

Time and History in Virgil's *Aeneid*

by

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To Jeb

αὐτὰρ ὁ νόσφιν ἰδὼν ἀπομόρξατο δάκρυ

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List of Abbreviations

LIMC = Boardman, J. (1981). *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae: (LIMC)*. Zurich: Artemis Verlag.

RE = Pauly, A. F. von, Wissowa, G. (1960). *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft: Supplementband*. Stuttgart: A. Druckenmüller.

CIL = (1893) *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Berlin: W. de Gruyter.

DK = Diels, H., Kranz, W. (1967). *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. Dublin: Weidmann.

FrGH = Jacoby, F. (1961). *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.

SVF = Arnim, H. F. A. von. (1968). *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*. Stuttgart: Teubner.

Chapter 1

Introduction

I. Virgil and the Philosophy of History

This dissertation is a study of the philosophy of history espoused by Virgil in the *Aeneid*. The *Aeneid* is the great historical epic of the Roman literary tradition. As such, it contains not only events that are depicted as historical, but also much thought *about* history itself. Indeed, Virgil privileges speculation *about* history over historical “truth” in the scientific sense. This is immediately obvious when we consider that in the *Aeneid*, he chose myth as his vehicle for expression. Certainly, aspects of this myth are presented as historical or quasi-historical. However, on a fundamental level, this feature clearly distinguishes the *Aeneid* from another historical Latin epic, Lucan’s *Pharsalia*.¹ Lucan’s poetic account of the civil war deals with facts that were more or less ascertainable by historical research; the *Aeneid* treats events whose primary appeal to contemporary

¹ Conte (1993): 437.

Romans would not have been their historical truth, but instead their mythological significance with regard to a conception of *Roma aeterna*.

Ultimately, this realization renders an inquiry into Virgil's philosophy of history all the more feasible. The liberty accorded by a mythological narrative, in which one is not so tightly constrained by the factuality of the events described, is highly conducive to the task of exposing a general theory of history. Virgil could deductively fit the narrative of the *Aeneid* to his preconceived notion of how history functions, rather than proceed inductively from more or less fixed data to a conclusion that we as moderns would consider more scientific. One would naturally expect the former approach from a poet, since, generally speaking, poets (especially in the classical conception of the occupation) construct their ideas only partially on the basis of physical observation. The ordering principle of the poetic vision (as evidenced by the ambiguity of the Latin *vates*, which could signify either a poet or a priest) is the idea of inspiration, an insight into reality granted to a privileged few, which does not arise from human experience, but rather explains that experience from outside.

"Philosophy of history" is a difficult term whose development is discussed in the introduction to Collingwood's important book on the subject.² The name itself was invented by Voltaire in his *Essai sur les moeurs et l'esprit des nations*. There it refers primarily to a critical and scientific approach to historical fact, as opposed to the

² Collingwood (1956). The philosophy of history, although a relatively new discipline, is quite vast, and my survey of it here is very brief and reductive. I have omitted discussion of the whole Anglo-American school of thought (to which Collingwood, although English, did not adhere) whose primary focus is on the epistemological characteristics of historical knowledge. To my mind, this question has no relevance to Virgil's thought as contained in the *Aeneid*, nor to the other aspects of first-century B.C. Roman culture that we shall consider over the course of the present study.

dogmatic acceptance of old stories.³ The term was later appropriated by Hegel and other philosophers of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century, who used it to refer to the whole course of world history.⁴ Also in the nineteenth century, positivist philosophers described the general laws that governed the course of events as the “philosophy of history”. A very different formulation was proposed by Collingwood himself, who used the term to describe the process of thinking philosophically (that is, in the second degree, as “thought about thought”) about the historian’s task, with the goal of understanding four things: the definition of history, the object of history (i.e. what it is a study of), the manner in which history proceeds, and what history is for (i.e. its purpose).⁵

It is obvious that the *Aeneid* (and Virgil’s poetry in general) concerns itself to some extent with questions about the nature of time and history. When Virgil speaks of a return to humankind’s ideal, pristine state in the new *Saturnia regna* that would occur under Augustus, he makes an implicit claim about the shape of history.⁶ This aspect of his poetry, which occurs throughout the *Eclogues*, the *Georgics*, and the *Aeneid*, embodies the approach to the philosophy of history employed by nineteenth century positivist philosophies. It also puts his relation to the topic in the same class as various ancient philosophical schools. Throughout the works of Plato and Aristotle, and in what we possess of Stoic and Pythagorean philosophy, speculation on the nature and shape of time plays a prominent role. In the past it was common to characterize ancient Greco-

³ Rosenthal (1955): 151. Rosenthal describes Voltaire’s approach as follows: “In the first place it stood for an examination of certain of the facts recorded and of the views entertained in traditional books of history concerning the past life of humanity. In the second place it represents an attempt on the part of Voltaire to reinterpret the moral, esthetic, and religious views, the customs and practices that prevailed in ancient civilizations.” Cf. also Sakmann (1906).

⁴ Hegel (1861); cf. Collingwood (1956): 1.

⁵ Collingwood (1956): 7-10.

⁶ *Aen.* 6.792-94: *Augustus Caesar, divi genus, aurea condet saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva Saturno quondam.*

Roman models of history as cyclic and “pessimistic,” as opposed to the “optimistic” linear conceptions found in Jewish and Christian sources. In an excellent book on the idea of historical recurrence in classical antiquity, Trompf largely dispels this sort of easy categorization.⁷ Jewish and Christian writers, in particular the author of the Gospel of Luke, often made use of cyclic ideas of history.⁸ Arnaldo Momigliano argued that no extant classical historian had a cyclic conception of time.⁹ Even among the Greek and Roman authors who acknowledge the idea of recurrence in history, this repetition is often conceived of as neither cyclic nor exact.¹⁰

Many have seen an eastern (Jewish) source behind the *palingenesis* of Virgil’s Fourth Eclogue, which seems to be construed as an eschatological end to history.¹¹ As we shall see in the main part of this study, his use of the term *saeculum* in the Fourth Eclogue is a specific reference to a linear conception of time that has its origins in Etruscan religion, in which history is conceived of as a succession of ages leading to a fixed end. Virgil’s general conception of time, however, has been assumed to be cyclic, based as it is in the philosophical systems of the Pythagoreans, Plato, and the Stoics.¹² The association of the *Aeneas* myth with a pattern of history that would be repeated in subsequent ages suggests that to some extent, a cyclic conception of history was present in his thought. Besides exemplifying the lack of clear-cut boundaries between ancient cyclic and linear temporal models, these interpretations of Virgil’s conception of time illustrate a tension that we shall see lies at the heart of his idea of history. All pertain to

⁷ Trompf (1979). Cf. also Feeney (2007): 3.

⁸ Trompf (1979): 116-78

⁹ Momigliano (1969): 13 ff.

¹⁰ Examples include Plato (in several dialogues), Panaetius, Boethus, and, as I shall argue in chapter 5, Virgil.

¹¹ Cf. Nisbet (1978).

¹² Holliday (1990): 555; Carcopino (1930): 45; Boyancé (1963).

the question that haunts the historical arc of the *Aeneid*: what is the end of history, with regard to both the world and the individual?

Modern scholarship has largely ignored or disregarded the extent to which we can speak of a Virgilian philosophy of history. In terms of dedicated studies, there exists a short article by Nawratil from 1939, and not much else.¹³ Nawratil sees the *Aeneid* as a precursor to Augustine's work, particularly the *De Civitate Dei*, in which we find a more explicitly philosophical conception of time and history. For Augustine, history is shaped by God and oriented towards an eschatological climax in which the temporal world will be reconciled with the eternal City of God. Nawratil believed the seeds of this view of history are present in the *Aeneid*. Otis flatly denied Nawratil's conclusion, saying that we can in no way read a philosophy of history into Virgil. His argument is based on the belief that the scope of the *Aeneid* does not extend beyond a specifically Roman end, as opposed to a universal one.¹⁴ As a result, the *Aeneid* treats the end and meaning of the story of Rome, and not of history itself.¹⁵ In discussing *Aeneid* 6, Otis claims that the more universal eschatologies of Pythagoreanism and Platonism are combined with this essentially Roman focus merely in order to "enhance the dignity and importance of the Roman theme."¹⁶ Both Otis and Norden argued that this feigned universalism is inconsistently and superficially attached to the Roman historical scheme that forms the true focus of *Aeneid*.¹⁷

¹³ Nawratil (1939).

¹⁴ Otis (1959): 173. Otis compares the *Aeneid* to the *Somnium Scipionis*, saying that Cicero and Virgil "did not see Rome as part of an historical process moving toward extra-historical fulfillment but rather as a final end in itself: *imperium sine fine dedi*."

¹⁵ Otis (1959): 173.

¹⁶ Otis (1959): 173.

¹⁷ Norden (1903): 327; Otis (1959): 173.

Hardie's *Cosmos and Imperium* has very little to do with the philosophy of history directly.¹⁸ However, one of the implications of his thesis, if true, would reaffirm, *contra* Otis, its presence in the *Aeneid*. For while Otis saw Roman history and the cosmos as two separate realities in the poem, Hardie argues that for Virgil, the Augustan *imperium* is identical with the cosmos. Hardie builds a strong argument that leads to a final interpretation of the shield of Aeneas as a cosmic symbol. In this single passage, he argues, Virgil evokes the cosmic implications of a number of classical tropes, including gigantomachy, descriptive hyperbole, and ancient cosmic interpretations of Achilles' shield in *Iliad* 18. Hardie's object is to demonstrate that Virgil equated "cosmos" with the Augustan *imperium*. In a limited sense he does this persuasively: Virgil certainly does liken Augustus' *imperium* to a cosmos. The flaw in Hardie's argument lies in the fact that he ignores the question of whether this is the only cosmos, or even the true cosmos. In the *Aeneid* there exists more than one: it is clear that the souls in the *sedes beatae* of *Aeneid* 6 inhabit their own cosmos, with its own celestial bodies, outside of time.¹⁹ Virgil's cosmology, as we shall see, is a composite of Stoic and Pythagorean ideas, and for both of these schools the heavenly bodies were in a sense the entities that defined the cosmos. As we encounter these ideas in their proper contexts over the course of this study, we shall see that when Virgil speaks of a separate solar system, he is pointedly referring to a separate cosmos.²⁰

From a simple common sense standpoint, if Augustus' dominion as depicted on Aeneas' shield were meant to be read as universal, there would be no need for the massive sacrifice represented in the same section. Such a practice implies a continued,

¹⁸ Hardie (1986).

¹⁹ *Aen.* 6.640-41.

²⁰ See especially chapter 5 *infra*.

uneasy division between the human and the divine. This is not simply an oversight on Virgil's part. The words used to describe the sacrifice, *ante aras terram caesi stravere iuventi* (*Aen.* 8.719), are extremely meaningful when considered in the context of Virgil's poetry. *Caesi iuventi* first occurs in the *Georgics*, where the eating of beef is described as an impious practice indicative of the decline humankind had experienced since the Golden Age:

Ante etiam sceptrum Dictaei regis et ante
impia quam caesis gens est epulata iuventis...(*G.* 2.536-38.)

Before the Dictaeon King [Jove] held the scepter, and before a wicked race feasted on slaughtered bullocks.²¹

However, just a few lines after calling the practice *impia*, Virgil uses the same words to describe a pious and apparently pleasing scene that takes place in the Mantuan temple he hopes to build for Augustus:

iam nunc sollemnis ducere pompas
ad delubra iuvat caesosque videre iuventos (*G.* 3.22-23)

Even now would I like to lead the stately procession to the shrine, and there behold the slaughtered bullocks.

Habinek and Dyson have both argued that the close proximity of these descriptions is meant to establish the ambiguous nature of sacrifice, which is simultaneously a pious and impious practice.²² Dyson goes on to catalogue the total occurrences of *caesi iuventi* and its inflections in Virgil's poetry. These amount to six, always in a sacrificial context.²³

The last instance occurs on Aeneas' shield, where it is used to describe Augustus' sacrifice after his (and Rome's) final triumph.

²¹ All translations in this study are my own, except where I indicate a translator.

²² Habinek (1990); Dyson (1996).

²³ Dyson (1996) 280.

Given the general argument of *Cosmos and Imperium*, it is predictable that Hardie attempts in a later study to show how these lines can be read as unproblematic with regard to the idea of cosmic balance.²⁴ He explains the potentially negative connotation of the idea of sacrifice using Girard's theory of the "sacrificial crisis."²⁵ For Girard, social and cultural order depends on the establishment of sacrificial distinctions, which differentiate "beneficial" and "harmful" violence.²⁶ By maintaining these sacrificial distinctions, as Augustus does in the last image of Virgil's *ekphrasis*, Hardie argues that harmful violence is kept at bay. Morgan, influenced by Hardie, advances a similar argument for the two passages in the *Georgics*, interpreting the idea of sacrifice as the embodiment of the Stoic notion of "creative destruction," suggested by the phenomenon of *ekpyrosis*, which he sees as the final logic behind Virgil's conception of the cosmos.²⁷

Others have found the image of *caesi iuveni* too problematic to be justified in such a fashion. Among these is Dyson, who along with Habinek has perceived most acutely the problematic juxtaposition of the two images of slaughter in *Georgics* 2 and 3. Dyson constructs an argument that goes rather too far in connecting negative depictions of sacrifice in Virgil's poetry to historical events involving Octavian/Augustus, in order to show the poet's tacit disapproval of the latter's conduct at different times. For instance, she connects the dual-occurrence of the motif in at *Georgics* 2 and 3 to civil war, which according to her makes virtue and impiety indistinguishable.²⁸ In order to link *caesi iuveni* to civil war, Dyson relies on an even more egregious association. She

²⁴ Hardie (1993): 19-26.

²⁵ Hardie (1993): 21.

²⁶ Girard (1977): 49.

²⁷ Morgan (1999), especially 105-8.

²⁸ Dyson (1996): 283. For Dyson, civil war erases the distinction between "the *pietas* of killing one's enemy with the *impietas* [sic] of killing one's brother."

argues that the three hundred temples in which the sacrifices of *Aeneid* 8 occur are intended by Virgil to recall the three hundred knights that Augustus allegedly sacrificed at the altar of Divus Julius in Perugia during the wars against Sextus Pompey.²⁹ In her subsequent book, she connects the presentation of sacrifice in Virgil's poetry with Turnus' death in *Aeneid* 12 and the ritual of the *rex nemorensis* at the temple of Diana at Aricia. Again, her goal is to argue for the presence of tragic and pessimistic overtones at the moment of Aeneas' triumph, in order to show how Virgil voiced his horror at the civil wars, specifically with regard to Augustus.

Here the arguments of Morgan and Hardie, based on Girard's theory of sacrifice, are indeed salutary. The idea of the sacrificial crisis can actually be used to distinguish correct and incorrect behavior; conceived thus, a sacrificial act is actually excluded from the semantic range of repetitive vengeance killing and civil war.³⁰ On a more general level, others have seen in Virgil's poetry the assertion that by participating in the sacrificial process of history, one makes valuable contributions to human progress, in a broad sense. Patricia Johnston's study of the Golden Age in the *Georgics* shows how the influence of Aratus, Posidonius, and Lucretius led him to incorporate notions of progress into the traditionally degenerative scheme of the metallurgic Ages of Man.³¹ The lynchpin of Johnston's argument is her interpretation of the Aristaeus episode in

²⁹ Suet. *Aug.* 15: *Scribunt quidam trecentos ex dediticiis electos utriusque ordinis ad aram Divo Iulio exstructam Idibus Martiis hostiarum more mactatos.* Also at Dio 48.14.4. Dyson pays little heed to the strong likelihood that the story is simply a fabrication, saying, "Did the sacrifice of 300 men...really take place? ...Whether or not the incident was historical fact is probably irrelevant as far as Virgil is concerned, for the perception of history, not the reality, is what matters to the artist." For the tendency of opposition literature to embellish the truth during the civil wars, see chapter 2 *infra*.

³⁰ Hardie (1993): 21: "As 'sacrifice' the death of Turnus represents the reimposition of order; but as uncontrolled rage, revenge pure and simple rather than the judicial retribution envisaged by the terms of the treaty, it retains its potential to repeat itself in fresh outbursts of chaotic anger (the dreary catalogue of vengeance killings of Roman civil war.)"

³¹ Johnston (1980).

Georgics 4, which focuses especially on the *bugonia* ritual. As noted above, the story can be read as decidedly pessimistic; however, sacrifice has both positive and negative aspects.³² In the case of the *bugonia* ritual at the end of *Georgics* 4, it is shown to be the vehicle for both security and progress in human existence. Thus Virgil portrays sacrifice, both in its ritual form and in the broader sense, as an unfortunate but necessary reality of human existence that has the potential to contribute to our material well-being.³³

On a more fundamental level, Dyson succumbs to the temptation that undermines most “pessimistic” readings of the *Aeneid* (and often, “optimistic” ones as well): she tries to reduce the entire meaning of the poem to a political statement. A far better reading of *caesi iuvenci* comes from Habinek, who argues that the theme of cattle sacrifice in the *Georgics* is intended to illuminate one of the fundamental problems of human existence. The several references to the practice culminate in the grotesque *bugonia* ritual in Book 4, where a brutally slaughtered bullock is the means by which a new hive of bees is sprung *ex nihilo*. Habinek notes the way in which bees function as a metaphor for humans in the *Georgics* and subsequently interprets the idea of sacrifice as a marker of degeneracy, which is nonetheless necessary to preserve order in society and the world. This is what Dyson’s reading completely misses: sacrifice, both ritually of animals and metaphorically of humans, is not without positive effects, and it is precisely for this reason that it is both pious and impious at the same time. The perfect illustration of this in the *Aeneid* is the death of Palinurus in Book 5, where Neptune demands, without

³² Cf. Habinek (1990). Habinek discusses the ambiguity of sacrifice specifically in relation to the Aristaetus episode, and comes to an optimistic conclusion quite similar to Johnston’s. His contributions to my argument are noted in the notes to chapter 3.

³³ Or, as Johnston puts it, our “material bliss.” Cf. Johnston (1980): 85.

explanation, the death of Aeneas' oarsman to ensure the safe passage of the Trojan fleet:
unum pro multis dabitur caput.

The scene of sacrifice on Aeneas' shield thus shows that this world exists in relation to some other one, most immediately identifiable with that of the gods. The main purpose of this study is to show that the distinction between these two worlds is made on the basis of their respective temporality and eternity. In this regard, I have relied heavily on certain conclusions found in Feeney's book on the Roman calendar.³⁴ In particular, Feeney's discussion of conceptions of mythical and historical time has been crucial to my argument that there is both a temporal and historical arc present in the *Aeneid*.³⁵ In general, his study has confirmed for me what was largely an assumption when I began this project: Virgil (and the Romans in general) did in fact have a developed set of ideas about time.³⁶ With this in mind, I attempt to show that Virgil's alleged pessimism and famous melancholy, which a "pessimist" in the contemporary sense would attribute to dissatisfaction with some notion of an Augustan program, instead resulted directly from the fact that he saw history and time as fundamentally imperfect processes. These processes were periodic and marked by recurrent typologies, but Virgil carefully avoided the idea of exact historical recurrence for two reasons. First, the exact recurrence model of history presupposes that time is an essentially perfectible, or teleological entity (this characterization will be explained more fully in the last section of this introduction). Second, exact historical recurrence precludes the existence of a true eschatology. If a soul must return to inhabit the same body in each repetition of time's cycle, it is impossible to conceive of a permanent afterlife. As we shall see, Virgil was very

³⁴ Feeney (2007).

³⁵ Feeney (2007) chapters 3 and 4.

³⁶ Cf. especially Feeney (2007): 161-66.

attached to the possibility that souls might be able to permanently cross over to a timeless, divine world. I shall argue that in *Aeneid* 6 he constructs an essentially religious eschatology, based on Pythagorean and Orphic beliefs that contained doctrines of divinization. But in Virgil's scheme, one cannot ascend to godhood through initiation into a religious cult, as was the case for practitioners of Orphism and Pythagoreanism. Rather, it is through contribution to the progress of humanity (in a very broad sense) that one reaches the *sedes beatae* after death. Thus I hope to reconcile the historical arc of the *Aeneid* (which concludes in the poem in the sacrificial death of Turnus, but which extends in terms of absolute chronology to Augustus' sacrifice during his triple triumph) with the religious conception of eternity that we observe in *Aeneid* 6.

II. Methodology

This study presupposes the synergistic influence of two factors on Virgil's conception of history: philosophical and religious speculation about the question of time in Greco-Roman culture, and the actual historical events witnessed by Virgil in his lifetime. With regard to the latter point: at the time when Virgil was composing the *Aeneid*, Rome had just been freed from decades of disastrous civil war. The person who claimed to have brought an end to this destructive chapter in Roman history was Augustus, and both he and Virgil refer to this accomplishment in terms borrowed from the "Golden Age," as conceived by the Greek and Roman literary tradition. Indeed, important conclusions about Virgil's conception of history can be arrived at by simultaneously considering related elements in Augustus' own public displays, and this is the approach I have taken. While most of the displays presented in this study postdate

Virgil's death, we shall see that they were largely responding to the same historical and cultural stimuli that inspired certain aspects of the *Aeneid*. In this sense, I treat Augustan monuments and public displays as data that can be used to explain Virgil's poetry, and *vice versa*.

In particular, two notions that Augustus applied to himself at various times are extremely important in Virgil's poetry. The first of these is a conception of historical agency, which Augustus termed his *auctoritas*, and which forms the dominant motif in the Forum of Augustus. In chapter 2, I examine the genesis of the concept as it was presented in the forum, with a particular emphasis on the historical circumstances from which it arose. As I shall show, chief among these was the troubled period that began with the triumviral proscriptions in 43 B.C. and continued through the wars against Sextus Pompey, which ended with the battle of Naulochus in 36. During these wars, the then-Octavian experienced a series of embarrassing military disasters that undermined his later claims to *auctoritas* by casting doubts on his *virtus*. These disasters exacerbated the disdain many Romans already had for him on account of his perceived lack of *pietas* during the proscriptions. It is no coincidence that in a monument intended to assert the central role that Augustus and the Julian family had played in Rome's history, a conception of *auctoritas* grounded in *virtus* and *pietas* was forcefully advanced. The latter virtue in particular was refigured so as to include a notion of revenge (*ultio*), in order to cast the actions of Augustus' early career as the pious vengeance taken on the murderers of Julius Caesar.

Thus the Forum of Augustus was concerned with defining *auctoritas*. In chapter 3, I argue that this is also Virgil's preoccupation in Book 5 of the *Aeneid*. Not

coincidentally, in this “Sicilian” book, and Virgil alludes to specific historical events from the war with Sextus Pompey. In doing so, he reinterprets occurrences that had the potential to embarrass or undermine Augustus’ *auctoritas*, in much the same way that we observe in the artistic program of the forum. But above all, he uses the seemingly relaxed context of the book to set up the ultimate justification of Augustus’ *auctoritas*, which occurs in the duel between Aeneas and Turnus at the poem’s end. This can only be understood in light of Virgil’s sacrificial conception of history; therefore I devote the majority of chapter 3 to establishing the existence of this dimension in the *Aeneid*, and to describing how it functions. My argument begins with the death of Palinurus and the boxing match between Dares and Entellus in Book 5, both of which expose a different aspect of “sacrificial history.” From these I move to two passages that I consider to be the interpretive keys for the epic’s historical arc. The first is the destruction of Troy in *Aeneid* 2. Virgil’s description pointedly evokes Stoic *ekpyrosis*, in which the whole universe is consumed by the divine, fiery *logos*, followed by the reconstitution (*palingenesis*) and the exact recurrence of the previous historical cycle. This process has a profound rapport with the “creative destruction” that characterizes sacrifice, and through this rapport, Virgil shows that history itself is a sacrificial process. This realization is strengthened by the second interpretive key, which in fact comes from the *Georgics*. In the ritual of the *bugonia* described in *Georgics* 4, a bullock is savagely slaughtered in order to magically produce a new hive of bees.³⁷ Here again, the words *caesi iuvenci* appear, and I argue that Virgil is intent upon conveying the inherently problematic character of sacrifice (which the *bugonia* expressly becomes in its second

³⁷ *G.* 4.281-314.

formulation).³⁸ My emphasis is on the idea that for humanity (which the bees represent) to thrive, a victim is demanded by some blind force; this I identify with history. I proceed to show how Aeneas fully realizes his historical agency by learning to manage this sacrificial process, and we see the final result in the last scene of the poem, where he (or rather Pallas, in a formulation whose significance I shall discuss) *immolates* Turnus.

As noted above, a number of scholars have perceived sacrificial motifs in both the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid*. I depart from the most common scholarly readings of these motifs in my assertion that sacrifice, especially in the *Aeneid*, is used to mark the fact that Augustus' Golden Age will not transcend temporality, as it would have to in order to be considered the sort of paradise envisioned in *Eclogue* 4. At the same time, I argue that this should not be taken as an indictment of Augustus, for the *princeps* himself made the same admission in his public displays. In chapter 4, we shall examine Augustus' conception of the new *saeculum* over which he would preside. This analysis begins with the Temple of Apollo, where he cultivated an association between himself and the god, whom we later see was considered to be the patron deity of the new age. I then turn to the performance of the *Ludi Saeculares*, in which it was pointedly implied that this new age would in no way resemble the easy, secure existence of some transcendent Golden Age, but would instead require constant attention to morality and religious observance. Finally I turn to the *Ara Pacis*, where the importance of religious observance in preserving the Augustan peace becomes a dominant theme. Here the previous chapters' discussion of Virgil will prove extremely instructive, for the problematic character of the sacrifice that would take place at the altar is pointedly shown in the monument's decoration. Moreover, Augustus is shown to be a historical sacrificant who does not

³⁸ *G.* 4.548-58.

transcend the limits of temporality. The altar, which I shall argue can be taken as an expression of Augustus' own ideas, was ultimately intended to show that the farthest progress of Rome (in the political, moral, and historical senses) could never efface the fundamental divide between the temporal and eternal, the human and the divine. A useful modern parallel to this admission is the political philosopher Erich Voegelin's famous critique of "immanent eschatologies." Such ideologies are based on the belief that a radical transformation of the present human condition is possible, and hold that the end of history is the establishment of a paradise on earth.³⁹

All of this helps us to finally understand what Virgil means when he describes a new Golden Age that will arrive in Italy under Augustus.⁴⁰ In chapter 5, I argue that Virgil conceives of two Golden Ages in the *Aeneid*, based on the divide that he establishes between mythical and historical time. As already noted, the historical arc functions according to a creative-destructive logic explained by both Stoic *ekpyrosis* and the idea of sacrifice. I take up this idea again in this chapter, where I show that Virgil fits it to the traditional scheme of the metallurgic Ages of Man. Thus I argue that when he describes a return of the Golden Age (*palingenesis*), we ought not to suppose that he is referring to something transcendent. Virgil shows that this age will still exist under the

³⁹ The term "immanentized eschaton" was coined in response to the utopian ideologies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Marxism and National Socialism, which Voegelin regarded as modern forms of Gnosticism. In essence, he perceived in Gnosticism the general tendency to expect the spiritual perfection of the immanent, physical world; that is, the realization of an *eidōs* (in the platonic sense) in historical time. One of Voegelin's favorite historical examples of the proposal and rejection of the idea of an immanent eschatology came from Thomas More's *Utopia* (Voegelin [1998]: 118): "His [More's] ideal remains in the twilight of his Nowhere... More was very much aware that his description of the ideal society implied an unrealistic change in the nature of man. He did not indulge in the fallacy of later activist eschatologists, that is, in the assumption that mysterious processes would indeed change the nature of man in such a manner that the problem of evil would disappear from the world."

⁴⁰ *Aen.* 6.791-94.

limitations of temporality; this is my explanation for the presence of the *caesi iuvenci* on Aeneas' shield.

Virgil's ideal, mythical Golden Age represents, in its most basic conception, an escape from history, which we see in *Aeneid* 6. The souls of the blessed leave the sacrificial process of history, and are shown to be the only figures in the *Aeneid* who possess true happiness. Even more importantly, however, Virgil shows that this bliss is truly permanent. In this he relied on a whole tradition of philosophical and religious thought stretching back to Pythagoras. These souls are freed not only from future incarnations in the present constitution of the world, but also from ever having to enter the tomb of the body again. This is only rendered possible by the explicit denial of exact historical recurrence. The destruction of Troy is described as an *ekpyrosis* of sorts, but it is shown to be local, rather than universal. This indicates that for Virgil, time is not perfectly cyclical, and the end of an age is not to be confounded with the end of the universe. In this he followed later Stoics like Boethus and Panaetius, whose thought we shall briefly examine. But his purpose was ultimately to assert an Orphic-Pythagorean idea, the final release of the soul from the body through divinization. As we shall see, Pythagoreanism itself had begun as an essentially religious sect that preached divinization by means of initiation (hence it was associated with Orphism from an early time). By the time of Plato it had morphed into a more philosophical discipline, distinguished by a doctrine of eternal recurrence. Subsequently, when it became popular again at Rome in the first century B.C., it had reacquired its religious character and reasserted its earlier doctrine of permanent escape. Virgil shows the influence of both the original and the revived form of Pythagoreanism in his denial of eternal recurrence, by

which he maintains the possibility that the human soul can remain permanently on the other side of the divide between temporality and eternity.

This eternal beatitude is the true objective of all the angst and longing present in the *Aeneid*. It is the potential for divinization that gives meaning to the whole historical process, which would otherwise be a pointless slaughter rather than a sacrifice. The divinized souls in Elysium are those who best managed history for the good of humanity. Virgil's departure from Orphic and Pythagorean belief lay in the fact that he showed how virtue, rather than religious initiation, is the means by which one may access this happiest state. This is essentially an affirmation of the idea of progress, and he incorporates it into both the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid*. In the *Georgics* Virgil follows Lucretius and Posidonius in affirming human agency in the development of the various beneficial *artes*, and in the *Aeneid* he mythologizes the process by making godhood the reward for the sages who cultivated them.

I close by emphasizing that this eschatology is personal, and as a result offers little consolation to those troubled by the sacrificial necessity of history. Aeneas (and Augustus) would permanently inhabit Elysium on account of his virtue, but this does nothing to change the way history functions. This fact is thrown into relief by the famous image of the Gate of False dreams, which I use as an interpretive key for the tension between history and eternity that exists in the second half of the *Aeneid*. In Book 6, Aeneas experiences a vision that is true in Elysium, but false once he reenters the temporal world. When he fails to follow his father's command by killing Turnus, he in fact admirably fulfills the role of a historical agent. Thus any dissatisfaction that we feel at this climactic moment is directed towards the process of history itself.

III. Terminology

At the outset of this study, two aspects of my terminology require clarification. The first is the distinction that I draw between “cosmos” and “universe.” This is an arbitrary distinction which I make only because it is an easy way to understand the difference that Virgil establishes between the two worlds of his poem: one, physical and historical, the other spiritual and eternal. I maintain the terms because Hardie has so well shown the cosmic dimensions of Augustus’ reign as depicted in the *Aeneid*, while pressing the argument too far by interpreting it as a universal claim.

I shall also use the words “teleology” and “eschatology” in rather special senses to highlight what I believe to be an important distinction. I use “teleology” in the Aristotelian sense, as the study of ends implied within the nature of objects themselves. Aristotle identified the *telos* of an object as a cause present in that object. A seed that grows into a rose bush has accomplished its *telos*. The term cannot properly be applied to eschatological conceptions: a soul who travels to the Islands of the Blest, where it shall live forever free of the body, passes beyond the normal mode of its existence to a state not implied in the nature of its previous corporeal state. To better illustrate this distinction, I wish to briefly examine how it functions in two of Plato’s dialogues, the *Laws* and the *Timaeus*. These both offer representative examples of what I consider to be teleological cosmic systems, and it will be useful to have this picture in mind as we proceed. Also, both are alluded to by Virgil at critical moments in the *Aeneid*, and I shall refer back to this section at several points in the main body of this discussion.

In a study of Plato’s *Laws*, Saunders has noted that the nature of the eschatological accounts in Plato’s dialogues evolved over time (with the assumption that

we accept the chronological order commonly proposed).⁴¹ In the earlier dialogues we see mythological descriptions of the Underworld and reference to the possibility of a permanent separation of soul from body. Later, Plato seemingly favored a less fantastic vision. In the *Laws*, generally believed to be one of Plato's last works, one finds no mention of an underworld; the Athenian stranger who leads the dialogue simply describes an endless series of reincarnations based on conduct in one's prior life. He says,

Now, as the soul combining first with one body and then with another undergoes all sorts of changes, either of herself, or through the influence of another soul, all that remains to the player of the game is that he should shift the pieces; sending the better nature to the better place, and the worse to the worse, and so assigning to them their proper portion. (*Laws* 903d; Jowett trans.)

Gone, as Saunders observes, is the sharp distinction between this world and the next found in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*: the fate of the soul is described spatially and within the normal processes of the visible cosmos, and not in mystical terms.⁴² Saunders calls this system a “scientific eschatology,” meaning one in which all experiences of the soul in life and death can be explained in purely natural, physical terms.⁴³ The idea behind this term is correct, but the use of the word “eschatology” is misleading. In its common usage, eschatology involves the transition from one plane of existence to another. In the *Laws*, the souls moves within in the same dimension that it had previously occupied; this transition is spatial, and not qualitative. As such, it is better understood as an element of the cosmos' *teleology*.

⁴¹ Saunders (1973) 233 ff.

⁴² Saunders (1973): 234.

⁴³ Saunders (1973): 234; also 243-44: “My view of the passage is then that Plato wants to provide, on the grounds that it has a high persuasive value, a—if I may again use the word—scientific eschatology, cast in terms of physical processes.”

In this respect the cosmology of the *Laws* is similar to that found in the *Timaeus*.⁴⁴ In the latter dialogue, time is famously said to be “the moving image of eternity.”⁴⁵ Insofar as this is the case, time must be in some respect cyclic, and Timaeus appears to describe it as such. In order to copy the self-identical and uniform nature of the eternal world, the Demiurge creates the universe in the shape of a sphere. He creates the planets expressly to “generate time.”⁴⁶ This motion is twice described as periodic (*περίοδος* at 58a, and implied in the reference to *κύκλοι* at 39a) and Timaeus concludes with the mention of a “completed year” (*τὸν τέλεον ἐνιαυτὸν*, 39d) when the stars return to their original positions. This can only mean that when this year is complete, time begins again.⁴⁷ Additionally, when time is said to be the “moving image of eternity,” a difference as well as a similarity is implied: “it is not possible to attach this [the nature of eternity] to a created thing” (37d). Eternity is *complete* in a single instant: it never *becomes*, it simply *is*. The only way in which the copy of the eternal world could reproduce that completeness is if the processes of time could at some point be said to be complete, and the Demiurge’s creative act does this by joining the end to the beginning, in the form of a circle. In this way, time is complete and self-contained from the eternal perspective of the demiurge, but it maintains its qualitative distinction from eternity by having a beginning and an end.

⁴⁴ Which Saunders rightly associates with this section of the *Laws*; cf. Saunders (1973): 244: “He wants to refer to, without precisely explaining in detail, the actual physical theory and procedures he has in mind—i.e. those of the *Timaeus*, where such an eschatology had already been sketched.”

⁴⁵ Pl. *Ti.* 37d.

⁴⁶ Pl. *Ti.* 38c: ἐξ οὗ λόγου καὶ διανοίας θεοῦ τοιαύτης πρὸς χρόνου γένεσιν, ἵνα γεννηθῆ χρόνος, ἥλιος καὶ σελήνη καὶ πέντε ἄλλα ἄστρα, ἐπίκλην ἔχοντα πλανητά, εἰς διορισμὸν καὶ φυλακὴν ἀριθμῶν χρόνου γέγονεν:

⁴⁷ von Leyden (1964): 43 agrees that the model of temporality in the *Timaeus* is cyclical: “There can be no doubt that Plato thought that in this capacity time is cyclical and that the universe as a whole is a kind of spherical space-time.”

Indeed, the claims of teleological systems involve beginnings as well as ends; the perfect illustration of this is the fact that Aristotle counted the *telos* of a thing among its four *causes*. In Plato's dialogue, *Timaeus* says that nothing can exist without a cause; this argues for the agency of a creator, the demiurge, who fashioned the material world according to an eternal model.⁴⁸ To emphasize that this order was implicit in all things from the beginning of the world, *Timaeus* describes a process of creation in which all living things *began*, rather than *terminated*, with human beings. "Lower" organisms "de-evolved" from the pristine human race by a process of degeneration, but still in accord with the model that the demiurge followed. This indicates that the diversity of species exists hierarchically in the divine model, with humans at the top, and is realized in the physical world by a process best described as metempsychosis *down* the chain of being.⁴⁹ It also reflects what Saunders has called the "scientific eschatology" of the *Laws*: there is no eternal reward or punishment for good and bad conduct in life, only potentially better or worse incarnations, always in the temporal mode of existence.

