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Founding Fathers: An Ethnic and Gender Study of the Iliadic *Aeneid*

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Founding Fathers: An Ethnic and Gender Study of the *Iliadic Aeneid*

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

In a 2005 work, Yasmin Syed concluded that the *Aeneid* created for ancient readers an idea of Romanness that was inclusive for all and not founded along strict genetic lines. Under this hypothesis, the *Aeneid* offers a sort of blueprint for becoming Roman, one in which biological descent from Aeneas is unnecessary. Syed reached this conclusion by analyzing themes of ethnicity and gender, in particular the ethnic other represented by the epic's female characters. This was accomplished in the manner so often chosen by Vergil scholars—by limiting analysis to the first half of the epic. The work concludes with an exhortation for others to extend the effort into Books VII-XII.

Such an extension is undertaken here, but the conclusion reached is somewhat different than what Syed imagined. Instead of a blueprint for disparate people in conquered lands to become Roman, the second half of the epic empowers these groups by demonstrating that Rome could not exist without them. Roman power to rule, *imperium*, was not brought to the Romans by Aeneas. It is a product of what Vergil described as *Itala virtute*, or Italian manliness. The second half of the epic provides not a blueprint for citizenship but the schematics of the Roman state, one in which the mother city would have no ability to rule were it not for the Italian peoples.

Vergil accomplishes this message by thoroughly emasculating both Aeneas and Turnus before their final confrontation. That scene is read here as one of copulation, the Italian ground serving as the marriage bed in a struggle to found Rome. But with both men portrayed as effeminate in this final scene, and *imperium* removed as one of the prizes in the battle by Jupiter himself, the offspring born of what must be read as two mothers rather than two fathers must itself be weak and impotent. Without the strength of the Italians, Rome will not succeed.

Abbreviations

Modern Sources

		Catull.	Catullus, <i>Carmina</i>
<i>AJPh</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>	Cic. <i>Cat.</i>	Cicero, <i>In Catilinam</i>
<i>AncWorld</i>	<i>The Ancient World</i>	Cic. <i>Clu.</i>	Cicero, <i>Pro Cluentio</i>
<i>CA</i>	<i>Classical Antiquity</i>	Cic. <i>Flac.</i>	Cicero, <i>Pro Flacco</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Classical Journal</i>	Cic. <i>Har. resp.</i>	Cicero, <i>De haruspicum responso</i>
<i>CPh</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>	Cic. <i>Mil.</i>	Cicero, <i>Pro Milone</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>	Cic. <i>Phil.</i>	Cicero, <i>Orationes Philippicae</i>
<i>CW</i>	<i>The Classical World</i>	Cic. <i>Sull.</i>	Cicero, <i>Pro Sulla</i>
<i>G&R</i>	<i>Greece and Rome</i>	Dio Cass.	Dio Cassius, <i>Roman History</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>	Donat. <i>Vit. Verg.</i>	Aelius Donatus, <i>Vita Vergilii</i>
<i>TAPhA</i>	<i>Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association</i>	<i>Eleg. Mace.</i>	Elegy for Macenas

Ancient Sources

		Eur. <i>Cyc.</i>	Euripides, <i>Cyclops</i>
Acts	New Testament, <i>Acts of the Apostles</i>	Eur. <i>IA</i>	Euripides, <i>Iphigenia Aulidensis</i>
Aug. <i>Anc.</i>	Augustus, <i>Monumentum Ancyranum</i>	Eur. <i>Tro.</i>	Euripides, <i>Troades</i>
Caes. <i>B. Gall.</i>	Julius Caesar, <i>Bellum Gallicum</i>	Gell.	Aulus Gellius, <i>Noctes Atticae</i>

Hdt.	Herodotus, <i>The Histories</i>		<i>Naturalis Historia</i>
Hom. <i>Hymn Aph.</i>	Homer, <i>Hymn to Aphrodite</i>	Quint. <i>Inst.</i>	Quintilian, <i>Institutio Oratoria</i>
Hom. <i>Il.</i>	Homer, <i>Iliad</i>	Sall. <i>Cat.</i>	<i>De Catilinae Coniuratio</i>
Hor. <i>Carm.</i>	Horace, <i>Carmina</i>	Sall. <i>Iug.</i>	Sallust, <i>Bellum Iugurthinum</i>
Hor. <i>Sat.</i>	Horace, <i>Satirae</i>	Sen. <i>Clem.</i>	Seneca, <i>De clementia</i>
Joseph <i>BJ</i>	Josephus, <i>Bellum Judaicum</i>	Sen. <i>Ep.</i>	Seneca, <i>Epistulae</i>
Juv.	Juvenal	Sen. <i>Ira</i>	Seneca, <i>De Ira</i>
Livy	Livy, <i>ab urbe condita libri</i>	Sen. <i>Oed.</i>	Seneca, <i>Oedipus</i>
Lucr.	Lucretius, <i>De Rerum Natura</i>	Sen. <i>Vit. Beat.</i>	Seneca, <i>De Vita Beata</i>
Mart.	Martial	Strab. <i>Geo.</i>	Strabo, <i>Geography</i>
Ov. <i>Ars am.</i>	Ovid, <i>Ars Amatoria</i>	Suet. <i>Calig.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Caligula</i>
Ov. <i>Met.</i>	Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i>	Suet. <i>Dom.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Domitianus</i>
Paus.	Pausanias	Suet. <i>Otho</i>	Suetonius, <i>Otho</i>
Plaut. <i>Mil.</i>	Plautus, <i>Miles gloriosus</i>	Suet. <i>Ner.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Nero</i>
Plaut. <i>Pseud.</i>	Plautus, <i>Pseudolus</i>	Ter. <i>Eun.</i>	Terrence, <i>Eunuchus</i>
Plin. <i>Ep.</i>	Pliny the Younger, <i>Epistulae</i>	Verg. <i>Aen.</i>	Vergil, <i>The Aeneid</i>
Plin. <i>HN</i>	Pliny the Elder,	Verg. <i>Ecl.</i>	Vergil, <i>Eclogues</i>
		Verg. <i>G.</i>	Vergil, <i>Georgics</i>

I. Introduction

In her 2005 work, *Vergil's Aeneid and the Roman Self*, Yasmin Syed argued that the *Aeneid* impacted its ancient readers' sense of self by allowing the readers to identify or differentiate themselves from the epic's myriad of characters.¹ This, she argued, presented "Romanness" as a "cultural construct" that can be learned by the reader, an important concept during an era of enormous expansion of Roman citizenship to inhabitants of the Empire well outside of Italy.² Thus, "while continuing to suggest that Romanness involves descent from Aeneas, that is, a group limited by blood and genealogy, (the *Aeneid*) opens up the concept of Romanness in such a way that descent from Aeneas can be understood as symbolic rather than literal."³

What Syed is essentially suggesting is that the *Aeneid* provides readers with a sort of blueprint for how to become Roman, or rather how to be a proper Roman citizen living in a Roman community. The location of this blueprint is in the defining characteristics of the epic's main players, characteristics like gender and ethnicity.⁴ Syed argues that Vergil's ethnic and gender constructs display for the reader not only exemplars of Roman behavior, but also the opposite, so the reader can learn "identity by opposition" through characters that are, through their ethnicity or gender behavior, un-Roman.⁵

Syed developed this intriguing theory by focusing heavily on certain feminine

1 Yasmin Syed, *Vergil's Aeneid and the Roman Self* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 2.

2 *Ibid.* at 216, 222-223.

3 *Ibid.* at 215.

4 *Ibid.* at 3

5 *Ibid.* at 117.

characters in the *Aeneid* and giving only limited attention to the second half of the epic.⁶ Perhaps because the Dido episode is such fertile ground for intellectual exploration and is just plain fascinating from a literary standpoint, neglect of the second half of the *Aeneid*, known as the Iliadic *Aeneid*, is a common theme in Vergilian scholarship. Syed concludes by challenging other scholars to extend her work and apply her theory to the portions of the *Aeneid* she was unable to tackle.⁷

Syed's challenge is accepted in this work. Adopted are her premises that the *Aeneid* speaks to the Roman conception of self through its various characters, and that the identification of an ideal Roman can be found both through positive and negative characterization in the epic. However, the outcome of this study is somewhat different than what Syed imagined. She finds in the *Aeneid* an epic aimed at teaching people how to be Roman. If this is correct, it is a passive message for readers living in the face of a Roman juggernaut, a sort of ancient "if you can't beat them, join them." This study finds in the Iliadic *Aeneid* a much more empowering message to the non-Roman reader. Vergil, it seems, is suggesting to the reader that Rome gets its power to rule, its *imperium*, not from itself, or Aeneas, or its legendary Trojan forefathers, but from the support of people of Italy. Rome, without the help of all of the Italian races, would be impotent. This reading, then, is less a blueprint of how to be Roman and more a schematic of the Roman state. It envisions Rome, the head, having no energy with which to operate without the electric support of its strong body, the Italians.

This theory is based on a different reading of the final struggle between Turnus

⁶ *Ibid.* at 227

⁷ *Ibid.*

and Aeneas. Aeneas' final defeat of Turnus is here read as a copulation, the mating event that will produce as its offspring the seeds of the Roman race, the city of Rome founded in the metaphorical sense if not the literal and the hereditary line that will culminate in the Caesars. But this study will demonstrate that although they mated, the two great characters of the Iliadic *Aeneid* were thoroughly emasculated by the poet by the time they became joined. Their union was one without the all-important Roman conception of manliness, *virtus*, and utterly without *imperium*. *Imperium* could only be granted to the winner, Aeneas, with the blessing of Jupiter and at the behest of the Italian races that would make up the future Roman state. With that conception in mind, rather than Founding Fathers, a more apt title for this study is perhaps Founding Mothers.

II. The Final (Sex) Scene

The *Aeneid* ends abruptly. At long last, after 12 books, the reader arrives at the final battle between Aeneas and Turnus. Turnus is down upon the ground, and Aeneas is contemplating mercy. Then, his eyes spot the *balteus* of Pallas, which Turnus earlier took as a trophy upon killing Pallas, a favorite of Aeneas and Evander's son. The *Aeneid* then ends this way:

ille, oculis postquam saeui monimenta doloris 945
exuiasque hausit, furiis accensus et ira
terribilis: 'tunc hinc spoliis indute meorum
eripiare mihi? Pallas te hoc uulnere, Pallas
immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit.'
hoc dicens ferrum aduerso sub pectore condit 950
feruidus; ast illi soluuntur frigore membra
*uitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras.*⁸

Aeneas, after his eyes drank in the trophy, that memorial to cruel grief, ablaze with *furor* and terrible in his *ira*: “Clad in the spoils of one of mine, are you to be snatched from my hands? Pallas it is, Pallas who sacrifices you with this stroke, and takes retribution from your guilty blood!” So saying, in burning rage he buries his sword full in Turnus' breast. His limbs grew slack and chill and with a moan his life fled resentfully to the Shades below.

This scene of death resulting from unfettered anger (*ira*) and fury (*furor*) is the founding scene of Rome.⁹ Vergil's word choice for the final blow is important. Aeneas *condit*, buries his *ferrum*, sword, below the breast of Turnus. *Condit*, from *condere*, means to bury, but also has the alternate meaning, to found, as in found a city.¹⁰ This

8 Verg. *Aen.* 12.945-952. Translations from the *Aeneid* and other Latin sources will generally be my own.

9 This view is not new. See R.J. Schork, “The Final Simile in the Aeneid: Roman and Rutulian Ramparts,” *AJPh* 107, no. 2 (1986): 260-270.

10 Lee Fratantuono, *Madness Unchained* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2007), xiii.

the Volscian, the virginal warrior who, though female, exhibits Roman manliness (*virtus*) in battle, dies one of these deaths. Camilla dies when

*hasta sub exsertam donec perlata papillam
haesit, virgineumque alte bibit acta cruorem.*²¹

The word choice is of great importance. *Hasta* is a spear that was in ancient Latin also compared to a penis.²² Also, the spear pierces beneath her breast *exsertam*, or thrust forward, and not just her breast but *papillam*, or nipple, and drinks of her virgin blood *alte*, with the goal of sustenance. This leads Oliensis to conclude that this scene accelerates Camilla from virgin to penetrated lover to nursing mother.²³

Euryalus, Lausus and Pallas all die in ways that are akin to defloration.²⁴ Pallas' death, in particular, is filled with sexual imagery. At the beginning of his final confrontation with Turnus, he

*emittit viribus hastam
vaginaque cava fulgentem deripit ensem.*²⁵

In a manly way he thrusts forward his *hasta* and exposes his sword by removing it from a deep scabbard (the English derivative of which, of course, is hard to miss). Pallas' *hasta*, however, will not penetrate Turnus. Turnus then grabs his *ferrum*, and taunts Pallas:

*“aspice, num mage sit nostrum penetrabile telum.”*²⁶

Turnus, full of male bravado, is essentially saying, “Let us see if mine penetrates

21 Verg. *Aen.* 11.803-804.

22 J.N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 17.

23 Oliensis at 308.

24 *Ibid.*

25 Verg. *Aen.* 10.474-475.

26 Verg. *Aen.* 10.481.

deeper than yours.” Turnus then

*uibranti cuspis medium transuerberat ictu
loricaeque moras et pectus perforat ingens.*²⁷ 485

With the *vibranti* (quivering) *cuspis* (which can mean, point, tip or head), he *pectus perforat*, pierces the breast of Pallas.²⁸

Aeneas, when he reaches Pallas’ body, sees *levique...in pectore volnus*, a wound in the smooth breast, caused by a *cuspidis*.²⁹ Pallas’ body is compared to a *demessum...florem*, or a cut flower.³⁰

Scholars have long speculated that Aeneas and Pallas may have enjoyed a homoerotic relationship.³¹ Oliensis finds that Pallas’ beauty wounded Aeneas (infused him with feeling and emotion) in the same way that Aeneas’ love wounded Dido.³² The funeral pyre prepared for Pallas by Aeneas certainly seems to be decorated like a wedding chamber in much the same way Dido decorated hers.

*haud segnes alii cratis et molle feretrum
arbutis texunt uirgis et uimine querno* 65
*exstructosque toros obtentu frondis inumbrant.
hic iuuenem agresti sublimem stramine ponunt:
qualem uirgineo demessum pollice florem
seu mollis uiolae seu languentis hyacinthi,
cui neque fulgor adhuc nec dum sua forma recessit,* 70
*non iam mater alit tellus uirisque ministrat.
tum geminas uestis auroque ostroque rigentis
extulit Aeneas, quas illi laeta laborum
ipsa suis quondam manibus Sidonia Dido
fecerat et tenui telas discreuerat auro.* 75
harum unam iuueni supremum maestus honorem

27 Verg. *Aen.* 10.484-485.

28 Verg. *Aen.* 10.482-485.

29 Verg. *Aen.* 11.40.

30 Verg. *Aen.* 11.67.

31 e.g., Craig A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 118.

32 Oliensis at 309.

*induit arsurasque comas obnubit amictu,
multaque praeterea Laurentis praemia pugnae
aggerat et longo praedam iubet ordine duci;*

Others, no less fired up, plait switches of oak and arbutus withes into wickerwork, weaving a casket and cushioning bier, raising a couch wattled over with taut-stretched, shadowing branches. Here, on a farmhand's bedding, they set out their noble young hero, languid as drooping hyacinth falls, or limp as a violet clipped in its flower by a virgin's thumb, but whose shimmering luster lingers, whose perfect form has not shriveled, as yet, though its earthen. Mother no longer sustains life's vital strength with her nurture. Then, bearing matching mantles stiffened with gold and with purple dye comes Aeneas. Sidonian Dido herself, with her once live hands had produced them for him, as a pair: her labor of rapture threaded with highlights of fine-spun gold worked into the cross-weave.³³

Aeneas brings forth ornate robes prepared by Sidonian Dido, one of which he *comas obnubit*, uses to cover Pallas' hair.³⁴ *Obnubit* carries with it the connotation of a bridal veil.³⁵

Finally Euryalus, a boy who, it is fairly obvious, is Lausus' lover, dies in this way:

*sed viribus ensis adactus
transabiit costas et candida pectora rumpit.*³⁶

His breast is described by the adjective *candida*, meaning shimmering, white, perhaps virginal. His breast is torn asunder by *ensis*, which is a phallic, double-edged sword. Evident is the connotation of the manly sword penetrating the delicate breast, *candida pectora*.

The final battle between Aeneas and Turnus is very slow in coming. There is a strange courtship in the Iliadic *Aeneid* wherein Turnus features prominently in Books 7,

33 Verg. *Aen.* 7.64-79, Frederick Ahl, trans. *Virgil Aeneid* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

34 Verg. *Aen.* 11.77.

35 Olien 309.

36 Verg. *Aen.* 9.431-432.

9, Aeneas in Book 8, both in Book 10, neither in Book 11 and finally they come together in Book 12.³⁷ When at last the confrontation that the reader knows is coming for thousands of lines begins, the reader sees Aeneas striking the first blow into Turnus' thigh with a *hasta*.³⁸ He will finish him off with the *ferrum*. He thus uses on Turnus both implements that are metaphors for a penis. But in between there is an intriguing bit of imagery. Aeneas is beholding a whimpering Turnus and seems as though he might be persuaded to grant some sort of clemency. His *ira*, however, is renewed by the sight of the belt of Pallas.

