Gavin Douglas’s Humanist Identity

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Finished in 1513, the *Eneados* – the first complete translation of the *Aeneid* into any variety of English – is often seen to demonstrate Gavin Douglas’s humanism. The *Eneados* does indeed present a new engagement with Virgil’s text: in its completeness, its overt and often precise dependence on scholarship new and old, and in its direct discussion of the problems of translation, of representing a text accurately rather than a character fairly. Yet to identify Douglas as a humanist without any qualification is problematic. Firstly, even in his prologues, Douglas makes reference to other aspects of his identity: his rank and (implicitly) his kin, in the dedications to Henry Sinclair; his status as a senior churchman; and his Scottishness (in contrast to Erasmian internationalism). The first two, because of their contiguity with questions of authority, political and religious, but also to some degree, textual, have a greater bearing on the discussion that follows; his patriotism contributes obliquely, since his family status is necessarily dependent on his Scottishness. Secondly, since what it is to be a humanist at the beginning of the sixteenth century is often defined more by examples than by absolute criteria, teasing out the elements of Douglas’s practice, in conjunction with his other identities, allows a greater subtlety in our framing of intellectual culture in Scotland in the early sixteenth century.

It would be foolish to pretend that Douglas’s humanism has not been addressed before: there are numerous critical accounts that consider it. In particular, Priscilla Bawcutt, in *Gavin Douglas: A Critical Study*, discusses Douglas’s achievements, his use of a specific print version of the text, his engagement with recent humanist commentaries, and the novelty of his undertaking, to translate the
Aeneid, rather than to rewrite or rework its material.⁴ Notwithstanding John Skelton’s exercises in prose translation, such a description seems out of line with many of Douglas’s better-known contemporaries:⁵ Erasmus, Thomas More and others wrote in Latin in preference to their vernaculars and were anxious about enabling the less learned to read their material.⁶ By the end of the Eneados, in contrast, Douglas imagines an audience of schoolmasters, benefiting from a crib in Older Scots.⁷ Douglas’s championing of the vernacular to represent classical texts appears prescient, yet he is also concerned to control that representation. This article will consider the methods of control Douglas employs and ask whether his humanism is modulated by other concerns.

Douglas received his formal education at the University of St Andrews; it seems probable that he also spent some time in Paris, whether or not he attended university classes there.⁸ Humanist interests are evident in Scotland among Douglas’s father’s generation: the libraries of William Elphinstone and Archibald Whitelaw include classical books, and Whitelaw was able to produce classical oratory in Latin as well.⁹ Apart from John Damian the alchemist, however, James IV did not employ humanists in the manner of Louis XII or Henry VII; humanist thinking, by and large, was brought back to Scotland by returning students, such as Hector Boece and Douglas himself. A sense of a local audience, therefore, may also have influenced Douglas’s translation: the distribution of the manuscript witnesses suggests that he was right to foresee one.¹⁰ Moreover, time spent in France not only enabled access to Latin humanist culture and the printed edition of the Aeneid that Douglas would use for his translation, but also, potentially, another vernacular model. Octavien de Saint-Gelais’s French translation of the Aeneid was printed in Paris in 1509, although composed earlier; Saint-Gelais had previously written Le Séjour d’honneur.¹¹ There
are parallels therefore between Saint-Gelais, also a nobleman and a churchman, and Douglas, although evidence of direct influence is scarce. Simply in terms of rank and role, there may be questions to pursue. The first is the ways in which the *Aeneid* might be particularly attractive to noblemen. In *The Palace of Honoure*, Douglas is concerned, amongst many other topics, with the use of *exempla* and models of honour, not simply military. The Douglas kin had also previously commissioned work to demonstrate their honourable origins, notably *The Buke of the Howlat*. The *Aeneid*, in its exploration of Aeneas’s movement from fugitive to ruler, and in its predictions of an imperial future, offers the raw material for advice to princes, a particular strength of Older Scots writing. To explore that possibility fully, however is beyond the scope of this article.\(^\text{12}\)

The second qualification, however, has more direct bearing on what follows. As a priest and dean of St Giles, Douglas was also concerned with the transmission of theology to his flock. Although evidence is slight, there is no reason to doubt his piety, and that he would also have taken the transmission of true doctrine equally seriously.\(^\text{13}\) Making the core theological text available to the less learned, that is translating the Bible into a variety of English, remained hugely contentious, so religious truths were mediated and managed by selective interpretation and quotation; furthermore, even amongst the learned, biblical reading was subject to innumerable commentaries. Given, then, that in his day job, Douglas was concerned with maintaining orthodoxy and with supporting religious truths, it would not be surprising if similar concerns inflected his presentation of an authoritative classical text, also open to misreading. As we shall see, Douglas seeks to direct and control reading in his presentation of the *Eneados*; it is not inconceivable that his humanist interest in
the text itself is constrained by other practices to maintain truthful and correct understanding.

