

Aeneid Book VI Analysis 6: Spondaic lines



In the last lesson we looked at a line with five (the maximum number) of spondees: line 227. The following nearby lines have the same pattern. Scan the lines and then **thinking of the context**, consider why five spondees would be effective to carry the meaning of the lines and jot down your thoughts below your translation in each case. You can compare with my ideas over the page.

228 *rursum in secessu longo sub rupe cavata*

232 *rursum ex diverso caeli caecisque latebris*

235 *edico, et dira bellum cum gente gerendum.*

Line 228: The Trojans are trying to hide their feast away now deep under a hollowed out rock. Perhaps the line is slowed down with the spondees to give the feeling of dragging everything down into this hideout.

Line 232: To give an impression of the wideness of the sky that the creatures fly down from??

Line 235: Aeneas is shouting orders here. Perhaps this is the loud shout of a commanding officer with quite slow words to ensure he is understood.

Now here is an opposite example:

Line 606 *si pereō, hominum manibus periisse iuvabit.*

Scan the line. What do you notice? Who is speaking. Why has Virgil given the line this rhythm? My answer is on the next page.

sī pĕrĕ | ō, hŏmīn | ūm mǎnī | būs pĕrī | īssĕ iŭ | vābit.

The speaker is Achaemenides. He is coming to the end of his speech in which he has been begging the Trojans to take him away with them. He ends with these words in which he says if they kill him it will be better to be killed by someone who is at least human than to be left to his fate on the island. As he speaks these terrible words his heart is beating wildly – hence the “galloping” rhythm.