Index verborum, synonyma, dictionarium:

writing Virgil in the early modern period

By Craig Kallendorf

Among the early modern interpretive aids to Virgil's poetry, there is not a single freestanding dictionary, nor can one be found appended to any of the school editions. Instead, there are word indexes and books of synonyms and Virgilian expressions. These works attest to Virgil's place in early modern education, where the principal need was not for basic translation aids but for lists of Virgilian words and expressions to be used in compositions designed to increase the control of Latin as a living language, to be spoken and written at school and beyond.

Introduction

One of the most tangible ways to demonstrate Virgil's ubiquitous presence within the culture of early modern Europe is to survey the printed editions of his works during this period. New books continue to surface as more bibliographical resources come on line, but at this point over three thousand five hundred different editions of one or more of Virgil's poems are known to have been in print by the year 1800.[1] Yet curiously, not a single one of the Latin editions contains a vocabulary list or dictionary like the ones found, for example, in the recently published volumes of the Focus Vergil *Aeneid* Commentaries or in Pharr's *Aeneid*, which by now has served several generations of Latin students in the Anglophone world.[2] Without going down the philosophical rabbit hole of Heidegger, Derrida, and Deleuze, I would like to use the concept of absence and presence to explore what we find as well as what we do not find when we look for Virgilian dictionaries in the early modern period. I think that this project is worth pursuing in itself, but especially here, as one of a group of essays in honor of Johann Ramminger, who has established himself as the leading Neo-Latin lexicographer at the turn of the twenty-first century.

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[1] Kallendorf 2012. The present article updates and builds from the "Dictionaries" section, 325-326.

[2] Virgil 1998; e.g., Virgil 2008.

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Absence

The absence of a dedicated Virgilian dictionary is all the more striking given the importance that the early humanists gave to lexicography. John Considine, who is the recognized expert in the field, has noted that while the dictionary as a genre had precursors, it took shape as we know it in the Neo-Latin world.[3] The *Elegantiae* of Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457) and the *De orthographia* of Giovanni Tortelli (1400-1466) applied some of the principles that guided the humanists' efforts to reform Latin language use, and a dictionary prepared according to these principles, the *De priscorum proprietate verborum* of Giuniano Maio (ca. 1430-1493), was printed as early as 1475. The *Cornu copiae* of Niccolò Perotti (1430-1480) was ostensibly a commentary on Martial but was recognized early on as a general dictionary of the Latin language, to be joined by the *Dictionarium* (1502) of Ambrogio Calepio (1440-1510/11) and the *Dictionarium, seu Latinae linguae thesaurus* (1531) of Robert Estienne (1503-1559) as the best sellers in the genre during the sixteenth century.[4] But there was plenty of competition, with some 150 dictionaries in print between 1450 and 1650, many of them in multiple editions.[5]

Clearly, then, the lexicographical resources were there to allow an enterprising scholar, teacher, or publisher to prepare a glossary that would define only the words used in Virgil's poetry, to save the reader time and effort. Yet to the best of my knowledge, no one did so. In order to answer why, we might begin by asking who Virgil's readers were in the early modern period. The existence of translations shows that there was a significant group of readers who had either never learned Latin or had forgotten much of what they had once known,[6] but the largest number of early printed editions were in Latin, with most designed for school use, either by students or teachers. This is because education for the elites in early modern Europe was focused around the Latin language and the literature that was written in it.[7] This was true for the early student years in medieval Europe as well, but work that had been undertaken then as a propaedeutic to further studies in religion was made an end in itself and extended into the higher educational levels in the early modern schools. In theory the canon was expanded as new classical works

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[3] Considine 2016

[4] Considine 2008; and Considine 2018. The bibliography on the major Renaissance dictionaries is substantial, with an orientation to be found in Strada & Spini 1994; and Mencaroni Zoppetti & Gennaro 2005 (for Calepio); Della Corte 1986; Furno 1995; Stok 2002; Charlet 2005; and Pade 2013 (on Perotti); and Starnes 1963; and Furno 2019 (on Estienne).