The point where Douglas articulates most clearly his position as translator and thus as humanist interpreter is the Prologue to Book 1, effectively the prologue to the whole book. This too has been the subject of much discussion and anthologisation: recently, it has been seen as a statement of Scottish identity, particularly based around language, since Douglas differentiates between ‘sudron’ and ‘our awyn langage’.14 There is an unspoken tension perhaps between Scots and Latin, between first and second languages, between the local and the international, and a further discrimination between Douglas and his readers, and Virgil himself, for whom Latin was native. In the use of ‘oure’, Douglas’s presentation of Scots imagines a Scottish audience, a domestication of high European culture. This is one of several linguistic issues Douglas raises in the prologue. Firstly, there is the question of poetic talent:

> Quha may thy versis follow in all degre

> In bewtie, sentence and in grauitie?

> Nane is, nor was, ne ȝit salbe, trow I,

> Had, haß or sal haue sic craft in poetry.15

Such idolisation of Virgil’s style might be seen as humanist, for although the poet’s reputation had remained constant throughout the Middle Ages, the engagement with style generally is often identified as humanist (witness Erasmus’s railing against the Ciceronianus).16 Douglas’s specificity contrasts with the more general attitude he ascribes to his patron, Henry Sinclair, who ‘prayt [Douglas] translait Virgil or Homeir’.17 While it is possible that either Sinclair or Douglas might have seen Lorenzo Valla’s Latin translation of the Iliad, printed in 1474, or even Aldus Manutius’ editio princeps of 1488, Homer would have been a less likely and
certainly less accessible choice for a poetic translation.\textsuperscript{18} Douglas’s emphatic engagement with Virgil’s style seems to confirm this: he clearly read a great deal of classical Latin verse, including Virgil’s \textit{Georgics}, and was aware of the particular features of Virgil’s style and attitudes.\textsuperscript{19} Although Douglas’s praise of Virgil evokes the modesty topos familiar from Dunbar, amongst others, he identifies specific issues that make task in representing Virgil difficult. Leaving aside his claims to lack of talent, these difficulties are concerned with the representation of Virgil’s poetics in a vernacular language, Older Scots.

In particular Douglas draws attention to issues of lexis, alongside the need to translate \textit{sentence}, and the complexities of poetic meaning. Lexis is the most basic, at face value simply having words to construe the text. Douglas initially presents his language as being inferior to Latin: a “lewit barbou tong” but later modifies this to suggest it is only such because of his own failing (“Nocht for our tong is in the selwyn skant/ Bot for that I the fowth langage want”).\textsuperscript{20} Douglas’s straightforward solution is to borrow, from Latin, French or English, using the classical model of Latin adopting Greek terms: although presented as a humanist mimicking of classical practice, such techniques are commonplace. Any reader of the \textit{Eneados} diligently looking up words in the \textit{Dictionary of the Older Scots Tongue} will nevertheless be struck by the number of definitions which reference only the \textit{Eneados}: it appears that Douglas did indeed look far and wide for his terminology, especially in seafaring, and in battle.\textsuperscript{21}

Whether a failure of the language or the poet, Douglas locates the problem in precise equivalence, in finding the best word to express the “cullour”.\textsuperscript{22} Even at the straightforward level of lexis, therefore, Douglas is striving for nuance and effect. He provides “arbor” and “lignum” among other examples in the Prologue, and in the Trinity College manuscript, he provides learned notes to explain further his other
difficulties. Such precision points forward to Douglas’s larger challenge, his striving after *sentence*, larger meaning constructed in part from nuance. In the discussion of this issue in the Prologue, Douglas notes that Lorenzo Valla struggled for twelve years to understand the *Aeneid*, so neither Douglas nor his reader (“my wys frend”) need reproach themselves for their own difficulties. One of the models of understanding Douglas identifies therefore is humanist, but this is not the only one. For later in the prologue, other authorities, the poet Horace and St Gregory, are also said to insist on grasping after meaning as the heart of translation. Douglas does not offer a hierarchy among these figures: there is no sense that Horace is more significant than St Gregory, or that Valla outweighs either of them, or even that they reflect particularly one another’s argument. Valla’s struggle with the *Aeneid* may legitimate Douglas’s challenges in translating this particular text, but it does not seem to add anything to the understanding of translation. The resulting heap of authorities does not offer an argument that is particularly philological, or that is directly concerned with accurate representation of the text: if anything, identifying and translating the *sentence* is a moral duty of interpretation, rather than a mediation of text.

Horace and Gregory occur in the middle of Douglas’s castigation of Chaucer’s treatment of Dido. Dido has been used as a touchstone for understanding Douglas’s attitude to the *Aeneid*, for her representation in the *Eneados* is deliberately presented in Prologue 1 as being closer to Virgil’s than is either Caxton’s or Chaucer’s. While Douglas deploys all kinds of rhetorical skills in the narrative to determine the reader’s response to Dido, including the manipulation of the form of the text, discussed below, at this point in the prologue Douglas is less concerned with Dido herself and more with asserting his own authority. For in Douglas’s recoil from Chaucer and in
particular Caxton, there is a strand of national identity: Caxton’s work is identified as an “Inglis” book, and Caxton himself is reviled as English. While the initial direction of Douglas’s work to another magnate might tempt a consideration of social snobbery, intellectual identity is far more obvious, since Douglas also attacks his rivals for their attitude to Virgil. To some degree, Douglas is disingenuous in his attacks, since neither Chaucer nor Caxton pretend to be translating the Aeneid: in that respect, Douglas is indeed undertaking a new challenge. However, he does not dwell on that, but rather relegates the English writers to an engagement with the classical text that displays little knowledge and understanding of Virgil as a poet. Whereas Douglas takes Valla as his comparator, he associates Caxton and Chaucer with Boccaccio and unspecified French redactions: these do not carry humanist authority, of direct reading of the original poem, but represent summaries and reworkings of the narrative, instead of the truth of Virgil’s text. Douglas therefore deploys an ad fontes argument, that knowing the story is not enough, and knowing – and representing - the text is essential.

