Chapter One
The shaping of authorial intention in Classical antiquity

The introduction of this book has argued that reading conventions oriented towards what the author meant are older than scepticism towards authorial intention. The concept of intentional fallacy, launched in 1946, which shifted authority in interpretation away from the author towards the text, was used to illustrate that point. But that shift is not the only possible source for doubting whether authors have something relevant to say about their poems, as one of the oldest relevant texts for our quest indicates: Plato's (ca. 428 – 348 BC) *Ion*. The first discussions in which authorial intention played at least a certain role show us that not only authorial intention comes in different shapes, but also the scepticism towards it.

The cradle of secular authorial intention: Plato, Phrynichus, scholia

In antiquity, be it Greek or Roman, authorial intention is not a major topic. But of course it is touched upon when poetry, rhetoric and interpretation are discussed. One of the first sources is *Ion*, one of Plato's oldest Socratic dialogues, probably from around 394 BC (Flashar 2002, 66). In it, Socrates talks to the rhapsode Ion who has just won a prize for performing Homer in a contest at Epidauros. Departing from the classical question on authorial intention, Socrates holds in the opening of *Ion* explicitly that no rhapsode can be a good performer of epic poetry when he has not understood "what the poet meant". The singer must become the intermittent between the poet and the public, which is impossible without recognising what the poet was after, Socrates argues (cf. *Ion* 530c). When Socrates has made Ion confess that he is able to say many worthwhile things about Homer, but not about other poets, the dialogue comes to its central point from our perspective. A rhapsodist performing well does so *not* because of specific knowledge or expertise but because of divine inspiration, we are told. And that goes for the poet as well as for the public, as Socrates explains in comparing the production and reception of poetry to magnetism:

> Do you know that the spectator is the last of the rings which, as I am saying, receive the power of the original magnet from one another? The rhapsode like yourself and the actor are intermediate links, and the poet himself is the first of them. Through all these

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> the God sways the souls of men in any direction which he pleases, and makes one man hang down from another. (*Ion* 536a, transl. B. Jowett)

It is clear from this passage that Plato – at least the younger Plato – conceives the process of understanding, if it is done well, as a continuity in which the aspects author, text, medium and public are bound together in a way that leads to homogeneity between them. However, it is not the human author and his intentions that bind them together, but divine inspiration and the intentions of the Gods. The author is only the medium, giving way to something of which he is not the source, that he cannot steer, let alone control by will.

The same thought can be found in another of Plato's early dialogues, the *Apology*, with again Socrates speaking:

> I realized that it was not owing to wisdom that [the poets] compose their poems, but in virtue of some natural ability and inspiration, just as seers and prophets who also deliver many fine messages without knowing in the least what they mean. (*Apol.* 22c, transl. H. Tredennick)

The poet is not able to explain what the text is about since he is not the source of what seems to be his uttering. He is only the medium of the Gods, as the rhapsodist and the public are, all held together through divine forces, as through magnetism. Intention in the sense of a purposeful human action, in which an individual tries to establish with words a relation to some aspect outside the individual, is not part of this concept. The Muses are responsible for the "many fine messages" of poetry. From the perspective of this concept, it would make no sense to speak of authorial intention, let alone to speak of more or less pronounced individual messages which might be put on the bill of the author, not by himself, not by the intermittent as actors or singers, not by the spectators or readers. In that sense, what Homer (or the rhapsode, actor etc.) intended is irrelevant. But that is a completely different kind of scepticism towards authorial intention than the one after 1946 referred to in the introduction. It is one that ascribes intentions in the interpretation of literary text to Godly entities, not to human utterances of or about poetry. So a sceptic attitude towards human answers to the question "what the poet meant" in the oldest concepts of authorial intention we know is at its core an expression of the view of man as only an instrument in the hands of the Gods – also concerning poetry and interpretation.

But already at Plato's time, and within the writing of Plato himself, this view had to face a competing one. In it, the first outlines of authorial intention in a secular sense can be traced: Plato's later writings are dominated by a *younger* concept of mimetic poetry as a kind of craft originating in the work of the

poet as a maker of artworks. This constellation has been analysed by Margalit Finkelberg (1998, 1–33) as a poetic conflict between what she calls a traditional "poetics of truth" (as in *Ion*) versus a more recent "poetics of fiction", visible for example in Plato's *Phaedrus*, in which Socrates reflects on the function of writing: basically, writing only serves to remember the one who wrote about what he once knew (cf. *Phaedrus* 275a). Texts cannot answer questions and cannot contradict misunderstandings in their interpretation. Therefore writing is in need of the help of its "father", since it can neither resist nor help itself, Plato writes (cf. *Phaedrus* 275d). The metaphor of the father still leaves room for many interpretations, but what they do have in common is that a link of responsibility is established between the one who has written the text and the text itself – as a father is responsible for his child. Also from an intentional perspective, we can see a clear opposition between those who give no role at all to human authorial intention (divine inspiration, poet as an instrument, poetics of truth) on one side, and on the other authorial intention as part of the work of an author, basically on the level of an intentional composition according to the rules of the genre (poetry as "making", mimesis, poetics of fiction). Only within the second conception can the poet be held responsible for what he did.

This poetics was not invented by Plato – an early manifestation of this view on literature, authorship and interpretation can be found for example in the oldest trial against literature about which we have at least some information (Finkelberg 1998, 177–179). Herodotus (VI, 21) tells us that the playwright Phrynichus was taken to court because of his tragedy on the *Capture of Miletus*. Only one or two years after the destruction of the Ionian city of Miletus and the deportation of its surviving inhabitants by the Persians in 494 BC, Phrynichus turned these events into a tragedy for the stage to be performed during the Dionysia (the festival in honour of the god Dionysius probably established under the tyranny of Pisistratus in the second half of the sixth century BC, including a contest between dramatists). The effect of Phrynichus' play was that the entire theatre burst into tears. In consequence, Phrynichus was taken to court and the verdict was an eternal ban on the text never to be played again – which actually did work out, since it is lost. Furthermore, Phrynichus was held personally responsible for putting his text on the stage by being fined heavily (cf. Wilson 2000, 115f.).

But what exactly was Phrynichus fined for? Obviously not for a specific message: Herodotus does not say a word about Phrynichus' individual intentions with his text or a specific message attributed to it, like criticising political mistakes of the past, the political or military lack of assistance to Miletus, or how to deal with the Persian threat in his times. The legal procedure was clearly dominated by another perspective: presenting the bill for the tragedy's extreme

emotional effect on the public to the one who wrote it. The judicial responsibility of Phrynichus seems to have been about his violation of the performative rules of the tragedy, which can be summarised, for the sake of the argument, as showing in a controlled setting a disturbance and restoration of universal order. In any case, a tragedy should not lead to the extreme grief that Phrynichus caused with his way of dealing with the still fresh Athenian trauma of the killing and deportation of the closely related inhabitants of Miletus. Therefore, in the words of Herodotus, Phrynichus was punished "for reminding the Athenians of troubles close to home (*oikeia kaka*)". Obviously, Phrynichus had neglected "the safe distance" that makes intense emotion in a tragedy pleasurable and valuable for the audience (cf. Wilson 2000, 115).

In this constellation, Phrynichus was held responsible for the disturbance of Athenian order – but at the same time the ban and the fine for Phrynichus were seen as sufficient for restoring that very order. The verdict did not restrain Phrynichus from taking his role as a poet in the future. If we go by the list of plays attributed to him after the trial, he still contributed to the feast of the Dionysia and even won the competition after *The Capture of Miletus*. Furthermore there are no indications that he changed his ideas about playwriting fundamentally, since some ten years later, he returned to the "contemporary mode" in *Phoenician Women* – in opposition to the vastly dominant mythological mode (cf. Cartledge 1999, 24). Apparently Phrynichus had been held responsible for *having written* what caused a violation of the conventions of performing and watching tragedy (what Gisèle Sapiro would call "objective responsibility"), a predominantly formal and technical responsibility. He was apparently not held responsible for any specific *view* on the Greek world expressed in his tragedy (what Sapiro would call "subjective responsibility", cf. Sapiro 2011).

It is clear that with regard to responsibility and authorial intention, the trial shows a completely different concept of authorship than the divine one, traced above in Plato's *Ion* and *Apology*. It is one that comes close to contemporary secular ideas in the sense that authors can be held responsible for what they do, for example in literary trials (cf. Grüttemeier 2016), since at the basis of their action is a will to go public with what they wrote. Obviously, authorial intention is crucial for this concept of responsibility. From our perspective, authorial intention in this sense can even be said to be the tool with which poetry was taken out of the arms of the Gods, and put into the arms of humans. As the writings of Plato indicate, this constellation must be understood as a conflict between two opposing poetics over many centuries, and not finished around 400 BC, as traces can be discovered much later on. Even in Rome, Horace for example can still be found ridiculing the Sicilian poet Empedocles from the fifth century BC who thought himself godlike ("deus inmortalis haberi", *Ars Poetica* 464). Ob-

viously, the opposition between the two conceptions of poetry was one of competition over many centuries. But there can be little doubt of what became dominant, when we look at the practices of interpreting in Classical Greece.

This impression can be taken from a source that reaches back to the time of Plato and beyond, the so-called scholia. These are available through the whole of antiquity from the fifth century BC onwards. René Nünlist has recently systematically analysed the vast amount of these glosses on Classical texts for the first time. According to Nünlist, they offer "a very good insight" into how the critics actually made use of the scholarly tools in the daily training of rhetoricians and grammarians (Nünlist 2009, 2). The picture that can be taken from Nünlist's study shows that what dominates is a view on authorial responsibility, primarily in a formal and technical sense. Also in the scholia, authorial intention is not talked about extensively and explicitly. Although Nünlist says he pays attention to "the topics that are discussed prominently in the scholia" and that he will do so "under modern rubrics" (for example focalisation) (cf. Nünlist 2009, 2–5), a chapter on intention is absent from his book.

