρος διδαξε τερπατος, οἵ δὲ σωμῆ / έν μέν διάμαρμα τερπαμέθα, μηδέ βοήτιος / ἐστι, ἐπεὶ τό γε καλὸν διακείμεν ἐστίν ἄοδροι (1.369-70). On the complexity of the relation between continuere and ora tenere see the comment of R.G. Austin, P. Vergili Maronis Aeneida Liber secundus (Oxford 1964) 27 ad loc.: 'ora refers to utterance, not to face or expression'. To the same question J. Henry, Annali di Critical, Exegetical and Aesthetic Remarks on the Aeneis, vol. 2 (Dublin 1878) 1-12, also tries to provide an answer. According to him, 'the ora tenebant of our text is the modified repetition (variation) of the theme continuere (8). It is possible that Virgil might have wanted to recast the Homeric model: continuere is the Virgilian version of the Homeric σώμη (Il. 9.190; Od. 1.325) and intendi ora tenebant is the Virgilian adaptation of the Homeric ἀμωπος (Od. 1.326).

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According to Bal (note 2) 147, 'a special case of focalization is memory. Memory is an act of vision of the past...it is often a narrative act.'
participant (pars magna fug, 6), the poet suggests that Aeneas as an embedded narrator shares with the principal epic narrator the basic poetic mechanism of memory which is usually connected with the well-known mnemonic and narrative qualities of the Muses. Since the appeal to an eyewitness as a poetic strategy structurally serves as a counterpart of the appeal to the Muses, it may well reflect Virgil's self-awareness of the poet's task.\(^{13}\)

The ambiguity of Aeneas between narrator/bard and participant reflects the dualism of the poet's position between authorial detachment and participatory subjectivity and involves a language of overt poetic reflexivity. Aeneas' response to the past is defined as dolorous (dolorum, 3);\(^{14}\) by recounting this past, Aeneas as an alter ego of Virgil starts the poem off again (renovare, 3) and re-enacts (renovare dolorum, 3) the pain.\(^{15}\) Nevertheless, this past is not perceived as a series of events to be narrated, that is as an aesthetic object to be manipulated by verbal means, since Troy's last hours are defined as a dolor infandus (3), a dolor that cannot be communicated through words (fando, 6).\(^{16}\)


\(^{14}\) See Susanne Lindgren Wofford, The Choice of Achilles. The Ideology of Figure in the Epic (Stanford 1992) 108, where she notes that 'the pleasure that comes from distance is not available to Aeneas within the scope of the poem, nor the understanding or knowledge that distant observers may have.'

\(^{15}\) Of particular interest is Fernandelli's discussion (note 13) 95-112, esp. 105: L'uso del verbo renovare nel poema, dunque, è specifico dell' évuyvov; e si ripartisce fra due occorrenze di grande peso: esso indica dapprima l'atto di rivivere i ἔπη del passato attraverso la memoria e il racconto; poi si riferisce allo sperimentare di nuovo in modo concreto ... i casus già vissuti.' The verb renovare is an obvious signal of division within the Aeneid, since Aeneas' narrative is a story within a story which starts the poem off again. On this sort of internal segmentation see Fowler (note 4) 264-65. Compare also the famous quae iam finis erit at Ann. 12.793, playing on the degree to which the poem's ending is satisfyingly final. On this ambiguity about the closure of the Aeneid see Fowler (note 8) 100.