Douglas chooses a striking simile to describe his view of Caxton: discussing the Eneydos and in particular, Dido’s representation, Douglas says, “It hass na thing ado tharwith [Virgil’s Aeneid] God wait/Ne na mair lyke than the devill and Sanct Austyne”. The simile is effective in its demonstration of the gulf between the texts, but it also takes a moral and theological position. In contrast to the flower comparisons at the Prologue’s beginning, the comparison is not merely one of aesthetics. For Caxton’s work to be like the devil, it must be morally corrupt and deceiving. To be this, a text would have to pretend to be something that is it not – here, the Aeneid – and mislead its readers into wrongful judgements – here about Dido, Aeneas, and the true nature of leadership. In corollary, for the Aeneid (or
Virgil) to be like Augustine, it must convey truths, about human existence, and potentially about God, through metaphor if not necessarily through factual narrative. Douglas elaborates his simile thus:

For so the poetis be the crafty curys
In similitudes and vndir quent figures
The suythfast materis to hyde and to constreyn;
All is noch fals, traste weill, in cace thai feyn.\(^{30}\)

This quatrain refers specifically to the representation of pagan religion, which Douglas argues Caxton skimps through misunderstanding, and even more specifically to the representation of Aeneas’ descent into the underworld. Of all the events in the \textit{Aeneid}, this is the one furthest from the general experience of vernacular literature, and certainly the one furthest from Christian assumptions; for that reason, it causes Douglas the most anxiety, perhaps particularly as a senior churchman, because his medium, Older Scots, opens up this material to the less learned. The profundity of this anxiety can be seen in the reappearance of the devil and Augustine in Prologue 6, again as a contrastive pair.\(^{31}\) There Augustine’s methods of reading through a text to extract allegorical and moral meaning legitimate the representation of pagan gods, but the devil’s insistence on direct representation is seen as something that misleads. Complex moral interpretation of the text thus seems to matter as much as accurate philological representation. In misrepresenting the \textit{Aeneid’s} Dido, Caxton thus fails morally as well as intellectually. The recurrent concern with truth and \textit{sentence} and the use of patristic authority might as easily be ascribed to Douglas’s ecclesiastical identity as well as to his humanist credentials:\(^{32}\) to explore this it is necessary to examine the \textit{Eneados} proper.
Prologue 1 makes some significant claims about Douglas’s translation practice, namely that fidelity to the text is important; that uncovering the sentence, Virgil’s broader meaning is paramount; and that Douglas is an honest mediator. A close examination of the text, however, raises some questions about those assertions. Even in the organisation and lay-out of the text, there are some significant interventions; their significance lies not so much in their individual relationship to humanist practice but in their deviation from the ideology of transparent mediation, hampered only by the limitations of the translator, implied in Prologue 1. Of these features, the prologues to every book are the most obvious, since they often attempt to determine the reader’s response to the book which follows. However, the smaller interventions in the text may be just as important: thus we should start with the chapter divisions.

There are no such labelled divisions in texts of the Aeneid, certainly not in Badius’ edition, so Douglas’s insertions are in effect editorial. Such divisions clearly have benefits for navigating the text, particularly if the audience is not familiar or comfortable with the Latin text: a generation later, quite possibly on Douglas’s model, John Bellenden makes similar interventions in his translations of Livy and Boece. Nevertheless, as with most editorial interventions, such chapter divisions also impose an interpretative structure. As with many aspects of the Eneados, this can be demonstrated with reference to Dido. For example, in Book 4, Douglas begins a new chapter, chapter 7, for Dido’s response to Aeneas’ announcement of his departure. In the Latin text at this point, Aeneas’ speech ends with a half line (Italiam non sponte sequor, ‘I seek Italy not by my own will’); there is here then a marked break in the Latin text, not necessarily the case for the many other chapters. As well as marking a division, which might be seen as the equivalent of inserting a paragraph, Douglas
also introduces a chapter heading: “Of the scharp wordys Queyn Dydo did say/ and how Eneas bownys fast away”. This is an entirely reasonable summary of the chapter which follows, but it is worth considering the effects of the intervention. In inserting the chapter break here, Douglas emphasises Dido as its key speaker, and acknowledges her as having a point of view worthy of attention. The summary Douglas provides reinforces Dido’s authority, pointing out her status as queen and commenting on the nature of her reaction: this is not a Dido requiring pity, but one with authority and effect. Aeneas, in contrast, is not given a rank. At this point in the narrative, of course, he does not really have an official designation, but is merely the leader of a group of refugees; their survival has been dependent on Dido’s good will. That dependency is stressed by Dido’s title, and consequently, notwithstanding “crime” as Douglas calls it, when trapped in the cave with Aeneas earlier in the book, Dido here maintains her authority, if possibly also a shrewish turn.