Yet, authorial intention can be said to be the ground on which most topics of the scholia are rooted. According to the scholia, intention can be characterised primarily as a compositional effort on the part of the authors, uncovered by the professional readers through the question "how exactly it is done" (Nünlist 2009, 68). Following that question, the topics that dominate the scholia accordingly range from plot (chapter 1, Nünlist 2009, 23–68) via focalisation (chapter 4, 116–134) to very detailed stylistic questions such as three-word hexameters or the increase in the number of syllables with each consecutive word (cf. Nünlist 2009, 221f.). The role assigned to the author with regard to all these and other formal aspects is giving "the text its particular shape and as such [he] is in control of things" (Nünlist 2009, 135). In other words: the author as he emerges from the scholia is someone whose formal and compositional choices are equivalent to what he intended to choose. The text in front of the reader is the result of those choices, and from the words on the papyrus the professional reader can tell what the author intended to do. What we have here seems to boil down to an intentional continuum between author, text and reader, with the author "in control".

This intentional continuum is primarily at work on the level of form and composition, given the "great interest that ancient scholars had in narrative technique in general and questions of structure in particular" (Nünlist 2009, 336f.). Also the scholia seem to be less interested in content matters, as we have seen in the Phrynichus trial, too. What the author intended on the content level is thematised mostly on the level of specific words: "It is quite often the case that the scholia simply identify what or who is 'meant' in the passages" (Nünlist 2009, 226). In other words, also on the content level the author is "in

control" by saying what he intends to say. This allows the good reader to tell from the text what the author "meant". The job of scholarly experts is apparently not to let their light shine on the views or messages of the text as a whole – at least we have no evidence for this.

Shaping the outlines of the Classical Greek concept of authorial intention: Aristotle

After this reconstruction of the birth – before the fifth century BC – of a secular concept of authorial intention in interpretation, in opposition to an older concept of divine inspiration, one would expect to find more elaborated views on the secular version in the decennia after Plato. Given the profound role rhetoric plays in literature and interpretation in antiquity (cf. Russell 1981, 114–128 et passim), Aristotle's treatise *On Rhetoric* from the fourth century BC is worth a closer look. It was written several decades after the *Republic* and the *Phaedrus*. Although intention is not explicitly part of the systematic terminological order within the three books of *On Rhetoric* (neither is it part of the index that George A. Kennedy (2007) has made for the English translation used here), there are some aspects of intention that can be reconstructed from Aristotle's text.

Intentionally speaking, Aristotle departs from a concept of humans in which having "the capacity and the will" to do something is equivalent to doing it: "for all act when ability to do so coincides with desire" (*Rhetoric* 1392b; 2.19.18; Kennedy 2007, 160). This fundamental role of will and desire is valid for rhetorical actions, too: "it is an inescapable presupposition of rhetoric that the speaker knows what he wants and has formulated to himself the message he wishes to convey" (Russell 1981, 116). Therefore, in the words of Aristotle, one can define rhetoric as "an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion" (*Rhetoric* 1355b; 1.2.1; Kennedy 2007, 37). This persuasion is the realisation of what Aristotle sees as the final intention, the *telos* of the three sorts of rhetoric he distinguishes: "deliberative" rhetoric (as in parliamentary speeches) aims at the "advantageous" instead of the harmful, "judicial" rhetoric at the "just" instead of the "unjust", and "epideictic" rhetoric, used for praising or blaming, aims at the "honourable" versus the "shameful" (*Rhetoric* 1358b, 1.3.5; Kennedy 2007, 49). This framework of intentionality has recently received sophisticated scholarly attention from a philosophical perspective (cf. Perler 2001; Caston 2005, 2007), aiming at "that feature of beliefs, desires, and other mental states, in virtue of which they are of or about something" in Plato, Aristotle and others (cf. Caston 2007). The focus here, however, is a different one,

guided by the question of to what extent we can reconstruct from *On Rhetoric* Aristotle's concept of authorial intention in the interpretation of texts.

Aristotle is most explicit about authorial intention in the context of the interpretation of laws. According to him, the interpreter should

> look not to the law but to the legislator and not to the word but to the intent [*dianoia*] of the legislator and not to the action but to the deliberate purpose [*prohairesis*] and not to the part but to the whole, not [at] what a person is now but what he has been always or for the most part. (*Rhetoric* 1374b; 1.13.17–18; Kennedy 2007, 100)

What Aristotle presents as guideline for the interpretation of laws is grounded on an argument for the contextualisation of the text of the law. According to Aristotle, when two interpretations of a law are in conflict, then the one arguing *only* with the "words" of the law is less persuasive as compared to one that can relate the words of the law to the legislator and his intent. Aristotle clearly conceptualises this role of authorial intention within a continuum that includes further contextual factors, such as biography ("the legislator", what a person "has been always or for the most part") and the whole situation in which someone uttered the words ("not [...] the action but [...] the deliberate purpose"). This contextualising further includes the words or sentences surrounding the law ("not [...] the part but [...] the whole"), as opposed to looking only at the words that cause uncertainty or dispute. More generally speaking, Aristotle argues for an interpretation on the basis of an intentional continuum of author, text, context and reader, in which biographical and other historical factors, combined with the words surrounding the passage under scrutiny, lead to better interpretations than looking at the "words" only. No opponent is mentioned explicitly. But what Aristotle attributes to the approach he finds less convincing is compatible with a poetics of divine inspiration and truth, uttered by Godly inspired actors: "the law", "words", "the action", "what someone is now". But that is clearly not what Aristotle has in mind with his secular model of interpretation on the basis of an intentional continuity, including relevant context factors.

Whereas Aristotle connects his model explicitly to the interpretation of laws only, there are quite some reasons to extend it to the interpretation of other texts as well. A strong case in point is that Aristotle himself in several places jumps from judicial to literary texts within the same argument: the basic rules of producing and interpreting both sorts of texts basically seem to be the same. For example, within the context of the arrangement (*taxis*) of a speech, Aristotle writes about the function of introductions: "As for the prooemia of judicial speeches, one should grasp that they have the same effect as the prologues of plays and the prooemia of epic poems". This effect is to present "a sample of the argument

in order that [the audience] may know what the speech is about and [their] thought not be left hanging". Or, even more intentionally formulated: "to make clear what is the purpose for which the speech [is being given]" (*Rhetoric* 1415a; 3.14.5–6; Kennedy 2007, 233). Obviously, for Aristotle judicial speeches and literary genres do not differ concerning the basic rhetorical aspects regarding intention. They are produced as texts with a purpose, and intentional steering of the reader or listener through the introduction is essential for the adequate reception of the texts – which is subsequently illustrated by Aristotle with short quotes from the first lines of Homer's epics and from Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*.

There are several passages in *On Rhetoric* from which the same osmotic conception concerning literary and judicial texts can be derived. Just to give one more, Aristotle distinguishes between two sorts of law, the one manmade and the other common in the sense of "natural". The latter is defined as follows:

> for there is in nature a common principle of the just and unjust that all people in some way divine, even if they have no association or commerce with each other, for example what Antigone in Sophocles' play seems to speak of when she says that though forbidden, it is just to bury Polyneices, since this is just by nature: 'For not now and yesterday, but always, ever / Lives this rule, and no one knows whence it appeared.' (*Rhetoric* 1373b; 1.13.2; Kennedy 2007, 97)

Again, Aristotle passes from the domain of law to that of literature and back again fluently: a line from a character in a tragedy is used as evidence for a factual claim about natural law. There is no reason to believe that in the interpretation of these lines Aristotle followed any other course concerning intention than this: the adequate characterisation of natural law has been understood by Sophocles, Sophocles intended to let Antigone articulate it in an appropriate context, Sophocles' intention is what his character in this play says and what must be read in it. In case of a dispute about these lines, Aristotle probably would have turned to the lines within their context of utterance, to the drama as a whole, to other tragedies by Sophocles and to what else is known about the character of Sophocles. In other words: he probably would have followed the model of authorial intention as outlined above with regard to the interpretation of law. Obviously, Aristotle has given in *Rhetoric* 1374b not a specific rule for interpreting laws, but a general model of interpretation, also for literature.

However, one must hold in mind that this generalisation towards literature is not argued for explicitly by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric*. If at all, such remarks most likely might be found in Aristotle's texts that focus on poets and poetics, especially in Aristotle's three books *On Poets*. These seem to have been "the main channel through which Aristotle explained his poetic theory to a wider public"

(Janko 2012, 390) with a powerful impact especially until the fourth century AD. At the same time *On Poets* probably was a major source for the *Poetics* itself. Yet, only fragments of *On Poets* exist – and the existing fragments do not touch upon intention, as far as I can see (cf. Janko 2012, 313–556). Therefore, in what follows, a closer look at Aristotle's *Poetics* shall be taken.

One must concede right from the start that although authorial intention in production and reception of poetry can be spotted in several places in the oldest poetics of mankind, its role is not centre stage and its outlines are not easy to reconstruct. For the sake of the argument, the *Poetics* can generally be characterised as an effort to clarify what mimetic art is, in which the genre of tragedy is discussed as exemplary. Consequently, most parts of the text deal with tragedy, especially from the angle of a wide notion of plot: the plot of tragedy is discussed first and at length, and from there on other genre aspects are touched upon: how to deal with actions, the presentation of the characters, the verbal shape, the forms of rhetorical argumentation in tragedy etc. (cf. *Poetics*, 1454a, 1456b). In dealing with these compositional requirements, authorial intention is sometimes explicitly mentioned in passing. For example, when the plot demands that someone unknown (or someone taken for someone else) is recognised as who he or she really is, then the best way of presenting this in tragedy is the way Sophocles has chosen in *Oedipus*. On the level of action, the recognition of who Oedipus really is has been left completely to what Aristotle calls "the combination of what is probable" through the acting persons themselves. Another, more "artless" way of dealing with the compositional problem of presenting a recognition on the stage might be to let the character say himself who he is, as for example when Orestes explicitly declares his identity to his not knowing sister in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*. Whatever a poet may have done, for Aristotle the choices on the level of plot and plot-related aspects are "what the poet wants" (cf. *Poetics* 1455a).