[5] Blair 2010, 121-124.

[6] Kallendorf 2018a.

[7] Waquet 2001; see also Chartier, Julia, & Compère 1976; and Black 2015, 217, 221, 224.

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were discovered and printed, so that Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (1405-1464), for example, gave a list of authors in his *De liberorum educatione* that should be read by students: Virgil, Lucan, Statius, and Ovid among the epic poets; the satirists Horace, Juvenal, and Persius; Plautus and Terence for comedy and Seneca for tragedy; Cicero in oratory; and the historians Livy, Sallust, Justin, Quintus Curtius, Arrian (in Latin translation), and Valerius Maximus.[8] This is an ambitious list, however, and in practice many masters and students who could not handle such a curriculum devoted a disproportionate effort to Cicero in prose and Virgil in Latin.

The language of instruction in early modern Europe was not English or French or German, but Latin, from the beginning. Over the years this should have produced a high degree of proficiency, and with the best students it did, but for those of limited ability or motivation, help was necessary to construe difficult texts like these. When help came, it was also in Latin.[9] Initially this might have been orally in the classroom, where the master typically went over the text slowly, word by word; written help was available as well, but in the form of a commentary, not a glossary. As an example, let us look at the speech that Dido gave when she learned that Aeneas had been making secret preparations to leave her. The speech begins like this:

> Tandem his Aenean compellat vocibus ultro:
> 'Dissimulare etiam sperasti, perfide, tantum   305
> Posse nefas? tacitusque mea decedere terra?
> Nec te noster amor nec te data dextera quondam
> Nec moritura tenet crudeli funere Dido?'   (*Aen*. 4.304-308)

>   And at last
> Dido attacks Aeneas with these words:
> 'Deceiver, did you ever hope to hide
> So harsh a crime, to leave this land of mine
> Without a word? Can nothing hold you back –
> Neither your love, the hand you pledged, nor even
> The cruel death that lies in wait for Dido?'[10]

In his popular commentary to the works of Virgil, Jodocus Badius (1462-1535) offered a paraphrase of these lines:

> Ordo autem est. Dido compellat id est alloquitur tandem aeneam id est
> post longam cogitationem ultro idest non exigentem eius

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[8] Piccolomini 2002, 220-225.

[9] This means that the definitions in the major Latin dictionaries were also in Latin, as noted in Stein 2017, vii-viii, with even Estienne's *Dictionnaire françois-latin* (1539) being designed to help the French student write good classical Latin (Hanks 2013, 512; and Kibbee 1986, 137).

[10] Translation from Mandelbaum 1972, 91.

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compellationem his vocibus id est subsequentibus verbis. O perfide, eccam constantiam muliebrem, quae dixerat. Credo equidem (nec vana fides) genus esse deorum. Nunc dicit. O perfide, sperasti id est sperasti ne etiam posse dissimulare id est per dissimulationem celare tantum nephas? Quantum scilicet est amantem & bene meritam sic deserere. Quod pro idest sperasti ne discedere tacitus id est tacens & secretus discedere, scilicet posse mea terra. Nec noster amor tenet te nec dextera id est fides data id est promissa quondam nec Dido moritura si discesseris super crudeli funere quia morte quam sibi illatura est, unde videtur ex tunc decrevisse sese interimere si discesserit.

Dido addresses, that is speaks, finally, that is after thinking for a long time, to Aeneas spontaneously, that is without his demanding an address from her, with these words, that is with the following words: O deceiver, there is even constancy in women, which she had said: Indeed I believe (nor is my trust in vain) that his race is of the gods. Now she says, O deceiver, did you hope, that is did you hope not even to be able to conceal, that is through concealing to hide so harsh a crime? To be sure, how great a thing it is to desert like this someone who loves you and deserves to be treated well. And instead, that is, did you hope to be able to depart without a word, that is in silence and in secret to be sure, from my land? Can neither our love hold you back nor the hand you pledged, that is the trust you gave, that was promised once, nor Dido's imminent death, if you should depart, with a cruel funeral afterward, since with the death that she intends to bring upon herself, it is seen how from that point she had decided to kill herself if he should leave.

