

Aeneid Books 10-12

1. Fate and the gods; free will and predestination
 2. Book 10: an exploration of the pious and impious
 3. Book 11: Camilla
 4. Book 12: Intertextuality revisited, & the Death of Turnus
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1. Fate and the gods; free will and predestination

Gods: real and not real: highly anthropomorphic, traditional, artistic representation (cf. bearded pictures of Jehovah) not very real, at least to the educated, but this does NOT mean that there is no belief in divinity

Fate at once insistently predetermined and malleable: Dido, 10 more years for Trojan War

Insistence that humans control their actions, in some sense, aside from the ultimate destiny of States and some crucial individuals: Council of the Gods, book 10: pp. 246-247, cf. sarcastic comment by Jupiter at p. 263 (833ff), the fate that the gods are not allowed to intervene in the battle (compare Iliad 20!)

- **Religion of the State**
 - Peculiar Roman spin: national piety revolved around belief in Rome's greatness and the new order, witness to that greatness, now stable and established at the end of the civil wars
 - In hindsight, it MUST BE that Rome was always fated to such greatness
 - Roman state religious institutions very solemn, strictly observed
- **Religion of the Individual**
 - On the other hand, diety is often capricious, in fact usually so
 - Diety works for personal motivations: Venus for Aeneas (son); Neptune for rights as King of the Sea; Cybele for the pine trees, now ships, that once were her sacred groves; Diana for favorite Camilla; Juno for her grievance against Troy and her love of favorite Carthage
 - Diety can also be malevolent: Venus and Dido; Juno everywhere; Athena and the snakes that attack Laocoon and convince the Trojans (falsely) of the sacred nature of the Trojan Horse; Iris inciting the women to burn the ships

"Aeneid reflects a feeling of the supernatural which on the one hand is congenial to Roman national sentiment and vindicates the religious system of the Roman state but on the other hand is profoundly discouraging to the individual. The Aeneid is s.t. referred to

as a religious poem, but perhaps it would be better described as a document of religious history." - W. A. Camps

Sad necessity of subordinating individual fate to the fate of the nation -- peculiarly Roman (unless Nazi, which took Rome as its ancestor!) -- but in the case of Rome also religious: **pietas**: "piety", ultimate loyalty to god, family, and state, none of which can be divorced from the others: Roman state as a sort of super family

2. Book 10: an exploration of the pious and impious

Book 10 initiates a triple death sequence: each of books 10, 11, 12 are ended by the death of an important Latin hero; in a sense, perhaps, the deaths of Mezentius and Camilla can be read as prefiguration or "dress rehearsals" for the critical death of Turnus that ends the epic

In book 10, our view of Aeneas begins to shift noticeably: it becomes less and less possible for him to be considered a "normal" man rather than a great warrior and hero (in fact, as Prof. Werner pointed out, he seems to become physically larger and larger)

Specifically, the killing of Pallas focuses our attention, as educated readers, on the parallel

Aeneas - Pallas - Turnus ~ Achilles - Patroclus - Hector

- Turnus, like and unlike Hector: note how impious: p. 258, lines 613-15
- Turnus, again like and unlike Hector: note the plunder of the belt, p. 260, 688ff.
- Then Aeneas' response, like and unlike Achilles:
 - 4+4 live youths to sacrifice at Pallas' funeral (we suddenly, as readers, are now **sure** of the parallel: Aeneas = Achilles, Pallas = Patroclus)
 - Achilles kills Magus, a suppliant: lines 730, esp. "This is what Anchises' Shade decides, and so says Iulus" (!!!)
 - Achilles kills a priest (!) of Apollo and Diana, 739ff
 - Achilles' blood lust: 766ff
 - Liger, 798ff, reminds us that the Latins are the defenders of their homeland now, Aeneas/Achilles the aggressors
 - Achilles kills Liger, again as a suppliant: again, impiety in the Roman sense, for A. brutally references the brother: 825: "Die, do not leave your brother all alone."
- There seems then a fundamental conflict here: pious Aeneas, in rage over the killing of his "adopted son" (as it were) or his "second self" (?), Pallas, is himself impious: somehow in defending piety, that is, loyalty to a