Douglas repeats his recognition of Dido as an agent in her own right in the opening lines of the chapter. Virgil’s transition from Aeneas to Dido is this:

Talia dicentem iamdudum aversa tuitur  
Huc illuc volvens oculos totumque pererrat  
Luminibus tacitis et sic accense profatur.  

Douglas renders it thus:

Dydo, aggrevit ay quhil his tayl talk  
With acquart luke gan towart hym behald,  
Rollyng vmquhile hir eyn, now heir, now thair.  
With sight onstabill waverand our alquhar  
And all enragyt thir wordis gan furth braid.
While Virgil is able to use grammatical gender to identify Dido as the speaker \textit{(aversa, accensa)} and also uses deponent verbs, passive in form although active in meaning, such options are not available to Douglas.\textsuperscript{41} Even so, in placing her name at the beginning of the first line of the chapter, particularly after the summary using both name and title, Douglas foregrounds Dido as a person rather than as a series of reactions, and elaborates her response and her “acquart luke”. That same “acquart luke” reappears in Book 6, when Aeneas meets Dido in the underworld: although Virgil uses the phrase \textit{oculos aversa} in both places, Douglas’s “acquart” suggests a more active hostility on Dido’s part than is necessarily explicit in the Latin text.\textsuperscript{42} Emphasising Dido’s agency, and thus perhaps her culpability, might well fit with Douglas’s avowed intention to correct previous misreadings, but he achieves this as much by the silently-imposed structure as he does by the translation proper.

Douglas’s attempts to represent Virgil accurately may therefore depend on the reframing of the text: the question is whether such intervention – which changes the text – is acceptable in a humanist mediation. If the primary duty of the humanist is to the integrity of the text, then the chapter headings are problematic. However, humanism was also deeply concerned with education, notably evident in Badius’s productions.\textsuperscript{43} In inserting the chapter headings, Douglas provides guidance for the reader – unable to interpret the Latin text – as to how to understand the vernacular version. In that way, such comments may be regarded as participating in the humanist commitment to education.

Chapter summaries, however, can be disregarded by the reader through an act of will. Another of Douglas’s textual interventions is less easy to identify, particularly if the reader is not familiar with the \textit{Aeneid} in Latin. As Bawcutt notes, on four occasions, at the beginnings of Books 2, 6, 7 and 8, Douglas changes the \textit{Aeneid’s}
book divisions. This is particularly striking because this aspect of Virgil’s text is reasonably stable; Badius’s divisions in Douglas’s source text are the usual ones. Douglas’s alterations only occur in the manuscript transmission of the *Eneados*: in the first surviving print, the divisions are restored to the usual pattern. While it is not clear who revised the *Eneados* to correlate with the more customary arrangement of the *Aeneid*, it must have been someone familiar with Virgil’s text; the original alteration in the Older Scots translation can safely be attributed to Douglas.

Such alterations seem extraordinary and can hardly have been accidental. To alter silently key structural features of the text seems to challenge the authority of the text. Douglas seems most exercised by the book divisions at the centre of the poem: these are difficult books in a Christian context, for they deal with the pagan underworld in Book 6, and a prophetic dream and divine intervention in Book 8. Douglas’s other role as a churchman may be significant here, since theological anxieties about orthodoxy and true belief may have outweighed humanist concerns about accurate reflection of the text. At the same time, modes of religious reading may have determined the best way to present the text for an audience more familiar with vernacular poetic conventions than classical texts.

There does not immediately appear to be a consistent pattern to the alterations. In discussing Douglas’s poetics, Bawcutt argues that the realignment with the opening of Book 7 (where Douglas moves 24 lines from Book 7 into Book 6), fits with Douglas’s fondness for seasonal beginnings and events. In the *Eneados*, Book 7 begins with dawn:

Tho gan the sey of bemyx walxin red
And heich abuf, dovn from the hevinyly sted,
Within hyr rosy cartis clerly schane
Aurora vestit into brovn sanguane.\textsuperscript{47}

This fits nicely with the close of the prologue, where Douglas presents himself rising at the break of day to continue the struggle of translation: Aeneas’s task thus becomes an extension of Douglas’s own.\textsuperscript{48} Such an extension also alludes to the presentation of poetry in \textit{The Palice of Honoure}, where it is a legitimate path to Honour alongside more military methods. However, the passage that Douglas moves is also significant to the narrative of the \textit{Aeneid}, for it deals with death and mourning, this time for Aeneas’ nurse Caieta, and then with the Trojans’ final passage to the point of settlement past Circe’s island. In moving these lines back to Book 6, troublesome Circe is confined with the Sibyl – women with eldritch power together. Book 7, the halfway point in Virgil’s poem, can begin with a fresh dawn rather than a reflection upon death. Douglas’s alteration removes some of the melancholy of Virgil’s poem at this point, where new beginnings are tinged with past events. Prologue 7 substitutes for that melancholy Douglas’s reluctance to leave his familiar and comfortable bed to complete his task. Yet as the addendum to the prologue offers the promise of war (“So weill according dewly bene annext/ Thou drery preambill, with a bludy text”)\textsuperscript{49}, there is no improvement in the lot of the Trojans, even if the sun rises on Book 7’s new day.