\(^{16}\) Austin (note 10) on l.6 remarks that fando - 'in the telling of such a tale' - is contrasted with infandum above. The most successful rendering of infandum dolorum can be found in G. Seferis' poem entitled Last Stop lines 84-86: 'and horror / really can't be talked about because it's alive, / because it's mute and goes on growing'; see
By introducing the issue of 'the difference' between the experience and its verbal expression, Aeneas draws attention to an important and crucial dilemma: can poetry encompass the historical and social reality or does the tension between poetic art and history, between aesthetics and historicity undermine any artistic expression? The same dilemma recurs in a highly dramatic way in lines 362-63 of Aen. 2: quis cladem illius noctis, quis funera jando \[\text{explicit aut posset} \] \[\text{lacrims aequare labores.} \] The narrator here wonders if anyone can (\textit{posset}) produce verbal (\textit{jando}) equivalents (\textit{aequare}) of the horrors of the war (described through words such as \textit{cladem, funera, lacrimis, labors}), while giving his personal interpretation at the same time (\textit{explicit}). This passage reveals Virgil's doubts about the communicative power of poetic language: can the poems produced by the poets express and give form to the historical, political and cultural context, or should the poets realize the futility of poetry?\footnote{A pervasive theme of Virgil's poetry is precisely the weakness and failure of poetry. Compare the authorial intervention in Aen. 9.446-49, where despite the narrator's apparent confidence in the power of his poetry, there is a pessimistic tone reminiscent of a passage from the \textit{Eclogues} (9.11-13) 'in which the power of poetry in the midst of empire is less than certain.' On this see Elena Theodorakopoulos, 'Closure: the Book of Virgil,' in Martindale (note 4) 161-62. In support of this reading, cf. A.J. Boyle, \textit{The Chorian Dove} (Leiden 1986) and D. Ross, \textit{Background to Augustan Poetry} (Cambridge 1975) 106. Wofford (note 14) 3 argues that 'the historical pressures on a text are often best seen as a dialectic in which ideology shapes poetic process while poetry counters, resists, figures, or generates the tropes of ideology itself.'}

This dilemma seems to lie close to the heart of Virgil's self-awareness as a poet,\footnote{Kyriakidis (note 8) 19 rightly observes: 'it (poetry) had become the major vehicle for carrying this discussion on poetics. Irrespective of genre, Roman poets included in their poems ... views or comments on and about poetry in any form and to a degree that it could be easily viewed as a necessary accessory of poetic art.'} and it was to become a central issue of modern poetry (Hölderlin, P. Celan).\footnote{Anne Carson, \textit{Economy of the Unlost: Reading Simonides of Keos with Paul Celan} (Princeton 1999) 52-58, shows how poetic language indicates an invisible reality beyond the reality of ordinary speech, where poetry arises from words and the surface of language reflects a deeper truth.}

In the process of transcribing his personal experiences into a poetic text, the Virgilian narrator in Aen. 2 (Aeneas), as Virgil's authorial persona, calls into question his mastery of his subject and his narrative control. This lack of confidence on the narrator's part stems from the discrepancy between the deed (\textit{ergon}) and its verbal counterpart (\textit{logos}), and from Aeneas' intense...
emotional involvement that undermines his status as an authoritative narrator.

Furthermore, there is no one who (quīs, 6), while recounting (fando, 6) such dolorous events (tālia, 6) – events already defined by terms such as infāndus dolor, lamentābilis, miserrimus – could remain detached (temperēt a laetīmus, 8). Aeneas, as both narrator and actor by his personal involvement in the episodes, enacts the internal and external audience’s response of increasing involvement. Overt poetic reflexivity transpires from the phrase quīs tālia fando ... temperēt a laetīmus, since it anticipates the audience’s empathetic/subjective reaction to the narrative. Virgil’s self-consciousness weighs heavily on the figure of Aeneas, who draws attention to the tragic emotions that the Virgilian narrative arouses in the reader.²⁰

It is significant that Dido as a representative of the internal audience receives Aeneas’ tale with intimate personal concern (nō tē sī tantus amō casus apperscere nosīmus, 10), which is transformed into passionate love. In Book 4, Aeneas is explicitly compared by Dido to a bard who ‘tells of long endured wars’ (quae bella exhaus ta canebat, 14). Dido’s passionate love (Aen. 4.1-2: at regīna ... caeco carptur ignī) for her guest is due to Aeneas’ bardic performance (canebat).²¹

By narrating the events of his Trojan past, that is Troiae supremum laborem (11), Aeneas is enframing his people’s painful efforts (labor) in the artistic design of Virgil’s epic, which in its allusive density and enjambment is also labor. Suprēmus on the one hand refers to the last painful hours of Troy and on the other hand it defines Virgil’s epic labour (Aeneid) as his utmost or greatest poetic work, which was meant to be his last artistic achievement²² (according

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²⁰ Lines 6-8 suggest the degree to which the audience (internal – Dido / external – reader) shares Aeneas’ perspective. By anticipating the audience’s empathetic response to the narrative, Virgil emphasizes the aesthetic parameters of his work: the Aeneid’s chief aim is to arouse strong emotions in the reader. Cf. Segal (note 13) 75: ‘Aeneas’ reactions and amorphous status as both observer and actor also enact the audience/reader’s response of increasing involvement, identification, and vicarious living of the episodes.’ On the idiosyncratic character of the Virgilian narrators see E. Block, ‘Narrative judgement and audience response in Homer and Vergil’, Aretusa 19 (1986) 155-69, esp. 167.