These examples from Plato help to establish the distinction between "teleology" and "eschatology" that will be of crucial importance throughout this study. While both deal with ends, it is patently obvious that in a perfectly teleological system, individual "last things," (i.e. eschatology) do not really exist, but are rather subsumed in the singular *telos* of the whole. For this reason, it seems, Plato de-emphasizes personal fate in the *Laws* and the *Timaeus*, choosing rather to contextualize them in the functioning of the living, teleological organism that is the cosmos. It is precisely this conception of a teleological cosmos that Virgil seeks to avoid in the *Aeneid*. At the conclusion of this

⁴⁸ Pl. *Ti.* 28a.

⁴⁹ On evolution in *Timaeus*' cosmology, see Campbell (2000).

study, we shall see that it is the possibility of a true eschatology, conceived as a permanent escape from the physical cosmos, which finally resolves the tension of human existence in time.

Chapter 2

Auctoritas and the Forum of Augustus

I. Introduction

The latest of the major Augustan building projects was the Forum of Augustus, dedicated in 2 B.C. As such, it represented in a sense the furthest development of the expression of Augustan ideas through art and architecture.¹ Recent scholarship has largely focused on the future claims implicit in these ideas, and it is certainly true that as Augustus became more settled in his position of *princeps*, he turned his attention to securing the same role for his heirs.² Dynastic motifs, which had played a role in Augustus' self-representation since at least the performance of the *Ludi Saeculares* in 17 B.C., became especially prominent in the Forum of Augustus.³ There, special emphasis

¹ For the Forum of Augustus as “an exemplar of the Augustan spirit,” see Galinsky (1996): 212-13.

² For dynastic elements in the Forum of Augustus, see Spannagel (1999): 345-58. For similar motifs elsewhere in Augustan art and architecture, see Hurler (1997): 436-42.

³ For the evolving role of Augustus' family in his self-representation, see Severy (2003). Severy argues that Augustus used his family relations differently in the earlier part of his reign (where it served to consolidate his own position) than in later years (where he was more expressly concerned with questions of inheritance and dynasty). Severy's book nicely complements Hurler's study, since the latter examines how

was placed on the essential importance of the Julian family in Roman history, from its origin with Aeneas to Julius Caesar in the generation prior to Augustus' ascent to power. As we shall see in this chapter, every detail of the Forum of Augustus, down to its basic physical layout, was intended to convey the notion that the *Julii* were the driving force behind the historical progress of the Roman state.

However, in addition to claims intended to secure the future of the Julian regime, the Forum of Augustus provides the clearest example of Augustus' interpretation of the past. Two aspects of this treatment stand out. The first is the use of historical examples to justify the assumption of a fundamentally extraordinary dynastic power within the framework of the Republican tradition. The inclusion of men from all periods of Roman history who had occupied positions of extra-governmental authority showed that the conferral of such power on one person, an office to which Augustus' own role as *princeps* corresponded, was somehow organically rooted in an essentialized conception of Roman government. The dynastic elements present in the forum ultimately served to translate this privilege to the whole Julian family. The second notable aspect of the interpretation of the past found in the Forum of Augustus is its depoliticized presentation of Roman history. It is remarkable that two controversial and problematic figures from that history, Sulla and Gnaeus Pompey, were prominently featured in the gallery of the *summi viri* that lined the forum's porticoes. Over the course of this chapter, we shall observe in detail how these two ideas were incorporated into the artistic program of the Forum of Augustus. On the basis of our observations, we shall see that an important conclusion can be drawn about the way in which Augustus wished for his reign to be

the "co-régence" (with the co-regents being always linked to Augustus by familial relations) was used to legitimate the transition between Republic and Principate. Cf. esp. Hurllet (1997): 365, 539.

perceived. He desired to be seen as someone who stood outside of ephemeral political squabbles, even though the good of the state had compelled him to take part in them on occasion in the past. One of the more problematic chapters in Augustus' early career, the triumviral proscriptions and the concurrent wars against Sextus Pompey waged around Sicily in the aftermath of Philippi, played a major role in the way he constructed his image. Augustus' actions in these wars, which inspired among many a personal hatred of and lack of confidence in him, were interpreted as cohering to a basic set of characteristically Roman virtues that had been practiced by the most important "agents" in the city's history. This explains the association of Augustus with *ultio* (established by the presence of the Temple of Mars Ultor), which we shall see was spatially linked to Aeneas' *pietas* and Romulus' *virtus*. The elimination of Sextus was to be seen as an act of revenge on those who had murdered Julius Caesar, and as such it was grounded in a refashioned conception of *pietas*. The idea of agency also illuminates the reference to Sulla, who appears as a precursor to Augustus in both the forum's sculptural program and in historical accounts of the proscriptions. "History" is ultimately shown to be anything but a neat process; those granted authority, as Augustus had been, were also subject to the painful responsibility of waging war and meting out punishment. The justification of this *auctoritas*, whose expression is rightly understood as the primary claim of the forum's artistic program, was the real and tangible improvement that such an agent could effect in Roman life, in all senses.

The special focus of the present study is on conceptions of time and history in Virgil. While it may seem unusual to devote the opening chapter of such a study to an Augustan monument completed more than fifteen years after the poet's death, the ideas at

work in the Forum of Augustus both explain and are explained by the key thematic elements of Virgil's *Aeneid*. When we turn to that poem in the following chapter, we shall see that Aeneas becomes a meaningful agent in his own story only after he begins to embody the virtues that formed the basis of Augustus' own *auctoritas* in the artistic program of the forum: *pietas*, *ultio*, and *virtus*. For Virgil, this *auctoritas* was tied to a specific claim about the nature of history, based on later Hellenistic and Roman conceptions of progress and historical agency that ran counter to classic cyclic models of time. A similar observation can be made about Augustus' self-representation if we consider it in terms of the Livian idea of a *conditor urbis*, a title that Livy applied to Augustus himself, and one that well suits the overall image of the *princeps* perpetuated by the Forum of Augustus. The same virtues on which Virgil bases Aeneas' *auctoritas* are appropriated as characteristically Julian in the forum, furthering the dynastic claim, and are shown to have been the means by which the illustrious Romans of the past had brought about the city's historical progress.

II. The Forum of Augustus

The physical appearance and the ideological program of the Forum of Augustus have been the subject of a number of substantial studies.⁴ We shall not recapitulate these here, but it is important to have before us a basic conception of how the forum was designed, so that we may note the elements that pertain specifically to notions of historical agency. Additionally, the issue of establishing a timeline for the inception and

⁴ First hand descriptions and impressions of the Forum of Augustus can be found in: Pliny *HN* 36.102; Ov. *Fast.* 5.545-98. For detailed modern reconstructions of the forum see Zanker (1968), Ganzert (1988), Kockel (1988), and Spannagel (1999). A briefer interpretation of the ideological program is provided by Galinsky (1996): 197-213. The opening of the forum is dated to 2 B.C. on the basis of *RG* 22.2, Dio 60.10.3, and Vell. Pat. 2.100.2.

completion of the forum project is crucially important to our understanding of the ideas that lay behind its artistic program. Therefore in the following two sections, we shall consider briefly the physical layout of the Forum of Augustus and the problems in establishing the important dates in its realization.

1. Basic Physical Layout

By all accounts, when the Forum of Augustus was inaugurated in 2 B.C., it made for a dazzling sight. On an intuitive and aesthetic level, it reinforced the grandeur of the city and her empire, embodying all that Rome had become. The colorful marbles of the interior, quarried from all across the Mediterranean, were a visual reminder of both the vastness of the empire and the transformation of the city of Rome achieved by Augustus.⁵ As one entered through the main portal that opened to the Forum of Caesar, he was immediately greeted by a statue of Augustus on a *quadriga*. The sides were formed by elegant porticoes, lined with statues of famous Romans, which rounded into *exedrae* as they neared the dominant structure of the forum: the Temple of Mars Ultor. Taken as a whole, the structure was intended to inspire tremendous awe, pride, and gratitude to the *princeps* who had conferred (at his own cost) so rich a decoration on the city.

However, the Forum of Augustus was not only intended to be visually impressive: a clear ideological program is evident in both the imagery and the layout of the complex. One way to establish meaning in a monument is to control the way a visitor can physically approach it, and the Forum of Augustus did precisely this. It was designed in an enclosed style, with the main square accessible by only three entranceways; in this way, the central notion of the forum's program became immediately apparent. First,

⁵ Kockel (1988): 152.

one's eyes would have been drawn to the inscription on the *quadriga*: PATER PATRIAE, Augustus' honorific title, conferred on him at the forum's dedication in 2 B.C.⁶ On the white Carrara marble of the temple's façade was an even less subtle reference to the *princeps*: the name AUGUSTUS, inscribed in block letters. This façade formed the center of a horizontal axis that terminated on each side with the central niches of the *exedrae*, each containing groups of sculptures depicting Rome's founders. On the left was Aeneas, fleeing Troy, carrying Anchises on his shoulder and the *penates* in his arms, followed by Ascanius. In the right niche was Romulus, carrying off the *spolia opima* for the first time in the history of Rome. The association of these two legendary figures with Augustus was obvious and intentional. Ovid, among others, describes Augustus' first vow to build a forum and temple on the eve of the battle of Philippi in 42 B.C., where in the name of *pietas* he was to avenge the murder of his adoptive father, Julius Caesar. Ovid also tells us that this intention was renewed in 20 B.C., when Augustus finally re-obtained the *signa* lost to the Parthians by Crassus at Carrhae.⁷ Aeneas provided an example of *pietas* to which Augustus linked his defeat of the conspirators at Philippi. Romulus embodied *virtus*, which Augustus used to characterize his own "conquest" of the Parthians.⁸ Combined with the significance of a temple dedicated to Mars Ultor, one aspect of the forum's symbolic intention begins to become clear: Augustus wished to be seen as a worthy successor to both Aeneas and Romulus

⁶ RG 35.

⁷ Ov. *Fast.* 5.573-95; Ovid narrates the vow taken by Octavian before Philippi, and then describes the loss and subsequent reacquisition of the *signa*. He finishes by saying,

Quid tibi nunc solitas mitti post terga sagittae,
 Quid loca, quid rapidi profuit usus equi?
 Parthe, refers aquilas: victos quoque porrigis arcus.
 Pignora jam nostri nulla pudoris habes.
 Rite deo templumque datum nomenque bis ulto,
 Et meritis votis debita solvit honos.

⁸ Zanker (1988): 203.

with regard to *pietas* and *virtus*. The rest of the forum's imagery is simply an outgrowth of this central idea, which we shall examine at length in a later section of this chapter.

Besides the Romulus and Aeneas groups, both the porticoes and the *exedrae* were lined with raised niches containing statues of other famous Romans.⁹ Judging by the fragments that have been recovered, the general basis for their selection appears to have been the exercise of civic virtue in any form, highlighting the fact that Romans possessed both military and civilian excellence.¹⁰ Each statue had at its base its *titulus*, and on the wall beneath this an *elogium*, which provided a brief summary of the man's life and service.¹¹ Fragments show that the sculptures were of men both wearing togas and in military uniform, and that contemporary Augustan dress and even hairstyle was used to depict figures from the very distant past.¹² This contemporizing representation makes the Augustan exemplar of the Roman *auctor* stand out as an essentially timeless personage. Typology, rather than chronology, was the organizing principle behind the ensemble.¹³

The excavations of 1924-26 confirmed Ovid's account in the *Fasti*, which says that the statue of Aeneas in the north *exedra* was accompanied by "so many members of the Julian line" (*Aenean oneratum pondere caro et tot Iuleae nobilitatis auos*). These

⁹Suet. *Aug.* 31.5: *Proximum a dis immortalibus honorem memoriae ducum praestitit, qui imperium p. R. ex minimo maximum reddidissent. itaque et opera cuiusque manentibus titulis restituit et statuas omnium triumphali effigie in utraque fori sui porticu dedicavit.*

¹⁰The archaeological work is not complete, making it difficult to ascertain whom all of these statues represented. Moreover, the practice of placing sculptures of famous Romans in the Forum of Augustus did not end with the completion of the project. Augustus himself, as well as later emperors, made further additions, further clouding our knowledge of the original layout. Notwithstanding these difficulties, nineteen of the original honorees have been identified, a number which comprises perhaps one-fourth of the total number. Cf. Anderson (1984): 84; Galinsky (1996): 206.

¹¹Pliny says that these *elogia* were in fact composed by Augustus himself. This is doubtful. However, it is likely that Augustus did have influence over both the texts and the selection of personages; cf. Zanker (1972): 16; Luce (1990): 127; and Frisch (1980): 93-98.

¹²Cf. Hoffer (1988): 197. Hoffer bases his count on the types of footwear and clothing found: "Es wurden dreizehn Fragmente von *compagi*, Militärstiefeln, gefunden, ein Senatschuh (*calceus*), sieben Fragmente von Togastatuen sowie ein Torso einer Panzerstatue mit *paludamentum*."

¹³In chapter 4 we shall see that Virgil took a similar approach in his presentation of the Roman Heroes in *Aeneid* 6.

excavations uncovered in the north *exedra* the *elogia* for three Republican members of the *gens Iulia*, as well as those for five pre-Romulean kings, who as descendants of Iulus would also have been *Iulii*. It was long agreed that this was the theme of the statues in the fourteen niches on either side of the Aeneas group, while the remainder of the statues in the porticoes and the south *exedra* were believed to have represented the *summi viri* who were unrelated to the Julian family.¹⁴ More recent scholarship has demonstrated that a far greater number of statues was devoted to the Julian sculptural program, most likely thirty-one, which would have exceeded the capacity allotted by Zanker.¹⁵ These would have filled both stories of the north *exedra* and part of the north portico along the main colonnade. Thus, Spannagel has argued that the upper story of the north apse presented, in order, all the kings from Aeneas to Romulus.¹⁶

The physical layout of the forum combined with this sculptural program to advance the notion that Augustus was a legitimate member of the preeminent Roman dynasty. Most immediately, there existed the spatial proximity to the Forum Iulium, which had been completed by Augustus before he opened the construction of his own project. This bordered the Forum of Augustus to the southwest, and consequently the primary entrance to the latter forum would have been through it. It contained a temple to Venus Genetrix; since Mars and Venus were the Roman ancestral gods, the two forum temples thus formed a complementary pair. Augustus could use this spatial and mythological closeness to underscore his relationship with Julius Caesar, and

¹⁴ Zanker (1968): 8, Table A.

¹⁵ Spannagel (1999): 288-99.

¹⁶ Thus, Aeneas and Romulus were represented twice in the forum. Spannagel harbors doubts as to whether this second statue of Romulus was located in the upper storey of the north apse, or whether it was closer to the Romulus group in the south apse. Cf. Spannagel (1999): 87-88.

consequently his membership in the divine and dynastic Julian family.¹⁷ This association was also emphasized in the sculptures that occupied the apse of the Temple of Mars Ultor, which represented Venus, Mars, and the Divine Julius.¹⁸

2. Issues in Dating the Project

According to Ovid, Augustus first vowed to build a forum and a temple to Mars in the year 42 B.C., on the eve of the battle of Philippi. He rededicated himself to this promise in 20 B.C., the year in which he recovered the standards lost to the Parthians by Crassus in 53 B.C.¹⁹ With regard to the specific chronology of the forum project, three occasions are important: the decree and inception of the whole project, the completion of the forum proper, and the completion and dedication of the Temple of Mars Ultor. The dating of these events is fraught with difficulty, due to discrepancies in the historical sources and in numismatic evidence. We shall devote brief attention to the problem of establishing a date for the inception of the project, since it will ultimately prove essential to our understanding of the forum's artistic program.

We know with certainty from both Cassius Dio and the *Res Gestae* that the Temple of Mars Ultor was completed and dedicated in 2 B.C.²⁰ The forum was opened for public use several years prior, showing that the temple was understood as a somewhat distinct project.²¹ If the temple was not completed and dedicated until 2 B.C., where had

¹⁷ Cf. Zanker (1988): 195-96.

¹⁸ The existence of this statue group can be known from a first century A.D. derivative group discovered in Algiers.

¹⁹ The vow at Philippi is mentioned in Suet. *Aug.* 29.2 and Ov. *Fast.* 5.569-78. The second vow in the year 20 B.C. is mentioned, along with several lines of boasting, at Ov. *Fast.* 5.579-94.

²⁰ Dio 55.10.6; *RG* 22.2; the dedication of the temple is here referred to as the occasion for the institution of the *ludi martiales*, first celebrated in this year.

²¹ Suet. *Aug.* 29.1: *fori extruendi causa fuit hominum et iudiciorum multitudo, quae uidebatur non sufficientibus duobus etiam tertio indigere; itaque festinatius necdum perfecta Martis aede publicatum est*

the recovered standards been kept since 20 B.C.? Dio records the construction of a temple to Mars Ultor on the Capitoline in 20 B.C. for the express purpose of housing the standards.²² Corroborating this assertion are a number of coins which have been discovered, datable to 19/18 B.C., depicting a small, round temple to Mars Ultor and military standards.²³ On the basis of this evidence, Mommsen concluded that an earlier temple to Mars Ultor was in fact built on the Capitoline to hold the standards until a more suitable location could be constructed. He found support for this claim in the fact that Dio and Ovid give two different dates for the annual *ludi martiales* that were revived to commemorate the opening of the temple in the forum. Ovid, a possible eyewitness to the original event, explicitly assigned these games to 12 May.²⁴ On the other hand, Dio says that in 41 A.D., during the reign of Claudius, they were produced on 1 August “in commemoration of the dedication of the temple of Mars Ultor in the Forum of Augustus.”²⁵

According to Mommsen, the date given by Ovid corresponds to the opening of the first temple on the Capitoline, while that given by Dio reflects the opening of the second, larger temple in the forum.²⁶ This, of course, would mean that the *ludi martiales* had first been celebrated when the original temple was dedicated ca. 19 B.C. The argument is

cautumque, ut separatim in eo publica iudicia et sortitiones iudicum fierent. For the public opening of the forum complex, Spannagel sets as a *terminus post quem* 6 B.C., and as a *terminus ante quem* 2 B.C., shortly before the dedication of the temple. Spannagel conjectures a date earlier in the range, 5 B.C.

Kockel and Jucker make similar estimates (ca. 5/6 B.C.). Cf. Kockel (1983): 439 and Jucker (1950): 174.

²² Dio 54.8.3: ἀμέλει καὶ θυσίας ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς καὶ νεῶν Ἄρεως Τιμωροῦ ἐν τῷ Καπιτωλίῳ, κατὰ τὸ τοῦ Διὸς τοῦ Φερετρίου ζήλωμα, πρὸς τὴν τῶν σημείων ἀνάθεσιν καὶ ψηφισθῆναι ἐκέλευσε καὶ ἐποίησε, καὶ προσέτι καὶ ἐπὶ κέλῃτος ἐς τὴν πόλιν ἐσήλασε καὶ ἀψίδι τροπαιοφόρω ἐτιμήθη.

²³ Mattingly (1966) I (Augustus), pl. 7.14-20; also Zanker (1988) fig. 89b, 108-9.

²⁴ Ov. *Fast.* 5.597: *solemnes ludos circo celebrate, Quirites*; for Ovid as a possible eyewitness, cf. Anderson (1984): 69.

²⁵ Dio 60.5.3: οὕτω δὲ δὴ τοὺς πατέρας ἀποσεμνύνας αὐτὸς οὐδὲν ἕξω τῶν ὀνομάτων τῶν ἐς τὴν ἀρχὴν φερόντων ἐδέξατο· ἐν γὰρ δὴ τῇ τοῦ Αὐγούστου νομηνία, ἐν ἣ ἐγεγέννητο, ἠγωνίζοντο μὲν ἵπποι, οὐ δὲ ἐκείνων δὲ ἀλλ’ ὅτι ὁ τοῦ Ἄρεως ναὸς ἐν ταύτῃ καθιέρωτο καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐτησίους ἀγῶσιν ἐτετίμητο.

²⁶ *CIL*, I², 318.

difficult to accept for several reasons.²⁷ First, several calendars contemporary with the period in question assign 12 May as the annual date of the *ludi martiales*, and none mention that a temple to Mars Ultor was dedicated on 1 August.²⁸ Second, the *Res Gestae* date the *ludi martiales* to Augustus' thirteenth consulship, which occurred in 2 B.C.²⁹ Here it is explicitly claimed that they were given on this occasion for the first time (*consul xiii ludos martiales primus feci*), thus contradicting the implication that they were first celebrated ca. 19 B.C. Third, this older temple would presumably have been the repository for the recaptured standards until the construction of the new temple in the Forum of Augustus. Yet in an ode datable to 13 B.C., Horace writes that the standards were returned not to Mars but to Jupiter, making no mention whatsoever of a temple to Mars.³⁰

More recently, several historians have supported an alternative to Mommsen's solution that was first proposed by Smith.³¹ According to his hypothesis, no temple to Mars Ultor ever existed on the Capitoline, and the one built in the Forum of Augustus was the first of its kind in Rome. Prior to its completion, the recovered standards were kept in the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius. The Temple of Mars on the Capitoline, whose depiction on the coins minted in 19 B.C. in fact resembles the temple to Jupiter Feretrius, was proposed but never constructed. These coins thus commemorate the *decision to*

²⁷ Pointed out by Simpson (1977).

²⁸ Fer. Cum.: *CIL* I² 229; F. Maff. : *CIL* I² 224; Philocalus: *CIL* I² 263.

²⁹ *RG* 22.2.

³⁰ *et signa nostro restituit Iovi / derepta Parthorum superbis / postibus* (*Car.* 4.15.6-8). According to Simpson (1977: 92), even if the standards were sent to the Temple of Jupiter for a short time until their temporary abode was completed, Horace was writing about seven years later, and could not have been so ignorant of contemporary events. He dates Horace's poem to ca. 13 B.C. based on Franke (1839): 223, as cited by Fraenkel (1957): 449 n. i.

³¹ Smith (1951). Cf. also Kraus (1964), Simpson (1977), Rich (1988), and Spannagel (1999).

build the temple, not the completed temple itself. While it was extremely rare for coins to depict structures that did not actually exist, it was not unheard of.³²

If this is the case, how do we account for the fabricated date in Dio? There is certainly the possibility that he made an error, which could have been caused by a number of factors.³³ He might also have intentionally failed to report a change of date for his thematic purpose. Simpson claims that prior to Dio's time, Claudius had moved the date of the *ludi martiales* to his own birthday, 1 August. Dio, according to Simpson, either made an error or willfully misrepresented reality because one objective of his narrative was to depict Claudius as moderating the extravagances of Caligula during the early stages of his reign.³⁴

There is further reason to believe Horace when he says that Augustus returned the standards to Jupiter.³⁵ Based on Dio's account, it is clear that Augustus wanted the recovered standards to be viewed as *spolia opima*:

He took [the standards] as if he had conquered the Parthians in a war; for he was tremendously proud, saying that he had recovered without a struggle that which had formerly been lost in battle. (Dio 54.8.2-3)

The rules regarding what could be dedicated as *spolia opima* were very specific and very strict: a Roman general needed to take them from an enemy general in single combat.

The recovered standards did not fit this description. Nonetheless, these had been returned

³² Simpson (1977): 93. Simpson cites two known examples of such an occurrence: "In 44 B.C. P. Sepullius Macer issued a coin on which there is a temple and the legend CLEMENTIA CAESARIS. In the previous year the Senate had decreed a temple to Caesar and to Clementia. Nevertheless, it is certain that the temple was never built. In 36 B.C. Augustus caused to be issued coins showing a temple and bearing the legend DIVO IVL. That temple was dedicated on 18 August 29 B.C. In both these cases, therefore, it is apparent that it is the decision to build a temple which is commemorated, and not the fact of the temple's dedication."

³³ Spannagel (1999): 53-55. Spannagel surveys potential causes for such a mistake, although none stands out as more plausible than the others.

³⁴ Dio 50.5.4: ἔν τε οὖν τούτοις ἐμετρίαζε, καὶ προσαπηγόρευσε μήτε προσκυνεῖν τινα αὐτὸν μήτε θυσίαν οἱ μηδεμίαν ποιεῖν.

³⁵ See note 20 above.

to Augustus by the Parthian king, and he undoubtedly tried to exploit the similarity to the traditional formulation. In an earlier section, Dio lists the dedication of the *spolia opima* as one of the special rights given to Julius Caesar by the Senate in 44 B.C.³⁶ If we compare the two passages, it is clear that upon recovering the standards, Augustus imitated his adoptive father's behavior. Dio records that Julius Caesar was granted the right to ride on horseback from the Alban Mount into Rome. Similarly, Augustus rode into the city on horseback in 20 B.C.³⁷ Of course, Julius Caesar never dedicated the *spolia opima* in the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius. Augustus did not either, but he did all he could to equate recovered standards to them. Dio does not mention any dedication to Jupiter; however, he does say that the decree of the temple to Mars Ultor was made "in commemoration of the event."³⁸

Surely the occasion of the recovery of the standards was momentous enough to have merited an immediate public display, even if it was not technically a dedication of the *spolia opima*.³⁹ Any such display would have taken place in the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius. Could the standards have been dedicated to Jupiter upon their recovery in 20 B.C. in a ceremony that was evocative of the *spolia opima*, and then perhaps moved or even rededicated to Mars at a slightly later date?⁴⁰ We should note that the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius was extremely small. Although it had perhaps been augmented somewhat over the years, it could not have exceeded by much the original dimensions described by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who said it measured fifteen feet on its longest sides.⁴¹ Moreover, it was

³⁶ Dio 44.4.3.

³⁷ Dio 54.8.3.

³⁸ Dio 54.8.3: ταῦτα μὲν ἐπ' ἐκείνοις ὕστερον ἐπράχθη.

³⁹ Cf. Anderson (1984): 67. Anderson calls the recovery of the standards Augustus' "greatest single diplomatic victory."

⁴⁰ The possibility is raised by Flower (2000): 55-56, and Bonnefond (1987): 270-77.

⁴¹ Dion. Hal. 2.34.4.

probably only open during actual dedication ceremonies.⁴² If the standards were intended for any sort of public display, they would have required a more suitable location. Thus, it is possible that both Horace and Dio are correct.

3. Augustus and *Ultio*

It would make sense if an earlier temple to Mars did exist, since Augustus' use of *ultio* as part of his imperial propaganda evolved over the course of time, before reaching its apex in the Forum of Augustus.⁴³ Several scholars have doubted the historicity of Augustus' claim that he vowed to build a temple to Mars Ultor on the eve of the battle of Philippi. The most pointed argument is that of Weinstock, who claims that prior to 20 B.C., Augustus had not associated the god with his avenging of Caesar's assassination. According to his hypothesis, any intention to build a temple to Mars prior to this date would merely have been a continuation of Julius Caesar's stated intention in 46 B.C., recorded by Suetonius.⁴⁴ Weinstock argues persuasively that this vow would have been made with the Parthian campaigns in mind. There are several examples of Julius Caesar's preoccupation with Mars ca. 50 B.C., during which time the prominent political issue at Rome was the need to avenge the defeat at the hands of the Parthians in 53 B.C.⁴⁵ His attention seems to have been focused on the Parthians both before and after the Civil Wars, which obviously interrupted his plans. It is clear that Mars played a significant role in the elder Caesar's public displays during this time, which included a sacrifice that he made to the god before the battle of Pharsalus.⁴⁶ Upon the conclusion of the Civil Wars, he rededicated himself to the Parthian campaigns, forming sixteen legions in 44 B.C. with

⁴² Anderson (1984): 68.

⁴³ On Augustus and *ultio*, cf. Glücklich (2004): 60; Thorau (2000); Croon (1981): 259-60.

⁴⁴ Suet. *Iul.* 44.1: *destinabat in primis Martis templum, quantum numquam esset, extruere repleto et complanato lacu, in quo naumachiae spectaculum ediderat.*

⁴⁵ Weinstock (1971): 130.

⁴⁶ App. *B. Civ.* 2.68.281.

the express purpose of avenging Crassus and conquering Parthia, which his assassination prevented.⁴⁷

Weinstock goes on to argue that Augustus may have intended to build a temple to Mars prior to 20 B.C., but those plans would have been unrelated to his private obligation as adopted son to avenge the murder of his father. Rather, they would have represented a continuation of Julius Caesar's devotion to Mars in relation to the Parthian campaigns. More importantly, in 42 B.C. any such plans would have been formulated in conjunction with the other two Triumvirs, since the war against the conspirators was a shared war.⁴⁸ This assertion is supported by the fact that Mars appears on triumviral coins from the year 42 B.C. depicting military standards on the obverse.⁴⁹ Thus in 20 B.C., with the resolution of the Parthian affair, Augustus resurrected the motif of Mars as *ultor* in keeping with the precedent set by his father. It was only subsequently that he extended this characterization of Mars to the revenge he had taken on Julius Caesar's murderers.

In so doing, Augustus reinterpreted this conception of revenge as a means of support for a separate ideological program. We should note again Dio's observation that the first temple to Mars Ultor was decreed "in commemoration" of the event (i.e. the recovery of the standards). Augustus' understanding of how he might use these items, which obviously exerted a tremendous influence over the collective Roman psyche, developed over the course of time. The rededication of the standards to Mars Ultor and the arrival on horseback at Rome represented the first stage of that development. The second phase began with the inception of the forum project and the final temple to Mars Ultor, where Augustus decided to expressly advertise the *pietas* he had shown in avenging his father. What could have precipitated this new approach? The context for the inauguration of the Forum of Augustus can point us towards a very strong likelihood. It is probable that

⁴⁷ Dio 43.51: *πράττοντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ταῦτα ἐπιθυμία τε πᾶσι τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις ὁμοίως ἐσῆλθε τιμωρῆσαι τῷ τε Κράσσῳ καὶ τοῖς σὺν αὐτῷ φθαρείσι, καὶ ἐλπίς τότε, εἴπερ ποτέ, τοὺς Πάρθους καταστρέψασθαι.*

⁴⁸ Weinstock (1971): 131.

⁴⁹ Sydenham (1968): 206.1320.

this project began in 17 B.C. In that year, Dio writes that Augustus commanded those who celebrated triumphs to erect some public monument from their spoils (ἐκ τῶν λαφύρων).⁵⁰ This mandate would have been awkward given the fact that Augustus himself had not yet done anything similar since celebrating his triple triumph in 29 B.C. Dio does not say that the earlier Mars Ultor temple had been built from Augustus' private spoils, and the only public monuments described as such by the *Res Gestae* are the Forum of Augustus and the main Temple of Mars Ultor.⁵¹ Thus, it is highly likely that Augustus took up the project in response to his own decree in 17 B.C.

III. Agency and *Auctoritas* in the Augustan Program

The year 17 B.C. was marked by two significant events: the *Ludi Saeculares* (to be discussed in chapter 5 of this study), which heralded the arrival of a new Augustan *saeculum*, and Augustus' adoption of Lucius (born in that year) and Gaius.⁵² These events explain two of the primary motifs deployed in the sculptural program of the Forum of Augustus. Most obvious is the dynastic claim to power for the Julian family, who are shown to have been the leading “agents” at Rome during every period of its history. We have already seen how this theme was incorporated into the artistic program of the forum by means of the prominent positioning of Julian *summi viri*. This dynastic claim was supported by the second motif: advertisement of Augustus' *auctoritas*. This complex and multi-faceted attribute, of which Augustus himself would boast in the *Res Gestae*, defies simple translation.⁵³ In this section we shall examine the concept, which has been described

⁵⁰ Dio 54.18.2.

⁵¹ RG 21.2: the Greek uses ἐκ λαφύρων, the Latin *ex manubiis*. Spannagel (1999): 82-4 also argues that the designation can only apply to the forum and the Mars Ultor temple.

⁵² Dio 54.18.1: ὁ Ἀγρίππας ἀνείλετο τὸν Λούκιον ὀνομασθέντα, καὶ αὐτὸν εὐθὺς ὁ Αὐγουστος μετὰ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ τοῦ Γαίου ἐποιήσατο, μὴ ἀναμείνας σφᾶς ἀνδρωθῆναι, ἀλλ' αὐτόθεν διαδόχους τῆς ἀρχῆς ἀποδείξας, ἵν' ἦττον ἐπιβουλεύηται.

⁵³ Dio believed the term could not be consistently translated into Greek (Dio 55.3.4-5). The reference study of the concept remains Heinze (1925). For good recent analyses, cf. Galinsky (1996): 10-20 and Lobur (2008): 59-64, both of whom I cite below.

as quintessentially Augustan,⁵⁴ but to do so we need to consider the event that shaped the term's later application: the triumviral proscriptions.⁵⁵ Part of Augustus' program for asserting his *auctoritas* involved subtly refuting certain criticisms, without appearing to be bothered too much by them. The bitterest of these still came as a result of his role in the proscriptions carried out by the Second Triumvirate in the late-40's B.C. One consequence of these measures was the almost universal hatred of the then-Octavian. To proceed, then, we shall look briefly at the relevant details of the history of the triumviral proscriptions, with a focus on the lingering resentment that they inspired among Augustus' detractors. We shall then examine the ways in which the Forum of Augustus constituted an answer to specific aspects of this resentment. All of this will lead to a single conclusion: the brand of *auctoritas* that Augustus advertised in his forum was specifically constructed in response to charges of impiety and inefficacy that originated in his conduct during the wars against Sextus Pompey, and was ultimately intended to assert his real capacity to act and to effect positive change in Roman society. What I especially wish to underscore is the way in which the other Augustan virtues, *pietas*, *clementia*, and *virtus*, were combined to form this specialized conception of *auctoritas*, since the same approach will be observed when we turn our attention to Virgil's *Aeneid*. We shall see that this process is best understood as a prioritization, rather than an undifferentiated blending, of these values; it is this aspect of "Augustanism" that best reflects the approach to history taken by Virgil.

⁵⁴ Galinsky (1996): 12. According to Galinsky, *auctoritas* was the concept that Augustus considered to be at "the center of his rule."

⁵⁵ Lobur (2008): 59.

1. The Memory of the Proscriptions

The issue of the Battle of Mutina in April of 43 B.C. had made Octavian a political force to be reckoned with, and, on 27 November of that year, the *lex Titia* officially created the Second Triumvirate. That same night, a list with the names of a number of senators and equestrians was posted: the first *proscripti*.⁵⁶ Appian records a statement purporting to be the edict that accompanied the list.⁵⁷ While its authenticity is not beyond doubt, it certainly expresses what these measures specifically were, and also the publicized rationale of the Triumvirs.⁵⁸ Vengeance is the motive most clearly emphasized: the murder of a man who had contributed so much to the glory of Rome could not go unpunished.⁵⁹ However the document additionally argues that the criminals who murdered Caesar were summarily sent out into positions of power in the provinces, which they proceeded to abuse by gathering public money in order to raise armies against those who had been loyal to Caesar. Moreover, these armies included barbarians who always had the destruction of Rome in the back of their minds. For the sake of Rome, then, the Triumvirs would wage a foreign war against the conspirators, and, while away,

⁵⁶ The essential history of the proscriptions that the Second Triumvirate carried out between 42 and 39 B.C. is sufficiently well known so that only a brief recapitulation is necessary here. More extensive discussions of the proscriptions can be found in the major modern accounts: Levi (1933): 1.229-35; Syme (1939): 187-201; Bengtson (1972); Kienast (1982); Hinard (1985); Osgood (2006); and Lobur (2008): ch. 3. Of these, Osgood's and Hinard's studies are the best; Osgood's for its sensitive consideration of the cultural impact of the Triumvirate's actions, and Hinard's for its remarkable thoroughness. I have relied mostly on Hinard's account for the brief overview included here. Various opinions exist regarding the number of names on the original list; Hinard says that the list included around 300 names; Osgood estimates that the number was much higher, with 300 being the number actually killed rather than simply proscribed. Cf. Hinard (1985): 264-69 and Osgood (2006): 63 n. 6.

⁵⁷ App. *B. Civ.* 4.2.8-11.

⁵⁸ While ancient historians did not shy from inventing speeches and edicts, there are good reasons to believe that this one is at least partly authentic. See especially Canfora (1980): 431-34. Others supporting the document's authenticity include Homeyer (1964): 17, Gabba (1966): 214, and Bengtson (1972): 10-11.

⁵⁹ App. *B. Civ.* 4.2.8: Γάιον μὲν δὴ καὶ αὐτοκράτορα ὄντα καὶ ἄρχοντα ἱερῶν, καὶ τὰ φοβερῶτατα Ῥωμαίοις καθελόντα τε ἔθνη καὶ κτησάμενον, καὶ πρῶτον ἀνδρῶν ὑπὲρ τοὺς Ἡρακλείους ὄρους ἀπλώτου θαλάσσης ἀποπειράσαντα, καὶ Ῥωμαίοις γῆν ἀγνωστον εὐρόντα, ἐν μέσῳ τῶ ἱερῶ λεγομένῳ βουλευτηρίῳ, ὑπὸ ὄψει θεῶν, κατέκανον εἴκοσι καὶ τρισὶ σφαγαῖς ἐνυβρίσαντες, οἱ πολέμῳ ληφθέντες ὑπ' ἐκείνου καὶ περισωθέντες κληρονόμοι τέ τινες αὐτοῦ τῆς οὐσίας ἐγγραφέντες εἶναι.

they needed to ensure that the “fifth column” of these enemies at Rome could not harm the city and its people. In short, the document argues that while those whose names appeared on the lists were indeed enemies of the Triumvirs, they were also dangerous to the Roman people in general; thus the private interests of the Triumvirate coincided with the public good.