Turnus lifted that belt from Pallas after he slew him. On it was

*impressumque nefas: una sub nocte iugali
caesa manus iuvenum foede thalamique cruenti.*³⁹

That is a picture of a *nefas*, impious deed, committed in chambers on a wedding night in which youth were slain. This refers to the legend of the Danaids. Though there are variations, the basic story is found in Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2.1. According to this version, the story is set in the East in Libya, Arabia and Egypt. Two brothers of the lineage of Poseidon, Aegyptus and Danaus, were born as twins. Aegyptus had 50 sons, and Danaus had 50 daughters. Danaus, in fear, fled to Argos, conquering a territory eventually named for him. Aegyptus' sons pursued, and begged Danaus to allow them to marry his daughters, incestuous though it was. Danaus consented. After the wedding feast, Danaus gave his daughters daggers, and all but one slew the bridegrooms in the bridal chambers. The one who did not was Hypermnestra. She saved her husband because

37 Fratantuono at 268.

38 Verg. *Aen.* 12.924.

39 Verg. *Aen.* 10.497-498.

he had respected her virginity. The heads were buried in Lerna.⁴⁰

A sculptural group depicting the Danaids was part of the art work of Augustus' Temple of Apollo Palatinus.⁴¹ It was apparently located in the portico of the temple. Its appearance in the *Aeneid* is noteworthy because, other than the depiction on the Palatine, it does not seem to appear anywhere else in the art of the period.⁴² That fact will figure prominently in later portions of this study. For present purposes, it is enough to point out that the image that sends Aeneas into his final rage and leads directly to his penetration of Turnus is a bloody wedding night, a bridal chamber copulation followed by a massacre. Oliensis astutely points out that this seems to indicate that the battlefield on which Turnus and Aeneas struggle is itself a bloody wedding night bedchamber.⁴³ Given the recurring motif of sexual death in the *Aeneid* and the imagery of this final scene, it is reasonable to conclude that Aeneas' penetration of Turnus sexually was necessary to *condit*, found Rome, in the metaphorical sense. Aeneas will go on to start the race that will become Roman in the physical sense with Lavinia. But she has only a bit part in Vergil's epic, and is of no consequence to its philosophical message.

If these two men are the metaphorical progenitors of Rome, what does that say about the race they are creating? The answer requires intimate knowledge of who these men were. Perhaps the best place to start is to look at their creator, the poet himself.

40 See also Campbell Bonner, "The Danaid-Myth," *TAPhA* 31 (1900): 27-36.

41 Barbara A. Kellum, "The Construction of Landscape in Augustan Rome: The Garden Room at the Villa ad Gallinas," *The Art Bulletin* 69, No. 2 (1994): 213.

42 Shadi Bartsch, "Ars and the Man: The Politics of Art in Virgil's *Aeneid*," *CPh* 93, No. 4 (1998): 332.

43 Oliensis at 309.

III. Vergil: The Roman Poet not from Rome

A key point for the arguments of Syed and this study is that Vergil's ethnic predecessors probably arose from a hinterland region removed from the traditional seat of Roman and Italian power. There is no real proof of Vergil's ancestry.⁴⁴ Scholars, however, have argued for backgrounds as disparate as Etruscan, Celtic, Venetian, Ligurian or even Greek.⁴⁵ The poet himself left us three classics, the *Aeneid*, *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, but in all of those works, he references himself by name only once, in *Georgics* 4.564. In that passage, he indicates that at the time Caesar was warring near the Euphrates, he (Vergil) was enjoying the sweet life in Parthenope, which was most likely Naples.⁴⁶

The best source we have for Vergil is from a biography written by Aelius Donatus, a late fourth century grammarian who was a contemporary of Maurus Servius Honoratus, author of an expansive commentary on the *Aeneid*.⁴⁷ The problem, of course, is that Donatus was as removed from Vergil as we are from William Shakespeare. His primary source seems to be an early biography by Suetonius and other documentary and

44 Leanora Reilly Furr, "The nationality of Vergil," *CJ* 25, No. 5 (1930): 340.

45 Mary L. Gordon, "The Family of Vergil." *JRS* 24 (1934): 1.

46 Verg. G. 4.563-566:

*Illo Vergilium me tempore dulcis alebat
Parthenope, studiis florentem ignobilis oti,
carmina qui lusi pastorum audaxque inuenta, 565
Tityre, te patulae cecini sub tegmine fagi.*

47 Christopher M. McDonough, Richard E. Prior and Mark Stansbury, *Servius' Commentary on Book Four of Virgil's Aeneid: an annotated translation* (Wauconda, Illinois: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2004), xiii.

anecdotal material, to which he most likely added his own embellishments.⁴⁸ Donatus is the source by which scholars attempt to answer the ever-nagging question about Vergil: what were his feelings on Rome and on his greatest patron, Augustus?⁴⁹ Warily, the work of Donatus is analyzed to try to piece together a biographical picture.

Donatus tells us that Vergil was Mantuan, born of humble parents in Andes, near Mantua, on October 15, 70 B.C.⁵⁰ Mantua had only Latin rights and not full citizenship until 49 B.C., when Vergil was in his twenties.⁵¹ He apparently spent his early years at Cremona, on the Po River.⁵² There, Donatus reports that he earned the *toga virilis* at the age of 15, in 55 BC, indicating that his family was of some influence.⁵³ However, Gordon finds that the dates do not add up, and casts doubt on this part of Donatus' tale.⁵⁴

Flavius Josephus, who was born within about 50 years of Vergil's death, reports that Cremona, described once by Vergil as *miseræ... Cremonae* (wretched Cremona), was a city in Gaul, considered to be in the borders of Italy.⁵⁵ Cicero speaks very affectionately of Cisalpine Gaul, calling in the *flos Italiae*, the flower of Italy.⁵⁶ Cremona was the first Latin colony in Cisalpine Gaul, and was founded well over a century before

48 R.J. Tarrant, "Aspects of Virgil's Reception in Antiquity," in *Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, ed. by Charles Martindale (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 57.

49 Eve Adler, *Virgil's Empire: political thought in the Aeneid* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), ix.

50 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 1-2. Donatus references are taken from the following translation: Donatus, Aelius. *Life of Virgil*. Trans. David Scott Wilson-Okamura. Available www.virgil.org/vitae/a-donatus.htm. 1996, Rev. 2005, 2008.

51 Gordon at 1.

52 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 6.

53 *Ibid.*, Gordon at 1.

54 Gordon at 1.

55 Verg. *Ecl.* 9.28; Joseph *BJ* 4.634. Trans. H. St. J. Thackeray and Ralph Marcus, *Josephus* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956).

56 Cic. *Phil.* 3.5.13.

Vergil's birth.⁵⁷ It had remained loyal to Rome in the Social War of 90-89 B.C., but its enfranchisement was balked at by senators until a late date.⁵⁸ It must have been to the Romans a frontier town. The Rubicon, after all, is well south of the Po.

Vergil moved on to Milan, a seat of higher learning in northern Italy even then.⁵⁹ There, he engaged in his schooling.⁶⁰ Donatus describes, perhaps apocryphally, an early affection between Augustus and Vergil, with Augustus acting on Vergil's behalf to increase his bread ration.⁶¹

During Vergil's formative years, the Civil Wars had a distinct impact on his homeland. When he was a teenager, Julius Caesar conquered Gaul with legions raised in Cisalpine Gaul. Just as he was entering adulthood, Rome was thrown into the turmoil of civil war as Caesar crossed the Rubicon and marched on Rome. When Vergil was 22, Pompey was killed. At 26, Julius Caesar was dead. Before he had reached his thirtieth year, Vergil experienced the horrific aftermath of the Battle of Philippi and the ensuing struggles between Marcus Antonius and Octavian.

Donatus reports that after the assassination of Caesar, the Cremonians threw their support behind and gave their aid to Republican forces.⁶² Augustus (then Octavian), likely in retribution for the slight, issued an order after victory that his veterans be settled on the lands of Cremona.⁶³ Donatus reports that Vergil was living in Mantua at the time,

57 L.P. Wilkinson, *The Georgics of Virgil: a critical survey* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 24.

58 *Ibid.*

59 Wilkinson at 12.

60 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 7.

61 *Ibid.*

62 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 61.

63 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 62.

and much of the Mantuans' territory was part of the seizure.⁶⁴ Apparently, the rather weak, sickly and usually retiring Vergil was so incensed that he threateningly accosted one Arrius, a centurion.⁶⁵ Predictably, the encounter ended with Vergil flinging himself into a river to save his skin.⁶⁶ The veracity of this story is certainly questionable. But that his homeland was impacted, probably negatively, by the battles raging around it and the presence of multiple armies is much more certain. Vergil's land was saved by his great patron, the Augustan supporter Maecenas, with help from other patrons including Asinius Pollio.⁶⁷ It seems that it was not until after this period that he obtained Augustus' favor.⁶⁸

It was immediately after this episode that Vergil began writing the *Eclogues*. They were apparently written to praise Octavian Caesar and his other patrons for saving his land.⁶⁹ Soon thereafter, he published the *Georgics* in honor of Maecenas.⁷⁰ With the help of Maecenas, he (again apocryphally) read them to Augustus for four days straight.⁷¹ This was Vergil's pastoral period where he celebrated simplistic rustic living, harkening back to a sort of "golden age" of good living, hearty Italians, as Donatus termed it.⁷²

Vergil gives us but one small window into his feelings on the civil wars that had shaped his life. It comes during a stirring sequence at the end of Book I of the *Georgics*.

*di patrii Indigetes et Romule Vestaque mater,
quae Tuscum Tiberim et Romana Palatia seruas,
hunc saltem euerso iuuenem succurrere saeclo 500
ne prohibete. satis iam pridem sanguine nostro*

64 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 63.

65 *Ibid.*

66 *Ibid.*

67 *Ibid.*, see also Mart. 8.56.

68 *Ibid.*

69 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 64.

70 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 20.

71 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 27.

72 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 57.

*Laomedontean luimus periuria Troiae;
iam pridem nobis caeli te regia, Caesar,
inuidet atque hominum queritur curare triumphos,
quippe ubi fas uersum atque nefas: tot bella per orbem, 505
tam multae scelerum facies, non ullus aratro
dignus honos, squalent abductis arua colonis,
et curuae rigidum falces conflantur in ensem.
hinc mouet Euphrates, illinc Germania bellum;
uicinae ruptis inter se legibus urbes 510
arma ferunt; saeuit toto Mars impius orbe,
ut cum carceribus sese effudere quadrigae,
addunt in spatia, et frustra retinacula tendens
fertur equis auriga neque audit currus habenas.⁷³*

Vergil speaks of *uerso...saeclo*, or the destroyed generation.⁷⁴ He notes how future people will unearth bones of the dead.⁷⁵ He finds *fas uersum atque nefas*, an inability to distinguish whether events are in conformance with or in abrogation of divine law.⁷⁶ He finds it a wickedness that farmers are pulled from their fields, the scythe molded into a sword, and war spread through the earth. Finally, *uicinae ruptis inter se legibus urbes arma ferunt; saeuit toto Mars impius orbe.*⁷⁷ The law, Vergil says, is ruptured while the city is carried by arms, and war depressingly rages everywhere. War is without piety, an utter wickedness. This dispiriting series stands in marked contrast with Book II of the *Georgics* in which Vergil speaks fondly of the great aspects of Italy and the races that live there.

The *Georgics* were finished soon after the Battle of Actium in 31 BC.⁷⁸ Vergil

73 Verg. G. 1.497-514.

74 Verg. G. 1.500.

75 Verg. G. 1.497: *Grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulcris.*

76 Verg. G. 1.504.

77 Verg. G. 1.510-511.

78 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 25.

spent the next 11 years composing the *Aeneid*.⁷⁹ Apparently much of this time was spent in Naples and Sicily.⁸⁰ The work was unfinished when Vergil took to his deathbed. The poet, a perfectionist, wanted it burned, but upon the order of Augustus it was famously (and, again, the story may be doubted) saved and published.⁸¹ Following his untimely death, Vergil was buried in Italy and his grave marked with the following epithet:

“Mantua gave birth to me, the Calabrians snatched me away, now Parthenope holds me fast; I sang of pastures, fields and princes.”⁸²

Vergil was thus the product of a region well within Roman hegemony but on the outskirts in terms of both citizenship and the opinion of the Romans. One wonders if he was an active member of the contingent that supported Augustus’ foes at that time, or what his politics were generally. One argument proposed is that he had Caesarian sympathies dating back to Julius Caesar’s time as governor of Cisalpine Gaul.⁸³ The political choices of the Cremonians, and Augustus’ subsequent reaction, seem to indicate that supposed love for Caesar in the region did not run very deep, but there is really no way of telling where Vergil stood.

Vergil lamented civil war, yet Donatus’ account is replete with anecdotes indicating that he was a friend and confidant of Octavian, the eventual victor of Rome’s civil war. Apparently, at one point, Augustus exercised his power to edit a political opponent out of the *Eclogues*.⁸⁴ No writer is a fan of editorial control, but one must

79 *Ibid.*

80 *Ibid.*, see translator’s note.

81 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 39-41.

82 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 36.

83 Wilkinson at 24.

84 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 25.

wonder how the red ink from on high must have felt to Vergil, if indeed this happened at all.

Vergil wrote his own epithet.⁸⁵ It includes no mention whatsoever of the city of Rome. Vergil, despite having a house on the Esquiline, came into the city only on very rare occasions.⁸⁶ He shows his affection for rustic hardiness, and for the rustic hardiness of the Italian race.

Vergil's experience as a borderland Italian must have been shared by countless contemporaries. The Romans were ethnically plural, but in a culture that placed huge emphasis on the purity of blood lines, this plurality created identity problems, with an ideal citizenry having already occurred sometime in the past.⁸⁷ A Rome obsessed with the influence of foreigners could be an uncomfortable place for the Italians, who were incorporated with difficulty after the Social War and whose place in Roman history was still being formulated as late as Tiberius.⁸⁸ A Roman certainly did not have to be from as far away as Cisalpine Gaul to be thought of as an outsider Italian and a possible foreigner. The mighty Cicero, who hails from a town only about 75 miles from Rome, was ridiculed by his rivals as a foreigner, called the third foreign king of Rome.⁸⁹

Vergil the man must remain an enigma, but it seems doubtful to conclude, given his home soil, his experiences with strife and his apparent feelings toward the mother city, that he would use his *Aeneid* to write a mere *panygericus* for Augustus and Rome.

85 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 68.

86 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 11-12.

87 Emma Dench, *Romulus' Asylum, Roman Identities from the Age of Alexander to the Age of Hadrian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 103, 111.

88 *Ibid.*

89 Cic. *Sull.* 22.

Quintillian indicates that the Romans appreciated the art of criticizing a social superior in a crafty, disguised manner.⁹⁰ The ultimate example of this is Pliny's *Panegyricus*. As Bartsch argues for Pliny, so perhaps is true for Vergil: a lack of sincerity, or a sincerity carefully concealed, perhaps demonstrates that the era in which one could express true feelings openly is gone.⁹¹

Aeneas embodies at least some of the characteristics Vergil laments in the *Georgics*. He is a man who comes to Italian soil and ignites civil war, a man who forces the rustic aboriginal Italians to abandon their life of husbandry for the sword, and a man looking to take the land and maiden hand belonging to another. This behavior is apparent in a character Vergil famously and continuously dubbed *pius Aeneas*. If Aeneas is the great Augustan hero and the paragon of Roman manliness, it sits very uncomfortably with Vergil's pastoral works and his life experiences as they can reasonably be deduced.

Vergil's Aeneas is also a bit different from the one in Livy, Book 1, which is ostensibly the version of Aeneas handed down by tradition. Livy is a contemporary of Vergil. Livy's Aeneas marries Lavinia, who gives birth to his son, Ascanius. He founds Lavinium before he is ever attacked by Turnus, and then dies in battle with Turnus.⁹² Vergil never actually lets us see Aeneas conclude a treaty with the Latins and rule a city, much less produce an offspring. Vergil places the founding event long before Aeneas ever produces a physical heir. His is a metaphorical heir, and he needed a different take on the traditional story.

90 Quint. *Inst.* 9.2.3, 9.2.64-65.

91 Shadi Bartsch, "The Art of Sincerity: Pliny's *Panegyricus*," in *Actors in the Audience. Theatricality and Doublespeak from Nero to Hadrian*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994), 185-187.

92 Livy 1.1.9-11, 1.2.6.

Vergil gained fame in his own time.⁹³ Augustus apparently awaited the final product of the *Aeneid* with great anticipation and with relish read the few books sent to him as a preview.⁹⁴ Juvenal 7.226 is typically cited for the proposition that Vergil was taught to students in school.⁹⁵ Ovid, who was nearly 20 at the time of Vergil's death, recommended that students read the *Aeneid* as an example because *nullum Latine clarius*—no Latin is more clear.⁹⁶ Within a century of his death, Quintilian puts Vergil on par with Homer as authors that all boys must read as part of their schooling (even though, he says, their minds might not yet be ready for a true appreciation of the subject matter).⁹⁷ There was an obvious sense of Roman national pride in claiming ownership of a poet comparable to Homer.⁹⁸ Quotations from Vergil even appeared as graffiti on the walls of Pompeii.⁹⁹ But Donatus reports that from the very beginning Vergil has had his critics.¹⁰⁰

That criticism ramped up to a much higher degree during the troubled Neronian age.¹⁰¹ It was then no longer in doubt that the Republic was long dead and that Augustus' vision could, in certain hands, go terribly awry. The Flavians, after Nero, continued the tradition of reading the *Aeneid* darkly.¹⁰² Seneca read the final scene of the epic as an

93 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 26.

94 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 31-34.

95 *cum totus decolor esset Flaccus et haereret nigro fuligo Maroni.*

96 Ov. *Ars am.* 3.338.

97 Quint. *Inst.* I.8.5: *Ideoque optime institutum est, ut ab Homero atque Vergilio lectio inciperet, quamquam ad intellegendas eorum virtutes firmiore iudicio opus est: sed huic rei superest tempus, neque enim semel legentur. Interim et sublimitate heroi carminis animus adsurgat et ex magnitudine rerum spiritum ducat et optimis inbuatur.*

98 Tarrant at 58.

99 James L. Franklin, "Vergil at Pompeii: A Teacher's Aid," *CJ* 92, no. 2 (1997): 175-184.

100 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 43.

