



Carthaginian America: Classical Encounters in Early Ibero-American Epic

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Introduction¹

Classics and America met as soon as Europe and America did.² Greco-Roman texts and ideas were in the baggage – both literal and metaphorical³ – of Europeans travelling to the Americas from the earliest days of the transatlantic encounter and have been in one another's orbit ever since. At the time of writing, Classics and the Americas have thus been acquainted for over five centuries and counting. 'Acquaintance' is admittedly an unduly mild metaphor in the context of what was initially (and subsequently) a tumultuous, violent time wherein the arrival of Classics in the Americas cannot be substantively uncoupled from the brutal imposition of the colonial order *tout court* and its accompanying ideologies, political institutions and educational edifices. At the same time, just as once-dominant narratives of unilateral

¹ I wish to record my thanks to the editor, Erik Hermans, for his pointers (and patience), as well as to the anonymous reviewer for their many helpful further suggestions: though I have not been able to adopt everything on this occasion, I remain grateful for them all. I take full responsibility for the shape in which the argument of this article has remained.

² For further discussion of this idea – and in general for fuller exemplification of many of the points touched upon in this introductory section – see M. Feile Tomes, 'Introduction. Synecdoche in Reverse: America's Transhemispheric Classics', in *Brill's Companion to Classics in the Early Americas*, ed. M. Feile Tomes et al., Leiden/Boston, 2021, pp. 1–49 (esp. 14–16). Germán Campos Muñoz has opened his new book on Classics in South America with a similar observation: 'We must first note that the connection between the Classics and Latin America is a phenomenon consubstantial with the arrival of Europeans in America' (G. Campos Muñoz, *The Classics in South America*, London, 2021, p. 8). Meanwhile, for the problematics of the term 'Classics' (and 'classical') itself – though used throughout this chapter – see further 'Synecdoche in Reverse', pp. 5–7; also A. Laird, 'Classical Learning and Indigenous Legacies in Sixteenth-Century Mexico', in *Brill's Companion to Classics in the Early Americas*, pp. 209–241 (216).

³ This metaphor is borrowed from David Lupher's seminal *Romans in a New World: Classical Models in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America*, Ann Arbor, 2003, p. 1.

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arrival and “discovery” have now rightly given way to more pluralizing conceptions of the European–American encounter and resultant contact phenomena, so too is it a disservice to the multifaceted transatlantic (re)iterations of Greco-Roman culture in the Americas to continue to conceive of it solely as a European imposition serving purely Eurocentric ends. We can far more usefully, rather, speak in terms of contact phenomena here too: the encounter and emergent patterns of interaction not just between America and Europe but between American and European antiquities. America’s encounter with European antiquity will be the subject of this article, though an equal and opposite study would be no less possible (and a growing number already exists).⁴ In the first instance, the enabling conditions for this phenomenon were still, clearly, the importation, imposition and inculcation of unfamiliar Mediterranean cultural legacies in an American context to which they were alien; but this in turn swiftly translated into dynamic transatlantic traditions of classicalizing thought and cultural production energized by innovative modalities of engagement, interaction and appropriation of a sort which wholly escapes, and defies, any Eurocentric definition of what Classics might mean or be. Indeed, after its encounter with America, the very fabric of Classics itself is never the same again: a whole discipline – and worldview – irrevocably inflected by the pressure of the radically amplified transatlantic space. Rather than being merely acquainted with one another, then, Classics and America belong to each other.

Crucially for our purposes, it was specifically in the Ibero-American context that this story of Classics in the Americas first began. Although in time there would be transatlantic classical contact phenomena from across the length and breadth of the American double continent and Caribbean, for historical reasons the phenomenon of American–classical interaction was more or less exclusive to the Iberian zones of occupation for at least the first post-contact century or so.⁵ The dynamism and acceleration in this sphere within just a few years of first European–American contact after Columbus strayed into the Caribbean Basin at the end of the fifteenth century are difficult to overstate. By the first decade of the 1500s, Columbus’s own son Hernando would be installed on Hispaniola (modern-day Haiti and Dominican Republic) with a trunkful of classical books,⁶ and there was a fully fledged library in the new colonial capital at Santo Domingo by the 1510s;⁷ by the 1520s, Latin

⁴ For introduction to the broader study of contact phenomena between Europe and American antiquities, see, seminally, S. MacCormack, *On the Wings of Time: Rome, the Incas, Spain, and Peru*, Princeton, 2007; also e.g. M. Almagro-Gorbea and J. Maier Allende, *De Pompeya al Nuevo Mundo: La corona española y la arqueología en el siglo XVIII*, Madrid, 2012; S. Gänger, *Relics of the Past: The Collecting and Study of Pre-Columbian Antiquities in Peru and Chile, 1837–1911*, Cambridge, 2014; *Globalized Antiquity: Uses and Perceptions of the Past in South Asia, Mesoamerica, and Europe*, ed. U. Schüren, D. M. Segesser and T. Späth, Berlin, 2015.

⁵ See Feile Tomes, ‘Synecdoche in Reverse’ (n. 2 above), pp. 13–27, for extended discussion of this point.

⁶ E. Wilson-Lee, *The Catalogue of Shipwrecked Books: Young Columbus and the Quest for a Universal Library*, London, 2018, pp. 117–24. See now also J. M. Pérez Fernández and E. Wilson-Lee, *Hernando Colón’s New World of Books: Toward a Cartography of Knowledge*, New Haven, 2021.

⁷ E. Mira Caballos, ‘Algunas consideraciones en torno a la primera biblioteca de Santo Domingo’, *Ecos*, 3, 1994, pp. 147–54, and id., *La Española, epicentro del Caribe en el siglo XVI*, Santo Domingo, 2010, pp. 493–500; also D. Padilla Peralta, ‘Lucianic Dialogues in Colonial Santo Domingo: The Historical

was being taught to Amerindians in the Valley of Mexico;⁸ a printing press was installed in Mexico City in the 1530s and classical texts – including works of original Latin poetry – published on it by 1540;⁹ fully fledged epic poetry was being composed across the continent from Chile to Brazil by the 1550s;¹⁰ the classical education system was consolidated and vastly expanded via the arrival of the pedagogically minded Jesuits in the 1560s and 1570s;¹¹ editions of classical texts began to be cranked out on the continent's second printing press, in the Peruvian capital of Lima, as of the 1580s; and universities had been chartered in capital cities across the region before the century was out. Starting from a *terminus post quem* of 1492, this is a really quite remarkable escalation of events. By contrast, in North America, the equivalent 'milestones' (without of course meaning to put too teleological a point on it)¹² can in most cases be dated to at least a century later. Ibero-America – and Hispano-America, the focus of this chapter, in particular – thus occupies a prominent and in many ways unique position in Classics-and-America's now more than quincennial shared history. Indeed, it was there that Classics – and European literary culture more broadly – first developed a truly sustained new existence in any extra-Mediterranean context, ceasing to be the preserve of the 'Old World' alone. Anything that was going on during this period on the European literary scene – especially in the Italo-Iberian sphere – can be found in Ibero-America as well, and often within just a few short years. It was what I have elsewhere termed the 'other arena':¹³ a buoyant site of Europeanizing – and so, almost by definition, classicizing – literary activity which keeps step with everything going on in Europe at that time and of which any study interested in early modern literary culture ought properly to take account. Of course, this binarized view itself in turn swiftly breaks down: what

Footnote 7 (continued)

Miscellany of Luis Joseph Peguero', in *Brill's Companion to Classics in the Early Americas* (n. 2 above), pp. 181–208 (186).

⁸ Among his other works on this subject, see, e.g., A. Laird, 'The Teaching of Latin to the Native Nobility in Mexico in the mid-1500s: Contexts, Methods, and Results', in *Learning Latin and Greek from Antiquity to the Present*, ed. E. Archibald et al., Cambridge, 2015, pp. 118–35, or id., 'Classical Learning and Indigenous Legacies' (n. 2 above), to be further expanded upon in his forthcoming book (n. 31 below).

⁹ See A. Laird, 'Migration und Ovids Exildichtung in der lateinischen Kultur Kolonialmexikos: Rafael Landívar, Cristóbal Cabrera und Vincenzo Lanuchi', trans. Veronika Coroleu Oberparleiter, in *Exil und Literatur: Interdisziplinäre Konferenz anlässlich der 2000. Wiederkehr der Verbannung Ovids*, ed. V. Coroleu Oberparleiter and G. Petersmann, Salzburg, 2011, pp. 101–118 (103–5); id., 'Classical Letters and Millenarian Madness in Post-Conquest Mexico: The *Ecstasis* of Fray Cristóbal Cabrera (1548)', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 24.1, 2017, pp. 78–108 (80).

¹⁰ Canarian-born Jesuit José de Anchieta's Latin-language epic poem *De gestis Mendi de Saa* was composed in Brazil and published in Coimbra (Portugal) in 1563; and Alonso de Ercilla's *La Araucana* (publ. 1569–89), on which more below, was allegedly begun while Ercilla was still in Chile in the late 1550s.

¹¹ The bibliography on the Jesuits in the colonial-era Americas is vast. For just one point of departure, see I. Osorio Romero, *Colegios y profesores jesuitas que enseñaron latín en Nueva España (1572–1767)*, Mexico City, 1979. See further also n. 29 below.

¹² See Feile Tomes, 'Synecdoche in Reverse' (n. 2 above), pp. 18–19, with pp. 27–30.

¹³ See M. Feile Tomes, 'The Other Arena: Poetics Goes Global in the Iberian Atlantic, 1500–1650+', *Classical Receptions Journal*, 13.1, 2021, pp. 126–148.

we are really witnessing here is the emergence of the interconnected Iberian transatlantic – and, in time, transpacific – world as a whole new literary context in itself.¹⁴

The search for practically any kind of classical text produced in the Ibero-American sphere during this period will be rewarded. Epic poetry, lyric poetry, Ciceroian prose, historiographical writing, textbooks, philosophical dialogues, plays, and just about every other genre imaginable can be found from across the region, and, as a corollary or rather pre-condition thereof, there is likewise evidence for the reading of a wide range of texts from the canonical to the niche from a notably early date.¹⁵ The only main form of ‘classical’ endeavour that could not at that time be so easily undertaken in the Americas, for reasons relating to manuscript availability and access to archives, is a certain brand of philological work leading to the production of editions collating variants and proposing new readings of the text; but of for instance translation, by contrast, there has always been a vibrant and distinctly Ibero-American tradition, which continues to this day.¹⁶ A couple of examples will have to suffice. In the mid-1590s, allegedly while traversing the complex Central American overland route from Costa Rica to Mexico City, Peru-based bookseller~poet Diego Mexía penned a complete verse translation of Ovid’s *Heroides* under the title of the *Primera parte del Parnaso Antártico de obras amatorias* [‘First part of the “Antarctic Parnassus” of amatory works’], published in his hometown of Seville but produced in the Americas and presented as an emphatically Ibero-American undertaking: the titular ‘Antártico’ is a reference to the Southern Hemisphere, site of Mexía’s adoptive Peruvian homeland. Widely reprinted, Mexía’s translation is still considered one of

¹⁴ On the Iberian Pacific, see most recently S. M. McManus, *Empire of Eloquence: The Classical Rhetorical Tradition in Colonial Latin America and the Iberian World*, Cambridge, 2021, e.g. p. 20 on the ‘Atlanticist myopia of much of the scholarship on the Iberian Enlightenment’; also p. 8. He goes on to suggest that his approach of ‘[t]reating the history of an intellectual current that has its roots in the ancient Mediterranean world primarily from the perspective of the Americas ... produces a certain “alienation effect” (*Verfremdungseffekt*) for historians of the classical tradition more accustomed to looking out at the world from Europe’ (p. 13). This in turn points to the dismantlement of the itself ultimately unhelpful Atlantic/Pacific binary, for which see further recently R. Padrón, *The Indies of the Setting Sun: How Early Modern Spain Mapped the Far East as the Transpacific West*, Chicago, 2020.

¹⁵ On the availability of books in the early colonial Mexican and Peruvian contexts, see eg. N. Maillard Álvarez, ‘The Early Circulation of Classical Books in New Spain and Peru’, in *Antiquities and Classical Traditions in the Americas*, ed. A. Laird and N. Miller, Chichester, 2018, pp. 26–40, or A. Laird, ‘Classical Learning and Indigenous Legacies’ (n. 2 above); also I. Osorio Romero, *Floresta de gramática, poética y retórica en Nueva España (1521-1767)*, Mexico City, 1980. On Brazil, see L. Hallelwell, *Books in Brazil: A History of the Publishing Trade*, Metuchen, 1982. On reading itself, see M. Feile Tomes, ‘Plurilingual Poetry and the Hinterland of Intertextuality: Europeanising Reading Culture in the Early Modern Iberian World’, in *The Edinburgh History of Reading*, vol. 1: *Early Readers*, ed. Mary Hammond, Edinburgh, 2020, pp. 227–48. See also Pérez Fernández and Wilson-Lee, *Hernando Colón’s New World of Books* (n. 6 above).

¹⁶ To pick just one study by way of example, see recently G. Gontijo Flores and R. T. Gonçalves, ed., *Algo infiel: corpo – performance – tradução*, São Paulo, 2017.

the foremost versions of the *Heroides* available in the Spanish language today.¹⁷ He also produced an accompanying translation of Ovid's *Ibis*.¹⁸ That Mexía had access to these texts in sixteenth-century Central America in turn draws our attention to the broader matter of book availability in the early American context. Mexía himself claims to have casually acquired his own copy of the *Heroides* from a student in Sonsonate (in modern-day El Salvador); and, while he affects to have purchased it *faute de mieux* ('por no hallar otro libro' ['for want of any other book']),¹⁹ the fact of the matter is that an astonishing array of classical texts were available in the Iberian Americas from an early date – as the claim of the 'fortuitously' ready obtainability of Ovid's *oeuvre* in sixteenth-century Sonsonate in fact tropes. We are thus invited to imagine Mexía wending his way across Meso-America with the works of Ovid tucked in his pocket, just as Alexander the Great was reputed to have kept his trusty copy of Homer's *Iliad* with him throughout his travels. Two centuries later, indeed, eighteenth-century Mexican Jesuit Francisco Javier Alegre (1729–88) – recognized as one of the foremost classical scholars in Mexico at the time – would produce a complete translation of the *Iliad* itself. His translation from the original Greek bespeaks his classical erudition: not into Spanish but rather into Latin. He also produced a Latin translation of the pseudo-Homeric *Batrachomyomachia*.²⁰ In the preceding century, fellow Mexican Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648?–95) – known as the 'La Décima Musa' ['Tenth Muse'] and likewise recognized as a consummate classical scholar – also engaged intensively with Greco-Roman literature in her wide-ranging poetic and dramaturgical output; indeed, she is considered one of the greatest lyric poets to have emerged on either side of the Atlantic.²¹ But it was epic poetry which had arguably the most vigorous career in the early modern Ibero-American context, with Virgil and his *Aeneid* looming largest of all – owing in great part to the Jesuits' Virgilianocentric curriculum imparted across the continent – and coming

¹⁷ D. Mexía, *Primera parte del Parnaso Antártico de obras amatorias. Con las 21 Epístolas de Ovidio y el in Ibin, en tercetos*, Seville, 1608. One might rightly wish to be suspicious of the claim – itself an act of *sprezzatura* – of accomplishing such a feat of translation during so arduous a journey. On the translations themselves, however, see B. Castany Prado, 'Las *Heroidas* de Ovidio, en la traducción de Diego Mexía de Fernangil (1608)', *Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes*, 2012. On Mexía's broader Ovidian poetics, see also *id.*, "'Ovidio transformado". La presencia de Ovidio en las dos primeras partes del "Parnaso Antártico" de Diego Mexía de Fernangil', in *Clásicos para un Nuevo Mundo. Estudios sobre la tradición clásica en la América de los siglos XVI y XVII*, ed. L. Fernández et al., Barcelona, 2016, pp. 53–85. In general, see further M. Feile Tomes, 'The Paradox of the Literary Wasteland: Writing "In Exile" across the Early Modern Iberian Atlantic', in *Festschrift in Honour of Professor Philip Hardie on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday*, ed. Stephen Oakley and Alessandro Schiesaro (forthcoming), and 'A Lady of Letters? The *Discurso en loor de la poesía* (1608) in Context and the Case for Diego Mexía as "Clarinda", *Colonial Latin American Review* (forthcoming).