The document refers briefly to Sulla, noting that the Triumvirs did not intend to kill as many people as he had. Nevertheless, they claim, three men had more enemies than just one, and triumviral power gave them authority to proscribe whomever they chose. Names could be added or removed at any time, even after someone had been killed.⁶⁰ Beyond this, the edict was enforced according to three simple points: first, anyone who harbored a proscribed individual would be automatically proscribed himself; second, a reward would be given to anyone who presented the head of a proscrip, and a slave could obtain his freedom and a lesser reward by doing so; third, informers could receive the same rewards. One result of these measures was completely predictable: bounty hunting was rampant throughout Italy. Beyond that, we can see the dilemma that would have existed in families because of the first and third points: harboring a man who had been proscribed was dangerous to oneself, and there was even a cash incentive to turn him in. Appian provides a number of accounts of people’s actions in this environment, claiming to have included in his history only a sample of the most remarkable anecdotes found in the “many books” written by “many Romans” on the subject.⁶¹ A literary genre, “proscription stories,” apparently existed at the time.⁶²

⁶⁰ Osgood (2006): 63. Osgood estimates the final total of all the names proscribed at several thousand.

⁶¹ App. B. Civ. 4.4.16: *πολλά δέ ἐστι, καὶ πολλοὶ Ῥωμαίων ἐν πολλαῖς βίβλοις αὐτὰ συνέγραψαν ἐφ’ αὐτῶν· ὀλίγα δὲ ἐγὼ καθ’ ἐκάστην ἰδέαν, ἐς πίστιν ἐκάστης καὶ ἐς εὐδαιμόνισμα τῶν νῦν παρόντων, ἐπὶ κεφαλαίου διὰ τὸ μῆκος ἀναγράψω.*

Judging by the redaction of these texts in Appian's history,⁶³ this genre was based on the portrayal of three aspects of the proscriptions: the treachery of the informers, the cruelty of the murderers, and the loyalty of the wives, sons, and slaves who aided the proscribed. Treachery is depicted as outrageously as possible. A good example is the account of the wife of Septimius. This woman, unnamed by Appian, had begun an affair with a friend of Antony. Having become desirous of changing this affair into a legitimate marriage, she approached Antony through her lover and managed to have her husband proscribed. When her husband saw his name on the list, he fled home, where she closed the doors and pretended to shelter him, until the murderers came and did the deed. The climax of the tale, and the best indicator of the shock it was intended to elicit, comes next: on the same day that her husband was killed, this woman celebrated her new marriage.

Conversely, other proscription stories were told in such a way as to make instances of loyalty seem as heroic as possible. An old proscrip named Oppius was too infirm to flee on his own, so his son led him to Sicily, carrying him most of the way.⁶⁴ In another account, a slave saved the life of his master, Appius, by putting on his clothes and allowing himself to be killed by the group of soldiers that had entered. In yet another tale, Appian provides a pointed contrast to the story of Septimius' wife:

The wife of Coponius begged his safety from Antony, although she had previously been chaste, thus curing one evil with another.' (App. *B. Civ.* 4.6.41)

This single-sentence report indicates discreetly that Coponius' wife gave herself to Antony in order to obtain her husband's safety. That sort of familial piety, which

⁶² For other accounts of these proscription narratives, see Lobur (2008): 66-81, and Powell (2008): 55-74.

⁶³ App. *B. Civ.* 4.17-51.

⁶⁴ App. *B. Civ.* 4.4.1.

rendered her otherwise shameful action praiseworthy, is the thread that binds all of the accounts of loyalty.

Clearly, Appian's sources believed that during the period in question, piety was to be found among the proscribed, not the Triumvirs. If we look again at the story of Oppius, it becomes apparent that the broader public felt the same way. At a later date, the younger Oppius was elected to an aedileship; since his property had been confiscated he could not pay the expenses of his office, local artisans did the necessary work for free, and various people donated enough money to him that he became a rich man. When he died at a relatively young age, a crowd forced his cremation and burial at the Campus Martius (although at a later date the Senate intervened and had the grave moved).⁶⁵ Additionally, Appian and Dio both record instances where Octavian faced open public hatred. There were riots in which Octavian himself was pelted with stones.⁶⁶ On one occasion, a woman secretly brought her husband, who was on the proscribed list, to a theater where Octavian was watching a play. Once inside, she brought him out into the open and described their predicament. The public outcry forced Octavian to grant the man his life.⁶⁷

The place to which Oppius and his father fled was Sicily, where they sought the protection of Sextus Pompey. It was towards him that public sentiment, alienated by the actions of the Triumvirs, gravitated. Appian writes that many citizens left Italy and settled in Sicily with Pompey, since he was "beloved by all at the time."⁶⁸ His further

⁶⁵ Dio 48.53.5; App. *B. Civ.* 4.41.

⁶⁶ App. *B. Civ.* 5.68; Dio 48.31.5.

⁶⁷ Dio 47.4.4.

⁶⁸ App. *B. Civ.* 4.85.7-11: ταῖς γὰρ δὴ γνώμαις αἶδε μάλιστα τὴν νίκην τῶν τριῶν ἀνδρῶν ἀπεύχοντο καί, ὅσα δύναντο, κρύφα ἀντέπρασσον· ἀποδιδράσκοντές τε τῶν πατρίδων ὡς οὐκέτι πατρίδων οἱ δυνάμενοι συνέφευγον εἰς Πομπήιον, ἀγχοτάτω τε ὄντα καὶ περιφίλητον ἅπασιν ἐν τῷ τότε.

appeals for popular support were unmistakable, and successful. The Triumvirs offered a reward for every severed head of a proscribed individual; Pompey offered double the amount to someone who saved such a person, and brought him safely to Sicily.⁶⁹ He also minted a variety of coins, intended to court public sentiment, that reflect his general propaganda from the time. Several indicated his devotion to *pietas*, which he intended to contrast with the impiousness of those who led the proscriptions. Of this sort was a coin depicting two brothers from Catana who, during an eruption of Mount Aetna, did not engage in the general looting, but rather sought out their elderly parents and carried them to safety. As they did, the lava caught up with them, but parted to make a pathway out of respect for the sons' *pietas*. While not dealing explicitly with the proscriptions, the coins celebrated the brothers' *pietas* at the expense of those who preferred to go looting. The crime of the latter was *avaritia*, a charge often leveled against the Triumvirs, and as well as against those who helped along the proscriptions.⁷⁰ Sextus' aim was to capitalize on Octavian's unpopularity; in large part he succeeded at this. While it is not possible to ascertain exact figures, Hinard attests that the vast majority of those *proscripti* who escaped Rome fled to Pompey. This enabled Pompey, in spite of the recent disaster at Philippi, to amass a considerable force.⁷¹ Dio writes that in 39 B.C., at the time of the Treaty of Misenum that temporarily halted hostilities between the two sides, Pompey's strength was greater than that of Antony and Octavian combined.⁷²

⁶⁹ Dio 47.12.3; App. *B. Civ.* 4.36; cited by Hinard (1985): 211.

⁷⁰ Powell (2008): 69 discusses the coin at some length. The ancient account of the episode is found in an anonymous poem of the first century, at one time attributed to Virgil, entitled *Aetna*, line 625 ff. For more on the depiction of the brothers and its connotations of *pietas*, see Zanker (1988): 40.

⁷¹ Hinard (1985): 312.

⁷² Dio 48.38.1; Dio writes that as a result of Pompey's superior power, he would not disembark his ship, and demanded that Octavian and Antony board it to hold conference. The scene is famously described in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*.

2. Sextus and Gnaeus Pompey

It was with regard to Rome's traditions, both political and moral, that the memory of Sextus Pompey posed a tremendous problem for Augustus, even many years after the fact. If we look carefully, we can see in the forum, constructed in the last decade of the first century B.C., subtle retorts against criticisms that stemmed from the wars against Sextus that had taken place more than two decades prior. These criticisms were handled in a much more indirect fashion than the rest of the forum's propaganda, which in turn speaks to the divisive and problematic character of this period of Augustus' career, even after much time had passed. The first problem Augustus faced was the fact that Sextus was the son of Pompey the Great; those who were predisposed to dislike Augustus could think nostalgically of Pompey as the standard-bearer of the Republican cause.

Consequently, there was a curious struggle on Augustus' part to appropriate the elder Pompey's legacy. Above all, his son could not be dignified with any sort of direct reference. Later, he would be characteristically and disdainfully cast as a sort of pirate.⁷³ This was no random insinuation. Clearly, one objective was to undermine the legitimacy of the Pompeian faction. Despite the success of this propaganda in both ancient and modern times, we have seen how the real Sextus Pompey was a far more formidable adversary than Augustus or others could openly admit. Thus, an attack on his legitimacy

⁷³ *RG* 25.1. *mare pacavi a praedonibus* has been interpreted by most as an oblique reference to Sextus Pompey (cf. Powell, [2008]: 17, Osgood [2006]: 203, Syme [1939]: 228). Syme (1939): 232 perpetuated Caesar's characterization by labeling Pompey a "brigand". Pompey, for Syme, lacked the capacity to fulfill the expectations most held for him as the son of Pompey the Great, and any popular success he obtained stemmed more from hatred of Caesar than from any significant accomplishment of his own: "Greek freedmen were his counselors, his agents and his admirals, while freed slaves manned his ships and filled his motley legions. Pompeius might sweep the seas, glorying in the favour and name of Neptune; the Roman plebs might riot in his honor—it was only from hatred of Caesar's heir. In reality an adventurer, Pompeius could easily be represented as a pirate" (Syme [1939]: 228). Subsequently, Zanker referred to Pompey as a "second-rate" figure (Zanker [1988]: 44). Ancient writers picked up on the trope as well; cf. Horace *Ep.* 4.19, where the naval campaigns of the time are said to be against pirates and slaves (*contra latrones atque servilem manum*). Syme (1939): 228 n. 5 took this as a reference to Sextus Pompey. Cf. also Vell. Pat. 2.73.1, where Sextus is described as *fide patri dissimillimus*.

and military capability could not have had a great deal of success. The more important component of this slander was the specific reference to piracy. Augustus' claim to have emptied the sea of pirates was boldly reminiscent of the results achieved by Pompey the Great following the passage of the *lex Gabinia* in 67 B.C.⁷⁴ This was perhaps the most significant among the many real and enduring services that Pompey the Great had provided to Rome. With remarkable skill, Augustus used his own failures at the hands of Sextus Pompey to portray the latter as a pirate, and subsequently turned the memory of his own father against him.

It would thus be no surprise if, as some have argued, there stood among the *summi viri* in the Forum of Augustus a statue of Pompey the Great.⁷⁵ In Book 1 the *Fasti*, Ovid discusses the significance of the name "Augustus" by examining previous men to whom it could have been applied (l. 590-608). The passage opens by inviting readers to consider the legends on wax images in noble halls, and then proceeds to claim that none have ever bestowed so great a title as "Augustus" on anyone else.⁷⁶ This is reminiscent of the *elogiae* and *tituli* that accompanied the sculptures in the forum. The examples that Ovid then cites contain several men whose inclusion among the *summi viri* has been attested: M'. Valerius Maximus (l. 595), Scipio Aemilianus (l. 596), Q. Caecilius Metellus (l. 597), Nero Claudius Drusus ("Germanicus," l. 597), M. Valerius Corvinus (l. 602), and Q. Fabius Maximus (l. 605). These two details lead one to believe that the passage is based at least in part on the statue gallery in the Forum of Augustus. We might thus conjecture that the other figures mentioned by Ovid were also present

⁷⁴ On Gn. Pompey and the *lex Gabinia*, see especially Hurlet (1996): 279-83.

⁷⁵ Cf. Anderson (1984): 86 and Galinsky (1996): 206. Anderson makes a compelling case, citing a passage in Ovid (*Fast.* 1.590-608).

⁷⁶ Ov. *Fast.* 1.591-92: *perlege dispositas generosa per atria ceras; / contigerunt nulli nomina tanta viro.*

among the *summi viri*. These include the elder Pompey, of whom Ovid writes:

Magne, tuum nomen rerum est mensura tuarum:
sed qui te vicit, nomine maior erat. (Ov. *Fast.* 603-4)

Great one, your name is a measure of your accomplishments; but he
who defeated you is greater in name.

Another reference is to Servilius Vatia (593), who had defeated Cilician pirates, and who consequently provided a parallel for Augustus' accomplishment in defeating Sextus Pompey.⁷⁷

There is no doubt that years later, Augustus made use of the image and memory of Pompey the Great in his funeral procession, which makes it all the more likely that the latter's statue stood in the Forum of Augustus. Dio, who recorded this event, said that Augustus himself planned it meticulously before he died.⁷⁸ His body was placed inside of an opulent couch, upon which there sat his image in wax. Two more images of Augustus followed this, including one on a triumphal chariot. The procession that followed behind these representations of the *princeps* included images of all of his distinguished Julian ancestors (with the exception of the Divine Julius, since he was a demigod) and other illustrious Romans, with Romulus at their head. Among these, Dio specifies that there was an image of Pompey the Great. The procession ended with the likenesses of all the nations acquired by Augustus; his successor, Tiberius, then delivered a long eulogy from the *rostra*.⁷⁹ Clearly, he had developed a use for the memory of Pompey, and it somehow suited the dynastic ambitions he had for his family.

⁷⁷ Anderson (1984): 86. Anderson also notes the other figures mentioned by Ovid who might have been included among the *summi viri*: T. Manlius Torquatus (l. 601), who had saved the city, and Q. Caecilius Metellus Creticus (l. 594) who had conquered Crete for Rome.

⁷⁸ Dio 56.33.1: *τοσαῦτα μὲν αἱ διαθήκαι ἐδήλουν, ἐσεκομίσθη δὲ καὶ βιβλία τέσσαρα· καὶ αὐτὰ ὁ Δροῦσος ἀνέγνω. ἐγγράπτο δὲ ἐν μὲν τῷ πρώτῳ ὅσα τῆς ταφῆς εἶχετο.*

⁷⁹ For the full account, cf. Dio 56.34 ff.

Dio's account reads like a virtual paraphrase of the procession of Elysian heroes in Book 6 of the *Aeneid*. Indeed, if Pompey's statue stood among the *summi viri*, it constituted another striking parallel between the Forum of Augustus and Virgil's epic. As their souls await mortal birth in the Underworld, Julius Caesar and Pompey are shown to be in harmony:

Illae autem, paribus quas fulgere cernis in armis,
Concordes animae nunc et dum nocte prementur. (*Aen.* 6.826-27)

Those shades, moreover, which you behold flashing in equal arms,
In harmony now, and for as long as they are confined by the night.

This is the only direct appearance by Julius Caesar in the *Aeneid*, and it further illustrates the tremendous difficulty that Pompey's legacy presented to Augustus. Unlike Antony, Pompey could not be portrayed as the clear-cut villain; he was a hero to many, and he had obtained many lasting benefits for his country.⁸⁰ As a result, Virgil emphasized the eternal compatibility of Julius Caesar and Pompey, while depicting their enmity as the unfortunate result of history. On the other hand, the forum highlighted their practical, temporal similarities, while Augustus himself went out of his way to rehabilitate Pompey's image by restoring his theater in 32 B.C.⁸¹ Both suggested a fundamental connection between Pompey and the Julian family, while minimizing or rationalizing their conflict.

Consequently, the appearance together in the *Aeneid* of Pompey and Julius Caesar should strike us not as a Virgilian innovation, but as an Augustan leitmotif, ultimately flattering to Julius Caesar and, by extension, to Augustus. It is Caesar whom Anchises addresses as the being above the fray, admonishing, "*tuque prior, tu parce, genus qui*

⁸⁰ Osgood (2006): 203; Powell (2008): 48; Syme (1939): 228.

⁸¹ RG 20.1: *Capitolium et Pompeium theatrum utrumque opus impensa grandis refeci sine ulla inscriptione nominis mei.*

ducis Olympo” (*Aen.* 835-35; “And you be the first, you who draw your lineage from Olympus, to show mercy”). This anticipates the famous exhortation to *clementia* that appears a few lines later:

tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
(hae tibi erunt artes), pacisque imponere morem,
parcere subiectis et debellare superbos. (*Aen.* 6.851-53)

Remember, O Roman, to rule the nations (these will be your *artes*), to impose the custom of peace, to spare the low and to crush the proud.

Augustus’ appropriation of Pompey the Great’s legacy, accomplished through the restoration of his theater, through the inclusion of his image among the gallery of illustrious Romans, and through the portrayal of his own victory over Sextus Pompey as a characteristically “Pompeian” act, has to have been interpreted in this conciliatory sense. In the new light of this portrayal, the conflict between Julius Caesar and Pompey becomes merely the temporary interruption of an eternal and fundamental concord. The younger Pompey was no “Pompeian” at all, but in fact quite the opposite: he was the sort of pirate his heroic father had chased from the seas. Thus, Augustus had restored the natural relation between the Julii and the Pompeii in an act that he could advertise as an instance of *clementia*.

All of this, of course, was necessitated by the fact that Sextus Pompey and what he represented were far more problematic to Augustus than he could ever admit. It would be a disservice to him to assume that he merely produced vague propaganda for its own sake. Certainly, Pompey the Great had a continuous appeal, and no one can deny that Augustus absolutely needed his political capital. By aligning himself with Pompey the Great, he could placate at least some of his followers, who were certainly still rather

numerous. According to Appian, one of Augustus' chief concerns during his most crushing defeats at the hands of Sextus Pompey in 37 B.C. was the "spell of the memory of Pompey the Great, which had not yet lost its hold over the people of Rome." To counter this fascination, he dispatched Maecenas to Rome and visited several colonies himself.⁸² That this occurred only after the disastrous losses endured at the hands of Sextus Pompey illustrates how the problems posed by the elder Pompey's memory were primarily indirect; any direct threat was located exclusively in the person of his son. The most damaging charges raised against Augustus stemmed from the proscriptions, which did breed lasting resentment. Sextus Pompey had consciously and pointedly set himself up as the man who was willing to save the Roman people from Octavian. Even in later years, those who continued to despise the *princeps*, either from memory of some past injury or from present lack of property, would have looked with longing to the memory of Sextus, not Gnaeus, Pompey. Pompey the Great was no accidental choice for inclusion in the imperial propaganda. Rather, Augustus practically had no option but to try to appropriate his legacy in order to salvage public support among those disaffected by the proscriptions.

3. *Pietas*, *Virtus*, and *Clementia* in the Forum of Augustus

Such a political move is an example of a common feature of politics throughout the ages, something Powell terms "stealing the clothes" of one's adversary.⁸³ This expression refers to the repeated emphasis of a theme from which one's rival has already benefited. Augustus also used this technique to reclaim the virtues that most ascribed to

⁸² Appian *B. Civ.* 5.99 ff. Appian does not specify the approach they intended to take with Pompey's supporters, nor does he record whether either man was successful or not.

⁸³ Powell (2008): 55.

Sextus Pompey when the latter styled himself as the protector of the proscribed: *pietas* and *virtus*. This approach involved a redefinition of the third virtue, *clementia*, whose priority was necessarily tempered by the Augustan conception of *ultio*. This aspect of “Augustanism” lay at the heart of the climactic scene of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, and is crucially important to the reading of the poem that we shall undertake in the following chapter.

a. *Pietas*

Sextus Pompey had been given the nickname *Pius* (which surely must have caused considerable irritation to Augustus) and the Pompeian password at the battle of Munda in 45 B.C. was *pietas*.⁸⁴ In the above section on the proscriptions, we saw how the Pompeian side was almost universally viewed as the *partes pias*, and in the following chapter we shall observe several sections of the *Aeneid* that can be interpreted as an Augustan response to this troubling reality. Augustus’ choice of *pietas* as the watchword of his principate can be at least partially traced to the same origin. It is instructive to note the change in usage of the word that occurred around 40 B.C. Wagenvoort observed that Wissowa’s definition of *pietas* as the fulfillment of one’s duties to the deity and to his fellow human beings is not entirely accurate.⁸⁵ If we look at the writings of Cicero, in none of the works he produced before 45 B.C. does he refer to *pietas* as something practiced in relation to the gods; this was the domain of *religio*. On the contrary, *pietas* exclusively relates to human interactions, and to one’s duty to his country.⁸⁶ Beginning with *De Finibus*, which he wrote in 45 B.C., Cicero’s conception of *pietas* began to

⁸⁴ App. B. Civ. 2.104.

⁸⁵ Wagenvoort (1980): 1-20; RE “pietas”.

⁸⁶ Cf. Cic. Inv. rhet. 2.22.66: *religionem eam, quae in metu et caerimonia deorum sit, appellant; pietatem, quae erga patriam aut parentes aut alios sanguine coniunctos officium conservare moneat*. Cf. also Rep. 6.16: *iustitiam cole et pietatem, quae cum magna in parentibus et propinquis, tum in patria maxima est*.

resemble Wissowa's definition. In that work, he speaks of *pietas adversus deos*, "piety towards the gods."⁸⁷ In 44 B.C., he completed his *De Natura Deorum*, where he explicitly defines piety as righteousness towards the gods: *est enim pietas iustitia adversus deos*, "for piety is righteousness towards the gods."⁸⁸ This seems to be a direct quotation of the Stoic philosopher Posidonius,⁸⁹ whom Cicero used as one of his primary sources in the composition of the *De Natura Deorum*.⁹⁰ Thus, the impetus for this change in the meaning of the word *pietas* seems to have resulted from the influence of middle Stoicism, and it appears that Augustus used it for his benefit beginning in the late 40s B.C.

With this Hellenistic conception of the word, Augustus countered Sextus Pompey's claim to be the standard-bearer of *pietas* by showing that the latter's conception of *piety*, which privileged the ties that bound man to man rather than man to god, undermined all forms of virtue. We may recall the coin issued by Pompey ca. 42-38 B.C. and described above, which featured his father's head and the word *pious* on the front, and Neptune flanked by the Catanian brothers on the obverse. Earlier in the *De Natura Deorum*, Cicero defined *pietas adversus deos* as the virtue that holds human society together: "And I scarcely can judge, whether when *pietas* towards the gods has been removed, *fides* also, and the society of the human race, and that single most excellent virtue, justice, will likewise be taken away."⁹¹ By adopting this usage of the

⁸⁷ *Fin.* 3.22.73: *nec vero pietas advorsum deos, nec quanta iis gratia debeatur, sine explanatione naturae intellegi potest.*

⁸⁸ *Nat. D.* 1.41.116.

⁸⁹ Based on a tract from Sextus Empiricus, which was based on the philosophy of Posidonius, and which contains Cicero's exact definition in Greek: *ἔστιν ἡ ὀσίотης δικαιοσύνη τις πρὸς θεούς.* Cf. A. Schmeckel (1892): 85-104.

⁹⁰ Wagenvoort (1980): 11.

⁹¹ *Deor. Nat.* I 2.3 *atque haud scio, an pietate adversus deos sublata fides etiam et societas generis humani et una excellentissima virtus, iustitia, tollatur.*

word, Augustus and the other members of the Triumvirate could maintain that this act of retribution for Julius Caesar's murder exemplified *pietas* to a far greater extent than anything Sextus could claim. Augustus possessed the *pietas* of the statesman; his concern was thus the well being of all.

Wagenvoort insightfully noted that the absence of personifications of *pietas* during Augustus' reign provides evidence for this refiguring. There was a long tradition of depicting *pietas* as a goddess, dating back to at least 107 B.C., when M. Herrenius issued a coin with a female head and the legend "*Pietas*" on the obverse, and one of the Catanian brothers carrying his father on the reverse.⁹² In 47 B.C., Julius Caesar struck a similar coin, with a female head on the obverse and Aeneas carrying Anchises and the Palladium on the reverse.⁹³ In 41 B.C., Lucius Antonius, who had taken the name "*Pius*" as well, minted on behalf of his brother a coin that featured the image and name of *Pietas*.⁹⁴ This type of personification ceased abruptly after 41 B.C. and did not resume until Tiberius minted a coin in the old style in A.D. 22.⁹⁵ In literature as well, we see *Pietas* referred to as a woman repeatedly by Plautus, never during the reign of Augustus, and consistently again by Seneca, Statius, and Claudian.⁹⁶ Wagenvoort's explanation for this absence strikes me as the only plausible one: under Augustus, *pietas* referred to the correct attitude to the gods, and one cannot logically conceive of that attitude as a god.⁹⁷

⁹² Weinstock (1971): 251-52, pl. 19.9.

⁹³ Weinstock (1971): 253.

⁹⁴ Weinstock (1971): 15.

⁹⁵ Mattingly (1966): I.133.

⁹⁶ Wagenvoort (1980): 16.

⁹⁷ Wagenvoort (1980): 16; He uses the term *religio* as an illustration: it would be absurd to make a deity of that word.

Armed with this novel conception of *pietas*, Augustus hoped to trump Sextus Pompey's use of the term. Of course, he could always claim that in addition to divine justice, familial duty had required him to exact revenge on the assassins:

si mihi bellandi pater est Vestaeque sacerdos
auctor, et ulcisci numen utrumque paro,
Mars, ades et satia scelerato sanguine ferrum,
stetque favor causa pro meliore tuus.
templa feres et, me victore, vocaberis Ultor. (Ov. *Fast.* 5.573-76)

If my father, priest of Vesta, sanctions my war, and if I should prepare to avenge both gods, be present, Mars, and sate with criminals' blood my sword, and arrange your favor behind the more righteous cause. You will have a temple, when I have won, and be called *Ultor*.

The Mars Ultor temple, together with the image of *Divus Julius* that it housed, underscored the divine character of Augustus' *pietas*. The sculptural group that represented Aeneas bearing Anchises on his shoulders emphasized its familial aspect. It is worth noting again the similarities between the image of Aeneas carrying his father from Troy, and that of the two analogues favored by Sextus Pompey: Oppius, who carried his father from Rome to safety during the proscriptions, and the brothers from Catana, who bore their parents on their shoulders through lava after an eruption of Mt. Aetna. Like the Pompeians at Munda, Augustus could claim to have acted out of duty to his father. But the Aeneas sculptural group also incorporated the later conception of *pietas* that Cicero had discovered in Posidonius. Taking a cue from Virgil's narration of the episode (*Aen.* 2.707-729), it is likely that Aeneas, Anchises, Ascanius, and the *penates* were presented together for the first time in visual representation. Spannagel has argued this point convincingly. The representation of the Aeneas group in the Forum of Augustus constituted a deviation from all known preceding depictions (primarily

numismatic) of the episode: these lacked either Ascanius/Iulus or the *penates*.⁹⁸ The inclusion of Iulus and the *penates* adds to the scene the religious component of *pietas* that began to appear at Rome in the late 40s B.C. No longer was Aeneas seen as having had a duty to his father exclusively; he bore with him the divinely ordained future of the Roman state. Thus, Aeneas comes to be seen as a vehicle of Fate, and his *pietas* manifests itself contrary to his own personal desires. This is precisely the direction taken by Virgil's narrative; there, Aeneas is continually reluctant to persevere in his divine mission, to such an extent that during the storm in Book 1, he longs for death.⁹⁹ The flight from Troy in Virgil's account, which mirrors the details of the forum group exactly, occurs only after the appearance of a comet, the omen that presages Julius Caesar and the future greatness of Rome.¹⁰⁰ To Dido in Book 4 he says, *Italiam non sponte sequor*.¹⁰¹ The Aeneas group in Augustus' forum emphasized this refashioned conception of *pietas*, as it appeared earlier in Virgil, and before that in Cicero. For Virgil's Aeneas, as for Augustus, *pietas* entailed more than just devotion to one's family and personal relations; it was owed to a nation and to the gods, and the fate of a people depended on it. By making this one of the obligations of the Julian dynasty, Augustus responded to the chorus of those who had labeled him *impius* after the proscriptions. Like Aeneas, if he had acted cruelly, it was only against his will, and for a higher purpose, that he had done so.

⁹⁸ Spannagel (1999): 104-105. Among these earlier renderings are the aforementioned coin of Herrenius from 107 B.C., which depicts only Aeneas and Anchises; the *denarius* of Julius Caesar from ca. 47 B.C., also mentioned above, which again has Aeneas and his father, this time both naked, with Aeneas carrying the Palladium; lastly, a coin struck by L. Livineius Regulus ca. 42 B.C., which closely resembled that of Herrenius, only with a young Augustus on the obverse.

⁹⁹ *Aen.* 1.93-101.

¹⁰⁰ *Aen.* 2.692-729.

¹⁰¹ *Aen.* 4.361.

b. *Virtus*

The emphasis on *virtus* displayed in the Forum of Augustus had a similar origin. Along with *pietas*, it was the quintessentially “Roman” virtue.¹⁰² Properly speaking, this concept does not refer to “virtue” in general, but to manly behavior, specifically in war. Thus, Cicero wrote, *a viris virtus nomen est mutuata* (Cic. *Tusc.* 2.43). In the previous section, we looked at the numerous military and political failures Augustus experienced in the years after Philippi, and it is safe to say that the most damaging indictments of his *virtus* occurred during the war with Sextus Pompey. To remedy this damage, he again imported motifs that had been exploited previously by Pompey the Great and by Julius Caesar. The former had notably dedicated shrines to Honos and Virtus in 55 B.C. For Cicero, and perhaps for the Roman populace in general, *virtus* was one of Pompey’s special qualities.¹⁰³ Julius Caesar had been cited for his bravery in 80 B.C., when he received an oak wreath, the *corona civica*, for saving a citizen’s life during a storm at Mytilene.¹⁰⁴ He was given the same distinction in 45 B.C. for having saved the lives of all citizens. There is some evidence that he had planned to further link himself to the cult of Virtus before his death.¹⁰⁵ Finally, there is the assertion by Dio that in 44 B.C., he was

¹⁰² Prop. 3.22.19-22:

armis apta magis tellus quam commoda noxae:
Famam, Roma, tuae non pudet historiae.
nam quantum ferro tantum pietate potentes
stamus: victricis temperat ira manus.

Cf. Galinsky (1996): 84, Weinstock (1971): 230.

¹⁰³ For example, Cic. *De imp.* 27: *nunc vero cum sit unus Cn. Pompeius qui non modo eorum hominum qui nunc sunt gloriam sed etiam antiquitatis memoriam virtute superarit, quae res est quae cuiusquam animum in hac causa dubium facere possit?* Also, *Balb.* 9.13: *O nationes, urbes, populi, reges, tetrarchae, tyranni, testes Cn. Pompei non solum virtutis in bello sed etiam religionis in pace!* Cf. Weinstock (1971): 232.

¹⁰⁴ Suet. *Iul.* 2; cf. Weinstock (1971): 163-164.

¹⁰⁵ For the evidence, cf. Weinstock (1971): 232. The case is largely circumstantial; Weinstock cites the dedication of the *spolia opima* in 45 B.C., the naming of a Caesarian colony after Virtus (Virtus Iulia), and the fact that his rival Pompey and his uncle Marius had both built temples to Virtus.

granted the right to dedicate the *spolia opima* in the temple of Jupiter Feretrius, as though he had killed an enemy commander in single combat (he certainly had not).¹⁰⁶

This would have been a major display of *virtus*. Caesar never availed himself of it: Livy writes that the *spolia opima* had only been dedicated three times total up until his own day: by Romulus, by A. Cornelius Cossus, and by M. Claudius Marcellus.¹⁰⁷ The fact that Dio speaks of a Caesar receiving this “right” is telling, however. Syme astutely noted that Dio is guilty of a “patent anachronism” here.¹⁰⁸ There was no real question about who had the right to dedicate the *spolia opima* prior to 29 B.C., when Augustus made a political issue out of the process. In that year, the younger Marcus Licinius Crassus killed Deldo, king of the Bastarni, and considered himself eligible to dedicate his spoils to Jupiter Feretrius. Augustus prevented this by showing that among the criteria of eligibility, “supreme commander” meant head of the Roman state and nothing less. To “show” this he produced a piece of linen that he claimed was the corselet of Lars Tolumnius, from whom Cossus had taken his *spolia opima*. The inscription on this linen indicated that Cossus was consul at the time of his victory, not military tribune. This claim removed all precedent for anyone other than the Roman head of state to dedicate the *spolia opima*. All of Livy’s sources placed the battle firmly in the year 437 B.C., while Cossus was not consul until 428 B.C.

Diplomatically, Livy trod lightly over what was a clear fabrication, either by Augustus, or perhaps by someone from Marcellus’ time.¹⁰⁹ He labeled the problem

¹⁰⁶ Dio 44.4.3: σκῦλά τέ τινα ὀπίμα ἐς τὸν τοῦ Διὸς τοῦ Φερετρίου νεῶν ἀναθεῖναι οἱ ὥσπερ τινὰ πολέμον αὐτοστράτηγον αὐτοχειρία [ποῖ] πεφονευκότι, καὶ τοῖς ῥαβδούχοις δαφνηφοροῦσιν αἰεὶ χρῆσθαι, μετὰ τε τὰς ἀνοχὰς τὰς Λατίνους ἐπὶ κέλητος ἐς τὴν πόλιν ἐκ τοῦ Ἀλβανοῦ ἐσελαύνειν ἔδοσαν.

¹⁰⁷ Livy 1.10.

¹⁰⁸ Syme (1959): 80; also 44.

¹⁰⁹ The first to raise this possibility was Perezonius in 1685, in his *Animadversiones historicae, in quibus quamplurima in priscis romanorum rerum, sed utriusque linguae auctoribus notantur* (cited by Flower

insoluble, saying he could not reconcile the irrefutable historical artifact produced by Augustus with the unanimity in his sources. By Dio's time, the fabrication had become part of the standard narrative. Whether or not Augustus did intentionally misrepresent the evidence surrounding Cossus' dedication of the *spolia opima*, he redefined the honor and used it as a political tool.¹¹⁰ This hinted at his intentions, which were made plain after recovering Crassus' standards in 20 B.C. The *virtus* that the dedication of the *spolia opima* embodied was accessible only to the leader of the Roman state. That right belonged exclusively to members of the Julian dynasty. We can compare this conception of the *spolia opima* to the one used by Virgil in *Aeneid* 6. There too, by associating Augustus' adopted son Marcellus with the famous M. Claudius Marcellus, and by portraying Aeneas as, in a sense, the first winner of the *spolia opima*, Virgil indicates that this was a characteristically Julian distinction.

This notion was echoed in the Forum of Augustus. Among the *summi viri*, special emphasis was placed on those from whom Augustus could claim descent as a member of the *Julii*. Most prominent were the Romulus and Aeneas groups, which occupied respectively the south and north *exedrae* of the forum. Each group was located in the center of its *exedra*, in a niche twice as large as those surrounding it. The sculptures themselves have not been discovered; however, Camaggio identified reasonable facsimiles from two first century A.D. murals at Pompeii.¹¹¹ Judging by these copies, Aeneas was shown on his flight from Troy. With his right hand he led Ascanius, while

2000): 53 n. 104. The view has been endorsed by several serious scholars of Livy, especially Ogilvie (1965): 563.

¹¹⁰ There is reason to believe that Marcellus had done the same and in fact invented in 222 B.C. the distinction of the *spolia opima* as we read it described by Livy. Cf. Flower (2000): 41-48.

¹¹¹ M. Camaggio, *Mem. Acc. Pontaniana*, vol. 58 (1928); cf. Zanker (1988): 201-202. Zanker (1972): 17 also identifies copies from Cologne, Bonn, and Turin, as well as representations on coins minted in the second century A.D. For the widespread copying of the Trojan group, cf. Galinsky (1969): 7-35.

on his left shoulder he bore a slightly smaller than life-size Anchises, who carried the *penates*. Like other sculptures in the forum, Aeneas' dress was modernized: he wore the boots of a Roman patrician and a first century B.C. Roman cuirass.¹¹² In the opposite group, Romulus carried off the first *spolia opima* in Rome's history.¹¹³ The Pompeian murals indicate the extent to which the two groups were visually balanced: the *spolia opima* carried by Romulus are of the same size and in the same position as Anchises in the Aeneas group. Like Aeneas, Romulus is also in modern Roman military dress. If we imagine again the horizontal axis occupied by the Aeneas group, the Temple of Mars Ultor with the inscription "Augustus" in its pediment, and the sculpture of Romulus, we can appreciate both the dynastic characterization of the Julian family and the association of *pietas*, *ultio*, and *virtus*.

c. *Clementia*

The shield carried by the statue of Mars in the temple's pediment included the *corona civica*, which for reasons noted above was specifically evocative of Julius Caesar's service to the Roman people. This symbol was multivalent, but it appears to have been most associated with saving the life of a Roman citizen. At times it could be tied to an act of *virtus*, as in the case of the elder Caesar. More commonly, it was awarded for *clementia*. A statue of Julius Caesar had been erected on the *rostra* in which he was shown wearing the oak wreath, and Cicero explicitly connected the crown to the

¹¹² On the mural, Ascanius is more Trojan in appearance: he wore a Phrygian cap and carried a sort of stick used to hunt rabbits, possibly alluding to the tradition that Trojan youths were shepherds on Mount Ida. Zanker (1988): 202; Galinsky (1996): 204.