101 Tarrant at 64-65.

102 *Ibid.* at 69.

example of *pietas* overwhelmed by rage.¹⁰³ Suetonius tells us that Caligula considered removing the writings and busts of Vergil from libraries because he found him lacking in his supposed genius and only of trifling learning.¹⁰⁴

Members of the public living during these difficult periods also saw in Vergil a message about the emperors. One taunting message, according to Suetonius, was posted somewhere in the city: “*Quis negat Aeneae magna de stripe Neronem? Sustulit hic matrem: sustulit ille patrem.*”¹⁰⁵ “Who denies Nero from the great stock of Aeneas? He carried his mother: Aeneas carried his father.” Nero was accused of executing his mother.

In religious usage, Vergil was apparently fertile ground for propaganda by pagans and Christians alike, and Constantine Christianized Vergil in his Good Friday sermon.¹⁰⁶ The writer of the New Testament book Acts used the name Aeneas to describe a man bedridden for years with paralysis before he was healed through the apostle Peter by Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁷ The *sortes Vergilinae* describes the use of verses from Vergil as a tool of divination, a practice which continued into the Medieval period.

In the centuries since the Roman Empire, the *Aeneid* has been analyzed and consistently read as an affirmation of Augustan values and the achievements of Rome.¹⁰⁸ Leading up until the middle part of the Twentieth Century, a typical, unabashedly optimistic reading of Aeneas found in him a character embodying *pietas* and overcoming rage and war to do his duty, an exemplar of the ideal of Roman heroism and the prime

103 *Ibid.*

104 Suet. *Cal.* 34.2: *Sed et Virgili ac Titi Livi scripta et imagines paulum afuit quin ex omnibus bibliothecis amoveret, quorum alterum ut nullius ingenii minimaque doctrinae.*

105 Suet. *Nero* 39.2.

106 Tarrant at 70.

107 Acts 9.33-34.

108 Christine G. Perkell, *A Poet's Truth, A Study of the Poet in Virgil's Georgics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 3.

character relating that ideal to Augustus.¹⁰⁹ This is now known as the European view. In the middle of the twentieth century, a pessimistic view developed, and classicists supporting that view were said to be of the Harvard School.¹¹⁰ Rightly or wrongly, that school has been associated with the Vietnam War and the idea that scholars writing on powder keg college campuses, themselves troubled by American imperialism, were projecting their own anti-imperial views onto the past.¹¹¹ In 2001, Thomas, in *Virgil and the Augustan Reception*, saved the Harvard School classicists to a degree by demonstrating that the pessimistic strain existed in antiquity.¹¹²

Classicists have demonstrated the complexity of Vergilian studies by making excellent, equally plausible yet contradictory points. The genius of Vergil and the difficulty of ciphering his code remain such a challenge for us today that James O'Hara has said "Can one be certain about anything in this poem?"¹¹³

At least one scholar has attempted to forge a middle ground. Conte argues that Vergil intentionally constructed his epic with contradictions to force the reader to experience the pain of anxiety and doubt.¹¹⁴ The debate between the Harvard and European Schools, then, is an outward manifestation of this Vergilian tactic.¹¹⁵

Perhaps this study then captures a bit of that dualism. The conclusion here is that

109 Noteworthy proponents of this view include Heinz and Poschl. See Craig Kallendorf, *The Other Virgil: 'pessimistic' readings of the Aeneid in early modern culture* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), v. Outside of classicists, this view was almost unanimous. See the landmark work Richard F. Thomas, *Virgil and the Augustan Reception* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), xix.

110 Kallendorf at vii-viii.

111 *Ibid.*

112 *Ibid.*

113 Thomas at 1.

114 Gian Biagio Conte, in *The Poetry of Pathos: studies in Virgilian epic*, ed. by S.J. Harrison (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 152.

115 *Ibid.*

Vergil did create a message of hope, only the message of hope did not reside in Augustus and his propaganda as the European School supposes. Vergil is read as a provincial (for a snobby Roman, just one wrong move from being a foreigner), living as such for most of his life, a man who experienced the helplessness of living amid war, but also experienced the extreme wealth to be gained when he used his talents to befriend those in power. This was perhaps not unlike many new leaders in the period following Actium. Many Italians took more active power positions in Rome during this era, challenging the ways of the old elite class and becoming Augustus new patrician class.¹¹⁶

Vergil created an Aeneas not only containing all that was good and bad about Rome, but a man who was in the end utterly emasculated. For this theory to hold true, Aeneas must be made effeminate during the course of the epic. Understanding how he was so constructed requires an understanding of the strictures of sexuality for a late Republican Roman.

¹¹⁶ Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 450-453.

IV. Being a Man in Rome

A. *Imperium*

The word *imperium* is difficult to translate adequately, but essentially means power exercised over another. There was a dual quality to *imperium* in ancient Rome. Initially, it was a high-level power of command within Roman government granted only to magistrates or pro-magistrates responsible for commanding others in executing official activities of the state.¹¹⁷ Only magistrates and pro-magistrates proposed laws, and, through *imperium*, only they could command the legions in the field.¹¹⁸ Under the Republic the strength of such a power and its tendency to corrupt was carefully guarded by regulation of how *imperium* was awarded.¹¹⁹ It was normally only available to men who had climbed the *cursus honorum* and had thus proven their eligibility.¹²⁰

Livy demonstrates the etiquette with which Romans regarded use of *imperium* in a situation where a Roman left his post with his legions to come to Rome and brought a lieutenant with him rather than leaving him in charge. This was deemed as proper because *cum etiam verius esset Ti. Sempronio imperium habenti tradi exercitum quam legato*.¹²¹ Sempronius, he says, rightfully should lead the army (rather than the lieutenant) because he is the one with *imperium*.

117 J.S. Richardson, "Imperium Romanum: Empire and the Language of Power," *JRS* 81 (1991): 1.

118 *Ibid.* at 2.

119 *Ibid.*

120 Myles Anthony McDonnell, *Roman Manliness: Virtus and the Roman Republic* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 197.

121 Livy 35.8.6-7.

In another example, the Roman senate reacts to a dispatch from L. Marcius in which he assumed the title “propraetor to the senate.” The senators were *offendebat*—offended—and thought this thing a *rem mali exempli esse*—to be a bad example—because this man had acted when *imperio non populi iussu*—*imperium* had not been issued by the people, and *non ex auctoritate partum dato*—it had not been given from the authority of the senate.¹²² The senators petulantly refused to address a response to Marcius with the title he had chosen (*adscribi autem “propraetori L. Marcio” non placuit*), and found the matter such an affront to established norms that the consuls needed to give it full priority (*re prius*).¹²³ In this scene Livy also reports that upon the decision in the senate, the tribunes were sent to consult the plebeians about who to send to Hispania *cum imperio* to replace a former general.¹²⁴ Livy also demonstrates that when a commander is performing well, the *imperium prorogabatur*, the *imperium* may be prolonged.¹²⁵

This tradition of careful watch over *imperium* was strong enough that Augustus, in writing autobiographically, is careful to note that *senatus...imperio mihi dedit*.¹²⁶ The senate, he writes, gave me *imperium*. This was part of his continuing fiction that the Republic was restored and ongoing. By this time, grant of *imperium* was not so carefully guarded as it had been in earlier Republican days. But the tradition was such that the fiction was necessary.

According to Richardson, the grant of this kind of *imperium* was not only a legal

122 Livy 26.2.1-2.

123 Livy 26.2.4-5.

124 Livy 26.2.5-6.

125 Livy 36.2.9.

126 Aug. Anc.1.

matter, but had a religious component as well. The *lex curiata* was a procedure by which elected magistrates proceeded to take the auspices and thus confirm that both the people and Jupiter himself accepted those receiving *imperium* as worthy.¹²⁷ While this event lost its significance to some degree in the late Republic, it still remained a fundamental part of the process.¹²⁸

In the final scene of the *Aeneid*, Aeneas faces Turnus, each the respective leaders of their individual forces. In ancient Rome, if the Roman commander acting under *imperium* had killed the enemy leader in single combat, he was eligible for the single highest military honor available in that society, the *spolia opima*.¹²⁹ This award was so extraordinarily rare that by the late Republic it had only occurred three times, and really only twice in historical fact because one belonged to Romulus.¹³⁰ If it was awarded, a trophy was dedicated in the shrine of Jupiter Feretrius.¹³¹

Such a victory by an official with *imperium* is an extreme, almost sublime, honor, and it is tied up with the worship of Jupiter, the deity who blesses the human grant of *imperium*. There is no indication that any of this applies to Aeneas by the final scene, even earlier scenes indicate that this war could be one in which Aeneas would gain *imperium*. Perhaps that is because Jupiter has refused *imperium* for the Trojans and for Aeneas, and it figures not at all in the final confrontation. He speaks just before the final battle in response to Juno's pleas.

127 Richardson at 2.

128 *Ibid.*

129 Harriet I. Flower, "The Tradition of the Spolia Opima: M. Claudius Marcellus and Augustus," *CA* 19, No. 1 (2000): 34.

130 *Ibid.*

131 *Ibid.*

do quod uis, et me uictusque uolensque remitto.
sermonem Ausonii patrium moresque tenebunt, 835
utque est nomen erit; commixti corpore tantum
subsident Teucri. morem ritusque sacrorum
adiciam faciamque omnis uno ore Latinos.
hinc genus Ausonio mixtum quod sanguine surget,
supra homines, supra ire deos pietate uidebis,
nec gens ulla tuos aequae celebrabit honores.' 840

I grant your wish and relent, willingly won over. Ausonia's sons shall keep their fathers' speech and ways, and as it is now, so shall their name be: the Trojans shall but sink down, merged in the mass. I will give them their sacred laws and rites and make them all Latins of one tongue. From them shall arise a race, blended with Ausonian blood, which you will see overpass men, overpass gods in loyalty, and no nation will celebrate your worship with equal zeal.¹³²

Though Aeneas may win the final confrontation, his leadership, or *imperium*, over his Trojans will disappear since the race itself will be obliterated. The *imperium* that exists in Italy will stay with the Latins until it is bestowed on the blended heirs of the two races. Jupiter himself has rejected *imperium* for the Trojans as a race and removed it as a prize from this fight.

The second key aspect of *imperium* is an extension of the first. It is a power and control the Roman people exercise over all other people in their dominion.¹³³ For that reason, the full title for Augustus' final epitaph is *Res Gestae divi Augusti quibus orbem terrarium imperio populi Romani subiecit*.¹³⁴ He is telling his readers that he is the man who spread the *imperium* of the Roman people across the earth. No better place can an example of this *imperium* be found than in perhaps the most famous line in the *Aeneid*. Jupiter tells us that

132 Verg. *Aen.* 12.833-840.

133 Andrew Lintott, "What was the 'Imperium Romanum'?" *G&R, Second Series* 28, No.1 (1981): 53.

134 *Ibid.*

*ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono;
imperium sine fine dedi.*¹³⁵

He gives the Romans *imperium* without end. A few lines later, he explains further: *Romanos rerum dominos*, the Romans will be the lords of all.¹³⁶ In this scene he goes on to describe the *imperium* of Julius Caesar, but never once does he bestow *imperium* on Aeneas or the Trojans, just on their progeny.

Imperium, for Romans, was tied closely to masculinity. The essence of Roman manhood was control, a sort of personal *imperium*, over oneself and others.¹³⁷ In essence, a proper Roman man exercised a personal *imperium* over those within his sphere of influence. *Imperium* was also tied in to *virtus*.¹³⁸ *Virtus* is a word that captures the essence of Roman manliness but can never be adequately translated. According to Williams, a freeborn Roman man was a holder of *virtus* by birthright and was expected to exercise his *imperium* over women and foreigners, “themselves implicitly likened to women.”¹³⁹

The overall argument this study attempts to make is that Aeneas was incapable of possessing *imperium* after he dispatched Turnus. Therefore, the Rome that arose from the union of Turnus and Aeneas would not have the *imperium* that made it famous unless the Italian races had provided it to them. Aeneas lacks *imperium* because he lacks he does not possess Roman manliness. He is made effeminate by the poet. To better explain this argument, it is important to understand what, in the Roman mind, made for a true man.

135 Verg. *Aen.* 1.278-279.

136 Verg. *Aen.* 1.282.

137 Williams at 127.

138 Williams at 133.

139 *Ibid.*

B. A Roman Man is Always on Top

As in the modern world, a Roman man was expected to behave in a certain way to be gendered as a man, and failure to do so could condemn him to being something other than a man despite his anatomical characteristics.¹⁴⁰ Unlike the modern world, whether a man had homosexual sex did not necessarily make a difference as to whether he was socially gendered a man (in fact, the modern concept of a bifurcated homosexual/heterosexual predilection had no place in the ancient world).¹⁴¹ Failure to remove such modern labels from scholarly thinking is probably the reason scholarship in this area was so slow in developing. In one typical example from the early twentieth century, a commentator declared Romans the progeny of “uncouth farmers” with little history of study in art, history, or philosophy and thus unable to produce a “lofty and spiritualized sexual life.”¹⁴² In the last few decades, the scholarship in this area is much improved and has given us a basic outline of Roman sexual behavior and constructions of gender and how they were projected onto the state.

Romans did have rules for acceptable sexual activity, but theirs was based more on the social status of the sexual partner and how the act was performed than their partner’s anatomical sex. As to the actual act, to borrow Williams’ phrase, theirs was a “Priapic model of masculinity” whereby a Roman man, to be seen as a fully gendered man, must be the active, insertive partner and not the passive penetrated partner in a

140 Williams at 4.

141 *Ibid.* at 4, 6.

142 Otto Kiefer, *Sexual Life in Ancient Rome* (New York: Dutton, 1935), 5. As an interesting aside, Kiefer finds Roman sex far cruder than that of the Greeks, despite some of the Greek tendencies that would be problematic for modern sensibilities.

sexual encounter.¹⁴³ But this concept existed not just in the tangible but in the abstract. A man's behavior, dress, appearance, image, speech and grooming habits could all paint him as penetrated metaphorically and therefore less than a fully gendered male.¹⁴⁴ Men who do things that are less than masculine essentially give up their masculine privilege, in a very real way selling out their *virtus*, thus becoming an object of scorn and even lower than women.¹⁴⁵ Under this Priapic model, "penetration is subjugation...and masculinity is domination," and, like the absurdly well-endowed deity Priapus for whom this model is named, an ideal Roman man was "ready, willing and able to express his dominion over others, male or female, by means of sexual penetration."¹⁴⁶

But there was a different level to this. A Roman, to remain fully gendered as a man, was expected to penetrate *puellae* (girls), *feminae* (women), *pueri* (boys) or *adulescentuli/iuvenes* (pre-pubescent youths) still in the *flos aetatis* (the flower of youth, prior to the onset of a manly beard), but was to avoid *viri* (other men).¹⁴⁷ Lucretius describes one *Veneris qui telis accipit ictus*—who accepts a wound from the spear of Venus (again the war imagery, *telis* being a javelin and *ictus* a war wound)—as a *puer membris muliebribus*—boy with the limbs of women—and *mulier*—a woman.¹⁴⁸ Thus, Donatus can tell us that Vergil enjoyed boys, and a Roman reader would find nothing unacceptable with that.¹⁴⁹

But a Roman man was also required to refrain from sex with freeborn partners,

143 Williams at 18.

144 *Ibid.*

145 *Ibid.* at 18.

146 Williams at 18.

147 *Ibid.* at 19.

148 Lucr. 4.1052-3.

149 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 8.

male or female.¹⁵⁰ That requirement makes sense in the Roman paradigm of the *paterfamilias*, who is the arbiter of the sexual behavior of the women under his power, in a sense the holder of a household *imperium* over the mating rights of the females. Committing such an act represented an act of *stuprum*, yet another untranslatable word that is most closely associated with debauchery or illicit sex.¹⁵¹ Cicero used it as an accusatory term against Catiline on numerous occasions, including one in which he said, “*quod nefarium stuprum no per illum?*” “What nefarious *stuprum* was not (done by) him?”¹⁵² A person who committed *stuprum* was at times termed a *moechus*. The term is demonstrated in a line in Suetonius meant to be funny: *Uxoris moechus coeperat esse suae*.¹⁵³ He is suggesting that a man is a crude *moechus* because he slept with his own wife. Another is in Plautus: *erus meus ita magnus moechus mulierum est*—my master is thus a great *moechus* (because he is exceptional at defiling women).¹⁵⁴ Finally, Horace writes of ancient authors that if a person deserved to be called out as a *moechus*...*multa cum libertate notabant*—they so designated him with much liberty.¹⁵⁵

Stuprum was so shameful against a freeborn person because it was in effect an act of removing the freeborn’s masculinity, or in the case of a woman harming her *pudicitia*.¹⁵⁶ *Pudicitia* is in very basic terms is the female equivalent of *virtus*.¹⁵⁷

Adulterium, adultery (not in the modern sense of having sex with anyone other than a

150 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 62.

151 Don. *Vit. Verg.* 98.

152 Cic. *Cat.* 2.7.

153 Suet. *Otho* 3.2.

154 Plaut. *Mil.* 3.1.

155 Hor. *Sat.* 1.4.4-5.

156 Williams at 110.

157 Rebecca Langlands, *Sexual Morality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 2. *Pudicitia*, like *virtus*, had a cult and personification. See Livy 10.23.

monogamous partner, but in a sense consistent with Roman mores, a form of *stuprum*), in the *Aeneid* is listed as a crime committed by the doomed men in the underworld.¹⁵⁸

An accusation of *stuprum* was so vile that Cicero castigated Antonius for raising the accusation that another man committed such an act with his wife because such statements were *crudelior*, crude, and *impie*, impious, when made in public in front of the woman's husband and father and in the presence of the senate.¹⁵⁹ Of course, he himself was not above castigating the *scelere*, wickedness, of a mother who committed adultery in public when it served his political ends.¹⁶⁰ But, for a man, sex with a slave was for the most part acceptable.