¹⁸ Mexía, *Parnaso Antártico* (n. 17 above), pp. 241–65.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2. This troped claim is further discussed in my pieces listed in n. 17 above.

²⁰ On Alegre, see Feile Tomes, 'Plurilingual Poetry and the Hinterland of Intertextuality' (n. 15 above), pp. 284–38. See also Feile Tomes, 'Synecdoche in Reverse' (n. 2 above), pp. 23–7 (p. 26 n. 70), and 'The Paradox of the Literary Wasteland' (n. 17 above).

²¹ The bibliography on Sor Juana is vast. For discussion of some of her classical connections in particular, see C. Kallendorf, *The Other Virgil: 'Pessimistic' Readings of the Aeneid in Early Modern Culture*, Oxford, 2007, pp. 126–37. See recently also L. Castellví Laukamp, *Hispanic Baroque Ekphrasis: Gón-gora, Camargo, Sor Juana*, Cambridge, 2020.

to be reconstituted in practically every form; there are even contemporary literary evocations of Virgil himself being reincarnated in Mexico.²² Examples of Virgilian engagement in the Americas range widely from centos like Bernardo Ceinos de Riofrío's *Centonicum Vergilianum Monumentum* (1680) from Mexico – a jigsaw-like recycling of the *Aeneid* to extol the Mexican Catholic cult icon, the Virgin of Guadalupe – to full-blown epic poems, both in the vernacular – as with Alonso de Ercilla's Spanish-language *La Araucana* (1569–89), on which more below – and in Latin, such as José de Anchieta's *De gestis Mendi de Saa* (1563) from sixteenth-century Brazil or José Antonio de Villerías y Roelas's *Guadalupe* (1724) – likewise on the eponymous Virgin – from eighteenth-century Mexico City.²³ The *Eclogues* and especially the *Georgics* also exercised their share of influence, energizing the composition of texts from Bernardo de Balbuena's *Grandeza mexicana* (1604), an 'urban Georgic'²⁴ devoted to the Mexican capital, to the youthful 1750s Latin elegies on the Maule region of Chile by renowned Jesuit botanist-to-be Juan Ignacio Molina,²⁵ to the fifteen-book *Rusticatio Mexicana* (1782) on the Meso-American countryside by Guatemalan Jesuit Rafael Landívar, also in Latin²⁶ – to say nothing of the post-Independence ode *A la agricultura de la Zona Tórrida* ['On the agriculture of the Torrid Zone'] (1826) penned in a pan-American key by Venezuelan-born Andrés Bello.²⁷ Indeed, the eighteenth century – by which time in Europe the stranglehold of Latin was generally waning under so-called 'Enlightenment' and other pressures – is considered the heyday or 'Golden Age' of Latin American Latinity.²⁸ A blow was dealt, however, when all Jesuits – prime exponents of this Latinity – were expelled from Hispano-America in 1767 and deported to Italy.²⁹ It was there that Ibero-Americans

²² See A. Laird, 'The *Aeneid* from the Aztecs to the Dark Virgin: Virgil, Native Tradition and Latin Poetry in Colonial Mexico from Sahagún's *Memoriales* to Villerías' *Guadalupe* (1724)', in *A Companion to Vergil's Aeneid and its Tradition*, ed. J. Farrell and M. C. J. Putnam, Malden MA and Oxford, 2010, pp. 217–33 (222–3), along with Feile Tomes, 'The Other Arena' (n. 13 above), pp. 140–41.

²³ See n. 10 above. On Villerías's *Guadalupe*, see previous note.

²⁴ R. Cacho Casal, 'Balbuena's *Grandeza Mexicana* and the American Georgic', *Colonial Latin American Review*, 24.2, 2015, pp. 190–214 (195). See further n. 48 below.

²⁵ See M. Castillo Didier, 'El Abate Molina y su poema "Sobre los ríos de Chile"', *Anales de Literatura Chilena*, 17.16, 2016, pp. 99–113; see also W. Hanisch Espíndola, *Juan Ignacio Molina: sabio de su tiempo*, Caracas, 1974, and C. E. Ronan, *Juan Ignacio Molina: The World's Window on Chile*, New York, 2002.

²⁶ See A. Laird, *The Epic of America: An Introduction to Rafael Landívar and the Rusticatio Mexicana*, London, 2006.

²⁷ See further M. Feile Tomes, 'The Poetics of the Torrid Zone: Troping the Tropics from Antiquity to the Atlantic', in *Cosmography and the Classical Tradition*, ed. R. Gagné and A. Kachuck, Cambridge (forthcoming).

²⁸ See (e.g.) T. Herrera Zapién, *Historia del humanismo mexicano: sus textos y contextos neolatinos en cinco siglos*, Mexico City, 2001, pp. 123–81; Laird, *The Epic of America* (n. 26 above), pp. 19–30; M. Korenjak, *Geschichte der neulateinischen Literatur: Vom Humanismus bis zur Gegenwart*, Munich, 2016, p. 93; M. Feile Tomes, 'Südamerika: Die spanischsprachigen Länder', in *Der neue Pauly. Das 18. Jahrhundert: Lexikon zur Antikerezeption in Aufklärung und Klassizismus*, ed. J. Jacob and J. Süßmann, Stuttgart and Weimar, 2018, pp. 920–32 (924).

²⁹ For introductions to this complex event, see, e.g. N. Guasti, *L'esilio italiano dei gesuiti spagnoli: identità, controllo sociale e pratiche culturali, 1767-1798*, Rome, 2006; *La presenza in Italia dei gesuiti iberici espulsi: aspetti religiosi, politici, culturali*, ed. U. Baldini and G. P. Brizzi, Bologna, 2010; *Jesuit Accounts of the Colonial Americas: Intercultural Transfers, Intellectual Disputes, and Textualities*, ed. M. A. Bernier et al., Toronto, 2014.

Landívar and the aforementioned Alegre published the works just mentioned: just a couple of examples from amid the flood of works produced by the Jesuits in Italian exile. Among them are those of their Spanish-born *confrère* José Manuel Peramás (1732–93), theretofore stationed in the Paraguayan missions among the indigenous Guaraní, who composed his own Latin epic poem, on which more below, as well as a fascinating prose work which we cannot end this swift summary of Classics in Latin America without mentioning: *De administratione guaranica comparata ad Rem publicam Platonis commentarius* [‘Treatise on the governance of the Guaraní in comparison with Plato’s Republic’] (1793), a político-philosophical tract in which Peramás offers a point-by-point comparison with Plato’s *Republic* in order to advance the thesis that the Jesuit missions of Paraguay were the closest that Plato’s ideal Republic had ever come to being instantiated on earth.³⁰

Were any of these texts to have been produced in Europe, they would surely occupy places squarely in the early modern classicizing canon and on literature courses taught today. And yet they will more than likely all be unfamiliar. After all, in spite of the 500+-year history of Ibero-American Classics, and despite the recent surge of activity in the burgeoning field of global classical reception studies, the classical traditions of early Ibero-America have still not come to the attention of scholars in today’s academy in any systematic form; on the contrary, they have suffered from systematic – indeed, systemic – underappreciation and neglect. The reasons for this are complex and cannot be done justice here. But it is worth at least taking a moment to consider some of the effects. In particular, it has meant that such researchers as are active in the field are continually obliged to devote considerable proportions of their time and energy to rehearsing fundamental historical coordinates and laying the groundwork afresh each time, as has indeed been the case in the preceding couple of paragraphs here; a further chunk is then typically also given over to bemoaning the state of undeserved abandon in which the field continues to languish. (This, of course, is counterproductive: to be continually required to insist on just how interesting and important – and unduly neglected – a field is inevitably comes to seem like a case of protesting too much.) Scholars of Ibero-American Classics do not have the luxury of the scholar of, say, Republican Rome or Renaissance Italy of being able to take a certain level of contextual familiarity for granted and dive straight in. The groundwork must be (re-)rehearsed. This in turn means that it can often prove difficult to pursue detailed lines of argumentation and interpretation, for the need to establish the panorama anew each time takes up much of the room in which one might have gone on to venture anything else. But on this occasion it is perhaps possible to short-circuit this loop somewhat. The body of work on the Greco-Roman traditions of early modern Ibero-America has grown significantly of late and is gaining in traction and momentum, even now in the “all-important” Anglophone sphere. Indeed, when considering the volume of recent publications in

³⁰ The *De administratione guaranica* is presently emerging as the subject of reinvigorated scholarly attention. See most recently M. Brumbaugh, ‘Utopia Writes Back: José Manuel Peramás on the Limits of Republicanism’, in *Brill’s Companion to Classics in the Early Americas* (n. 2 above), pp. 50–72; he is presently also engaged in preparing a full edition thereof (*ibid.*, p. 55, n. 16).

the field, the term ‘veritable spate’ would not be out of place. It is of course always difficult, when not downright foolhardy, to suggest that a corner has been turned or to herald the start of a new scholarly era by proclaiming that something has impinged meaningfully on broader consciousness at last; still harder is it to predict what the response to, or uptake of, a particular scholarly area will be. But we can at least say that something of a critical mass has now been reached: in the course of a single year alone (2021) we have just seen the publication – to speak only of book-length contributions – of Germán Campos Muñoz’s *The Classics in South America* (Bloomsbury), Stuart McManus’s *Empire of Eloquence: The Classical Rhetorical Tradition in Colonial Latin America and the Iberian World* (CUP), and the edited *Brill’s Companion to Classics in the Early Americas* (Brill), while Andrew Laird’s *Aztec Latin: Renaissance Learning and Nahuatl Traditions in Early Colonial Mexico* (OUP) is, at the time of writing, poised to appear.³¹ 2021 also saw the publication of Gerd König’s new study of eighteenth-century Columbus epics,³² as well as the foundation by Julia C. Hernández, Erika Valdivieso and Adriana Vázquez of the ‘Hesperides’ research network, an ‘international scholarly organization highlighting Greco-Roman engagements throughout the Luso-Hispanic world’.³³ This means that, while familiarity with the panorama of Latin American Classics can perhaps still not be taken for granted exactly, it has at least become possible to refer~defer to this rich and – crucially – readily accessible body of resources now available. This in turn displaces the burden of explication from individual authors onto the wider scholarly community, in turn freeing the former up to turn more swiftly from scene-setting to discussion of specific aspects of interest.

³¹ G. Campos Muñoz, *The Classics in South America*, London, 2021; S. M. McManus, *Empire of Eloquence: The Classical Rhetorical Tradition in Colonial Latin America and the Iberian World*, Cambridge, 2021; *Brill’s Companion to Classics in the Early Americas*, ed. M. Feile Tomes et al., Leiden and Boston, 2021; A. Laird, *Aztec Latin: Renaissance Learning and Nahuatl Traditions in Early Colonial Mexico*, New York (2023). Feile Tomes et al. seeks to approach the transhemispheric American double continent in transatlantic perspective, while McManus seeks to open up the spaces of the Iberian World in transpacific perspective (see n. 14 above). Other major recent Anglophone contributions to the field of Ibero-American Classics include *Antiquities and Classical Traditions in Latin America*, ed. A. Laird and N. Miller, Chichester, 2018, and *Greeks and Romans on the Latin American Stage*, ed. R. Andújar and K. P. Nikoloutsos, London, 2020. (For just one of numerous recent Hispanophone examples, meanwhile, see n. 17 above.) For more on the seminal earlier bibliography which paved the way for this work in the Anglophone context, see discussion at Feile Tomes, ‘Synecdoche in Reverse’ (n. 2 above), pp. 2–3 n. 3, and, on the Iberophone sphere, note the suggested further reading at the end of A. Laird, ‘Colonial Spanish America and Brazil’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Latin*, ed. S. Knight and S. Tilg, Oxford, 2015, pp. 525–40.

³² G. König, *Kolumbus-Epik: Die Inszenierung eines Helden in französischen und neulateinischen Texten ab 1750*, Berlin and Boston, 2021. The cornerstone studies of this subject, on which König’s builds, are H. Hofmann, ‘Adventat tandem Typhis qui detegat orbes: Columbus in Neo-Latin Epic Poetry (16th–18th Centuries)’, in *The Classical Tradition and the Americas*, vol. 1.1: *European Images of the Americas and the Classical Tradition*, ed. W. Haase and M. Reinhold, Berlin and New York, 1994, pp. 420–656, and I. Villalba de la Güida, ‘Virgilianismo y tradición clásica en la épica neolatina de tema colombino’, PhD diss., Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2012.

³³ <https://www.hesperideslusohispano.org/> [last accessed 24 March 2023]. The above-named founders are all publishing actively in the field; the reader may usefully consult their respective publication lists for the latest further bibliography.

Availing myself of this same licence, then, I too propose to take the opportunity to do something different for the remainder of this piece, turning from broad-brush-stroke coordinates to a more literary undertaking centred around a particular thematic cluster of ideas predicated on, and emerging from, a set of close readings. What follows, in other words, will not be a continued exposition of the historical, human and material circumstances of classical–American first contact: for this, I joyfully direct the context-seeking reader to the aforementioned body of pre-existing work on that subject. Nor will I be continuing to insist excitably upon the mere existence of the rich tradition of creative literature written in, and about, the Iberian Americas from the earliest days of European–American contact onwards: suffice it to say that this body of literature exists and that it behoves us not to be endlessly surprised by it (which is another way of saying: to exoticize it), but rather to engage with it.³⁴ In what follows, I shall therefore be taking the invitation of the present volume – which, in its original formulation, prompted contributors to reflect on the theme of ‘Classical First Contacts Across the Globe’ – as an opportunity to examine how first contact between Europe(ans) and America(ns) was itself figured in the classicizing literature produced in and about Ibero-America in the wake of the transatlantic encounter. More specifically, I will consider the representation of European–American first contact in the context of one of the most significant classical poetic genres to spring up in relation to the Americas: epic poetry. This, then, is a study not of the circumstances of first contact itself but of the representation of that first contact *in* classicizing epic. How did the Greco-Roman epic idiom lend itself to figuring the epochal encounter between Europe and America and the reality of an amplified transatlantic space of which the Greeks and the Romans had no conception?

America avant la lettre

We have said that Classics and the Americas have by now stood in relation to one another for five hundred years and counting. But, in another sense, Classics and the Americas(-to-be) have been in dialogue for significantly longer than that: a dialogue of the more millennial variety (which, given the inevitably Eurocentric terms of this aspect, is also of the more unilateral variety). Indeed, there is a sense in which Classics and America have been in contact since European classical antiquity itself. Perhaps it is not quite so true, then, to say that the Greeks and the Romans had no conception of the Americas. This is not an allusion to those theories about the Greco-Roman, Carthaginian–Phoenician or other ancient seafarers sometimes credited with having preceded Columbus in reaching the Americas from Europe

³⁴ For a survey of some of the very earliest examples, see Feile Tomes, ‘The Other Arena’ (n. 13 above), pp. 126–8. On plurilingual dynamics, see *ibid.*, p. 145, as well as ‘Plurilingual Poetry and the Hinterland of Intertextuality’ (n. 15 above). For surveys of Ibero-America’s Latin-language literary production in particular, see A. Laird, ‘Latin America’, in *Brill’s Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World*, ed. P. Ford et al., Leiden, 2014, pp. 821–32, and *id.*, ‘Colonial Spanish America and Brazil’ (n. 31 above). On the ethics of ‘surprise’ in this sense, and the problem of the exoticizing tendencies with which it is connected, see Feile Tomes, ‘Synecdoche in Reverse’ (n. 2 above), pp. 36–8.