In the case of Book 7, the change in the book division aligns the opening of the text with the prologue and thus surreptitiously domesticates Virgil’s text. While such domestication might help the putative reader recognise and navigate the text, addressing the educational aspect of humanism, it also aligns Douglas with Virgil and demonstrates his close control and understanding of the whole work. Such a figure
contrasts with the humble translator of Prologue 1, and brings into question Douglas’s attitude to Virgil’s text.

The beginning of book 6 has similar features. The Latin text concludes Book 5 with Aeneas’ lament over Palinurus: “o nimium caelo et pelago confise sereno/ nudus ignota, Palinure, iacebis harena” (“Trusting too much in serene sky and sea, Palinurus, you will lie shroudless on an unknown shore”);\(^{50}\) Book 6 reiterates Aeneas’ grief in its opening words “sic fatur lacrimans” (“Thus weeping he speaks”).\(^{51}\) Douglas again changes the book division, this time only by eight lines backwards, so that the lament and the first landing of the Trojan host are contained in the earlier book. As a result, the sixth book of the *Eneados* starts with Aeneas’ quest for the Sibyl. The difficulties with this change are indicated in the addition of filler lines to ease the narrative flow, at the end of Book 5, “To beit thar mystir al bissy for the nanys/ Sum to th is turn, sum to that, start atanys” and at the beginning of Book 6, “Qwil on this wyss ilk man occupyit was”.\(^{52}\)

Dramatically, in Virgil’s text, the lament over Palinurus works as a part of the characterisation of Aeneas and his quest, since it functions as a reflection of what Aeneas needs to lose before he can undertake his destiny. The lament, therefore, belongs with Aeneas’s visit to the past in the underworld, where Anchises’ prophecy forces him to look forward. This function becomes obvious in contrast to Caieta’s death for there Aeneas performs the appropriate funeral rites, but he does not offer a lament. Instead her eulogy is performed by the Virgilian narrator, and focuses on her commemoration in naming of a point on the Italian peninsula. Douglas’s changes to the book divisions in these cases move both these engagements with death to the ends of books rather than their beginnings: the result is that Aeneas looks more determined and purposeful in his arrival in Italy.
While the changes to the book divisions might be invisible, the prologues to the books are not. The thirteen prologues in the *Eneados* are Douglas’s most obvious editorial intervention and possibly his most original poetry. Like Prologues 12 and 13, prologue 7 dramatises the process of Douglas’s translation and locates the undertaking in a seasonal context; like Prologue 12, Prologue 7 is detachable, for its links with its subsequent book are implicit and allusory. In contrast, the prologue to Book 6 comments directly on what follows, and it expresses anxiety about the pagan beliefs that are assumed in Virgil’s text. Because of the overt relationship between prologue and book, at a point where Douglas has intervened to reshape the book, the prologue may provide further explanation for Douglas’s intervention. In Prologue 6, Douglas attempts to reconcile a Roman belief system with Christianity, drawing on various authorities such as Servius, Ascensius and Augustine, and rehearsing familiar arguments (such as the Sibyl being a type of the Virgin). While Servius and Ascensius represent the full chronological breadth of the Virgilian commentary tradition, Augustine had a more personal relationship with the *Aeneid*, using it to discuss other truths and to structure his *Confessions*. As discussed earlier, he is evoked in Prologue 1, in the same opposition to the devil. In Prologue 6, Douglas also uses Augustine to legitimate the use of Virgil as a guide to Christian values, describing how Augustine uses *Aeneid* VI in *The City of God* (“And of this saxt buke walis he mony a scor/ Not but gude ressoun”). Augustine himself was no humanist: entirely dependent on Jerome’s Vulgate, he was interested in reading through the text, particularly the Biblical text, rather than locating it in any kind of linguistic or literary understanding. As a thinker and theologian, he was one of the dominant influences of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and his modes of reading were familiar to Douglas and to a significant proportion of his intended audience.
That Douglas chooses to foreground here an ahistorical method of reading the *Aeneid*, in part to deny the potential for faith in pagan gods, suggests that he not entirely bold in his humanism, or rather, his humanism is constrained both by his own faith but also his responsibility as a churchman and a teacher. That he is putting this material into the vernacular increases his responsibility. As a result, he overturns his opening invocation to Pluto at the beginning of the prologue, through identifying Pluto with Satan, and through another citation of Augustine, this time declaring that the Devil is not a makar ([f]or Austyne says syn, mischief or evill/ Is nocht at all”), he puts himself by contrast on the side of the angels.\(^57\)

But if Virgil writes truth, even in Book 6, the reallocation of those eight lines from Book 6 to book 5 must have some purpose. In addition to the narrative reasons outlined above, because the prologue focuses on the journey to the Underworld, Book 6 itself has to move directly towards Aeneas’ main objective so that the theological explanations provided can remain fresh in the reader’s mind. The necessary ‘filler’ lines separate Aeneas from his men: none of the “ȝonkers” of his troop is named or individualised, and all have group tasks, to “beit that mystir”, the unfamiliar land they have reached.\(^58\) Aeneas , on the other hand, is both named and individualised, and intent on a different king of “mystir”, where the place is known but the results are not:

R euthful Eneas bownys him to pas

O none to serss the strenth and tempil tho

Dedicat ontil the mighty Apollo

T hat fearful gowsty cave far from the way

A nd secret hald of Sibilla the May.\(^59\)

The separation serves to make Aeneas extraordinary, both as the hero the Douglas wishes to rehabilitate, but also as a figure who can enter the underworld, and who can
be read allegorically on an Augustinian model. In removing Palinurus to book 5, Douglas drives a particular reading of Book 6: his interpretation, intended to allay fears around pagan belief, takes precedence over the integrity of the text.

