

Poetic Analysis Using TEI and XSL

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How can the TEI be used for more than preservation? How can one employ the TEI to the benefit of scholars who are unfamiliar with digital markup? Finally, what can the TEI offer to scholars who are interested in comparing multiple versions of the same source text? Based on a single TEI-conformant document, it is possible to produce any number of representations using eXtensible Stylesheet Language (XSL) transformation scenarios. In this case, I'd like to demonstrate the benefits and possibilities of using an XSL platform to render a facsimile version of a TEI-encoded English translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* side-by-side with an interpreted version in which are indicated various poetic figures of speech, figures of sound, and figures of thought. Importantly, both of these versions are generated from a single XML source file and rendered simultaneously by a server. While it presents a faithful rendition of the original, this approach also helps users visualize the manner and frequency with which the translator chose to employ poetic devices in his work.

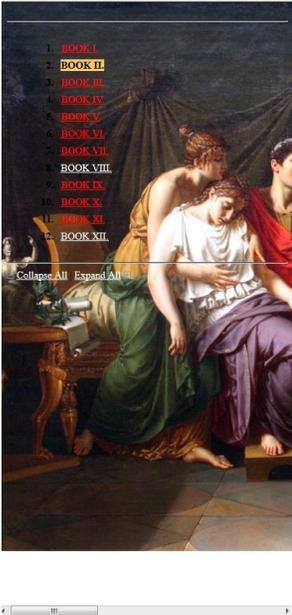
In 1794, James Beresford's English translation of the *Aeneid* was published. In the translator's own words, "It seems to have been wholly overlooked by the bulk of our Translators, that the great principle which should actuate them, is a wish to extend and perpetuate their Author's renown; and this, as must be evident, can only be effected by the closest imitation which it is in their power to produce" (vii). That is, Beresford believed that fidelity to the sense of the original is of utmost importance in any form of translation. Though he chose to employ English blank verse, he attempted to deviate little from the imagery and comparisons of Virgil's original.

Since Beresford's work is an English translation, though, he did of necessity include poetic figures that were not always present in the Latin in order to fit the rhythm, meter, and overall structure he assigned to his work. Using a customized TEI schema, I have selected a set of these figures to indicate in a digital edition of his translation. Such figures—including alliteration, simile, anaphora, and apostrophe, among others—I have marked up with a closed attribute list to assist in my coding.

Using the California Digital Library's eXtensible Text Framework (XTF), I have begun a project to present the facsimile representation in tandem with a version that highlights my customized coding, both in the same interface window. The principal exhibit for this project is currently housed on a server at the University of Central Florida's College of Arts and Humanities. By default, two versions of the same text are visible: one an accurate transcription with no normalization or emendation, the other a transcription with modernized lettering (for example, standard 's' rather than the historic long-s 'ſ' employed in Beresford's work) and selected poetic figures indicated with CSS-styled text. Thanks to XSL 2.0 templates, the single XML source document can be processed through the XTF system and rendered variously. This is accomplished by means of variables in the URL that defines which XSL templates should be processed or suppressed within each frame.

ÆNEID
—XTF—

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Me, near by confanguinity allied,
Hither in early youth my humble Sire
Dismiss'd, with him associated in arms.
Whilst in the kingdom yet secure he stood.
And fill that kingdom by his counsels wife
Flourish'd, I, too, some fame and glory bore:
129 But when, by Itahacus' malignant snares,
G 2



44 ÆNEID BOOK II 130.157.

130 (Things known I speak) he left the realms of day,
Sorrowing, thenceforth, I dragg'd my hours along
In darkness and in dole; and rag'd within
At the hard fortune of my guiltless friend.
Nor, senseless as I was, in silence mourn'd,
But solemn vow'd, should fav'ring chance present
Th' occasion, and victorious I might reach
My native Argos with remearur'd course,
To be myself th' avenger of his wrongs:
And with such words I rous'd invet'rate hate.
Hence first within my breast began to spread
The blot of ill, hence with accusings new
Dance I th'offer now to dust my food

Me, near by consanguinity allied,
Hither in early youth my humble Sire
Dismiss'd *d'ff*, with him associated in arms.
Whilst in the kingdom yet secure he stood.
And still that kingdom by his counsels wise
Flourish'd *d'ff*, I, too, some fame and glory bore:
129 But when, by *Itahacus*' malignant snares,
G 2



44 ÆNEID BOOK II 130.157.

130 (Things known I speak) he left the realms of day,
Sorrowing, thenceforth, I dragg'd *d'ff* my hours along
In darkness and in dole; and rag'd *d'ff* within
At the hard fortune of my guiltless friend.
Nor, senseless as I was, in silence mourn'd *d'ff*,
But solemn vow'd *d'ff*, should fav'ring *ff* chance present
Th' occasion, and victorious I might reach
My native Argos with remearsur'd *d'ff* course,
To be myself th' avenger of his wrongs:
And with such words I rous'd *d'ff* invet'rate *ff* hate.
ff first within my breast began to spread
The blot of ill, *ff* with accusings new
Dance I th'offer now to dust my food

Though the XTF platform serves as the primary project showcase, other options exist and should be considered. One lightweight option is the TEI Boilerplate, a project headed by John Walsh of Indiana University. Like XTF, TEI Boilerplate also makes use of XSL transformations, but is a simpler installation and requires less set-up time, troubleshooting, or customization. An even simpler and more accessible option is the use of built-in CSS rules or associated CSS files, both of which options do not even need a server to display a coded text, requiring merely a browser capable of rendering markup.

A TEI-encoded text possesses more virtues than simply being an electronic representation of a physical work—as important as that feature is for preservation and accessibility. A representation of a poetic piece such as Beresford's translation offers benefits for several disciplines, including poetic analysis, translation, and linguistic comparison. Further, in the higher education framework in which it has been produced and is hosted, it could serve as an example both for digital as well as linguistic and literary critical scholars. When the project began, it was my primary intention to produce a parallel translation. While still an achievable and desirable goal, this goal gave way to the project as it stands.

Finally, reflecting on the process of producing this edition has afforded me invaluable insight on the production of digital editions. Over the course of its digitization and coding, my goals and approaches experienced continual flux. While the fundamental goal of producing a facsimile digital edition remained a constant, other possibilities manifested and shifted the focus, eventually leading to the product as it stands. Even now, the project is not “complete,” nor do I anticipate that it can ever be deemed so. Even given the finite list of poetic figures I've chosen, I expect that future readings can produce different interpretations. This realization is also an important one for the edition's future existence: it might be that other students and scholars might like to use my initial coding as a foundation for further work on the same piece—to me, this possibility is a defining trait of digital scholarship.

Bibliography

Beresford, James, trans. *The Aeneid of Virgil, Translated into Blank Verse by James Beresford*.
Virgil. London: J. Johnson, 1794.