Badius worked through the entire poem in a similar way, signaling the beginning of the paraphrase with *ordo est* and introducing the paraphrases of each section with *id est*.[11] For a student with a basic control of the language acquired over many years, this was supposed to obviate the need for a dictionary, which during this period was seen as closely associated with the commentary: the prefaces to dictionaries like those of Calepio and Estienne referred to them as "a kind of commentary," and Conrad Gessner (1516-1565) said that his *Onomasticon* was like a commentary as well. Indeed, the dictionary of Perotti, as noted above, began as a commentary, and in the end the main difference was in extent rather than in kind, with the dictionary covering all the words in a language and the commentary only those words from a given text that were chosen for discussion.[12]

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[11] Virgil 1507, f. 310r. I have included both the Latin original and an English translation for Virgil's text and Badius's paraphrase so that Badius's procedure might be as clear as possible.

[12] Blair 2010, 129-130.

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There were, to be sure, ways in the early modern period to get help with Virgil's poetry that approach what might be done today. Dictionaries like those of Calepio, Perotti, and Estienne were best sellers in early modern Europe, and one could envision a schoolboy struggling through one of them instead of a specialized glossary at the back of his Virgil text. Both manuscripts from the period and early printed books survive in which a student has made his own glossary by writing Latin synonyms or vernacular translations above the lines of the text or in the margins—indeed schoolmasters preferred that their students compile their own monolingual vocabulary lists for the canonical authors they were studying. In general, however, the absence of a dedicated Virgilian dictionary, either as a freestanding volume or as a glossary at the end of an early printed edition, is explained by the nature of the early modern schoolroom, where the student was proficient enough to get the help he needed through other means. It is also worth noting that although many dictionaries were produced in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the genre as we know it was not a clear conceptual category for educated people even a century later: Gabriel Naudé (1600-1653), for example, referred to a master at the University of Paris who was constantly studying in his collection of fifty 'dictionaries,' which must have been a general term for alphabetically arranged reference books.[13] This terminological elasticity invites us to extend our search to other kinds of dictionary-like books that might have served similar functions but would not be seen as dictionaries today, when the generic boundaries are more fixed than they were in the early modern period.

Presence

Much time in the early modern classroom was devoted to reading and understanding the classical authors, but this is not all that went on there. In his *Ludus Literarius: Or, the Grammar Schoole* (1612), John Brinsley (fl. 1581-1624) discusses how to prepare one's students to "make verses," with the suggestion that it should be easy: "For the making of a verse, is nothing but the turning of words forth of the Grammaticall order, into the Rhetoricall, in some kinde of metre; which we call verses," with the goal for the students to "be made very cunning in the rules of versifying."[14] Notwithstanding the fulminations of the humanists against all things medieval, the *Poetria nova* of Geoffrey of Vinsauf (fl. 1200) continued to circulate widely through the fifteenth century as a vehicle for doing this, but the *Elegantiolae* (*Isogogicus libellus*) of Agostino Dati (1420-1478) followed the same general

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[13] Moss 2003, 27.
[14] Knight 2017, 57.