Yet Douglas also moves the division between books 1 and 2, and between 7 and 8, where tensions around pagan characters are less directly articulated. Book 2 and Book 8 have some important parallels. In contrast to Book 6, where the Sibyl enables Aeneas to make his journey, but his father, Anchises, provides authoritative information, in Books 2 and 8, the most significant interlocutor is a woman in authority: Dido, as queen and hostess in Book 2; Venus, as Aeneas’s mother, goddess and protector in Book 8. Moreover, they are the second books of the Homeric halves of the Aeneid, where the first half reflects the Odyssey and the second the Iliad: Book 2 deals with Aeneas’ own recounting of the past to Dido and Book 8, through the images on the shield interpreted by Venus, describes Aeneas’ future. These parallels, however, do not appear to motivate the changes in book divisions, although larger concerns about interpretation do.

Douglas opens his translation of Book 8 with the chapter heading, “Quhou Tiberinus, god of the river/ Till Eneas in visioun gan appear”. To do this, Douglas has again assigned the opening seventeen lines of Virgil’s text to the previous book of the Eneados. These lines record the gathering of Turnus’ forces and the general state of Latium. Douglas’s rearrangement follows the previous patterns of putting Aeneas to the head of the book, reinforcing his heroic status. At the same, Prologue 8 seems to undermine Aeneas’s role as prophetic dreamer.

Prologue 8 is not as easy to interpret as some of the others. In the alliterative metre of The Buke of the Howlat, it is a dream vision, a genre also used in Prologue 13. The unnamed narrator of Prologue 8 is the dreamer, while the man he meets in his
dream is unnamed and undescribed, but offers initially a condemnation of modern customs and habits. When the figures interact, the dreamer is unconvinced by his interlocutor’s message, and his unbelief is confirmed when the hoard he is offered disappears on waking. The dreamer then condemns his dream as “faynt fantasy” and sets off to write his translation of Book 8 under a tree. 62 Whereas the combination of the prologue and the alteration to book division in Book 7 suggests an identification between the translator and Aeneas, in Book 8, the prologue denies any equivalent. For in the Aeneid, Aeneas’s dream is true (despite its delivery by a river god), while the Prologue Translator’s is false. Prologue 8 is closer in function to Prologue 6 in denying the validity of the pagan divine, but it uses native poetics in form and genre to imply the impossibility of Virgil’s narrative in sixteenth-century Christian Scotland. As in the case of Book 6, again Douglas seems to have moved the book division to promote safe interpretation over textual integrity; such alteration may arise from Douglas’s religious identity as well as a humanist concern with education.

The first alteration of a book division, between books 1 and 2, does not appear to arise from religious concerns. In the Latin text, Book 1 concludes with Dido asking Aeneas to recount his experience of the sack of Troy; Book 2 begins with Aeneas answering Dido’s request. Douglas moves the first eighteen lines of Virgil’s second book to the end of the first book of the Eneados. It is noticeable that Douglas always moves lines backwards, never forwards, as if some Virgilian baggage carried by the characters always needs to be left behind. This means that Eneados 1 closes with Aeneas’s initial resistance to Dido’s request, and then his concession, whereas Eneados II begins with Aeneas’s request of past events. Virgil’s original break makes more narrative sense, in that it stresses the distinction between Dido and Aeneas and allocates each equal voice: it is also tidier. Douglas, however, is a deliberate poet: this
alteration returns the discussion to Dido as the fulcrum of Douglas’s engagement with the *Aeneid*.

If, as discussed earlier, the chapter heading in Book 4 renders Dido a moral (and thus culpable) agent, the redistribution of lines here also asserts a particular balance between Dido and Aeneas. In Prologue 1, Douglas argues that Dido has wrongly taken precedence over Aeneas in interpretations of the *Aeneid*, and his duty to Virgil is to redress that misreading. To do that here, Douglas changes Virgil’s text. For in the Latin text, Book 1’s conclusion with Dido’s request stresses her significance as hostes for the refugees, and as a potential spouse for Aeneas; it also reinforces Aeneas’s anguish because Book 2 begins with his resistance. For an audience more familiar with vernacular representations of Dido as well as (perhaps) the *Heroides*, the parity with Aeneas gained by Dido’s conclusion to the book over-emphasises her importance in the Virgilian narrative. In contrast, by dividing Aeneas’s speech over the book divisions, Douglas asserts Aeneas as the protagonist of the whole work and reduces Dido’s audibility. In short, to reassert the integrity of Virgilian perspectives, Douglas makes light of the integrity of the Virgilian text. Douglas’s decision here is thus both humanist and not: concerned with accurate representation of poetic presentation but not with the text, the arguments of Prologue 1 notwithstanding.

