

Volvere Casus: The Aeneid and Volvo

1. Dido and the Carthaginians¹
 - a. 1.423-24: instant ardentis Tyrii, pars ducere muros / molirique arcem et manibus **subuoluere** saxa (“the Carthaginians passionately press on—some were extending the walls and constructing a citadel and rolling rocks up with their hands”)
 - b. 4.84-89: non coeptae adsurgunt turrets, non arma iuuentus / exercet portusue aut propugnacula bello / tuta parant: pendent opera interrupta minaeque / murorum ingentes aequataque machina caelo (“the towers, previously under construction, no longer rise, and the youth do not practice soldiery or prepare havens and bulwarks to defend against war: tasks are left incomplete, along with the huge walls and the machines which rival the sky”)
 - c. 4.362-64: tuetur / huc illuc **uoluens** oculos totumque pererrat / luminibus tacitis (“[Dido] watches Jason, rolling her eyes here and there, and surveys him in his entirety with silent eyes”)
 - d. 4.643: at trepida et coeptis immanibus efferat Dido / sanguineam **uoluens** aciem, maculisque tremantis / interfusa genas et pallida morte futura (“trembling, maddened by the enormous undertakings, Dido rolls bloodshot eyes, her quivering cheeks splotchy and pale at her approaching death”)
 - e. 4.670-71: flammaeque furentes / culmina perque hominum **uoluantur** perque deorum (“raging flames roll over the roofs of both humans and gods”)
 - f. 4.691: ter **reuoluta** toro est (“three times [Dido] rolls onto her back”)
2. Beginning of war²
 - a. 7.251: intentos **uoluens** oculos (“[Latinus] rolls watchful eyes”)
 - b. 7.254: ueteris Fauni **uoluit** sub pectore sortem (“[Latinus] rolls the oracle of ancient Faunus in his heart”)
 - c. 9.36: quis globus, o ciues, caligine **uoluitur** atra? (“what mass is rolled in the black gloom, o fellow-citizens?”)
 - d. 8.618: oculos per singula **uoluit** (“[Aeneas] rolls his eyes over each detail [of the armor]”)
 - e. 8.538-59: quam multa sub undas / scuta uirum galeasque et fortia corpora **uolues** (“how many men’s shields and helmets and strong bodies you will roll under your waves!”)
 - f. 1.100-101: ubi tot Simois correpta sub undis / scuta uirum galeasque et fortia corpora **uoluit** (“where the Simois snatched up and rolled under its waves so many men’s shields and helmets and strong bodies”)

¹ For the other figures of *uoluo* that appear after Dido and Aeneas’ falling-out, see 4.449 (the unproductive tears of an unspecified actor, most likely Anna or Dido, fall when Aeneas refuses to budge a second time), 4.524 (the evening on which Dido contemplates killing herself and Hermes visits Aeneas in a dream is introduced by the phrase “when stars roll to the middle of their course”), and 4.533 (Dido rolls her misfortunes in her heart before delivering the speech wherein she makes the final decision to commit suicide).

² The other events where *uoluo* is directly linked to the commencement of warfare in Latium include the following: the prophecy foretelling how Lavinia will bring war upon her people (7.76-77); Allecto sowing discontent in Amata’s heart (7.349-50, 7.382); Iris goading Turnus into beginning the war while Aeneas is absent (9.6-7); Aeneas pondering within himself the varied fortunes of war on his way back to Latium (10.159-60); and the day dawning on which Aeneas finally enters the fray (10.256-57).

3. Pallas and Turnus
 - a. 10.445-47: *iuuenis tum iussa superba / miratus stupet in Turno corpusque per ingens / lumina uoluit* (“then the young [Pallas], marveling at [Turnus’] haughty orders, stands agape at him and rolls his eyes over his huge bulk”)
 - b. 12.938-39: *stetit acer in armis / Aeneas uoluens oculos* (“Aeneas, fierce in his arms, stood, rolling his eyes”)

4. Horrors of war
 - a. 10.555-56: *truncumque tepentem / prouoluens super haec inimico pectore fatur* (“[Aeneas] rolls over the warm trunk and speaks these things over it with a hostile heart”)
 - b. 12.329: *seminecis uoluit multos* (“[Turnus] rolls many half-dead men”)
 - c. 11.633-35: *tum uero et gemitus morientum et sanguine in alto / armaque corporaque et permixti caede uirorum / semianimes uoluuntur equi* (“then, truly, the groans of the dying and arms and bodies steeped in blood and the half-dead horses of men are rolled together, mixed up in the carnage”)
 - d. 12.292-93: *miser oppositis a tergo inuoluitur aris / in caput inque umeros* (“the poor [Aulestes] rolls onto his head and shoulders on top of the altars behind him”)

5. Volvo and (mis)fortune

Musa, mihi causas memora, quo numine laeso
 quidue dolens regina deum **tot uoluere casus**
 insignem pietate uirum, tot adire labores
 impulerit. tantaene animis caelestibus irae?

Muse, recount the causes to me, by what wounded *numen* or suffering what did the queen of the gods force a man, noted for *pietas*, **to experience so many misfortunes** and to go through so much hardship. Can such great wrath exist in the hearts of gods? (1.8-11)

Works Cited

- Anderson, W.S. (1971). “Two Passages from Book Twelve of the *Aeneid*”, *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 4: 49-65.
- Harrison, S.J. (1991). *Aeneid 10*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Mynors, R.A.B. (1972). *P. Vergili Maronis: Opera*. Oxford: OUP.
- Putnam, M.C.J. (1995). *Vergil’s Aeneid: Interpretation and Influence*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Smith, R.A. (2005). *The Primacy of Vision in Virgil’s Aeneid*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Traina, A. (1990). “Volvo”, in *Enciclopedia Virgiliana*, Vol. 5. Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 624-27.