– although these too exist in any number.³⁵ Rather, I am referring to encounters of the more imaginative kind. After all, while one may rightly be more sceptical about the former, what most certainly did exist was a highly developed Greco-Roman intellectual tradition of both creatively imagining, and seriously speculating about, what might lie out in the high Atlantic beyond the westernmost longitudes empirically known in European antiquity. (Semi-)mythical westerly places including the Hesperides, Plato's Atlantis, the Fortunate or Blessed Isles, the legendary island allegedly once reached by the Carthaginians, or even the northerly – but at times also decidedly north-*westerly* – land of Thule were all imagined at different times and with different degrees of earnestness to lie out in that direction. Indeed, entire strands of the ancient geographical and philosophical traditions – by which the literary tradition is in turn inflected – were devoted to accounting for what might exist out in the remote West.³⁶

Speaking only semi-metaphorically, then, one can say that the Greeks and the Romans did have some form of hazy conception of America *avant la lettre* – or at least so it certainly seemed afterwards. After all, it was precisely as a function of this rich tradition of ancient speculation about the transatlantic world, in concert with the equally suggestive body of eschatological indications in the Bible, that Columbus and those who shared his views came to be so firmly convinced of the feasibility of reaching (some kind of) land by striking out to the West in the first place.³⁷ The imaginative encounter between Classics and at least the *possibility* – and also the long-harboured ambition – of reaching land along a westerly transatlantic route thus antedated actual European arrival there by quite some measure: by many months

³⁵ See, for just one example, H. Hofmann, 'Odysseus: Von Homer bis zu James Joyce', *Antike Mythen in der europäischen Tradition*, ed. H. Hofmann, Tübingen, 1999, pp. 27–67. For instance, in Ubertino Carrara's eponymous Columbus epic (*Columbus*, 1715), Odysseus is found buried in Mexico, having sailed there in antiquity. More generally, see J. Romm, 'New World and "Novos Orbes": Seneca in the Renaissance Debate over Ancient Knowledge of the Americas', in *The Classical Tradition and the Americas* (n. 32 above), pp. 77–116. On notions of the Carthaginians having reached the Americas in antiquity, see further nn. 36 and 95 below.

³⁶ J. Ramin, *Mythologie et géographie*, Paris, 1979, is helpful on ancient ideas about the West, as is J. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration, and Fiction*, Princeton, 1992. See, relatedly, now also R. Gagné, *Cosmography and the Idea of Hyperborea in Ancient Greece: A Philology of Worlds*, Cambridge, 2021. The most recent treatment of the Carthaginian theory is P. Fernández Camacho, 'Carthaginians Beyond the Ocean: Comparison, Justification, and Inversion in the Hypothesis of the Carthaginian Discovery of America', *Classical Receptions Journal*, 14.2, 2022, pp. 141–158. I say '(semi-)mythical' because there is debate as to whether some of these legendary islands may have been based on knowledge of places like (what are now known as) Madeira, Cabo Verde and/or the Canary Islands or even the Azores.

³⁷ See further Feile Tomes, 'Synecdoche in Reverse' (n. 2 above), pp. 14–15, with bibliography. On Columbus's own *Libro de las Profecías*, see further n. 39 below. For the important recent corrective of Nicolás Wey Gómez, who has reinscribed the centrality of Columbus's beliefs about the South as well as the West, see N. Wey Gómez, *The Tropics of Empire: Why Columbus Sailed South to the Indies*, Cambridge MA, 2008.

and years in the crucible of Columbus's and others' minds,³⁸ and in a sense by over two millennia.

In the wake of 1492, meanwhile, the intellectual encounter between classical thought and the Americas was in effect (re-)enacted time and again by Europeans seeking to reconcile transatlantic empirical reality with Greco-Roman pronouncements about the remote West, and, in so doing, to provide a *post hoc* rationalization for what had just transpired in that part of the world. (Columbus himself did a lot of his own rationalizing *post hoc*, too – although he may have fudged the chronology of this work in order to make the original basis for setting out seem surer than it actually had been.)³⁹ Places like Atlantis, Thule or the Hesperides – which by the fifteenth century had already come to be associated with the Canary Islands or the Azores⁴⁰ – continued on their westerly associative trajectory and began to be identified as betokening the Antilles or even the Americas *tout court*. Likewise, enigmatic ancient pronouncements such as the assertion in Seneca's *Medea* that *venient annis saecula seris, | quibus Oceanus vincula rerum | laxet et ingens pateat tellus | Typhisque [or: Tethysque] novos detegat orbis | nec sit terris ultima Thule* ['The time will come, in the most distant of years, when the Ocean will loosen the bonds by which things are held together and an enormous land shall be exposed, when Typhis/Tethys shall uncover new worlds and remote Thule will no longer mark the endpoint of all lands'] (*Medea*, 375–9)⁴¹ were epistemologically elevated by European thinkers to the status of full-blown prophecies and seemed, or were retroactively made to seem, to contain within them the visionary kernel of as yet unaccessed areas across the Atlantic Ocean. These and many other examples thus provided convenient conceptual pegs onto which any land(s) indeed encountered in that direction could, with often extraordinary apparent neatness, in turn be slotted. In fact, the classical westerly oriented tradition was so robust that it has at times been credited with having significantly blunted the impact of what might otherwise have been a cataclysmic intellectual confrontation of paradigm-shattering proportions. As it was, instead of (or alongside) unadulterated bewilderment, the twin epistemological currents of classical and biblical westerly evocation – which now suddenly seemed like true foreknowledge grasped as *through a glass darkly* (1 Corinthians 13:12) – were able to step into the breach and bear swift and remarkably straightforward reinterpretation with reference to the Americas. As

³⁸ Consider, for instance, the phrasing in the 1493 Papal Bull, *Inter Caetera*, by which the lands encountered across the Atlantic were 'donated' by Pope Alexander VI to the Monarchs of Spain, who are here addressed: 'We have indeed learned that you, who for a long time had intended to seek out and discover certain islands and mainlands remote and unknown and not hitherto discovered by others, to the end that you might bring to the worship of our Redeemer and the profession of the Catholic faith their residents and inhabitants, (...)' (English translation taken from <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/alex06/alex06inter.htm> [last accessed 24 March 2023]; my emphasis).

³⁹ His famous *Libro de las Profecías* may, contrary to what its title suggests, in fact have been compiled retrospectively (and not necessarily even by Columbus himself): see further Wilson-Lee, *Catalogue of Shipwrecked Books* (n. 6 above), pp. 59–60, 74–6. The timing even of (t)his first classical–American encounter thus remains difficult to date.

⁴⁰ See n. 36 above.

⁴¹ On the early modern fate of these lines, see Romm, 'New World and "Novos Orbis"' (n. 35 above); also Hofmann, 'Columbus in Neo-Latin Epic Poetry' (n. 32 above).

such, over against the traditional narrative of shock and confoundment which has frequently dominated accounts of the European–American encounter, there is also – as is itself by now a commonplace to point out – an alternative, or rather simultaneous and complementary, narrative according to which the potential force of the impact was markedly mitigated by the existence of this supple pre-existing imaginative tradition.⁴² This tradition was able to become immediately loadbearing, so to speak, and do a good deal of the intellectual heavy-lifting in accommodating and accounting for the existence of the lands on the other side of the Atlantic. Classical thought, in other words, has always been ready for America. Whether or not Amerindian literatures and cosmologies were equally ‘ready for’ Europe – not least in view of the alleged existence of prophecies foretelling the arrival of European-style men, which, as these may have been fabricated or certainly cynically capitalized upon by the likes of Columbus and Hernán Cortés, remains controversial – is another question.

For present purposes, this long European tradition of imagining the transatlantic West proved productive not only in prompting real-life early modern seafarers to strike out across the ocean as they did, nor solely for their *post hoc* attempts to make sense of what they then encountered there, but also for the purposes of writing creative literature about the transatlantic world – a project upon which sixteenth-century Europeans (and, in time, also Americans) quickly embarked. In this context, moreover, it was not only the tradition of ancient imaginings of the West itself that proved useful: alongside the more ‘obvious’ candidates for westerly appropriation like the Hesperides or Atlantis, all manner of other literary landscapes proved, on a variety of metaphorical grounds, to be similarly ripe for reinterpretation and redeployment with reference to the Americas. Indeed, in this regard the Greco-Roman literary imaginary – blithely unaware of the transatlantic world though it was – proved to be decidedly well furnished with a variety of ‘fertile’ (i.e. figuratively germane) literary landscapes which could, by virtue of some perceived point of conceptual correspondence, be instrumentalized by early modern poets seeking ways to represent America: a whole associative idiom for thinking about, and articulating, the nature of the space on the opposite side of the Atlantic. One such readily reinterpretable environment was India (the India of the eponymous subcontinent), of which the many Greco-Roman literary evocations were, in the wake of the transatlantic encounter, swiftly pressed into service and creatively re-worked to provide the descriptive terms for America – or, as it was widely known at that time, *India Nova*.⁴³ Another was the idiom of Ovidian

⁴² A good starting point is A. Grafton et al., *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery*, Cambridge MA, 1992. See further J. Cañizares-Esguerra, ‘New World, New Stars: Patriotic Astrology and the Invention of Indian and Creole Bodies in Colonial Spanish America, 1600–1650’, *The American Historical Review* 104.1, 1999, pp. 33–68 (35), as well as Romm, ‘New World and “Novos Orbes”’ (n. 35 above). See also A. Ramachandran, *The Worldmakers: Global Imagining in Early Modern Europe*, Chicago, 2015. Compare S. Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*, Chicago, 1991.

⁴³ The designations ‘*India Nova*’ or ‘*Nova India*’ for America can be found on many early modern maps. Compare S. Raman, *Framing “India”: The Colonial Imaginary in Early Modern Culture*, Stanford, 2002. For the figurative mileage of the literary landscapes of India in the ancient context, see P. Schneider, *L’Éthiopie et l’Inde: Interférences et confusions aux extrémités du monde antique (VIIIe siècle avant J.-C. – VIe siècle après J.-C.)*, Rome, 2004.

exile, re-deploying Ovid's exilic stance as a means of processing and articulating early Europeans' own sense of dislocation and decentredness in the Americas.⁴⁴ But for the purposes of the highly codified form of writing that was classicizing epic, by far the most frequent source of suitable proto-American literary landscapes was inevitably Virgil's *Aeneid*. The *Aeneid* was the blueprint for practically all post-Virgilian Latin(ate) epic writing, irrespective of subject matter, and the early modern American epics are no exception. Thus, though Virgil had no conception of the Americas (just as he had no conception of the countless other topics, places and technologies to which post-Virgilian poets would turn their hand),⁴⁵ the *Aeneid* proved as productive as ever for poems of transatlantic theme, offering suitable literary landscapes which bore ready redeployment with reference to the American world.

It is not new to point out the extent to which the *Aeneid* mapped – or was made to map – uncannily well onto the events of 1492, offering a fully fleshed-out paradigm via its tale of an epochal journey to a new land in the West that was to be settled and become the seat of a grand new empire.⁴⁶ On this count, the most suitably 'American' landscape within the teleological economy of the *Aeneid* must be Italy: *Hesperia* – the 'western land' – itself.⁴⁷ Sure enough, there is no shortage of early modern poems that present America in precisely such Virgilian–Italian terms, slotting it neatly into the category of *telos* within the schema of their epics.⁴⁸ But there is another Virgilian landscape which has had an equally if not more productive – albeit much less recognized – career in early modern epic as a literary landscape regularly redeployed with reference to the Americas. The landscape in question is Carthage. A survey of early modern Ibero-American epic reveals that America is – sometimes as an alternative to its 'Italianate' portrayal, sometimes contrapuntally

⁴⁴ On the figurative redeployment of the tropes of Ovidian exile in this regard, see Feile Tomes, 'The Paradox of the Literary Wasteland' (n. 17 above), along with n. 9 above.

⁴⁵ It is worth noting, however, that the visionary-style words which Virgil puts into Anchises's mouth at *Aen.* 6.795–7 – *iacet extra sidera tellus, | extra anni solisque vias, ubi caelifer Atlas | axem umero torquet stellis ardentibus aptum* – were, as with Seneca's reference to the transoceanic *ingens ... tellus* in his *Medea*, likewise reinterpreted in the early modern period as a prophetic reference to America. But, with or without such 'directly' suggestive passages, the affordances of the Virgilian epic mode are manifold and the *Aeneid* has been used as the blueprint for poems on everything from mining to sugar cane production to the power of flight (on which see n. 48 below).

⁴⁶ See, for instance, Hofmann, 'Columbus in Neo-Latin Epic Poetry' (n. 32 above); C. Kallendorf, *The Other Virgil* (n. 21 above); P. Hardie, *The Last Trojan Hero: A Cultural History of Virgil's Aeneid*, London, 2014. As such the *Aeneid* too was seen as being invested with a sort of 'predictive power': see previous note.

⁴⁷ E.g. *Aen.* 1.530, 570; 3.163–88; 7.4.

⁴⁸ America is also frequently represented in the terms of another Virgilian Italy: the weird-and-wonderful Italy of the *Laudes Italiae* in *Geo.* 2.136–76. This occurs, for instance, in Peramás's *De Invento Novo Orbe* (on which more below) at *DINO* 3.435–549; see also D. Bitzel, ed., *Bernardo Zamagna – Navis aëria: Eine Metamorphose des Lehrgedichts im Zeichen des technischen Fortschritts*, Frankfurt am Main, 1997, p. 119, on the '*Laudes Americae*' in Bernardo Zamagna's *Navis aëria* (1768). In general on the early modern Iberian *Laudes* tradition, see A. Ramajo Caño, 'Notas sobre el tópico de *laudes* (alabanzas de lugares): algunas manifestaciones en la poesía áurea española', *Bulletin Hispanique*, 1, 2003, 99–117, or J. S. Ruth, *Urban Honor in Spain: The Laus Urbis from Antiquity through Humanism*, Lewiston, 2011, and, in turn, n. 24 above on refractions of the 'urban georgic' in the Ibero-American context; also R. Cacho Casal, 'Dialectic Spaces: Poetry and Architecture in Balbuena's *Grandeza Mexicana*', in *Artifice and Invention in the Spanish Golden Age*, ed. Stephen Boyd and Terence O'Reilly, Leeds, 2014, pp. 148–60.

alongside it – represented time and again in strikingly Carthaginian terms. (In what follows I use ‘Carthage’ and ‘Carthaginian’ to denote the Virgilian Carthage, which is broadly to say the Carthage of *Aeneid* 1–4. I am not referring to the historical Carthage, except where the line is blurred by Virgil himself.) Certain aspects of Carthage’s career as a landscape of interest in the early modern Ibero-American epic tradition have been individually pointed out before:⁴⁹ however, to the best of my knowledge, no systematic study has been offered⁵⁰ – although the characterization of America as Carthaginian is itself nothing if not systematic. Indeed, to the extent to which any coastline approached by means of an *Aeneid* 1-style storm reads as quasi-Carthaginian, America is cast in symbolically Carthaginian terms throughout the entire early modern American epic corpus, in which the *tempestas poetica* of a Virgilian storm habitually strikes out in the mid-Atlantic as the European ships bear down upon America.⁵¹ Any land approached in the manner of Aeneas and his crew being buffeted towards the shores of North Africa is thus in some essential sense ‘a Carthage’.⁵²

In what follows, we will consider two paradigmatic examples of this Carthaginian–American epic phenomenon. These case studies are drawn from two of the earliest epics ever to be written about America,⁵³ both of which, in different ways, work to present their American environments – respectively, Chile and the Caribbean

⁴⁹ To speak only of the texts studied in this chapter: in the case of Ercilla’s *Araucana*, see above all the ample bibliography on the so-called Dido episode (nn. 73–5 below); for Stella’s *Columbeis*, see I. Villalba de la Güida, ‘Virgilio y la épica neolatina de tema colombino: el episodio de Dido y Eneas en la *Columbeis* de Giulio Cesare Stella (1585–1589)’, in *Humanismo y pervivencia del mundo clásico (V): homenaje al profesor Juan Gil*, vol. 5.2, Alcañiz/Madrid, 2010, pp. 869–85; also the relevant sections of Villalba de la Güida, ‘Virgilianismo y tradición clásica’, and of Hofmann, ‘Columbus in Neo-Latin epic’ (both n. 32 above), as well as Kallendorf, *The Other Virgil* (n. 21 above), esp. pp. 77–102.

⁵⁰ A preliminary attempt at such a study in my doctoral thesis (M. Feile Tomes, ‘Neo-Latin America: The Poetics of the “New World” in Early Modern Epic. Studies in José Manuel Peramás’s *De Invenio Novo Orbe Inductoque Illuc Christi Sacrificio* (Faenza, 1777)’, PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2017, pp. 69–108) – an earlier version of the present piece – notwithstanding. See now also Fernández Camacho, ‘Carthaginians Across the Ocean’ (n. 36 above). Earlier, see the fleeting but highly suggestive remarks in R. Helgerson, *A Sonnet from Carthage: Garcilaso de la Vega and the New Poetry of Sixteenth-Century Europe*, Philadelphia, 2007, pp. 5–30.