²² On labor as a poetic term see A. Loupiac, ‘Le labor chez Virgile: essai d’interprétation’, REL 70 (1992) 99. Labor at 2.11 refers (1) to the painful efforts of the Trojan people; (2) to the Alexandrian principle of labor that describes Virgil’s way of composing his epic poem; and (3) to Virgil’s epic labour (Aeneid) as his utmost
to Donat. *Vita Virg.* § 35 Virgil's intention was to leave poetry for philosophy. 23

The self-referential function of *supremus labor* is emphasised by the reference in verse 11 (*breviter audire*) to the major principle of Callimachean poetics, that of brevity. 24 Aeneas defines his narrative as concise, with obvious allusion to the Odyssean ἀριστοκράτης ἀγορεύσα in *Odyssey* 7.241. Although reminiscent of his Homeric model, 25 Virgil signals his recognition of his debts to the Callimachean principle of *carmen deductum*, which he reinstates in the epic context of a *perpetuum* *carmen* such as the *Aenéid*. 26

Aeneas' initial reluctance to recollect (*renovare*) the painful experiences (*dolorem*) of his past and his doubts concerning the aesthetic parameters of such an empathetic narrative (*quae talar iundo ... tempent a latimis*) are echoed at the end of this passage: *quamquam animus meminisse horret luctuque refugii, / inapicam* (12-13). Although the horrors of the past and the grief resulting from it are still alive and undermine any attempt at their verbal re-enactment, Aeneas will try to enframe these past events in the elaborate structure of the

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23 *Anno aetatis quinquagesimo secundo imposuit Aeneid summam manum statuit in Graeciam et in Asiam sequens triennio continuo nihil amplius quam emendare et reliquias tautum philosophiam vacaret.* N. Horsfall, 'Virgil: his life and times', in N. Horsfall (ed.), *A Companion to the Study of Virgil* (Leiden, New York & Köln 1995) 20 has analysed with sober scepticism the reliability of the *Vita Sueto nii*/Donati and documented that devotion to philosophy is a conventional invention of Roman biography.


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narrative (*incipium*). The term *incipium* marks Aeneas’ self-consciousness as a narrator who, by trying to provoke the immediate emotional response of his audience, is fully aware that this emotional effect should be ‘mediated’ through a well-ordered structure with a beginning (*incipium*), middle and end.27

The term *incipere* becomes emblematic of the diegetic activity of Aeneas, which thus serves as an analogue of that of the epic narrator himself, that is Virgil. The implicit comparison between hero and epic narrator is to be connected with the actual conditions of the reception of *Aeneid*, which Virgil himself recited publicly (Donat. *Vita Virg.* §32) in circumstances resembling those of Aeneas at the court of Dido.

In this study I have tried to make some suggestions about the self-referential quality of *Aen.* 2.1-13. I cannot pretend to have resolved the complexity of Virgilian narrative, but I have attempted to make the reader aware of possible readings that would otherwise remain undetected.

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27 The verb *incipere* focuses the reader’s attention on the act of narration itself and this self-reflexiveness is without doubt programmatic. For this well-known feature of the poetic self-consciousness compare Lucr. 1.55; Verg. *Georg.* 1.5; *Aen.* 5.10-13; 10.6. Cf. the parallel use of ὄρχομενος in Apoll. Rhod. (line 7). On this see Goldhill (note 22) 287, 292.

28 *Cui iam in mullo post perfectaque domum materia tres omnino libras recitant, secundum quartum et sextum.* This information that Virgil recited to Augustus Books 2, 4 and 6 is not supported by Pliny (*Ep.* 5.3.7). Cf. the remarks of Horsfall (note 23) 19 about this.
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