All of this created a late Republican, early imperial Rome where erotic statues of boys were the rage and Augustus could be entertained at his wedding by dancing nude boys while at the same time working to pass his morality laws to preserve traditional Roman marriages, eliminate adultery and encourage procreation.¹⁶¹ Augustus' *lex Julia* was such an extreme attempt to maintain the social hierarchy that a *paterfamilias* had the right to kill a married daughter who misbehaved sexually.¹⁶² So serious was sexual morality that guardians of that morality were regarded as generals in the field.¹⁶³

158 Verg. *Aen.* 6.612: *quique ob adulterium caesi.*

159 Cic. *Phil.* 2.38.99: *quod ab eo sorori et uxori tuae stuprum esse oblatum comperisses. quis interpretari potest, impudentiorne qui in senatu, an improbior qui in Dolabellam, an impurior qui patre audiente, an crudelior qui in illam miseram tam spurce, tam impie dixeris?*

160 Cic. *Clu.* 5.12.

161 Elizabeth Bartman, "Eros's Flame: Images of Sexy Boys in Roman Ideal Sculpture," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome. Supplementary Volumes* 1, *The Ancient Art of Emulation: Studies in Artistic Originality and Tradition from the Present to Classical Antiquity* (2002): 269-270; Dio Cass. 48.44.3, Earnest Cary trans., *Dio's Roman History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954); Richard I. Frank, "Augustus' Legislation on Marriage and Children," *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 8 (1975): 43-45.

162 Langlands at 20.

163 Catherine Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1.

The antithesis of a fully gendered Roman male was a *cinaedus*, referencing a man who enjoyed being penetrated, and who was characterized by such modifiers as *effeminatus* (effeminate) and *semivir* (literally half-man).¹⁶⁴ Such men were characterized by the soft moistness of a woman.¹⁶⁵ They were often seen to wear feminine clothes and perfume. They depilate their skin and were generally thought to be overly concerned with their appearance.¹⁶⁶ A real man was characterized by “uncultivated roughness.”¹⁶⁷ Gellius quotes Scipio Africanus, certainly someone who could be called the epitome of Roman manliness, for a description of what *cinaedi* do:

Nam qui cotidie unguentatus adversum speculum ornetur, cuius supercilia radantur, qui barba vulsa feminibusque subvulsis ambulet, qui in conviviis adolescentulus cum amatore, cum chirodota tunica interior accubuerit, qui non modo vinosus, sed virosus quoque sit, eumne quisquem dubitet, quin idem fecerit quod cinaedi facere solent?

For one who daily having anointed himself prepares before a mirror, whose eyebrows are shaved off, who ambles with a plucked beard and nether regions like a woman, who a young boy at a party will recline with his lover wearing his long-sleeved tunic, who not only likes wine, but men, who then can be uncertain that he is doing what *cinaedi* are accustomed to do?¹⁶⁸

Gender was regulated visually by appearance in public.¹⁶⁹ A Roman must be particularly careful of appearance because he was constantly critiqued based on a physiognomical tradition with its ancestry in Aristotelean Greece. A Roman’s face, body and gestures were constantly analyzed for signs of weakness like too much dampness in

164 Williams at 122.

165 Maud W. Gleason, *Making Men: sophists and self-presentation in ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 29.

166 Williams at 129.

167 *Ibid.* at 130.

168 Gell. 6.12.5.

169 Gleason at 70.

the eye.¹⁷⁰ Thus, in Gellius, a man is taunted for *mollities oculorum et corporis*, softness of eye and body.¹⁷¹ Gellius further relates a story from Plutarch of a man who was known to have not committed *stuprum* but who was still taunted because *nam cum vocem eius infractam capillumque arte compositum et oculos ludibundos atque inlecebrae voluptatisque plenos*, his voice was different, his hair artfully composed and his playful eyes full of enticement and voluptuousness.¹⁷²

Cicero, in criticizing a band of soldiers hanging out around the senate, attempts to portray them as effeminate. He says that these are men *qui nitent ungeuentis, qui fulgent purpura*—who are glistening with ointment and flashing purple.¹⁷³ Cicero is also well known for defining how an appropriate Roman man should walk.¹⁷⁴ Also, according to Seneca, if a man is *effeminatus*, one could detect a *mollitiam*, a softness, in the way he walks.¹⁷⁵

Juvenal, in his second satire, gives us a rant filled with invective against the effeminate garb and grooming that has invaded Rome. He begins by criticizing a man for effeminate behavior, saying he is one of the *Socraticos...cinaedos*, Socratic *cinaedi*.¹⁷⁶ Further: *hispida membra quidem at durae per bracchia saetae promittunt atrocem animum*—arms stiff with hard bristles promise a hard soul.¹⁷⁷ *Sed podice levi caeduntur tumidae medico ridente mariscae*—But (of a *cinaedus*) large wounds are being cut by the

170 *Ibid.* at 29, 55-56.

171 Gell. 3.5.

172 *Ibid.*

173 Cic. *Cat.* 2.5

174 Anthony Corbeill, "Political Movement. Walking and Ideology in Republican Rome," in *The Roman Gaze. Vision, Power, and the Body*, ed. by David Frederick (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 182-183.

175 Sen. *Ep.* 114.3: *Si ille effeminatus est, in ipso incessu adparere mollitiam?*

176 Juv. 2.10.

177 Juv. 2.11-12.

laughing doctor on your shaven anus.¹⁷⁸

Juvenal, in addition to providing us this rather graphic image, also illustrates another facet of being an effeminate man: lack of control over one's emotions and desires. Describing one Peribomius, he terms the effeminacy that afflicts him a *furor*, which is a raving madness and the result *veniam*, or indulgences.¹⁷⁹ Juvenal continues on his rant by considering the colorful clothing of the *cinaedi*, the made up faces and plucked eyebrows. Barton sees in the Romans a disdain for make-up because it provides a place for the wearer to hide from the shaming glances of others.¹⁸⁰ Juvenal concludes his rant by running effeminate behavior right up against the most notable symbol of Roman manliness, the general in the field of battle. There, at the moment he was to order a charge, an effeminate commander *quo se ille videbat armatum*—paused to gaze at himself fully armed in a mirror.¹⁸¹ Juvenal was shocked that a mirror would be brought to the battlefield.¹⁸² Sarcastically, he says: *nimirum summi ducis est occidere Galbam et curare cutem*—doubtless the greatest leader is needed to kill Galba and at the same time to preen over his skin.¹⁸³

The term *semivir* appears in Ovid. It describes the legend of Hermaphroditus (provider of another obvious English derivative) and how he entered a stream a full man, only to become half man, half woman, or *semivir*.¹⁸⁴ Writes Ovid: *quisquis in hos fontis vir venerit, exeat inde semivir et tactis subito mollescat in undis!* He entered the water a

178 Juv. 2.12-13.

179 Juv. 2.18-19.

180 Carlin Barton, "Being in the eyes. Shame and Sight in Ancient Rome," in *The Roman Gaze, Vision, Power and the Body* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 216-235.

181 Juv. 2 100-101.

182 Juv. 2 104: *speculum ciuilis sarcina belli*.

183 Juv. 2. 104-105.

184 Ov. *Met.* 4.385-86.

vir, and when he exited he was a *semivir* with a *mollescat*, a softened touch.¹⁸⁵ Strabo, a Greek contemporary of Vergil, states that *cinaedi* had their own way of speaking and mannerisms, and he mentions one Sotades, who became the first to attempt to write the talk of the *cinaedi*.¹⁸⁶

It is worth noting that these writers are talking about extremes. A man showing distinct *virtus* and another effeminate *cinaedus* were on opposite ends of what Gleason has termed a continuum of masculinity.¹⁸⁷ However, she notes that masculinity was the proving ground for the Roman race, not a birthright but “something that had to be won.”¹⁸⁸ Oliensis states that homophobia existed in ancient Rome, but it was a homophobia toward effeminate actors, the *cinaedi*.¹⁸⁹

C. Virtus

Virtus is a pre-requisite both for being accepted as a true Roman man and for holding *imperium*. That masculinity was tied up in the very essence of the Roman state is perhaps difficult to grasp in a modern nation (or perhaps not, considering the cowboy image some presidents feel the need to convey and considering that even President Obama, more aristocratic in his sensibilities, felt the need to choke down a cheese steak and beer to prove he is an average guy). But, as McDonnell put it, *virtus* was “nothing less than the quality associated with, and responsible for, Roman greatness.”¹⁹⁰ Cicero said *virtus* is *quae propria est Romani generis et seminis*—the particular quality of the

185 *Ibid.*

186 Strab. *Geo.* 14.1.41 Trans. Horace Leonard Jones, 1970.

187 Gleason at 62.

188 *Ibid.* at 159.

189 Oliensis at 296.

190 McDonnell at 2.

Roman race and seed—and that by it, the ancestors had conquered all of Italy, Carthage, Numantia and brought kingdoms and nations *in dicionem huius imperii*—under the control of this *imperium*.¹⁹¹ Thus, unlike during the king-dominated period before the Republic, and the imperial period, women in the Republic play almost no overt role whatsoever.¹⁹² Roman leadership involves the world of men, and other than a few very rare exceptions, like Cornelia mother of the Gracchi, women, children, and slaves were utterly excluded from *virtus*.¹⁹³ This also demonstrates why acting masculine, and not like a *cinaedus*, was so important. Judgment of a person’s masculinity was linked directly with the ethics of the state because to act as a magistrate required a demonstrated *virtus*.¹⁹⁴

Quintilian gives an idea how pervasive manliness was in daily life. Speaking about reading, he says *sit autem in primis lectio virilis*.¹⁹⁵ He counsels his readers to read like a man. Further, he states, if one is singing poetry, there is no excuse for singing *effeminata*, in a girly manner, *ut nunc a plerisque fit*, as now is done by many.¹⁹⁶ Later, he recommends reading poets of an older age for reasons of *sanctitas*, sanctity, and *virilitas*, manliness, and to avoid modern laxity in writing.¹⁹⁷

Additionally, Cicero states: *ut homo effeminatus fortissimum virum conaretur occidere, hodie rem publicam nullam haberetis*—“if that effeminate man had not tried to

191 Cic. *Phil.* 4.13.

192 McDonnell at 11.

193 *Ibid.* 167.

194 Shadi Bartsch, *The Mirror of the Self. Sexuality, Self-Knowledge, and the Gaze in the Early Roman Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

195 Quint. *Inst.* 1.8.2.

196 *Ibid.*

197 Quint. *Inst.* 1.8.9: *Sanctitas certe et, ut sic dicam, virilitas ab iis petenda est, quando nos in omnia deliciarum vitia dicendi quoque ratione defluximus.*

kill that most strong man, today you would not have a Republic.”¹⁹⁸ *Fortis* is an adjective often linked with *virtus*, and here Cicero indicates that almost as a foregone conclusion the real man will prevail over the effeminate in an individual fight, though perhaps not always in the realm of politics.

This definition of *virtus* sits uncomfortably with a few of the characters in the late Republic. Most notably is Maecenas, patron of Vergil and confidant of Augustus. His name became synonymous with the luxurious and feminine, and he is accused of never pleasing his wife and always going about accompanied by eunuchs.¹⁹⁹ That begs the question of how a person like that could hold such great power in ancient Rome. His funeral oration, as recounted by Williams, is instructive. In it, even though the writer is acting as an apologist for Maecenas, he indicates that his un-manly behavior was only allowed as an *indulsit*, or an indulgence, from Augustus.²⁰⁰ Williams concludes: “That his behavior is intrinsically something *needing* indulgence is never questioned.”²⁰¹ Julius Caesar was another man of power described as behaving, at times, in an effeminate manner. It must be noted that most of these were taunts, many of which he allowed by his own soldiers as way of building trust through levity.²⁰² Caesar makes it clear, however, that good *virtus* is of the first importance for victory.²⁰³ McDonnell theorizes that a large part of the reason for civil war was a “crisis in manliness” exemplified by the crisis of 63 B.C.²⁰⁴ That scholars would expect to see leaders without the traditional *virtus* at the end

198 Cic. *Mil.* 89.

199 Williams at 147-48.

200 See *Eleg. Maec.*; Williams at 157-59.

201 *Ibid.* at 159.

202 Williams at 165.

203 McDonnell at 303.

204 *Ibid.* at 2.

of the Republic is not a surprise. That there are variances of opinion concerning the nature of manliness from this period is also to be expected. But what the reader should be looking for in analyzing *virtus* in Vergil is a traditional definition of the word. Such a definition was an existing and vibrant part of the political ideology at the time the poet wrote.

Virtus was a divinity in ancient Rome, made so by the third-century consul and general Marcus Claudius Marcellus. Marcellus was a leader in the Second Punic War, and eventually died in battle. He is perhaps the best example of what true (that is, ideologically accurate) *virtus* was for a Republican Roman. His greatest triumph came earlier in his life during the Gallic War. His creation of the divine *virtus* resulted from his single combat victory over the Gallic king Viridumarus at the Battle of Clastidium, which made him one of three Romans ever given the *spolia opima*.²⁰⁵ Vergil references Marcellus' *spolia opima* in the *Aeneid*, placing it in Anchises' underworld speech to Aeneas in which he described the future for Rome: *Aspice, ut insignis spoliis Marcellus opimis ingreditur, victorque viros supereminet omnes*.²⁰⁶ "Behold, where Marcellus is marching his *spolia opima* trophy, a victor towering over all men." This is the ultimate moment of Roman manliness projected upon the state. Marcellus, a man granted *imperium*, has killed (penetrated with his weapon) a king whose name includes the Latin for man (*vir*). He dedicated during his *spolia opima* to a new divinity *Virtus*. He became a man who not only rules over but towers above all other men (*viros*). He is the embodiment of the manly Roman man taking control over other men.

205 *Ibid.* at 208.

206 Verg. *Aen.* 6.855-856.

In strict contrast to this ultimate, perfect example of Roman *virtus* is a story about the armies of Alexander the Great. A foreigner (and in particular an Easterner who was seen as especially susceptible to the dreaded qualities of luxury, sloth and effeminacy), just by the fact alone that he was a foreigner was regarded as subjugated, or metaphorically penetrated by, Roman manliness.²⁰⁷ Livy thus laments how Alexander's army was adversely affected by its time in the East and its exposure to luxury, eventually driving *mulierum ac spadonum*, women and castrated men, or eunuchs, and dragging *purpuram atque aurum oneratum fortunae...suae*, the gold and purple load of his fortune.²⁰⁸ Livy suggests that he can get away with it because conquest of the Far East is terribly easy; Alexander finds *praedam uerius quam hostem*, booty rather than an actual enemy.²⁰⁹ Livy assures his readers that had Alexander invaded Italy rather than India, he would have met a different result.²¹⁰

Catullus describes Arabs, a favorite representative of the luxurious east, as *Arabasve molles*, soft Arabs.²¹¹ Cicero, writing in castigation for the way one group of Easterners, the Apollonides, has been treated, states that *homines sunt tota ex Asia frugalissimi, sanctissimi, a Graecorum luxuria et levitate remotissimi*—they are the most frugal men in all of Asia, most sanctimonious, and most removed from the luxury and softness of the Greeks.²¹² He further states they are hard working *aratores, rusticani*—

207 McDonnell at 133.

208 Livy 9.17.16: *quem mulierum ac spadonum agmen trahentem, inter purpuram atque aurum oneratum fortunae apparatibus suae.*

209 *Ibid.*

210 Livy 9.17.17: *longe alius Italiae quam Indiae.*

211 *Catull.* 11.5.

212 *Cic. Flac.* 71.

ploughmen, rustics.²¹³ His description of them is reminiscent of Vergil's description of pastoral Italians, and comes across as noteworthy and unusual in someone from the East. This also demonstrates some of the tension in Rome concerning Greeks. As Pliny's letters illustrate, the Greeks are considered the original civilized people, but also bear signs of foreign decadence.²¹⁴

More often than not, Greeks and other foreigners are seen as too full of passion (like a woman, in the ancient sense) and unable to control their desires. Take the prototypical Greek in Juvenal, who he considers to be so sexually out of control that he will sleep with just about everything.²¹⁵ He will even *aviam resupinat amici*—bend over his friend's grandmother.²¹⁶ A Greek, Juvenal says, is always playacting, and thus his emotions are always in the extreme. Thus *flet, si lacrimas conspexit amici, nec dolet...si dixeris aestuo, sudat*—if he spots his friend's tears, he weeps, even though he feels no anguish...if you say "I'm hot," he breaks into a sweat.²¹⁷ Konstan points out in the example of the femal Roman client ruler Pythodoris that foreigners, particularly Easterners, were so low on the femininity scale, that the rule over them in the frontier by a female Roman was considered entirely appropriate.²¹⁸ This is a considerable indication of the Roman mindset towards foreigners considering that, in Republican Rome, accusing a man of operating at the behest or under the power of a woman was a strong insult.²¹⁹

213 *Ibid.*

214 Greg Woolf, "Playing Games with Greeks: One Roman on Greekness," in *Greeks on Greekness: Viewing the Greek Past under the Roman Empire*, ed. by David Konstan and Suzanne Said (supplementary Volume 29, 162-179. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

215 Juv. 3.109-113.

216 Juv. 3.112.

217 Juv.3.101-103.

218 David Konstan, "Women, Ethnicity and Power in the Roman Empire," *Diotima* (2000).

219 Tom Hillard, "Republican Politics, Women and Evidence," *Helios* 16, no. 2 (1989): 165-182.

Luxury is a major concern to ancient authors who consider it a threat to the state. It was directly related to the female element, something brought into the state by the female and pursued by those with too much idle time.²²⁰ It was particularly pernicious because a person given to luxury used his or her wealth for personal pursuits instead of furtherance of the state.²²¹ It was of such a concern for the Romans that Cicero, when speaking about impending civil war, indicated that one of its key causes was *luxuria*.²²² Livy said that *luxuria*, along with avarice, *quae pestes omnia magna imperia everterunt*—is the pestilence that has overthrown all great empires.²²³ He finds Greece and Asia *omnibus libidinum illecebris repletas*—replete with all of the enticements of salacious pleasure (*libidinum*, from *libido* leads to the latest noteworthy English derivative).²²⁴ This is from an account by Livy in support of maintaining the Oppian law, which contemporaries like Cato the Elder found necessary to curb *luxuriam muliebrem*—feminine luxury.²²⁵ Livy places female *luxuria* on par with the *luxuria* that arises from the East. Thus, the feminine and the Eastern are combined as dangerous producers of *luxuria*, an element that can threaten *virtus* and thus the Empire as a whole. Incidentally, Livy here joins in the nostalgia for the hard-working, tough times of old by finding that feminine luxury was not so much of a worry in the past because luxury was simply unavailable. Still, the law was apparently deemed necessary, just in case. Livy makes this connection between the slothful foreigner, the feminine, and the downfall of Rome

220 Edwards at 80.

221 *Ibid.* at 186-87.