¹¹³ The episode is described in Livy, 1.10.4-7.

virtue of *clementia*.¹¹⁴ Later, Seneca and Pliny the Elder would both associate the crown with this virtue, with the latter specifying the context of a civil war.¹¹⁵ Just as he had appropriated his father's *virtus* with regard to the *spolia opima*, Augustus incorporated this emblem into his own personal symbolism by using the forum's layout to associate it with the tokens of his success. An earlier instance of this association, and a testament to its resonance, was the Senate's decision in 27 B.C. to permanently affix a crown of oak leaves to the doorpost of his home.¹¹⁶

While *clementia* became one of the preeminent Roman virtues after Julius Caesar, it was not granted automatic precedence in ethical matters. For Virgil, it does not necessarily trump all the other virtues, especially when the observance of *pietas* demands a more severe course of action. We shall examine Turnus' death in detail in the next chapter, but it is worth noting here that Aeneas' first impulse is to show *clementia*.¹¹⁷ It is only after being reminded of his obligation to his friends and allies that he resolves to kill Turnus; his agency in the act is expressly de-emphasized.¹¹⁸ Moreover, *clementia* could be interpreted as weakness; according to Dio, the Triumvirs considered Julius

¹¹⁴ Cic. *Deiot.* 34: *solus, inquam, es, C. Caesar, cuius in victoria ceciderit nemo nisi armatus. et quem nos liberi in summa populi Romani libertate nati non modo non tyrannum sed etiam clementissimum in victoria ducimus, is Blesamio qui vivit in regno tyrannus videri potest? nam de statua quis queritur, una praesertim, cum tam multas videat? valde enim invidendum est eius statuis cuius tropaeis non invidemus. nam si locus adfert invidiam, nullus est ad statuam quidem rostris clarior.*

¹¹⁵ Pliny *HN* 16.7: *hinc civicae coronae, militum virtutis insigne clarissimum, iam pridem vero et clementiae imperatorum, postquam civilium bellorum profano meritum coepit videri civem non occidere.* Also Sen. *De clem.* 1.26.5: *Felicitas illa multis salutem dare et ad vitam ab ipsa morte revocare et mereri clementia civicam. Nullum ornamentum principis fastigio dignius pulchriusque est quam illa corona ob cives servatos.*

¹¹⁶ *RG* 34.2: *In consulata sexto et septimo, bella ubi civilia exstinxeram per consensum universorum potitus rerum omnium, rem publicam ex mea potestate in senatus populique Romani arbitrium transtuli. Quo pro merito meo senatus consulto Augustus appellatus sum et laureis postes aedium mearum vestiti publice coronaque civica super ianuam meam fixa est clupeusque aureus in curia Iulia positus, quem mihi senatum populumque Romanum dare virtutis clementiae iustitiae pietatis causa testatum est per eius clupei inscriptionem.*

¹¹⁷ *Aen.* 12.938-41: *Stetit acer in armis Aeneas, volvens oculos, dextramque repressit; et iam iamque magis cunctantem flectere sermo coeperat...*

¹¹⁸ *Aen.* 12.948-49: *Pallas te hoc volnere, Pallas immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit.*

Caesar's clemency to have been a failure, since it encouraged his enemies to plot against him.¹¹⁹ The inclusion of the *corona civica* on the statue of Mars Ultor advanced a refashioned interpretation of *clementia*: it was shown alongside the symbol of revenge necessitated by duty. *Clementia*, *pietas*, and *virtus* were complementary: each guaranteed the other, and together promoted *iustitia* in general. Still, *pietas* (in the redefined, Augustan sense) seems to have been granted precedence in the most extreme cases, based on its far-reaching application. The pediment relief of Mars, which emphasized the divine origins of the Julian dynasty, also made this point. On Mars' right stood Venus; on his left was their descendant, the deified Julius.¹²⁰ At the bottom of the relief, a tiny Cupid hands Mars' sword to his mother. *Ultio* thus became a sacrosanct concept, essential to any claim to *auctoritas* that rested upon *pietas*. The implication was clear – the actions of the Julian family might at times epitomize clemency, at times vengeance, but the end was always the just functioning of the Roman state.

IV. Sulla, Pompey, and De-Politicized History

The difficulty faced by Augustus in making his dynastic claim was the fact that he clearly wanted to be viewed as *princeps*, i.e. *primus inter pares*, rather than as *rex*.¹²¹ As a result, the majority of the non-Julian *summi viri* in the north and south porticoes seem to have been Romans from the Republic who had held extraordinary power at some point in their lives. This was the case for fourteen of the nineteen figures identified: A.

Postumus Regillensis (dictator), M'. Valerius Maximus (dictator), Camillus (dictator,

¹¹⁹ Dio 44.7.

¹²⁰ Zanker (1988): 197.

¹²¹ RG 6: *Consulibus M. Vinicio et Q. Lucretio et postea P. Lentulo et Cn. Lentulo et tertium Paulo Fabio Maximo et Q. Tuberone senatu populoque Romano consentientibus ut curator legum et morum summa potestate solus crearet, nullum magistratum contra morem maiorum delatum recepi.*

military tribune with consular power), M. Valerius Corvus (dictator), Papirius Cursor (dictator), Appius Claudius Caecus (dictator, interrex), Quintus Fabius Maximus Aemilianus (not cunctator, proconsul in Spain while a private citizen), Aemilius Paullus (interrex, possibly *princeps*¹²²), Scipio Aemilianus (consul at an early age, consul seven times), Sulla (dictator), and Licinius Lucullus (military tribune at an early age). These men served as reminders that Republican precedents existed for Augustus as *princeps*, a fact he stressed in the *Res Gestae*.¹²³

The presence of Sulla among these statues is extremely interesting. No one, either in the immediate aftermath of his dictatorship or in subsequent generations, wished to seem too much like Sulla.¹²⁴ It seems especially strange that Augustus would even dare to evoke his memory in the same monument through which he sought to justify his own conduct during the triumviral proscriptions.¹²⁵ Julius Caesar's famous *clementia* had been a calculated response both to public memory of the Sullan proscriptions, and to the widespread belief that the Pompeians had intended to imitate Sulla's example.¹²⁶ Why would Augustus allow so problematic an image to be present among the *summi viri*? One possible answer is found in the proscription edict recorded by Appian. As noted above, the Triumvirs declared that their proscriptions would not be as bloody as those of Sulla, despite the fact that three men necessarily had more enemies than one.¹²⁷ Here we see an example of *la défense par la pire*, and certainly this idea was at work in the proscription edict. If the argument could be made that the triumviral proscriptions were milder than

¹²² Cf. Cic., *Brut.* 80: *Atque etiam L. Paullus Africani pater personam principis civis facile dicendo tuebatur.*

¹²³ See n. 122 above.

¹²⁴ On the unfavorable view of Sulla in the late Republic see Seidl-Steed (2008): ch. 4 and 5.

¹²⁵ For a comparison of the Sullan and Triumviral proscriptions, see Lobur (2008): 66-67.

¹²⁶ On this point see Lobur (2008): 66; also Dowling (2000).

¹²⁷ App. *B. Civ.* 4.2.10

the Sullan ones, we need not assume that the presence of Sulla's image in the forum necessarily reflected negatively on Augustus. Rather, the dictator's example could be seen as the negative path that Augustus sought to avoid. This is in fact the typical characterization of Sulla's career by various Augustan historians.¹²⁸ A common treatment involved praising his actions as a general, while showing his dictatorship to have been the epitome of cruel and tyrannical behavior.¹²⁹ We only possess *periochae* for Livy's account of the period, but these show clearly that the historian had a substantial amount of admiration for Sulla's behavior so long as he operated within a Republican framework.¹³⁰ Once Marius ceased to be a threat, Sulla succumbed to the dangers of the extraordinary power that he possessed, and the *periochae* show that Livy spared no details in setting forth the dictator's cruelty: Rome and all of Italy, to which he had previously brought order, were now filled with slaughter as a result of his excesses.¹³¹

Thus in addition to the "worse" example that Sulla provided, there was a positive, non-partisan dimension of his character that could legitimately be praised, while also serving as a moral lesson about the temptations faced by those in positions of great power. This aspect of Sulla's image helps us to further understand the role that Gnaeus

¹²⁸ On this see Dowling's fine discussion (Dowling [2000]: 318-33).

¹²⁹ Cf. Dowling (2000): 319. "The early years of Sulla are presented in increasingly formulaic ways in order to present Sulla as the man of quintessential Roman virtue. The dichotomy reveals an interesting point: while acting as a general fighting for the prestige and power of the Republic against Mithridates, in Athens, and in dealing with Scipio's troops (marching against Cinna was certainly seen as saving the Republic by Sulla), Sulla is portrayed as a Roman general of the old Republican style of virtue." A good example of this opinion is the elder Seneca, whose *Controversiae* makes substantial reference to late Republican and Augustan sources. Dowling observes that Seneca generally describes Sulla as a man with definite good qualities, in whom normal human vices were amplified by the position in which he found himself (Dowling [2000]: 331).

¹³⁰ In fact, Livy appears to have highlighted Sulla's clemency relative to savagery of the Marian faction, and his successful establishment of legitimate government over the whole of Italy (*Per.* 86).

¹³¹ *Per.* 87: *VIII milia dediticiorum in villa publica trucidavit, tabulam proscriptionis posuit, urbem ac totam Italiam caedibus replevit inter quas omnes Praenestinos inermes concidi iussit, Marium, senatorii ordinis virum, cruribus brachiisque fractis, auribus praeseectis et oculis effossis necavit.*

Pompey played in the artistic program of the Forum of Augustus. Certainly, the *lex Gabinia* and the *lex Manilia* had invested Pompey with extraordinary power. Hurllet has thoughtfully analyzed the way in which Augustus used the precedent of Pompey's *imperium* to "maintain the fiction of Republican constitutional continuity" in the face of his increasingly monarchic power.¹³² We know that the elder Pompey was represented prominently in statue groups erected at Mytilene between 12 and 4 B.C., the time during which the Forum of Augustus was also being constructed.¹³³ The city was important to the imperial family, probably because of the amount of time that Agrippa and Julia spent there.¹³⁴ Pompey also had personal connections to the island, and in fact fled there to join his wife before his fateful voyage to Egypt. But he appeared in sculptural groups with the imperial family because he furnished a constitutional model that the regime could imitate.¹³⁵ Specifically, the ratification of laws legitimized Pompey's extraordinary power by grounding his *imperium* in the will of the people. Augustus made use of the same procedure in both the First and Second Settlements, and in fact the principle continued to operate throughout the duration of the High Empire.¹³⁶ It is also worth noting that Pompey had been called *princeps*, and this brand of *auctoritas* was something Augustus clearly wished to emulate.¹³⁷

Sulla and Pompey thus served as precedents for Augustus' specialized conception

¹³² Hurllet (1996): 279-94 (especially 294), 458-59, 539-40.

¹³³ Hurllet (1996): 458; 587-89 (cat. 91-93, 95-100, 103).

¹³⁴ Hurllet (1996): 458.

¹³⁵ Hurllet (1996): 459. For more on the appropriation of this aspect of Pompey's character by Augustus, see Boak (1918): 23-25, and Grenade (1950).

¹³⁶ See especially Dio 53.32.5 on the Second Settlement, where Augustus received the *imperium proconsulare maius* and the *tribunicia potestas* for life. Dio goes on to describe the dynastic character of these powers (53.32.6). On the *tribunicia potestas*, see also RG 10.1 and Scheid (2007) and Cooley (2009) *ad loc.* On the First Settlement, see Dio 53.12.1. Hurllet correctly observes that in both cases, Dio shows that Augustus' powers were conferred by a law ratifying a *senatus consultum* (Hurllet [1996] 246-47).

¹³⁷ Cicero refers to Pompey as *princeps* in *Ad Fam.* 1.9.11 (*Cum autem in re publica Cn. Pompeius princeps esset vir...*). On Pompey as *princeps*, see Gelzer (1968): 197-98 (esp. 197 n. 2). On the relationship between *auctoritas* and *princeps*, see Magdelain (1947) and Lepore (1954).

of *auctoritas*. What is interesting is the way in which these very politically-charged personages were de-politicized in the Augustan program. An instructive comparison can be made with Livy's history. As noted above, Livy's account of Sulla appears to have been relatively non-partisan: his career was presented more as a universal moral lesson than as a political statement. Even Cicero, whom Livy admired, was treated realistically in the context of the late-Republican political crisis: the fate he ultimately suffered was no different than what he would have inflicted on his own enemies, had he been victorious.¹³⁸ The virtues of problematic opposition figures from the civil wars, like Pompey and Cato, could be held up by both sides, since in fact these "battle-lines" had ceased to be meaningful.¹³⁹ Augustus consequently strove to be non-partisan in his interpretation of history; such an approach was welcomed by Livy, to whom the bitter partisanship of Sallust and Pollio was completely repellent.¹⁴⁰

Livy is most "Augustan" when he places Augustus in the non-partisan context of Romans who possessed *auctoritas*. The historian had a technical term for such men: *conditor urbis*. In the *Ab Urbe Condita*, the title applies exclusively to those who had physically expanded or improved the city.¹⁴¹ Certainly, Augustus improved the physical appearance of Rome, especially by 2 B.C. He had completed the Forum of Julius and his own adjacent forum, along with numerous other building projects, which allowed him to

¹³⁸ Livy, quoted by Seneca, *Suas.* 6.22: *omnium adversorum nihil ut viro dignum erat tulit praeter mortem, quae vere aestimanti minus indigna videri potuit quod a victore inimico nihil crudelius passurus erat quam quod eiusdem fortunae compos victo fecisset*. See Syme (1959): 61.

¹³⁹ As Syme notes, it did not hurt that such men were dead and no longer posed a threat; in this sense Augustus exercised total control over what their memory signified. Cf. Syme (1959): 58: "Pompeius and Cato were conveniently out of the way before Octavianus appeared on the scene. Therefore freedom of treatment was not merely permitted but encouraged by Augustus."

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Syme (1959): 53-54.

¹⁴¹ For a discussion of the use of the term *conditor* (as well as *maior*) in Livy's first decade, cf. Miles (1988): 193-204. See also Syme (1959): 55.

make the boast recorded by Suetonius, that he had found Rome brick and left it marble.¹⁴² Livy thus called him the *templorum omnium restitutorem ac conditorem*.¹⁴³ As such, he places Augustus in the same apolitical and non-partisan role occupied by other “founders” like Numa and Camillus. At play here is a conception of historical agency that is vital to our subsequent discussion of Virgil’s idea of history. Being the “founder” of a city implies that one has effected a positive change in society that would not have occurred otherwise; a *conditor* is an agent of progress in history with respect to political societies. Augustus’ contributions to the beauty of the Rome, both in the physical and moral sense, coalesced with his exercise of the characteristically Roman virtues of *pietas* and *virtus* to underscore his historical agency. In the *Res Gestae*, this concept is implied by the term *auctoritas*:

Post id tempus auctoritate omnibus praestiti, potestatis autem nihilo amplius habui quam ceteri qui mihi quoque in magistratu conlegae fuerunt. (*RG* 34.3)

After that time, I surpassed all in *auctoritas*, while of *potestas* I had no more than the rest of the men who had been my colleagues in the magistracy.

It is vital to understand the contrast in these lines between *auctoritas* and *potestas*.

Potestas is to be understood as official, constitutional power, i.e. the traditional Republican machinery. *Auctoritas*, a notoriously difficult word to translate, is in this instance meant to signify supra-constitutional power, or a general ability to influence affairs beyond the actual workings of the state. In this sense, it operated within a similar

¹⁴² Suet. *Aug.* 28.3: *Urbem...excoluit adeo, ut iure sit gloriatus marmoream se relinquere, quam latericiam accepisset.*

¹⁴³ Livy 4.20.7; cf. Miles (1988): 194-95.

semantic register as terms like *pater patriae*, or *princeps*.¹⁴⁴ One might say that it embraced the capacity for significant action, as well the worthiness to perform that action.

It is no coincidence, then, that in the *Res Gestae* Augustus' *auctoritas* is mentioned in the same paragraph that describes the *clupeus virtutis*, an ornamental shield dedicated to him by the senate that displayed the four virtues: *virtus*, *clementia*, *iustitia*, and *pietas*. These comprised the foundation of Augustus' *auctoritas*, and thus the other manifestations of *pietas* and *virtus* in the Forum of Augustus can be viewed as underscoring that quality as well. Virgil appears to allude to this in the prophecy depicted on Aeneas' shield in Book 8 of the *Aeneid*. There, Augustus is shown at his triple triumph in 29 B.C., crowning his *virtus* with an act of *pietas*, "dedicating to the Italian gods his immortal offering, three hundred great temples across the city."¹⁴⁵ Augustus himself wished to emphasize these accomplishments, specifically in regard to reviving Rome's religious life. The *Res Gestae* mention that in his sixth consulship, he had renovated all of the eighty-two temples throughout the city that were then in need of restoration.¹⁴⁶ He also viewed himself as a religious figure, and appeared to enjoy making this aspect of his character quite public.¹⁴⁷ The religious emphasis was neither gratuitous nor accidental. It invested Augustus with a universal, historical importance,

¹⁴⁴ For an exhaustive discussion of these "supra-constitutional" titles, see Béranger (1953); for the history of the use of the term *auctoritas* at Rome, see Galinsky (1996): 10-20.

¹⁴⁵ *Aen.* 8.715-16.

¹⁴⁶ *RG* 20.

¹⁴⁷ We shall see in the fifth chapter of this study the prominent role Augustus played in the performance of the *ludi saeculares*, and also the importance he attached to his holding the office of *pontifex maximus*. A telling pre-Actium anecdote gives us an early example of Augustus' religious self-presentation. To declare war on Antony and Cleopatra, he assumed the role of the *fetialis* in the traditional Roman ritual; in the ceremony at the Circus Flaminius, he symbolically cast a wooden spear into "enemy territory." Cf. Eck (2003): 41.

while distancing him from topical, partisan debates.¹⁴⁸ It was to this unique, transcendent conception of *auctoritas* that Augustus attributed his ability to finally bring peace to Rome after decades of civil war.

V. Conclusion

This peace, the *pax victoriis parta*, supplied Augustus with the ultimate defense against his critics. Yavetz imagined a scenario that gives us an idea of the social climate in which the whole process took place:

Let us imagine for a moment a novel about a Roman boy, born in 76 B.C., whose uncle was killed in the Sullan proscriptions, whose father died in Spain fighting Sertorius, and who could still remember his mother's stories about Spartacus' atrocities. The news about his first cousin's death in Pompey's eastern campaigns reached him while Rome was afflicted by the Catilinarian conspiracy. In 59 B.C. the boy was seventeen, and in 58 B.C. he joined Caesar's army in Gaul. He excelled in battle and crossed the Rubicon in 49 B.C. As a staunch supporter of Caesar he fought alongside him at Ilerda, Pharsalus, Zela, Thapsus, and Munda. He was thirty-two when Caesar was killed. His unit joined Caesar's heir without hesitation. He fought bravely at Mutina and Philippi, but he had chanced his luck once too often: wounded at Philippi, he had recovered all too slowly, and after twenty years of loyal and distinguished service he was honorably discharged and given a plot of land. He married; his wife gave birth to a son, but he hardly had opportunity to rejoice. The day his son was born, his brother was killed at Actium. He loved his son and decided never to allow him to volunteer for army service, particularly if he might be involved in savage civil wars. If only someone could put an end to his senseless killing and at last close the gates of Janus, he would adore him as almost superhuman, and for the sake of peace transfer all authority to him. He was not sorry to sacrifice the long republican tradition. It meant very little to him. This of course is fiction—but is it pure imagination?¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Here it is worth noting the choice of the name "Augustus" in 27 B.C., rather than "Romulus," which Octavian also had considered. While the second name would have emphasized his similarity to Rome's founder, it had both monarchic and partisan connotations. Syme is especially good on this point, and he is right to discuss it in relation to Livy's idea of a *conditor urbis*. Cf. Syme (1959): 55.

¹⁴⁹ Yavetz (1984): 4.

The emphasis on Augustus' *pietas*, *virtus*, and *clementia* was important, but it was also secondary. The moral defense of actions from his early career was his claim to *auctoritas*, which in turn guaranteed his ability to procure results. *Auctoritas*, as noted above, was a twofold concept. On the one hand, it was based on the worthiness to perform significant action, but it also depended on capacity to act. *Pace* Tacitus, Augustus' peace was a bloody one, but it was a peace nonetheless; his achievements resonated with the Roman people, and his claim to *auctoritas* carried real weight.

It is instructive that the "long republican tradition" mentioned by Yavetz, along with the partisan battles that it entailed, ultimately did mean less to Livy than the tangible results procured by Augustus. By referring to Augustus in the early portions of his history (i.e. out of his chronological place), and by doing so in the detached, non-partisan sense with which Augustus himself treated Sulla and Pompey in his forum, Livy raised the *princeps* above the topical political debates of the late Republic. His achievement was not the success of one party as opposed to another; it was the real, historical improvement of Rome through the establishment of a peace in which there was a place for everyone. This spirit, which animates both the Forum of Augustus and Livy's history, becomes crucially important in Virgil's conception of history, to which we shall turn in the next two chapters. Of particular importance is the way in which Virgil asserts Augustus' *auctoritas* by reference to the same historical circumstances (the proscriptions and the war with Sextus Pompey) that had defined the Augustan sense of the term. For Virgil, *auctoritas* is specifically identified with historical agency, the capacity to bring about genuine progress. In the "Sicilian" books of the *Aeneid*, Virgil proposed refashioned, "Augustan" conceptions of *pietas*, *virtus*, and *clementia* to counter the

specific charges that stemmed from the proscriptions, and he made subtle excuses for Octavian's failures. On a more fundamental level, however, the *Aeneid* provided the template for a historical justification of the Augustan regime, for Virgil conceived of history as an inherently *sacrificial* process. No one could deny that Rome had suffered greatly during the civil wars, on all sides. But as we shall see in the following chapter, it would be wrong to blame Augustus for that suffering. Instead, Virgil shows us that suffering is the inevitable result of history. To his credit, Augustus' *auctoritas* had enabled him to direct that suffering towards a truly noble end: the establishment of *pax*. For Virgil, the dilemmas faced by Aeneas (and by association Augustus) with regard to *pietas*, *clementia*, and *ultio* are set in the context of the deeper tension that exists between temporality and eternity. It is ultimately this tension that needs to be managed by those who would be "agents" of historical progress. Virgil's conception of agency in Roman history is divorced from topical, political debates; *ultio* and *pietas* do not respond to specific partisan concerns, but rather to universal and transcendent exigencies arising from the basic character of human existence in time. The drama of the *Aeneid* stems not from the singular enmity between Aeneas and Turnus, but from the typological conflict between the forces of history and the Roman *auctor*. As we shall see, it is only after Aeneas confronts the difficulties experienced by Octavian in Sicily that he obtains the *auctoritas* to function as the main actor in his own story.

Chapter 3

History as Sacrifice

I. Introduction

At Buthrotum in *Aeneid* 3, Aeneas observes what has been interpreted as a failed attempt to rebuild Troy.¹ He refers to the locale as a “little Troy,” and we are told that it included a replica of the Trojan citadel of Pergamus, a Scaean gate, a dry stream that had been named “Xanthus,” and a “mimic-Simois.”² The first image from the city represents an unhealthy obsession with the past: Aeneas finds Andromache at the mimic-Simois, making an offering to the dust, and calling forth Hector’s ghost from an empty tomb.³ Buthrotum is a place of pretense and make-believe: none of these landmarks are “the real thing,” any more than Helenus (Andromache’s new husband) is Hector.⁴ Andromache is detached from reality; her first impulse upon seeing Aeneas and his band in Trojan dress

¹ The best discussions of Buthrotum as a failed attempt to recreate the Trojan past are Reed (2007): 119-21; Perkell (1999): 73-77; Bettini (1997); Quint (1982): 30-35; and Saylor (1970).

² *Aen.* 3.302: *falsi Simoentis*; 3.349-50: *parvam Troiam simulataque magnis Pergama et arentem Xanthi cognomina rivum agnosco, Scaeaque amplector limina portae.*

³ *Aen.* 3.301-5.

⁴ Perkell (1999): 75-76.

is to believe that they are ghosts, who might indulge her obsession with Hector's memory.⁵ Later, as the Trojans are about to depart, she loads Ascanius with clothes that had been intended for Astyanax, imagining through Aeneas' son how her own dead child might have appeared.⁶ The scene is as disturbing as it is tragic. Buthrotum itself is "a kind of underworld, inhabited by the living dead."⁷ By fetishizing a moment in the past, its residents exist in a historical stasis, where they strive endlessly and vainly to preserve the vanished reality of a Trojan nation.⁸

The Homeric precedent for Aeneas' visit to Buthrotum is *Odyssey* 4, where Telemachus travels to Sparta to see Menelaus and Helen.⁹ A major component of Homer's narrative is *forgetfulness*; Helen offers Telemachus a drug that she says can make one forget all sorrow, no matter how grievous. Andromache, Helen's analogue in the *Aeneid*, obsesses over recreating the past and *keeping alive* her painful memories. Virgil's narrative is thus framed by these two extreme approaches to the past. However, it would be a mistake to assume that either is privileged in the *Aeneid*. Helenus and Andromache merely manage to produce an odd curiosity at Buthrotum, rather than a recreation of the historical Troy. By virtue of being trapped in the past, the city has no

⁵ *Aen.* 3.310-12.

⁶ *Aen.* 3. 486-91:

'Accipe et haec, manuum tibi quae monumenta mearum
sint, puer, et longum Andromachae testentur amorem,
coniugis Hectoreae. Cape dona extrema tuorum,
O milli sola mei super Astyanactis imago:
sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora ferebat;
et nunc aequali tecum pubesceret aevo.'

⁷ Quint (1982): 31.

⁸ Reed (2007): 120 offers an especially perceptive analysis of this dimension: "Andromache is emphasizing generational succession as national survival. So too does Aeneas, but his yearning for Troy is more complicated than hers. He is not to rebuild Troy literally; his new 'Troy' must be different."

⁹ *Od.* 4.1-624. When Telemachus arrives, the Menelaus is hosting a wedding feast for Hermione, who had been betrothed to Neoptolemus (4.1-14). In the *Aeneid*, this marriage had caused Neoptolemus to give up Andromache, who then married Helenus (*Aen.* 4.325-29).

viable historical meaning of its own.¹⁰ Virgil thus shows the perils of excessive remembrance, while advocating the necessity of forgetting.¹¹ Quint has argued that this notion can be allegorically interpreted as a commentary on Augustus' approach to his own troubled past during the late-Republican period.¹² Aeneas must distance himself from the dead Trojan past that Buthrotum vainly sought to reproduce, and which the influence of Anchises on the poem's earlier narrative represents, in order for Rome's mission in history to progress.¹³ But total forgetfulness is equally harmful, as the Odyssean frame of the Buthrotum episode implies. This realization becomes fully clear in *Aeneid* 5 and 6, where Aeneas finally becomes the protagonist, in the true sense, of his

¹⁰ Reed calls the literal recovery of the Trojan past "a pathetic dead end," and aptly describes Buthrotum as an "amusement-park or miniature-golf version" of the original. Cf. Reed (2007): 119. Quint (1982): 32-33 has a good discussion of the ways in which Virgil's Buthrotum mirrors Homer's *nekylia* in *Odyssey* 11. He observes the ironic inversion by which Andromache first mistakes Aeneas for the shade of a dead Trojan as she practices a form of *nekylia* (2.301-12). In fact, the situation of Buthrotum's inhabitants is effectively identical to being dead: it is a "dry" society in the sense that it will have no issue or future relevance, as shown by the contrast between the dead Astyanax and the living Ascanius.

¹¹ The idea of Nietzsche's essay, "The Use and Abuse of History," is instructive in our reading of this aspect of Virgil's thought. For Nietzsche, extreme consciousness of the past is incompatible with individual identity or the motivation to act. He writes, "The man without any power to forget is condemned to see "becoming" everywhere. Such a man no longer believes in himself or his own existence... At last, like the logical disciple of Heraclitus, he will hardly dare to raise his finger. Forgetfulness is a property of all action... Thus even a happy life is possible without remembrance, as the beast shows: but life in any sense is impossible without forgetfulness. Or, to put my conclusion better, there is a degree of sleeplessness, of rumination, of 'historical sense,' that injures and finally destroys the living thing, be it a man or a people or a system of culture." (Nietzsche [1957]: 6-7). The Trojan approach to the past at Buthrotum corresponds to what Nietzsche calls "Monumental History," in which instances of past greatness are highlighted as *exempla* to show that such feats were once possible, and may be again. The fallacy involved with this sort of history is the belief that such accomplishments can exist in a vacuum, detached from the causal network that originally produced them. By replicating monuments and landmarks from the real Troy, the Trojans at Buthrotum attempt to recreate a culture by reproducing its effects (and not the causes of those effects). No image is more illustrative of this than the dried-up creek that has been named "Xanthus."

¹² Quint specifically has in mind the problematic legacy of Julius Caesar, who had destroyed the senatorial authority and republican rule that Augustus wished (at least superficially) to reestablish. Citing Syme, Quint notes that in this respect the elder Caesar was "an embarrassment and political liability for his son" (Quint [1982]: 35), and that consequently "Caesar's heir forswore the memory of Caesar: in the official conception, the Dictatorship and the Triumvirate were blotted from the record." (Syme [1939]: 317) Virgil handled Julius Caesar similarly: "The *Aeneid* mentions, without directly naming, the historical Caesar only once and then in order to deplore his taking up the arms of civil war against the Pompeian defenders of the Republic." (Quint [1982]: 35; cf. Syme [1939]: 317).

¹³ Quint (1982): 35.

own story.¹⁴ He achieves this agency by learning to contextualize all aspects of the past in the whole arc of Roman history. On the one hand, Virgil demonstrates this through the Parade of Roman Heroes in the Underworld; while these were descendants of Aeneas, the description is *post eventum* from the perspective of a late-first century Roman, and thus the message to be derived from the scene is an example of ‘monumental history.’ But ‘remembrance’ also plays a very topical and specific role in *Aeneid* 5, where Virgil alludes to the problematic aspects of Augustus’ past that we examined in the previous chapter of this study.¹⁵ It is no accident that Aeneas discovers his *auctoritas* in Sicily; events in the same geographic location had influenced the interpretation of *pietas*, *virtus*, and *clementia* that formed the basis of Augustus’ own historical agency as envisioned in the Forum of Augustus.

In this chapter, we shall examine these topical allusions in *Aeneid* 5. Our preceding discussion of the Forum of Augustus will prove crucial to our understanding of the ideas at work in the poem. The circumstances used by Virgil to establish Aeneas’ agency in Roman history allude specifically to real historical episodes in the triumviral wars against Sextus Pompey, which Augustus had needed to ‘reinterpret’ in order to assert his own *auctoritas*, as discussed in the previous chapter. In this ‘Sicilian’ book of the *Aeneid*, Virgil had the opportunity to make an *apologia* for the stunning series of naval failures suffered there by Octavian. However, he also needed to tread lightly over issues that were potentially embarrassing to the *princeps*, or that would remind readers of the brutality with which he treated the island after his victory. Virgil uses the book’s tranquil setting and pacing to make this serious point, just as he uses the playful context

¹⁴ I offer many thanks to my doctoral advisor, Professor David Potter, for this insight.

¹⁵ The best studies of first century historical references in *Aeneid* 5 are Powell (2008) and Galinsky (1969), both of whom I cite throughout this chapter.

of the funeral games to allude to even more serious issues. Darker elements in these episodes hint at one of the most important concepts at work in the *Aeneid*, that of history as an inherently sacrificial act. This understanding of history is established in the death of Palinurus and the boxing match between Dares and Entellus, which is narrated against the backdrop of the myth of Hercules and Eryx. Ultimately, both of these episodes prepare us to interpret the death of Turnus at the end of the poem in similar fashion. In Sicily, Aeneas observes the sacrificial logic that governs history, and learns the skills that allow him to bring the narrative of the *Aeneid*, along with the chapter of Roman history that it relates, to its conclusion.

II. Sicily in the *Aeneid*

1. Sextus Pompey

The celebrated *ekphrasis* of Aeneas' shield at the conclusion of *Aeneid* 8 can be read as a structured narrative: Virgil presents a clear introduction, middle, and end. He lays out the fundamental tension of the 'story of Italy' (8.626, *res Italae*) in the first part, where we are shown instances of Rome's historical struggle.¹⁶ The emphasis is on recurrent motifs of internal divisions and foreign threats. The shield depicts the invasions of the Sabines (637-38), the Etruscans (646-51), and the Gauls (653-62). We see the famous traitor and conspirator, Mettus Fufetius (642) and Tarquinius Superbus (646). The narrative dwells on Fufetius' symbolic dismemberment; Virgil pauses to address him directly, and relates graphically the details of his execution, as if to emphasize the

¹⁶ On the shield as a narrative, see Bartsch (1998), especially 330-31; also Quint (1993): 22-49, especially 23-31. Other recent, important readings of the shield include Putnam (1998): 119-88 (Ch. 5, "The Shield of Aeneas"), and Hardie (1986), whose conclusions are discussed in the fifth chapter of this study. Cf. Farrell (1997): 222-38, especially 224-25; also Barchiesi (1997): 271-81.

importance of this literal and figurative division to the broader purpose of the section. These darker motifs, however, are balanced by positive *exempla*. There is a constant emphasis on the virtues that made Rome successful: toughness (Romulus and Remus, 630-34), self-sacrifice (Horatius Cocles, 650, and the matrons who donated their gold during the siege of Veii, 655-56), and courage (Cloelia, 651, and Manlius Capitolinus, 653-54). The section ends on a bleak note—a third conspirator, Catiline, hanging on a cliff and suffering his just punishment—but also reinforces the idea that there is a cosmic good, embodied in the person of Cato, ‘giving laws to the *pious*’ (666-70). It is this Manichean vision of Rome’s existence that the middle section, which depicts the battle of Actium, seemingly corrects. As he enters the battle, Augustus has already united not only Rome, but also all of Italy:

hinc Augustus agens Italos in proelia Caesar
cum patribus populoque, penatibus et magnis dis. (*Aen.* 8.678-79)

Antony embodies all the evil described in the first section. He is both a traitor and a foreigner: he has abandoned Rome for the east, and for his shameful Egyptian wife he commands “a barbarian force and a motley horde.”¹⁷ Augustus’ victory is followed by the closing section of the shield’s narrative, which functions as a *denouement*: he returns to a united Italy, where he leads a pious sacrifice, and watches as all the nations that he had dominated parade before him in submission.

Aeneas’ shield depicts the fulfillment of Jupiter’s prophecy from Book 1, thereby reiterating for the final time the prediction of Roman *imperium* that gives momentum to the narrative of the *Aeneid*. In that prophecy, Jupiter tells Venus that during the reign of Augustus,

¹⁷ *Aen.* 8.685: ...*ope barbarica variisque Antonius armis.*

Nascetur pulchra Troianus origine Caesar
Imperium Oceano, famam qui terminet astris...

aspera tum positis mitescent saecula bellis;
cana Fides, et Vesta, Remo cum fratre Quirinus,
iura dabunt; dirae ferro et compagibus artis
claudentur Belli portae; Furor impius intus,
saeva sedens super arma, et centum vinctus aenis
post tergum nodis, fremet horridus ore cruento. (*Aen.* 1.286-96)

From this noble origin shall Trojan Caesar be born, who shall stretch
his empire to the ocean, and his fame to the stars... Then shall wars
cease and the harsh ages soften; hoary Faith, and Vesta, Romulus with
his brother Remus, shall give laws; the Gates of War, grim with their
iron and close-fitting bars, shall be closed; within shall rage impious
Furor, ghastly and with blood-stained mouth, seated on his savage arms,
his arms bound by a hundred bronze knots behind his back.