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principles,[15] and soon a host of Renaissance manuals appeared to teach prosody and versification: *De ratione syllabarum brevis isagoge* (1516) of Henricus Glareanus (1488-1563), *Rudimenta poetices* (1523) of Ulrich von Hutten (1488-1523), *In artis componendorum versuum rudimenta* (1530) of Johannes Murmellius (1480-1513), and above all *Ars versificatoria* (ca. 1511) of Johannes Despauterius (1480-1520). In part verse composition served as a teaching aid to improve the pronunciation of Latin, which had fallen away from classical standards when the rules of prosody were gradually forgotten. But it was also seen as an important tool for solidifying the broader control of the language that the schoolboy had to speak, write, and think in to take his place in the speech community that extended from Cicero and Virgil into the educated elite of his own day.[16]

Verse composition was practiced wherever Latin was taught in the early modern period, but it flourished especially in England, as M. L. Clarke pointed out more than half a century ago. It was largely an exercise in *copia*: the Westminster statutes directed the master to set a theme, on which variations were to be written in prose in the fifth form and in verse for the sixth and seventh, and in his *Progymnasma scholasticum* (1597), John Stockwood (d. 1610) demonstrated 450 ways to express the same sentiment in an elegiac couplet and 104 ways to vary one hexameter line using the same words. Verse composition flourished especially at Westminster and Eton, in both cases well into the eighteenth century, with the last edition of the collected verses from the former, the *Lusus Westmonasterienses*, published in 1750 and the *Musae Etonenses* still being disseminated five years later. Even in the 1840s, an Eton master could write "If you do not write good longs and shorts, how can you ever be a man of taste? If you are not a man of taste, how can you ever be of use in the world?" Those who enjoyed it, like Isaac Williams (1802-1865) at Harrow, considered it the highlight of their school years, but those who did not—perhaps the majority—recycled verses that had been written for the death of George II when they were asked to commemorate the death of George III. At Winchester many turned to "small but bulky quartos, the accretion of I know not how many generations of boys; in which almost every possible subject had been made the theme of a verse-task or *vulgus* (Latin epigram)," volumes that were called "Old Copies" at Eton. John Milton (1608-1674) lamented the time he felt he had wasted on Latin verse composition at school, and in *Thoughts on Education*, John Locke (1632-1704) argued that the boy without ability is tormented by the practice,

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[15] Black 2015, 222-223; see also Woods 2010.
[16] Ford 2014, 67-73; and Moss 2003, 5.

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which should still be suppressed even for those who could do it, but these were isolated voices that did not prevail.[17]

This being the case, it would be reasonable to ask what sort of dictionary-like books might aid in verse composition. There are two genres, neither of which has received the attention it deserves because neither has been examined within the cultural environment for which it was produced. The first of these genres is the *index verborum*, an alphabetized list of words found in the text.[18] Many of these lists were relatively short, but two were extensive enough to show that they aimed at a certain measure of completeness. Both were among the most often printed items of Virgiliana from the early modern period, as Table 1 shows:

Index of Nicolaus Erythraeus

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: Giovanni Antonio Nicolini da Sabbio, 1538-1539.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: Francesco Rampazetto and Melchiorre Sessa, 1555-1556.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: Heirs of Francesco Rampazetto, and heirs of Melchiorre Sessa, 1565.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: Francesco Lorenzini, 1566.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: Heirs of Francesco Rampazetto, and heirs of Melchiorre Sessa, 1582-1583.

Virgil. *Opera*. 2 pts. in 1 vol. Frankfurt/Main: Heirs of Andreas Wechel, 1583.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: Heirs of Melchiorre Sessa, 1586.

Erythraeus, Nicolaus. *Operum Virgilii index*. Venice: Damiano Zenaro, 1586.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: Heirs of Melchiorre Sessa, 1586.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: Damiano Zenaro, 1587.

Virgil. *Opera*. Frankfurt/Main: Heirs of Andreas Wechel, Claude Marne, and Johann Aubry, 1596.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: Heirs of Melchiorre Sessa, Giovanni Battista and Giovanni Bernardo Sessa, 1597.

Virgil. *Opera*. Heidelberg: Heirs of Hieronymus Commelinus, 1599.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: Heirs of Melchiorre Sessa, 1601-1602.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: Giulio Burchioni, 1602.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: Alessandro Vecchi, 1602.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: Paolo Martinelli, 1602.