222 Cic. *Cat.* 2.11: *intus est hostis. cum luxuria nobis, cum amentia, cum scelere certandum est.*

223 Livy 34.4.2.

224 Livy 34.4.3.

225 Livy 34.4.6.

immediately from the preface of his work. He states that moral problems *immigraverint*, were brought into Rome from the outside.²²⁶ That worry is important when discussing just what kind of people the Trojans were and what they brought to Italian soil.

This connection between people who were gendered less than male and luxury is seen again in a letter from Pliny. In it, he uses the phrases *scurrae cinaedi* and *molle a cinaedo, petulans a scurra*, with *scurra* translating to a lazy person, or a person enjoying luxury (it is in the feminine).²²⁷ Thus a *cinaedus* is not only soft, but connected with laziness, the result of too much luxury, and luxury is connected with the Eastern and foreign.

In the *Aeneid*, Vergil himself links feminine luxury to a failure of *virtus* through the story of Camilla the Volscian, a female warrior who for much of her appearance in the epic is a paragon of *virtus*. She is undone when, in the midst of battle, she spots a priest dressed in finery and, desiring to seize his finery for herself, basically loses her mind. She comes under the spear of her killer because *femineo praedae et spoliolum ardebat amore*—she was blazing with a feminine love of booty and spoils.²²⁸

In further examples, Julius Caesar once lamented, “*Animi est ista mollitia, non virtus, paulisper inopiam ferre non posse.*” “It is softness, not *virtus*, to be unable to bear privation for a short time.”²²⁹ *Virtus* and *mollitia* are set against one another in an interesting way. Sallust blames Sulla for allowing luxury to slip into the camp while the soldiers were in Asia with the result that *animos molliverant*—their spirits had become

226 Livy Pr. 11; Dench at 22-23.

227 Plin. *Ep.* 9.17.1-2.

228 Verg. *Aen.* 11.782.

229 Caes. *B. Gall.* 7.77.4-5.

soft.²³⁰ Caesar recounts, with a hint of admiration, that the one tribe of the Belgae that refused to surrender to him because, having allowed no merchants and thus tempted by no luxury, they were *esse homines feros magnaue virtutis*—they were wild men of great *virtus*.²³¹ So worried were the Romans about their own army growing soft, that even the deployment of a mosquito net in camp was seen as an unacceptable use of an eastern luxury.²³² The *Aeneid* feeds into that, as will be discussed later in this study, by portraying the native Italians as hardy and unaffected by luxury.

D. The Message and Augustan Rome

By way of summary, *virtus* is the manly quality that drives the Roman state and gives it its ability to exercise *imperium* over foreigners, women and others. This manliness is tied up with sexual dominance. A Roman man is literally expected to penetrate the rest of the world and act as a gatekeeper for those who he allows to penetrate the females in his household. The antithesis is effeminate behavior, and such effeminate behavior can be found in the behavior of women, foreigners (usually from the East) and those who took too great of an enjoyment from luxury, as women were most likely to do.

This leads to one of the central premises developed by Syed that is accepted as a basis for this study. She argued that the ethnic identity of Romans was developed by the reader of the *Aeneid* comparing or contrasting his own perceptions of appropriate behavior with characters in the poem.²³³ This effect of the poem was particularly acute

230 Sall. *Cat.* 11.

231 Caes. *B. Gall.* 2.14.3-5.

232 Syed at 184.

233 *Ibid.* at 214.

with the female characters. The females are often portrayed as passionate and unable to control their emotions, both conditions unbecoming a Roman man.²³⁴ Because of their emotions and general femininity, they were linked to the foreign, becoming examples of the non-Roman both in terms of gender and ethnicity, which as many of the ancient examples have shown is often one in the same. In Syed's words: "As gendered and ethnic others, some female characters define the reader's Roman identity by opposition."²³⁵

The obvious example of this is Dido. She is, in the *Aeneid*, uniquely Carthaginian but also undone by her wild feminine passion.²³⁶ This brings Syed back to the argument that Roman *imperium* and conquest are portrayed as sexual, because whether gendered feminine directly or ethnically feminine, the conquered territory is metaphorically penetrated by Rome.²³⁷ This study brings that conception home to the two main characters in the Iliadic *Aeneid*, Turnus and Aeneas. The copulatory nature of their final struggle has already been demonstrated. The remainder of this study will show that by the poet's descriptions they are gendered female and, particularly in the case of Aeneas, ethnically female as well, thus providing the reader with a final struggle between two men who are the antitheses of a stereotypically gendered Roman men.

But first, a word about the Rome in which the poet is working. The idea of the ethnic and gendered other would have been very acute at the time of the writing, just a few years after Actium. During the period leading up to the battle, Augustus had begun a programmatic moral campaign against Antonius in which he expounded old-style Roman

234 *Ibid.* at 116.

235 *Ibid.* at 117.

236 *Ibid.* at 166-171.

237 *Ibid.* at 171.

virtues and pummeled Antonius' image as the representative of the luxurious, unholy East.²³⁸ Octavian linked himself closely to Apollo, and was heir of the Julian line.²³⁹ Antonius, on the other hand, was the new Dionysus-Osiris, heir to the Ptolemies, and even as he used this as his own propaganda it was turned against him by the pro-Octavian faction.²⁴⁰ Thus, Cassius Dio reports that Augustus exhorted his troops before Actium by telling them that Antonius had abandoned his ancestors to assume the customs of the barbarians, and that his indulgence in luxury has led to this day.²⁴¹ A subplot of the war between Antonius and Octavian was a battle of sexualized insults.²⁴² In that same speech, Augustus encourages his men by telling them that Antonius, having consorted with Cleopatra and because he is living in luxury and behaves "like a woman," can in no way carry out a manly deed.²⁴³ He has become effeminate, his mind is infected by the poison of womanly thoughts and an unnatural lust.²⁴⁴ After thoroughly effeminizing Antonius, Octavian leads his forces to victory. Roman *virtus* is victorious over an effeminate foreign power yet again.

At the center of all of this is Cleopatra. In Dio's account, Augustus is beside himself that not only an Eastern ruler, but a *female* Eastern ruler, would attempt to defeat Rome.²⁴⁵ Syed finds her the ultimate ethnic and gendered other, whom Augustus

238 Amy Richlin, "Not Before Homosexuality: The Materiality of the *Cinaedus* and the Roman Law against Love between Men," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 3, no. 4 (1993): 524.

239 Barbara A. Kellum, "The Construction of Landscape in Augustan Rome: The Garden Room at the Villa ad Gallinas," *The Art Bulletin* 76, no. 2 (1994): 11.

240 Kenneth Scott, "Octavian's Propaganda and Antonius's *De Sua Ebrietate*," *CPh* 4, No. 2 (1929): 133.

241 Dio Cass. 50.25.

242 Caroline Vout, *Power and Eroticism in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

243 Dio Cass. 50.27.

244 Dio Cass. 50.28-29.

245 Dio Cass. 50.24-25.

exploited to suggest the foreignness of Antonius.²⁴⁶

This theme is taken up by Vergil in one of the *Aeneid*'s most obviously pro-Augustan scenes. Coming in Book VIII, it is the scene describing the shield of Aeneas as forged by Vulcan. On it appears the battle of Actium. Vergil writes:

Hinc ope barbarica variisque Antonius armis, 685
victor ab Aurorae populis et litore rubro,
Aegyptum viresque Orientis et ultima secum
*Bactra vehit, sequiturque (nefas) Aegyptia coniunx.*²⁴⁷

Antonius appears in his barbaric arms, leader of the *Aurorae...Orientis* people of the east, and most nefarious of all, he has his Egyptian consort. Vergil cannot even bring himself to say Cleopatra's name, though in many cases the link between the historical character Cleopatra and Dido are unmistakable.

246 Syed at 177.

247 Verg. *Aen.* 8.685-688.

V. Turning the Men Into Women

A. Turnus

The effeminatization of Turnus is far more stark and obvious than that of Aeneas. He is penetrated twice by his conqueror in the final scene of the epic. At first, a phallic *hasta* thrown by Aeneas *transit femur*, enters his thigh, *incidit ictus ingens*, and it cut open a huge wound.²⁴⁸ Lucretius used the word *ictus* as a metaphor for the wound caused by a sexual penetration.²⁴⁹ Later, as Turnus begins to beg Aeneas, *humilis supplexque oculos*, he is humble with downcast eyes.²⁵⁰ In the Roman world, concerned with physiognomy, homoerotic artwork often portrays the cinaedic figure with downcast, passive, suppliant eyes.²⁵¹ After this passive, effeminate scene, Turnus is penetrated by the *ferrum*, the iron, *sub pectore*, under the breast, thus *condit*, the ferrum is buried, and Rome is founded.²⁵² That Turnus concludes the epic as a penetrated effeminate is hard to miss. But he did not arrive in the epic as effeminate. Becoming effeminate was a process.

At our first meeting with Turnus, he seems to have developed the qualities that befit a man of Roman *virtus*. He is described first by Vergil at the start of Book VII as, of Lavinia's many suitors, *pulcherrimus omnis*, most handsome of all, and *atavisque potens*, of a powerful lineage.²⁵³ Turnus has *praestanti corpore*, an exceptional body, and *toto*

248 Verg. *Aen.* 12.926-927.

249 See Note 152 above.

250 Verg. *Aen.* 12.930.

251 Bartman at 269-270.

252 Verg. *Aen.* 12.950.

253 Verg. *Aen.* 7.55-56.

vertice supra est, is taller than the rest by an entire head.²⁵⁴ Describing Lausus, Vergil says that *quo puchrior alter no fuit excepto Laurentis corpre Turni*—there is no other handsomer except for Turnus.²⁵⁵

Vergil had a problem with Turnus. He needed Aeneas' great foil to be effeminate and enervated, but Turnus was of Italian stock, and filled with Italian *virtus*. The epic could not work with a single great Italian warrior being effeminate while the rest were full of *virtus*. Vergil's answer was to describe the Turnus existing at the arrival of Aeneas as a paragon of *virtus*, a man who has apparently fought and won Lavinia's hand in the past, but then to infect him with a disease that robs him of his manly vitality.²⁵⁶ That disease was *ira* and *furor*, and those two words would become his ubiquitous adjectives. He is poisoned, as it were, by this anger and fury at the hands of the feminine deity, thus making his rage "intrinsically opposed to his (former) masculine identity."²⁵⁷

The previous section touched on the connection between *ira* and *furor* and the distinctly feminine. These two bad qualities were directly in abrogation of the Roman man's responsibility to remain at all times calm and in control. Seneca, in his work on *ira*, expounded on these ideas. He said: *Ita ira muliebre maxime ac puerile vitium est*—Thus *ira* is to the highest degree the defect of the woman and child.²⁵⁸ He includes both *ira* and *furor* in another line: *Muliebre est furere in ira*—It is for a woman to rage in anger.²⁵⁹ The rage Turnus develops was in the Roman mind a feminine thing. This war is

254 Verg. *Aen.* 7.783-784.

255 Verg. *Aen.* 7.649-650.

256 Fratantuono at 585.

257 Syed at 122.

258 Sen. *Ira* 1.20.3.

259 Sen. *Clem.* 1.5.5.

prosecuted by a Turnus infected by feminine rage. The case itself is feminine. Lavinia, Vergil writes, is *causa mali tanti*—the cause of all this evil.²⁶⁰ Poor Lavinia never says one word in this epic, sits there passively watching men kill for her, is mentioned only ten times though she is the key prize, and she is still blamed for all of this mess.

The process that led to the infection of Turnus began with Juno. She is the continuing example of feminine *ira* and *furor* throughout the *Aeneid*. Vergil sets this up in the fourth line of the epic when he immediately mentions *Iunonis...iram*, Juno's *ira*.²⁶¹ When she first appears in the Iliadic *Aeneid* she is referred to as *Iovis coniunx*, Jove's consort.²⁶² This is a similar description to the *Aegyptus coniunx* used to describe Cleopatra, the real-life embodiment of the dangers of feminine rage. Vergil chooses not to name Juno here in her first, rage-filled appearance in the Iliadic *Aeneid*, reducing her from a ruling female member of the gods to a woman who has overstepped her bounds.

Juno spews forth a spiteful invective against the Trojans. It is because she has witnessed a deal struck to take Lavinia away from Turnus and award her to Aeneas. She immediately calls on the fury Alecto, whose *cordi* (heart) is inspired by *ira*.²⁶³ Juno, aghast at the early peaceful entreaties between the Trojans and the Italians, sends Alecto to pick a fight. Alecto is a good choice for the task; her body is filled with *Gorgoneis...venenis*, Gorgon poison.²⁶⁴ Poison is an interesting word choice. In Rome, the poison was seen to be a female method of killing, and poison was particularly scary because it took from a man control over his body, forcing him to watch helplessly as he

260 Verg. *Aen.* 11.480.

261 Verg. *Aen.* 1.4.

262 Verg. *Aen.* 7.287.

263 Verg. *Aen.* 7.325.

264 Verg. *Aen.* 7.341.

turned into a puppet of the poisoner.²⁶⁵

Alecto's first target is Latinus' queen Amata. She finds her already *femineae ardentum curaeque iraeque coquebant*—she was boiling over affairs with her feminine *ira* and pains.²⁶⁶ With a snake plucked from her hair, Alecto strikes Amata in the breast, injecting in her the poison that causes her to become *furibunda*, raving mad.²⁶⁷ She literally loses her mind, and here Vergil shows how *ira* and *furor* can fearfully upset the *paterfamilias* scheme by sending women into lust-filled orgies. *Fama volat*, the rumor of Amata's doings flies about, and *furiisque accensas pectore matres*, the same fury kindles in the breasts of the other women.²⁶⁸ Off into the woods they run, Amata shouting *capite orgia mecum*—seize the orgies with me.²⁶⁹ For the Romans, the female body was a mystical thing, something hard to understand and fearful.²⁷⁰ Female sexuality under male control was one of the key facets that maintained order in the state, and female uprisings like that of Amata were of particular concern, especially when they involved slaves and foreigners.²⁷¹ Amata's behavior here is also strikingly redolent of the wild Messalina readers find effeminizing the Empire in Tacitus or the Bacchanalian orgies in Livy.²⁷²

In the midst of this feminine *furor*, Latinus remains unmoved.²⁷³ The *ira* and *furor* in this scene take hold upon the native women, who because of their gender are

265 Sarah Currie, "Poisonous Women and Unnatural History in Roman Culture," in *Parchments of Gender. Deciphering the Bodies of Antiquity*, ed. by Maria Wyke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

266 Verg. *Aen.* 7.345.

267 Verg. *Aen.* 7.346-348.

268 Verg. *Aen.* 7.392.

269 Verg. *Aen.* 7.403.

270 Amy Richlin, "Pliny's Brassiere," in *Roman Sexualities*, ed. by Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

271 Holt Parker, "Why Were the Vestals Virgins? Or the Chastity of Women and the Safety of the Roman State," *AJPh* 125 (2004): 563-601.

272 Sandra R. Joshel, "Female Desire and the Discourse of Empire: Tacitus's Messalina," *Signs* 21, no. 1 (1995): 50-82.

273 Verg. *Aen.* 7.373-374.

likened to foreigners, but not on the men. But Juno's *ira* and *furor* are dangerous, because they can upset the control of the *paterfamilias*, Latinus, over the marriage of his daughter, and in an even more profound way, they can upset the decision of the ultimate *paterfamilias*, Jupiter.