“The harsh ages” could refer to any number of periods of Roman history, but few more applicably than that which Romans of the first century had experienced. For a variety of reasons (including Virgil’s reference to the representation of Actium on the shield), scholarship has traditionally located the defining conflict of these ‘harsh ages’ in the war with Antony.¹⁸ However, Aeneas’ shield hints at much more. The linear narrative outlined above has a different sort of dramatic tension than one might expect: Augustus’ defeat of Antony is remarkable precisely because it seems so effortless. With the senate, the people, and all of Italy united behind him as he confronts the ‘barbarian, motley

¹⁸ The best discussion of this tendency is by Powell (2008): 3-30, who argues that many studies of the *Aeneid* fall into the trap of circularity: they interpret Virgil’s poem through reference to a world that Virgil himself created. Of course, one of Powell’s central arguments (as well as my own) is that many interpretations of this world are inaccurate, thanks in part to negligent readings of key historical allusions in the *Aeneid*; the “world” by which many have interpreted the poem in fact comes not from Virgil, but from the tradition of Virgilian reception. Like Powell, I shall argue in this chapter that Sextus Pompey is the other “great villain” of the *Aeneid*, a fact obscured by the tendency to reduce all reference to topical conflict to Antony.

horde,' his victory is presented as *fait accompli*: Rome is united, and all that remains is to claim a victory that is taken for granted from the outset.¹⁹

Aeneas' shield contains very subtle reference to another chapter of the *aspera saecula*, in which Augustus would have been unable to claim the support of the whole of Italy:

Parte alia ventis et dis Agrippa secundis
arduus agmen agens; cui, belli insigne superbum,
tempora navali fulgent rostrata corona. (*Aen.* 8.778-784)

In another part is formidable Agrippa, leading his column, favored by gods and the wind; on his brow flashes the twin-beaked naval crown, proud token of war.

Upon careful reading, two elements in this description encourage us to consider that Virgil might be referring to more than just Actium on the shield. First the naval crown: what is it? The temptation may be to read the description as proleptically referring to an award won by Agrippa after his success at Actium. However, in actuality, Dio tells us that he won this crown far earlier, after the battle of Naulochus (36 B.C.), the decisive naval engagement in the wars against Sextus Pompey. Dio and others further emphasize that this crown was awarded to no one before or since.²⁰ The second detail is Virgil's emphasis on the favoring winds granted by the gods. Although it seems insignificant at first glance, it is hard to imagine that Roman readers would have failed to recognize the import of this pointed remark. For a long period of time, Augustus was thought to have

¹⁹ Cf. Quint (1993): 23. "The construction of an apologetic propaganda for the winning side of Augustus brings into play a whole ideology that transforms the recent history of civil strife into a war of foreign conquest."

²⁰ Dio 49.14.3; cf. Livy *Per.* 129.

terrible luck at sea. Sextus Pompey, on the other hand, seemed to be tremendously lucky, so much so that he began to claim he was an adopted son of Neptune:²¹

[Sextus] Pompey however decided not to seize even the fine opportunity presented to him by so many shipwrecks. He merely offered sacrifice to the sea and to Neptune, assuming to call himself their son, and persuading himself that it was not without the special act of Providence that his enemies had been twice overwhelmed in this way in the summer months. It is said that he was so much puffed up by these circumstances that he exchanged the purple cloak customary to Roman commanders for a dark blue one, to signify that he was the adopted son of Neptune. (App. *B. Civ.* 5.100.416)

Events would reinforce Pompey's claim to be a 'son of Neptune,' so dominant was he in the naval battles around Sicily.²² Octavian's navy and reputation absorbed the brunt of this success. In 38 B.C. he suffered a disastrous defeat at Sextus' hands in the straits near Messana.²³ Appian gives the fullest account of the humiliation suffered by Octavian in this encounter. At the end of the first day of the battle, with his fleet routed, Octavian was forced to leap into the water himself to gather his shipwrecked men and conduct them to a safe place on land. The next day he awoke to see the straits littered with the remains of his ships, his men, and their provisions. Matters were then exacerbated by a violent summer storm that left the majority of Octavian's fleet destroyed, and his men adrift and groaning in the darkness. The destruction of the greater part of Octavian's fleet by this tempest stood stark contrast to Pompey's blessed fortunes at sea, in terms of both

²¹ Powell (2008): 20. Dio records the same incident, with a strange reference to human sacrifice (Dio 48.48.5): "Because of this disaster Caesar despaired of Sicily and was satisfied to guard the coast of the mainland; but Sextus was still more elated, believing himself in very truth to be the son of Neptune, and he put on a dark blue robe and cast alive into the strait not only horses but also, as some relate, men as well."

²² The most substantial historical accounts Pompey's successes are Cassius Dio and Appian. In modern literature, the best treatments are Meyer (1923) and Anton Powell in Gowing (2002).

²³ Cf. Dio 49.5; App. *B. Civ.* 5.81-92; Suet. *Aug.* 16.1.

military success and weather. According to Appian, it was unequalled in fury, even in the memory of Messana's oldest inhabitants.²⁴

Octavian retreated from Sicily to Italy in order to regroup and to enlist the help of the other Triumvirs. Returning to Sicily the following spring, he performed two rituals in hopes of avoiding the disasters of the previous year. First, he personally performed a lustration of his entire fleet.²⁵ Later, to obtain more favorable weather from Neptune, who had seemed to that point truly to favor Pompey, Octavian attempted a sacrifice of blood and wine, which he poured into the sea at Puteoli.²⁶ These failed spectacularly. Almost immediately there followed a storm that destroyed, in Appian's account, six of Augustus' heavy ships, twenty-six lighter ones, and a large number of liburnian galleys.²⁷ It was shortly after this that Pompey ostentatiously switched his purple commander's cloak for a sea-blue one. Octavian is described as altogether pathetic in the whole affair. At one point, after he has taken to land with the remnants of his force, a torrential downpour forced him to spend the night under a large Gallic shield which two of his armor-bearers held above him.²⁸ The other ancient accounts, those of Suetonius and Cassius Dio, do not provide as many details as Appian's, but both do convey the unfortunate and unlucky circumstances that seemed to follow Octavian at this stage of the conflict.²⁹

²⁴ App. B. Civ 5.90: *καὶ τὸ δεινὸν οὐδ' ὑπὸ τῶν ἐγχωρίων ποτὲ τηλικούτων ἐμνημονεύετο γενέσθαι· γενόμενον δὲ ἔθους τε καὶ νόμου κρείσσον διέφθειρε τῶν Καίσαρος νεῶν καὶ ἀνδρῶν τὸ πλεόν.*

²⁵ App. B. Civ 5.96.14-25: *νείμαντες δὲ αὐτά, μέρος ἐς τὴν θάλασσαν ἀπορρίπτουσι καὶ μέρος ἐς τοὺς βωμοὺς ἐπιθέντες ἄπτουσι, καὶ ὁ λεὼς ἐπευφημεί. οὕτω μὲν Ῥωμαῖοι τὰ ναυτικὰ καθαίρουσιν.*

²⁶ App. B. Civ 5.98.1-13.

²⁷ App. B. Civ 5.99.1-7. The episode is also related in Dio 49.1 and Vel. Pet. 2.79.3.

²⁸ App. B. Civ 5.117.

²⁹ Dio says, "He lost the greater part of his fleet and barely avoided destruction himself. Indeed, he could not even escape to his own men in Sicily, but was glad to reach the mainland in safety. And though he himself was then in security, yet when he saw his army cut off on the island, he was terribly distressed." (Dio 49.5.3-4). Suetonius describes the role played by the storm in delaying Octavian's plans (Suet. Aug. 16.1).

In very subtle fashion, the mention of favoring winds and the gods on Aeneas' shield shows that Octavian's luck had turned, and that the gods were in fact on his side. In 38 B.C., neither of these two things had been evident. Virgil also alludes to the events of that time in Books 3 and 5 of the *Aeneid*, which not coincidentally deal with Sicily. As Aeneas prepares to cross from Sicily to Italy, he performs a sacrifice similar to the one made by Octavian on the reverse journey, casting wine and entrails into the sea.³⁰ In Aeneas' case, the sacrifice does succeed: a calm wind arose, and followed the fleet to its destination:

Tris Eryci vitulos et Tempestatibus agnam
caedere deinde iubet, solvique ex ordine funem.
Ipse, caput tonsae foliis evinctus olivae,
stans procul in prora pateram tenet, extaque salsos
proiicit in fluctus ac vina liquentia fundit.
Prosequitur surgens a puppi ventus euntes. (*Aeneid* 5.772-76)

Then he orders slain three bull-calves to Eryx and a lamb to the Storm-gods, and to loose the moorings. He, his head bound with leaves of trimmed olive, stands apart on the prow and holds the cup, and hurls the entrails into the salty wave, and pours the liquid wine.

Additionally, the description of Scylla in Book 3 has traditionally been seen as little more than a parallel of the famous episode from Homer's *Odyssey*. The Greek poet describes the monster as follows:

τῆς ἧ τοι πόδες εἰσὶ δώδεκα πάντες ἄωροι,
ἔξ δέ τέ οἱ δειραὶ περιμήκεες, ἐν δὲ ἐκάστη
σμερδαλέη κεφαλή, ἐν δὲ τρίστοιχοὶ ὀδόντες,
πυκνοὶ καὶ θαμέες, πλείοι μέλανος θανάτοιο. (*Od.* 12.89-92)

On her there are twelve feet, all deformed, and six long necks, and on each a horrible head, and inside three rows of teeth, thick and close, full of black death.

Comparison reveals Virgil's Scylla to be quite different:

³⁰ The connection between this episode in the *Aeneid* and the historical event is made by Powell (2008): 99.

At Scyllam caecis cohibet spelunca latebris,
ora exsertantem et navis in saxa trahentem.
Prima hominis facies et pulchro pectore virgo
pube tenus, postrema immani corpore pistrix,
delphinum caudas utero commissa luporum. (*Aen.* 3.426-28)³¹

But a cavern holds Scylla in its dark recesses, stretching out her face
and dragging ships on the rocks. At first there is a human face, a
maiden of lovely breast down to the groin; below she is a sea-beast of
monstrous form, joining dolphin's tails to a womb of wolves.

As Powell has noted, Virgil's Scylla is not much like Homer's at all. She has much more in common with the image depicted on a coin minted and circulated in Sicily (and parts of Italy) by Sextus Pompey in the early 30s B.C.³² On this coin, Scylla is a beautiful woman (with one head) from the waist up, while her lower half is comprised of fishes' tails and wolves. Moreover, the Scylla on the coin does not devour men, as Homer's monster does. Rather, she holds a ship's rudder behind her head, which she appears ready to smash. This also bears more resemblance to the description in Virgil, who says that Scylla drags ships onto the rocks, while Homer says that she carries off a sailor in each mouth (*Od.* 12.98-100). We ought to note that both Virgil's Scylla and the one on Pompey's coin adhere to the exclusively predominant iconography for the monster in mid-first century Rome.³³ Virgil has consciously deviated from his epic precedent to use an image that originated with Sextus. He also departs from this precedent in the strategy he has his hero use to navigate Scylla and Charybdis: Aeneas avoids them altogether,

³¹ The plural *ora* would seem to indicate multiple heads, but we must then reconcile it with *facies* (singular, as shown by *prima*), and the overall description, which clearly gives the impression of a normal, indeed beautiful woman. Powell (2008): 101 hypothesizes that *ora* is a poetic plural for face, and perhaps a nod to the Homeric description from which Virgil has consciously departed.

³² Powell (2008): 100-2.

³³ M.O. Jentel in *LIMC* 8.1, 1137-1145.

sailing instead along the southern coast of Sicily, as advised by the seer Helenus (*Aen.* 3.429-32).

What was Virgil's purpose in this departure? Scylla gave her name to an actual geographical location, Scyllaeum, on the Italian side of the strait of Messana. The crushing naval defeat that Octavian suffered in 38 B.C. began here. After two days of being completely dominated, he retreated to the mainland and literally took to the mountains to return to Rome, worried that, in his position of power, Sextus would attack Italy. Octavian appears to have entered a depression, from which he only got out after managing to get ships from Antony.³⁴ It is no exaggeration to say that Scyllaeum/Messana may have represented the lowest point of his career. Powell argues compellingly that it would have touched a raw nerve had Virgil shown the father of the Julian family losing men and ships at that same spot. That seems correct, but Virgil also appears to do something else: he shows that it is acceptable, and even prudent, to avoid danger. Aeneas handles Scylla and Charybdis in essentially the same way that Octavian did: he stayed away. Aeneas' decision was thus shown to be not cowardly, but prudent and sanctioned by prophecy. Consequently, the only criticism of Octavian that one could derive from this passage is that he had been *too* bold and courageous.

Since Syme wrote *The Roman Revolution*, which tacitly associated Augustus with the more troubling authoritarian figures of the 20th century, Virgilian scholarship has been dominated by the question of whether Virgil was basically optimistic or pessimistic with regard to the Augustan regime. The delicate treatment of Sicilian history in *Aeneid* 5 helps us to answer to that question. We saw in the previous chapter how even in later years Augustus maintained a campaign of 'propaganda by omission' against Sextus

³⁴ App. B. Civ. 5.85.

Pompey. In reality, while alive, Sextus had been a formidable opponent who inflamed a large portion of Roman society against Octavian. Generally, Antony is regarded as having posed the greatest problem for Augustus in terms of public opinion, but he was in fact much easier to vilify.³⁵ As we observe on the shield that Virgil presents to us in Book 8, he could be classed as a traitor not only to Rome but also to Rome's values, and, in the end, as a non-Roman.

Sextus' memory was in a way more menacing. During the height of his conflict with Octavian, his side was widely considered to be the *partes piae*. Certainly, he could make a claim to *virtus* as well, given his military success, and his policy of amnesty during the proscriptions made him an exemplar of *clementia* and *iustitia*. He had a moral basis for criticism of Octavian that someone like Antony lacked. Even when he was gone these criticisms would have endured, since they were ultimately grounded in fact. It is no coincidence that Augustus' moral "program," as it is called, placed a strong emphasis on virtue in general, and the four virtues inscribed on the *clupeum virtutis* – *virtus*, *clementia*, *pietas*, and *iustitia* – in particular. They had been appropriated by Sextus Pompey, and Augustus ultimately needed to re-appropriate them in order to legitimize his rule in the eyes of his critics, and to eliminate the traces of a resentment that at the time had been quite strong. This became all the more important in later years as he began to conceive of his regime as a dynasty, a new "Golden Age" for Rome, and we saw these elements at work in his public displays beginning in 17 B.C.

Virgil had preceded Augustus in this respect. Having appreciated that the poem acknowledges the Pompeian rhetoric directed at Octavian, Virgil's constant

³⁵ This is the implication of Quint's discussion in chapter 1 of *Epic and Empire* (Quint [1993]: 21-49). Quint also notes that Cleopatra's actions are followed much more closely on the shield than those of Antony, and connects this treatment to the prominence of Dido in the *Aeneid* (Quint [1993]: 28).

preoccupation with a notion of “Julian” virtue can clearly be seen as a response to those who continued to resent the *princeps*. Does not the usual epithet of Octavian’s ancestor Aeneas, *pius*, recall pointedly the manner in which Sextus styled himself, *Magnus Pius*? In Book 6, when Anchises ascribes to Aeneas the quality that will define his progeny, the “Roman art” he describes amounts quite simply to a fusion of *iustitia*, *virtus*, and *clementia*: “to rule the nations, to impose the custom of peace, to spare the low and crush the proud.”³⁶ The correspondence with Pompeian criticisms is clear. As a poet writing for Augustus, and as a man who I shall argue was supportive of the *princeps*, he needed to tread a fine line. On the one hand, reflections of Augustus’ accomplishments needed to be portrayed as sufficiently glorious. On the other, he could not give too much credit to the adversaries against whom these victories had been obtained, for fear of either embarrassing Augustus or of rekindling resentment against him. Thus, Virgil “ignores” Sextus Pompey in the main text of the *Aeneid*. Nonetheless, he lurks in the subtext of the poem, treated as though beneath mention, a “pirate and a robber,” as Augustus would later characterize him, but in reality far more problematic to the success of his rule. Instead of embarrassing Augustus by mentioning Sextus, or conceding that the latter did in fact exhibit the virtues that the Roman people had come to demand from their ruler, Virgil simply redefined the qualities in question, and by means of indirect reference showed how Augustan virtue was superior to Pompeian virtue.

2. The Palinurus Episode

Once we perceive this subtext to these portions of the *Aeneid*, many elements of the poem that have traditionally posed difficulties become clearer. Foremost among

³⁶ *Aen.* 6.851-53.

these is the geographical etiology in Book 5 involving the name Palinurus. Aeneas' oarsman Palinurus is made to fall asleep by the god Somnus, who then pushes him overboard. The only explanation given for his death is that it was the will of Neptune, who delivers what is perhaps the most cryptic of Virgil's unfinished lines: *unum pro multis dabitur caput* (*Aen.* 5.815). Later in Book 6, Aeneas meets Palinurus in the underworld, and discovers that he did not die when he fell overboard, but rather swam to the Italian shore, only to be murdered by the natives there. Palinurus begs to cross with Aeneas from the region of the unburied to his "quiet resting" place (*sedibus placibus*), but Aeneas tells him it is out of the question, since his body still floats at sea (*Aen.* 6.337-83).

The episode is rich in associations with the history surrounding the wars with Sextus.³⁷ The name "Palinurus" refers to a geographical location: the Capo Palinuro, a mile's length of jagged cliffs that juts into the Mediterranean near the Bay of Naples. Dionysios of Halicarnassus, probably deriving his material from the Sicilian historian Timaeus, said that it derived its name from Aeneas' oarsman.³⁸ The role assigned to Neptune, not mentioned in Dionysios' account, seems to be Virgil's innovation. This is a particularly salient detail, as it was at the Capo Palinuro in 36 B.C. that Octavian staged the aforementioned sacrifice to Neptune. This is the first indication that the death of Palinurus in the *Aeneid* relates in some way to the naval disasters that occurred from 38 to 36 B.C.

³⁷ Brenk (1999): 69: "The fate of Palinurus as described by Virgil seems to echo the geography, events, and ideology of the war against Sextus Pompeius."

³⁸ Dion. Hal. 1.53.2. Brenk (1999): 36 posits further layers of the etiology's reception, including Varro. He also cites Perret's argument that Timaios took an originally Greek myth and turned "Palinouros" into a Trojan. Cf. Perret (1942): 119.

Furthering this connection is an often-overlooked detail in the episode. Palinurus did not fall from Aeneas' ship; rather, the god Somnus hurled (*proiecit*) him from his place at the rudder. An instructive contrast can here be drawn between Virgil's narrative and one of the epic models for the scene, the death of Elpenor in Book 10 of the *Odyssey*:

κινυμένων δ' ἐτάρων ὄμαδον καὶ δοῦπον ἀκούσας
ἔξαπίνης ἀνόρουσε καὶ ἐκλάθετο φρεσὶν ἦσιν
ἄψορρον καταβῆναι ἰὼν ἐς κλίμακα μακρὴν,
ἀλλὰ καταντικρὺ τέγεος πέσεν· ἐκ δέ οἱ αὐχὴν
ἀστραγάλων ἐάγη, ψυχὴ δ' Ἄϊδόσδε κατῆλθεν. (*Od.* 10.556-60)

Hearing the hustle and bustle of his comrades as they moved about, he suddenly sprang up, and he forgot to descend by going to the long ladder, but fell headlong from the roof, and his neck was broken away from the spine, and his spirit went down to the house of Hades.

Palinurus, on the other hand, refuses to neglect his duty, despite the protestations of Somnus (who had disguised himself as the Trojan Phorbas), and says:

“Mene salis placidi voltum fluctusque quietos
ignorare iubes? Mene huic confidere monstro?
Aenean credam quid enim fallacibus auris
et caelo, totiens deceptus fraude sereni?” (*Aen.* 5.848-51)

Do you ask me to pay no mind to the calm surface and peaceful waves?
To trust this monster? I, so often deceived by serene deceit, why am I
to trust Aeneas to the lying winds and sky?

The god proceeds to douse his brow with “Lethe's dew” (*rore Lethaeo*). Even in this impaired state, however, which echoes that of Elpenor, Palinurus does not fall; he is pushed by Somnus:

Vix primos inopina quies laxaverat artus,
et super incumbens cum puppis parte revolsa,
cumque gubernaclo, liquidus proiecit in undas
praecipitem ac socios nequiquam saepe vocantem. (*Aen.* 5.857-60)

Scarcely had unexpected slumber slackened his limbs, when leaning over he hurled him headlong into the clear waves together with part of the stern, torn away, and with the rudder, as he called on his comrades again and again, in vain.

The use of the word *proiacere* here is no accident.³⁹ The specific act of casting a victim into the sea was a characteristic part of Greek and Roman nautical sacrifice. Two instances have already been noted: Octavian’s sacrifice in 36 B.C., where according to Appian he hurled (*ἀπορρίπτουσι*) entrails into the bay of Naples, and Sextus’ sacrifice to Neptune as described by Dio, who says he cast (*ἐνέβαλε*) horses and possibly men into the sea off the Sicilian coast. Several Greek apotropaic rituals with which Virgil was probably familiar comprised the throwing of a scapegoat (*pharmakon*) into the sea.⁴⁰ In the *Aeneid*, the occurrence of the word in the Palinurus episode is the culmination of an obviously intentional nexus of terms that clearly portrays his death as a sacrifice. Twice before Virgil had used the word *proiecit* to denote nautical sacrifices: in the passage about Aeneas’ sacrifice, noted above, and also earlier in Book 5, where, during Anchises’ funeral games, the Trojan Coanthus promises to sacrifice a bull to the gods if he wins his race, and to hurl its entrails into the sea. The language used in these three passages is strikingly similar. Coanthus promises to the gods of the sea that he will place a white bull at an altar on the shore, and cast the entrails into the sea:

“...extaque salsos
proiciam in fluctus et vina liquentia fundam.” (*Aen.* 5.237-38)

“And I shall cast his entrails into the salty sea, and pour liquid wine.”

The description of Aeneas’ sacrifice repeats almost exactly Coanthus’ words:

³⁹ Also noted by Brenk (1999): 68-69.

⁴⁰ These include an expiatory ritual performed yearly at Leukas in Akarnania, described by Strabo (10.2.9) and Ampuleius, *Liber Memorialis* (8). Strabo uses a form of the Greek translation for *iacio*, *ρίπτω* (*ρίπτεισθαί*) to describe the ritual. Ampelius, of whom exceedingly little is known, wrote at some time after Trajan’s Parthian campaigns ca. 115 A.D. He presumably drew on sources with which Virgil would have been either familiar or contemporary: Alexandrian histories, Nigidius Figulus, Varro, Nepos, and Trogus. Cf. Brenk (1999): 71 n. 14. Bremmer (1983): 301 also cites the *Suda* and Photius as references to the notion of the scapegoat contained in the Leukas ritual (s.v. *περίφημα*). These sources say that the ritual was accompanied by the words “be thou our offscouring.”

Ipse, caput tonsae foliis evinctus olivae,
stans procul in prora pateram tenet, extaque salsos
proiicit in fluctus ac vina liquentia fundit. (*Aen.* 5.774-76)

He himself, his head wreathed with leaves of trimmed olive, standing
off on the prow holds the cup, and flings the entrails into the salty sea,
and pours liquid wine.

The account of Palinurus' death, *liquidas proiecit in undas*, incorporates the words
liquidas and *proicere*, while replacing *fluctus* with the similar *undas*.

Along with the geographical setting, the sacrificial language used to narrate the
episode suggests a conscious effort on Virgil's part to link Palinurus' death both to
Octavian's sacrifice in 36 B.C., and more generally to the sacrifice of Roman lives in the
Sicilian war.⁴¹ This seems especially to be the case given the fact that Octavian's actions
did not yield any immediate result, and in fact seemed to produce an effect contrary to the
one desired. In Appian's account of this shipwreck, it is the violent, contending winds
that were responsible for most of the destruction suffered by Octavian's fleet.⁴² Here it is
necessary to note the possibility that even Palinurus' name, which suggests linguistically
the Greek *paliouros* (a "contrary wind"), could be a play on words intended to refer
obliquely to this disaster.⁴³ In the opening section of Book 5, Palinurus cries out, as he
looks at the threatening sky, "Quidve, pater Neptune, paras?" The lines that follow seem
especially important:

"Magnanime Aenea, non, si mihi Iuppiter auctor
spondeat, hoc sperem Italiam contingere caelo.

⁴¹ Hardie has also noted ways in which Palinurus' death coheres to the sacral dimension of the *Aeneid*. See Hardie (1993): 32 ff.

⁴² App. *B. Civ.* 5.98: ὁ δὲ Καῖσαρ ἀρχομένου μὲν τοῦ χειμῶνος ἐς τὸν Ἐλεάτην κόλπον ἐρμυδὸν ὄντα συμπεφεύγει, χωρὶς ἐξήρους μῆας, ἢ περὶ τῇ ἄκρᾳ διελύθη· λιβὸς δὲ τὸν νότον μεταλαβόντος ὁ κόλπος ἐκυκᾶτο, ἐς τὴν ἐσπέραν ἀνεωγμένος, καὶ οὔτε ἐκπλεῦσαι δυνατὸν ἦν ἔτι πρὸς ἐναντίον τοῦ κόλπου τὸ πνεῦμα, οὔτε κῶπαι κατείχον οὔτε ἄγκυραι, ἀλλ' ἐς ἀλλήλας ἢ ἐς τὰς πέτρας ἐνηράσσοντο αἱ νῆες. καὶ νυκτὸς ἦν ἔτι τὸ δεινὸν ἀτοπώτερον.

⁴³ Thus Brenk (1999): 35, 50; also McKay (1967): 3. For the etymology and linguistic association of the name Palinurus, cf. Lossau (1980): 113.

Mutati transversa fremunt et vespere ab atro
consurgunt venti, atque in nubem cogitur aër.
Nec nos obniti contra, nec tendere tantum
sufficimus. Superat quoniam Fortuna, sequamur,
quoque vocat, vertamus iter. (*Aen.* 5.17-23)

Great-hearted Aeneas, not if Jupiter himself should guarantee it could I hope to reach Italy under such skies. The winds have changed: they roar against us, and rise together from the black west, and the air has massed into a cloud. We can neither resist, nor even struggle against such a thing. Since Fortune prevails, let us acquiesce, and whither she calls, let us bend our course.

The first significant image of the book is of Palinurus struggling with adverse winds.

Aeneas' reply to these lines intensifies the focus on this image:

Tum pius Aeneas: "Equidem sic poscere ventos
iamdudum et frustra cerno te tendere contra:
Flecte viam velis." (*Aen.* 5.26-28)

Then Pius Aeneas said, "Indeed, for some time now I have seen you beg the winds, and how vainly you strive against them. Bend our course with your sails..."⁴⁴

The character Phorbas, whose shape Somnus assumes in order to push Palinurus into the sea, provides further reason to believe that the latter's death was meant to evoke a nautical sacrifice. If we consider again the Homeric model of Elpenor, we see that the inclusion of this secondary character was an innovation on Virgil's part. Elpenor fell from the roof, with no external agency required. A second Homeric model for the Palinurus episode was the death of Menelaos' helmsman Phrontis, who was struck by Apollo's "gentle arrows" during the return from Troy.⁴⁵ Like Palinurus, he was killed by a god; however, however in Homer that god acts directly, while in Virgil he assumes a different form. Phorbas appears in Rhodian mythology and was sometimes associated

⁴⁴ Brenk astutely notes that this echo of Palinurus' words most likely forms an Alexandrian play on words (*venti...nos...contra...tendere; ventos...te...tendere... contra*). Cf. Brenk (1999): 50.

⁴⁵ *Od.* 3.276-85. Williams (1987): 199 observed a parallel between the two deaths, in that they were both painless and peaceful.

with the Erysichthon myth.⁴⁶ In the primary version of the myth, he was shipwrecked with his sister Parthenia. The two swam to shore at Ialysos on the island of Rhodes, where they were taken in and treated hospitably by the local ruler Thamneus. At Ialysos and elsewhere on Rhodes, the ritual that sprang from this tradition included propitiatory sacrifices to Phorbas at the opening of each sailing season. This ritual had been transported by Rhodian sailors to Phorbantia (modern Levanzo), an island ten kilometers from Drepanum (Trapani), the site of Anchises' funeral games.⁴⁷ This adds yet another layer to the association of the Palinurus episode with both the geography of the area and the notion of propitiatory sacrifice that Virgil wished to convey.

One can form a reasonable interpretation of what Virgil intended to show with these portions of Book 5: bad luck at sea, caused by Fortuna and Neptune, which must be expiated by sacrifice. In the *Aeneid*, this expiation is accomplished partly by Aeneas' tossing of entrails into the sea. However, on a more fundamental level, it is the sacrifice of Palinurus' life that buys the Trojans safe passage to Italy.⁴⁸ Immediately after Aeneas' sacrifice, Venus begs Neptune to allow the Trojan fleet to arrive intact at Italy. Neptune assents, but he arbitrarily demands Palinurus' death. The mechanism by which this exchange operates is left completely uncertain; we are only told, *unum pro multis dabitur caput*. Nevertheless, the sacrifice is ultimately successful, and despite inflicting a temporary loss on the Trojans, Neptune emphasizes that he has always been on their side:

Nec minor in terris, Xanthum Simoëntaque testor,
Aeneae mihi cura tui. Cum Troia Achilles
exanimata sequens impingeret agmina muris,

⁴⁶ Robertson (1984): 378-82 examines the various forms of the Phorbas myth and establishes that he was originally a Rhodian cult figure who was later linked to Erysichthon, on the basis of similarities between the respective stories.

⁴⁷ Brenk (1999): 71.

⁴⁸ Cf. Hardie (1993): 32-33.

milia multa daret leto, gementque repleti
annes, nec reperire viam atque evolvere posset
in mare se Xanthus, Pelidae tunc ego forti
congressum Aenean nec dis nec viribus aequis
nube cava rapui, cuperem cum vertere ab imo
structa meis manibus periurae moenia Troiae.
Nunc quoque mens eadem perstat mihi: pelle timores.
Tutus, quos optas, portus accedet Averni.
Unus erit tantum, amissum quem gurgite quaeres;
unum pro multis dabitur caput. (*Aen.* 5.803-15)

No less on land (I call on Xanthus and Simoïs as witnesses) has your Aeneas been my care. When Achilles in his pursuit dashed the desperate Trojan ranks against their walls, when he sent many thousands to their death, and the teeming waters groaned, and Xanthus could not find a way or roll out to sea, then did I snatch Aeneas, met with the brave son of Peleus, with neither gods nor his strength in his favor, in a cloud, even though I would have liked to upturn from their base the walls of perjured Troy, built by my own hands. Even now my mind is unchanged; cast off your fear. As you pray, safe will he reach Avernus' port. One alone will there be, whom you will seek in the abyss; one life will be given for many.

It does not require too creative a reading to locate a historical basis for this passage in the war with Sextus. Many aspects of that war seemed to indicate that the Pompeians truly did enjoy divine favor. The pattern of sacrifice—loss—success mirrors the events of 36 B.C. In this passage, Virgil provides a reinterpretation of those events. As was the case with Octavian, Aeneas' sacrifice was significant, but not entirely sufficient; in exchange for Julian *imperium*, the gods for some reason demanded the loss of Roman lives. Nevertheless, this was due not to any permanent enmity, but rather to some inscrutable aspect of the divine will. As we see in lines 808-11, Virgil could cite an instance from the *Iliad* where Poseidon/Neptune had helped Aeneas.⁴⁹ Thus, Virgil provides a historical

⁴⁹ Neptune reminds Venus of how he had saved Aeneas from Achilles, despite the fact that he was on the side of the Greeks. Virgil refers here to *Il.* 20.290-352, a passage which Scodel (1999): 74-76 says is deliberately inconsistent with the poem's primary narrative (cf. also O'Hara [2007]: 13). The fact that Virgil introduces this detail just before the final nautical sacrifice to Neptune in the *Aeneid* justifies the interpretation I have advanced here.

consolation of sorts, while countering the Pompeian propaganda that the gods, particularly Neptune, were hostile to Octavian. This lies at the root of Virgil's presentation of Neptune in the *Aeneid*, which constitutes one of the most significant departures from his Homeric model. Poseidon is the primary antagonist of the *Odyssey*; Neptune's role in the *Aeneid*, while at times ambiguous, is fundamentally in favor of Aeneas and the Trojans.⁵⁰ The preceding discussion shows that this "refiguring" of the epic tradition occurred as the result of real historical events in the career of Octavian/Augustus.

3. Eryx

It would be a mistake to search for too direct a connection between the Sicilian portion of the *Aeneid* and details from the war with Sextus. From what we may judge, the logic by which Augustan poetry operated was far too subtle to allow a linear allegorization of obvious historical events.⁵¹ Nonetheless, a characteristic feature of poetry from the period, and of the Roman frame of reference in general, was the practice of viewing the present in terms of the past, and vice versa.⁵² The effect of this practice was often a more or less impressionistic, yet unmistakable connection between a person or event from the past and one from the present. The examples we have seen to this point

⁵⁰ Cf. Powell (2008): 96-97.

⁵¹ Cf. Galinsky (1996): 229: "Augustan poetry was not simple "propaganda" or "organization of opinion" that drummed home straightforward messages. Like Augustan art, it delighted in being a complex mixture of different traditions, many of them Greek, which provided an unprecedented range of allusiveness and resonance."

⁵² This is also the opinion of Brenk (1999): 46 and Powell (2006): 24-25. However, the most concise and elegant expression of this principle can be found in Griffin (1985): 191: "[The Romans] found it natural to 'see through history' and to recognize one event or person in another." An example, Griffin says, is Cicero's claim that a theater audience never failed to catch a possible allusion to a contemporary figure (Cic. *Pro. Sest.* 118). Of Virgil specifically, Griffin writes (1985): 193, "Virgil also uses the device to bring out and to do justice to the complexity of our attitude to his story and to Rome itself."

were relatively clear and direct. The treatment of Sicily in the *Aeneid* is somewhat more difficult to characterize. On the one hand, Virgil went to great lengths to emphasize the Julian connection to the island. Obviously, Book 5, where we witness Anchises' funeral games, serves that end. On the other hand, the numerous references in that book to Eryx form an important subtext that most have failed to recognize.⁵³ Eryx was Aeneas' half-brother; his mother was Venus and his father was the mortal Butes. According to Diodorus Siculus, on account of his divine birth he became king of a large part of the island, and founded a city called Eryx, on the mountain that also bore his name. Here he founded the shrine to Venus Erycina, which Diodorus says was later embellished by Aeneas during his stay on Sicily.⁵⁴ Eryx is mentioned directly nine times in Book 5, always with reverence, as though he were a patron divinity of the book. Palinurus emphasizes that he is Aeneas' brother, and predicts that this will guarantee safe arrival on Sicily:

Nec litora longe
fida reor fraterna Erycis portusque Sicanos,
si modo rite memor servata remetior astra. (*Aen.* 5.23-25)

Not far, I think, are the trusted shores of your brother Eryx, and the Sicanian ports, if with correct memory I retrace the stars that I saw before.

Behind this, however, lay a tragic and disturbing history that is referenced only indirectly. Eryx had been visited by Hercules, who had just taken the cattle of Geryon. The accounts of their meeting differ considerably among historians and mythographers, but the basic details are that Hercules challenged Eryx to a boxing (or wrestling) match,

⁵³ Galinsky mentions Eryx at several places in his discussion of the importance of Sicily in the *Aeneid*, but never offers a clear interpretation of the myth's role in Virgil's epic; cf. Galinsky (1969): 75, 85, 172.

⁵⁴ Diod. Sic. 4.83.1-4.

with the former staking his newly-won cattle on the bout, and the latter his kingdom. Hercules won, and killed Eryx in the process.⁵⁵ The boxing match between Entellus and Dares in Book 5 of the *Aeneid* calls this aspect of the myth to our attention; Entellus in fact owns the gloves with which Eryx had fought Hercules, “still splattered with blood and gore.” The death of Eryx is further recalled when Entellus kills the bull after Aeneas stops the fight. Bulls play a significant role in the Eryx myth. As noted, it was for the cattle of Geryon that he had fought Hercules. In Pseudo-Apollodorus’ account, a single bull had escaped from Hercules at Rhegium and had ended up in Sicily, where Eryx kept it and used it to sire cattle from his own herd. Hercules discovered this and demanded that he return the bull, which Eryx refused to do unless Hercules could defeat him in a wrestling match. Hercules managed to defeat Eryx three times, and killed him in the process.⁵⁶

Virgil clearly had this story in mind when he constructed the boxing match in Book 5. The Homeric inspiration for the scene occurs during the funeral games for Patroclus in book 23 of the *Iliad*, where Achilles gives a mule as prize to the victorious boxer Epeius. Virgil chose a different animal: like Eryx and Hercules, Dares and Entellus contend for a bull. An examination of the scene’s Hellenistic inspirations reveals the connection between Dares-Entellus and Hercules-Eryx to be even deeper and more meaningful. When Dares is introduced in *Aeneid* 5, we are told,

Solus qui Paridem solitus contendere contra,
Idemque ad tumulum, quo maximus occubat Hector,

⁵⁵ The most substantial versions of the myth can be found in: Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2.5.10; Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 4.23; Pausanias 3.16.4 and 4.36.3-4.

⁵⁶ *Apol. Bibl.* 2.5.10. One aspect of the myth that will be significant later involves how Hercules discovered the location of his lost bull. According to Varro, he asked certain natives if they had seen the missing animal. Not knowing Greek, they eventually uttered the word *vitulus*, from which Hercules named the territory that the bull had traversed: *Vitulia*, which ultimately became *Italia*. Cf. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.35.1-3; also Varro *Rust.* 2.5.3.