⁵¹ On the frequency of mid-Atlantic storms assailing Europeans on the approach to America in early modern epic, see J. Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550–1700*, Stanford, 2006, pp. 35–54; Villalba de la Güida, ‘Virgilianismo y tradición clásica’, p. 140; and now also König, *Kolumbus-Epik* (n. 32 above). For the *poetica ... tempestas* itself, see Juvenal 12.23–4.

⁵² It exceeds present possibilities to deal with the question of whether the harbour at which they land is to be understood as truly Carthaginian or as belonging to the wider African environment: for the purposes of this article, we take all the space of *Aen.* 1–4 as Carthaginian – or, rather, we contend that that is how it is received in the early modern tradition under scrutiny here. For further discussion of the harbour topography, however, see V. Shi and L. Morgan, ‘A Tale of Two Carthages: History and Allusive Topography in Virgil’s Libyan Harbour’, *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 145, 2015, pp. 107–33. For the broader role of Africa in the early modern European imaginary of the Americas, see Feile Tomes, ‘The Poetics of the Torrid Zone’ (n. 27 above).

⁵³ For further discussion of the earliest manifestations of Ibero-American epic, see Feile Tomes, ‘The Other Arena’ (n. 13 above), pp. 126–8. See recently also R. Cacho Casal, ‘Writing in the New World: Spanish American Poetics and the Literary Canon’, in *The Places of Early Modern Criticism*, ed. G. Alexander et al., Oxford, 2021, pp. 125–42.

– in (not-so-)tacitly but consistently Carthaginian terms. Moreover, although near-contemporaneous, they were composed under very different circumstances: one, in Spanish, by a highly mobile author operating in the transatlantic space between the Viceroyalty of Peru and the Iberian Peninsula; the other – in Latin – penned in Italy by a writer who never visited the Americas himself. Nonetheless, both have unmistakable recourse to the Virgilian Carthage in the figuring of their respective Americas, suggesting that the perception of Carthage as symbolically germane to the project of writing about early America was a polygenetic phenomenon, which, in turn, tells us something about the strength of the principles on which the metaphor subtending the Carthaginian–American association rests. Many subsequent authors, be it following in these poets’ footsteps or spontaneously making the same metaphorical leap, would likewise present their epic Americas in the same terms: we will see a further example of this in the final section. The more important question, then, is why? After first attempting to establish a sense of epic America’s Carthaginian credentials by means of our two case studies, we will proceed to turn to interrogation of the underlying basis of the identification. What was so compelling about the Virgilian–Carthaginian environment when it came to the figuration of the Americas? What conceptual freight does the Carthaginian landscape offer that suited early modern Ibero-American poets’ purposes quite so well? Why dress up America in the guise of Carthage of all places?

Alonso de Ercilla’s *La Araucana* (1569–89)

Time and again in early Ibero-American epic poetry, European sailors are shown arriving on new and supposedly alien American shores only to find themselves in something that looks suspiciously akin to the coastal environment of the Virgilian Carthage as familiar from the *Aeneid*. They too, as if some sort of environmental determinism were exercising its effect, in turn proceed to go through all the familiar ‘Carthaginian’ motions in terms of inaugural activities, re-enacting the behaviour of the Trojans upon first landing on the North African littoral in *Aeneid* 1. First-contact America thus exudes a Carthaginian aura in everything from the topography of its coastline to the time-honoured actions undertaken there. Indeed, in many cases one need not even get as far as actually landing in order to realize what is coming: as just mentioned, early modern epic America is frequently pre-encoded as Carthaginian thanks to the Virgilian storms which strike during the approach, serving to project Carthaginianism onto it already from far out at sea. America’s presentation as Carthaginian, and the effect this has on the actors operating in that space, is thus completely overdetermined – and overdetermining.

Take the case of the earliest fully-fledged vernacular epic to be written about the Americas: Alonso de Ercilla’s *La Araucana*, a blockbusting 37-canto poem on the conquest of Chile – in which Ercilla himself took part – published in three instalments over a span of two decades (Part I: 1569; Part II: 1578; Part III: 1589). Ercilla (1533–94) first arrived in the region in question in the mid-1550s: at the time the standard route to Chile was across the Atlantic to Central America, then overland from America’s Atlantic to its Pacific coast (best undertaken at its narrowest point,

the Isthmus of Panama) and in turn by sea down the Pacific littoral to Peru. The Conquest of Chile was in turn launched from Peru and consisted in winning strategic military victories all the way down Chile's famed 'shoestring geography'.⁵⁴ Having commenced around 1541 and running throughout the rest of the century, the Conquest of Chile and the trajectory of Ercilla and his epic are thus broadly co-extensive. Indeed, like Mexía affecting to have begun his translation of Ovid's *Heroides* during a perilous journey from El Salvador to Mexico after a (suspiciously Virgilian?) shipwreck off the coast of Costa Rica,⁵⁵ Ercilla too dissolves the line between literature and life by affecting to have written his epic right there in the thick of things, pitched uncomfortably on the very battlefield.⁵⁶ (One again recalls Alexander the Great allegedly consulting his copy of the *Iliad* in the heat of battle.) Most likely Ercilla did compose at least some portion of Part I while still in Chile – though the rest of the epic was completed, and certainly the whole thing published, once he was back in Spain. This monumental poem, which was a contemporary global bestseller in the Hispanosphere and remains a scholarly staple to this day,⁵⁷ has been extensively studied along numerous historical and literary-critical axes in relation, among other things, to its representation of the indigenous 'Araucanians' and, more broadly, of the Chilean environment and wider Ibero-American world. But amid many other more noted characteristics, Ercilla's American environment is – perhaps not first and foremost, but *also* – markedly Carthaginian. And, while certainly some aspects of this Carthaginianism have been registered before,⁵⁸ the dots remain to be joined.

In line with the above, the first sign of the Carthaginian connection is the almighty, and almightily Virgilian, storm which Ercilla whips up in the epic upon the seafarers' approach to Chile. This storm is positively littered with intertextual allusions to the storm in *Aeneid* 1,⁵⁹ including references to the role of Aeolus (*Arauc.* 15.76ff.; cf. *Aen.* 1.50ff.), comparison of the waves to mountains (*Arauc.* 15.68, 73; cf. *Aen.* 1.102ff.), and a familiar sense of impending doom (*Arauc.* 16.7; cf. *Aen.* 1.91). Ercilla's Chile is thus approached in the manner of Virgil's

⁵⁴ R. Padrón, 'Love American Style: The Virgin Land and the Sodomitic Body in Ercilla's *Araucana*', *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos*, 34, 2000, pp. 561–84 (565); see also id., *The Spacious Word: Cartography, Literature, and Empire in Early Modern Spain*, Chicago, 2004, 189–94.

⁵⁵ More broadly, however, this storm is (also) part of the exilic Ovidian persona which Mexía assiduously constructs for himself throughout the *Parnaso Antártico* (on which see further n. 17 above).

⁵⁶ Ercilla, *La Araucana*, 'Prólogo': '...este libro, el cual, porque fuese más cierto y verdadero, se hizo en la misma guerra y en los mismos pasos y sitios, **escribiendo** muchas veces **en cuero** por falta de papel, y en **pedazos de cartas**, algunos tan pequeños que apenas cabían seis versos, que no me costó después poco trabajo juntarlos'. Arguably there is already here an allusion to a Virgilian type of writing: the Sibyl herself commits her aphorisms to loose fragments on leaves at *Aen.* 3.441–452 (...*quae rupe sub ima l fata canit foliisque notas et nomina mandat*, 443–4); cf. *Aen.* 3.74–6.

⁵⁷ On its early modern popularity – and wide material circulation – on both sides of the Atlantic, see, e.g., M. Martínez, *Front Lines: Soldiers' Writing in the Early Modern Hispanic World*, Philadelphia, 2016, p. 148.

⁵⁸ See n. 49 above. By far the most studied aspect in this regard is Ercilla's Dido episode, on which there is a substantial bibliography: see further nn. 73–5 below.

⁵⁹ In his edition of *La Araucana*, Isafías Lerner notes several of these parallels in his notes *ad locc.*: see A. de Ercilla, *La Araucana*, ed. I. Lerner, Madrid, 1993, pp. 449–475, esp. p. 471 n. 24. See also Kallendorf, *The Other Virgil* (n. 21 above), pp. 87–8.

Carthage. Moreover, lest the identification remain at any risk of being lost on us, Ercilla further takes explicit steps to point out that his storm is similar to, and indeed greater than, that suffered by Aeneas and his men on the approach to Carthage:

Ni la nave de Ulises, **ni la armada
que de Troya escapó el último día**
vieron con tal furor el viento airado,
ni removido mar tan levantado.
Arauc. 16.10e–h

*Neither Ulysses~Odysseus's ship nor the fleet which escaped on the last day from Troy witnessed wind raging with such fury nor the churning sea whipped up to such heights*⁶⁰.

Ercilla thus conveniently even supplies his own interpretative key. Indeed, he works to position this episode as the latest in a long line of epic storms: in referring not only to Aeneas (in his capacity as Trojan refugee) but also – first – to *la nave de Ulises*, Ercilla spins us vertiginously through the textual tradition to remind us that the Virgilian storm was itself indebted to the Homeric one that had assailed Odysseus on his approach to Scheria (one of the several new-worldly environments visited in the course of the *Odyssey*),⁶¹ overlaying his own storm in turn onto this intertextual palimpsest of tempests. Scheria leads to Carthage, and Carthage to Chile. Ercilla's storm outdoes them all.

For our purposes, the unmistakably Virgilian complexion of this storm is perhaps the first sign that the Chilean coastline upon which the sailors are bearing down is located in a symbolically Carthaginian world: after all, any coastline approached in the throes of a storm of such impeccably Virgilian credential cannot fail to put one in mind of Aeneas's crew on the approach to Carthage. Crucially, however, in Ercilla's case the storm does not come at the start of the 37-canto poem but rather later on – initially brewing in Canto 13 and then swelling to truly epic proportions in Canto 15, the final canto of Part I of *La Araucana* (publ. 1569) – as fresh European reinforcements are summoned down from Peru to come and aid the Spanish military effort in Chile. It is as these new reinforcements set off by sea to sail down to Chile that the storm finally strikes, serving to prefigure – or rather re-figure – the coastline on which they are bearing down as conceptually Carthaginian. The Chilean landscape in which the epic has already been situated for over a dozen cantos is thus suddenly re-clad in new Virgilian garb. And while it may seem odd to re-calibrate the environment at this already reasonably advanced stage in the epic scheme of things, in reality this symbolic reinvention comes at a key strategic juncture of its own in the structure of the overall work. After all, Canto 15

⁶⁰ All translations from Latin and Spanish in what follows are mine. Note that, for reasons of consistency, I print 'v' (for consonantal 'u') in both early modern and classical Latin.

⁶¹ For more on the figure of Odysseus as a proto-colonizer, see C. Dougherty, *The Raft of Odysseus: The Ethnographic Imagination of Homer's Odyssey*, Oxford, 2001. On Aeneas as a fellow (proto-)colonizer following in Odysseus's footsteps, see N. M. Horsfall, 'Aeneas the Colonist', *Vergilius*, 35, 1989, pp. 8–26.

is an end which is also a beginning: when the epic resumes for the second instalment (Part II, publ. 1578), the storm can be found still raging in full flight at the start of Canto 16, where its unstable liquid energy, having been held in cryogenic suspension throughout the intervening period, serves to jumpstart the epic all over again. The storm thus both bridges and re-launches the epic, shocking it back into life after a publication interval of almost ten years.⁶² Moreover, at this point in *La Araucana* the whole poem in a sense re-invents itself: as has been noted before, the transition from Part I to Part II of Ercilla's epic heralds the inception of a work of an altogether different literary order, as if Ercilla had significantly escalated the scope and ambition of his epic project during the intervening decade.⁶³ The storm is thus the figure of – and the vehicle for – this fresh start, functioning metaliterarily in its full epic-inaugurating capacity to signal that we are shifting now into a higher epic gear. Further, the shift from Part I to II also marks the point in the epic at which Ercilla 'himself' becomes involved in the narrative action ('Yo con ellos también...' ['I too with them...'], *Arauc.* 13.29a), for while Part I deals narratively with matters prior to the historical Ercilla's own arrival in Chile, Part II spans the period and events in which he claims to have personally participated. In this regard too, then, the epic acquires a whole new dimension – a new epistemological narrative basis – in terms of the alleged authorial eyewitness testimony and (conceit of) credibility which animates its latter two instalments. The transition from Parts I to II thus constitutes a whole new beginning, as troped by the epic-inaugurating Virgilian storm. And the corollary of this is that the land beset by these gale-force metapoetic winds becomes conceptually Carthaginian.

And the metaphor stretches on: when the storm-tossed Spanish reinforcements are at last able to make safe harbour, it is only to find themselves in a Chilean port environment topographically identical to the North African natural harbour at which the bedraggled Trojans stagger ashore in *Aeneid* 1:

Arribamos a popa sobre **el puerto**;

el cual está amparado de **una isleta**
que resiste al furor del norte airado,
y los continuos golpes de **mareta**
que le baten **furiosos** de **aquel lado**.

La corva y larga punta una caleta
hace y seno tranquilo y sosegado,

⁶² Kallendorf, *The Other Virgil* (n. 21 above), pp. 87–8, has a similar observation.

⁶³ On the idea that Ercilla significantly upped the ante between Parts I and II, from a more pedestrian form of versification to a poem with serious epic pretensions, see, e.g., J. Nicolopoulos, *The Poetics of Empire in the Indies: Prophecy and Imitation in La Araucana and Os Lusfadas*, University Park, 2000, pp. xi–xii, 21–64, 264–9. This 'change of tack' (p. xi) is theorized as a response to the publication of Luís de Camões's monumental *Os Lusfadas* in 1572.

do las **cansadas** naves, como digo,
hallan seguro albergue y **dulce** abrigo.⁶⁴

Arauc. 16.17h-18a-h

We docked within the port, which is protected by an islet which deflects the violence of the raging North Wind and the endless blows of the tide which rain down furiously on that side. The long, curved promontory creates an inlet with a peaceful, restful bosom where the weary ships can, as I say, find safe harbour and sweet shelter.

Upon coming ashore, the new arrivals – environmentally conditioned by the new Chilean–Carthaginian context – in turn launch into a full-blown Carthaginian-style seaside sequence, going through the motions of everything from engaging in exploratory efforts (*Arauc.* 16.27–8; cf. *Aen.* 1.305–9)⁶⁵ to battling to toast their waterlogged ship’s biscuit, like Achates in *Aeneid* 1 working to light a fire on the Carthaginian shore:⁶⁶

donde todos a un tiempo diligentes,
cuál **arma**, pabellón, cuál toldo o tienda,
quién **fuego enciende** y en el casco usado
tuesta el húmido trigo mareado.

Arauc. 16.31e-h

There we all industriously move as one to ready our weapons, canopies, tarpaulins and tents, while some among us kindle fires and re-purpose their helmets to toast the damp grain which had become waterlogged at sea.

ac primum silici scintillam excudit Achates
succepitque **ignem** foliis atque arida circum
nutrimenta dedit rapuitque in fomite flammam.
tum **Cererem corruptam undis** Cerealiaque **arma**
expediunt fessi rerum **frugesque receptas**

⁶⁴ Compare *defessi Aeneadae, quae proxima litora cursu | contendunt petere, et Libyae vertuntur ad oras. | est in secessu longo locus: insula portum | efficit obiectu laterum, quibus omnis ab alto | frangitur inque sinus scindit sese unda reductos. | hinc atque hinc vastae rupes geminique minantur | in caelum scopuli, quorum sub vertice late | aequora tuta silent; tum silvis scaena coruscis | desuper horrentique atrum nemus imminet umbra. | fronte sub adversa scopulis pendentibus antrum, | intus aquae dulces vivoque sedilia saxo, | nympharum domus: hic fessas non vincula navis | ulla tenent, unco non alligat ancora morsu* (*Aen.* 1.157–69). This unmistakable Carthaginian coastal topography is widely reconstituted on American shores in early modern Ibero-American epic: for instance, of the Mexican environment in José Antonio de Villerías’s epic *Guadalupe* (1724) (n. 22 above) and of the Island of the Lucayans and at Panama in José Manuel Peramás’s *De Invento Novo Orbe* (1777), on which more below. Indeed, along with the storm, it is perhaps the most widely appropriated Virgilian–Carthaginian element.