Alecto then turns her fury to Turnus. But he immediately demonstrates his manliness by his disposition at the beginning of the scene, which is in complete opposition of that of Amata. Amata was wide awake, boiling in her worry, already infected with *ira*. Turnus, even after losing his betrothed to a new invader and facing a possible conflict, is

*tectis hic Turnus in altis
iam mediam nigra carpebat nocte quietem.*

He is in his high chamber sleeping in the middle of the dark night.²⁷⁴ Alecto appears to him first as an old woman, a priestess of Juno, and attempts to rouse him to war with dire prophecies. He is unworried, and dismisses her as out of her element: *bella viri pacemque gerent*—let men wage wars and peace.²⁷⁵ He is relaxed, in control, the picture of a manly Roman. And then:

*Talibus Allecto dictis exarsit in iras. 445
at iuueni oranti subitus tremor occupat artus,
deriguere oculi: tot Erinys sibilat hydrys
tantaque se facies aperit; tum flammea torquens
lumina cunctantem et quaerentem dicere plura
reppulit, et geminos erexit crinibus anguis, 450
uerberaque insonuit rabidoque haec addidit ore:...*

*olli somnum ingens rumpit pauor, ossaque et artus
perfundit toto proruptus corpore sudor.
arma amens fremit, arma toro tectisque requirit; 460*

274 Verg. *Aen.* 7.413-414.

275 Verg. *Aen.* 7.445.

*saeuit amor ferri et scelerata insania belli,
ira super:*

At these words Alecto blazed forth in *ira*. But even as the young man spoke, a sudden tremor seized his limbs, and his eyes set in fear; so many are the Fury's hissing snakes, so monstrous the countenance that reveals itself. Then, rolling her flaming eyes, she thrust him back, as he faltered and sought to say more, reared two snakes from her tresses, sounded her whip, and spoke further with rabid lips...A monstrous terror broke his sleep, and the sweat, bursting from all his frame, drenched bone and limb. For arms he madly shrieks; arms he seeks in couch and chamber; lust of the sword rages in him, the accursed frenzy of war, and *ira* above all.²⁷⁶

This man of *virtus* is thus rendered effeminate not by his own actions but a trick of the divine. He is poisoned, suffering one of the greatest Roman fears, a man still alive but now a puppet, unable to control his formerly manly body. Thus, he cannot be blamed for his bad behavior as an Italian. It is no longer Turnus in control. He is a spectator, watching the poison take him away.

Turnus will remain for the most part in effeminate form until he concludes the poem as an *effeminatus*. After this scene, he takes up his adjectives of *furor* and *ira*. His *mens exaestuat ira*—his mind boils with *ira*.²⁷⁷ He is pushed into war by *furor ardentem*—blazing *furor*.²⁷⁸ He is Easternized when Vergil describes his army as moving like the Ganges or the Nile.²⁷⁹ He is compared to animals: a *lupus isidiatus*, a wolf on the prowl, and a *saevum...lionem*, a savage lion.²⁸⁰ He attributed with *violentia*.²⁸¹ Despite all of the carnage and the savagery in the epic, he is the only character with whom Vergil

276 Verg. *Aen.* 7.445-451, 458-462.

277 Verg. *Aen.* 9.798.

278 Verg. *Aen.* 9.760.

279 Verg. *Aen.* 9.30-33: *Ceu septem surgens sedatis amnibus altus per tacitum Ganges aut pingui flumine Nilus cum refluit campis et iam se condidit alveo.*

280 Verg. *Aen.* 9.60; 9.793.

281 Verg. *Aen.* 11.376, 12.9, 12.45.

associates *violentia*.

There is another interesting scene that speaks to Turnus' effeminacy. At the very opening of the Iliadic *Aeneid*, Latinus receives an instruction in answer to his prayer. The instruction tells him that his daughter is not to marry an Italian, but a foreigner, an *externi*.²⁸² A similar statement is made in Book VIII concerning the leadership of the Etruscan soldiers.²⁸³ Amata, in her post-Alecto passionate groveling in front of Latinus, brings up the following argument to convince him to rethink his position: *Et Turno, si prima domus repetatur origo, inachus Acrisiusque patres mediaeque Mycenae*.²⁸⁴ She argues that Turnus is descended from a race from Mycenae, and thus should be considered himself an *externus*, a foreigner. This is an interesting argument because Amata is so filled with her feminine fury that she is willing to make Turnus a foreigner, and a Greek no less, in order that her desire should be fulfilled. She is willing to see him further feminized in order to accomplish her feverish, capricious ends.

This scene stands juxtaposed to a discussion between Latinus and the Trojans in which he comments that Trojan ancestry through Dardanus can be traced back to Italy.²⁸⁵ Finding an Italian ancestry would undermine their ability to fulfill the prophecies concerning foreign marriage and leadership. Turnus has Greek ancestry, but he is too Italian to be considered a foreigner. Pallas is ineligible, though his father Evander is Greek in heritage, *ni mixtus matre Sabella*.²⁸⁶ The reason is that his mother is Sabine,

282 Verg. *Aen.* 7.96-101: "*Ne pete conubiis natam sociare Latinis, O mea progenies, thalamis neu crede paratis: externi venient generi, qui sanguine nostrum nomen in astra ferant quorumque a stirpe nepotes omnia sub pedibus, qua Sol utrumque recurrens aspicit Oceanum, vertique regique videbunt.*"

283 Verg. *Aen.* 8.503-504: *nulli fas Italo tantam subiungere gentem: externos optate duces.*

284 Verg. *Aen.* 7.371-372.

285 Verg. *Aen.* 7.195-211.

286 Verg. *Aen.* 8.510.

thus making him half-Italian. Thus, the fact that the Trojans are still considered foreign despite their connection to Italy makes Aeneas seem even more foreign. He is in a state of “absolute foreignness.”²⁸⁷

Turnus, then, is a bit of a tragic figure. He becomes effeminate after being injected and infected by a poison through no fault of his own. But he is effeminate, and behaves in ways similar to a *cinaedus* by epic’s end.²⁸⁸ Thus one half of the mated pair is *effeminatus*.

B. Aeneas

Numerous commentators have pointed out that Vergil gives us virtually no physical description of Aeneas, breaking with the Homeric tradition by focusing instead almost exclusively on the hero’s internal thoughts or feelings.²⁸⁹ One of the only, if not the only, occasion of a physical description is at the very end of the epic when Vergil reports that Aeneas, considering Turnus’ plea, stands with *volvens oculos*, searching eyes.²⁹⁰ Otherwise, readers have to take their physical descriptions of the man second hand by projecting the description of the cultural mores and physical appearance of other Trojans on him (which makes sense, since he is of them and their leader) or taking words in the form of taunts at face value.

The taunts readily portray the Trojans and Aeneas as a foreigner, an Easterner, a Phrygian, and effeminate. Often, scholars enamored with Aeneas have dismissed these lines simply because they are taunts, and because the poet gives no evidence that they are

287 Adler at 181.

288 See Langford at 138-139.

289 Mark Griffith, “What Does Aeneas Look Like?” *CPh* 80, No. 4 1(1985): 309, 314.

290 Verg. *Aen.* 12.938.

accurate.²⁹¹ This line of thinking does not engage Vergil on his own terms. He placed the taunts in the epic, and readers would do well by attempting to discern their meaning.

Aeneas is an uncomfortable character because, although he is the supposed Augustan hero, he is continually attributed with feminine qualities and strange behavior. Vergil freely labels him a foreigner. But is he truly an *effeminatus* and perhaps a *cinaedus*? An analysis of themes and references in the epic demonstrate a hero who, through his own behavior and his cultural lineage, is systematically castrated in the literary sense to the point of becoming an *effeminatus* by the epic's conclusion.

1. Trojans in the *Aeneid*

A good place to start is one of the more talked-about taunts that occurred early in the *Aeneid*. It came from the mouth of one King Iarbus.

Et nunc ille Paris, cum semiviro comitatu, 215
Meonia mentum itra crinemque madentum
subnexus...

And now that Paris with his half-man retinue, with a Maeonian bonnet tied under dripping hair...²⁹²

Servius finds the reference to Paris a well-chosen personal insult because Aeneas may be stealing the wife of another.²⁹³ Here, he is stealing Dido, but this image arises again in the second half of the epic when he is accused of stealing Lavinia. Juno said:

Paris alter 320
funestaeque iterum recidiva in Pergama taedae

He is another Paris to bring fatal wedlock to another Troy.²⁹⁴ This occurs again in the

291 Griffith at 315.

292 Verg. *Aen.* 4.215-217.

293 McDonough et al. at 51.

294 Verg. *Aen.* 7.320-321.

character of Amata and a reference to the incursion Paris made onto a foreign shore for the purpose of stealing a bride:

*At non sic Phrygius penetrat Lacedaemona pastor
Ledaemque Helenam Troianas vexit ad urbes?*

Vergil writes: was it not in this same way that the Phrygian herdsman penetrated Lacedaemona and dragged Helen, daughter of Leda, to the city of the Trojans?²⁹⁵

For even the biggest supporter of Aeneas, this sequence hits close to home. It is not a disingenuous interpretation to see him acting as Paris did, also under the color of divine authority (the love of Venus in particular), and snatching the brides of others.²⁹⁶

Homer has his own brother Hector deride his behavior:

Evil Paris, beautiful, woman-crazy, cajoling, better had you never been born, or killed unwedded. Truly I could have wished it so; it would be far better than to have you with us to our shame, for others to sneer at. How the flowing-haired Achaians laugh at us, thinking you are our bravest champion, only because your looks are handsome, but there is no strength in your heart, no courage.²⁹⁷

Even Paris' moment of triumph, killing Achilles, was effeminate. He employed archery, seen as a less than manly way of engaging in battle.²⁹⁸ Ovid compares the way Paris and Aeneas were both hidden in rather cowardly fashion by a cloud sent by a goddess to save them from impending death at the hands of a superior foe.²⁹⁹ He contrasted them to Julius Caesar, who suffered his death without the aid of a divine

295 Verg. *Aen.* 7.363-364.

296 Oliensis at 296.

297 Hom *Il.* 3.39-45. Richard Lattimore, trans., *The Iliad of Homer* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951).

298 Fratantuono at 284.

299 Ov. *Met.* 15.803-806:

*Tum vero Cytherea manu percussit utraque
pectus et Aeneaden molitur condere nube,
qua prius infesto Paris est ereptus Atridae 805
et Deomedeos Aeneas fugerat enses.*

cloud.

Comparisons of Aeneas to Paris come in the form of taunts. But to any objective observer, Aeneas' behavior comes perilously close to approximating that of his Trojan kinsman. At least Nero read it this way (for whatever that is worth), finding during his method acting session that Paris and Aeneas are one in the same. That Homer himself portrayed Paris as a troubling individual makes the reference all the more biting. If Aeneas is a Paris, then he is committing *adulterium*, the crime that Vergil and Augustus so harshly condemn. In particular, by his invasion of Dido's grief for her former husband, he is committing *stuprum*.

Aeneas may also be acting the part of a *moechus* with Pallas. We never know for sure whether Aeneas and Pallas have a homoerotic relationship, but many commentators have interpreted the relationship in this way. It is perhaps most evident in a scene in Book VIII when Evander arises early in the morning, dresses, and steps outside. There, he finds Aeneas, apparently also just risen, and *filius huic Pallas*, his son Pallas there with him.³⁰⁰ That he is penetrating Pallas would not have offended Romans physically because Pallas is described as a *pueri*, still a boy and not a *vir*.³⁰¹ What would have offended Romans is that Aeneas is sleeping with a freeborn boy. That is an act of *stuprum* and would make him a *moechus*. The supposition concerning this relationship that is so often proffered cannot be substantiated. Perhaps what is important for a Roman reader of this period is that Vergil leads him to wonder about this relationship.

It could be argued that none of this counts against Aeneas in the strictest sense

300 Verg. *Aen.* 8.466.

301 Verg. *Aen.* 12.943.

because neither he, nor any of the characters he is interacting with, are Romans. All of these terms, like *stuprum* and *moechus*, apply to Roman sexual behavior. However, if the Syed thesis is to be accepted, and these characters provide a basis for determining the behavioral norms and identity of a proper Roman man, then it is appropriate to project onto them Roman expectations of their behavior. Thus, though they are not Romans in the strictest sense, readers can expect Roman morality from them and give their acts the appropriate Roman labels.

In the Iarbus quote there is a reference to Maeonia. This reference is to a distinctly Eastern region, one that would have labeled the Trojans as typical feminine Easterners.³⁰² This descriptor here is part of a rant. But in the Iliadic *Aeneid* it is used quite a bit differently. Evander references the Trojan Maeonian lineage in a monologue praising the newly arrived heroes. He says: *O Maeoniae delecta iuventus, flos veterum virtusque virum*: O delightful leader of Maeonians, the flower and manliness of the ancient race.³⁰³ This is a very intriguing sentence. The words *Maeonia*, *delecta* and *flos* are all quite effeminate, and portray the people of whom Evander is speaking as girly. But in addition to being a flower of their race, they are also the *virtus* of their race. That simply does not add up. The speaker here is a Greek, though one venerated in Italy. He is of the East. He is suggesting that these visitors from the East are not just effeminate, but that their form of *virtus* is womanly. The Trojans do not have *virtus* of the same kind as the Italians.

2. What in the world is he wearing?

The other notable word in Iarbus' taunt is *mitra*. Bonnet is probably the most apt

302 Syed at 195.

303 Verg. *Aen.* 8.499-500.

translation—it was an article of feminine headgear. Servius writes that it was worn by Phrygians and Lydians, and had a sort of curved side and cheek pieces.³⁰⁴ The word appears again in an Iliadic *Aeneid* taunt by Numanus Remulus, a passage that is often compared to Iarbas’ statement. Remulus taunts the Trojans and compares their womanly qualities to Italian manly courage. He is promptly killed by Ascanius in his final act of violence before he is removed from war by divine decree. Of the Trojans, Remulus says:

*uobis picta croco et fulgenti murice uestis,
desidia cordi, iuuat indulgere choreis, 615
et tunicae manicas et habent redimicula mitrae.
o uere Phrygiae, neque enim Phryges*

But you wear embroidered saffron and gleaming purple, sloth is your joy, your delight is to enjoy the dance; your tunics have sleeves and your bonnets ribbons, O truly Phrygian women, for Phrygian men you are not!³⁰⁵

As an aside, the final line of this passage is an adaptation of Homer. In the *Iliad*, the Trojan Hector taunts: “you are Achaean women, men no more!”³⁰⁶ The mitra is mentioned here again. Mitra was the Persian name given to an Eastern deity.³⁰⁷ Pliny describes the Arabs as *mitrati*, wearing mitras.³⁰⁸ Seneca further illustrates the feminine nature of the mitra, writing that a man with a *mollem...frontem*, a soft forehead, decorates his hair with *floribus vernis*, spring flowers, and places on his head a *Tyria...mitra*, a Tyrian mitra.³⁰⁹ In the Remulus passage, the mitra is tied up with *redimicula*, translated here as ribbons. These appear in Juvenal in his description of effeminate men *qui longa*

304 McDonough et al. at 51.

305 Verg. *Aen.* 9.614-620.

306 Hom. *Il.* 7.96.

307 Hdt. 1.131.3

308 Plin *NH* 6.32.162.

309 Sen. *Oed.* 413-416: *Te decet cingi comam floribus vernis te caput Tyria cohibere mitra hederave mollem bacifera religare frontem.*

domi redimicula sumunt frontibus, who at home tie up their brows with long bows.³¹⁰

As indicated by this passage, the *mitra* is not the only article of clothing of the feminine sort the Trojans are accused of wearing. In the Gellius quote of Scipio Africanus from earlier, he noted that long-sleeved tunics were the mark of a supposed *cinaedus*.³¹¹ The colorful, loose-fitting clothing is also suspect, several earlier examples noted, and as illustrated by Cicero in his rant against Clodius.

P. Clodius a crocota, a mitra, a muliebribus soleis purpureisque fasceolis, a strophio, a psalterio, a flagitio, a stupro est factus repente popularis.

Publius Clodius creeping about in a saffron colored dress, a *mitra*, a woman's slippers and purple fasteners, with a breast band, a lute, an evil thing and a *stuprum* made himself popular.³¹²

As a final example of the effeminacy of colorful items, the passage in Livy concerning the Oppian law is instructive.³¹³ He supports maintaining the law to quell feminine extravagance because, when the law was written, women *cum aurum et purpuram data*, gave items of gold and purple.³¹⁴ He finds such prudence unlikely in the present. Earlier examples also demonstrated that primping and perfume are indicative of the effeminate.

Let us return to Aeneas himself, who Turnus refers to as womanly in Book XII when he says:

*da sternere corpus
loricamque manu ualida lacerare reuulsam
semiuri Phrygis et foedare in puluere crinis
uibratos calido ferro murraque madentis.'* 100

310 Juv 2.84-85.

311 See above Note 173.

312 Cic. *Har. resp.* 21.

313 See above Note 224.

314 Livy 34.4.9.

lot of other things apparently) and his father got some of Jupiter's best horses in exchange.³²⁰

Rapuit, sometimes translated as rape, is a significant word choice because it captures both meanings of the word. Euripides makes Ganymede's relationship with Zeus more explicit. At one point, he refers to Ganymede as the Phrygian boy with dainty step, filling the cups.³²¹ In *Cyclops*, the monster is snatching Silenus into his bedchamber for some entertainment. He reports that he is taking his Ganymede to bed because he enjoys boys more than women. Silenus is not at all happy when he learns that he must play Ganymede.³²² Elsewhere, Euripides refers to Ganymede as a dainty morsel of Zeus' bed.³²³ Apparently the Romans thought of Jupiter as a bit of a pederast. Martial tells us that the lips of Alexis, which are given credit for exciting Vergil to write the *Aeneid*, were such that *quae poterant ipsum sollicitare Iouem*, they were able to make Jupiter himself aroused.³²⁴ Apparently Vergil had his own Ganymede on his hands.