Victorem Buten, immani corpore qui se
Bebrycia veniens Amyci de gente ferebat,
Perculit et fulva moribundum extendit harena. (*Aen.* 5.370-74)

He alone was accustomed to contend with Paris, and he by the tomb
where great Hector lay struck down the champion Butes, from Amycus'
Bebrycian race, who came forward with his hulking form, and stretched
him out dying on the yellow sand.

Part of the Argonautica myth involved a landing at Bebrycia (Bithynia), where the king Amycus was accustomed to challenge all visitors to a boxing match. Out of the Argonauts, it was Polydeuces who volunteered to fight the king. The episode is treated extensively by both Theocritus and Apollonius of Rhodes. Theocritus' *Idyll 22* is an ode to the Dioscuroi, and the half that deals with Polydeuces recounts his match with Amycus.⁵⁷ The opening section of Book 2 of the *Argonautica* treats the same subject.⁵⁸ Butes does not fit into either narrative. He is mentioned twice elsewhere in the *Argonautica*, however, and according to Apollonius he was Eryx's father.⁵⁹ Virgil's mention of Butes serves simply to blur the myth and to set up Amycus' Bebrycian line as a race of boxers (and losing ones at that). It leaves us with two opposing groups of combatants: Polydeuces-Hercules-Dares and Amycus-Butes-Eryx-Entellus. The latter is

⁵⁷ Nelis briefly mentions the possibility that *Idyll 22* influenced the composition of the boxing match in *Aeneid* 5 (Nelis [2001]: 9 n. 41). Others who have noticed the Virgil's allusion to Theocritus include Heinze (1993): 153, Bellardi (1962), and Sens (1995): 53; (1997): 57.

⁵⁸ On Virgil's use of the *Argonautica* as a prism through which he refigured the original Homeric episode, cf. Nelis (2001): 8-21. Nelis oversimplifies considerably the significance of Virgil's use of Apollonius, claiming that the episode shows how "a whole section of the narrative can be built out of models in the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Argonautica*...to create a Roman and Augustan epic built on Homeric and Apollonian foundations." Such a conclusion leads one to believe that Virgil had no further purpose except to combine a theme from Homer with its Apollonian "variations," and that "Augustan epic" ultimately consists simply of a pastiche of literary precedents. In the analysis I provide below, I hope to show that Virgil had a deeper reason for incorporating elements from Apollonius (as well as Theocritus, whose importance in this passage Nelis largely ignores) into this originally Homeric *topos*.

⁵⁹ First, we are told (*Arg.* 1.95) that he was an Argonaut who came from Cecropia (Attica). Later (*Arg.* 4.912-19) Apollonius describes how he was the only member of the band to be enticed by the sirens' song. He would have drowned, had not Cypris "the goddess who rules Eryx" rescued him and set him down at Lilybaeum on Sicily. This, then is the background for the union that produces Eryx. It is unlikely that Virgil meant his introduction of Dares to refer to the same Butes, the father of Eryx. This would have made Dares and Entellus natural rivals, since Entellus is "Eryx's brother" (*Aen.* 5.412), but we would then have to account for Butes' presence at Troy.

connected by virtue of its members' relationship to Amycus. The former is linked perhaps by a shared ancestor, Zeus (one of the ancestors of the Trojan people was Dardanus, who was the offspring of Zeus and Electra),⁶⁰ and certainly by the trope that Virgil establishes.

The allusion to Amycus frames the episode within this tradition, and more importantly introduces expectations for how the scene might go, based on Theocritus' and Apollonius' versions. The episode itself takes place contrary to all of these expectations. For both Apollonius and Theocritus, it was Amycus who brashly instigated the fight, while his opponent volunteered somewhat reluctantly.⁶¹ This also seems to characterize the Hercules-Eryx myth: according to Pseudo-Apollodorus, Eryx refuses to give back Hercules' bull unless the latter boxed him for it.⁶² In Virgil the roles are reversed; Dares is the instigator while Entellus initially refused the challenge, acknowledging with humility that his strength is not what it once was.⁶³ Most importantly, in the boxing tradition to which Virgil refers, one of the two sides always wins: Polydeuces defeated Amycus, Hercules defeated Eryx, and Dares defeated Butes. In each instance, the loser was killed. The only exception is in Theocritus' account; there, Polydeuces spares Amycus on the condition that he swear an oath to his father Poseidon to never harass travelers again. This eccentric version provided Virgil with the possibility for a "happy" ending, and we can perceive his reliance on Theocritus by comparing the section in the *Aeneid* with *Idyll* 22.123-30. In Theocritus' poem, Amycus' attempts to land a fatal blow, but Polydeuces ducks aside and punches the Bebrycian king

⁶⁰ Dion. Hal. 1.61.

⁶¹ Apol. Rhod. *Arg.* 2.19-24; Theoc. *Id.* 22.65-74.

⁶² Pseud. Apoll. *Bibl.* 2.111.

⁶³ *Aen.* 5.383-86. On the reversal in the epic tradition that this represents, cf. Lovatt (2005): 145.

in the face, smashing his teeth and turning his face to “mash.” Dares is similarly battered after the fight: *iactantemque utroque caput, crassumque cruorem ore eiectantem mixtosque in sanguine dentes* (5.469-70). Entellus twice misses with a fatal blow, “from on high.”⁶⁴ By following the Theocritean model in this respect, Virgil allows Dares to escape with only severely wounded pride and a bloodied face.

Nevertheless, Virgil manages to combine both the Apollonian and Theocritean endings. Entellus obeys Aeneas and does not kill Dares, but he does kill the bull that he had won as a substitute. The language that Virgil uses here is somewhat evocative of Apollonius’ description of the death of Amycus:

κόψε μεταΐγδην ὑπὲρ οὐρατος, ὅστέα δ’ εἶσω
 ῥῆξεν· ὁ δ’ ἀμφ’ ὀδύνη γνῦξ ἤριπεν. οἱ δ’ ἰάχησαν
 ἥρωες Μινύαι· τοῦ δ’ ἀθρόος ἔκχυτο θυμός. (*Arg.* 2.95-97)

With a rush struck him above the ear, and broke the bones inside; the other fell to his knees in pain. And the Minyan heroes shouted out while his life poured out all at once.

Durosque reducta
 Libravit dextra media inter cornua caestus,
 Arduus, effractoque inlisis in ossa cerebro.
 Sternitur exanimisque tremens procumbit humili bos. (*Aen.* 5.478-81)

He drew back his right hand and from his full height, swung the hard battle glove between the horns, and the brains scattered as he broke the bones. The bull falls and lay stretched, quivering, lifeless on the ground.

However, Virgil’s use of *arduus* (*OLD*: “high, lofty”) reveals that the passage is in fact directly borrowed from an earlier line in Apollonius, where Amycus prepares to strike

Polydeuces but misses:

ἔνθα δ’ ἔπειτ’ Ἄμυκος μὲν ἐπ’ ἀκροτάτοισιν ἀερθεῖς
 βουτύπος οἶα πόδεσσι τανύσσατο, καὶ δὲ βαρεῖαν

⁶⁴ Once at 443-49 (*alte*), and again at 480 (*arduus*), where he “misses” Dares and kills the bull.

χεῖρ' ἐπὶ οἱ πελέμιξεν (Arg. 2.90-92)

Next Amycus rising on tiptoe, like one who slays an ox, sprung to his full height and swung his heavy hand down upon him...

Virgil's boxer *does* in fact slay an ox, and the echo is perhaps meant to link Entellus' sacrifice to Amycus' miss.

Clearly, these literary inversions were aimed at a specific goal. Taken together, they efface the negative and unpleasant aspects of "Amycus' race" and replace them with a more sympathetic rendering. Entellus has a sort of quiet nobility that almost belies his ferocity in the fight. Nevertheless, Virgil's network of allusions makes Entellus remarkable precisely *because* he represents a departure from his predecessors. In the context of funeral games, which after Homer served obligatorily as a respite from the deadly world of the battlefield, a fatal boxing match would have been improper. As was also the case with Homer, however, it is the contrast with this deadly context that provides Virgil's scene with its meaning. Entellus practically kills Dares; in fact, he would have, had Aeneas not stopped the fight. Thus, while not violating the rules that governed the portrayal of funeral games, Virgil brings to mind the deadly results of previous meetings between the two sides. Virgil dissociates Entellus from this past, but he also makes him the vehicle through which this past becomes meaningful in the poem.

To determine what that meaning is, we ought to consider that the appearance of Eryx in the book centers around his death at the hands of Hercules. Virgil's network of allusions transforms this encounter into a trope, in which a member of Eryx' family fights and is defeated by Hercules, or someone occupying his role. But Eryx' representative in *Aeneid* 5 wins a surprise victory, and given what we now know of the literary tradition, we expect him to exact revenge for the long history of failure. As noted, the only thing

that stops him is Aeneas, who functions as a sort of *deus ex machina* by enforcing the epic conventions that forbid death at funeral games. So he kills a scapegoat in an explicit sacrifice:

Hanc tibi, Eryx, meliorem animam pro morte Daretis
persolvo; hic victor caestus artemque repono. (*Aen.* 5.483-84)

This better life I offer to you Eryx, in place of Dares; here as victor I lay
down my battle gloves and my art.

Thus in place of the retribution demanded by the literary trope, Entellus “misses” and kills a bull, who dies just like Apollonius’ Amycus (and presumably Eryx) did. We ought also to notice the ambiguity of *melioem*: how is the bull’s life “better”? Is it better because Dares did not have to die? Or does Entellus mean better in the moral sense, i.e. that Dares ought to have been killed in place of the bull?

The ambiguity of this verse blurs the association between Dares and the bull, and causes us to consider which of the two was actually supposed to die.⁶⁵ Another aspect of Virgil’s language achieves a similar effect. Until the final *Daretis* (if we imagine hearing, rather than reading, these lines) we are inclined to read *pro morte* according to the more common use of *pro* (as the opposite of *contra*): “I offer for this better life for your death, Eryx...”⁶⁶ That is to say, we expect Entellus to perform a sacrifice that Eryx’ death somehow demanded. The genitive *Daretis* at the end changes everything, and the hint that Eryx’ death demanded expiatory sacrifice slips back beneath the surface.⁶⁷ This seems to be intentional on Virgil’s part: the first five times Dares’ name occurs in the

⁶⁵ On this blurred distinction, cf. Feldherr (2002): 69.

⁶⁶ For *pro* and *contra*, cf. *OLD* “pro” II.B.1. *Pro* can signify “a standing before or in front of, for defence or protection; hence an acting for, in behalf of, in favor of, for the benefit of, on the side of (opp. contra, adversum).” We might initially read *pro* in Entellus’ address as indicating that he will act “on behalf of” Eryx.

⁶⁷ Cf. again *OLD* “pro” II.B.2. *Pro* can also mean, “With the notion of replacement or substitution, *in the place of, instead of, for.*” This leads us to realize that the bull functions as a substitute for Dares, which subverts our expectation of a human sacrifice performed *on behalf of* Eryx.

episode, it is in the nominative or the accusative *Dares/Daren*, which cannot end a hexameter. The next three times he uses the alternate accusative *Dareta*, which is a suitable word with which to end a line. The next occurrence is the genitive *Daretis* in the line we have been examining, but by this point we do not expect to hear a genitive name in this position. Virgil waits to clarify *pro morte* until the last possible second.⁶⁸ Now we realize that a human sacrifice to expiate the death of Eryx has narrowly been avoided, simply on account of the festive setting of funeral games. The episode has a potentially disturbing dimension, which Virgil conceals only partially.

These allusions establish a dark counterpoint to the events of Book 5, which as “games” are generically marked as a cheerful respite from more serious epic concerns (i.e. war).⁶⁹ While Eryx was Aeneas’ brother, the interaction between Sicily and Troy would not always be fraternal. The fatal episodes that Virgil hints at prefigure yet another historical parallel from the war between Sextus and Octavian. After his (or rather, Agrippa’s) decisive victory at Naulochus in 36 B.C., Octavian took measures to prevent the potential rise of a “fifth column,” comprised of those who had supported Sextus, in Sicily. Among the historians on whom we rely for these events (Cassius Dio and Appian), the details regarding these measures are scant, perhaps owing to a pro-Augustan bias on their part or on the part of the original sources.⁷⁰ While relating that he exacted a tribute of 1600 talents from the island, Appian portrays Octavian as having acted with a fair degree of leniency: he says that he pardoned the Pompeian leaders and

⁶⁸ I became aware of the alternation between *Daren* and *Dareta* after reading McGowan’s paper, although he makes a very different, but also valid, point. The shift from the accusative *Daren* to *Dareta* occurs after the fight turns in Entellus’ favor, and involves a play on words with the aorist passive participle of the Greek δέρω, “to flay.” Cf. McGowan (2002): 80 ff.

⁶⁹ These expectations are, of course, continually subverted in a variety of ways by ancient authors, as we have seen Virgil do here. For the ambiguous relationship between epic games and the more serious realities that they mirror, see Lovatt (2005): 4-8.

⁷⁰ Stone (1984): 13.

refused to pursue Sextus, “because he was not one of [Octavian’s] father’s murderers.” He also, however, turned Sicily into an occupied province, appointing a *propraetor* and assigning a division of his army to the territory.⁷¹ Dio provides a few more critical details. According to his account, Octavian punished most of the members of the senatorial or equestrian classes who had enlisted with Sextus, while incorporating into his own legions the majority of the rank and file. He also says that some cities surrendered to Octavian and were pardoned and allowed to maintain some measure of autonomy, while others resisted and were “punished.” Still, Dio does not describe what this punishment entailed. However, Diodorus Siculus mentions in a brief notice about the city of Tauromenium that Octavian had expelled its inhabitants and had later set up a Roman colony there. The archaeological evidence indicates that this sort of activity took place throughout Sicily in the years following the battle of Naulochus. An important study by Stone has shown that the punishment that Octavian meted out to recalcitrant cities was widespread and extensive. Her survey of archeological findings catalogues a systematic series of abandonments and devastations that can be dated to the 30s B.C., commencing with the defeat of Sextus in 36 B.C. The most compelling of these findings were discovered near Aidone, considered to have been the site of ancient Morgantina, and indicate a forced depopulation that must have taken place around 35 B.C.⁷² Similar

⁷¹ Appian *B. Civ.* 5.127, 129.

⁷² Stone (1984): 16-19 cites as evidence the remains of a house discovered in Morgantina that shows signs of having been destroyed by an intense fire. The latest coins found inside were Roman issue from the late 40s B.C., as well as two *asses* depicting Sextus Pompey datable to 40-35 B.C. This sort of destruction, as well as evidence of abandonment, is discernible in other houses and buildings around the city. Stone rightly suggests that these findings could not be related to the military campaigns ca. 36 B.C., since Morgantina is too far inland to have been affected by them. Rather, the destruction and abandonment of the town must have been the result of Octavian’s measures after the war. Significantly, only one skeleton datable to the period has been found at Morgantina. Stone concludes, “A ‘police’ action ca. 35 B.C. involving the removal of the population of Morgantina in retaliation for support for Sextus Pompey is the only logical cause for the destruction and abandonments.”

evidence can be found throughout Sicily, which provides agreement with the descriptions of Sicily during the period given by Strabo and Pliny the Elder.⁷³ It was not until the mid-20s B.C. that Augustus began the reconstruction of the Sicilian cities. By the time this was completed in 21 B.C. (Dio 54.7.1) Sicily had ceased to exercise any autonomous importance, having been reduced to a “backwater” satellite oriented entirely towards Rome. Thus, the importance of the island under Sextus Pompey, along with the resistance to Octavian’s control, constituted “the final show of independence by the old Sicilian cities.”⁷⁴ Stone’s conclusion seems correct: for the ordinary Sicilian at the time, life must have been miserable.⁷⁵ Sicily had been integrated into the empire, but at a tremendous human cost.

Aeneid 5 is tinged with allusion to this tragic history. On the whole, Virgil’s mention of the Eryx myth is an oblique reference to the problematic relationship between Sicily and Rome.⁷⁶ Eryx’ “off-stage” death is situated in a pattern of violence that is shown to have existed between the Trojan/Roman and Sicilian sides. As a son of Venus, he was Aeneas’ brother, but he was also closely identified with Sicily.⁷⁷ Additionally, the boxing match between Eryx and Hercules was connected to a prevalent etymology for

⁷³ Stone (1984): 19: “The small town of Megara Hyblaea disappeared around 35 B.C.; a hoard of coins including issues of ca. 40 B.C. provides the best evidence for the date of the abandonment. West of Agrigentum, Heraklea Minoa was abandoned in the same period. The hinterland of Agrigentum around Sciacca shows occupation into the first century B.C. followed by reoccupation in the second half of the first century A.D. Three coin hoards found in western Sicily provide additional evidence for anxiety in that area in the 30s B.C. Strabo (2.6.4 ff.) describes a veritable wasteland; of Morgantina, he says, *καὶ τὸ Μοργάντιον δὲ εἰκὸς ὑπὸ τῶν Μοργήτων ᾤκισθαι πόλις δ’ ἦν αὐτῆ, νῦν δ’ οὐκ ἔστω.* For Pliny’s description, see *N.H.* 3.8.88-91. Cf. Rostovtzeff (1998): 629 n. 20.

⁷⁴ Stone (1984): 22. Stone notes that from that point forward all of the important cities in Sicily were located on the northern and eastern coasts of the island, i.e. along the natural lines of commerce with the Italian peninsula.

⁷⁵ Stone (1984): 19.

⁷⁶ Cf. Brenk (1999): 73.

⁷⁷ See Galinsky (1969): 75.

the name of Italy, with which Virgil was almost certainly familiar.⁷⁸ Hercules christened the territory that the lost bull of Geryon had traversed *Italia*, based on the word that its natives kept repeating to him as he searched (*vitulus*).⁷⁹ Moving forward in the pattern, Entellus is a native Sicilian whose incorporation into the Trojan (sc. Roman) people is connected to an act of deadly violence. Virgil's manipulation of his literary precedents renders the absence of Dares' death from the narrative conspicuous: it is the only detail missing from an account that would otherwise possess all the gravity of the historical events that the scene evokes. The depiction of Entellus as a Sicilian represents a rather striking innovation: ancient sources had listed him among the Trojan followers of Aeneas.⁸⁰ Finally, when Book 5 closes with the death of Palinurus, we see the latest life claimed by this troubling dynamic.

As we shall see, Palinurus' death foreshadows that of Turnus in several meaningful ways. By so doing, Virgil invites us to generalize the ideas that underlie *Aeneid* 5, such that they transcend the Rome-Sicily context and become relevant to the basic reality of human existence. In this way, Virgil structures Book 5 around one of his main preoccupations: the human cost of the process of history. For previous generations of scholars, *Aeneid* 5 constituted an interlude, a release of tension between the emotional intensity and thematic significance of the fourth and sixth books.⁸¹ In reality, as we have

⁷⁸ Judging by his clear reliance on Varro's *De Re Rustica*, which references the etymology, in the *Georgics*. Cf. Morgan (1999): 131; Thomas (1988): 111.

⁷⁹ See n. 56 *supra*; also Morgan (1999): 132.

⁸⁰ Servius (*Ad Aen.* 5.389) says that according to Hyginus, Entellus was a Trojan. Cf. Feldherr (2002): 67; Cairns (1989): 227.

⁸¹ Galinsky (1969) has ascribed a greater significance to the book, but primarily as it relates to the structure of the poem as a whole, and not on its own merits. More recently, Lovatt has discussed the way in which the games serve to explain important aspects of the rest of the *Aeneid*, most significantly by contrasting Aeneas' control of the narrative in Book 5 with what she perceives as his loss of control during the duel in Book 12 (Lovatt [2005], especially 277-305). In a very perceptive essay, Feldherr (2002) has also argued that elements of the boxing match between Dares and Entellus may provide an interpretive key for the

seen, while Virgil generically modeled the greater part of the book on Homer's funeral games for Patroclus, much darker and more troubling motifs lurk beneath the surface.

III. History as Sacrifice

The key required to interpret *Aeneid* 5 is the notion of sacrifice that Virgil employs.⁸² As Entellus hints, given the long history involving Eryx and his family, something needed to die at the end of the boxing match; because this match is situated in an epic game, we are spared from witnessing the death of Dares. But we have seen that when Entellus kills his bull, the act is explicitly depicted as a sacrifice. As noted, Palinurus' death is also clearly sacrificial. These deaths serve to equate the losses endured by Sicily to those suffered by Rome, and ultimately attribute them to some inscrutable force that transcends individual agency, rather than to any human cause. This force is best understood as the "sacrificial logic" of history. To see this, we now turn briefly to the darker side of *Aeneid* 5, which allows us to connect the sacrifices in that book to the poem's climactic sacrifice, the death of Turnus.

1. Intimations of Doom in *Aeneid* 5

The deaths of Palinurus and Eryx are foreshadowed by other "dark" episodes within *Aeneid* 5. As when Entellus slaughters his bull, the death of the dove during the

whole epic. Feldherr's conclusion is the most significant and productive, and I cite his ideas several times below.

⁸² Hardie (1993) offers a similar discussion of the function of sacrificial imagery in the *Aeneid*, based largely on the theory of the "sacrificial crisis" first set forth by René Girard. For Girard, social and cultural order depends on the establishment of sacrificial distinctions, which differentiate "pure" (sc. "beneficial") and "impure" (sc. "harmful") violence (Girard [1977]: 49, cf. Hardie [1993]: 21). Girard's theory is extremely instructive, and Hardie's application of it is insightful, but I take issue below with his belief that the tension and ambiguity present in Virgil's characterization of violence is fully resolved simply by sanctioning such actions as pure and beneficial.

archery contest is another animal death described in human terms.⁸³ These actions are not merely isolated, tragic incidents in an otherwise lighthearted book; they are instead instances where a violence that is hinted at throughout the book breaks through the surface and is actually realized. Earlier, during the boat race, Gyas becomes enraged because his pilot Menoetes is unwilling to risk going near rocks. So he tosses him overboard:

segnemque Menoeten,
oblitus decorisque sui sociumque salutis,
in mare praecipitem puppi deturbat ab alta (*Aen.* 5.173-75)

And he shoved timid Menoetes from the high stern headlong into the sea, heedless of propriety and the safety of his comrades.

The men on shore watch and laugh, as the old man Menoetes drags himself out of the water. If we are sensitive to the language, which is evocative of drowning, their laughter seems especially perverse:

Illum et labentem Teucris et risere natantem,
et salsos rident revomentem pectore fluctus. (*Aen.* 5.181-82)

The Teucrians laughed at him as he fell and swam, and they laugh watching him coughing saltwater out of his lungs.

A number of scholars have recognized that this passage anticipates the death of Palinurus.⁸⁴ Beyond that, it is a rather macabre story, since it seems as though Menoetes could well have died. This is not to mention the fact that he is old (*senior*, 179), making Gyas' act come across as quite impious.

⁸³ *Aen.* 5.517-18: *Decidit exanimis, vitamque reliquit in astris aetheriis, fixamque refert delapsa sagittam.* "It fell dead, and it left its life in the stars of the aether, and in its fall it brought back the arrow that had pierced it."

⁸⁴ The similarities are discussed by Putnam (1968): 75 ff., Kraggerud (1968): 167 ff., and Nicolls (1988): 468.

The same sense exists in another dark episode that occurs during the games.

While running in the footrace, Nisus slips and falls in a puddle of blood and gore from the bulls that Aeneas has sacrificed:

Iamque fere spatio extremo fessique sub ipsam
finem adventabant, levi cum sanguine Nisus
labitur infelix, caesis ut forte iuencis
fusus humum viridisque super madefecerat herbas. (*Aen.* 5.327-30)

And now nearly at the end of the course they were coming, exhausted,
to the goal itself, when unlucky Nisus fell in some slippery blood,
which had spilled by chance from the slaughtered bulls and had soaked
the ground and the grass.

The precedent here is of course the scene from Book 23 of Homer's *Iliad*, where Aias is tripped by Athena and falls face-firsts into bull dung. Virgil's sucks every bit of comic value from the trope.⁸⁵ Again, we should note the perversity of the scene. Unlike the Greek spectators in the *Iliad*, the Trojans do not laugh at Nisus; one hopes it is because they are too horrified. The sight of a young man covered in *sacro cruore* (333) would be extremely disconcerting, if not inauspicious. But there is the sense that Aeneas and his men are intent on enjoying the respite provided by the funeral games, and that they purposely ignore the grim aspects of these two events.

We should avoid doing the same. Beyond the repulsive image of Nisus covered in blood, this passage looks forward to more explicitly troubling scenes later in the poem. The first of these is Nisus' own death in Book 9. Nisus rampages during his fatal expedition with Euryalus, decapitating every sleeping Italian that he can; their couches and the ground are said to be soaked with warm, black gore (*atro tepefacta cruore terrae torique madent* 9.333-34), like the ground on which Nisus had slipped several books

⁸⁵ Cf. Dyson (1996): 281: "The change in this detail and the evocative phrase *sacer cruor* suggest that Virgil wishes to darken one of Homer's lightest moments."

earlier. The two scenes are linked by this image, although of course the blood is now from slaughtered men instead of bulls.⁸⁶

2. Turnus

The ground is also said to be soaked with blood in Book 12, when Turnus summons Aeneas to single combat. He stands “where the ground is most drenched with spilled blood” (*ubi plurima fuso sanguine terra madet*) and offers himself as a sacrificial victim:

Parcite iam, Rutuli, et vos tela inhibete, Latini;
quaecumque est Fortuna, mea est: me verius unum
pro vobis foedus luere et decernere ferro. (*Aen.* 12.693-95)

Cease now, Rutulians, and hold back your javelins, Latins. Whatever fortune holds, it holds for me; better that for your sake I satisfy the covenant, that I decide its outcome with the sword.

This passage coheres to a pattern in Turnus’ character that emerges during the debate surrounding the treaty in Book 11. There, speaking in truly tortured Latin, Turnus first offers himself in single combat:

Vobis animam hanc soceroque Latino
Turnus ego, haud ulli veterum virtute secundus,
devovi. “Solum Aeneas vocat”: et vocet oro,
nec Drances potius, sive est haec ira deorum,
morte luat, sive est virtus et gloria, tollat. (*Aen.* 11.440-44)

⁸⁶ This connection is perhaps even more meaningful if we can show that *Aeneid* 5 was composed after certain other books of the poem. Galinsky (1968): 182 ff. sees the book as an “*Aeneid in parvo*” because it mirrors the dramatic arc of the entire poem. Based on this and other factors he dates Book 5’s composition very late in relation to the other books, perhaps near the end (185). Dyson (1996): 282 connects Nisus’ fall with his death as well, and raises some excellent points. She mistakenly believes, however, that “blood-soaked ground” appears only in these two episodes of the *Aeneid*, plus another shortly before the end of the poem. In fact, it also occurs at 4.201-202, where Iarbas performs a sacrifice to Zeus (if we accept *solum* instead of *herba* or *terra*, which seems reasonable). This does not affect the validity of her point, and in fact strengthens the association she makes (correctly) between the deaths of Nisus and Turnus and the idea of sacrifice.

To you [Rutulians] I, Turnus, offer this life, and to my bride's father Latinus, second to none of my ancestors in courage. You say, "Aeneas challenges him alone"; I hope he does, and I hope that if there be some anger of the gods I, not Drances, satisfy it for you by dying, or bring back honor and glory, if those prizes be offered.

Juturna later echoes this statement, again using the verb *devovere*:

Ille quidem ad superos, quorum se devovet aris,
succedet fama vivusque per ora feretur. (*Aen.* 12.234-35)

[Turnus] will ascend by his fame to the gods, on whose altars he has offered himself, and his name will ever be on men's lips.

These passages clearly stamp Turnus' self-offering with the character of a *devotio*, at least in the minds of the Rutulians, for whom such an act would bring some form of victory.⁸⁷ In fact, Juturna delivers her lines in exhorting the other Rutulians to battle, arguing that there is no need for *Turnus* to risk his life in a *devotio* because the Trojans are so numerically inferior.

Like the original Roman *devotio* described by Livy, Turnus' act was a very specialized form of sacrifice, meant to benefit only the Rutulians and their allies. When he speaks before the Rutulian council in Book 11, he dedicates his life to the Rutulians and to his father-in-law (*vobis animam hanc soceroque Latino...devovi*; "vobis" refers to the audience of Rutulians). When Juturna tries to shame the Rutulians out of letting Turnus fight alone, she says,

non pudet, o Rutuli, pro cunctis talibus unam
obiectare animam? (*Aen.* 12.229-30)

⁸⁷ The allusion to *devotio* in these passages has been noted by a number of scholars. My interpretation is most similar to Nicoll's (Nicolls [2001], especially 190-91 on *devotio*), and I cite his work several times below. Perkell (1999): 214 ff. also discusses Turnus' action in the context of the *devotio* ritual. The argument against such an interpretation is quite weak; Pascal (1990) claims that Turnus' statements of *devotio* do not conform to the alleged formulation historic origin of the ritual, found in Livy's account of the Decii. (Livy 8.9, 10.28). This presupposes that all Romans at the time held Livy's view of the origins, purpose, and formulation of the act, an assumption we ought not to make. In any event, Virgil's repeated use of *devovere* seems to make the issue abundantly clear. See also Leigh (1993).

Are you not ashamed, Rutulians, to risk one man's life for all these?

Pro cunctis talibus is difficult to translate, but it clearly must be taken as referring to Juturna's immediate audience, i.e. the Rutulians.⁸⁸ Finally, in the passage cited above, where Turnus stands on the gore-soaked battlefield, he offers to fulfill the covenant *pro vobis, sc. Rutuli*.

But we realize that Turnus' plan to die for the Rutulians alone has been thwarted when he becomes the victim in the enemy's sacrifice: *Pallas te hoc volnere, Pallas immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit*.⁸⁹ In fact, he is identified as a sacrificial victim at the very beginning of the encounter. After the simile that likens the two heroes to bulls fighting for supremacy over the herd, Virgil writes,

non alitur Tros Aeneas et Daunius heros
concurrunt clipeis; ingens fragor aethera complet. (*Aen.* 12.723-24)

No differently did Trojan Aeneas and the Daunian hero clash with their shields, and the huge crash filled the heavens.

The clash of shield upon shield and the resounding crash that results perhaps lead us to recall the devices depicted on those shields. At the center of Aeneas' device is Caesar Augustus, sitting before the altar of Apollo's temple, where the ground is covered with slaughtered bullocks (8.714-19). On Turnus shield was his ancestor Io, "already a cow."⁹⁰ Another crucial point to bear in mind is the fact that in between Turnus' *devotio* and his death, the Trojans become Italian as well, thanks to Jupiter's concession to Juno.

In that sense Turnus' death can only be interpreted as a *devotio* if we significantly expand

⁸⁸ Perhaps the best translation is Sidgwick's in his commentary on Book 12: "for all these heroes," although "heroes" is not implied in the Latin. Nicolls (2001): 198 and Stahl (in Raaflaub [1990]: 193) also read the phrase as clearly referring to the Rutulians.

⁸⁹ Cf. Nicolls (2001): 191-92.

⁹⁰ Gale (1997): 181-83 discusses other likely significations of the device on Turnus shield, including, most interestingly, the possibility that the myth of Io's metamorphosis was meant to parallel Turnus' transformation under the influence of Allecto. For Turnus' Argive ancestry, see MacKie (1991).

the group for whom it is performed to cover the whole Roman nation. Indeed, depending on Virgil's definition of "Roman" national identity, that expansion is theoretically infinite.⁹¹ In this way, far from offering himself *pro cunctis talibus* in a neatly defined *devotio*, Turnus becomes a more general offering: *unum caput dabitur pro multis*.

This of course recalls Palinurus, whose life was demanded by Neptune as "one, given for many." The similarity between Palinurus and Turnus is not accidental, and several scholars have noticed other parallels between the two characters.⁹² This invites us to speculate about the potential reasons for their sacrifices. One interpretation has been offered by Nicholls, who argues that both needed to die because their actions revealed an excessive trust in *fortuna*. Palinurus, at the beginning of Book 5, was suspicious of the ominous skies, and urged Aeneas to stop at Sicily rather than making straight for Italy:

...Superat quoniam Fortuna, sequamur,
quoque vocat, vertamus iter. (*Aen.* 5.22-32)

Since Fortune has won, let us bend our course to where she calls.

In Nicolls' words, "Palinurus died because his guiding principles in life would be inappropriate for a leader in the Augustan world, the foundations of which Aeneas himself was laying. The Augustan leader cannot drift where the wind of Fortune takes him."⁹³ Similarly, Turnus speaks often of *fortuna*, asking at one point: *quo deus et quo dura uocat Fortuna sequamur* ("Let us follow to where god and Fortune call us"). In

⁹¹ On this point I tend to agree with Reed's belief that the *Aeneid* basically rejects any conception of ethno-nationalism (outlined in the introduction to Reed [2007]: 1-15). In the next chapter, I shall argue that in the *Aeneid* the essentially "Roman" is dissociated not only from ethnicity, but from time and space as well, meaning that in the end the adjective can theoretically apply to anyone at anytime.

⁹² Nicolls (2001): 191-6. These similarities are based primarily on the respective narrative designs of Books 5 and 12, which Nicolls believe position Palinurus' and Turnus' deaths at a structurally identical point. The argument is rather involved, relying on specific interpretation identifying Nautes with Iapyx, and the burning of the Trojan ships with the violation of the treaty.

⁹³ Nicolls (2001): 196.

general, in fact, Turnus seems to be characterized as representing *fortuna*, while Aeneas is the emblem of *virtus*. Nicolls argues that the line which occurs when Aeneas and Turnus finally meet in the decisive battle, *fors et virtus miscent in unum* (12.714), should be read literally as the clash of Chance (Turnus) and Power (Aeneas).⁹⁴ This interpretation coheres with what we have discussed regarding the concept of historical agency. In a world where the Julian rulers of Rome have wrested control over human affairs away from the blind and inscrutable might of *fortuna*, men like Palinurus and Turnus have no place.

While Nicolls' thesis is immediately applicable to the issues we have been considering, there is more to be gained by pressing the association between Palinurus and Turnus even further. What ultimately makes the death of Palinurus stand out is the fact that it is so random and arbitrary.⁹⁵ Palinurus' sacrificial death can be used to interpret the last scene of the *Aeneid*, but only because Neptune's reasoning is left entirely unexplained. To understand how this arbitrariness relates to Turnus' death, we need to consider Virgil's understanding of history as a basically sacrificial process. He first alludes to the idea in the *Georgics*.

3. The *Bugonia* and the Idea of Sacrifice

One of the most gruesome moments in all of Virgil's poetry is the description of the *bugonia* in *Georgics* 4, the horrific ritual by which Virgil says a completely decimated bee colony may be restored. In almost voyeuristic detail, Virgil describes the

⁹⁴ Nicolls (2001): 197. Nicolls follows Servius, *ad loc.: casus in Turno, uirtus in Aenea*.

⁹⁵ On the relation Virgil establishes between random death and sacrifice, cf. Bandera (2004): 136-37.

killing of the bull, with its mouth and nose blocked to suffocate the animal while it is beaten to death.

Tum vitulus bima curvans iam cornua fronte
quaeritur; huic geminae nares et spiritus oris
multa reluctanti obstruitur, plagisque perempto
tunsa per integram solvuntur viscera pellem. (*G.* 4.299-302)

Then a bull is sought, one just showing horns on his two year old brow;
his two nostrils and the breath from his mouth are blocked, and then he
is beaten to death, and his insides are pounded to a pulp through his
intact hide.

After this, the carcass is left to rot until bees spring forth spontaneously. It is one of the ugliest scenes in all of Virgil's poetry.⁹⁶ The gratuitous cruelty of the description is so uncharacteristic of a poet who shows elsewhere in the *Georgics* a genuine sympathy and love for animals, and cows in particular.⁹⁷ Ultimately, the ritual is meant to shock, for Virgil means to show that the logic by which bees come to be from the carcass of a tortured bull is the same logic by which humanity maintains its existence in the physical, historical world.

That Virgil associates the bees of *Georgics* 4 with the human race on some level is well-recognized fact, even if there exists disagreement regarding certain particulars.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Morgan (1999: 12) calls the method "unashamedly repulsive." Cf. also Miles (1980): 254 ("...a particularly brutal and repugnant sacrifice"); Mynors (1990): 300 ("...a disgusting process").

⁹⁷ Liebeschuetz (1965): 64-65 demonstrates this is a charming passage, which I cite in its entirety in part to serve as an antidote for the account of the *bugonia*: "[Virgil] seems to have been in the habit of imagining himself in the place of even the smallest animals. He felt for the tiny mouse, establishing its residence and granaries, and for the ant, concerned about a poverty-stricken old age; he felt glad with the ravens revisiting their small offspring and sweet nests after rain, and sorry for the birds who lost their nests when the forest was felled, and for the nightingale who had lost her young. But he was moved by even stronger and more intimate ties of sympathy for the large domestic animals, cattle and horses. He wrote about pregnant mother animals, calves, or stricken oxen with feelings close to those which would be aroused in him by similar conditions in human beings." As specific instance of this sympathy can be seen Virgil's highly affective description of an oxen's death at *G.* 515-30.