In general, one could hold that what the *Poetics* says about composition of the tragedy is what the author intended or at least should have intended. This also applies the other way round: what the poet actually has done in his text concerning composition is what he intended to do, for example with regard to the concept of catharsis (roughly, the purification of the audience from pity and fear through evoking pity and fear; i. e. the key feature of the tragedy according to Aristotle; cf. *Poetics* 1450a). Even if intention is not mentioned explicitly in this passage, there can be no doubt that catharsis and "tragic pleasure" is what the poet intends and should intend – though of course he can fail in his intention, as we have seen in the Phrynichus trial. Still, one has to conclude that in the process of writing poetry, authorial intention is for Aristotle a concept primarily on a technical and compositional level.

The most explicit mentioning of authorial intention in Aristotle's *Poetics* can be found in passages on the so-called Homer problems, referring to what seem to be inconsistencies or mistakes in Homer (cf. *Poetics* 1460a–1461b). Aristotle tries to systematically give "solutions" for these problems. One type of problems can be found on the linguistic level, where Aristotle defends Homer against criticism with alternative plausible readings of words in his epics. Here one finds sentences like "maybe Homer did not mean the mules, but the guardians", or: "he did not mean a distorted body but an ugly face" (*Poetics* 1461a). Obviously, for Aristotle, semantic and syntactical phenomena on the level of words or expressions, too, are intentional choices of the author, although they get less attention compared to choices about form and genre.

The same can be seen on the content level with regard to the options an author has regarding mimesis. According to Aristotle, an author can relate his work to reality in three ways: a representation of reality as how it is, a presentation of reality as how it should be, and a representation of how it is said to be. If someone criticises that an author does not write realistically, one might for example oppose that this was not the intention of the author because he wanted to present reality as how it should be:

> In general, the impossible must be justified by reference to artistic requirements, or to the higher reality, or to received opinion. (*Poetics* 1461b, transl. S.H. Butcher)

Such a way of arguing is clearly based on the idea that there is something like authorial intention outside the text and that the intention of the author is inherent in what he has chosen. Content is hardly touched upon, but if so, then it is used only in very general formulations ("show how it should be") and discussed only with regard to specific singular passages or words, not to the specific message of the text as a whole. Not only in Plato and the Phrynichus trial, also in Aristotle's explicit remarks on how to write a tragedy, the intention of the author nowhere comes near our contemporary ideas about expressing an individual view on aspects of reality in a work of art. Accordingly, William Allan and Adrian Kelly recently warned contemporary scholars not "to exaggerate the conscious political intentions of the poets" whose didactic function was never considered as "an explicit process" in which "Aeschylus, Sophocles, or Euripides consciously set out to endorse fifth-century Athenian values when they began to write a play" (cf. Allan and Kelly 2013, 87 f.). What they actually set out to do is probably close to what is generally seen as the function of this form of mass entertainment in fifth century Athens: appreciating the benefits of contemporary society rather than questioning the values of its audience, or, generally speaking, giving answers rather than asking questions: "tragedy aims to make mythological sense

of the audience's world, and does so in a way that is both appealing and pleasurable" (Allan and Kelly 2013, 87).

Having (or being ascribed) only very general intentions on the content level does not exclude, as we have seen, having (or being ascribed) rather specific intentions on the level of semantics and grammar or in relation to the kind of mimetic intention. The good critic – such as Aristotle – is able to identify these intentions of an established literary authority such as Homer, while those who criticise the author for wrong insights do not. Looked at this way, Aristotle's systematic reflections on the "problems and solutions" concerning possible faults in Classical texts contribute to building the specific knowledge a literary expert must have – on the basis of benevolence towards established literary authorities. Once the concept of literary texts as a result of human intentional actions is accepted, it gives the critic room to defend authors like Homer with his *assumed* intentions against criticism. Accordingly, the passages on the Homer problems can be seen as the conceptual basis for attributing more specific messages to parts of a text or to the text as a whole in the act of interpretation – more specific and individual than anything that Aristotle has explicitly said about authorial intention on the content level in *On Rhetoric* or in *Poetics*. As we will see later on in the Second Chapter, Aristotle's discussions of intention have paved the ground for the more privileged position of the individual author, for more individual messages and for more individual interpretations in post-Classical times.

In antiquity, the reception of the *Iliad* can be characterised as time and again trying to accommodate problematic parts of the canonical texts to contemporary demands – in accordance with the procedure we have reconstructed from Aristotle's *Poetics* on this point. Interpreters did so in reading the *Iliad* as the product of the intention of an author and in attributing plausible intentions to parts of the texts. These readings reach from Theagenes of Rhegium's allegorical interpretation of the battle of the Gods in the *Iliad* around 500 BC, to reading scientific and practical knowledge into parts of the text, including their own moral ideas, for example as Plutarch (ca. 46–120 AD) did regarding the concept of *aretê* (virtue) (cf. Finkelberg 2003). All these interpretations can be situated conceptually within the intentional continuum of author, text, context and reader. None of these interpretations signals any doubt that in the end they are about retrieving the intentions of Homer, be they obvious or hidden. This also applies for specific messages attributed to the text such as interpreting the whole of the *Iliad* according to the cosmological doctrines of Anaxagoras or interpreting the *Odyssey* as a poem about the fate of souls (cf. Finkelberg 2003, 154): it seems that all interpreters were convinced that they simply read what had to be read, on the basis of what was written.

This reconstruction of the dominant concept of authorial intention in interpretation is in tune with how Donald A. Russell has characterised criticism in antiquity in general. According to him and many others, throughout the Greco-Roman era, it was "the poet's business to give instruction of some kind" (Russell 1981, 84). The task of the critic was to unravel this instruction – "whether in factual knowledge or skill, or simply in the art of living" (ibid.) – from the text, assuming that this was the intention of the author. Already Heraclitus aimed in his critical remarks at "uncovering [...] the intention of the author", which was for Russell "the general assumption throughout antiquity": "ancient criticism was 'intentionalist'" (Russell 1981, 96 f.).

It is a typical example of modern intentional normativity and projection, though, that what sounds in the words of Russell as a description, is in fact a criticism of the "inadequacy of ancient criticism": in Russell's eyes, the ancient critics "could not do justice to the complex and sophisticated literature they were studying" (1981, 98). This justice Russell seems to seek in the wake of symbolism, autonomy of literature and a form of intentional fallacy. The judgment that ancient criticism "is fundamentally not equal to the task of appraising classical literature" (1981, 6) runs as a common thread through the whole of Russell's study. Accordingly, Russell cannot resist making a modern caricature of his object, for example when ancient critics are characterised as departing from the assumption that authors are "beginning with a message and embodying it in fiction" (1981, 97). That sounds more like polemics against a *roman à thèse* in modern times, but is not compatible with the concept of authorial intention reconstructed above, with is intentional focus primarily on genre conventions, composition, style, and words, accompanied by hardly disputable very general moral insights on the content level.

If we take a look back from this point to the predecessor of the Aristotelian concept of authorial intention (the concept of divine inspiration as the oldest answer to the question "what the poet meant"), it is striking that there are quite some overlaps between both views, despite all their differences. To start with, both conceptions share the idea of an intentional continuum between author, reader and text – be it Muses-driven or not. For both views it applies that to have one component of the continuum is to have all the others. However, Aristotle uses this intentional continuity concept now for a secular aim: as an instrument to reconstruct the most plausible interpretation in case of doubt. His guiding principle is contextualisation: of the passage within its textual surroundings, related to what is known about its author and the circumstances within which he acted.

Furthermore, both concepts do share the belief that moral knowledge and other insights can be found in poetry. Consequently, *human* responsibility for

texts inevitably leads to the new situation that the "many fine messages" (*Ion*) become part of dispute and changing consensus over time. When from this perspective parts of Homeric – already half a millennium old in Plato's times – or other canonical texts do not stand the contemporary test of offering "fine messages", then there are two major options. One is, as we saw above, reinterpreting the poets and giving "solutions" for what seems to be a moral problem, the other: correcting them. The *locus classicus* for the latter can be found in Plato's *Republic* (cf. *Rep*. 377) where he suggests supervising poets by selecting their good stories for use in the ideal state and to erase their bad ones. Both kinds of interventions, however, would be unconceivable with poetry whose source is divine. But what both options share with the older concept of divine inspiration is that all see Homeric and other poetry predominantly as a collective "encomium of virtue" (cf. Finkelberg 2003, 156). And in all cases, on the level of views on the world, in Greek antiquity the author as an individual remained nearly invisible – as have been the Muses per definition. Is the same valid for Rome?

How to avoid misreading: Cicero, Quintilian and Tacitus

Referring to the anecdote about the Pergamene scholar and diplomat Crates of Mallos, breaking his leg in Rome in 168 BC and then giving the first philological lectures to the eager Roman youth while recovering, Martin Bloomer has stated: "Romans receive literature and learning through an accidental, compulsory visitation" (cf. Bloomer 1997, 39). Whatever one thinks of this anecdote, it seems very likely that the Roman concept of intention in interpretation will be close to what we encountered in ancient Greece (cf. Schickert 2005, 123–127), and that the concept of Latinity (cf. Bloomer 1997) guarantees this closeness. The basic training rule in reading and writing in the Roman Empire was an orientation towards tradition to an extent that must seem alien to twenty-first century parents comparing their children's schools to their own, let alone to those of their parents. Departing from the question why Roman "schools and their prestige remain so impressively unchanged" in late antiquity for over 400 years, Robert A. Kaster points out that what from our view might seem like stagnation, was in the eyes of the Roman elite "nothing other than the stability of lasting achievement" and "a satisfaction with what was already effective" (Kaster 1997, 196). So it seems a safe guess that in Rome there must have been obvious traces of the model for interpreting texts that was shaped in ancient Greece.