Ganymede appears one other time in the *Aeneid*, very near the beginning. Vergil is discussing Juno's wrath, setting her up as the embodiment of *furor* and *ira* that will stalk Aeneas throughout the remainder of the epic. Giving the reasons for Juno's wrath, he lists two specific events: *iudicium Paridis*, the choice of Paris, and *rapti Ganymedis honores*, the honors given raped Ganymede.³²⁵ Ganymede's beauty caught the eye of her husband, and Jupiter chose him much like Paris chose Venus, leaving Juno feeling

320 For a traditional telling, see Hom *Hymn Aph.* 5. Also Hor. *Carm.* 4.4, Paus. 5.24.5.

321 Eur. *Tro.* 820.

322 Eur. *Cyc.* 566.

323 Eur. *IA* 1036.

324 Mart.8.56.15.

325 Verg. *Aen.* 1.27-28.

wronged.

The juxtaposition here is striking. Paris and Ganymede were both effeminate Trojans by whom Juno was dealt a lover's wound. Both are also linked with Aeneas in the epic. The cloak at the funeral games displays all of the effeminate finery that arises in the Dido episode. Apparently Aeneas' taste for the luxury is not only Dido's fault. This cloak also links him to a homoerotic tale involving a seized Trojan. Jupiter has the strong, penetrative position in the Ganymede episode, and he will again at the end of the epic when he exercises his power and refuses to allow *imperium* to go to Aeneas after the final confrontation.

4. Cybele

Cybele, a problematic and enervating goddess, makes several appearances in the *Aeneid* as well, always assisting Aeneas and the Trojans. Earlier, the death of Camilla the Volscian was recounted. She, though female, fought as an exemplar of Italian *virtus* until the temptation of beautiful spoils excited in her a womanly passion that exposed her to a strike from the enemy. What was the object that caused her womanly passion to boil to the surface? Cybele's priest.

*Forte sacer Cybelo Chloereus olimque sacerdos
insignis longe Phrygiis fulgebat in armis
spumantemque agitabat equum, quem pellis aenis* 770
*in plumam squamis auro conserta tegebat.
ipse peregrina ferrugine clarus et ostro
spicula torquebat Lycio Gortynia cornu;
aureus ex umeris erat arcus et aurea uati
cassida; tum croceam chlamydemque sinusque crepantis* 775
*carbaceos fuluo in nodum collegerat auro
pictus acu tunicas et barbara tegmina crurum.
hunc uirgo, siue ut templis praefigeret arma
Troia, captiuo siue ut se ferret in auro*
uenatrix, unum ex omni certamine pugnae 780
caeca sequebatur totumque incauta per agmen

femineo praedae et spoliolum ardebat amore

It chanced that Chloereus, sacred to Cybele, and once a priest, glittered resplendent from far off in his Phrygian armor, and spurred his foaming charger, whose covering was a skin plumed with bronze scales and clasped with gold. Himself ablaze in the deep hue of foreign purple, he launched Gortynian arrows from a Lycian bow; golden was that bow upon his shoulders, and golden was the seer's helmet; his saffron scarf and its rustling linen folds were gathered into a knot by yellow gold; his tunic and barbaric hose were embroidered with the needle. Whether hoping to fasten up Trojan arms in a temple or to flaunt in golden spoil, the maiden singled him out from all the battle fray and like a huntress was blindly pursuing him, recklessly raging through all the ranks with a woman's passion for booty and spoil.³²⁶

This is a descriptive sequence written by the poet, not a taunt. The priest's dress is outlandish for the Roman, full of all colors including the feminine purple and gold. He wears a tunic and the clothes of a barbarian. His cloak is the *chlamydem*, which is the same type of distinctly Greek cloak awarded by Aeneas that portrayed the legend of Ganymede. Perhaps most noteworthy of all, Vergil describes these wild clothes as *Phrygiis...armis*, Phrygian armor, indicating that this is the usual attire from one of the Trojan warriors. These are people so different from Romans, so worried about grooming and personal appearance that even their ships are *pictas*, painted.³²⁷ Vergil gives us no reason to assume that he would exclude Aeneas in these routine depictions of Trojan effeminacy. He is linked to luxury and effeminacy throughout. Even in the final book, Latinus refers to him as a *Phrygio...tyranno*, a Phrygian tyrant.³²⁸ Interestingly, that line is often translated as Phrygian king, but Vergil chooses *tyranno* rather than *rex*, perhaps foreshadowing the descent of Aeneas into feminine madness that is to come.

326 Verg. *Aen.* 11.768-782

327 Verg. *Aen.* 7.431

328 Verg. *Aen.* 12.75

An overlooked key to this sequence is the relationship between Chloereus, the Trojans and the deity Cybele. Cybele, also associated with Magna Mater and Idaean Mater, was the Phrygian earth mother. Her worship was distinctly Eastern, passionate, and effeminate, characterized by a cult of mutilated eunuch priests known as the Galli.³²⁹ Their wild Eastern “orgiastic” ceremonies were off limits to Roman citizenry, who were by law precluded from seeking to become priests in the cult.³³⁰

Livy recounts the story of how Cybele’s worship ended up in Rome. Moved by superstition after frequent meteor showers, and the fact they were doing poorly in their war against Hannibal, the Romans consulted the Sibylline books, which told them that a foreign foe invading Italy could be driven out if the Idaean Mother were brought to Rome.³³¹ Ambassadors traveled to Phrygia and received the goddess, apparently in the form of a rock.³³² As word arrived that the goddess was on her way, the women took to the streets in force, leading to what Livy termed a *seditioni...muliebri*, an uprising of women.³³³

During times of celebration, the Galli descended on the city like some sort of twisted circus. Lucretius writes:

*Tympana tenta tonant palmis et cymbala circum concava raucisonoque minantur
cornua cantu, et Phrygio stimulat numero cava tibia mentis, telaque praeportant,
violenti signa furoris, ingrates animos atque impia pectora vogi conterrere metu
quae possint numine divae*

The stretched tambourine and concave cymbal they smash with their hands and

329 Cyril Bailey, *Religion in Virgil* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1935), 174; Strab. Geo. 13.4.

330 Bailey at 174.

331 Livy 29.10.4-5.

332 Livy 29.11.7 Livy describes it as *sacrum...lapidem*, sacred stone. One imagines it something like the Stone of Scone that English regents sit atop at their coronation.

333 Livy 34.3.8.

driven by the sound of an off-key horn, and the hollow pipe goads their minds with Phrygian measure, they bear the javelin, signs of violent *furor*, ingrate minds and impious hearts of the masses to terrify with the powerful nod of the divine.³³⁴

These eunuchs have *violens furor*, and are carrying the *tela*. Livy employs the same language for the Galli that Vergil does for Turnus. Vergil further makes a point of their association with the Trojans. This playing of the tamborine seems to have been particularly pernicious. In Dio, Antonius, as he is being portrayed as an effeminate Easterner, is said to have taken up the tambourine.³³⁵ Seneca writes: *quale vir fortis stolam indutus... in manu tympanum est*—what kind of a strong man is it having put on the dress...and in his hand is a tambourine.³³⁶ Use of a tambourine is associated with the luxurious foreigner. Juvenal worries about an invasion up the Tiber of the Greeks, with their *tympanum* and *picta...mitra*, painted bonnets, making for a *Graecem urbem*, a Greek Rome.³³⁷ The Galli were so extreme that both Romans and Christians could agree that their mutilated, effeminate forms were hideous and antithetical to proper morality.³³⁸

The Galli seem to get the basis for their behavior from the legend of Attis, recounted in Catullus. Attis, a lover of Cybele, was driven crazy by the goddess as a result of her wrath, and he fled into the Phrygian woods. There,

*furenti rabie, vagus animis
devolvit ili acuto sibi pondera silice*

In rabid *furor*, with mind polluted he castrated himself with a sharpened flint.³³⁹

334 Lucr. 2.581.619-624.

335 Dio Cass. 50.27.

336 Sen. *Vit. Beat.* 7.13.3.

337 Juv.3.61-66.

338 See Will Roscoe, "Priests of the Goddess: Gender Transgression in Ancient Religion," *History of Religions* 35, No. 3 (1996): 195-230.

339 *Catull.* 63.

Speaking to the Galli about the act of castration, Attis says

corpus evirastis Veneris nimio

You emasculate your body in excessive hatred of Venus (goddess of love and Aeneas' patron).³⁴⁰ They take to the Phrygian wood of the goddess

*ubi cymbalum sonat vox, ubi tympana reboant,
tibicen ubi canit Phryx curvo grave calamo*

Where the voice of the cymbal sounds, where the tambourine reverberates, where the Phrygian flutist sings by means of a heavy curved reed.³⁴¹ There, *furibunda—furor* bound—they orgy.

The next morning, an Attis no longer infected by *furor* repents his castration and subsequent orgiastic behavior. Cybele will not stand for this, and in a manner very close to that of Juno and Alecto, she sends a beastly servant to Attis with orders to

*age ferox i, fac ut hunc furor
agitet, fac uti furoris ictu reditum in nemora ferat*

Go fierce one, make it so that *furor* rages violently in that man, make it so that driven by a wound (again, *ictus*, the war wound) of *furor* he turns about into my forest.³⁴² This is the same forest from which Jupiter seized Ganymede.

In the *Aeneid*, this priest was not the only Trojan associated with Cybele. In Remulus' general taunt of the race as a whole, he says:

*ite per alta
Dindyma, ubi adsuetis biformem dat tibia cantum.
tympana uos buxusque uocat Berecyntia Matris
Idaearum; sinite arma uiris et cedite ferro.'* 620

340 *Ibid.*

341 *Ibid.*

342 *Ibid.*

Go over to the heights of Dindymus, where to accustomed ears the pipe utters music from double mouths! The tambourines call you, and the Berecynthian boxwood of the mother of Ida: leave arms to men and quit the sword.³⁴³

This comes right after the famous moment when Remulus declares *o vere Phrygiae, neque enim Phryges* and indicates that the Italian Remulus had no problem dismissing Cybele as an Eastern, effeminate goddess unworthy of his attention. Lines from Vergil, Livy and Catullus display how problematic Cybele was for Trojan and Roman masculinity. That Cybele is associated with the effeminate, wild, passion-filled East is of no doubt. It infuses the Trojans, and by implication Aeneas, with its emasculating flavor.

5. Aeneas *subsidents* into *ira*

Vergil's physical descriptions and allusions to Trojan figures have systematically painted Aeneas as effeminate. In the final stanzas of the epic, Aeneas also leaves his famous piety behind, and as his race is prepared to be subsumed under the Italians he devolves into feminine anger. It is here that Vergil's feminizing intent is more focused directly on the hero.

In the Book XII passage referenced above, Jupiter grants Juno's wish and allows that the Trojans will be subsumed into the native Latin culture.³⁴⁴ Vergil chooses an interesting verb for this process: *subsident*. The Trojans will *subsident*, sink down. This verb is used sometimes as it is in the early part of the *Aeneid*, where *subsidunt undae*, they sink beneath the waves.³⁴⁵ Another example appears in Ovid, where *subsidere*

343 Verg. *Aen.* 9.614-620.

344 See above, Note 121.

345 Verg. *Aen.* 5.820.

valles, the valleys are sunken.³⁴⁶ But *subsidere* has an alternative meaning: to be penetrated sexually. Lucretius used it as such: *nec ratione...euae maribus subsidere possent*, nor...would mares be able to submit for the males.³⁴⁷ This shade of meaning makes for a vastly different interpretation of Jupiter's decree, one in which Aeneas is sexually subsumed beneath the Latin races.

Subsidere is used only three times in the *Aeneid*. The first two have already been mentioned. The third comes in the following scene:

*substitit Aeneas et se collegit in arma
poplite subsidens; apicem tamen incita summum
hasta tulit summasque excussit uertice cristas.
tum uero adsurgunt irae, insidiisque subactus,
diuersos ubi sensit equos currumque referri, 495
multa Iouem et laesi testatus foederis aras
iam tandem inuadit medios et Marte secundo
terribilis saeuam nullo discrimine caedem
suscitat, irarumque omnis effundit habenas.*

Aeneas halted, gathered himself behind his shield, sinking upon his knee; but the swift *hasta* took off the top of his helmet and dashed the topmost plumes from his head. Then indeed his *ira* swells, and driven by this treachery, when he saw that the horses and chariot of his foe were far away, making many appeals to Jove and the altars of the broken treaty, at last he plunges into the fray and, with the War God supporting him, terribly awakes grim indiscriminate carnage, giving full reign to his *ira*.³⁴⁸

Thus Aeneas sinks, forced to submit to the Italian *hasta*, or phallic spear. After its impact, he arises, now utterly impregnated by feminine *ira*, which he gives full reign over his pitiless behavior.

The location of this scene in the epic's final book further indicates a change in Aeneas from the hero of piety and *virtus* to one beset by rage. Just before this scene,

346 Ov. *Met.* 1.5.42.

347 Lucr. 4.1198.

348 Verg. *Aen.* 12.491-499.

Aeneas is wounded, and Vergil refers to him as *pious Aeneas*.³⁴⁹ Then, as he is explaining the contract for single battle he has made: *ecce viro stridens alis adlapsa sagitta est*, behold, the hero (here still a *vir*) is pierced by whizzing, winged arrow.³⁵⁰ The noun choice for arrow is *sagitta*. Dido, when struck by the metaphorical dart of love for Aeneas, was struck by a *sagitta*. Here, the anonymous Italian who shot the arrow has penetrated Aeneas in a sexual manner. Then, Aeneas cannot get the arrow out, finding it stubbornly stuck to his flesh.³⁵¹ In rather unmanly fashion, Aeneas is *maerentis*, bitterly lamenting, and Iulus is beset by *lacrimis*, tears.³⁵²

This arrow wound sticks to the hero for more than 100 lines, more than 10% of the final book of the epic. It is finally healed in a very unmanly fashion by *flore...purpureo*, purple flowers, delivered by Venus herself.³⁵³

Immediately after this stretch comes the *subsistere* scene. That scene is followed by a lengthy segment wherein the poet takes the reader back and forth between Turnus and Aeneas as both exact their martial *ira* on their enemies. Then comes this line:

*non segnius ambo Aeneas Turnusque runt per proelia;
nunc, nunc fluctuat ira intus, rumpuntur nescia vinci
pectora, nunc totis in volnera viribus itur*

Not slowly both Aeneas and Turnus brought down violence upon the battle; now with *ira* fluctuating within, breasts ignorant of defeat were ruptured, now with all of their

349 Verg. *Aen.* 10.311.

350 Verg. *Aen.* 12.319.

351 Verg. *Aen.* 12.387-390:

*Saevit et infracta luctatur arundine telum
eripere auxilioque viam, quae proxima, poscit
ense secent lato vulnus telique latebram
rescindant penitus seseque in bella remittant.* 390

352 Verg. *Aen.* 12.399-400.

353 Verg. *Aen.* 12.412-413.

strength they advance into wounds.³⁵⁴ The translation is really unnecessary. The beauty of Vergil's word placement says everything. Aeneas and Turnus, now conjoined in womanish *ira*, their formerly manly strength, *viribus*, now used for passionate violence. Turnus was effeminized by the poison of Alecto. Aeneas was feminized when he was forced to submit to the Italian hasta, only to arise filled with *ira*.

In the sequences beginning with the wounding of Aeneas and ending with this scene, the reader sees the hero, the progeny of foreign Easterners already with distinctly feminine tastes, beset by *ira*. With Aeneas already penetrated, in a few lines more, Jupiter will order that the Trojan race as a whole will submit (*subsident*).

The last scene of the epic is the one that most disturbs European School critics who privilege the piety of Aeneas. Before he kills Turnus, he suffers from *ira terribilis* brought on when he sees the *balteus* of Pallas. Aeneas' *ira* arises in the same proximity to the end of the poem as Juno's *ira* to the beginning. Fratantuono sees a link. He reads this final scene as a transference of the womanly *ira* of Juno to Aeneas, the abrupt end to the action leaving us unsure when and if his *ira* will ever subside.³⁵⁵

The alternate view is expressed by Galinsky.³⁵⁶ He finds the *ira* displayed by Aeneas in this final scene something that the Romans would have found appropriate. Specifically, he relates this *ira* to the *ira* judges were expected to use when handing down sentences, and finds that Aeneas is appropriately judging whether or not Turnus should receive the punishment of death.³⁵⁷ Of course the problem with this argument is that it

354 Verg. *Aen.* 12.526-528.

355 Fratantuono at 100.

356 Karl Galinsky, "The Anger of Aeneas," *AJP* 109, No. 3 (1988): 321-348.

357 *Ibid.* at 326-328.

conflates the militaristic, battlefield character of Aeneas with the actions of a judge. He is murdering another man in single combat. No one has given him the label or authority of judge and there is no action of law involved here. If anyone is acting as a judge, it is Jupiter, perhaps under the authority of divine law. Also, Galinsky points to different philosophical interpretations of *ira*.³⁵⁸ While it is difficult to argue with Galinsky's point that social conceptions of anger are multi-faceted and at times inconsistent, this study has attempted to demonstrate that the *ira* involved here is directly related to the feminine rage of Juno, a form of the feminine *ira* as disdained by Seneca and others. Vergil chose to open his epic with *ira* describing Juno, and close it with *ira* describing Aeneas.

The Danaids were in statue form portrayed on the portico of Augustus' temple of Apollo Palatinus, built near his home.³⁵⁹ The temple was built when Vergil was about two years into writing the *Aeneid*.³⁶⁰ The meaning of this statuary is up for debate, with one argument, as an example, that it was indicative of fratricidal civil war left at the door of the temple and not invited inside.³⁶¹ But gender meanings were prevelant throughout Augustan architecture.³⁶² Milnor suggests Augustus used feminine imagery on the Palatine to reference the women in his family. By juxtaposing his female relations with scenes of females, including Cleopatra, who behave in improper, frightening ways, the Julian women are held up as paragons of proper female behavior in Roman society.³⁶³

358 *Ibid.* at 329-330.