There is only one further point to consider around this book division. Unlike the others, the prologue to Book 2 is very short, only twenty-one lines. Such brevity maintains the flow of the larger narrative and stresses three points: that there is much sorrow to come, that the translator is only following the master poet (implying both accuracy and helplessness, neither of which is true), and finally that there are moral lessons to be drawn from the Trojan narrative. “Teris lamentabill” are common to
translator, author and protagonist. In distributing Aeneas’s response to Dido’s request across the book division, Douglas-as-translator manages to embed himself in Aeneas’s speech, thus for the first time identifying himself with Aeneas. The immediate similarities are initially hard to see: in what ways is a poet like Douglas kin to a classical hero, leader of a war band and founder of a nation? It is impossible to imagine either of Henryson or Dunbar, Douglas’s poetic contemporaries making the same self-associations. Yet, in terms of rank, Douglas too was noble (albeit not the son of a goddess), his ancestors and his extended family were central to national myths of Scottish identity, and by the end of the Eneados, Douglas makes reference to his intent to turn to serious matters. Furthermore, such identification makes sense with reference to The Palice of Honoure. There Douglas the poet travels from blasphemy to a commission from Venus, generally assumed to be the translation of the Aeneid: such a move from refugee to favoured figure is not entirely dissimilar to that of Aeneas. More importantly, the central equation of poetry and military endeavour and political rule as paths to honour allows this identification within the confines of social rank.

What then should we make of Douglas’s humanism? His concern with the interpretation of Virgil’s sentence, to represent the emphases of the Aeneid more accurately than previous vernacular versions, fits with humanist intentions to return to the text, as does his desire to inform and guide his readership in the navigation of the poem. He also provides metatextual material, to guide and to educate those unfamiliar with the Latin text. The drive to assert the truthfulness of his reading, however, overcomes his respect for the integrity of the text, and much of his reading of problematic sections is justified by older allegorical models of reading, entirely
familiar to scholars of previous generations. In that way, Douglas presents an Augustinian Virgil rather than a Dantean one.\textsuperscript{66}

His humanism is also inflected by his other identities. As a scion of a noble house, it is easier for him to identify with some aspects of Aeneas’ role; as a churchman, he is concerned to maintain orthodox faith among his flock. As a speaker of Older Scots, he has at his disposal a rich strain of literature to enable his translation, and there can be no doubt that Douglas is deeply engaged with vernacular poetry. To greater or lesser degree, these aspects also play their part in the \textit{Eneados}, intrinsic to Douglas and also to his audience. Douglas’s concern to provide an accurate sense of the \textit{Aeneid} for those not able to access the Latin text, together with his demonstrable knowledge of classical Latin poetry and contemporary scholarship cannot be discounted. The \textit{Eneados} is a sustained attempt to find equivalent poetics for an exalted work, but in a context of religious understanding and linguistic anxiety. These concerns are not unique to Douglas, but they are heightened by his use of the vernacular, particularly when it was less commonly used by those claiming to be humanists. Notwithstanding Douglas’s interventions, the \textit{Eneados} is best seen as a humanist endeavour, but the nature of that humanism is dependent on the circumstances of the practitioner.

Any delineation of Douglas’s identity rather assumes an audience that shares at least some aspects of it. While Douglas’s magnatial standing was perhaps not widely shared (except perhaps with the dedicatee of the \textit{Eneados}), there were other learned churchmen, such as the parson of Turriff, William Hay, the owner of the Elphinstone Manuscript, who might reasonably be expected to have some familiarity with Augustine’s thought.\textsuperscript{67} The manuscript also belonged to an Aberdeen burgess, equivalent perhaps to Douglas’s schoolmasters, with less formal education but a
sophisticated interest in vernacular poetry. It is not possible to establish whether they
did not know that Douglas had broken the integrity of the text he translated, or
whether they did not care, for there is no evidence of annotation in the manuscript; it
was probably someone of a subsequent generation who restored the Latin book
divisions in Copland’s print. The reception of the *Eneados* suggests that Douglas’s
representation of the *Aeneid* met the expectations of his contemporaries. For Douglas,
perhaps that is what mattered most.\(^6^\)