One of the passages that come very close to what we have read in Aristotle can be found in Marcus Tullius Cicero's early handbook for public speeches, *De*

Inventione (ca. 84 BC). The parts that deal most explicitly with intention in interpretation are the judicial speeches in Book II, especially when talking about ambiguities in texts. For Cicero, controversy arises from ambiguities only when it is not clear what the author of the text has meant ("quid senserit scriptor, obscurum est", *De Inv.* II, 40, 116). Starting from a concrete example – a line from a testament leading to a dispute between two heirs – Cicero guides the good interpreter through several steps that should be taken: he should look at the preceding and the following passages, at the whole text, at other writings of the author, and at the biography of the author in order to corroborate his specific interpretation ("quod nos interpretamur") of the disputed passage of the testament. Summarising this part, Cicero thinks it easy ("facile") to conclude from the whole text ("ex omni scriptura"), from the character of the author ("ex persona scriptoris") and from the context (in Cicero's example of the testament: the other persons involved; "eis rebus, quae personis attributae sunt"), what is the most likely interpretation of the disputed passage. In Cicero's words: "quid veri simile sit eum voluisse, qui scripsit". A possible translation might be: what it is likely that the writer wanted; or more freely: when all these steps are taken, the most likely interpretation is what the author actually intended.

Cicero's guideline for rhetoricians can in general be seen as a blueprint for the interpretation of texts (cf. Krampe 1983, 197). This blueprint shows the conceptual continuity between author, text, context and reader familiar from the model we came across in the secular model in ancient Greece. When specific passages of a text are not clear – and, we might add, the author cannot be asked since he is dead – then the interpreter receives from Cicero a recipe for other steps that can be taken. The interpretation of a specific passage that takes into account the whole text and what is known about the author and the context of his utterance will lead to the most probable ("quid veri simile sit") interpretation. And this is what the author intended, according to Cicero ("voluisse, quid scripsit"). There is no doubt in *De Inventione* that this recipe will work: do your work well, and you get what the text and the author intended, Cicero seems to say.

Not only Cicero conceptualised the intentional continuum this way. In the first century AD, Quintilian (cf. *Instit. Orat.* VII, 9, 14) for example argued that when two interpretations are possible and at dispute, it is per definition impossible to settle the dispute on the level of the text ("scriptum") only. On that level both parties will be equal in case of a real ambiguity. A real ambiguity, Quintilian tells us, can sometimes be disambiguated when the possible interpretations are held against the question of what is more according to nature ("secundum naturam magis sermo"). When this fact check does not bring more clarity into what has been written or said, then what the interpreter *always* ("semper") has to

do is argue what is more equitable ("sit aequius") and according to the intention of the author, to what he wanted with what he said and wrote ("utrum is, qui scripsit ac dixit, voluerit"). Also Quintilian's concept of interpretation shares ideas with the Classical Greek model: the aspects author, text, context and reader should all point into the same direction concerning questions of intention. To reconstruct one well is to have all the others, too. Quintilian's rule is: when the text itself (mostly he gives examples from the judicial context such as wills, but sometimes also an example from Virgil) is ambiguous, turn to the other aspects "context" and "author" in order to solve the problem of interpretation – again, a perfect continuum.

When looking more closely at this continuity, it is obvious that in the process of interpretation, for Cicero and Quintilian the intention of the author seems on the same level as the other aspects of the continuum. There are no signs that authorial intention in interpretation is in any hierarchical sense different from text or context. It is "only" part of a continuity: the author wanted what is a probable interpretation of the text – think of the quote from Cicero. When looking at the examples, the model of communication seems to be one in which the interpreter just has to walk back along the road the author has taken in the other direction: when the author has chosen the right words in a specific situation in order to say something, then the interpreter must be able to arrive from specific words on the table and his knowledge of the context at the right intention of the author. In both directions, the procedure seems to be more about correct phrasing in a specific situation, and less about giving the contours of an individual view of the author. That impression is underlined by the fact that both recipes for dealing with debatable questions of interpretation are primarily situated on a judicial stage – a stage where in the end a factual decision has to be taken on the wrong or right interpretation of the words under scrutiny.

There is further evidence to confirm this impression. In the opening scene of Tacitus' *Dialogus de Oratoribus* (3,2) – published around 102 AD and with events placed in the 70s AD – a certain Maternus is visited by some friends, just after he has recited parts of his drama *Cato* in public – based on the life of Cato the younger, Julius Caesar's opponent. This public reading had irritated those in power and the whole city talked about it. The friends are surprised that they find Maternus with his *Cato* manuscript on his lap and one of them asks:

> [...] nihilne te [...], Materne, fabulae malignorum terrent, quo minus offensas Catonis tui ames? An ideo librum istum apprehendisti, ut diligentius retractares, et sublatis si qua pravae interpretationi materiam dederunt, emitteres Catonem non quidem meliorem, sed tamen securiorem?

> Has the talk of your detractors no terrors for you, Maternus? Does it not make you feel less enamoured of that exasperating *Cato* of yours? Or is it with the idea of going carefully over it that you have taken your drama in hand, intending to cut out any passages that may have given a handle for misrepresentation, and then to publish your *Cato*, if not better than it was at least not so dangerous? (qtd. from Leigh 2000, 469)

To which Maternus replies that he will write what he owes to himself ("quid Maternus sibi debuerit") so that the friend will recognise what he has heard ("agnosces quae audisti") – and that his next tragedy *Thyestes* will say everything that may have been left out ("omisit") by his *Cato*.

Let us first have a look at the interpretation of his friend: according to him, the reading of *Cato* by those who see it as political criticism of those in power might lose its ground by removing single passages of the play. But what is especially interesting from our perspective is that when talking to the poet about this critical political reading, he speaks of a distorted interpretation: "pravae interpretationi". The problem of interpretation is in the eyes of the friend not about a specific vision of Maternus on Cato or those in power, it is about right or wrong interpretation. Having said that, it must be added that when the friend – who is not an author himself, as far as we can tell from Tacitus – suggests to consider deleting certain passages of the text, he looks at authorial composition in a more gradual or maybe even strategic way. Deleting some passages might make the *Cato* "if not better than it was at least not so dangerous", because then the distorted interpretations are depraved of their textual foundations. Apart from that, the non-offending interpretation is the right one according to the friend, since the interpreters with the "wrong" interpretation are seen as evil-minded detractors ("fabulae malignorum").

On a conceptual level of authorial intention, Maternus seems to adhere to a similar view on intention and interpretation, but possibly a different one on intention and composition. First of all, he emphasises that he writes in the light of what he owes to himself – "quid Maternus sibi debuerit". But what he owes to himself is obviously not a specific vision on *Cato* or those in power. In case the published version of *Cato* should leave something unsaid, his next tragedy *Thyestes* will say it ("Quod si qua omisit Cato, sequenti recitatione Thyestes dicet", *Dial. Orat.* 3,3). There is not a word about a vision (be it critical, affirmative, or neither), it is only about saying or not saying. This attitude lends the greatest urgency and importance to the words uttered – and it implies also that what is uttered is the result of perfect and sincerest intentional care of the poet. Given this background it is plausible that Maternus is not even thinking about deleting whole passages: what he wrote on *Cato* was what had to be written. So his poetics seems to be one of a hard-working poet who presents his texts

only after extensive revising. This is why his friends find him with his *Cato* on his lap, still working even on the version that had already passed enough revisions to be read in public. Maternus is busy getting *Cato* finished for publication ("atque ideo maturare libri huius editionem festino") in order to be able to work on his *Thyestes* with his mind free.

Interpretation and intention in this dialogue are practiced in a different way to what the twenty-first century is used to. In Rome, both seem to be framed primarily in oppositions of right or wrong phrasing. The intention of the author is to write down what must be written and to keep on revising the words on the page. Once he has published his text, there is basically only one reading of the text, which is the right reading – and not the author's individual reading as opposed to contesting others'. When the author has not made mistakes in writing and composing, and nevertheless fundamentally other interpretations occur, then these divergent readings must be plain wrong and/or evil-minded towards the author: in our example in the eyes of his friend and of Maternus himself. All this is different from a view in which intention and interpretation are framed in terms of more or less plausible interpretations, of individual intentional views, or in terms of more or less hidden individual criticism of those in power: nothing points in Tacitus' story into that direction.

The relevance of this distinction can be seen in much recent literary criticism. Matthew Leigh for example wonders why Maternus is about to write a *Thyestes* – a tragedy "on the woes of ancient Mycenae" – in first century Rome. This is

> unclear until one notes the recurrent tendency of a succession of Roman writers from Ennius and Accius onwards to use this theme, and in particular the psychopathic rule of Atreus, to evoke the perils of autocracy. (Leigh 2000, 469)

Attributing critical intentions to Maternus' *Cato* and *Thyestes* is definitely compatible with contemporary views on the role of writers – but this view ignores that neither the text nor the Roman historical context corroborate this view. What is more: the claim that a *Thyestes* must be placed in the tradition "to evoke the perils of autocracy" is by far *not* as clear as it is presented. Think for example of the *Thyestes* written by Varius for the occasion of the triumph of Augustus in 29 BC that glorified the deeds of Augustus and Agrippa. Varius wrote this play in a way that pleased the emperor since he rewarded him with a substantial amount of money (cf. Schickert 2005, 17). Obviously, contemporary scholars find it hard to resist projecting back in time current individual, critical views on an unread play.

The same thought comes to mind when for example Christina S. Kraus (2000, 450) attributes to "fictional Maternus" a "delight" in "manipulating de-

clamatory themes [...] to push the boundaries out a little further each time" in "an exciting, intellectually challenging game". Many writers contemporary to Kraus could be subsumed under this characterisation. But in the light of what was argued above, it seems unlikely that this would have been compatible with the conception of authorial intention in Classical Rome – let alone with the intentions of an individual Roman 2000 years ago.

Summarising, there is quite some plausibility for the claim that, as in Greece, also in Classical Rome intention does not play a very pronounced role. Though there is no doubt in our sources that it exists outside the text, in the regular utterance authorial intention is what the text says in a specific context. Authorial intention does not seem to have a privileged position in interpretation. From this perspective, authorial intention is much closer to correct phrasing and understanding than it is to a more or less plausible reconstruction of an individual authorial message. However, one might raise the question of to what extent texts for the training of rhetoricians can be taken as exemplary for the domain of poetry. Therefore, a closer look should be taken at the text that in Roman antiquity was the most explicit concerning writing and reading literature, and by far the most seminal: Horace's letter to Piso and his sons about poetry that came to be known under the title *De Arte Poetica* or *Ars Poetica*.