Virgil. *Opera*. Heidelberg: Bibliopolium Commelinianum, 1603.

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[17] Clarke 1959.

[18] Abbamonte and Kallendorf under review examines the *index verborum* in relation to the general indexing practices of the early modern period.

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Virgil. *Opera*. 2 pts. in 1 vol. Hanau: Claude de Marne and the heirs of Johann Aubry, 1603.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: Sessa, 1605.

Virgil. *Opera*. Hanau: Claude de Marne and the heirs of Johann Aubry, 1608.

Virgil. *Opera*. Lyon: Jean Antoine Huguetan, 1608.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: I Sessa, 1609.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: I Sessa, 1610.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: I Sessa, 1611.

Virgil. *Opera*. 3 vols. Lyon: Horace Cardon, 1612-1619.

Virgil. *Opera*. Hanau: Heirs of Johann Aubry, 1613.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: I Sessa, 1613.

Virgil. *Opera*. Frankfurt/Main: Widow of Matthäus Becker, heirs of Claude de Marne, Johann de Marne, and Andreas de Marne, 1613.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: Giovanni Alberti, 1616.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: Giovanni Alberti, 1621-1622.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: Giovanni Antonio Giuliani, 1626-1627.

Virgil. *Opera*. 3 vols. Cologne: Bernhard Wolter, 1628.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: Paolo and Gaspare Guerigli, 1638.

Virgil. *Opera*. 3 vols. Cologne: Johann Kinckius, 1642-1647.

Virgil. *Opera*. 3 vols. Leiden and Amsterdam: Abraham Wolfgang and Jacobus Hackius, 1680.

Virgil. *Opera*. Rouen: Richard Lallemant, 1710.

Virgil. *Opera*. 2 vols. Leeuwarden: François Halma, 1717.

Virgil. *Opera*. 2 vols. Venice: Giovanni Battista Pasquali, 1736.

Virgil. *Opera*. Rouen: Nicolas and Richard Lallemant, 1739.

Virgil. *Opera*. 4 vols. Amsterdam: Jacob Wetstein, 1746.

Virgil. *Opera*. Rouen: Richard Lallemant, 1770.

Novus Index Verborum

Virgil. *Opera*. London: Thomas Dring, George Wells, and Abel Swalle, 1687.

Virgil. *Opera*. London: Widow and heirs of Thomas Dring and George Wells, 1695.

Virgil. *Opera*. London: Abel Swalle and Timothy Childe, 1696.

Virgil. *Opera*. London: John Nicholson, John Sprint, and Benjamin Tooke, 1707.

Virgil. *Opera*. London: Samuel Smith et al., 1707.

Virgil. *Opera*. London: Jacob Tonson et al.*,* 1712.

Virgil. *Opera*. Venice: Natale Feltrini, 1713.

Virgil. *Opera*. London: Jacob Tonson et al., 1718.