⁶⁵ Reconnaissance parties are dispatched in like fashion to explore the surrounding Caribbean–American environment in both Stella’s *Columbeis* (*Col.* 1.687–90) and at various points in Peramás’s *De Invento Novo Orbe*.

⁶⁶ Lerner (see n. 59 above) also notes the correspondence in his footnote *ad loc.*, though makes nothing of it beyond noting that one is redolent of the other.

et **torrere** parant flammis et frangere saxo.

Aen. 1.174–79⁶⁷

And Achates was the first to strike a spark from flint and kindle a fire with leaves, stoking it on all sides with dry fodder and causing the tinder to catch alight. Then everyone, exhausted though they are, readies the corn ruined by the waves and the utensils required for food preparation and prepares to toast the grain which could be salvaged in the flames and grind it with a stone.

Moreover, as classicists have pointed out,⁶⁸ what Achates does here is a primeval gesture of cooking a first meal in what is itself a quasi-Promethean act of primordial firebringing redolent of, or appropriate to, the world at the dawn of time: fitting indeed for the world when it is new or, if you will, the New World.

Later, the Spanish themselves proceed to found a fortress which not only exhibits several conspicuously Carthaginian architectural hallmarks – including a notable emphasis on walls and ditches (*abren los hondos fosos y señales, Arauc.* 17.24b; ... *una gruesa muralla* ..., | *de fondo y ancho foso rodeada, Arauc.*, 17.26b-c ~ *instant ardentis Tyrii pars ducere muros, Aen.* 1.423; *hic portus alii effodiunt, Aen.* 1.427) – but which we are explicitly told is founded in the manner of the Tyrians constructing Carthage. Thus, as if the natural coastal environment were not already Carthaginian enough, a suitable built environment is also duly provided: after all, what is a Carthaginian environment without its signature city?

No con tanto hervor la **tiria gente**
 en la labor de la **ciudad famosa**,
 solícita, officiosa y diligente
 andaba en todas partes presurosa[.]
 (...)
 cuanto fue de nosotros coronada
 de una gruesa muralla la montaña,
 de **fondo y ancho foso** rodeada,
 con ocho gruesas piezas de campaña[.]
Arauc. 17.25a–d, 26a–d

The Tyrians themselves did not exercise as much zeal in the construction of their famed city as they urgently made their way this way and that, busying themselves avidly and industriously, (...) as we did in our efforts to encircle the hilltop with a solid wall, surrounded by a deep, wide ditch, fortified with eight hefty pieces of artillery.

⁶⁷ Peramás, in his *De Invento Novo Orbe*, also enacts an identical fire-lighting sequence on the shore of Haiti (*DINO* 2.402–10).

⁶⁸ See A. Schiesaro, ‘Under the Sign of Saturn: Dido’s Kulturkampf’, in *La représentation du temps dans la poésie augustéenne / Zur Poetik der Zeit in augusteischer Dichtung*, ed. J. Schwindt, Heidelberg, 2005, along with his forthcoming commentary on *Aeneid* 1; also, more generally, P. Hardie, *Lucretian Receptions: History, the Sublime, Knowledge*, Cambridge, 2009, pp. 41–64, together with id., ‘Reflections of Lucretius in Late Antique and Early Modern Biblical and Scientific Poetry: Providence and the Sublime’, in *Lucretius and Modernity: Epicurean Encounters across Time and Disciplines*, ed. J. Lezra and L. Blake, Basingstoke, 2016, pp. 187–202.

The final touch to this Carthaginian~Chilean littoral environment is thus applied by having a Carthaginian-style settlement literally plotted – recall again the emphasis on the digging of ditches – into the landscape. The allusion to Carthage here not by name but as *la ciudad famosa* is doubly knowing;⁶⁹ a pointed periphrasis hinging on the classic device of troping something (intertextually) familiar as famous-but-nameless – thereby in fact serving draw attention to it all the more. Indeed, the very form of the passage constitutes a tacit Carthaginian nod in the terms of the simile itself, for the Tyrians at the point of their own Carthaginian city-building efforts in the *Aeneid* (*Aen.* 1.421ff.) are likewise characterized by means of a famous entomological figure in which they are compared to busy worker bees (*Aen.* 1.430–6).⁷⁰ Here, the relationship in hierarchy between the two parts of the simile are pointedly reversed, however: now the industrious Spanish are the tenor and the Tyrians themselves the vehicle. Thus, in the usual game of one-upmanship that characterizes so much of the early modern relationship – and arguably the Ibero-American one in particular – to the ancient literary tradition,⁷¹ the storm on the Carthaginian-style approach to Chile is much worse, while the Spanish weather this comparison much better.

Lastly, for reasons of space, we must skip forward to the episode which we might say constitutes the *pièce de résistance* of Ercilla's Carthaginian Chile. In general, the instantiation of the Carthaginian environment throughout the epic is subtle but sustained: by no means always uppermost in the mesh of metaphorical layers that make up Ercilla's multifaceted literary Chile, yet perennially subtending proceedings and so potentially always on the cusp of reasserting itself. The crowning element of this epic-spanning Carthaginian project comes as the poem draws towards its closing cantos in the third and final instalment (Part III, publ. 1589) and is embodied in the most quintessentially Carthaginian figure of all: Dido herself. Ercilla's Dido episode, which has attracted significant scholarly interest, takes the form of an extended narration of her legendary foundation of Carthage and, crucially, stands squarely in the anti-Virgilian or 'alternative' tradition of the so-called historical Dido, according to which Virgil unfairly traduced the Carthaginian queen by associating her ahistorically with good-for-nothing Aeneas.⁷² In Ercilla's case, this redemptive account (which stretches across Cantos 32–3: not unlike the canto-straddling Carthaginian storm earlier in the epic, in Cantos 15–16 ~ Parts I–I) is offered by Ercilla-in-the-epic himself, regaling his intrigued companions with the 'alternative' version – which he expressly sets up

⁶⁹ On this, see Lerner (n. 59 above) *ad loc.*, and Kallendorf, *The Other Virgil* (n. 21 above), pp. 92–3. On namelessness as a trope of intertextuality and indeed, paradoxically, as a figure of renown itself, see S. Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry*, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 8–10, 100, 108–111; and for magisterial treatment of the *Fama*-‘famousness’ nexus, see P. Hardie, *Rumour and Renown: Representations of Fama in Western Literature*, Cambridge, 2014.

⁷⁰ The zeal of Virgil's bee-like Tyrians is also conveyed in their description as *ardentes Tyrii* at *Aen.* 1.423, picked up by Ercilla both in description of the Spanish as *'diligentes'* at *Arauc.* 16.10e and in that of the fervour (*hervor*) which serves as the fulcrum of the simile at *Arauc.* 17.25a.

⁷¹ On this kind of ‘besting’ or ‘topping’ vis-à-vis Greco-Roman antiquity in the Ibero-American context in particular, see, e.g. Luper, *Romans in a New World* (n. 3 above), p. 19 (and *passim*).

⁷² On the tradition of the ‘historical’ Dido in general, see M. Desmond, *Reading Dido: Gender, Textuality, and the Medieval Aeneid*, Minneapolis, 1994, and, for the Hispanic context in particular, M. R. Lida de Malkiel, *Dido en la literatura española: su retrato y defensa*, London, 1974.

in contradistinction to the Virgilian one (*Arauc.* 32.43–7) – as they make their way through a remote section of southern Chilean countryside. Scholars of *La Araucana* have thus been faced with the challenge of accounting for the place of this substantial Carthaginian tale in the schema of the wider epic and of making sense of the fact that Ercilla should have chosen to devote a full two cantos to a scene of soldiers debating the fate of Dido in the Chilean hinterlands just as the poem is drawing towards its climax.⁷³ Indeed, the bewilderment which this decision has generated has led to the episode being referred to, and thus implicitly dismissed, as the ‘Dido digression’ – even the Dido ‘*interpolación*’ – and other such synonyms which insist upon, and so perpetuate, the perceived disconnect vis-à-vis the rest of the epic.⁷⁴

There are many possible grounds upon which to rehabilitate Ercilla’s Dido from her undeservedly ‘digressive’ status, and several attempts have recently been essayed.⁷⁵ To these we can add the matter of the environmental dimension – and environmental determinism – itself: in an environment so epic-spanningly Carthaginian as Ercilla’s Chile, the evocation of the Queen of Carthage is nowhere near as decontextualized or as surprising as has generally been implied, even by those who do then go on to seek – on other grounds – to rehabilitate her. On the contrary, she is entirely consonant with her Chilean–Carthaginian environment and with the epic’s wider poetics of place; after all, in a poem which first brought us to the Chilean–Carthaginian shore back in Part I, it is in a sense not only fitting but long overdue that here in Part III we should now come face to face with an evocation of Dido herself at long last. Furthermore, Ercilla’s evocation of the historical Dido in Cantos 32–3 is no spontaneous apparition but powerfully anchored in, and prompted by, the events of the text itself: the Dido episode is immediately preceded by the tale of Lauca, a sort of Chilean mirror image of Dido who is rescued – by the hero Ercilla-in-the-epic, here playing the anti-Aeneas to Lauca’s Dido-in-reverse – from what is to all intents and purposes a funeral pyre (*sobre un haz de arrancada yerba estaba | ...una mujer herida* [‘on a mound of

⁷³ The *locus classicus* of this scholarly trope comes from María Rosa Lida de Malkiel in her itself classic study, *Dido en la literatura española* (n. 72 above), exclaiming over the fact that we should find ‘aquella tropa de conquistadores ... discurr[iendo] sobre la honra de Dido en un perdido rincón americano’; cf., e.g. Lupher, *Romans in a New World* (n. 3 above), p. 319, on the ‘piquant picture’ of the troops in Chile arguing over this subject matter. Of course, the idea of rehearsing the tale of Dido in remotest Chile in the midst of a military campaign is not all that different from the claim of composing *La Araucana* itself in the heat of battle – on which see n. 56 above – and the one may indeed be a metaliterary figuration of the other, in turn allowing us to plug the Dido episode firmly into the epic on this analogous basis, too. For another form of allegorical basis, see n. 78 below.

⁷⁴ See, e.g. Lida de Malkiel, *Dido en la literatura española* (n. 72 above), p. 130; D. Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton*, Princeton 1993, p. 182; Lupher, *Romans in a New World* (n. 3 above), p. 307.

⁷⁵ See especially K. Galperin, ‘The Dido Episode in Ercilla’s *La Araucana* and the Critique of Empire’, *Hispanic Review*, 77.1, 2009, pp. 31–67, together with the response piece by Elizabeth Wright in that same issue of *Hispanic Review* (pp. 69–70); see also Quint, *Epic and Empire* (n. 74 above), pp. 179–81, and more recently A. Plagnard, ‘Geografías épicas nas obras de Jerónimo Corte-Real, Alonso de Ercilla e Luís de Camões’, *Veredas*, 23, 2015, pp. 9–25 (19–21).

torn-up grass lay a wounded woman’], *Arauc.* 32.32a–b) and happily restored to life.⁷⁶ She too, then, is a counter-Virgilian Dido, in turn directly setting up for Ercilla’s evocation of the non-Virgilian Dido to follow: we move from Lauca to Dido in adjacent stanzas, across the frontier of the line-break where these specular Didos meet.⁷⁷ Both in the global context of *La Araucana*’s Carthaginian–Chilean environment as a whole, and in the more local context of the tale of her anti-Virgilian *alter ego* Lauca in the stanzas immediately preceding, the appearance of the Carthaginian Queen in the epic is not decontextualized but overdetermined; indeed, she is the logical conclusion to, even herself the ultimate instantiation of, that very Carthaginian environment. And, although in-depth discussion of this much contested episode exceeds our possibilities here, the symbolism will be apparent: the tale of Dido’s wanderings *a buscar nuevas tierras* [‘in search of new lands’] (*Arauc.* 32.86d) and foundation of the colony of Carthage is surely to be understood at this point as standing in some kind of analogous or allegorical relationship to that of Spanish colonialist activity in the New World.⁷⁸ Thus America, once again, is Carthage.

Giulio Cesare Stella’s *Columbeis* (1585/89)

But Ercilla’s was not the only Dido-containing Carthaginian–American epic to be penned in the century following the transatlantic encounter. It was not even the only Dido-starring epic to be published in 1589,⁷⁹ or to be dedicated to a figure at the Spanish Court.⁸⁰ In his *Columbeis*, an ultra-Virgilian neo-Latin epic on Columbus’s

⁷⁶ It reads in full: *Sobre un haz de arrancada yerba estaba | en la cabeza una mujer herida, | moza que de quince años no pasaba, | de noble traje y parecer vestida. | Y en la color quebrada se mostraba | la falta de la sangre, que esparcida | por la delgada y blanca vestidura, | la lástima aumentaba y hermosura* (*Arauc.* 32.32a–h); cf. *pallor simul occupat ora* (*Aen.* 4.499), *at regina, pyra penetrati in sede sub auras | erecta ingenti taedis atque ilice secta, | intenditque locum sertis et fronde coronat | funerea* (*Aen.* 4.504–7); *maculisque tremantis | interfusa genas et pallida morte futura* (*Aen.* 4.643–4).

⁷⁷ No sooner do we learn Lauca’s name at *Arauc.* 32.42g (*supe que se llamaba Lauca*) than Ercilla is immediately put in mind of *la casta Elisa Dido* in the stanza immediately following (*Arauc.* 32.43g).

⁷⁸ See the related analysis of Galperin, ‘The Dido Episode’ (n. 75 above). See also n. 73 above.

⁷⁹ Giulio Cesare Stella’s *Columbeis* was first published without its author’s permission in an earlier version in London in 1585, and then in sanctioned form in Rome in 1589. Though the latter had certainly been subject to some key revisions, in both versions it remains the *Columbeidos Libri Priores Duo*, i.e. unfinished (or ‘unfinished’: see n. 89 below). A modern edition of the official 1589 Roman version is *Julio César Stella: La Columbeida*, ed. J. Sánchez Quirós, Alcañiz/Madrid, 2010; also N. Llewellyn, ‘The *Columbeis* of Giulio Cesare Stella (1564–1624) – Roman Edition, 1589’, PhD diss., UCLA, 2006. On its Dido episode, see Villalba de la Güida, ‘Virgilio y la épica neolatina de tema colombino: el episodio de Dido y Eneas en la *Columbeis* de Giulio Cesare Stella (1585–1589)’ (n. 49 above), and C. Kallendorf, ‘Aeneas in the “New World”: Stella’s *Columbeis* and Virgilian Pessimism’, in *The Virgilian Tradition: Book History and the History of Reading in Early Modern Europe*, 2007, pp. 1–10.

⁸⁰ Ercilla’s *Araucana* was dedicated in all three instalments to Philip II, while Stella’s *Columbeis* was (in its official 1589 Roman edition: n. 79 above) dedicated to García Loaysa, tutor to the Crown Prince, i.e., the future Philip III. For more on Stella’s connection to Spanish courtly circles, see e.g. I. Villalba de la Güida, ‘Elogios a Francisco de Quevedo en una oda encomiástica de Giulio Cesare Stella (1618): panorama del círculo literario neolatino del Tercer Duque de Osuna, Virrey de Nápoles’, *Myrtia*, 25, 2010, pp. 259–86.

maiden voyage to America, the young Italian poet Giulio Cesare Stella (1564–1624) also instantiates a profoundly Carthaginian America with a cast of characters to match. Though in principle a very different type of epic from Ercilla's, the *Columbeis* does bear some notable similarities to *La Araucana* in this regard. Stella's American environment (in his case, the Caribbean island of Haiti) is likewise a Carthaginian locality through and through, and from the very outset – when not earlier still: his Haiti too is pre-encoded as 'Carthaginian' by virtue of the *Aeneid*-style storm which duly assails the sailors as they attempt their first transatlantic crossing, serving to project Carthaginianism onto the Haitian coastline long before it is reached. So much so, in fact, that on this occasion the narrative of the storm itself is not included in the remit of the poem at all but rather anepically evoked as something that has immediately preceded the start of the epic:⁸¹

'Nam quid ego ventos tempestatemque procacem,
 quae Cererem tumidis omnem pene obruit undis,
 et penitus puri corruptit munera Bacchi?
 Quid memorem rapido convulsam turbine classem?
 Aspice, adhuc tantae superant monumenta ruinae.'