359 Oliffe Richmond, "Palatine Apollo Again," *CQ, New Series* 8, No. 3/4 (1958): 183-184.

360 Nicholas Horsfall, "Empty Shelves on the Palatine," *G&R, Second Series* 40, No. 1 (1993): 58.

361 Kellum (1994) at 213.

362 Barbara Kellum, "Concealing/Revealing: Gender and the Play of Meaning in the Monuments of Augustan Rome," in *Roman Cultural Revolution*, ed. by Habineck, Thomas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

363 This is the theory in: Kristina Milnor, *Gender, Domesticity, and the Age of Augustus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

But this use of the female as political speech might have been uncomfortable for a Republican Roman.

In Aeneas, Vergil creates a character beset by many of the Eastern qualities that Augustus used against Antonius in his propaganda. This Aeneas is set off into a murderous rage by the sight of the Danaids, probable representatives of civil war but also co-opted by Augustus. This could not have been comfortable.

The key point is that Aeneas, thoroughly effeminized, penetrates Turnus, thoroughly effeminized. Neither are Roman males. Both are without *virtus* and ineligible to exercise *imperium*. That leads to the most important question of all.

VI. Where is the *imperium*?

It seems the winner of the battle for Lavinia's hand should win *imperium*. But *imperium* is not a prize of the final battle. Aeneas forsakes the prize of *imperium* as he makes his prayer at the beginning of Book XII, just before his descent into *ira*.

*non ego nec Teucris Italos parere iubebo
nec mihi regna peto: paribus se legibus ambae 190
inuictae gentes aeterna in foedera mittant.
sacra deosque dabo; socer arma Latinus habeto,
imperium sollemne socer; mihi moenia Teucri
constituent urbique dabit Lavinia nomen.'*

I will not bid the Italians be subject to Teucrians, nor do I seek the realm for myself; under equal terms let both nations, unconquered, enter upon an everlasting compact. I will give gods and their rites; Latinus, my father-in-law, is to keep the sword; my father-in-law is to keep *imperium*. The Teucrians shall raise walls for me, and Lavinia give the city her name.³⁶⁴

Aeneas gives up *imperium* as his prize. It will not be available in the final battle.

What is noteworthy about this sequence is that Aeneas is rather arrogant about his ability to decide who does or does not get *imperium*. Jupiter is the final arbiter of *imperium*, and his decisions seem to indicate that he decides against Trojan *imperium*, and thus *imperium* for Aeneas. In the deal finally blessed by Jupiter, the Trojans are not equal and unconquered, they will be subsumed (*subsident*).

Whether *imperium* would have been available had Aeneas not given it up is quite doubtful. Many of the Italian tribes never agree to his leadership. More importantly, throughout the Iliadic *Aeneid*, Vergil inserts a motif of the Italians demonstrating the

364 Verg. *Aen.* 12.189-194.

qualities of the perfect Roman man in utter contrast to the Trojans and their effeminate dress and manner.

Long before Jupiter's final proclamation, the epic includes a juxtaposition between these emasculated foreigners and the Italians, full of the qualities that will make the "nascent foundation of future Rome."³⁶⁵ These Italians, here appearing on the edge of history and legend, have a distinct "magical" quality, and their primitive charm is "unspoiled and pure."³⁶⁶ Vergil, through the voice of Evander, traces the Italian lineage back to the hunter-gatherer days before Saturn descended and brought the rule of law. Those originals were *gensque virum truncis et duro robore nata*, they were a race of men born of tree trunks and stout oak.³⁶⁷

At the end of Book VII, Vergil gives the reader nearly 200 lines describing the myriad of Italian tribes that will be involved in the coming fight. Before he does so, he interjects himself into the poem, praying that he may successfully describe *quibus Italiam tum floruerit terra alma viris, quisbus arserit armis*—those men who will flower from the nourishing Italian soil, who will display blazing arms.³⁶⁸ In the midst of his lengthy description, Vergil pauses briefly to tell us *quam multi Libyco volvuntur marmore fluctus saevus*, they were of such a multitude that they were like the pounding waves rocking the Libyan sea, or *vel cum sole novo densae torrentur aristae aut Hermi campo aut Lyciae flaventibus arvis*, the tightly packed wheat tops baking in the new sun

365 Fratatuono at 239.

366 Fratatuono at 236.

367 Verg. *Aen.* 8.315.

368 Verg. *Aen.* 9.643-644.

In addition to looking like and acting like a Roman exemplar of *virtus*, the Italians are seen to utilize Roman military tactics, the same tactics that allowed the Romans to hold *imperium* over the rest of the world. In Book IX, as Turnus penetrates the walls of the Trojan camp, he penetrates a Trojan with a *phalarica*.³⁷⁴ This is a distinctly Roman weapon.³⁷⁵ Livy writes that the *phalarica* was similar to other types of javelins or spears except that *ad extremum unde ferrum exstabat*, to the tip there was an extension of iron which *ferrum autem tres longum habebat pedes*, stood at three feet long.³⁷⁶ This terrifying weapon was at times lit on fire, Livy writes, and was so powerful that *ut cum armis transfigure corpus posset*, it was able to rip through both armor and body.³⁷⁷ The weapon, made possible by the Iberians and their skill in iron works, was effective because of its long range and because of superior penetrating power.³⁷⁸

In addition to the *phalarica*, the Italians, the Volscians in particular, utilize the *testudo*, or tortoise shell technique. The *testudo* was a Roman military tactic whereby shields were interlocked above and around a squad of soldiers, forming a sort of human tank. The extremely effective tactic demonstrated Rome's military discipline and courageous execution in the field and was one of the reasons its military was so effective

374 Verg. *Aen.* 9.702-708:

*tum Meropem atque Erymanta manu, tum sternit Aphidnum,
tum Bitian ardentem oculis animisque frementem,
non iaculo (neque enim iaculo uitam ille dedisset),
sed magnum stridens contorta phalarica uenit 705
fulminis acta modo, quam nec duo taurea terga
nec duplici squama lorica fidelis et auro
sustinuit; conlapsa ruunt immania membra*

375 Fratutuono at 285.

376 Livy 21.8.10-11.

377 Livy 21.8.11.

378 Eugene S. McCartney, "The Genesis of Rome's Military Equipment," *The Classic Weekly* 6, No. 10 (1912): 76; M.J.V. Bell, "Tactical Reform in the Roman Republican Army," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 14, No. 4 (1965): 419.

undermined the wall and set fire to the gate with no casualties.³⁸⁴

Vergil has created native Italians who represent the farmer soldier ideals of a Cincinnatus, and who behave on the battlefield in a manner that is distinctly Roman. Perhaps Vergil was playing into the nostalgia that so obviously existed in the Rome of his era, probably brought on by the terror of civil war. Late Republican Romans pined for a time when men were men and were not dragged down by an infusion of the luxurious and foreign. Pliny, writing within a century of Vergil, gives an idea of the Roman view of its simple, rugged past: *agrū male colere censorium probrum iudicabatur...cum virum bonum laudantes bonum agricolam bonumque colonum dixissent, amplissime laudasse existimabantur*. To tend to land badly was an offense under the jurisdiction of the censor...when a man was said to be a good farmer and good at husbandry, it was valued as the most laudable compliment he could receive.³⁸⁵ Also, *rusticate tribus laudatissimae eorum, qui rura haberent, urbanae vero, in quas transferri ignominia esset, desidiae probro*. The rustic tribes where the most praiseworthy of men, they who had rural estates, the city dwellers truly, in which it was ignoble to be transferred, were disgraceful in sloth.³⁸⁶ Finally, for tough men of that era *quies somnusque in stramentis erat*, rest and sleep was in the straw.³⁸⁷ According to Pliny, in the early days, the Italians of the countryside were the strong and manly, and the city dwellers were given to idleness. The city survived on the backs of these powerful Italians.

The Italians in the *Aeneid* fit this ideal. They are the only people in the epic

384 Josephus *BJ* 2.537

385 Pliny *NH* 18.3.

386 *Ibid.*

387 *Ibid.*

identifiable as exemplars of Roman manliness. The epic tells us that the final battle between Aeneas and Turnus is not for *imperium*. Aeneas has given up *imperium* as a prize of the final fight, or rather granted Latinus an *imperium* that was already his and that Aeneas had no power to grant. Jupiter indicated that Aeneas' power to determine *imperium* was overstated when he rewrote Aeneas' deal by lowering the Trojans from equals to the subjected. What is left are the raw, manly, ideal-Roman Italians. Where is the *imperium*?

Subtly, Vergil indicates that Aeneas' conquest is a failure. He will not win *imperium*. However, Evander had

*cum me complexus euntem
mitteret in magnum imperium*

Sith a hug sent me (Aeneas) to capture great *imperium*.³⁸⁸ Aeneas not only allows Evander's son Pallas to die a brutal death, but he fails in the reason for the conflict, winning *imperium*. Interestingly, Vergil puts into Evander's mouth:

*“sed mihi tarda gelu saeculisque effecta senectus
invidet imperium seraeque ad fortia vires.”*³⁸⁹

Because of his advanced years, his own *imperium* was weak.

While the metaphorical Rome is born of the blood struggle between its two mothers, the thorough emasculation of both of those characters leaves the offspring weak, impotent and untenable, much like the original city dwellers in Pliny. For this sickly offspring to emerge into a world superpower, it must earn its *imperium*. To discover where its *imperium* will come from, it is best to return to Jupiter's final proclamation. His

388 Verg. *Aen.* 11.46-47.

389 Verg. *Aen.* 8.508-509.

proclamation is the grant of a wish from the rage-filled Juno. He willingly grants her wish, which is:

*ne uetus indigenas nomen mutare Latinos
neu Troas fieri iubeas Teucrosque uocari
aut uocem mutare uiros aut uertere uestem. 825
sit Latium, sint Albani per saecula reges,
sit Romana potens Itala uirtute propago:
occidit, occideritque sinas cum nomine Troia.*

Do not command the native Latins to change their ancient name, nor to become Trojans and be called Teucrians, nor to change their language and alter their attire: let Latium be, let Alban kings endure through the ages, let be a Roman stock strong in Italian *virtus*: Troy is killed, and let her be killed with her name.³⁹⁰

This impotent infant, the metaphorical Rome, will be birthed from this union of Aeneas and Turnus will have its *imperium*. But it will come from Italian *virtus*, a *virtus* that existed in fully mature form well before the Trojans or the Romans arrived. It is inherent in the Italian races, and the Roman Empire could not exist in her powerful form without an infusion of Italian *virtus* into a nascent city made weak by its *effeminatus moechus* and *effeminatus cinaedus* fathers. This, then, is the message of hope Vergil has for the Italians. It is their *virtus* on which Rome succeeds.

390 Verg. *Aen.* 12.823-829.

VII. Conclusion: The Victory of Vergil

Cicero speaks fondly of the province of Gaul, homeland of the poet, which he calls the flower of Italy. Cicero goes on to say: *illud firmamentum imperi populi Romani*, they are the fiber of the *imperium* of the Roman people, and defenders of the *maiestatemque populi Romani*, the majesty of the Roman people.³⁹¹

Vergil and other provincials must have agreed. But the ultimate triumph of the *Aeneid* goes further. Vergil was born in the Roman borderlands, living there more than half of his life prior to his discovery by the Roman elite. He was the victim of the ravages of civil war. He became the greatest poet of a mother city he rarely visited. He wrote his epic at a time when Rome was struggling with her recent past, and leaders that grabbed power rather than attaining it by following Republican models. It was also a time when the old ruling class had died away, and a new ruling class, based on provincial Italians had emerged.

The Aeneas Vergil creates delighted the new emperor. Aeneas will find a place on key monuments to Augustan ideology like the Ara Pacis and in the Forum of Augustus.³⁹² He was a unifying force of patriotic fervor at a time when Augustus is working to solidify power and heal Rome from the trauma of civil war. Thus, Vergil's own literary career is an example of what this study finds in his masterwork. He granted Augustus a founding legend on which his propaganda could rise to glory. He gave

³⁹¹ Cic. *Phil.* 3.5.13.

³⁹² Martindale, Charles. In *Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, ed. by Martindale, Charles. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 57.

Augustus his *imperium*. By giving Rome a founding story based on Trojan *antiquitas* and Italian *virtute*, he helps the city conquer its inferiority complex toward Greece while also justifying the *imperium* of Augustus' Rome. He also gave this new Italian ruling class a feeling of the power it now enjoyed.

Passages Cited

Acts	9.33-34	Gell.	3.5, 6.12.6
Apollodorus, <i>Bibliotheca</i>	2.1	Hom. <i>Hymn</i> <i>Aph.</i>	Homer, <i>Hymn to</i> <i>Aphrodite</i> 5
Aug. <i>Anc.</i>	1	Hom. <i>Il.</i>	3.39-45, 7.96
Caes. <i>B. Gall.</i>	2.14.3-5, 7.77.4-5	Hor. <i>Carm.</i>	4.4
<i>Catull.</i>	11.5, 63	Hor. <i>Sat.</i>	1.2.2-4, 1.4.4-5, 1.10.44
Cic. <i>Cat.</i>	2.5, 2.7, 2.11	Hdt.	1.131.3
Cic. <i>Clu.</i>	5.12	Joseph <i>BJ</i>	2.537, 4.634
Cic. <i>Flac.</i>	71	Juv.	2.10, 2.11-12, 2.12-13, 2.18-19, 2.84-85, 2.100- 101, 2.104, 2.104-105, 3.61-66, 3.101-103, 3.109- 113, 3.112, 7.226
Cic. <i>Har. resp.</i>	21		
Cic. <i>Mil.</i>	89		
Cic. <i>Phil.</i>	2.38.99, 3.5.13, 4.13	Livy	Pr. 11, 1.1.9-11, 1.2.6, 9.17.16, 9.17.17, 10.23, 21.8.10-11, 21.8.11, 26.2.1- 2, 26.2.4-5, 26.2.5-6, 29.10.4-5, 29.11.7, 31.39.14, 34.3.8, 34.4.2, 34.4.3, 34.4.6, 34.4.9, 35.8.6-7, 36.2.9, 37.9.8, 38.17.9
Cic. <i>Sull.</i>	22		
Dio Cass.	48.44.3, 50.24-25, 50.25, 50.27, 50.28-29		
Don. <i>Vit.</i> <i>Verg.</i>	1-2, 6, 7, 8, 11-12, 20, 25, 26, 27, 31-34, 36, 39-41, 43, 57, 61, 62, 63, 64	Lucr.	2.581, 2.619-624, 4.1052-3, 4.1198
Eur. <i>Tro.</i>	820	Mart.	8.56, 8.56.15
Eur. <i>Cyc.</i>	566		
Eur. <i>IA</i>	1036	Ov. <i>Ars am.</i>	3.338

Ov. <i>Met.</i>	4.385-386, 15.803-806	Strab. <i>Geo.</i>	13.4, 14.1.41
Paus.	5.24.5	Terr. <i>Eun.</i>	59-61
Plaut. <i>Mil.</i>	3.1	Verg. <i>Ecl.</i>	9.28
Plautus, <i>Pseudolus</i>	4.7.80-84	Verg. <i>G.</i>	1.497, 1.500, 1.504, 1.504-508, 1.510-511, 4.563-566
Plin. <i>Ep.</i>	9.17.1-2	Verg. <i>Aen.</i>	Book I 1.4 1.5, 1.27-28, 1.272, 1.278-279, 1.282 Book III 3.105, 3.111-112 Book IV 4.67-69, 4.215-217, 4.259-265, 4.262-264, 4.505-508, 4.509, 4.518, 4.663 Book V 5.250, 5.820 Book VI 6.105-123, 6.612, 6.781-782, 6.784, 6.786-787, 6.792-793, 6.855-856 Book VII 7.55, 7.56, 7.96-101, 7.195-211, 7.287, 7.320-321, 7.325, 7.341, 7.345, 7.346-348, 7.371-372, 7.373-374, 7.392, 7.403, 7.410-412, 7.413-414, 7.431, 7.445, 7.445-451, 7.458-462, 7.649-650, 7.763-764, 7.720-721, 7.783-784 Book VIII 8.315, 8.466, 8.499-500, 8.503-504, 8.508-509, 8.510, 8.685-688 Book IX 9.30-33, 9.60, 9.126, 9.128, 9.431-432, 9.444-445, 9.505-506, 9.512-514, 9.515, 9.603-612, 9.614-620, 9.643-644, 9.702-708, 9.760, 9.793, 9.798 Book X 10.133-138, 10.154-155, 10.163, 10.198-203, 10.215-251, 10.252-255, 10.311, 10.474-475, 10.481, 10.482-485, 10.497-498 Book XI 11.40, 11.46-47, 11.67, 11.77, 11.376, 11.480, 11.768-782, 11.782, 11.803-804 Book XII 12.9, 12.45, 12.75, 12.97-100, 12.189-194, 12.319, 12.387-390, 12.399-400, 12.412-413, 12.491-499, 12.526-528, 12.823-829, 12.833-840, 12.924, 12.926-927, 12.930, 12.938, 12.943, 12.945-952, 12.950
Plin. <i>NH</i>	6.32.162, 18.3		
Quint. <i>Inst.</i>	1.5.42, 1.8.2, 1.8.5, 1.8.9, 9.2.3, 9.2.64-65		
Sall. <i>Cat.</i>	11		
Sall. <i>Iug.</i>	94		
Sen. <i>Clem.</i>	1.5.5		
Sen. <i>Ep.</i>	114.3		
Sen. <i>Ira</i>	1.20.3		
Sen. <i>Oed.</i>	413-46		
Sen. <i>Vit. Beat.</i>	7.13.3		
Suet. <i>Calig.</i>	34.2		
Suet. <i>Dom.</i>	9.1		
Suet. <i>Ner.</i>	39.2, 54		
Suet. <i>Otho</i>	3.2		

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