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Virgil. *Opera*. The Hague: Frères Vaillant and Nicolas Prevost, 1723.
Virgil. *Opera*. London: James Knapton et al*.,* 1727.
Virgil. *Opera*. London: James, John, and Paul Knapton et al*.,* 1735.
Virgil. *Opera*. London: H. Knaplock et al., 1740.
Virgil. *Opera*. London: James Hodges, 1741.
Virgil. *Opera*. 2 vols. Naples: Tipografia abbaziana, 1745.
Virgil. *Opera*. London: William Innys et al., 1746.
Virgil. *Opera*. Dublin: Joseph Leathley et al*.,* 1752.
Virgil. *Opera*. London: William Innys et al., 1753.
Virgil. *Opera*. 2 vols. Naples: Stamperia abbaziana, 1754-1755.
Virgil. *Opera*. London: Charles Hitch et al., 1759.
Virgil. *Opera*. 2 pts. in 1 vol. Venice: Sebastiano Coleti, 1764.
Virgil. *Opera*. London: Charles Bathurst et al., 1765.
Virgil. *Opera*. 2 vols. Naples: Giuseppe Antonio Elia, 1768.
Virgil. *Opera*. London: Charles Bathurst et al., 1769.
Virgil. *Opera*. Dublin: William Smith et al., 1771.
Virgil. *Opera*. London: Charles Bathurst et al., 1773.
Virgil. *Opera*. 2 vols. Venice: La società, 1776.
Virgil. *Opera*. London: Charles Bathurst et al*.,* 1777.
Virgil. *Opera*. 2 vols. Venice: Sebastiano Coleti, 1779.
Virgil. *Opera*. London: Charles Bathurst et al., 1781.
Virgil. *Opera*. 2 vols. Naples: Paolo Severini, 1787.
Virgil. *Opera*. London: Matthew Brown et al., 1787.
Virgil. *Opera*. Dublin: John Exshaw and Patrick Wogan, 1790.
Virgil. *Opera*. London: Matthew Brown, Francis and Charles Rivington, et al., 1794.
Virgil. *Opera*. 2 vols. Bassano and Venice: Giuseppe Remondini, 1796.
Virgil. *Opera*. London: Matthew Brown, G. and G. Ginger, et al*.,* 1798.
Virgil. *Opera*. 2 vols. Naples: Gaetano Raimondi, 1799.

Table 1: Major Virgilian *Indices Verborum*

The first *index verborum*, that of Nicolaus Erythraeus (Niccolò Rossi, 16th cent.),[19] was printed forty-two times between its *editio princeps* in 1538-1539 and its last appearance in 1770. Generally published as a long addendum to the text of Virgil's poetry, Erythraeus's word list was accompanied by a manual that explained the rules of prosody and the various kinds of verses. Our suspicion that the *index verborum* and the accompanying prosody manual were included as an aid for verse composition in the schools is confirmed in Erythraeus's introduction:

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[19] Wilson-Okamura 2010, 25, 240, 256; and Kallendorf 2019, 20, 31.

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Perhaps with these indexes (let there be no envy attached to the word) they could attain eloquence with no less gain (if only they might turn with zeal and skill, as a sort of scout) than if (as we wish) they had read our commentaries, arranged and written in the most precise way for the purpose of invention ... As a result things that the most diligent and learned reader could scarcely be able to see before can now be discerned by even the less educated boys with no effort at all or with some helpful reading.[20]

Erythraeus's word list gave way toward the end of the seventeenth century to a successor whose popularity was centered in the British Isles, although there were also several Neapolitan editions and a couple of others from elsewhere. This work is anonymous, but it was entitled *Novus Index Verborum* in several of the early editions to distinguish it from Erythraeus's.[21]

In his *A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching Schoole* (1660), Charles Hoole (1610-1667), the master of several grammar schools in Rotherham and London, gave detailed instructions on how to teach verse composition. Vocabulary lists were among the teaching aids he recommended, but so were books with titles like *Phrases poeticae* and *Encheiridion poeticum* that contain words and expressions from approved classical authors, often also with epithets (i.e., adjectives that could accompany nouns within a relevant meter), synonyms, similes, etc., all of which could be recycled into 'original' verse compositions.[22] Anne-Pascale Pouey-Mounou has studied this genre and identified twenty-two works in it that were originally published between 1487 and 1654 and reprinted well into the eighteenth century. Many of them, like the *Epitome epithetorum … cum eiusdem synonymis poeticis* (1623) of Johannes Ravisius Textor (1470-1542) and the popular *Novus synonymorum epithetorum et phrasium, seu elegantiarum poeticarum thesaurus, sive Gradus ad Parnassum* (1766), drew from several canonical authors, but included in her list is the *Opus epithetorum, phrasium et synonymorum ex Virgilio collectorum* (1593) of Leonhartus Schroterus (1532-1601) that was devoted exclusively to Virgilian expressions.[23] As Table 2 shows, Schroterus's is not the only such work that was focused on Virgil alone:

Schott, Johann. *Encheiridion poeticum*. Strasbourg: s.n., 1513/1514.