Col. 1.126–30

'For why should I need to recall the gales and the turbulent storm which almost ruined all our grain with its swelling waves and utterly spoiled our reserves of uncontaminated wine? Must I really recall how the fleet was swept along on a racing whirlwind? Look, the evidence of this destruction is all around us still.'

These indignant words are uttered by none other than the Devil himself, who, in the reconstituted Christian symbolic economy of the *Columbeis*, occupies the role of the Virgilian Juno and is, like her, hellbent on preventing Christopher (*Christophorus*) Columbus from reaching America and bringing Christianity to it. As a comparison with *Aeneid* 1 shows, they are packed almost line-for-line with Virgilian allusion,⁸² not least the reference to the ruined ship's biscuit, as also seen above in *La Araucana*. The environment towards which the sailors are tending is thus, once again, pre-encoded as Carthaginian before they even get there; this time, even before the poem has so much as begun.⁸³ The analepsis thus also serves to metaphorize the degree to which America is 'always already' Carthaginian and can never be anything *but* Carthaginian. Indeed, *memorem...*? ['must I recall'?] at Col. 1.129 functions not only to evoke the (according to the narrative's own conceit) recently bygone event but simultaneously also in its classic intertextuality-trooping capacity

⁸¹ Although cf., earlier, Col. 1.57–60: *multa putat, si qua properantem avertere classem | possit ab incepto: velit aequora fervere flammis, | astra tegi tenebris, coelum inbribus omne resolvi, | ipse inferre faces, dare noctem, immittere nimbos*. Nonetheless, the fact remains that we do not actually witness any such storm in narrative terms.

⁸² Cf., e.g., *Aen.* 1.45, 53, 80, 177, 215.

⁸³ There is later also another analeptic reference to this storm, which we are supposed to understand as having occurred earlier: *'Et potuit? Nec quicquam undae, nec ventus et arma | profuerunt comitumque metus, nec...'* etc. (Col. 2. 386–7).

to conjure up the Virgilian storm itself:⁸⁴ indeed, one might say that the ‘earlier’ storm to which the Devil is referring here simply *is* the Virgilian storm. Stella thus effectively guides his epic into the slipstream of Virgil’s own, eliding the intervening time~distance and running the poems into one another, with a concomitant conflation of space. His Haiti’s status as Carthaginian is thus, once again, completely overdetermined by means of this analeptic intertextual manoeuvre whereby we sail through the very storm that assailed Aeneas off the coast of Carthage and come ashore to find ourselves in the Caribbean. Stella’s epic thus opens out on the high seas somewhere between Sicily and Carthage, Europe and America: in what, to borrow a recently coined term, we might call the ‘Mediterratlantic’.⁸⁵

Upon landing, the Haitian beach environment will likewise prove duly redolent of the Carthaginian littoral in *Aeneid* 1 in terms, again, both of the nature of the landscape and of the behaviour which this induces in the new arrivals.⁸⁶ And in an environment so profoundly Carthaginian, as we have just learnt from the case of *La Araucana*, we must be primed for the possible arrival of (a) Dido as the ultimate figuration~instantiation of that very environment. Indeed, Ercilla’s own Dido ‘digression’ can be further rehabilitated in this regard, too: not merely by attending to Ercilla’s own *intratextual* Carthaginian project but also through the wider contextualization offered by the intertextual lens of the contemporary poetic panorama. In other words, far from being out of place, Ercilla’s Dido is in the very good company of her other Ibero-American epic cousins, including in that of direct contemporary, Giulio Cesare Stella. After all, as we have said, not one but two Dido-containing Ibero-American epics arrived at the Spanish Court within the space of that year. In Stella’s case, this Dido figure comes in the guise

⁸⁴ For classic discussion of the now standardly accepted intertextuality-trope function of the metaphor of memory, see G. B. Conte, *Memoria dei poeti e sistema letterario: Catullo, Virgilio, Ovidio, Lucano*, Turin, 1985, pp. 35–45, and Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext* (n. 69 above), esp. pp. 3–4.

⁸⁵ The term is Byron Hamann’s and is used on various occasions, including in titular form in his *Bad Christians, New Spains: Muslims, Catholics, and Native Americans in a Mediterratlantic World*, London, 2020. Building perhaps on this early modern tradition of (re)configuring the Caribbean as the ‘New World’ Mediterranean, structural parallels between the Caribbean and Mediterranean Basins have likewise been perceived, or created, by a number of more contemporary writers, including Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier and St Lucian poet Derek Walcott: see, e.g., A. Benítez-Rojo, *La isla que se repite*, Barcelona, 1998; E. Greenwood, *Afro-Greeks: Dialogues between Anglophone Caribbean Literature and Classics in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford, 2010, pp. 2–5, 20–68; also B. Goff and M. Simpson, *Crossroads in the Black Aegean: Oedipus, Antigone, and Dramas of the African Diaspora*, Oxford, 2007, pp. 1–37, 219–70, discussing how Walcott’s *Omeros* casts ‘the Caribbean as a global agora of cultures which are freely accessible to one another, even across time’ (34), with its ‘mapping of the Caribbean as one spatial present that can hold together numerous historical pasts’ (32).

⁸⁶ See, e.g., *Col.* 1.550–8, 1.571–5, 1.687–90, 2.1.

of the towering presence of the Haitian princess Anacaona,⁸⁷ who arrives on the scene in unmistakably Dido-esque terms:⁸⁸

Pone subit magna matrum comitante caterva
 Anacaona soror, qua non prudentior ulla
 imperio populos regere et dare iura subactis,
 seu velit iniustos gravibus compescere poenis,
 seu meritis aequa partiri praemia lance
Col. 2.144–8

Bringing up the rear, flanked by a large retinue of matrons, came his [i.e., the Haitian king's] sister Anacaona, more judicious than any other when it comes to governing her people through rule and imposing laws upon her subjects, both when punishing wrongdoers with harsh penalties or bestowing rewards upon the worthy in an even-handed manner.

Anacaona's arrival here is in the company of her brother, King Narilus (himself a Virgilian Latinus-cum-Evander figure), as part of the Haitian welcome party that has come down to the shore to meet Columbus. But although the main encounter is staged between Narilus and Columbus in their capacity as leaders (*Col. 2.166–8*), in fact it is Anacaona who is shown as making very first contact: *nunc ... Ausonio cum prodeat obvia regi* ['Now, as she goes forth to meet the Italian chief,...'] (*Col. 2.160*). And, playing Dido to his Aeneas, she soon falls fatefully and madly in love with him:

At non veliferis tantum Anacaona movetur
 navibus Ausonio quantum in ductore moratur
 oraque et augustae sublimes frontis honores
 suspicit atque oculis totum cunctantibus ambit
 et tacitum interea per venas concipit ignem.

Col. 2.224–8 (cf. *Aen. 1.656–660, 1.712–722, 4.1–5*)

But it is not the sailing ships that impress Anacaona so much as the arresting sight of the Italian leader, whose face and high forehead in its lofty nobility she gazes upon as she sizes him up with a lingering gaze, all the while kindling a blazing unspoken passion for him in her veins.

However, after an extended sojourn on Haiti, Columbus resolves to sail on without her and explore other Caribbean shores alone. Anacaona is devastated and her despair – spurred on by the machinations of the Devil – swells to dominate the entire

⁸⁷ The Haitian princess Anacaona is (based on) a historical figure who has commanded an interesting, if later, poetic tradition in her own right: see further M. C. Fumagalli, *On the Edge: Writing the Border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic*, Liverpool, 2015. It would be instructive on a future occasion to bring Stella's sixteenth-century literary Anacaona into dialogue with these later manifestations: after all, Dido and those who stand in her literary shoes are likewise voices of resistance, on which see further Quint, *Epic and Empire* (n. 74 above), pp. 99–130.

⁸⁸ Compare the whole of *Col. 2.144–159* with the description of Dido at *Aen. 1.494–508*; also 1.340. Stella's Anacaona brings up the rear of this welcome party simultaneously also in the manner of Turnus at the end of the catalogue of forces in *Aeneid 7* (*Aen. 7.783ff.*).

latter portion of the poem, just as – albeit under different circumstances – we spent much of the later portion of Ercilla’s epic in the company of Dido there, too. Stella’s poem ends as follows:

(...) At postquam facientem vela Columbum
 illa videt certumque abitus, correpta dolore
 exanimis cadit atque oculos nox plurima pressit.
 Excipiunt famulae manibusque in tecta reportant
 regia, pallentem ac gelido sudore fluentem
 et tacitos imo quaestus sub corde cientem.
Col. 2.935–40

But when she sees Columbus putting out to sea, bent on making good his departure, she is seized with anguish and collapses in a swoon as great darkness bears down upon her eyes. Her maidservants lift her up and carry her back into the royal residence, pale and dripping with icy sweat and stifling silent complaints in the depths of her heart.

These are the poem’s last lines: Anacaona collapses in a dead faint on the Haitian~Carthaginian shore, and the poem ends. She is thus a Dido from the moment of her first appearance, and to the very last – which is also to say and until the epic’s very last, for her demise is co-terminous (co-terminal?) with the abrupt implosion of the narrative itself. Indeed, as with the attempt to account for Ercilla’s not-so-decontextualized Dido through the lens of *La Araucana*’s wider Carthaginian epic context, perhaps we can use the intensely Carthaginian dimension of the *Columbeis* to make sense of one of the enigmas which has dogged the interpretation of Stella’s epic, too. The enigma revolves around the poem’s so-called ‘unfinished’ state: though having been originally conceived as – or at least billed as – a four-book epic (note its fuller title: *Columbeidos Libri Priores Duo* [‘The **First Two** Books of the *Columbeis*’]), the poem breaks off here at the end of Book II and never resumes. Scholars have argued over whether any continuation was subsequently forthcoming – perhaps now lost – or ever truly even planned.⁸⁹ But the thoroughgoing Carthaginian~Haitian conflation which Stella has instantiated in his epic may help to account for this. After all, if Stella’s Haiti is wholly conflated with Carthaginian space, as we have suggested that it is – recall that we opened analeptically out in the Mediterratlantic somewhere between Sicily and Carthage, Europe and America, Spain and Haiti – then in a sense there can be no more poem once that Carthaginian environment has been left. It is a hermetically sealed Carthaginian~American space, dominated by its Dido-esque Haitian queen, beyond which there can be no more narrative. Anacaona collapses on the liminal space of the shore beyond which she

⁸⁹ To date the prevailing critical consensus has been that it is unfinished (whereas I would contend, given its total Haitian~Carthaginian conflation, that it is in a sense *unfinishable*): see, for instance, Llewellyn, ‘The *Columbeis* of Giulio Cesare Stella’ (n. 79 above), pp. 92–6, 114–5, 175; H. Hofmann, ‘La scoperta del Nuovo Mondo nella poesia latina: i “Columbeidos libri priores duo” di Giulio Cesare Stella’, in *Columbeis III*, ed. S. Pittalunga, Genova, 1988, pp. 71–94 (76–7, 93–4); id., ‘Aen[e]as in Amerika: de “Columbeis” van Julius Caesar Stella’, *Hermeneus*, 64.5, 1992, pp. 315–24 (332–3); id., ‘Columbus in Neo-Latin Epic’, p. 468.

can go no further – and nor can the poem. Stella’s Caribbean epic is thus Carthaginian before it even gets going – or, to borrow an itself Carthaginian phrase, Carthaginian *ante diem* (*Aen.* 4.697) – and to the very last. Moreover, the terms in which Anacaona~Dido collapses themselves conspicuously re-work the death of Turnus in the closing lines of the *Aeneid* at *Aen.* 12.950–2, thereby further serving to signal that this is no arbitrary interruption but rather deliberate, heavy-handed closure, bearing all the hallmarks of an epic ending. In the absence of Dido and of Haitian Carthage, the poem must simply abort: there is no story to be had beyond the confines of Carthaginian Haiti.⁹⁰ Stella too, then, has given us an America which is an entirety – indeed, almost unsurvivalably – Carthaginian environment, conflated to the point of total identification, and, ultimately, total implosion.

The Carthaginian Connection

Two poets active in the same years of the sixteenth century, one writing in Spanish between Chile and the Iberian Peninsula, the other in Latin in Italy without ever visiting America,⁹¹ both independently – and in very different ways – arrived at the decision to present their respective Americas as Carthaginian. ‘Independently’ is something of a misnomer, of course, for both were first and foremost readers of the *Aeneid* and are thus triangulated with one another via Virgil. Nonetheless, the fact remains that something about the nature of the early American environment struck them both as aptly thematizable through the landscape of Carthage in particular: after all, other Virgilian landscapes are also available – notably the symbolically laden landscape of Italy-as-*telos* itself – yet Carthage evidently offered something compelling and particular in its own right. Moreover, many other early modern poets writing in Ercilla and Stella’s wake continued to figure America as Carthage, which serves not only to reaffirm the aptness of the metaphorical basis of the Carthaginian~American identification *per se* but also, in time, as an index of the degree to which that association had become naturalized almost as standard in the early modern Ibero-American tradition.⁹² In this sense, ‘as Carthage’ is simply how literary America came to be done. Take the case of the *De Invento Novo*

⁹⁰ Cf. Quint’s related idea of Carthage as a ‘dead end’: *Epic and Empire* (n. 74 above), p. 119. See further also Ramachandran, *The Worldmakers* (n. 42 above), p. 115.

⁹¹ He appears not to have visited the Iberian Peninsula itself either – though he was closely involved with the Spanish Court in the Italian Peninsula: see further n. 80 above.

⁹² There is (e.g.) extensive engagement with Carthage in Villerías’s Neo-Latin epic *Guadalupe* (1724) (n. 64 above) when dealing with the early contact environment in Mexico and even in its account of pre-contact Mexico. In a different context, but dealing with ‘new worlds’ of its own, note also the intensely Carthaginian elements in Luís de Camões’s *Os Lusíadas* (1572), on which see, e.g., Quint, *Epic and Empire* (n. 74 above), and more recently Ramachandran, *The Worldmakers* (n. 42 above), pp. 114–21. Later, one of the first independence-era dramas in Argentina would be Juan Cruz Varela’s intensely Virgilian *Dido* (1823), on which see most recently K. P. Nikoloutsos, ‘From Epic to Tragedy: Theatre and Politics in Juan Cruz Varela’s *Dido*’, in *Greeks and Romans on the Latin American Stage* (n. 31 above), pp. 19–32. See also J. Davidson ‘Domesticating Dido’, in *A Woman Scorn’d: Responses to the Dido Myth*, ed. M. Burden, London, 1998, pp. 65–88.

Orbe Inductoque Illuc Christi Sacrificio [‘On the Discovery of the New World and the Introduction of the Sacrament of Christ to it’] (1777):⁹³ another Latin-language Columbus epic composed in the mid-1770s by the Jesuit José Manuel Peramás, author of the Paraguayan Platonic treatise to which we alluded at the start. Thanks to his historical vantage point in the later eighteenth century, Peramás is no longer restricted to scouring the ancient literary tradition for landscapes suitable for metaphorical redeployment with reference to America: he also has the preceding three centuries’ worth of Ibero-American epic tradition at his disposal. In other words, in weighing up how best to figure America in Latinate epic idiom, he can contemplate the classical corpus ‘ready parsed’ through the lens of the pre-existing early modern Ibero-American tradition, in which the Carthaginian–American association had become ingrained almost to the point of commonplace.