⁹⁸ Ross (1987): 189 says, "the bees in some way stand for men, if not Man"; Habinek (1991): 210-11 believes the story of the bees figures forth the story of humanity and that the life and times of the bees serve as an extended metaphor, along the lines of medieval allegory, that stress both the similarities and differences between bees and humans. Cf. also Hardie (2009): 51-52.

But one potential basis for comparison that has not been observed is the fact the *bugonia* ritual recalls a version of the Orphic cosmogony in which Dionysos had assumed the form of a bull when the Titans killed and ate him.⁹⁹ We know with reasonable certainty that the god Bacchus-Dionysos played an important role in a large number of Orphic theogonies and cult practices. Dionysos was considered to be the son of Zeus and Persephone. The Titans devoured him, and in his anger Zeus incinerated them with his thunderbolt. From the ashes sprinkled on the earth the race of man arose; thus, by virtue of its bodily aspect, human existence carries within it both the divinity of Dionysos and the guilt for his death.¹⁰⁰ The *bugonia* presents a striking parallel with the Orphic myth, and this perhaps explains why the ritual frames the story of Orpheus' *katabasis* in the *Georgics*.

For the moment, I shall avoid pressing the connection between Virgil and Orphism any further. I believe that his positioning of the *bugonia* ritual as the narrative frame of the Orpheus *epyllion* argues that such a connection exists, and in the fifth chapter of this study we shall explore further evidence of Orphic influence on Virgil's thought to support this claim. For our present purpose, it suffices to recognize the idea implicit in this passage that history is fundamentally sacrificial. Habinek and Ross have correctly noted that the discussion of bees in the first half of *Georgics* 4 is diachronic rather than synchronic; Virgil does not provide a static description of bee-nature at a given moment, but instead treats the historical evolution of bee colonies from rude to

Other interpretations include: Perkell (1978), who also gives a brief survey of the ideas of others on the topic; Putnam (1972); Grene and Nelson (1998): 146 ff.

⁹⁹ Burkert (1985): 64.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Burkert (1972): 128 ff.

advanced states of social organization.¹⁰¹ What we learn is that bee history (and, by metaphorical extension, human history) is inescapably predicated on the suffering of a victim. Habinek says, “Human society, like bee society, may grow, evolve, and eventually die, but stuffing an ox in an airless room is not going to restore us to life. But another sort of ox-killing is closely connected with the questions of the origins and stability of human society, at least in ancient thought, and that form of ox-killing is ritual sacrifice.”¹⁰² The first description of the *bugonia* ritual noted above is said to be the Egyptian version, from which evolved the sacrifice performed by Aristaeus. Yet Aristaeus’ repetition, which comes at the end of the Orpheus myth, is quite different. Apart from the disposal of the bull’s body in a grove (4.543), the details of this ritual all conform to conventional Roman religious practice. Through this subtle change Virgil connects the bizarre ritual first described with the general Roman idea of the practice of sacrifice, making the association of the *bugonia* with a generalized conception of sacrifice more immediate, both for his original Roman audience and for modern readers.¹⁰³

In all of this, Virgil hints at one of the most basic problems of human existence, which we can better understand in light of two earlier passages from the *Georgics*. These

¹⁰¹ Habinek (1991): 210. “Like the humans of Book 1, the bees of Book 4 pass from a distinctly pre-historic state, in the case of the bees figured in their rude habitation and simple social organization, to a ‘mature society,’ with the transition between the stages of cultural evolution marked by the excursus on the old man of Tarentum (*G.* 4.116-48) and by the express intervention of Jupiter (*G.* 4.149-50), who is, after all, god of the universe in history as opposed to the Golden Age. In their new status the bees endure the passage of seasons (as opposed to continuous spring) and acquire the arts necessary for the construction and governance of a complex urban society.” Cf. also Ross (1987): 188ff. It is worth noting that this section of the *Georgics* reads like a translation across species of Lucretius’ anthropology in *De Rerum Natura* 5.772 ff. For a pertinent discussion of this section of the *DRN*, see Campbell (2000): 146-57.

¹⁰² Habinek (1991): 211.

¹⁰³ Cf. Habinek (1991): 212-13 for a similar argument. He concludes by saying, “The bees will be reborn through an impossible, exotic, and unbelievable technological marvel; but civilized human society must forever restore itself by re-establishing the right relations between humans, gods, and beasts in the act of sacrifice and all that it stands for.”

passages are connected to the *bugonia* by means of a significant word-pair, *caesi iuventi*.

In introducing the *bugonia* account, Virgil says he will reveal the “discovery of the Arcadian master (Aristaeus),”

quoque modo caesis iam saepe iuventis
insincerus apes tulerit cruor. (*G.* 4.284-85)

and in which way the foul blood of slain bulls has often brought forth
bees.

Dyson has noted that in all of its other appearances in Virgil’s poetry, the phrase *caesi iuventi* functions as a specialized sacrificial marker.¹⁰⁴ The pair first occurs at *Georgics* 2, in a usage that clearly denotes sacrificial slaughter:

[ante]
impia quam caesis gens est epulata iuventis (*G.* 2.537)

Before an impious race feasted on slaughtered bulls...¹⁰⁵

They next appear a few lines later, near the opening of *Georgics* 3, where Virgil describes the shrine that he will erect to mark his poetic triumph. Augustus will be the central focus, and Virgil longs to take part in the ceremonies he ordains:

Iam nunc sollemnis ducere pompas
ad delubra iuvat caesosque videre iuencos (*G.* 3.22-23)

Even now it pleases to lead solemn processions to shrines, and to
behold the slaughtered bulls.

The first passage describes animal sacrifice in negative terms, while the second treats it as a pious action. This ambiguity, which Virgil emphasizes by placing the passages so

¹⁰⁴ Dyson (1996): 280; in total, the pair occurs six times in the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid*: *G.* 2.537, 3.23, and 4.284; *Aen.* 3.369, 5.329, 8.719. Cf. Morgan (1999): 113. Morgan does not include *G.* 2.537 among the “sacrificial” uses of the phrase; I consider this a mistake, for reasons argued below.

¹⁰⁵ Dyson (1996): 278-79 argues that we are to understand the crime to actually consist in sacrificing cows, rather than eating of their flesh, citing Habinek (1990): 215, who reads this line in *Georgics* 2 as referring to an actual sacrifice. Thomas (1991): 214-18 argues against this interpretation, saying that *epulor* can exist in a non-sacral context. Truth be told, it certainly can; however its original meaning relates to sacrificial meat (see Ernout and Meillet [1985]: 199) and its use here with *caesi iuventi*, which elsewhere refers unambiguously to sacrifice, argues strongly in favor of Habinek’s reading.

close to each other, is one of the main sources of tension in human existence. On the one hand, sacrifice is a basically pious action. As Habinek has noted, it preserves order in the universe and maintains a peaceful relationship between gods and humans.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, it virtually demarcates humanity's role in the cosmos. The human species is defined by its subservience to one class of being and its domination of another. Humans stabilize their existence, in which they are at the mercy of forces beyond their power, by asserting their domination of the animal world. The sacrifice of a domestic animal to the gods is what distinguishes humans from the levels of being directly above and below them.¹⁰⁷ Phrased in these terms, however, we can see how this situation is not unproblematic. Our very existence comes at the expense of things "below us": plants, animals, and nature in general. The close juxtaposition of the impious sacrifice at 2.537 and the pious one at 3.23 illustrates this dynamic.¹⁰⁸ Sacrifice is a necessary evil imposed on humans by virtue of their position in the hierarchy of being. Morgan comes very close to reading Virgil's conception of sacrifice as something akin to doctrines of original sin.¹⁰⁹ Some change in the very nature of humanity's relationship to the cosmos occurs between *Georgics* 2.537 and 3.23, such that what was previously the extreme of wickedness becomes a marker of religious piety. In essence, human nature has been transformed. This interpretation is both perceptive and productive. As noted above, Orphic cosmogonies, with which Virgil was familiar, held that the most basic and inescapable evil that characterizes human existence (physical death) originally resulted from the

¹⁰⁶ See n. 103 *supra*.

¹⁰⁷ For this conception of sacrifice, cf. Detienne (1998): chapter 3, Rudhardt (1992), Habinek (1991): 212, Burkert (1983), and Vernant (1976).

¹⁰⁸ The best discussion of Virgil's conception of sacrifice as both pious and impious is Dyson (1996). See also Morgan (1999): 115.

¹⁰⁹ See Morgan (1999): 110-11. Morgan goes so far as to call the end of *Georgics* 2 a pagan account of "the Fall from Grace of the human race."

Titans' impiety towards the god Dionysus. The esteem in which Christian culture has historically held Virgil is largely attributable to the degree to which this conception of human existence informs his poetry.

Indeed, the idea of sacrifice pervades Virgil's poetry, spilling over into his conception of history, and infusing it with a sentiment justifiably comparable to Christian pessimism regarding the temporal world. Virgil generalizes the idea of sacrifice just as much as he specifies the *bugonia* as a sacrifice. Taken alone, the first, Egyptian version (*G.* 4.295-314) bears little resemblance to a sacrifice, and reads more like a description of magical practice. But as noted, Aristaeus' repetition, to which *caesis iuvencis* at 4.284-85 refers, conforms to a full-blown Roman sacrifice.¹¹⁰ The connotation of these words in Virgil's poetry, along with Aristaeus' "Roman" interpretation of the ritual, frame the Egyptian *bugonia* as a sacrifice. However, the Egyptian version also colors the way we read the idea of sacrifice that frames it: at its core, apart from purely accidental details involving specific rites, sacrifice simply consists of deadly violence to another living thing for a (hopefully) constructive purpose. In even more general terms, destruction has the power to bring about creation. The cosmic model most closely related to this conception is that of Stoicism, and it should come as no surprise that Stoic ideas regarding *ekpyrosis* and *palingenesis* are present in the *Aeneid*. By examining Virgil's use of these ideas, we shall be able to extend his idea of sacrifice to his great historical epic, and to his philosophy of history itself.

¹¹⁰ Habinek (1990): 213; cf. Morgan (1999): 112.

4. Stoicism in the *Aeneid*

Stoicism would necessarily have influenced how an educated Roman approached questions of cosmology.¹¹¹ Of course, by the first century B.C., it is impossible to speak of Stoicism as a single, unified doctrine; nonetheless, certain positions were fundamental to the discipline throughout its existence. Moreover, in the areas where we observe variation, we also may note that the ideas of certain, individual Stoics predominated at different points in history. These facts enable us to discuss, at least provisionally, what “Stoicism” might have meant to Romans during the first century B.C. Because the philosophy of history belongs primarily to the domain of cosmology, it is necessary to omit discussion of Stoic logic and ethics (which, even if cursory, would be quite lengthy). But we do need to briefly consider the discipline’s general doctrines on physics, insofar as they pertain to cosmological speculation.

Any discussion of Stoic physics must begin with the fundamental doctrine of the school, which dates back to Zeno of Citium, the “founder of Stoicism”: only bodies exist. A body is defined as something that has the capacity to act or to be acted upon. The active and the passive principles play a formative role in Stoic physics. The elements that comprise reality (the traditional four: earth, water, fire, and air) are the result of the combination of inert and passive Matter with eternal Reason (*logos*). *Logos* is the Stoic god, identified with intelligent, designing fire. This god is a body as well: he is immanent in the material world, which is consequently a living, animate entity. Possibly borrowing from Heraclitus, the Stoics generally held that the creative principle of the world, *pneuma/logos/fire*, is also that which effects the world’s destruction in a final

¹¹¹ Holliday (1990) notes at 543: “Although it was the ethical system of Stoicism that dominated the later Imperial period, its theoretical speculations appealed to a sophisticated audience during the late Republic.” Cf. Garnsey and Saller (1987): 179, 182.

conflagration, the *ekpyrosis*.¹¹² Matter and *pneuma* continue to exist however, and because their natures are perfectly unchangeable, their interaction will again produce the entire cosmos exactly as it was in the previous cycle, down to the most microscopic of details.¹¹³ Thus, the doctrine of *ekpyrosis* went hand in hand with that of *palingenesis*, a return to the origin. In this regard, it is important to distinguish *ekpyrosis* from destruction; for the Stoics, that which consumes also creates.¹¹⁴ An individual would consider the beginning of his period as a genesis and the end as a dissolution based on his temporal perspective, but they are in fact the exact same event. Similarly, it is imperative that we understand this system not as an endless series of cycles, but rather as *one* cycle, perfectly and universally teleological (since, in the standard Stoic formulation, historical recurrence was said to be exact down to the smallest detail), repeated an infinite number of times.¹¹⁵

Morgan briefly offers Stoic cosmic theory as a comparison for the notion of sacrifice at work in the *Georgics*.¹¹⁶ However, he stops short of extending any specific connection to the *Aeneid*, and to my knowledge, no scholarly interpretation of the Virgil's epic has observed the extent to which the destruction of Troy in Book 2 recalls imagery of *ekpyrosis*.¹¹⁷ The account opens as Aeneas, having seen Hector's ghost in a

¹¹² Zeller's summary of the Stoic doctrine of *ekpyrosis* and its sources is still excellent (Zeller [1897]: 155-160). For a detailed explanation of the physical aspect of the process, see Long (1985): 20 ff. The belief that the Stoics derived the idea of *ekpyrosis* from Heraclitus is quite contested; cf. Hoven (1971): 31.

¹¹³ Tatianus *Ad Gr.* 3.5 = *SVF* I.109 (Chrysippus); Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.118 = *SVF* II.598

¹¹⁴ cf. Long (1985): 22-23.

¹¹⁵ Lactant. *Div. Inst.* 7.23.3 = *SVF* II.623 (Chrysippus). Among certain Stoics who adhered to the ideas of *ekpyrosis/palingenesis*, there was slight disagreement regarding just how exact the historical cycles would be. These believed that each cycle would be essentially the same, but could potentially differ in its accidents. Cf. Or. *C. Cels.* 5.20 = *SVF* II.626.

¹¹⁶ Morgan (1999): 105-8.

¹¹⁷ The closest anyone has come is Knox (1950), who discusses how in *Aeneid* 2, fire is consistently shown to be both harmful and useful.

dream, rouses himself from sleep and views from his rooftop the beginning of Troy's downfall:

in segetem veluti cum flamma furentibus austris
incidit, aut rapidus montano flumine torrens
sternit agros, sternit sata laeta boumque labores,
praecipitisque trahit silvas, stupet inscius alto
accipiens sonitum saxi de vertice pastor. (*Aen.* 2.304-08)

Just as when fire falls upon the corn while the south wind rages, or the torrent rushing from a mountain stream lays low the fields, lays low the happy crops and the toil of oxen, dragging headlong the forest; the shepherd gapes, bewildered, as he hears the roar from the rock's top.

The reference to destruction by water is especially interesting, since it references the other sort of catastrophe (described by certain of the Stoics, as well as by Plato and Polybius) by which the world can be consumed.¹¹⁸ Indeed, it is not the only reference to cataclysm (in the specific sense, referring to destruction by water) in the episode, a curious fact considering that Troy's end is brought about by fire. The Dolopian force is likened to a hurricane, when "foamy Nereus rages and roils the waters from their lowest depths with his trident."¹¹⁹ Later, Virgil uses the image of a flooded river that destroys human social achievements, wiping away plowed fields and the herds that graze the plains, along with their stables.¹²⁰ These seemingly out-of-place similes emphasize the historical significance of Troy's destruction, which is more than just an ordinary fire: it is

¹¹⁸ Cf. Rosenmeyer (1989): 149: "Our fragments tell us that from Zeno onward, there was talk of ekpyrosis, conflagration, and palingenesia, regeneration (*SVF* 1.107, 2.596, 2.1064, and *passim*). How early *kataklysmos*, inundation, was added as an alternative materialization of the *Weltumbruch* is now impossible to tell. But we have already had occasion to discuss the mutual implication of fire and moisture as the material (and vulnerable) avatars of the pneuma. It is, therefore, not unlikely that both versions of the catastrophe were available to Stoic writers from the beginning, especially since Plato, in his account of the breaks in world history, had put the major emphasis on great floods (*Laws* 677a)." On *ekpyrosis*, *cataclysm*, and *anacyclosis* in Polybius and Plato, see Trompf (1979): 6-16.

¹¹⁹ *Aen.* 2.419: *saevitque tridenti spumeus atque imo Nereus ciet aequora fundo.*

¹²⁰ *Aen.* 2.496-499: *Non sic, aggeribus ruptis cum spumeus amnis exiit, oppositasque evicit gurgite moles, fertur in arva furens cumulo, camposque per omnis cum stabulis armenta trahit.*

an epoch-marking event in the Stoic sense, heralding the end of a civilization, or perhaps even of civilization in general.

Troy's fall was an instance of *ekpyrosis*, not cataclysm, and while scattered images of flooding stress the catastrophic nature of the event, fire is consistently emphasized during the city's destruction. The first image of Troy's ruin at line 311 is *volcano superante*: Vulcan, personifying divine fire, towering above. Later Aeneas says,

Tum vero omne mihi visum considerare in ignis
Ilium et ex imo verti Neptunia Troia... (*Aen.* 2.624-25)

Then indeed it seemed to me that the whole of Ilium was sinking into flames, and that Neptune's Troy was upturned from its depths...

The idea of descent as Troy "sinks" into flames attributes a spatial quality to the chaos, which heightens the sense of metaphysical catastrophe.¹²¹ What makes the role of fire in *Aeneid* 2 so specifically Stoic, however, is the fact that it is both destructive *and* creative.¹²² Above, we saw how in all Stoic formulations, it is impossible to distinguish between the creative and destructive power of the *aether*. The divine fire both generates and consumes the world, and *ekpyrosis* can be simultaneously interpreted as the end of one cycle and the beginning of the next. This idea, I believe, is behind the portent of the

¹²¹ Cf. Estevez (1981): 322 for a good discussion of the imagery of the episode, which centers around notions of "rising up and looming over, falling forward, rushing forward to destroy or be destroyed (sometimes both), and dragging to destruction." In addition to the physical destruction, this spatial chaos is, in my opinion, meant to evoke the radical overturning of a whole world order.

¹²² Knox (1950) analyzes how in *Aeneid* 2, Virgil deploys serpent imagery, which is closely connected to action of the flames, in such a way as to identify creation and destruction. Cf. Knox (1950): 380: "This connotation of the serpent is of the utmost importance for the second book of the *Aeneid*, which tells of the promise of renewal given in the throes of destruction; the death agonies of Troy are the birth-pangs of Rome."

flame above Iulus' head (680 ff.) and the comet (or perhaps asteroid) that ratifies it (692 ff.).¹²³

ecce levis summo de vertice visus Iuli
fundere lumen apex, tactuque innoxia mollis
lambere flamma comas et circum tempora pasci. (*Aen.* 2.682-84)

Behold, a soft light was seen streaming from the very top of Iulus' head: a flame, harmless to touch, licked his soft hair and grazed about his temples.

All those present can only perceive danger, which is understandable given their immediate experience. Anchises alone senses the favorable character of the fire; he lifts his eyes joyfully to the stars (*oculos ad sidera laetus extulit*, 687-688) and prays for a confirmatory sign. This he is given:

et de caelo lapsa per umbras
stella facem ducens multa cum luce cucurrit. (*Aen.* 2.694-95)

And from the sky a star fell through the shadows, and leading a bright trail of flame as it went.

While numerous scholars have noted the obvious allusion to the *sidum iulium* of 44 B.C., none have, to my knowledge, connected this passage to the rest of the fire imagery of Book 2.¹²⁴ It is striking to see the imagery of fire, whose destructive power has been so consistently emphasized throughout the book, applied to events which do no harm, and in fact portend good. Iulus cannot be harmed by the destructive power of fire because he belongs to the future that this fire creates.

¹²³ "Comets" (*cometes* or sometimes *crinitae*) are rarely mentioned by name in Augustan literature because of its inauspicious connotations; cf. Pliny *NH* II.22.89-23.92: [*cometes est*] *terrificum magna ex parte sidus atque non leviter piatum*; Luc. *Phars.* 1.529. cf. Wagenvoort (1956): 11. Williams (2003): 5.

¹²⁴ Bömer (1952): 31, 43 believes that both Virgil's comet and the flame around Iulus' head are meant to evoke (but do not literally represent) the *sidum iulium*, the mark of the divinity of the Julian family. Wagenvoort (1956): 15 identifies both the flame and the comet in Caesar's comet, saying that Virgil "transported" the *sidus Iulium* back to the "mythological pre-history of Rome."

This same flame is shown to be at work throughout the process of creating Rome.

In Book 10, as Aeneas is about to enter battle for the first time:

ardet apex capiti cristisque a uertice flamma
funditur et uastos umbo uomit aureus ignis:
non secus ac liquida si quando nocte cometae
sanguinei lugubre rubent...(Aen. 10.270-73)

His helmet-peak blazes on the top of his head, and from the crest
streams a flame, and his shield's golden boss pours a flood of fire; not
unlike when in the clear night comets glow blood-red and dire.

We should compare the image of Augustus at Actium on Aeneas' shield in Book 8:

hinc Augustus agens Italos in proelia Caesar
patribus populoque, penatibus et magnis dis,
stans celsa in puppi, geminas cui tempora flammas
laeta uomunt patriumque aperitur uertice sidus. (Aen. 8.678-81)

Here was Caesar Augustus, standing on the high stern, leading into
battle the Italians, with the Senate, the people, the Penates and the
mighty gods; his joyous temples poured twin streams of flame, and at
the top of his head there shone his father's star.

A pattern of words appears in all of these passages (*vertex*, *tempus*, *flamma*, *laetus*, *vomere*) that we cannot attribute to simple stock description.¹²⁵ This recurrent image represents the creative force behind the historical realization of Rome, from Iulus all the way to Augustus. Flames, both in *Aeneid* 2 and throughout the rest of the epic, thus symbolize a force not unlike the Stoic *logos*, also identified with intelligent, designing fire. Both its creative and its destructive effects are identified as belonging typologically to the same process, the gradual realization of history. By associating the *sidus Iulium*, which had heralded the arrival of the last *saeculum*, with the flame over Augustus' head

¹²⁵ Cf. West (1997). West also connects the apparition of Romulus in the Underworld to this nexus: *geminæ stant uertice cristae* (6.777-80), although in my opinion the absence of flames makes the association tenuous.

at Actium, Virgil implies that the *pax Augusta* that followed the civil wars was in a sense the end of history.

5. Creation, Destruction, and Sacrificial History

Thus a pattern exists in the *Aeneid*, whereby creation and destruction are identified as the singular force behind the process of history. This identification allowed Virgil to conceive of temporal existence as a fundamentally sacrificial reality. This conception is evident in Book 2, where Virgil uses an overtly sacrificial scene to narrate Priam's death at the hands of Pyrrhus. Priam is killed at an altar. Pyrrhus is a butcher, but he has an almost priestly functionality: he has already slaughtered Priam's son Polites at the same altar, which still streams with the young Trojan's blood.¹²⁶ Also supporting this sacrificial interpretation is the simile from earlier in Book 2 that Virgil uses to describe Laocoön's attempted escape from the serpent that eventually kills him and his sons. He is compared to a wounded bull that escapes from the priest:

quales mugitus, fugit cum saucius aram
taurus, et incertam excussit cervice securim. (*Aen.* 2.223-24)

Like the bellowing, when a bull flees wounded from the altar, and shakes from its neck the ill-aimed axe.

When we first see Polites, Virgil uses a similar image:

porticibus longis fugit, et vacua atria lustrat
sauceus: illum ardens infesto volnere Pyrrhus
insequitur, iam iamque manu tenet et premit hasta. (*Aen.* 2.528-29)

He fled through the long porticoes, and wanders wounded through the empty atria; hard upon him follows Pyrrhus, burning for the kill, ready at any moment to grab him and bury his spear.

¹²⁶ Dyson (2001): 105.

The re-use of imagery employed earlier with explicit reference to sacrifice deepens the characterization of Pyrrhus as a sort of infernal priest.¹²⁷ Virgil ascribes to Pyrrhus the role of an agent in the sacrificial process of history. Furthering this interpretation is the scene's proximity to the episode of Iulus and the comet. Priam needed to die; the Troy that he stood for needed to fall, so that Rome could ultimately come to be.

The basic irony of this truth is implicit in the two scenes where Aeneas is shown a vision of the divine world's role in human events. The first of these occurs in Book 2, when Venus removes from her son's eyes the "cloud that obscures mortal sight," whereupon he sees the gods themselves overturning the city:

Neptunus muros magnoque emota tridenti
fundamenta quatit, totamque a sedibus urbem
eruit; hic Iuno Scaeas saevissima portas
prima tenet, sociumque furens a navibus agmen
ferro accincta vocat...
Iam summas arces Tritonia, respice, Pallas
insedit, nimbo effulgens et Gorgone saeva.
Ipse pater Danais animos viresque secundas
sufficit, ipse deos in Dardana suscitatur arma. (*Aen.* 2.610-18)

Neptune shakes the walls and the foundations, upheaved by his great trident, and destroys the whole city from its very base. Here most savage Juno is the first to hold the Scaean gate, raging, girt with steel, as she calls from the ships her force...Look! Now on the topmost *arx* sits Tritonian Pallas, flashing with the storm cloud and dread Gorgon's head. The Father himself gives to the Greeks spirit and fighting strength, himself incites the gods against Trojan arms.

At this point Aeneas realizes that Troy's destruction was the will of the gods: *apparent dirae facies inimicaque Troiae numina magna deum* (2.622-23). Even his mother Venus did nothing to obstruct this destiny. This passage anticipates the Battle of Actium as depicted on Aeneas' shield, which is the second war scene where the gods are shown to

¹²⁷ Dyson (2001): 104-5 mentions the bull simile just before discussing the death of Priam, but does not make the connection with Polites.

play a pivotal role. Vulcan's shield reveals both to Aeneas and to us that the same gods who had helped destroy Troy would fight on the "Trojan" side at Actium, the final action needed to realize Rome's destiny:

omnigenumque deum monstra et latrator Anubis
contra Neptunum et Venerem contraque Minervam
tela tenent. Saevit medio in certamine Mavors
caelatus ferro tristesque ex aethere Dirae,
et scissa gaudens vadit Discordia palla,
quam cum sanguineo sequitur Bellona flagello.
Actius haec cernens arcum tendebat Apollo
desuper...(Aen. 8.698-705)

And monstrous gods of all sorts and barking Anubis wield arms against Neptune, and Venus, and Minerva. In the midst rages Mars clad in steel, and the grim Dirae from the sky, and Discord wanders in her rent garment, rejoicing, while with bloody whip follows Bellona. Seeing these things from above Actian Apollo stretched his bow...

Here we realize at last that the fall of Troy was as much an act of creation as it was of destruction: by destroying Troy, the gods were in fact creating Rome. Insofar as both events were necessary conditions for the accomplishment of the final Roman triumph, the gods' work at both Troy and Actium is typologically identical. Second, and more importantly, the unity of the gods at Actium implies that history can be seen as progress in both a metaphysical and a moral sense. Rome is the culmination of history because it unites the work of *all* the unseen forces of the universe. In the time between the fall of Troy and the Battle of Actium, Neptune and Minerva had switched sides.¹²⁸ To maintain the dramatic intensity of the epic, Aeneas' shield does not show that the other of Troy's erstwhile enemies, Juno, would also be on Rome's side by the time of Actium. Perhaps in the conquest of the Egyptian gods, and the mastery of the forces represented by

¹²⁸ For an excellent discussion of the complexities involved in Minerva's role in the *Aeneid*, see Henry (1989): 90-107. She notes that Minerva has an ambiguous relation to the fortunes of Rome, but does not place that relation in a moral or historical context.

Bellona and the Dirae, we are meant to perceive just how universal the Roman domain would be.

It is in the last panel of the shield, as Augustus celebrates his triple triumph, that we learn the moral dimension of this arrangement. The harmonious relationship between the Roman people and the gods is ensured by the religious devotion that Augustus valued so highly:

At Caesar, triplici invectus Romana triumpho
moenia, dis Italis votum immortale sacrabat,
maxuma tercentum totam delubra per urbem.
Laetitia ludisque viae plausuque fremebant;
omnibus in templis matrum chorus, omnibus arae;
ante aras terram caesi stravere iuveni. (*Aen.* 8.714-19)

But Caesar, borne inside the walls of Rome in triple triumph, was dedicating to the gods of Italy his immortal offering: three hundred magnificent shrines throughout the city. The streets rang with joy, games, and applause; in every temple there was a chorus of matrons, in every one were altars, and before these altars slain bullocks littered the earth.

At the moment when Rome's historical destiny has been accomplished, Virgil includes an image that we now recognize is full of significance: *ante aras terram caesi stravere iuveni*. This line, which contains the last occurrence in the *Aeneid* of the phrase *caesi iuveni*, forces us to interpret Augustus' Golden Age as still existing within the temporal boundaries of history. Just as the *bugonia* ritual of *Georgics* 4 alludes to the necessity of sacrifice for the continued existence of humanity, the presence of *caesi iuveni* in the very heart of Augustus' new *saeculum* shows that even then Rome's flourishing will be contingent on the death of living creatures.

The scene of Augustus' victory on Aeneas' shield, along with the sacrifice that follows it, represents the closing of a frame opened in Book 3. Before visiting

Buthrotum, Aeneas and his followers stop at Actium. There the Trojans spend an entire year, and Aeneas institutes an early version of the Actian Games.¹²⁹ Just prior to departing, Aeneas hangs the shield of Abas on the entrance pillars of the ancient Temple of Apollo (which Octavian would restore and enlarge following Actium, in honor of the god who had made him victorious).¹³⁰ The offering is marked by the unusual dedicatory formula, *AENEAS HAEC DE DANAIIS VICTORIBUS ARMA*, with *victoribus* in place of the expected *victis*.¹³¹ As Miller notes, Virgil uses the scene to hint “at eventual Trojan and Roman success at a moment of recalling a loss from the Trojan War.”¹³² More specifically, he implicitly transforms “an emblem of Argive victory into a mark of Trojan-Roman success.”¹³³

What Miller does not observe is the fact that the trophy foreshadows not only Octavian’s victory at Actium, but also Aeneas’ defeat of Turnus. Abas was an Argive, the son of Linceus and Hypermestra.¹³⁴ Turnus’ Argive ancestry is consistently emphasized in the *Aeneid*. Danaë, the daughter of the Argive king Acrisius, was exiled by her father to Italy after being violated by Zeus. There she married Pilumnus and founded the city of Ardea, the capital of the Rutuli. Daunus, Turnus’ father, was their grandson.¹³⁵ This lineage in fact connects Turnus to Linceus, who was Acrisius’

¹²⁹ *Aen.* 3.274-90.

¹³⁰ On Octavian, Actium/Nicopolis, and the Temple to Apollo, see Lange (2009): 96-123.

¹³¹ Cf. Miller (1993): 448.

¹³² Miller (1993): 449-50.

¹³³ Miller (1993): 448.

¹³⁴ Linceus and Hypermestra were also two of the pivotal figures in the myth of the Danaids. The Danaids were the fifty daughters of the Argive king Danaus. Against their will (and their father’s) they were forced to marry the fifty sons of their uncle, Aegyptus. Danaus told them to acquiesce, but instructed them to kill their husbands in their wedding chambers. All of the daughters followed this command, except one: Hypermestra, who spared her husband Linceus. This myth was of critical importance in a variety of ways during the Augustan period, and shall be discussed further in later sections of the present study.

¹³⁵ For the ancestry of Turnus and the Argive origin of Ardea, see *Aen.* 7.371-72, 410; 10.76, 618-20. For further discussion of its significance, see MacKie (1991): 263-65, and Buchheit, (1963): 113.

grandfather.¹³⁶ Additionally, the shield that Turnus carries into battle (which physically clashes with Aeneas' shield and its representation of Actium)¹³⁷ is emblazoned with the image of Io, the ancestor of Danaus, and consequently of the Danaids and of Turnus.¹³⁸ Miller points out that the language used by Aeneas to dedicate Abas' shield (*de Danais victoribus arma*) obliquely references Danaus and the Argive lineage.¹³⁹

The dedication of Abas' shield is qualitatively distinguished from the two Trojan/Roman victories that it foreshadows by virtue of the fact that it embodies a defeatist, backwards-looking mindset: it is in essence a monument to the Greek victory over the Trojans. This mindset is more fully expressed among the inhabitants of Buthrotum, who exhibit a paralyzing attachment to their Trojan past. Between Buthrotum and the real "New Troy" in Italy, Aeneas learns the logic of sacrifice that allows him to become a meaningful actor in his own story. As we have seen in this chapter, part of this role involves remembering. Still, an equally important aspect is the ability to constructively forget, in order to orient one's actions towards the future. This entire process becomes constructive when interpreted as sacrificial, i.e. as something that turns suffering towards a positive end. In the *Aeneid*, Virgil locates the *auctoritas* of both Aeneas and Augustus in their ability to effectively manage this process. Both experience their "initiation" around Sicily, where they learn the basic, sacrificial character of historical progress. Both learn that this progress is contingent upon suffering, and ultimately both realize the correct ordering of the future is dependant upon an obligation

¹³⁶ Apoll. *Bibl.* 2.1.5; Paus. 2.16.1.

¹³⁷ *Aen.* 12.723-24: ...*Tros Aeneas et Daunius heros concurrunt clipeis, et fragor aethera complet.*

¹³⁸ *Aen.* 7.783-92.

¹³⁹ Miller (1993): 448. "While *Danai* is a common Virgilian designation for 'Greeks,' the use of the word *Danais* here (instead of, say, *Grais*), highlighted by caesura, obliquely points in Alexandrian fashion to the first dedicator of the shield, Abas' grandfather, Danaus."

to the past. It is worth noting that in his rage following the death of Pallas, Aeneas performs a series of killings that Virgil describes as sacrifices (using the verb *immolare*), and at Pallas' funeral he actually ritually sacrifices a group of young Rutulians.¹⁴⁰ Like Augustus, Aeneas ultimately asserts his *auctoritas* in an act of revenge, by killing Turnus out of duty to Evander and the memory of Turnus. To describe this act he himself uses the word *immolat*. In this respect, we see how Julian *auctoritas* is founded upon *pietas* (and consequently *ultio*), along with the acknowledgment that history is an imperfect process that by definition necessitates loss and individual suffering. The successful *auctor* is able to orient these negative aspects toward the greater good. As Feldherr has noted, the value of sacrifice is best appreciated from a perspective of "historical distance," where one is less inclined to identify with the victim, and where he is in a position to observe the positive effects achieved by sacral violence.¹⁴¹ This is precisely what Virgil provides in the two episodes from *Aeneid* 5 on which we have focused most closely: the boxing match and the death of Palinurus establish the moral character of Aeneas' slaying of Turnus, and of Augustus' early career.

IV. Conclusion

As noted above, Morgan describes the origins of human existence's fundamentally sacrificial character in terms very reminiscent of the Christian conception of Original Sin. Both Morgan and Hardie (whom the former follows closely) have provided extremely insightful analysis of the specialized notion of sacrifice at work in

¹⁴⁰ *Aen.* 10.518-20: [*iuvenes*] *inferias quos immolet umbris captivoque rogi perfundat sanguine flammis*; 10.541: *Quem congressus agit campo lapsumque superstans immolat*. The ritual sacrifice takes place at 11.81-2.

¹⁴¹ Feldherr (2002): 72. Cf. also 63, where Feldherr highlights what he calls one of the "paradoxes" of the historical view that the games in *Aeneid* 5 exemplify: "the future will be just like the past only better."

Virgil's poetry. However, both insist far too strongly on the perfectibility of this sacral dimension. Hardie maintains that the final panel on Aeneas' shield, primarily by virtue of the sacrifice it depicts, represents the perfected order of the whole universe.¹⁴²

Morgan's otherwise astute reference to the "Fall from Grace" highlights the fact that he fails to acknowledge how Virgil's system leaves open the possibility of escape from this fallen state.¹⁴³ Thus, like Hardie, he interprets the *caesi iuveni* on the shield in a basically positive sense, as representing the full expression of human piety towards the gods. In so doing, he ignores the problematic connotations that Virgil establishes when he first employs the phrase: *impia quam caesis gens est epulata iuvenis* (G. 2.537).