How to write and read: Horace

In his *Poetics* – published probably shortly before his death in 8 BC (cf. Nisbet 2007, 20) – Horace offers conceptual frames for what has been observed in the texts of the rhetoricians. First of all, for Horace the core of writing poetry and being a poet is knowing how to put the right words in the right place: "scribendi recte sapere est et principium et fons" (*Ars Poetica 309*). This writing rightly ("scribendi recte") is guideline and source ("principium et fons") and leads to works that find their strength and beauty in verbal elegance and clarity of composition. On the content level, this means that the poet "just says now what has to be said just now" ("ut iam nunc dicat iam nunc debentia dici", *Ars Poetica* 43) – a formulation that seems congenial to what we have attributed to Maternus above. Also for Horace, writing as a poet is primarily a technical thing concerning words and their composition in a specific situation, and not about individual views: there is not a word in and around these passages about *what* exactly has to be said.

Many passages are used by Horace to emphasise that the struggle with words, metre, composition etc. of *recte scribere* is identical with first of all one thing: hard work. When Horace acknowledges that the craft of the poet is noth-

ing without some genius ("ingenium"), it is for him even more true the other way round (cf. *Ars Poetica* 411). Therefore his major advice for the two sons of Piso is that, after having written something, they should present it to Maecius (a competent critic), to their father and to Horace, and then: let it rest for nine years. What's not yet published, can be deleted – once the words are in the world, they can never be taken back, Horace argues (*Ars Poetica* 385–390). This is not only advice for the youths, it is Horace's conviction that this is what every poet should do, and what especially Roman writers have *not* done sufficiently in the past:

> Nec virtute foret clarisve potentius armis
> quam lingua Latium, si non offenderet unum
> quemque poetarum limae labor et mora. (*Ars Poetica* 289–291)
>
> Nor would Latium be more supreme in valour and glory of arms than in letters, were it not that her poets, one and all, cannot brook the toil and tedium of the file. (Fairclough 1978a, 475)

Rome would be as powerful through its language as it is now through its men's courage and arms, if poets had not disliked repeatedly revising their texts. Self-criticism in connection with working hard on the poem is the only road to good poetry, Horace tells us, and gives as a rule to refrain from any poem that has not been the object of many erasures on the wax tablet for many days, and of which the perfect polish has not been checked ten times (*Ars Poetica* 292–294). Again, for Horace, this revision is not about refining one's vision on the world. The working on the text is above all about detecting and eliminating mistakes in the composition of words, about signalling weak verses, deleting unnecessary ornaments, elucidating what is not clear enough, criticising ambiguity ("arguet ambigue dictum") etc. (cf. *Ars Poetica* 445–453). This expertise of the good poet and the good critic enables them to distinguish between right and wrong in *recte scribere*, as the references show to the exemplary critic Quintilius and the words put into his mouth. When Quintilius detects ill-made verses ("male tornatos versus"), he orders to correct ("corrige") or, after several efforts have been in vain, even to delete them and start over again. Horace recommends this practice with his *Ars Poetica* as a whole (cf. Holzberg 2009, 214–220), but also most explicitly in verses in which he calls the incriminated passages an offence ("delictum", cf. *Ars Poetica* 438–444). The goal and the final intention of the author must be to write in the right way and the good reader will be able to tell from the text where the author succeeded and where he failed. But what is said explicitly about intentional actions of authors in the *Ars Poetica?*

The word "intentio" itself or its variations do not occur in the text. What is found can be divided over three kinds of conscious acts aiming at specific effects. The first sort of intention is connected with the formal and technical efforts of the poet as outlined above, and again connected to the poet as a craftsman working hard on artistic form. Such an artist – in this case a painter – might for example intend ("cupit") to give more effect to a simple object such as a painted wood by inserting a dolphin, or more effect to stormy waves by painting a wild pig into them (cf. *Ars Poetica* 29–30). It is clear from Horace's introduction that this intention, formal as it may be, is intending the wrong thing, since his rule is whatever you want ("vis") to make, make it simple and one ("denique sit quod vis, simplex dumtaxat et unum", *Ars Poetica* 23).

There can be no doubt that, for Horace, the poet does have intentions outside the poem, wrong and right ones. Wrong ones can be avoided when poets – and the sons of Piso – learn what they should strive for instead. This includes clear rules like the ones quoted above or similar ones, for example: a poet should choose a topic according to his power (*Ars Poetica* 178), the Greek habit of consequently sticking to the metre should be followed day and night (*Ars Poetica* 268–269) etc. Still, having the right intentions concerning the formal side of the poem is not enough, since the literary product can fall short of its author's intentions, or these intentions may cause collateral artistic damage: if I want to be brief ("brevis esse laboro"), Horace writes, I become difficult to understand ("obscurus fio", *Ars Poetica* 25–26). In such a constellation, all a poet can do leads us back to Horace's basic principle of being a poet: *recte scribere* – try to write in the right way and keep on revising, whatever it may take.

The second kind of intention that is discussed in the *Ars Poetica* is about aiming at emotions and empathy. The most famous passage concerns Horace's rule that if a poet wants to make a reader cry ("si vis me flere"), the one speaking must have suffered himself before ("dolendum est primum ipsi tibi", *Ars Poetica* 102–103). The intention to shake the hearts of the ones listening with words ("animum auditoris agunto") is for Horace what poetry can and should do. But this goal is not easy to achieve and can be missed in many ways when the poet violates or forgets the rule that it is our inner disposition, shaped by nature according to circumstances ("format enim natura prius nos intus ad omnem fortunarum habitum"), that is the source of what we say or do (cf. *Ars Poetica* 108–109). Poets can therefore create faults when a gap falls between the words and the speaker, be it because of speaking a role badly ("male mandata loqueris"), of a mismatch between words and the expression on the face of the one speaking, or a mismatch between the words and the character speaking. In such cases, the intention of moving the audience will fail (cf. *Ars Poetica* 99–118).

Finally, there are also passages about desirable intentions concerning the view on the world that the reader or listener should take from poetry. As general and vague as they may be, they can be subsumed under the label of general moral intentions, expressed in a nutshell in Horace's well-known metonymic programme of mixing the useful with pleasure, *utile dulci:* the poets either want to teach or to delight or both ("aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae", *Ars Poetica* 333 – 334). However, if after these lines one would expect programmatic reflections or at least examples of what should be regarded as useful and what should be taught, one will be referred back again to how things must be said: whatever your advice may be ("quidquid praecipies"), Horace continues, be brief ("esto brevis"), so that your readers quickly get what you are after ("ut cito dicta percipiant animi dociles") and faithfully stick to what you said ("teneantque fideles", cf. *Ars Poetica* 335 – 336). For Horace, authorial intention in poetry is not primarily about specific views and individual messages, it is about how to formally and technically present in a correct way what the poet is trying to say.

When one looks at the examples given by Horace elsewhere in his *Poetics* for what is *utile*, a possible explanation for the vague contours of intention on the content level comes into sight. This may be detected in what seems to be a basic moral homogeneity of the Roman view on the world, despite all jealous contests of philosophical schools (cf. Mayer 1986). Look for example at the function of the chorus in drama:

> ille bonis faveatque et consilietur amice
> et regat iratos et amet pacare timentis,
> ille dapes laudet mensae brevis, ille salubrem
> iustitiam legesque et apertis otia portis,
> ille tegat commissa deosque precetur et oret,
> ut redeat miseris, abeat Fortuna superbis. (*Ars Poetica* 196 – 201)
>
> It should side with the good and give friendly counsel; sway the angry and cherish the righteous. It should praise the fare of a modest board, praise wholesome justice, law, and peace with her open gates; should keep secrets, and pray and beseech the gods that fortune may return to the unhappy, and depart from the proud. (Fairclough 1978a, 467)

It will not be too bold to see in this list of tasks of the chorus also a list of moral intentions Horace would expect generally – in parts or in the text as a whole – in poetry that counts as *utile*. From today's perspective, two things are striking in this list. First, the focus lies on encouraging in very general terms behaviour by citizens that is regarded as ethically desirable. This concerns pretty basic things like a positive attitude, advising, reasoning, calming, praising, keeping secrets, praying etc. Second, the absence of any form of criticism or even a critical

attitude towards authorities in any field whatever is striking. Instead, the list is about a well-minded attitude to worldly and religious authorities, but also about praising Roman heroic acts ("celebrare domestica facta", *Ars Poetica* 287). The only shade of criticism regards an unwanted individual character disposition: pride ("superbis"). If this is what should be "taught" by poets, the underlying worldview must be rather homogenous, indeed. And in such a context, it seems plausible that Horace in his *Ars Poetica* is primarily concerned about how poets say things as well as about what should be their formal and topical intentions. Authorial intentions in terms of an individual "worldview" are not part of his argument. This is demonstrated most clearly with a similar list that combines moral intentions with artistic skill:

> qui didicit, patriae quid debeat et quid amicis,
> quo sit amore parens, quo frater amandus et hospes,
> quod sit conscripti, quod iudicis officium, quae
> partes in bellum missi ducis, ille profecto
> reddere personae scit convenientia cuique. (*Ars Poetica* 312–316)
>
> He who has learned what he owes to his country and his friends, what love is due a parent, a brother, and a guest, what is imposed on senator and judge, what is the function of a general sent to war, he surely knows how to give each character his fitting part. (Fairclough 1978a, 477)

All these moral expectations fit perfectly into the gist of the list earlier given. But what is even more important, Horace connects these possible intentions with a poetic rule that reminds us again where the focus of the *Ars Poetica* lies: once you have found your topic, if you are a good poet and work hard, words will follow easily ("verbaque provisam rem non invita sequentur", *Ars Poetica* 311). Horace reformulates here Cato's famous "rem tene, verba sequentur". Poetry is primarily about writing the right words in a specific situation, it is not an individual view on content or moral, let alone a critical one.

The *Ars Poetica* does confirm the impression formulated earlier that in dealing with literature in Rome, the authors and their intentions are part of a continuum connecting the intention to be taken from the text, the context and what the readers understand as intentions. There are no signs that the intention of the author is in any way a privileged point of orientation in interpretation. This goes along with – from today's perspective – a not very pronounced interest in what the author as an individual is saying in specific passages. That view is corroborated in general terms by Paul Veyne, in his effort to characterise what antiquity did or did not understand when someone talked or wrote about an "I":

> No ancient, not even the poets, is capable of talking about himself. Nothing is more misleading that the use of 'I' in Greco-Roman poetry. [...] He speaks in the name of all and makes no claim that his readers should be interested in his own personal state of mind. To talk about oneself, to throw personal testimony into the balance, to profess that personal conviction must be taken into account provided only that it is sincere is a Christian, indeed an eminently Protestant idea that the ancients never dared to profess. (Veyne 1987, 231f.)