For Peramás too, then, America proves to be best rendered as Carthage. In his poem, in which several different parts of the Caribbean Basin are visited, no one place exhibits every single Carthaginian hallmark – but together they exhibit them all: a composite Caribbean Carthage, or Carthaginian Caribbean. As such, his America is consistently Carthaginian in a manner which bespeaks the degree to which the association had become standard in the early modern tradition, of which he reveals himself to be a close and careful reader. Indeed, perhaps thematizing this, he opens the epic with a prophetic description of what America will be like when the Europeans eventually get there, wherein an aged sage is said to ‘remember’ (*memini*) rumours he has heard tell regarding a Carthaginian connection to lands across the Ocean. The intertextuality-trope language of memory – as with Stella and his Devil (*memorem*), above – thus draws attention to the fact that the Carthaginian transatlantic association has been seen in literature many times before: in the ancient tradition in the context of descriptions of the Carthaginian’s legendary Atlantic exploits, of course, and in the early modern context in connection with America itself. Moreover, in a vertiginous Virgilian twist, the original Carthaginians are said to have been borne across the ocean to Carthaginian America-to-be by means of the kind of storm characteristic of the approach to Carthage itself: *Phoenices classibus ... | ... magnis ... tempestatibus actos* [‘the Phoenicians in their fleet, spirited along by immense storms’] (*DINO* 1.698–9).⁹⁴ They are thus blown off course to an environment which is thereby figured as already Carthage-esque before

⁹³ J. M. Peramás, *De Invento Novo Orbe Inductoque Illuc Christi Sacrificio*, Faenza, 1777. See Feile Tomes, ‘Neo-Latin America’ (n. 50 above), with further bibliography, and, most recently, König, *Kolumbus-Epik* (n. 32 above). König’s *Kolumbus-Epik*, pp. 366–8, also has a few remarks on the Carthaginianism of Peramás’s landing environment. I too have discussed it at length in Feile Tomes, ‘Neo-Latin America’, pp. 68–108 (*contra* König p. 366, n. 1098).

⁹⁴ In Stella’s *Columbeis*, the current residents of Haiti (Quiqueia) are also said to have originally come from elsewhere in a quasi-Carthaginian manner, fleeing civil strife at home: *eiecti patria poenisque ingentibus acti | devenere locos populi, quo ventus et unda | impulit. Hic laetam mirati littoris oram | camposque sylvasque et amictos gramine colles, | piscososque lacus, Cemiis in prima vocatis, | omnia, qua longo sese explicat area tractu, | frondentes posuere domos et nomine magnam | consiliis opibusque urbem dixere Cypangam* (*Col.* 1.675–82). In Villerías’s *Guadalupe* (n. 92 above), there has also been a Carthaginian-style migration by the indigenous Mexicans.

they – *the Carthaginians* – have even got there: a wry acknowledgement, perhaps, of the fact that America is ‘always already’ Carthaginian.

What is it, then, about Carthage that afforded such key figurative potential for the purposes of evoking America? What are the symbolic dimensions that lent themselves so neatly to the purposes of early modern writers attempting to thematize the nature of that environment – and the relation in which America and Europe stood to one another? There are many possible reasons for which Carthage might have struck an early modern European poet casting around for a classical landscape ripe for re-metaphorization with reference to America as a fitting literary environment through which to do so. For one thing, the Americas had developed something of a ‘Carthaginian connection’ in the European imaginary almost immediately upon first contact: as with the Hesperides or Atlantis, the legendary Atlantic island allegedly once reached by Carthaginian seafarers was taken as another sign of ancient familiarity with – or at least as a suitable candidate for retroactive reidentification with – America, and many an early modern European in America seriously sought (and often professed to have located) evidence of Carthaginian presence in the landscapes and built environments there.⁹⁵ On this logic, then, one might say that it simply makes good symbolic sense for literary America to be shown ‘ready styled’ as Carthaginian, as if the ancient Carthaginian seafarers had left it rendered in their own image. Early modern poets who present America in Carthaginian guise may well thus at least in part be trading on this dimension of America’s supposed Carthaginian connection, and to do so they make use of Virgil’s literary Carthage as the most obvious ancient evocation of it available for poetic reappropriation. Or perhaps they may also be trading on other, darker points of perceived correspondence: one is put in mind, for instance, of the persistent associations in the ancient Roman imaginary between Carthaginians and cannibalism and/or child murder,⁹⁶ which, in the early modern European associative economy, aligned only too conveniently with the charges of cannibalism and other so-called “crimes against nature” so frequently levelled at Amerindian populations by early Europeans. Or one may think, too, of Carthage’s irreducibly colonial status, both as colony-of-Tyre and Roman-colony-to-be (i.e., *Colonia Iulia Concordia Carthago*, est. 44 BC), and of its fate of military conquest at Roman hands – after all, the most famous thing about *Carthago* is that *delenda est* – which in turn could be interpreted as foreshadowing and even eerily pre-encoding the fate of conquest, occupation and colonial order which lay in store for the Americas at the hands of Europeans. From its foundation as a colony of

⁹⁵ The tale of the Carthaginians having reached an unknown Atlantic isle in antiquity is recounted in the pseudo-Aristotelian tradition: Ps-Aristotle, Περὶ θαυμασίων ἀκουσμάτων 836b30–837a7; Diodorus Siculus 5.19–20; and see Romm, *Edges of the Earth* (n. 36 above), pp. 126–7. On earnestly countenanced ideas about ancient Carthaginians in the Americas see, for instance, Cañizares-Esguerra, ‘New World, New Stars’ (n. 42 above), pp. 47–9; Lupher, *Romans in a New World* (n. 3 above), pp. 168–86 (esp. 176–7); Laird, *The Epic of America* (n. 26 above), pp. 76–7. See now also Fernández Camacho (n. 36 above).

⁹⁶ On Carthaginians as cannibalic, see e.g. A. Schiesaro, ‘Dido’s Kulturkampf’ (n. 68 above), 92 n. 36, 95; R. Miles, *Carthage Must Be Destroyed: The Rise and Fall of an Ancient Mediterranean Civilization*, London, 2010, pp. 15–17; E. Giusti, ‘Virgil’s Carthage: A Heterotopic Space of Empire’, in *Imagining Empire: Political Space in Hellenistic and Roman Literature*, ed. V. Rimell and M. Asper, Heidelberg, 2017, pp. 133–50 (144).

Tyre to its later iteration as a colony of Rome, Carthage's colonial fate is both pre- and overdetermined – and America's is (on the providentialist early modern Iberian view of its own destiny as an imperial~evangelizing power) felt to be likewise: the Iberian Americas are 'destined' to be the political colonies of Spain and Portugal, not to mention spiritually subject to Rome. It has even recently been suggested that Virgil's description of the Carthaginian soil at *Aen.* 1.445 as *facilem victu (egregiam et facilem victu per saecula gentem)* may be taken to mean not only "rich in substance" but "easy to conquer",⁹⁷ as if its conquerability were plotted into the ground and from its very foundation. This same quality may have struck early modern poets casting around for a *conquerable* colonial epic landscape, germane to a certain jingoistic vision of the European imperialist project.

But for our purposes here, Virgilian Carthage is perhaps most germane of all in that it is also – or rather *first and foremost* – a space of first contact. Indeed, there is a sense in which it is itself a whole new world. We said above that early modern American epicists availed themselves not only of the more obvious literary candidates for westerly reinterpretation, such as the Hesperides or Atlantis, but also of other Greco-Roman literary landscapes which seemed on various figurative grounds to be somehow conceptually germane to the project of writing about America. After all, the Mediterranean ancients may not have been familiar with the 'New World' that was America but that is not to say that they had any shortage of imaginings about new worlds in their own right. For an example of this one need look no further than the above-mentioned Senecan assertion that *venient annis saecula seris, | quibus Oceanus vincula rerum | laxet et ingens pateat tellus | Typhisque/Tethysque novos detegat orbis | nec sit terris ultima Thule* (*Medea*, 375-9), while other examples ranged from Aristotle's beliefs about the Antipodes to Heliodorus's novelistic alternate universe of Ethiopia, or from Ovid's aetiological interest in the world-when-it-was-new (...*primaque ab origine mundi* ['from the earliest origin of the world'], *Met.* 1.3) to Lucian's fantastical voyage to the ultimate frontier of the moon itself. Even Odysseus, in his capacity as proto-colonist, spent the *Odyssey* sailing from one new-worldly insular space to another, scanning the coastlines for signs of human habitation or, conversely, virgin territory.⁹⁸ It is not too far a conceptual leap to see how these and other such new-worldly literary environments came to be repurposed in the early modern period with reference to 'the' New World. And among these new-worldly literary environments is Virgil's Carthage.

That Carthage is itself a new-worldly environment – the new world of the *Aeneid* – may perhaps not be its most obvious feature, but novelty in fact inheres in a number of key regards, both literal and metaphorical. On the most obvious level, it is a space of firstness: quite literally so by virtue of being the *first* space encountered in the *first* book of the epic. Everything that occurs there is thus by definition 'a first'. True to this, Carthage makes its first appearance not merely in the epic's first book

⁹⁷ E. Giusti, 'My Enemy's Enemy is my Enemy: Virgil's Illogical Use of *metus hostilis*', in *Augustan Poetry and the Irrational*, ed. P. Hardie, Oxford, 2016, pp. 37–55 (44).

⁹⁸ See n. 61 above.

but in its very opening lines (*Aen.* 1.12ff.), where it is thus again – or rather *already* – ‘first’ in this most immediate of structural senses:

urbs antiqua fuit (Tyrii tenuere coloni)
Karthago, Italiam contra Tiberinaque longe
 ostia, dives opum studiisque asperrima belli
 (*Aen.* 1.12–14)

There was once an ancient city, occupied by Tyrian colonists: Carthage – located, at a great distance [longe], opposite Italy and the mouth of the Tiber – rich in resources and exceedingly hardy in the pursuit of war.

It is even first in its own line – twice over, indeed, if one counts not only *Karthago* at the start of line 13 but also the *urbs antiqua* [‘ancient city’] to which this site of firstness is in (ironic) apposition at the start of line 12, its double line-initial status serving microcosmically to metaphorize its primal position as the locale of epic’s inaugural episode. Moreover, this double whammy of ‘firsts’ in apposition to one another in lines 12–13 is a textbook example of paraprosoodian via enjambement (*urbs antiqua* ... | *Karthago*):⁹⁹ one had expected the ‘ancient city’ hailed at the outset of Virgil’s ktistic epic to be Rome itself – especially given that it has just been prominently named moments before, at the end of line 7 (...*altae moenia Romae*) – or at the very least perhaps Troy (cf. ...*Troiae qui primus ab oris* | ...*venit*, 1–2); but what one did not expect here of all places was Carthage – Rome’s ultimate arch-enemy – lurking unexpectedly around the corner of the line-break.¹⁰⁰ It thus also makes a memorable first impression.

But Carthage’s position as structurally first in Virgil’s epic makes sense, and is perhaps even the thematization (or rather the literalization), of another crucial aspect of Carthage’s inherent ‘new-worldliness’. After all, Carthage is by definition a new world vis-à-vis its mother state, Tyre. (Recall Ercilla’s Dido setting out from Tyre – her *caro reino y patria* [‘dear realm and fatherland’] – a *buscar nuevas tierras* [‘to seek new lands’].) Indeed, the name ‘Carthage’ – supposedly a Latinization of the Punic term Kart Hadasht or Qart Hadašt – is itself said to mean ‘new city’ or ‘new place’, thus investing it with an inalienable new-worldly aura through the fundamental ontology of etymology. If etymology is ontology, then Carthage is already – ‘always already’ – a new world in this most essential of senses. Moreover, this etymologizing explanation of the meaning of ‘Carthage’ – apocryphal or otherwise – is something of which readers both ancient and modern have long been aware and is, as such, certainly available as a dimension for poets to riff on. Virgil himself capitalized on it, presupposing some expectation of readerly familiarity with its alleged etymology: after all, it is on this that the much-touted tautologies – if

⁹⁹ Similar points are made by A. Barchiesi, ‘Representations of Suffering and Interpretation in the *Aeneid*’, in *Virgil: Critical Assessments of Classical Authors*, vol. 3: *The Aeneid*, ed. P. Hardie, London, 1999, pp. 324–44 (338); Giusti, ‘My Enemy’s Enemy’ (n. 97 above), p. 42.

¹⁰⁰ The opening lines of the *Aeneid* are so overwhelmingly familiar that any real surprise at this revelation has long since been neutralized; the continued expression of ‘surprise’ at this point is thus, at best, troped.

they are indeed to function as tautologies – of the terms *novae ... Karthaginis arces* (*Aen.* 1.298) and *novae Karthaginis arcem* (*Aen.* 1.366) rely; so too the aforementioned irony of its opening evocation as an *urbs antiqua* (*Aen.* 1.12), sitting in tension with Carthage's supposed etymology as place of the new – and so further drawing attention to it. (With perhaps similar irony, America may be said – indeed, can *only* be said – to be quite so very 'new' insofar as its own antiquity is wilfully erased and it is made to become a temporally 'shallow' place – a 'blank slate' onto which European culture, starting with Greco-Roman classical antiquity, sets out to project itself.)¹⁰¹ Crucially, the fourth-century CE Virgilian commentator Servius ensured that this etymological dimension should not be(come) lost on readers by spelling it out for posterity in one of his notes, flagging up – and explaining – the tautological nature of the above: *Carthago enim est lingua Poenorum nova ciuitas* ['for Carthage means "new city" in the language of the Phoenicians'] (Servius *ad Aen.* 1.366). This is picked up by all manner of subsequent readers, including renowned seventeenth-century Virgilian commentator, the Spanish Jesuit Juan Luis de la Cerda, who likewise explained the wordplay by reporting the same gloss.¹⁰² To over-translate, then, something like *novae Karthaginis ar[x]* would mean 'the citadel of the new new city'. By this same logic, equally tautologous must be the name of Carthage's own ancient colony, *Carthago Nova* (now modern-day Cartagena) in Spain,¹⁰³ which one would also have to translate as 'New New City'; and yet more tautologous still the colonial American settlements in turn founded in the image of that Spanish Cartagena, for any Ibero-American Cartagena is effectively then a *Carthago Nova Nova* – or, to use the name of the best-known of the American Cartagenas, a *Cartagena de Indias*: itself a denomination which blends not one but two of our metaphorically repurposed classical landscapes, Carthage and India.

But the Virgilian Carthage's 'new worldliness' does not depend on etymological interpretations alone – or perhaps we should rather say that this very etymological new worldliness is itself thematized at a deeper structural level. For the Virgilian–Carthaginian landscape is further characterized by a sustained pattern of intertextual engagement with another new-worldly environment which serves to a significant, if at times underappreciated, degree to create the 'new-worldly' aura of Virgil's own Carthage. We have already said that the *Aeneid*'s Carthage is Virgil's Scheria: one of the several Homeric new-worldly places to which Odysseus comes in his capacity as proto-colonist and onto the shores of which, moreover, he is deposited courtesy of a great storm. But the main intertext of relevance to our purposes here is that of Roman philosopher–poet Lucretius's evocation in *De Rerum Natura* 5, in a sequence known as the *Kulturentstehungsgeschichte* or the 'emergence of culture' (i.e. *DRN* 5.772–1104),¹⁰⁴ of the world at the

¹⁰¹ I owe a version of this point to the anonymous reviewer, for which I am grateful. See further, though, n. 4 above.

¹⁰² La Cerda reports the gloss *ad Aen.* 1.298 (rather than *ad* 1.366).

¹⁰³ For suggestive links between Virgil's Carthage and the Spanish Cartagena (*Carthago Nova*), see, again, Shi and Morgan, 'A Tale of Two Carthages' (n. 53 above).

¹⁰⁴ On this sequence, see the illuminating commentary of G. Campbell, *Lucretius on Creation and Evolution: A Commentary on De Rerum Natura 5.772–1104*, Oxford, 2003.

dawn of time when all was fresh, unadulterated and new. We noted above that Ovid's aetiological interest in the world at the dawn of time was one of the new-worldly literary sequences of interest to New World poets,¹⁰⁵ and the Lucretian world-when-it-was-new is another; and evidently it was of equal interest to Virgil for his own new-worldly Carthage. Close intertextual engagement with Lucretius's vision of the early world – when the land was spontaneously bountiful, humans feral, and so forth – courses through, and indeed fundamentally subtends, the whole of Virgil's *Aeneid* 1 Carthaginian environment. Carthage's positional primacy as the first environment encountered in the epic thus thematizes, or is thematized in, the form of more ontologically compelling 'firstness' that is *newness* itself. Regrettably there is no longer room here to tease out and rehearse the full extent of the web of intertextual allusions to the young world evoked in the Lucretian *Kulturentstehungsgeschichte* by which Virgil generates the new-worldly aura of Carthage in the *Aeneid*; it has, in any case, been noted by critics before, and suffice it to add that our early modern epicists appear to have been keyed in to it, too.¹⁰⁶ Crucially, moreover, Virgil's engagement with his Lucretian intertext hinges on the same metaphorical manoeuvre as would later be employed by the Ibero-American epicists vis-à-vis Virgil's own Carthaginian landscape. In presenting Carthage as he does, Virgil has homed in on Lucretius's world when it was new and pounced on it as the literary landscape through which to evoke the environment which he in turn, for reasons of his own, wishes to present as 'new-worldly'. Virgil's evocation of new-worldly Carthage – Qart Hadašt, the quintessential 'new place' – is thus itself predicated on (and generated by) a metaphorical reinterpretation of the Lucretian world at the dawn of time; and this, in turn, is re-metaphorized – or rather *de*-metaphorized – by the Ibero-American epicists who come along and seize upon the Virgilian Carthage as a suitable vehicle for their evocations of first-contact America, or America when it was new: 'the' New World itself.¹⁰⁷

In an environment so new-worldly, then, everything that takes place is not only (a) first but first-*ever*: a dimension which owes its origins both to Carthage's position as first-in-epic and to its intertextual engagement with Lucretius's *DRN* 5 *Kulturentstehungsgeschichte*, where everything is happening for the first time in human history. It is a quintessential space of firstness and of newness: a landscape in which everything by definition reads as unprecedented. The symbolic mileage of this for the purposes of Ibero-American epicists attempting to evoke the experience of the European–American encounter and first contact will be self-evident.