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[20] Virgil 1566, f. A3r-v.

[21] While these two examples dominated, the anonymous referee for this article added another Virgilian word list for consideration: Giovanni Biffi (?), *Servii Honorati vocabula brevi compendio cum auctoritatibus ipsius Vergilii* (Milan: [Leonhard Pachel and Ulrich Scinzenzeler, ca. 1480]).

[22] Clarke 1959, 38-40.

[23] Pouey-Mounou 2013; see also Chevalier 2006, which also contains a list of relevant primary sources (37-42).

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Dieterich, Balthasar. *Res Virgiliana, hoc est: phrases, epitheta, descriptiones et similitudines*. Görlitz: Ambrosius Fritsch, 1585.

Dieterich, Balthasar. *Res Virgiliana, hoc est: phrases, epitheta, descriptiones et similitudines*. Görlitz: Ambrosius Fritsch, 1589.

Schroterus, Leonhartus. *Opus epithetorum, phrasium et synonymorum ex Virgilio collectorum*. Zerbst: Bonaventura Schmidt and Ambrosius Kirchner, 1593.

Dieterich, Balthasar. *Res Virgiliana, hoc est: phrases, epitheta, descriptiones et similitudines*. Görlitz: Heirs of Ambrosius Fritsch, 1594.

Schroterus, Leonhartus. *Opus epithetorum, phrasium, et synonymorum ex Virgilio collectorum*. Zerbst: Ambrosius Kirchner and heirs of Bonaventura Schmidt, 1598.

Dieterich, Balthasar. *Res Virgiliana, hoc est: phrases, epitheta, descriptiones et similitudines*. Görlitz: Hans Rambau, 1601.

Dieterich, Balthasar. *Res Virgiliana, hoc est: phrases, epitheta, descriptiones et similitudines*. Görlitz: Hans Rambau, 1607.

Dieterich, Balthasar. *Res Virgiliana, hoc est: phrases, epitheta, descriptiones et similitudines*. Görlitz: s.n., 1630.

Ragazio, Dominico Francisco. *Synonima poetica ex solo Virgilio collecta*. Venice: Francesco Barezzi, 1646.

Ragazio, Dominico Francisco. *Synonima poetica ex solo Virgilio collecta*. Venice: Miloco, 1652.

Ragazio, Dominico Francisco. *Synonima poetica ex solo Virgilio collecta*. Venice: Francesco Barezzi, 1652.

Ragazio, Dominico Francisco. *Synonima poetica ex solo Virgilio collecta*. Venice: Apud Ioannem Baptistam Cestarii, 1660.

Ragazio, Dominico Francisco. *Synonima poetica ex solo Virgilio collecta*. Venice: Giovanni Battista Cestari, 1665.

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Table 2: Virgilian Phrase Books

As we can see, this genre, which we might call the *synonyma* after several representative examples of it, is not restricted to one or two works as the *index verborum* was, but Laurent Le Brun (1608-1663), the author of what became the most popular eighteenth-century example, confirmed that it too was designed to be "useful and necessary for studious youth … to make and fashion poems."[24]

How this worked out in practice is explained in the *Experimenta Publii Virgilii Maronis* (1550) of Iodocus Willichius (1501-1552).[25] Seen in isolation, this is an odd little book, but Willichius explained that "after the foundations of the art of speaking had been set out, the students were soon

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[24] Le Brun 1767, f. π1r.

[25] Willichius 1550. References to this book, which is discussed further in Kallendorf forthcoming, will be placed in the text in the following.