Volvo in the Aeneid³

Words: 82x **uoluo** (ad-, circum-, con-, de-, e-, in-, pro-, re-, sub-), 10x **uoluto**, 1x **uolubilis**, 4x **uolumen**

PHYSICAL	movement	1.116, 1.424, 2.449, 2.474, 3.607, 4.691, 5.336, 6.182, 6.581, 6.616, 7.350, 7.382, 9.36, 9.391, 9.414, 9.433, 9.476, 9.512, 9.516, 10.403, 10.556, 10.590, 10.700, 11.529, 11.635, 11.640, 11.671, 11.889, 12.292, 12.329, 12.533, 12.689, 12.906 ex: “the Trojans roll down (<i>deuoluunt</i>) gilded beams” (2.449), “Euryalus rolls over (<i>uoluitur</i>) in death” (9.433), “Turnus rolls (<i>uoluit</i>) many half-dead men” (12.329)
	elements	1.86, 1.101, 2.251, 2.706, 2.759, 3.196, 3.198, 3.206, 4.671, 5.629, 5.807, 6.336, 6.659, 7.77, 7.718, 8.253, 8.539, 10.98, 10.660, 11.627, 11.876, 12.591, 12.672 ex: “flames roll (<i>uoluunt</i>) the heat closer” (2.706), “Xanthus could not roll himself out (<i>euoluere</i>) to the sea” (5.807), “thick dust is rolled (<i>uoluitur</i>)” (11.876)
	eyes⁴	4.363, 4.643, 7.251, 8.618, 10.447, 12.939 ex: “Dido rolls (<i>uoluens</i>) bloodshot eyes” (4.643), “Latinus rolls (<i>uoluens</i>) intent eyes” (7.251), “Aeneas rolls (<i>uoluens</i>) his eyes” (12.939)
	tears⁵	4.449, 10.790 ex: “Lausus’ tears rolled (<i>uolutae</i>) over his face” (10.790)
ABSTRACT	sound⁶	1.725, 5.149, 10.98 ex: “the enclosed beaches roll (<i>uolutant</i>) the sound” (5.149)
	time	1.234, 1.269, 3.284, 4.524, 6.748, 9.7, 10.256 ex: “in the rolling (<i>uoluentibus</i>) years” (1.234), “daytime, returned (<i>reuoluta</i>), rushed in with already mature light” (10.256)
	fate, future	1.22, 1.262, 3.376, 5.50, ⁷ 6.100, 6.449, 9.476, 9.528 ex: “thus the fates determined” (<i>sic uoluere Parcas</i> , 1.22), “thus you, gods, determined” (<i>sic di uoluitis</i> , 5.50), “Zeus will roll out (<i>uoluens</i>) the scroll of the fates further” (1.262), “Muses, unroll (<i>euoluite</i>) with me the picture of war” (9.528)
	thought, emotion	1.50, 1.305, 2.101, 3.102, 4.533, 6.157, 6.185, 7.254, 10.159, 12.831, 12.843 ex: “Latinus rolls (<i>uoluit</i>) the oracle of ancient Faunus in his heart” (7.254), “you [Juno] roll (<i>uoluis</i>) such great waves of anger in your heart” (12.831)
	misfortune	1.9, 10.61 ex: “to experience so many misfortunes” (<i>uoluere casus</i> , 1.9), “to experience anew Trojan misfortunes” (<i>reuoluere casus</i> , 10.61)
	uolumen (noun)	2.208, 5.85, 5.408, 11.753 ex: “Aeneas turns here and there the huge folds (<i>uolumina</i>) of the bonds” (5.408), “the wounded snake twists its sinuous coils (<i>uolumina</i>)” (11.753)

Distribution: Bk 1 = 12 Bk 2 = 7 Bk 3 = 7 Bk 4 = 7 Bk 5 = 7 Bk 6 = 10
Bk 7 = 6 Bk 8 = 3 Bk 9 = 9 Bk 10 = 11 Bk 11 = 8 Bk 12 = 10

³ Cf. Traina (1990) who provides a survey of the verb in the *Enciclopedia Virgiliana*. For this study, I have used the text of Mynors (1972) via Phi Latin Texts, latin.packhum.org.

⁴ “Rolling eyes” may be a Vergilian innovation; see esp. Traina (1990). He notes that the closest example of “rolling eyes” before Vergil is Euripides’ *Heracles* (ἐλίσσει κόρας, 868) where it is a symptom of the hero’s madness. The only Vergilian example where “rolling eyes” might represent insanity is Dido at 4.642-46. See Anderson (1971) and Putnam (1995) 212-13 for a more general study of the phrase and its meaning in the *Aeneid*.

⁵ “Rolling tears” may also be an innovation; see esp. Traina (1990).

⁶ This is yet another possible innovation; see Harrison (1991) ad 10.98.

⁷ The verb *uoluitis* at 5.50 can be interpreted as either the perfect of *volo*, *velle* > *voluitis* (“you desired”) or *volvo*, *volvere* > *volvistis* (“you rolled/determined”). While most editions that distinguish between *u* and *v* choose the former, the latter is a convincing option—more convincing, I would argue—due to its similarity to 1.22.