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1 The work for this article was supported by the Leverhulme Trust.
2 D.F.C. Coldwell, ed. *Virgil’s Aeneid translated into Scottish Verse by Gavin
(Edinburgh and London: Blackwood for the Society, 1956-60). For Douglas as
translator, see, among others, Priscilla Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas: A Critical Study*
*Aeneid to Eneados*: theory and practice of Gavin Douglas's translation”, *Medievalia
and Humanistica* 17 (1991), 81-100; Alastair Fowler, “Gavin Douglas: Romantic
Humanist”, in *Rhetoric, Royalty, and Reality: Essays on the Literary Culture of
Medieval and Early Modern Scotland* edited by Alasdair A. MacDonald and Kees
Dekker (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 83-103; and Douglas Gray, “Gavin Douglas” in *A
Companion to Medieval Scottish Poetry* edited by Priscilla Bawcutt and Janet Hadley
Williams (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), 149-64, esp. 156-64.
3 For a discussion of Douglas’s Scottish identity, see Nicola Royan, “The Scottish
identity of Gavin Douglas” in *The Anglo-Scottish Border and the Shaping of Identity,
1300-1600* edited by Mark P. Bruce and Katherine H. Terrell (New York: Palgrave
4 Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas, passim*, esp. 69-91 and also Priscilla Bawcutt (ed) *The
Shorter Poems of Gavin Douglas* rev. edn, Scottish Text Society, ser 5, 2 (Edinburgh:
Scottish Text Society, 2003) for a review of Douglas’s debt to Ovid in *The Palice of
Honoure*.
5 See Maria Dowling, *Humanism in the Age of Henry VIII* (Beckenham: Croom Helm,
6 For Badius’s problems with popularisation, see Paul White, *Jodocus Badius
Ascensius: Commentary, Commerce and Print in the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford
7 Coldwell vol. 4, 189 (“Heir the translator direkkis hys buk”, 47-50)
9 See “William Elphinstone” and “Archibald Whitelaw” in *Early Scottish Libraries*
edited by John Durkan and Antony Ross, *Innes Review* 9.1 (1958) and A. Whytelaw,
“Oratio Scotorum ad regem Richardum tertium” in *The Bannatyne Miscellany* 2
(Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1836), 41-8.
12 See Douglas Gray, “‘Gavin Douglas and ‘the gret prynce Eneas’”, *Essays in Criticism* 51 (2001), 18-34, for one discussion.
15 Coldwell vol. 2, 4 (*Eneados* Prologue 1: 53-6).
17 Coldwell, vol. 2, 5 (*Eneados* Prologue 1:88)
20 Coldwell vol. 2, 3, 6 (*Eneados* Prologue, 1: 21, 119-20).
21 See Fowler, “Gavin Douglas”, 92-4. Fowler’s comment that Douglas’s use archaic terms for armour compares with Ariosto seems unnecessary: armour for battle was commonly inherited and reused, and it is just as probable that Douglas was drawing on family practice around fighting men.
22 Coldwell vol. 2, 6 (*Eneados* Prologue 1, 121).
23 See Coldwell 2, 14 (*Eneados* Prologue 1: 380-6). The notes from Cambridge, Trinity College MS Gale 0.3.12 are also transcribed in Coldwell 2, 12-13.
24 Coldwell vol. 2, 6 (*Eneados* Prologue 1: 136). The term is probably addressed in the first instance to Sinclair, but opens out to include other readers.
25 Coldwell vol. 1, 14 (*Eneados* Prologue 1: 396-404)
28 Coldwell vol. 2, 7 (*Eneados* Prologue 1: 142-3).
29 Coldwell vol. 2, 3 (*Eneados* Prologue 1: 1-23).
30 Coldwell vol. 2, 8 (*Eneados* Prologue 1: 195-8).
31 Coldwell vol. 3, 5 (*Eneados* Prologue VI: 161-8).
34 For *Chronicles of Scotland*, Bellenden claims the approval of Boece himself for his translation; for Livy and indeed for Virgil, no such appeal to authority is possible. See Thomas Maitland (ed) *The History and Chronicle of Scotland .. translated by John Bellenden*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: W and C Tait, 1821) vol. 1, cxii.
35 *Coldwell* vol. 2, 174-6 (*Eneados IV*, chapter 7).
37 *Coldwell* vol. 2, 174 (*Eneados IV*: vii).
43 See White, *Jodocus Badius Ascensius*, 144-78.
45 The *Eneados* was printed by William Copland in London as *The XIII bukes of Eneados* in 1553.
46 Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, 139.
47 *Coldwell* vol. 3, 66 (*Eneados VII*:1: 104)
48 *Coldwell* vol. 3, 64-5 (*Eneados Prologue VII*: 138-62)
50 *Aeneid* vol. 1, book 5: 870-1.
51 *Aeneid* vol 1, book 6: 1.
52 *Coldwell* vol. 2, 240 (*Eneados V*: xiv: 101-02) and *Coldwell* vol. 3, 6 (*Eneados VII*:1:). See also Bawcutt 139-40.
55 *Coldwell* vol. 3, 3 (*Eneados Prologue VI*: 65-6)
56 Williams, “Biblical interpretation”, 62.
57 *Coldwell* vol.3, 5 (*Eneados Prologue 6: 65-6).
59 *Coldwell* vol. 3, 6 (*Eneados VI*: i: 2-6).
60 Wilson-Okamura, *Virgil in the Renaissance*, 146.
61 *Coldwell* vol. 3, 123 (*Eneados VIII*: i).
62 *Coldwell* vol. 3 122 (*Eneados Prologue VIII*: 175, 180-1. Writing under a tree might bring its own dangers, cf. *Sir Orfeo*. The location of the dreamer outdoors in these prologues contrasts with Prologues 7 and 12, where the writing of the translation occurs indoors.
63 *Coldwell* vol 2, 7-8, 12-16 (*Eneados Prologue 1: 163-88, 405-40).
64 *Coldwell* vol 2, 65 (*Eneados Prologue II*: 8).
65 Thomas Rutledge, private correspondence.

This manuscript is now Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Library, MS Dk.7.49. It is dated to 1527. See Durkan and Ross, *Early Scottish Libraries*, “William Hay”.

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