The role of authorial intention in antiquity concerning content is basically a collective moral one, on the level of the production of poetry as on that of its reception.

This impression, derived here basically from some exemplary passages and a closer look at Horace's *Poetics*, is also in tune with what the *Thesaurus linguae Latinae* tells us under "intentio". The meaning concerning interpretation roughly hovers between "plan" (VII, 1, 2120, 30 – 2121, 27) and the general sense or the gist of what authors say (VII, 1, 2121, 28 – 44). From a Roman intentional viewpoint, literary authors do have a general plan, but this plan is primarily a technical one about which words to write in a specific combination and composition (cf. Vogt-Spira 2008, 32f.). Concerning content, the author's *intentio* can be summarised in a general sense, but this authorial intention remains without sharp edges and very osmotic. It seems that it is more about generally accepted moral *faits divers* or a hardly contestable moral summary, not about an individual moral message, neither in parts nor in the literary text as a whole. Compared to our twenty-first century world, the difference to that apparently rather homogenous Roman world of production and interpretation of literature – in which the principle rule of being an author is expressed as "just to say what has to be said" – can hardly be emphasised enough (cf. Mayer 2003). In order to illustrate the relevance of this difference for contemporary scholarship and the analytic applicability of a historical perspective on concepts of intention in general, a brief glance at the reception of Virgil's *Aeneid* shall be taken.

The reception of Virgil's *Aeneid* from the perspective of intention

The choice of the *Aeneid* as a case for a historical analysis of concepts of intention in interpretation with regard to Classical Rome is not completely arbitrary. What makes this case a very suitable one is that impressive groundwork has been done already, notably with the publication of *Critical Assessments of Classical Authors* on Virgil by Philip Hardie (1999a and 1999b) and with some studies reconstructing parts of the reception history of the *Aeneid* in depth (for example

Comparetti 1892; Williams 1969; Wlosok 1973; Martindale 1993; Kallendorf 2007; Burkard 2010; Perkell 2014).

The *Aeneid* itself offers only very vague indications concerning the intention of its author. However, there is one passage in which a remark on the effect of the text is made, related to an episode in which two young Trojan warriors, Nisus and Euryalus, go out of their surrounded camp at night in order to support the mission of Aeneas, but are killed in action (*Aeneid* IX, 176 – 445). The episode ends with the verses:

> Fortunati ambo! si quid mea carmina possunt,
> nulla dies umquam memori vos eximet aevo,
> dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum
> accolet imperiumque pater Romanus habebit. (*Aeneid* IX, 446 – 449)
>
> Happy pair! If augh my verse avail, no day shall ever blot you from the memory of time, so long as the house of Aeneas shall dwell on the Capitol's unshaken rock, and the Father of Rome hold sovereign sway! (Fairclough 1978c, 143)

If all works out well, Virgil writes, the *Aeneid* ("si quid mea carmina possunt") will save these two from being forgotten. In other words: Virgil articulates the intention that his verses should erect a lasting memorial for the two brave youngsters. Such a goal fits perfectly in the range of general intentions we derived above from Horace's *Ars Poetica*. But however courageous the two may have been, Virgil talks here about rather marginal characters of whom nothing else is known except what is told in the less than 300 verses of the *Aeneid* about them. Therefore, from our perspective, more important than their actions and character is the explicit connection of their memorising to the duration of the house of Aeneas ("domus Aeneae") – which rules at the moment of publication of the *Aeneid* in the person of Augustus (cf. *Aeneid* I, 286 – 288). Assuming the intentional continuity between author, text and reader as outlined above, it is more than likely that a Roman reader consequently will have taken the memory intentions expressed explicitly concerning Nisus and Euralyus in the *Aeneid* as a regular function of poetry in general – exemplarily related in this passage to the two youngsters. From here, it is more a syllogism than an interpretation to suppose that Roman readers will have taken the *Aeneid* as a whole for a praise of Augustus. Take for example the prophecy of Anchises in the underworld to his son Aeneas:

> hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti saepius audis,
> Augustus Caesar, divi genus, aurea condet
> saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva

> Saturno quondam, super et Garamantas et Indos
> proferet imperium [...]. (*Aeneid* VI, 791–795)
>
> This, this is he, whom thou so oft hearest promised to thee, Augustus Caesar, son of a god, who shall again set up the Golden Age amid the fields where Saturn once reigned, and shall spread his empire past Garamant and Indian [...]. (Fairclough 1978b, 561–563)

This man, Augustus – who has been promised by fate, a son of the Gods, who will bring the Golden Age back to Latium and who is the Emperor at the time of publication – receives in the *Aeneid* an epos that relates him back to another favourite of the Gods, the Trojan hero Aeneas: if the power of Virgil's songs is sufficient ("possunt"), the *Aeneid* will be an eternal memorial for and praise of Augustus as long as the House of Aeneas rules in Rome, one could say with the lines on Nisus/Euralyus (*Aeneid* IX, 446–449) in mind.

Apart from this one passage on Nisus/Euralyus, no explicit remarks are made on the intention of the author *within* the *Aeneid* (cf. Holzberg 2006, 188). This very general praise of memorable acts fits into the conceptual outlines around intention as reconstructed. Also Suetonius' first biography of Virgil – written more than 100 years after his death – embeds the text into a context in which Virgil was personally close to Augustus and in which Augustus himself ordered after Virgil's death in 19 BC that the not yet finished *Aeneid* should be published by Virgil's heirs, apparently in significant numbers (cf. Schickert 2005, 59 f., 22): a plausible context for a memorial intent.

More pronounced documents on the reception of the *Aeneid* with regard to intention are available from the fourth century onwards. One of the earliest commentaries on the *Aeneid* is the one by the grammarian Servius from around 400, which is quite explicit concerning authorial intention by saying that when you introduce an author, seven things have to be mentioned by the grammarian: from, one, the life of the author to, seven, the explanation of words and sentences. Number four in Servius' list is "scribentis intentio", authorial intention (cf. Servius 2015, 26). As a good teacher, in the introduction to his commentary Servius discusses each of the seven points he mentions, ascribing under the fourth aspect a dual intention to Virgil: "Intentio Vergilii haec est Homerum imitari et Augustum laudare a parentibus" (Servius 2015, 28) – it is Virgil's intention to imitate Homer and to praise Augustus by going back to his ancestry.

Both intentions can be traced easily in the *Aeneid* itself, Servius explains. Concerning the praising of Augustus, Servius argues with the family line running via Augustus' mother, who was the daughter of Julia, who in turn was the sister of Julius Caesar, and from there on back to the son of Aeneas, Julus: "ut confirmat ipse Vergilius 'a magno demissum nomen Iulo'" (Servius 2015, 28) – which is

confirmed by Virgil himself when he says "name coming upon him from the great Julus".

Accordingly, already the first verse of the *Aeneid* "Arma virumque cano" – about wars and the man I sing – can be read as indicating the enormous influence of Homer: "arma" points not only to the wars of Aeneas after his landing in Italy, but also to the battles around Troy and therefore to the *Iliad*, and "virum" not only to the wanderings of Aeneas, but to those of Odysseus in the *Odyssey*, too. Consequently, the first line of the *Aeneid* can be seen as preluding that the first six books of its twelve are *Odyssey*-like, while the last six books are *Iliad*-like. In other words: Virgil aims at "Homerum imitari" – to imitate Homer.

Of course Servius was not the only commentary on Virgil and these commentaries differ – but hardly concerning authorial intention. Tiberius Claudius Donatus for example argues around 430 AD that *rhetoricians* should teach about Virgil (and not *grammarians* like Servius), but also *his* intentional frame was that Virgil praised Augustus through Aeneas (cf. Servius 2004, xviii). So it seems that *intentio* as "plan" or "general sense" draws the outlines of the early reception of the *Aeneid:* the plan to imitate Homer and to praise Augustus via Aeneas. Roughly speaking, one could draw a line in which Servius' remarks on intention are recycled by many scholars in the centuries to come (cf. Casali and Stok 2008, 194 – 261; Comparetti 1892) until today, with Niklas Holzberg (2006, 56 – 61, 129 – 210) as a recent German example:

> On the one hand the poet wanted, I think, to present to his contemporary public literary entertainment on a high level. On the other, he obviously wanted to express his esteem for the politics of the first man of the state in which he lived, and connect this to the praise of Augustan Rome. (Holzberg 2006, 8; *my translation, RG*)

Similar contemporary interpretations in British-American reception are by Francis Cairns (1989), Karl Galinsky (1996) and Joseph D. Reed (2007). Galinsky for example holds that "the *Aeneid* does not present abstract ideals but was meant to be true to Roman life. This truthfulness or Roman realism is ennobled precisely by the poetic richness of Vergil's allusions to both the philosophical and the Homeric traditions" (qtd. from Hardie 1999b, 454). Of course, different accents can be given to authorial intention, basically on a scale between political content ("Augustum laudare") and artistic form ("Homerum imitari"). But what is also important here is that over time these basic intentions seem to turn from general to specific, from collective moral values to more individual views.