- special comrade who is in the position of a kin (note his frequent reference to Anchises and Iulus), he steps over the line towards impiety
- In this context, we meet Lausus and Mezentius, son and father
 - Lausus, paired with Pallas: as virtuous, pious: lines 602ff.
 - Mezentius, an Atheist: he prays to himself and his weapons, not to the gods: 1062ff: "My own right hand, which is my god, and this my shaft that I now poise to cast, be gracious"
 - After M. is wounded, L., in good piety towards his father, tries to protect him; Aeneas slays L., but at L.'s death, his blood lust and battle fury suddenly abate: "the image of his love for his own father touched his mind"
 - After L's death, M. shows regret for his shameful life (p. 271), but it's too late, and A. slays him
 - Note that it is this strange example of *pietas* that checks A.'s fury
 - The episode itself seems almost a meditation on the nature of *pietas*, how it is blind, what positive effects it does (and doesn't!) have, the relation between *pietas*, revenge, homeland, honor, justice, war
 - Again, we are reminded of the historical situation, *perhaps*: Octavian, like Aeneas, had buried his father and given splendid games (book 5 would certainly have resonated for a contemporary Roman!); he then went on to blood lust in the killing of Antony and Cleopatra (Mezentius and Camilla??)-- but here the reference is vague, more an exploration of a theme of obvious pressing concern for his generation than a parallel or paradigm per se

3. Book 11: Camilla

The strange figure of Camilla: highly marked, rather mysterious: **why does Vergil introduce this female warrior at this point in the epic?**

- First: in some ways what is most interesting is how we have come to view this question by the time we, as educated readers, reach book 11 of the Aeneid
- Specifically, inasmuch as an obvious theme does not present itself, we begin to search for a solution by means of
 - (1) Intertextual associations and contrasts, as between Camilla and figures in the Iliad and Odyssey
 - (2) Internal associations and contrasts
 - **This marks a fundamental shift in the way the reader interacts with the text, a shift not original to Vergil, but marked by Vergil: later epic (Dante, Milton), and much of later poetry will be in this intertextual mode: a critical point for the development of epic and related genres**
- This is a real question: scholars have not uncovered a very satisfactory solution or set of solutions, to my mind: the example of W. S. Anderson (!)

- Some links:
 - As a woman, we think of the "victim" theme: doesn't seem to work
 - Link to Romulus and Remus: the myth of the rustic origins of Rome and Romans
 - Camilla as mythological person: part of the thiasos (group of young maidens) following Diana: like an Amazon: desirable, highly dangerous (ax: p. 297): she alone receives direct divine revenge for her death (Opis, deity sent by Diana, kills Arruns with a divine arrow!)
 - Link to Diana reminds us of Book 1: Venus, dressed as Diana, hunting theme, ultimately of Dido
 - Like Dido, Camilla is a **woman taking a man's role**: but Dido, unlike Camilla, is (very) human
 - Like Dido, Camilla is defending her homeland, associated with the homeland she defends
 - cf. 11.1180ff: could one theme be then the construction of woman as a complex image of the urge to defend the homeland? Are we supposed to put this together with the figure of Dido in this way? (A very different construction of the female idea of "duty" than what we see in Iliad 6 [Hector and Andromache], and reflective of Roman society)
 - Or cf. 1019ff: link to Nisus and Euryalus episode: could another theme be then the nexus of links between lust for prizes (=lack of self-control, loss of clear-sightedness about one's goal), and the feminine principle (=irrationality): that is, are we meant to think about the "feminine" side of the hero, that irrational, un-controlled, lustful side of men and women?
 - Or ...?

4. Book 12: Intertextuality revisited, & the Death of Turnus

- Opening simile: an image of doom and blood lust
- Intertextuality revisited: Lavinia's cheeks and Iliad 3: lines 12.91ff., cf. Menelaus' thigh (!)
 - prefiguration of the scene, since much in this book will reflect book 3 of the Iliad
 - but also note how the imagery works: the ineffable effect of this striking set of associations: Lavinia, the maiden, her cheeks (which we see again: our last image of her: line 813, on the death of her mother); Menelaus, the broken truce, the blood running down his white thighs; Aeneas, the broken truce, shot by an archer: maiden, woman, lust, bloodlust, deceit, blood, the corpse of Amata, the hero ignominiously wounded: hard to express how these images fit together, but somehow they do, and somehow this adds to our sense of depth in the poetry
- The Death of Turnus: surreal (stone): we are brought to pity him (like Hector--why?): in the end, Aeneas almost relents -- what no other hero has done -- but

cannot finally relent when faced with the belt of Pallas: what does it mean? Is Aeneas cruel, unjust? Pious? What kind of piety? Piety to what or whom?

- In my mind, it links unavoidably with the apostrophe to Julius and Augustus Caesar towards the end of book 6, p. 160
 - Again, we are brought back to **history**: there must come a time when the killing in a civil war must end: the beneficent ruler will hesitate to kill his enemies, but kill them he will when revenge requires: so Octavian, killing Brutus, later Antony: now the killing is at an end: peace must reign, but also the knowledge of the complexity and difficulty for even the best ruler, the best hero, to stick to the values of *pietas* to family and country in a brutal and brutish world.
 - Octavian, like Aeneas, is a complex figure, essential *pius*, but often in his life forced to act in a brutal fashion in order to bring about the golden era he rules as the Aeneid, and Vergil's life, comes to a close.
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