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turning their attention to style, and they were striving to master it through daily and assiduous practice" (f. A2r). Their practice should focus around Virgil:

> Further in order that the treatment of our principles might better succeed, I have added exercises from Virgil, the most excellent of poets (as it is believed), as examples from one who was still a youth when he wrote them. Students will perceive them as a most pleasant and agreeable reward in their own time. This has been done in order that from the examples of that poet, the young might be more drawn to this kind of study. (f. A3(bis)r)

To aid the student in his stylistic *experimenta*, Willichius included a *Commentariolus de verborum copia*, which was divided into *verba*, *constructiones*, and *figurae*, showing once again how the boundary between commentary and dictionary blurred (3). Then he moved from theory to practice, "so that in these Virgilian exercises we might offer an example of these kinds of precepts for the pleasure and use of studious youths" (26). To encourage his readers, Willichius went to a group of epigrams that circulated as youthful works of Virgil within the *opuscula* that were attributed to him in the early modern period.[26] For each epigram, he offered synonyms for the Virgilian words, then paraphrases, declensions, and epithets, with a prose explanation that made the book into a tool for verse composition (27-68). By following this model, the diligent student could complete his assignments and write verse that was Virgilian in vocabulary, syntax, and ornament.

Conclusion

This study shows that in order to understand what went on in early modern culture, we have to immerse ourselves in the artifacts of that culture, especially its books. When we do so, we often encounter things that do not make sense at first. Why were Virgilian word lists and books of synonyms and epithets printed and reprinted in dozens of copies over hundreds of years? And what function could volumes like Willichius's *Experimenta* possibly have served? In isolation the artifacts remain puzzling, but once we place them into their cultural context, we can recover their meaning. Latin verse composition is seldom taught today, but it was a key element in the educational system of its time. Without books like these, it would be difficult to understand how that system worked and why it was so important.

Artifact-based studies like this one can also reveal the profound gulf that exists between past and present. As we have seen, the dictionary as a conceptual category is firmly established today but was not then, when the

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[26] Kallendorf 2018b.

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index verborum and *synonyma* served some of its functions and met the educational needs of the day. This in turn drives home the point that at all levels, the control of Latin was far greater in the early modern period than it is today. Not only must we remind ourselves that schoolchildren in the sixteenth century spoke and wrote Latin all day, every day, but the language held sway outside class as well to an extent that we might not anticipate. In describing the household of the scholar-printer Henri Estienne (1460 or 1470-1520), Jean Dorat (1508-1588) asked what else we should expect to hear but

> ... Latini puritas
> Sermonis & castus décor
> Nempe uxor, ancillae clientes, liberi
> (Non segnis examen domus)!
> Quo Plautus ore, quo Terentius solent
> Quotidiane colloquii.

> ... the purity of Latin speech
> In rev'rend elegance pronounced by each?
> His wife, his handmaids, and his clients too,
> His children (lively band) hold speeches with you
> Habitually in no other way
> Than Terence or than Plautus in a play.[27]

In this environment, it now becomes easier to make sense of the many collections of *Iuvenilia* like those of Théodore de Bèze (1519-1605), Marc-Antoine Muret (1526-1585), and John Milton (1608-1674) and to understand how when Elizabeth I visited Oxford in 1566, she could be presented with manuscript volumes of celebratory Latin verse by those destined for later fame but could also find Latin poems pasted to the college walls by those who would remain forever anonymous.[28]

In the end, then, the discussion of dictionaries in this essay is probably not what Johann Ramminger might have anticipated. But I hope that he will accept my expansion of the term and will continue his lexicographical work for many years to come.

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[27] Considine 2008, 57. The translation of the poem is by Elizabeth Armstrong. We must be careful not to idealize the results of the traditional Latin education: Waquet 2001, 151-171, for example argues eloquently that even after years of instruction, many people remained far below the Estienne household in their ability to speak and understand Latin. Farrell 2001, 84-112, however, warns us not to go too far in the other direction either, for even today it is difficult to speak of Latin as really being a 'dead' language.

[28] Knight 2017, 55, 64.

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