To illustrate this impression with a more or less arbitrary jump in time: the British reception in the early seventeenth century for example was most interested in "Augustum laudare". But at the same time it connected this praise of the

Roman Empire and its values with, in the words of Charles Martindale, "the merits of royalism and one-man rule" (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 29) – a rather specific and contemporary British message of the time. Concerning the artistic tradition, Richard Heinze's *Virgils epische Technik* from 1901 for example clearly emphasises Virgil's artistic intention ("künstlerische Intention") in very specific textual solutions of the many formal problems that the *Aeneid* had to face. More than a dozen of the 47 articles reprinted by Philip Hardie in his documentation of the reception of the *Aeneid* in the twentieth century explicitly or implicitly refer to Heinze, including for example efforts from the 1970s to explain with Virgil's *künstlerische Intention* such questions as "Why Did Venus Wear Boots?" in the *Aeneid* (1.314 f.) (cf. Hardie 1999b, 59 – 75). These artistic intention problems can arise for example from the fact that Virgil had decided to include a set of games into his epic, and then had to face such questions as: who would hold them, in whose honour, where exactly in the *Aeneid* should they take place etc. But Virgil's more specific artistic intention can also be shown in his artistic control of the Dido episode, including Virgil's amazing ability for empathy with victims (cf. Hardie 1999a, 2 f.). While all interpretations, as already mentioned, agree that authorial intention exists outside the text and that normally author, text, context and reader do form an intentional continuum, there seems to be a tendency over the course of time towards attributing more specific individual intentions to Virgil and *Aeneid* than Servius did. From our perspective, this indicates a gradual shift in the domination of more individual concepts of authorial intention from the intentionally less outspoken Classical model – at least from the Renaissance onwards.

Yet, this is definitely not the whole reception history from an intentional perspective. It seems to be only one half of it, since according to the German classicist Gregor Vogt-Spira one of the key questions of classicists is whether the *Aeneid* is pro- or anti-Augustan ("staatstragend oder insgeheim doch antiaugusteisch", Vogt-Spira 2008, 28). Vogt-Spira does not give any historical or other qualifications for his claim. Therefore, combining the 1946 intentional watershed (intentional fallacy) touched upon in the introduction of the present book, with the massive homogenous evidence around a pro-Augustan intention given above, we might dare to predict that anti-Augustan interpretations of the *Aeneid* as opposed to Virgil's authorial intentions will not be found before 1946 in the interpretations of classicists. In fact, as far as I can see, this is the case.

The starting point of such an opposition is generally located in the pro-Augustan reading of the *Aeneid* by Adam Parry in an essay dating from 1963. Parry distinguishes between the traditional "explicit message of the *Aeneid*" and "a different suggestion" carried by the last books. This different suggestion was "that the formation of Rome's empire involved the loss of pristine purity of

Italy" (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 52). This loss triggers an ambiguity between "the public glory of the roman achievement" and "the terrible price one must pay for this glory": "We hear two distinct voices in the *Aeneid*, a public voice of triumph, and a private voice of regret" (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 63). In this polyphony, the sympathy of Parry is with the private voice:

> The *Aeneid* enforces the fine paradox that all the wonders of the most powerful institution the world has ever known are not necessarily of greater importance than the emptiness of human suffering. (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 64)

There are quite some signals that, intentionally speaking, the foundations of this interpretation are close to the concept of intentional fallacy of the New Critics. To begin with, there is circumstantial evidence such as allusions to Cleanth Brooks' *The Well-Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* and to other New Critical tropes (cf. Hardie 1999a, 19). In addition, there are passages in which Parry tries to liberate the meaning of the poem from traditional restrictions of historical authorial intention. He warns for example "not to let orthodox interpretations of the *Aeneid* obscure our sense of what it really is" (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 53). And what the *Aeneid* "really is", is felt by the *modern* reader:

> The nostalgia for the heroic and Latin past, the pervasive sadness, the regretful sense of limitation of human action in a world where you've got to end up on the right side or perish [...]: all this I think is felt by every attentive reader of the poem. (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 53)

Nevertheless, what most "orthodox interpretations" have been doing is putting forth a hypothetical "Roman reader" against this "sense" of what the *Aeneid* "really is". This historical reader had to correct contemporary impressions: "*He* would have taken the poem ultimately as a great work of Augustan propaganda", and this hypothetical Roman reader would also have "clapped his hands when Aeneas abandons the overemotional Dido":

> Generations of Latin teachers have felt it necessary to defend Aeneas from the charge of having been a cad. Modern readers are romantic, but a Roman reader would have known that Aeneas did the right thing. So the student is asked to forsake his own experience of the poem for that of a hypothetical Roman. (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 60 f.)

Parry's turning away from history and from author-based historical readings, while at the same time upgrading the importance of contemporary readings of "the student" and his "own experience" in opposition to "orthodox" readings by literary historians do form clear parallels with Wimsatt and Beardsley's claim quoted above that the poem "belongs to the public". For Parry, too, the in-

tention of the historical author is not "desirable", at least not when it is used to correct and overrule contemporary readings.

Parry's interpretation triggered many similar ones to come, for example Wendell Clausen's article "An Interpretation of the *Aeneid*" only one year later, 1964: "But there is another reason why the *Aeneid* moves us: its larger structure enlists our sympathies on the side of loneliness, suffering, defeat" (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 69). Pointing in the same direction, Michael Putnam held in 1965 that Aeneas' killing of the already defeated Turnus reduces Aeneas to the level of his enemies and compromises "his moral authority and therefore the legitimacy of empire" (cf. Perkell 2014, 1). Many similar interpretations that stress defeat, loss, suffering and unethical behaviour on the side of Aeneas/Augustus can be found in the wake of Parry's essay, for example in Gian Biago Conte's *The Rhetoric of Imitation* (1986) with his explicit conceptual choice for Umberto Eco's *intentio operis* in order to show that the *Aeneid* aims at "freeing language from its ideological fixity"(qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 28; cf. Hardie 1999b, 336–344). In all these cases, a clear devaluation of the importance of authorial intention can be observed, accompanied by a corresponding growing importance of views that contemporary readers attribute to the text. These interpretations are explicitly or implicitly based on concepts close to intentional fallacy and, I would add, would not have been regarded as legitimate ones before the emergence of such concepts in scholarship.

The same historical correlation between the introduction of a new concept of intention in interpretation and corresponding interpretations of the *Aeneid* could be shown regarding more recent work employing a poststructuralist concept of intentionality: for example Don Fowler who, from a deconstructivist perspective, turns against intentional fallacy readings in the wake of Parry and warns that to "praise the *Aeneid* for its resistance to power can be seen as a way of underestimating that power, and thus reinforcing it". Instead, he argues that the scholar should head for "creating problems rather than solving them", for "confusing rather than clarifying" (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 318). For other poststructuralist readings see David Quint (1989, in Hardie 1999b, 117–157) or Alessandro Barchiesi (1994, in Hardie 1999a, 324–344) but poststructuralism is not the point here. The point is that the reconstruction of the reception of the *Aeneid* has confirmed that every interpretation is – implicitly or explicitly – based on an underlying concept of intention. This makes it possible, in turn, to relate in principle all interpretations of the *Aeneid* to specific concepts of intention. At this stage of our reconstruction of types of intention, at least four different intentional strands of reception can be distinguished: a Classical one (for example Servius: departing from an intentional continuity between author, text, context and reader, with only very generic articulations of the plan of the *Aeneid*); one that, on the

basis of the Classical model, gradually seems to evolve towards more individual messages on the content level (for example the British reception in the early seventeenth century with sharper and more contemporary/individual edges to authorial intention); one according to the concept of intentional fallacy from 1946 onwards (for example interpretations in the wake of Adam Parry 1963); and finally poststructural ones (for example Fowler, Quint and others).

Implied in that attribution, there seems to be a certain degree of predictability of types of interpretation on the basis of the intentional prototypes available at specific historical moments. For the time being, this predictability can hardly go further than historical exclusions of the kind "not before 1946". But related to this last point, there seems to be another analytic use of a historically differentiated typology of conceptions of intention in interpretation: to check historical claims of scholars who seem unaware of the historical dimension of the debates they are leading. For example, in the context of the analysis given above, I think Vogt-Spira should probably reformulate his claim about one of the key questions of Classical studies into: one of the key questions of the last 60 years. But there are more convincing examples to give.

Taking the British reception of the *Aeneid* in the early seventeenth century just mentioned as point of departure, we can read that Aeneas was seen as reflecting the qualities of Augustus, who in turn was seen as exemplary for the Christian prince and leader, for royalism and one-man-rule. Shortly afterwards, according to Charles Martindale (born 1949), the English Revolution, with the victory of Parliament, favoured the old Roman Republic more than Augustus, which led to a different reading of the *Aeneid*, too: "Virgil could be represented as, covertly or in reality, a Republican and friend to liberty (so Gibbon, citing the story of Mezentius)" (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 29). The intentions attributed to the *Aeneid* here are more specific and individual than the one by Servius, as mentioned before. But even more interesting from our perspective is Martindale's remark between brackets: "(so Gibbon, citing the story of Mezentius)". If Martindale's reading of the famous British eighteenth-century historian Edward Gibbon were correct, then long before 1946 there would already be a reading of the *Aeneid* that ascribes anti-Augustan republican messages to Virgil. A closer look at Gibbon however reveals that he would not have agreed with Martindale's summary of his view, at least not when Martindale claims that Gibbon did hold Virgil "covertly or in reality", for "a Republican and friend to liberty".

To begin with, there can be no doubt that Gibbon does read in 1763 in Virgil's lines about Mezentius, the Etruscan king and enemy of Aeneas, ideas that are exemplary for the right of a people to rise against a tyrannical ruler, "having justice and the gods on its side" (Gibbon 1837, 560). With regard to these passages Gibbon holds that "Every line breathes republican sentiments" – and Gibbon

supposes that Augustus must have read this "with terror". However, Gibbon nowhere ascribes a republican view to Virgil, not even in parts of the text. According to Gibbon, the passages on Mezentius were simply a mistake by Virgil that happened in the writing of the *Aeneid*. That mistake was not corrected due to Virgil's untimely death. Virgil wrote the passages on Mezentius without thinking "of the general plan of his poem", in a kind of slip of the pen. Gibbon's interpretation is here not only in line with Servius' remarks on Virgil's intention, but also with what since Horace's *Ars Poetica* (359) is known as the nap of Homer: "quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus", sometimes even good Homer takes a nap. Meaning: all poets make mistakes from time to time – even in Homer we can find them. If the good reader has detected such a mistake, and if he could go to the author and present it to him, then the good author would happily correct it – that is Horace's idea. And Gibbon does think he has caught Virgil napping:

> I am sensible that had Virgil lived to revise his work, he would have given to it uniformity and unity; and carefully effaced all those marks by which an attentive reader in it may perceive detached parts, not originally written the one for the other. (Gibbon 1837, 560)

In other words: Gibbon does not question at all the pro-Augustan view of the *Aeneid* and of Virgil. This pro-Augustan view was "the general plan of his poem", according to Gibbon in the tradition of Servius. Nevertheless Gibbon, from *his* historical position after the victory of Parliament against the King, reads the lines on Mezentius as rousing anti-tyrannical sympathies. But according to him, if Virgil would have been given the time to publish his *Aeneid* himself, he would have noted this possible interpretation triggered by his own words on the page, too – and then would have changed or deleted the Mezentius passages. And what is more: these lines definitely don't make Virgil "a Republican and a friend of Liberty" in the eyes of Gibbon. So in the end, Gibbon's interpretation turns out to be in tune with the Classical model of authorial intention reconstructed so far. At the same time, it confirms the tendency towards more specific messages in the wake of the Classical Roman (and Greek) model of intentional continuity between author, text, context and reader. However, what Martindale and others do when they say that Gibbon presented Virgil as a Republican is ahistorically projecting back contemporary interpretations and contemporary concepts of intention. This projection does not withstand a historical examination of the sources from an intentional perspective. What is confirmed, therefore, in general, is the analytical capacity of reconstructions of concepts of intention from a historical perspective.

