

**Venerat in saltum iam tum Vosagum vocitatum.
Nam nemus est ingens, spatiosum, lustra ferarum
Plurima habens, suetum canibus resonare tubisque.**

- *Georgics* 2.471: illic saltus ac lustra ferarum. ‘They have woodland glades and haunts of game.’
Context: Virgil enumerates the blessings of farmers’ “simple” lives. Their possession and access to and “saltus” and “lustra ferarum” is one of them.
- *Aeneid* 3.646-647.: vitam in silvis inter deserta ferarum/ lustra domosque traho. ‘I began to drag out my life in the woods among the lonely lairs and haunts of wild beasts.’
Context: Aeneas and his company land on the island of the Cyclops and find a Greek youth left behind by Ulysses. The youth describes his barren life, scratching out an existence as he avoids Polyphemus.
- *Ibid.* 3.432: canibus resonantia saxa. . . ‘Rocks that echo with her hounds. . .’
Context: description of Scylla.

**Sunt in secessu bini montesque propinqui,
Inter quos licet angustum specus extat amoenum,
Non tellure cava factum, sed vertice rupum:**

- *Aeneid* 1.159-160.: est in secessu longo locus. . .hinc atque hinc vastae rupes geminique minantur/ in caelum scopuli, quorum sub vertice late Aequeora tuta silent. . .huc. . .Aeneas. . .subit. ‘There in a deep inlet lies a spot. On either side loom heavenward huge cliffs and twin peaks, beneath whose crest far and wide is the stillness of sheltered water. Here Aeneas takes shelter.’
Context: Aeneas has just been shipwrecked in Carthage. The gods have argued about his fate.
- *Ibid.* 3.229: in secessu longo. . . ‘In a deep recess. . .’
Context: Aeneas and his men take refuge in this “recess” when they land on the island of the Harpies.
- *Ibid.* 8.597-598.: est ingens gelidum lucus prope Caeritis amnem. . .undique colles / inclusere cavi et nigra nemus abiete cingunt. ‘Near Caere’s cold stream there stands a vast grove; on all sides curving hills enclose it and girdle the woodland with dark fir trees.’
Context: Describes the location of the Trojans’ camp as they prepare to battle with Turnus and the Latins. Here, Venus gives Aeneas his armor, fashioned by Vulcan.
- *Ibid.* 11.522-523.: est curvo anfractu valles. . .quam densis frondibus atrum/ urget utrimque latus. ‘There is a valley with sweeping curve, hemmed in on either side by a wall black with dense foliage.’
Context: Turnus hides above this valley, preparing to ambush Aeneas.

Apta quidem statio latronibus illa cruentis.

- *Aeneid* 11.522-523: accommoda fraudi/ armorumque dolis. . . 'Fit site for the stratagems and deceits of war. . .'
Context: This describes the place where Turnus hides to ambush Aeneas.

Angulus hic virides ac vescas gesserat herbas.

- *Georgics* 3.174-175.: non gramina tantum/ nec vescas salicum frondes. . . 'Not grass alone or poor willow leaves. . .'
Context: Virgil describes food inappropriate for young calves.
- *Ibid.* 4.131: vescuque papaver. . . 'Fine-seeded poppy. . .'
Context: Virgil describes a Cilician peasant who plants what he can in a barren, brambly field. He praises the simpler riches the man can derive from poor land.

'huc', mox ut vidit iuuenis, 'huc' inquit 'eamus,

- *Aeneid* 11.530: huc iuuenis nota fertur regione viarum. 'Hither the warrior hastens by a well-known road.'
Context: Again, the "hither" of the sentence is the secluded spot from which Turnus intends to ambush Aeneas.

His iuvat in castris fessum componere corpus.'

- *Georgics* 4.438: defessa. . .componere membra. . . 'To settle his weary limbs. . .'
Context: Virgil describes Proteus resting, about to be disturbed by Aristaeus.
- *Ibid.* 4.189: ubi iam thalamis se composuere. . . 'When they have laid themselves to rest in their chambers. . .'
Context: Virgil describes the society of bees, here as relates to their resting at night.

Nam postquam fugiens Avarum discesserat oris,

Non aliter somni requiem gustaverat idem

Quam super innixus clipeo; vix clauserat orbes.

Interpretations

Many of these phrases simply echo a common hexameter tradition: it is clear that phrases such as “lustra ferarum” or “vescas herbas” simply form part of the *Waltharius*-poet’s “toolbox” to construct his language. This does not mean, however, that he uses these echoes thoughtlessly.

The references either refer to barren places of danger in the *Aeneid* or uninhabited, barren places that are praiseworthy because they have not been spoiled by society. Many of the *Aeneid* references are drawn from the first half of the epic, when Aeneas wanders, bereft and endangered, meeting with monsters or dangers in many kinds of barren places. This emphasizes the danger of Walter and Hildegund’s flight.

The *Georgics* references, however, frequently praise the purity to be found in such environments. This emphasizes the purity of their relationship and suggests that their break with the Hun court is a highly positive move.

The tension between the idyllic “lustra ferarum” of the *Georgics* and the threatening “lustra ferarum” where the young Ithacan youth hides from Polyphemus has the potential to enrich the setting of the latter half of the *Waltharius*. On the one hand, the barren cave should constitute a place of safety for Walter and Hildegund, removed from the dangers of political life; however, like Polyphemus’ rocky island, it is overlooked by dangerous figures who invade the peace and threaten the safety of the couple.

The continual references to the tiny passage in Book XI that describe Turnus’ hiding place are also suggestive. They place Walter in the role of Turnus, concealing himself from the eyes of others so that he may do as he plans. We know, however, that in fact he is being overlooked by another hostile force, which will ambush him, making him more like Aeneas than Turnus. This is another example of the ways in which the mountain refuge is both a place of danger and safety.