¹⁰⁵ Re-workings of Ovidian 'Metamorphic' chaos from the opening of *Met.* 1 occur, for instance, in the *Discurso en loor de la poesía* (part of Mexía's 01608 *Primera parte del Parnaso Antártico*, on which n. 17 above) at *Disc.* 61–78; and Peramás too cites the opening lines of the *Metamorphoses* in his *De administratione guaranica*, on which n. 30 above.

¹⁰⁶ E.g. Schiesaro, 'Dido's *Kulturkampf*' (n. 68 above), and in his forthcoming commentary on *Aeneid* 1. Peramás engages with it particularly intensively in his *De Invento Novo Orbe*.

¹⁰⁷ This is especially acute in the context of early modern European ideas about America being genuinely, even geologically, 'young': in this regard, the designation of the 'New World' is not necessarily a purely metaphorical and/or merely relational one. See further J. Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of The New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World*, Stanford, 2001, p. 3; Laird, *Epic of America* (n. 26 above), p. 25; D. Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World*, Princeton, 1997, p. 72.

Virgil's Carthage provides a highly germane environment where everything is symbolically taking place for the first time in a profoundly new, seemingly unadulterated space. After all, the Trojans' first impression of the landscape upon approach to the Carthaginian littoral – for which one might easily substitute “the Europeans' first impression of the landscape upon first approach to America” – is that it is a virgin territory, deserted and uninhabited; exploratory reconnaissance efforts are carried out in an attempt to fathom the lie of the land and discover any possible traces of human settlement; the first creatures to be seen (in Virgil's case deer, in Stella's parrots, in Peramás's tapirs) are immediately shot down in a heavy-handed staging of the advent of technologized ‘civilization’ to this apparently wild landscape; and in a further figure of this, as already noted, the new arrivals engage in flame-kindling in a symbolic act of Promethean-style fire-bringing. Of course, as swiftly becomes clear, the North African littoral is not really an uninhabited virgin landscape at all, just as America is not really ‘new’: the city of Carthage itself is just around the corner, as, in the American case, are vast urban centres like the Mexican capital of Tenochtitlan; but the conceit, precisely, turns in both cases on the fact that both are presented~apprehended *as if* new. Indeed, the Trojans' journey progressively inland from virgin shoreline to ultra-urban(e) Carthaginian metropolis has itself been seen as symbolically re-enacting a form of *Kulturentstehungsgeschichte* as the Trojans are successively acculturated, and, simultaneously, themselves serve acculturate~‘civilize’ the new environment: a dimension which, again, is germane to contemporary Eurocentric figurations of the European transatlantic project in the Americas as a ‘civilizing’ mission on both a political and religious level. It is not only Lucretius, then, who deals in *Kulturentstehungsgeschichten*: these are poems of intensely Christian conception which tell the tale of the advent of Christianity-bearing Europeans to America as its own form of *Kulturentstehungsgeschichte* in its own n/New w/World.

For these reasons and more, then, Carthage is the quintessential space of first contact: every encounter which occurs there is by definition a first, no matter where in the schema of the epic in question it occurs. For instance, in the third and final book of Peramás's *De Invento Novo Orbe* – at what is also the third (and final) of the epic's three landings around the Caribbean – Peramás's Columbus has a Carthaginian-style encounter. He has just ascended to a hilltop near the Panamanian port of Portobelo, from which, like Aeneas overlooking Carthage (*Aen.* 1.180ff., 419ff.), he has gazed down upon the landscape of Carthaginian America stretching all around him as far as the eye can see. As he descends, an unexpected figure suddenly emerges from the forest and approaches the stunned Europeans.¹⁰⁸

Post, ubi sublimi descendit culmine, visa
umbrosas inter silvas America nympha

¹⁰⁸ Further discussion of this episode is in M. Feile Tomes, ‘The Angel and Ameri(c)a: Performing the “New World” in José Manuel Peramás's *De Invento Novo Orbe* (1777)’, in *Changing Hearts: Performing Jesuit Emotions between Europe, Asia and the Americas*, ed. Y. Haskell and R. Garrod, Leiden and Boston, 2019, pp. 121–46 (131–4).

venatrix, **qualis per flumina Thermodoontis
trux solet Harpalice virides circumdare saltus.**
(...)

DINO 3.408–11

No sooner had he [i.e., Columbus] descended from the lofty peak than the nymph Ameria, a huntress like fierce Harpalyce who roams the glades along the River Thermodon, appeared in like manner from amid the dappled woods.

The description that follows goes on to describe the figure, who is here introduced as the nymph Ameria, as attired in Amazonian fashion, with long flowing locks (*nigrisque capillis | colla per et dorsum serpentibus* [‘her black hair snaked its way down her neck and back’], *DINO* 3.414–5) and a quiver slung across her shoulder (*suspensa pharetra | terga premit*, 3.418–19).¹⁰⁹ The terms of the description will be familiar: Ameria approaches Columbus on the shores of Panama in the guise of Venus first approaching Aeneas on the shores of Carthage in the first book of the *Aeneid*:

cui mater media sese tulit obvia silva¹¹⁰
virginis os habitumque gerens et virginis arma
Spartanae, **vel qualis equos Threissa fatigat
Harpalyce volucremque fuga praevertitur Hebrum.**
namque umeris de more habilem suspenderit arcum
venatrix dederatque comam diffundere ventis,
nuda genu nodoque sinus collecta fluentis.
Aen. 1.314–20

His mother came to meet him [i.e., Aeneas] in the middle of the forest in the guise of a maiden, with a maiden’s mien and manner and bearing weapons as a Spartaness does, or like Thracian Harpalyce who wears out her horses and outstrips even the fleet River Hebrus as she runs. For she had hung a supple bow from her shoulders in the manner customary for a huntress and let down her hair to blow on the breeze, with her legs bare from the knee down and swathed in flowing folds held fast by a knot.

Not only do they boast near-identical sartorial and physiognomic features, but – thanks to a shared Amazonian simile (with its own recently acquired new resonances in the new American context) – the very manner of their approach is said to be the same. Presented in like terms and triangulated via Virgil by the shared vehicle of their respective similes, Venus and Ameria are thus aligned in making their respective epochal overtures to Aeneas–Columbus in selfsame ‘Amazonian’ mode.

¹⁰⁹ For the moment of her epochal encounter with Columbus, Stella’s Anacaona(-as/Dido) also appears with her flowing locks loose (*at leves humeros depexo contegit auro | crinis, ab effuso qui vertice plurimus errat*, *Col.* 2.163–4) and wielding a bow and quiver (*laevam arcu gravidaque humeros armata pharetra*, *Col.* 2.159) to say nothing of the fact that the Virgilian Dido herself, at the moment of her encounter with Aeneas, is described by means of a simile in which she is compared to Diana and armed with a quiver (*illa pharetram | fert umero*, *Aen.* 1.500–501).

¹¹⁰ Stella’s Anacaona herself goes forth to meet Columbus in similar terms to Venus’s encounter with Aeneas here: *nunc ... Ausonio cum prodeat obvia regi* (*Col.* 2.160). Anacaona thus in a sense goes forth to meet Columbus not only as Dido but, even more ‘primordially’, also as Venus.

Earlier, we saw Stella imaginatively performing a scene of first European–American contact through the meeting between Columbus-as-Aeneas and Anacaona-as-Dido (and Narilus-as-Latinus/Evander) in Book II of the *Columbeis*. Peramás here outmanoeuvres this – or rather pre-empts it – by going a step earlier still, presenting his moment of first contact between American and European not in the guise of Dido and Aeneas – who after all do not meet until *Aen.* 1.585ff. – but of Venus first going to meet Aeneas for their inaugural meeting even earlier in *Aeneid* 1: the epic’s very first encounter. Although himself writing in the 1770s, by which time Europe and America had been in contact for nigh on three centuries, and although by this late stage in the schema of the *De Invento Novo Orbe* we have in narrative terms been in the Caribbean Basin for a good while already, Peramás nonetheless succeeds hereby in capturing and recreating the intense newness of the ‘New World’, troping the action as radically novel and unprecedented by virtue of the associations of inalienable firstness and newness which Carthage retains from its figuration in the *Aeneid*. Moreover, while Aeneas is left frustrated that he cannot continue the conversation with his mother as she melts away into thin air just as he recognizes her (*ille ubi matrem | agnovit tali fugientem est voce secutus: | ‘quid natum totiens, crudelis tu quoque, falsis | ludis imaginibus? cur dextrae iungere dextram | non datur ac veras audire et reddere voces?’*, *Aen.* 1.405–9),¹¹¹ Ameria and Columbus soon discover that they cannot interact properly either – because they have no language in common. Thematising this crucial aspect of first-contact experience, their communication fails and Ameria’s incomprehensible articulations are carried away on the empty breezes: *...ignotoque ore loquentem | nequicquam compellat Iber: commercia discors | lingua vetat, vacuasque sonum diffundit in auras* [‘...and it was pointless for her Iberian interlocutor to attempt to address her as she was speaking in an unknown language: their difference in tongue prevented communication and scattered the sounds onto the empty breezes’] (*DINO* 3.425–7). Aeneas and Venus’s famous maternal–filial communicative difficulties are thus reconstituted by Peramás as the inter-continental language barrier itself.¹¹² Here, then, we witness this moment of first contact between the metonymically named nymph Ameria – striding forth in representation of the continent for which she stands – and the European representative Columbus, staged in the manner of Venus first going to meet Aeneas on the shores of Carthage. But this is no longer just any old first encounter: it is *the* First Encounter.

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¹¹¹ ‘When he [i.e., Aeneas] realised that it was his mother, he called out to her as she disappeared from view: “Why are you, in your own cruelty, forever deceiving your son with false mirages? Why should it not be possible to clasp your right hand in my own and to engage in an exchange of utterances?”.’ For minute analysis of the dynamics of this scene of encounter between Venus and Aeneas – and its links, in turn, to the first appearance of Dido – see V. Starnone, *Nessuno guarda Elissa: due passi del primo libro dell’Eneide e il disagio degli interpreti*, Pisa, 2020.

¹¹² In addition to being a re-working of Aeneas’s frustrated first encounter with Venus, the emphasis on the language barrier here exhibits strong intertextual links with the communicative difficulties experienced by Ovid in exile at Tomis as articulated in his exilic poetry, on which see Feile Tomes, ‘The Paradox of the Literary Wasteland’ (n. 17 above).

As mentioned at the start, the *Aeneid*'s Italy is, in its own way, the – or *a* – new world of the *Aeneid*, too: after all, it is the site of the preordained new settlement towards which Aeneas and his Trojans are epochally commanded to strive for the purposes of great things and a new world order to come. And certainly, as mentioned, Italy is very much also used by early modern poets for Ibero-American purposes, especially when a teleological, providentialist agenda is uppermost. But Carthage too is the – or, again, *a* – new world of the *Aeneid*, and in a number of senses it indeed rather has the edge over Italy *qua* new-worldly for Ibero-American epicists' purposes. For one thing, it is not just any new world but its *first* new world, where everything both literally and – thanks to its powerful Lucretian intertextual substratum – symbolically commands the status of not just first but first-*ever*. But, perhaps above all, it is not just a new space: it is a new space *to which one did not expect to come*. In other words, it is the space in which Aeneas, who was headed determinedly for Italy at the point of being inadvertently blown off course to Carthage, suddenly finds himself in disconcerted bewilderment. The relevance of this dimension of unexpectedness to the tale of Europeans' transatlantic first contact will be self-evident: after all, wherever one thinks that Columbus originally believed he was heading (and however much *post hoc* providentialist reinterpretation may subsequently have taken place), it was certainly not to America. Carthage is thus the environment not merely of the first encounter but of the *chance* encounter. History changed course when Columbus unwittingly strayed into not the imagined 'Spice Islands' or 'East Indies' but the Caribbean, just as Carthage and Rome were set on a new narrative track by their unplanned brush with one another in *Aeneid* 1~4. Aeneas~Columbus is blown off course, and so is history.

Thus, while the new-worldly Virgilian Italy remains useful to Ibero-American epicists in certain more teleological regards (especially once the intellectual machinery of *post hoc* rationalization had set to work energetically generating providentialist interpretations of America-as-destination – America-as-*destiny* – in the Christian-imperialist vein), Carthage offers something that ultra-teleological Italy does not: its rarefied atmosphere as a space of chance first encounters in an unanticipated land pulsing with the profound ontological firstness, newness and strangeness of the place at which you had no intention of arriving, encountering people whom you did not expect to meet. As such, Carthage also has the edge over Italy in that it is not only a radically new space: it is also a fundamentally *other* space, and a space of encounter with the ultimate other – the ultimate Other. It has even recently been read as a full-blown heterotopia in the full Foucauldian sense of the word.¹¹³ After all, Carthage is Rome's psychic opposite – its own ultimate Other – as is indeed itself thematized in the Virgilian~Carthaginian environment in numerous ways, starting with its antagonistic designation as '*contra*' and likewise as being located conspicuously '*longe*' from Italy: *Karthago, Italiam contra Tiberinaque longe | ostia* (*Aen.* 1.12–13). Given the in fact very short as-the-crow-flies distance separating Sicily from Carthage (and the critical embarrassment which the use of the term '*longe*'

¹¹³ E. Giusti, 'Virgil's Carthage: A Heterotopic Space of Empire' (n. 96 above). See also E. Giusti, *Carthage in Virgil's Aeneid: Staging the Enemy under Augustus*, Cambridge, 2018, on Carthage as a kind of wonderland.

has consequently occasioned),¹¹⁴ Carthage's designation here as 'distant' must presumably be understood as the psychological gulf of conceptual remoteness wilfully – or wishfully – reconfigured as physical distance. And if the Virgilian '*longe*' ultimately only really makes sense as a measure of conceptual distance, so too might one say that the enormous psychological distance between Rome and Carthage in turn comes to be conveniently re-metaphorized (or, again, *de*-metaphorized) by the Ibero-American epicists as a metric of the *truly* enormous distance – this time physical as well as psychological – separating Europe from America. The conceptual pair of opposites of Rome vis-à-vis Carthage thus comes to stand for the relationship between these opposites in the actual geographical – indeed, hemispheric – sense: the true *polar* opposites.¹¹⁵ Thus, while the ancient Mediterraneans had no conception of the real distances involved in crossing the Atlantic, Greco-Roman literature nonetheless proves once again to be furnished with a figure eminently capable of articulating and encoding the nature of that vast distance. The Virgilian Carthage is a space of newness and firstness, as well as of radical otherness and remoteness: the perfect place to stage the estranging, confounding, first confrontation-with-the-ultimate-other encounter in a new world that is the First Encounter with the ultimate Other in the New World.¹¹⁶

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¹¹⁴ There have been attempts to wallpaper over the perceived problem by converting it into an intensifier, e.g. '*valde*' (Servius); '*praecipue*' (Charisius). La Cerda (*ad loc.*) reports both but accepts neither.

¹¹⁵ Fittingly, '*polo*' in early modern Spanish was used as equivalent to 'hemisphere'. See n. 17 above.

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