In the modern reception of the *Aeneid*, there are many similar examples, as Thorsten Burkard for instance has shown with regard to Virgil interpretations of

the Renaissance (cf. Burkard 2010). I will limit myself to discuss one more, taken from *The Virgil Encyclopedia*, launched in 2014. Christine Perkell (2014, 5) writes in an entry:

> The power of the Dido episode to absorb readers' interest and to question the imperial mission is attested in Ovid (*Tristia* 2.533 – 36) and Augustine (*Confessions* 1.13.22), as well as in later centuries.

While there is little doubt that the quotes by Ovid and Augustine confirm the fascination of these two readers (and not only *their* fascination) for the passages on Dido in the *Aeneid*, nothing can be found in Ovid and Augustine where they would "question the imperial mission". Without going into details, one might hold that in the lines referred to by Perkell, Ovid defends his own erotic poetry, addressing Augustus who banned him with the argument: even Virgil does it, just look at Dido. In the other reference Augustine criticises his own pre-Christian fascination for "phantasies" such as the death of Dido, the Trojan horse or the shadow of Aeneas' first wife Creusa. A questioning of the imperial mission through the *Aeneid*, as we have come to know it in interpretations in the wake of Adam Parry, is nowhere to be found in the writings of the readers Ovid and Augustine – as our reflections until here would have predicted. So when Perkell (2014, 5) argues in the same entry that "failure to realise one's assumptions is the major obstacle to new discoveries", I couldn't agree more with her. But I would add that in much recent literary scholarship, there seems to be a serious failure in realising and reflecting modern assumptions concerning concepts of intention from a historical perspective. G.K. Galinsky (in Hardie 1999b, 434 – 457, here 435) for example holds that criticism on Aeneas for his killing of the already defeated Turnus was absent in the vast tradition of non-Christian criticism of the *Aeneid* until 1965, "though his modern critics do not seem to acknowledge it" (here 435). For such modern criticism see Putnam (in Hardie 1999b, 414 – 433) or Nisbet (in Hardie 1999b, 263).

This failure of conceptual reflection is accompanied by a failure to reflect what one might call a "critical-towards-power-bias" present in much post-1960s scholarly work on the *Aeneid*. For example, when looking back from today at Parry's seminal essay on the two voices in the *Aeneid*, one cannot help asking whether this article is more about the USA in the 1960s than about Rome 2000 years ago. In ambiguous formulations the article draws our attention several times towards losses "which cannot survive the complex forces of civilization" (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 52), to losses in "the steady march" of a state "to world dominion" (1999a, 53) and to losses "in the service of what is grand, monumental and impersonal: the [...] State" (1999a, 62). One may wonder

whether Parry is only talking about the Roman state when he speaks of "the wonders of the most powerful institution the world has ever known" (1999a, 64). But not only the general formulations might put readers on the track of also thinking of criticism of the USA in the 1960s. There are also passages where Parry explicitly draws parallels between Rome and the USA, for example regarding the loss of the "pristine purity" of the Marsi people east of Rome, brought under the rule of Rome in the first century BC: Virgil's "feeling for them had something in common with what Americans have felt for the American Indian." (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 51) Or, in another passage, the same blending of Rome and the twentieth century is triggered by the heroic motto under which the Allies won the Second World War. According to Parry, the *Aeneid* shows that during "the establishment of peace and order and civilization", something more precious "than blood, sweat and tears" is lost: "human freedom, love, personal loyalty" (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 63). It seems as if, on the basis of the concept of intentional fallacy, Parry and others made the *Aeneid* an ally in a contemporary criticism of those in power, be it criticism of "Augustan propaganda" in the *Aeneid* (qtd. from Hardie 1999a, 53) or of the US government and its wars in the name of "peace and order and civilization".

I will end this short look at the reception of the *Aeneid* with what seems to be counter-evidence to my "not before 1946" claim: an example of an anti-Augustan interpretation of the *Aeneid* as early as 1935. In that year, a certain Francesco Sforza argues in a 12-page article without notes in the *Classical Review* that the *Aeneid* is "the most virulent libel against Rome and its rule" (Sforza 1935, 102). Also his view seems to be inspired by political opposition, putting himself and the *Aeneid* on the side of freedom and democracy (cf. Sforza 1935, 108) – and thus in 1935 against totalitarian regimes such as those of Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin, we might add. In his interpretation, two things are relevant from the perspective of the present book. First, Sforza does not argue with an opposition between the intention of the author and an intention taken from the text. Instead, he presents his interpretation as the hidden meaning of Virgil himself and the *Aeneid* as a "disguised pamphlet", of which the disguise has been lifted by Sforza now, after 2000 years (cf. Sforza 1935, 102). There can be little doubt that Sforza argues on the basis of the Classical model of authorial intention as reconstructed above: authors may make mistakes, they may lie or they may try to deceive us, but despite these irregularities the task of the interpreter simply remains to reconstruct authorial intention as part of an intentional continuum with the text. That is at least what Sforza says should be done in 1935.

Second, there are no indications that the message he attributes to Virgil and the *Aeneid* is regarded as a legitimate interpretation by Classicists, not even in the reception in the wake of Parry. If it is mentioned at all, then it is generally

dismissed as not according to professional standards. For example, for his judgment Thorsten Burkard quotes Rudolf Rieks from 1981 and agrees with him that: "The absolute one-sidedness of the argument, which dramatically distorts even correct observations, makes a refutation redundant" (Burkard 2010, 35; *my translation, RG*). From the perspective of the present book, Sforza's text primarily seems to have been a "disguised pamphlet" against contemporary totalitarianism and not so much about interpreting the *Aeneid*.

Whatever one may think of these parallels between criticism of Rome, totalitarianism in 1935 and the USA from 1963 onwards – Antonie Wlosok (1973, 146), P.H. Schrijvers (1978, 254) and Rudy van der Paardt (1982, 35) already signalled that parts of the modern American *Aeneid* reception have mixed pacifistic anti-Vietnam War and anti-Cold War tendencies into their discourse on the *Aeneid* – I hope to have made my point: historical awareness of concepts of intention used in specific interpretations allows for classifying historically specific types of interpretation. The historical typology of documents of reception presented here hopefully offers an extra stimulus to unravel hidden assumptions in interpretations and to correct ahistorical scholarly projections. Therefore, given the background of what I argued above, there is reason to seriously doubt the claim of Philip Hardie (Hardie 1999a, 3) that "the history of twentieth-century Virgilian criticism [...] has largely been that of the rediscovery in the *Aeneid* of contradiction, disharmony, incoherence even" on at least two points: first, contradiction, disharmony etc. has only been the story from *the last third* of the twentieth century onwards, and, second, probably more suitable than the word "rediscovery" in this quote would be "discovery" or maybe even "construction".

After this closer look at the concept of authorial intention in antiquity from different angles, let me try to summarise. The claim of this chapter has been that the Classical concept of secular authorial intention was shaped in Athens. It was in operation from around 500 BC onwards – primarily in opposition to a concept of poetry as coming from divine inspiration – and conquered a dominant position from then on until the final days of antiquity. In Greek and Roman antiquity, authorial intention is conceptualised as part of the intentional continuum between author, text, context and reader. The literary aspects that this intention is related to are primarily technical and compositional questions in which the author makes choices for which he has to take responsibility and of which he is supposed to be in control. The role of authorial intention on the level of content generally is only a rudimentary one that reflects a broadly shared *doxa* of morals in which all texts, including literature, participate. In this view, authorial intention hardly goes further than tautologies such as: the author says what he meant, and meant what he says. The most explicit Roman version of this concept can be found in Horace.

Authorial intention became and remained for many centuries a concept whose primary function was to make literature part of human activities (as opposed to divine inspiration), a cultural practice for which the actors could be held responsible via the concept of intention. While this does not seem a very individual and sophisticated concept of authorial intention from today's perspective, its importance on the level of the functioning of poetry within antiquity can hardly be overestimated, since our reconstruction has also shown that one must not think too monolithically about authorial intention in antiquity: it was born out of a poetic conflict between a divine poetics of truth and a more secular poetics of fiction.

This summary can be further specified in two regards. First, authorial intention was the tool with which the concept of divinely inspired art could be successfully attacked and eventually dominated over the course of the centuries. It was this poetic rupture at some point before the fifth century BC that shaped the foundation for professionally dealing with literature as an expert. The cradle of the concept of authorial intention must be placed in a process that eventually led to a differentiation of poetry as an art work primarily on the level of composition and form. Second, while the vast majority of critics and scholia in antiquity stick to a more technical view, especially in contexts in which highly valued authors are defended against criticism, by Aristotle and others, more specific views on message come into sight. This will ultimately permit presenting interpretations with plausible individual authorial intentional messages. But when exactly can that individualisation of authorial intention on the content level be triggered? The next two chapters on the long Middle Ages and on the Renaissance will try to answer that question.

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