Taken alone, the *impia* in this verse can be explained away, as Morgan does quite satisfactorily by locating the ethical basis for the condemnation in a permanently lost state of innocence. However, we simply cannot take it alone; even the context of the phrase's other occurrences is too limited. Instead, we need to look at the way in which Virgil treats the religious/philosophical influences most pertinent to this issue, Orphic-Pythagoreanism and Stoicism, in the *Aeneid* as a whole. In the fifth chapter of this study, I shall show how Virgil consciously incorporates specialized forms of these two systems in order to establish the possibility of a permanent escape from the fundamentally tragic and sacrificial reality of temporal existence. First, however, it is again useful to examine the Augustan context from which Virgil's approach arose. In the following chapter, we shall see how an implicitly tenuous characterization of the new "Golden Age" can be observed in Augustus' public self-representation during the early principate, as well as in the broader culture of the period. Several major examples of "Augustanism" implied that

¹⁴² Hardie (1986), especially 364-75.

¹⁴³ Morgan (1999): 108-12.

the threat of evil and the need for sacrifice had not simply vanished after Augustus' final triumph, and that the continued existence of peace and prosperity was still contingent on respect and reverence towards the gods. At the fullest expression of the Augustan ideal, in architectural and artistic representation and in poetry, this reverence was shown to necessarily entail sacrifice, conceived as an intrinsically imperfect act of violence. When we return to the *Aeneid* in chapter 5, we shall see how this basic tension is pointedly left unresolved in the temporal arc of the narrative, and only ceases to exist in the transcendent, eternal realm of Elysium.

Chapter 4

The Augustan *Saeculum*

I. Introduction

In the first chapter of this study, we observed how a notion of historical agency, under the rubric of a precisely defined conception of *auctoritas*, was advanced in the artistic program of the Forum of Augustus. We then turned to Virgil's *Aeneid*, where the same historical events that inspired these Augustan claims are interpreted according to a sacrificial model of temporality, in which *auctoritas* is founded upon one's ability to constructively manage the fundamentally consumptive process of history. In essence, the Virgilian "agent of history," a role into which Aeneas grows over the course of the *Aeneid*, is at once defined by his power and by his limitation: he possesses *auctoritas*, and yet submits to the powerful, transcendent force that governs temporal existence. The priestly comparison implicit in such a characterization, expressly stated in Aeneas' final immolation of Turnus, is particularly apt: the Roman *auctor* is a mediator between what

is seen and what is unseen, between forces more and less powerful, and between the temporal and the eternal.

Virgil was not secretly anti-Augustan in emphasizing the limitations of Julian temporal power, nor was he alone. In this chapter we shall observe how a similar sentiment informed Augustus' public displays, and in the conclusion of this study we shall note the same expression in poems by two other Augustan authors. Both Augustus and the authors whom we shall consider acknowledged a distinction between the results obtainable by temporal agency and "perfected society" in an absolute sense. In this regard, Voegelin's critique of "immanentized eschatons," discussed in chapter 1, is particularly useful. Taken literally, the ostensibly millennial claims found in Virgil's poetry and implicit in certain Augustan public displays describe the spiritual perfection of the immanent, physical world. Were Romans of the first century B.C. expected to accept literally the association that Virgil suggested in the Fourth Eclogue, between the coming age and the poem's utopian vision of the *Saturnia regna*? Or that which Augustus suggested by equating himself to Apollo, and by subsequently promoting prophetic literature that heralded the advent of a new, Apollonian *saeculum*?

Effectively, the remainder of this study will be occupied with answering these two questions. I begin with Augustus. Significant rapport exists between Virgil's conception of history as sacrificial process and Augustus' representation of his own role in Roman history. In an important article on the Ara Pacis, Elsner applied ideas from Habinek's reading of the ox-slaughter in the *Georgics* to the artistic program of the Augustan monument. As he notes, "The Ara Pacis is eloquent on the subject of death."¹ He lays particular stress on the motif of cow skulls hung with garlands that decorate the inside of

¹ Elsner (1991): 58.

the precinct: “Even as sacrifice took place, its participants were surrounded by the *memento mori* of its results—the fruitfulness of life bought at the ritual cost of death.”²

While Habinek, Hardie, and Morgan have attempted to redeem the Augustan sacrificant by emphasizing the indispensable role in the construction of culture that Virgil ascribes to him, Elsner emphasizes the fundamental irony of such a justification:

At the very least, the image of sacrifice is an ambivalent one. While it establishes social life through ritual killing, it also evokes the gap of death which gapes before that social life at its boundary and undermines its very foundations, its very meaning, with a great denial. Ritual killing and imagined religious worlds to be placated seem (like imperial ‘apotheosis’) to be the defence of Roman ideology against the deconstructive fact of death. But it is ironic that death itself must be the prophylactic barrier to death.³

If we agree with Hardie and Morgan that Virgil ultimately resolves the tension of the sacrificial act by marking out for it a proper place in the cosmic order, Elsner’s argument will make no sense to us. However, if we appreciate how the role of “historical sacrificant” is conceived as being fundamentally imperfect precisely on account of the temporal and physical limitations that necessitate its existence, we can perceive the insight of Elsner’s observation. In the Ara Pacis one becomes aware of a tension that renders the basis of the Augustan peace tenuous at best.

It shall be my argument in this chapter that the development of official Augustan art shows an awareness of this tension, and expressly leaves it unresolved in order to mark out the limitations of Augustus’ temporal power. Augustus advertised his reign as a new “Golden Age.” At the same time he carefully avoided depicting this age as consisting of a radical transformation of the normal mode of human existence. Beginning with the Temple of Apollo Palatinus, he subtly, but continually referenced the limitations

² Elsner (1991): 58.

³ Elsner (1991): 58.

that circumscribed his power. The expression of these limitations reaches its apogee in the Ara Pacis, where his role in Roman history is explicitly defined as that of a priestly sacrificant, thus conforming to what we have seen in Virgil's characterization of Aeneas.

In all of this we can locate what I consider to be Augustus' conception of history. To show precisely what this was, I shall trace his characterization of his own agency from its earliest expression in the Temple of Apollo Palatinus, to the point where he expressly marks out his role in the broader function of the cosmos, as a priestly sacrificant on the Ara Pacis. In the end, we shall see that Augustus conceived of himself as a mediator between the divine and the human, rather than as a sort of transcendent "messianic" figure. We have already seen that in the *Aeneid*, Julian *auctoritas* is conceived in similar terms. For Virgil, as for Augustus, the act of sacrifice marks the boundary between the human and the transcendent, the temporal and the eternal. When we return to the *Aeneid* in the final chapter, we shall see how it is this distinction that is responsible for the uneasy tension in the poem's more problematic moments, and not (as many have supposed) Virgil's veiled disapproval of Augustus.

II. Apollo and Augustus

1. The Temple of Apollo Palatinus

According to both Josephus and Velleius Paterculus, the Temple of Apollo Palatinus was the most spectacular of Augustus' public works.⁴ It was constructed of

⁴ Joseph. *Bell. Iud.* 2.80-81, Vell. 2.81.3; my description relies primarily on the best source we have for the appearance of the temple, Propertius 2.31:

Quaeris, cur veniam tibi tardior? aurea Phoebi
porticus a magno Caesare aperta fuit.
tantam erat in speciem Poenis digesta columnis,
inter quas Danaï femina turba senis.
hic equidem Phoëbo visus mihi pulchrior ipso

white marble, with porticoes formed by “Carthaginian columns,” among which were interspersed statues of the fifty Danaids and their father. Atop the roof was the *quadriga* of the Sun god, who had been identified with Apollo since the Hellenistic period.⁵ The main doors were made of ivory, and each was carved with a scene: the miraculous repulse of the Gauls from Delphi (278 B.C.), and the punishment of Niobe. There were surely multiple representations of Apollo throughout the complex, of which Propertius mentions two. The first seems to have stood near the Danaids; it was a marble Phoebus with his lyre, “seemingly more beautiful than the real one” (*Prop.* 2.31.5). The second was perhaps the primary cult statue of the god, since Propertius calls it *deus ipse* (2.31.15). Again he holds his lyre, but this time he is dressed in long robes like a priest, and flanked by Latona and Diana.⁶ Around the altar stood four cows, allegedly sculpted by the famous Myron, and elsewhere in the complex there was a magnificent library.

At some point during the second half of the first century B.C., Apollo had become the god most associated with eschatological prophecy at Rome. In the Fourth Eclogue, Virgil proclaims that a new Golden Age, ruled by Apollo, is about to begin: *tuus iam*

marmoreus tacita carmen hiare lyra;
 atque aram circum steterant armenta Myronis,
 quattuor artificis, vivida signa, boves.
 tum medium claro surgebat marmore templum,
 et patria Phoebo carius Ortygia:
 in quo Solis erat supra fastigia currus;
 et valvae, Libyci nobile dentis opus,
 altera deiectos Parnasi vertice Gallos,
 altera maerebat funera Tantalidos.
 deinde inter matrem deus ipse interque sororem
 Pythius in longa carmina veste sonat.

The text of this elegy is seemingly corrupt in some places; I here have included the Barber’s 1967 Oxford text. For the textual problems, see Richardson (1977). A detailed explication of Propertius’ elegy can be found in Lange (2009): 168-71.

⁵ Galinsky (1996): 219.

⁶ This group is believed to be represented on a statue base found at Sorrento; see Zanker (1990): 70-73 and 242-47; Roccas (1989); and Lange (2009): 176-81.

*regnat Apollo.*⁷ Nigidius Figulus relates a scheme of world history in which there are four successive ages ruled by four different gods, and mentions that the *magi* predict a fifth, ruled by Apollo, and possibly *sine fine*.⁸ Both of these statements had been written well before the then-Octavian vowed to build a Temple to Apollo in 36 B.C., after his victory over Sextus Pompey at Naulochus.⁹ The character of Apollonian-inspired prophecy surely had something to do with his choice. Suetonius and Dio tell us that after Octavian returned to Rome, lightning struck his house on the Palatine.¹⁰ In the case of prodigies such as this, the usual course of action was to pass through the Senate in order to consult the *XVviri*, who were in charge of the Sibylline Books.¹¹ Instead, Octavian called upon a *haruspex* to interpret the sign, and he was told that the spot struck by lightning was desired by Apollo.¹² Heckster and Rich have convincingly shown that Octavian's choice of a *haruspex* (instead of the *XVviri*) was no accident: he wanted Apollo named. Perhaps because he had a good relationship with the particular *haruspex*, he knew he could count on the right answer.¹³

But why was Octavian so intent of getting this specific response? Most likely, it was because he had already decided to emphasize Apollo as his patron.¹⁴ This decision must have been made independently of the result at Naulochus, since that battle occurred in proximity to a sanctuary of Artemis, where some of Octavian's land maneuvers

⁷ *Ec.* 4.10.

⁸ I.e. not followed by *ekpyrosis*. Cf. Nigidius Figulus fr. 67 [Swoboda]. This passage, and particularly its reference to *ekpyrosis*, will be discussed at length in chapter 5 of the present study.

⁹ *Vell. Pet.* 2.81.3.

¹⁰ *Suet. Aug.* 29.3; *Dio* 49.15.5.

¹¹ Heckster and Rich (2006): 155.

¹² *Suet. Aug.* 29.3.

¹³ Heckster and Rich (2006): 155-60; also Lange (2009): 40. See Potter (1994): 149-58 on the *haruspices* and *XVviri* in general (especially 156-57, where he discusses the difference between the two in terms of obtaining the answer one wanted). On Augustus and the *haruspices* see Rawson (1978) and Vigourt (2001).

¹⁴ Heckster and Rich (2006): 166: "Octavian had, almost certainly, already settled on Apollo as his patron before the decision was taken that a temple to the god should be built next to his house."

actually took place.¹⁵ When he selected Apollo in 36 B.C., he did so for reasons other than thanksgiving for a military victory, and as a result the temple was not constructed *ex manubiis*.¹⁶ Diana would have a role in the Palatine cult, but it was initially conceived without reference to a military victory.¹⁷ The emphasis on thanksgiving for victory was instead due to a fortunate coincidence that occurred between the vowing of the temple in 36 and its completion in 28: the Battle of Actium had by chance taken place near the ancient sanctuary of Apollo at Actium.¹⁸ Octavian could combine the commemoration of his triumph with the close association between himself and Apollo that he had begun to cultivate in 36 B.C. A relatively straightforward interpretation of sculptural program of the Temple of Apollo Palatinus shows us how this association probably functioned. The positioning of Sol's chariot on the roof cleverly avoids heavy-handedness, while still making a clear point. As noted, the sun god had been closely identified with Apollo since the Hellenistic period. Moreover, in ruler cults from the same time, the sun was used to symbolize the divinity of kings and queens, and in Italy, Sol was considered to be an ancestor of the Latins.¹⁹ By ensuring that the temple be constructed next to his own house on the Palatine, Octavian laid the groundwork for a connection between himself and Apollo, and in turn subtly attached to himself these further associations.

We have already seen how *ultio* was a pivotal component of Augustus' self-representation by the time he constructed his forum. The motif was already prominent in the artistic program of the Temple of Apollo. The scene of Niobe sculpted on the ivory

¹⁵ Heckster and Rich (2006): 154.

¹⁶ Of the temples constructed by Octavian/Augustus, only that of Mars Ultor was dedicated *ex manubiis*; cf. Heckster and Rich (2006): 166: "Octavian's founding of the Palatine temple drew not on the tradition of the manubial temples of commanders, but on a different tradition, namely the establishment of temples on the recommendation of priestly experts in expiation of a prodigy."

¹⁷ Propertius 2.31.15–16; Heckster and Rich (2006): 155.

¹⁸ Strabo 7.7.6; Suet. *Aug.* 18.2; Dio 51.1.2–3. See Heckster and Rich (2006): 162.

¹⁹ Galinsky (1996): 219. For Sol as an ancestor of the Latins, cf. *Aen.* 12.164.

doors is unambiguously related to notions of divine vengeance.²⁰ The portico of the Danaids anticipates the later, fully developed conception of *ultio* to an even greater extent. Many attempts, largely unsuccessful, have been made to explain what these sculptures were meant to signify.²¹ The reason why nearly all these attempts have failed is due to a stubborn insistence that the Danaids refer to some historical nation (Egyptians, Greeks, Romans) or to one side of various traditional ethnic and geographic antipathies (Oriental/Greco-Roman, civilized/barbarian). In the fifth chapter of the present study, we shall note their appearance on the baldric worn by Turnus, which reminds Aeneas of his duty to exact revenge for Pallas' death. In the other major references to myth by ancient authors prior to the construction of the Temple of Apollo, the crime of the Danaids had no ethnic or racial dimension whatsoever.²² Based on the evidence we have seen, the Danaids do nothing more than embody the principle of cosmic justice. In this sense, we ought not to over-think their placement in the portico of the Temple of Apollo. They are there to make a moral point, not a nationalistic one: in a Rome protected by Apollo and Octavian, justice and wickedness will receive their proper dues. Of course, as would

²⁰ Gurval (1998): 125 and 130. Gurval believes that the implicit comparison to Augustus was missed by Propertius, but such an observation would have been out of place in the poem; Elegy 2.31 is not too much concerned with seeing Augustus through Apollo, but rather seems to take the scene at face value.

²¹ Cf. Lefèvre (1989): 45. Lefèvre believes that the Danaids represent the triumph of Greece over Egypt. Cf. also Harrison (1998): 231. Harrison argues that the Danaids in fact stand for Egyptian barbarism themselves. He includes a good overview of the different opinions on the issue, which fall more or less in these two camps, which we observe in Putnam (1998): 199-200 and Smith (2005): 172-74.

²² The earliest extant treatment of the Danaid myth is by Aeschylus in *The Suppliants* (and the other two plays of the Danaid trilogy, which are lost). The punishment of the Danaids was also featured on the mural by Polygnotus in the Lesche at Delphi (according to Paus. 10.31.9). For the present study, the most important classical citations of the myth are those that interpret the daughters of Danaus as intemperate or uninitiated into a mystery cult. This characterization can be traced back to Plato's *Gorgias*, where the punishment endured by the Danaids in Tartarus (filling sieves with water) is said to result from the fact that they were intemperate, and thus somehow "leaky" and "uninitiated" (Socrates makes a play on words with ἀμύηται, which can mean either "uninitiated" or "leaky." Cf. Pl. *Grg.* 493a ff.). The later tradition picked up on the idea of being "uninitiated," and the pseudo-Platonic *Axiochus* (late-second or early-first century B.C.) uses the Danaids as an example of those who suffer in the afterlife because they were never initiated into a mystery religion. Closer in time to our period, Lucretius reasserted the association with intemperance (Lucr. 3.1003-10). In all instances, the Greek-Barbarian dimension that so many have attempted to identify is simply missing.

later be the case in the Temple of Mars Ultor, this idea had a specific relevance to the vengeance taken by Octavian on Caesar's murderers. Still, the image of the Danaids, whose punishment in Tartarus was practically a mythological commonplace, is at its core one of generalized, cosmic justice.

This last point alludes to an idea that is crucial to our understanding of the complex's significance and meaning. Building the Temple of Apollo was the first step in a series of actions taken by Augustus to show that he had facilitated the arrival of a new period in Roman history. By the 30s B.C., these periods were described as *saecula*. To understand the precise historical claims of Augustus' regime, it is necessary to understand the origins and development of this concept, which was adopted by the Romans in its Etruscan form.

2. The Etruscan *Saecula*

Etruscan eschatological ideas appear to have been quite popular in the first century B.C. The turbulent events of the time must have inspired a millennial fervor that gravitated towards any sort of apocalyptic speculation, and the Etruscan variety, influenced by that people's sense of impending cultural obliteration at the hands of the Romans, was among the most attractive forms available. It is no accident that Lucan marks Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon with a procession of Etruscan priests, and with prophecies delivered by the *haruspex* Aruns and Nigidius Figulus.²³ Both predicted Rome's doom. The idea that a nation could end abruptly was characteristic of the Etruscans, who believed that each people's history consists of preordained *saecula*. A fragment called the Prophecy of Vegoia, presumably translated into Latin from an

²³ Lucr.1.558-672.

Etruscan source in the first century, attests to such a system by situating itself in the *octavum saeculum*, which it says is “almost the last”. This text is most likely derived from the *Libri Vegoici*, one of the two fundamental revealed texts that constituted the core of the *Etrusca disciplina* (the other being the *Libri Tegetici*). The doctrine contained in the *Libri* was believed to have been dictated to Arruns of Veltymnus by the nymph Vegoia in the very distant past.²⁴ Significantly, the Vegoian Books were occasionally consulted by the Romans and stored in the Temple of Apollo, along with the *Libri Sibyllini* and the *carmina Marcii*.²⁵

Unfortunately, we know rather little about this aspect of Etruscan religion. Plutarch writes that the Etruscans believed their race would last for eight *saecula* of varying length, but he was already mistaken. The prophecy of Vegoia, which refers to the eighth *saeculum* as “almost the last,” is corroborated by Varro (cited in Censorinus’ *De Die Natali*). Varro relates that the Etruscans believed their city would endure ten *saecula*, each marked out by the death of the last person born on the opening day of that particular span.²⁶ Thus the duration of each *saeculum* was unpredictable and difficult to determine; the belief was that the gods would send portents that augurs could interpret. In 88 B.C. there was a terrifying blast of thunder before the Senate, and the haruspex

²⁴ *Corpus agrimensorum Romanorum* 348-50; cf. *RE* “Bego”; Ammian. Marc. 12.10.2. The translation, thought to be by Tarquinius, cannot be direct, since Vegoia was believed to have prophesied much earlier than the eighth *saeculum*.

²⁵ Serv. *Ad Aen.* 6.72. At *Aen.* 6.69-74 Virgil alludes to the temple that Apollo and Diana would have at Rome, built of solid marble. Norden (1903): 141-42 points out that the other, older temple to Apollo in the Flaminian fields, could not have fit the description. Servius, who unlike Virgil wrote after the transfer of the *Libri Sibyllini* to the Temple of Apollo Palatinus, describes how the collection housed in the base of the cult statue there also contained the *libri vegoici* and the obscure *carmina marcii*, a prophecy that had led to the institution of the *ludi Apollinares* during the Second Punic War.

²⁶ Censorinus *DN.* 17.5-6.

called in determined that it signaled the end of the eighth *saeculum*.²⁷ In 44 B.C. the haruspex Vulcanius interpreted “Caesar’s Comet” as the sign that the ninth *saeculum* had ended; thereupon he died, being the last person born on the first day of the previous age. A period of 44 years seems extremely short, and most likely shows how the interpretation of portents could be molded to meet contemporary demands.²⁸

The Romans’ use of *saecula* to demarcate periods of their city’s history ultimately had its origins in this aspect of the *Etrusca disciplina*.²⁹ Simultaneously, they entertained the pessimistic Etruscan belief that the lifespan of a city was marked out from the very time of its origins. The legendary appearance of twelve vultures to Romulus, the sign upon which he based his legitimacy to rule Rome, was interpreted as an indicator of this duration. Varro (again cited by Censorinus) reports that the first century *haruspex* Vettius concluded that because the city had already lasted more than one hundred twenty years, the length of each *saeculum* indicated by the portent must have been one hundred years; thus Rome would last twelve hundred years.³⁰

Vettius’ conclusion was encouraging, but far from ideal from the perspective of Augustus, who as we shall see wished to ground his *saeculum* in something more stable and eternal. Twelve hundred years is a long time, but it is not *sine finis*. For a more

²⁷ Plut. *Sull.* 7.3. Most likely, Plutarch does not specify the number of the new age--the ninth-- because of confusion.

²⁸ Feeney (2007): 147.

²⁹ Feeney (2007): 146.

³⁰ Censorinus *DN.* 17.15. The legend of the twelve vultures was said by Livy to be the less common explanation for the origin of the Romulus’ primacy, the more common being that he killed Remus after the other mocked the height of the wall he was building (*Liv.* 1.6). However, Ennius claims that the vultures provided the portent upon which the city was founded:

Cedunt de caelo ter quattor corpora sancta
Avium, praepetibus sese pulchrisque locis dant.
Conspicit inde sibi data Romulus esse priora,
Auspicio regni stabilita scamna locumque. (*Ann. Fr.* 97-100)

appropriate model of history, he turned to the tradition of the *Libri Sibyllini*, which could somehow turn the arrival of the *ultima aetas* into a happy occurrence.

3. The *Libri Sibyllini*

Almost as soon as he became *pontifex maximus* in 12 B.C., Augustus had the collection of prophetic texts known as the *Libri Sibyllini* transferred from the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline to the Temple of Apollo Palatinus, where they were kept in two gold cases beneath the cult statue. The act crowned his longstanding attachment to the books. The Sorrento statue base, which most likely depicts a reconstruction of the cult statues in the Temple of Apollo, shows Diana, Apollo, and Latona standing, with the Sibyl on the ground before them, apparently exhausted after having delivered the god's prophecies.³¹ The texts that Augustus had transferred to the Temple of Apollo actually replaced the original *libri*, which burned with the old Temple of Jupiter in 83 B.C. These originals were considered to be of great antiquity: they were said to have been purchased from the Sibyl by either Tarquinius Priscus or Tarquinius Superbus.³² In 76 B.C., envoys were sent to cities all over the Mediterranean to make a new collection³³

The contents of the *libri* had always been kept private and secret.³⁴ The only people allowed to access them were members of the *collegium sacris faciundius*, whose number increased over the years from two (*duumviri*), to ten (*decemviri*), to fifteen

³¹ Roccus (1989): 574-75.

³² For the famous story of the book-burning, see Dionys. 4.62; Gell. *NA* 1.19; Lact. *Div. Inst.* 1.6; Pliny *HN* 13.27. Lactantius' account, which follows Varro, is the only one that identifies this Sibyl as the Cumaean one. That version entered the tradition, although we do hear that this Cumaean Sibyl may actually have been a native of Erythrae. This probably invested her prophecies with an even greater authority; cf. Potter (1994): 74, who cites Livy (1.8.1) and a pseudo-Aristotelian text on marvels.

³³ Special attention seems to have been paid to the Erythraean Sibyl; cf. Dionys. 4.62, following Varro.

³⁴ Dionysius (4.62) relates the fate of one of the first *duumviri*, Marcus Atilius, who divulged some of the prophecies contained in the *libri*. Tarquinius had him punished as a traitor, which entailed being thrown into the sea after having been sewed into a bag with a dog, a rooster, a viper, and an ape.

(*quindecimviri*) in the time of Sulla. When a prodigy was reported, the college would withdraw to where the books were kept and select several of the Greek verses (probably based on some similarity with the portent that had been observed). These were always distinguished by acrostics; all the letters in the first line appeared in order as the first letters of the subsequent lines of the poem. This characteristic distinguished an authentic Sibylline text. The college would translate the verses into Latin hexameters, and these would describe the specific expiation that was required.³⁵

Why was Augustus so interested in these texts? The answer lies in what the Sibyl represented, or perhaps rather what she could be made to represent. In the Fourth Eclogue, Virgil writes, “now the last age of Cumaean song has arrived.”³⁶ A few lines below we read, “now returns the Virgin, and Saturn’s rule,” and a few lines later, “now Apollo reigns.”³⁷ The rest of the poem predicts the well-known details of what the new age will be like, using imagery to be found in the poetic tradition of the Golden Age.³⁸ That tradition does not associate Sibylline prophecy with the Golden Age or Apollo in any way, and Virgil’s mention of two separate deities (Saturn and Apollo) that would preside over the new age indicates that he was working from more than one source. Certainly the literary tradition that originated with Hesiod’s scheme of the Ages of Man was one of these sources. But on the surface at least, Virgil appears to have supplemented this with some other account that offered an eschatological prediction of Apollo’s rule in a renewed age of happiness and innocence.

³⁵ For the acrostics, see Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.62.5-6. My understanding of the procedure followed by the *XVviri* was given to me by my advisor, Prof. Potter, who also discusses the subject in his book (Potter [1994]). For a different opinion, see Scheid’s admittedly “synthetic” reconstruction (Scheid [2003]: 148-150). Cf. also Niebuhr (1844): 244 on consultation at random or by lots: “To have searched after a passage and applied it would have been presumptuous.”

³⁶ *Ecl.* 4.4: *ultima cumaei venit iam carminis aetas.*

³⁷ *Ecl.* 4.6: *iam redit et virgo, redeunt saturnia regna.* 4.10: *tuus iam regnat Apollo.*

³⁸ For which see chapter 5 *infra*.

Can we actually identify that prediction with a “Cumaean” (i.e. Sibylline) song, as Virgil says? Three possibilities need to be considered. One is that Virgil somehow gained access to a prophecy contained in the official *Libri Sibyllini* that associated the reign of Apollo with a new Golden Age. The second is that he had access to some publicly circulating oracle that claimed to originate with the Sibyl, of which there were many.³⁹ The third is that he derived the idea of Apollo’s reign in the *ultima aetas* from a non-Sibylline source and blended it with the general Sibylline setting of the Fourth Eclogue. The first case is unlikely, since we have seen how tightly access to the official texts was restricted.⁴⁰ That is not to say it was impossible. One of the two fragments of the *Libri Sibyllini* that Phlegon of Tralles preserved (from the 76 B.C. compilation) describes the Sibyl’s possession by Apollo. The imagery is strikingly similar to the passage in *Aeneid* 6, and Virgil perhaps knew of the oracle.⁴¹ However, I believe Niebuhr’s remark is still correct: unlike Greek oracles, the function of the *Libri Sibyllini* was not to learn the future, but to learn what expiatory rituals were required when prodigies showed that the gods were angry.⁴² Thus to say that Virgil’s association of Apollo with a Golden Age had been predicted by the official *Libri Sibyllini* involves two improbabilities: one, that the *libri* (or a Latin rendering of one of the leaves by the

³⁹ Cf. Nisbet (1978): 48-49. Some of these unofficial oracles have found their way into a collection texts which we still possess, known as the *Oracula Sibyllina*. Any use of these texts to inform aspects of first century Roman culture or actual Sibylline prophecy is fraught with extreme difficulties, since the what we possess is the product of centuries of accretions from pagan, Jewish, and Christian redactors. For the problems involved, see Potter (1994): 83-92 and Buitenwerf (2003): 124-34. Buitenwerf specifically discusses *Oracula* III, generally considered to contain the most authentically “Roman” material, but which he nevertheless correctly labels “a highly idiosyncratic product of Hellenized Judaism.” See also Parke (1988): 1-23, whose work is in many ways the reference for the subject, and Lightfoot (2007): 18-23.

⁴⁰ Also noted by Nisbet (1978): 59.

⁴¹ *FGrH* 257 fr. 37 V = Phlegon; *Aen.* 6.45-102.

⁴² Niebuhr (1844): 244.

XVviri) contained an eschatological prophecy involving Apollo; and two, that Virgil had access to this text.⁴³

Still, we can discern at least three voices that operate in the Fourth Eclogue: the Sibylline voice assumed by the poem's narrative frame, that of the literary tradition on the subject of the Golden Age, and that of some third source which connected these two dimensions. This source has to have been accessible prior to 40 B.C., the date by which Virgil had composed the poem. Few solid candidates exist, but certain possibilities do stand out. Servius Danielis explains Virgil's reference to the reign of Apollo by citing Book 4 of Nigidius' *De Diis*:

Certain authorities, among them Orpheus, distinguish the gods and their types by the divisions of time and ages: first comes the reign of Saturn, then Jove, then Neptune, then Pluto; others also, like the magi, say that there will be a reign of Apollo, in which it must be determined whether they predict a conflagration, or rather, an *ekpyrosis*.⁴⁴

It is difficult to prove a connection between prose and poetic texts, especially when the poetry has as mystical a tone as that of the Fourth Eclogue. However, there are several reasons why we ought to entertain the possibility that some sort of relationship exists. First, Nigidius' study would have been available to Virgil when he was composing *Eclogue 4* around 40 B.C. Second, it provides a precedent for a millennial conception of Apollo, which is otherwise lacking in this period. Third, the fact that the *aetas* in *Eclogue 4* is said to be *ultima* (4.4), along with the absence of any reference to destruction or decline, is unprecedented in the literary tradition, but the sense is implied by the passage from Nigidius. We have already seen Virgil's allusion to the idea of *ekpyrosis* in his description of the destruction of Troy in *Aeneid 2*. As we shall see in the

⁴³ Cf. Nisbet (1978): 48.

⁴⁴ Nigidius Figulus fr. 67 [Swoboda]; *Neptunium* is Swoboda's emendation of Daniel's *Neptuni*.

following chapter, the idea that the world is periodically consumed and reconstituted occasionally characterized the cosmology of the Pythagoreans (with whom the Stoic notion of *ekpyrosis* possibly originated), a fact that perhaps explains Nigidius' reference to the process in the above quote.⁴⁵ But we shall also see that neither the Pythagoreans nor the Stoics adhered uniformly to a conception of universal *ekpyrosis*, or to the doctrine of eternal recurrence that necessarily accompanied it. The Neopythagoreanism practiced by Nigidius himself likely took this alternate form, and the reference to *magi* in this passage (a term frequently applied in the first century to Pythagoreans) indicates that the secular scheme it sets forth originated in that discipline.⁴⁶

We do not need to accept that Virgil read this actual passage in order to accept that the ideas it contains somehow influenced *Eclogue 4*. As we shall see in the final chapter of this study, Neopythagoreanism was prevalent enough in mid-first century Rome that such ideas could have had a fairly wide circulation. With this in mind, can we settle on this “Western” analysis, and conclude that Virgil composed his poem on the basis of two traditions, the literary and the Pythagorean, onto which he superficially fit the Sibylline frame in order to invest the *Eclogue* with a specific prophetic character? This is the safest route,⁴⁷ but we need to be aware of one element in the poem that potentially indicates an eastern source. At lines 22-25, where we see all of nature at peace:

nec magnos metuent armenta leones
ipsa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores

⁴⁵ On the Pythagorean origins of historical recurrence and *ekpyrosis*, see Trompf (1979): 9, and Mansfeld (1979): 146 n. 52.

⁴⁶ On Nigidius as a Neopythagorean, and on the *magi*, see chapter 5 *infra*. The reference to Orpheus in this passage is also significant, since Neopythagoreanism was in many ways similar to Orphism. I discuss this point as well in chapter 5.

⁴⁷ Cf. Nisbet (1978), especially 74-75.

occidet et serpens, et fallax herba veneni
occidet. (*Ecl.* 4.22-25)

Nor will cattle fear great lions, but they will fill your cradle with lovely
flowers, the serpent will perish, so too will the plant that hides its
poison.

The image of universal peace that extends even to wild animals does not exist in the
traditional accounts of the Golden Age prior to Virgil. But it does have a parallel in the

Book of Isaiah:

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down
with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed;
their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw
like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and
the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den (*Is.* 11.6-8,
KJV)

It is highly improbable that Virgil was familiar with the Septuagint or the Hebrew
scriptures.⁴⁸ But this passage from Isaiah had found its way into a non-official Sibylline
text that has come down to us, in some form, in the *Oracula Sibyllina*:

Wolves and lambs will eat grass together in the mountains. Leopards
will feed together with kids. Bears, roaming about for food, will share
their habitat with calves. The carnivorous lion will eat straw from a
manger like a cow. Children, still very young, will take them out on the
lead. For he will tame the wild beasts on earth. Serpents and asps will
sleep together with babies without harming them. (*Sib. Or.* 3.788-95
[Buitenwerf trans.]

As a general rule I believe that when explaining texts from antiquity, we should resort to
the *Oracula Sibyllina* as little as possible, because they constitute an almost insoluble
jumble of pagan, Jewish, and Christian accretions spanning centuries. Even the Third
Oracle, which is considered to contain the oldest sections, is not free from this. For
example, it is quite possible that passages from the *Oraculum* that resemble the Fourth

⁴⁸ Nisbet (1978): 64.

Eclogue were written later and were themselves inspired by Virgil. But here we can triangulate the evidence with the passage from Isaiah. Given that the image of harmony among wild animals does not exist elsewhere in the traditions which Virgil follows, it seems possible that the text which has become *Oracula Sibyllina* 3, or some other similar related “Sibylline” text, contained these lines prior to 40 B.C., and that they inspired this section of the Fourth Eclogue.

I do not dare to press this conclusion too strongly, given the tenuous nature of the evidence needed to support it. The question of whether Virgil derived his seemingly “messianic” idea of the recapitulation of humankind’s primordial, happy state from an eastern-inspired source is too fraught with difficulty to solve in the present study, and ultimately it is irrelevant to our discussion.⁴⁹ What is important is that we see in *Eclogue* 4 a precedent for connecting the return of the Golden Age with prophecy that could be labeled “Sibylline.” Whether the Eclogue itself was that precedent, or whether some other official or unofficial Sibylline text expressed the sentiment, is largely immaterial. With this precedent in mind, we better understand why Augustus was so interested in the official Sibylline prophecy. While having the *libri* recopied in 19 B.C., he discovered that they called for the old *Ludi Saeculares* to be performed for the first time since 149 B.C. This felicitous discovery afforded him a wonderful opportunity: he would stage the *Ludi* in 17 B.C. and combine imagery of a permanent Augustan/Apollonian *saeculum* with the idea of his having led Rome from a period of political and moral decay to a recapitulation of its earlier innocence and virtue.

⁴⁹ Cf. Nisbet (1978) for an excellent summary and analysis of the “Easterner” vs. “Westerner” debate. Nisbet ultimately comes to a “Western” conclusion, but acknowledges that “there is also much to criticize in the Westerners’ underestimation of this supremely beautiful poem.” (Nisbet [1978]: 74 n. 144)

Not coincidentally, the text produced by the *XVviri* indicated a ceremony that departed from the older performance. In 149, sacrifices were made to the gods of the Underworld, Dis and Proserpina. In 17, the games would replace these with happier chthonic gods, while shifting the overall focus to the Olympian deities. And for reasons now clear, the event would culminate with a sacrifice to Apollo at his temple on the Palatine. Augustus had laid the groundwork for an association between himself and the god who would preside over this new *saeculum*. But how was this association meant to be interpreted? Would Augustus reign over a radically transformed, utopian society like the Saturnian race described by Virgil? Or would he act as a mediator between the gods and the Roman people?

4. The *Ludi Saeculares*

The celebration of the *Ludi Saeculares* was a massive affair. The Games themselves were religious performances over three consecutive days.⁵⁰ They began with a sacrifice to the Moerae the night of May 31; the next day sacrifice was made to Jupiter Optimus Maximus at his temple on the Capitoline. The same pattern was continued the next two days, with night sacrifices to Ilythia, and Terra Mater, and day sacrifices at the respective temples of Juno and Apollo-Diana. Interspersed with these were plays, hymns, and sacred banquets. At the conclusion of the sacrifice to Apollo and Diana, Horace's *Carmen Saeculare* was sung by a chorus of twenty-seven boys and twenty-

⁵⁰ The sequence of the *Ludi Saeculares* was recorded and survived in an inscription, which can be found in *CIL* 6.32323. The text is also included in the edition of Pighi (1965). Modern accounts include: Wissowa (1902): 68; Turcan (1988); Galinsky (1996): 100-6; Beard, North, Price (1998): 201 ff. Galinsky's approach is valuable but quite impressionistic. Sumi (2005): 243-45 and Severy (2003): 57-59 both provide briefer accounts with very interesting observations.

seven girls on both the Palatine and the Capitoline hills. The ceremonies proper were then followed by several days of theatrical performances and athletic contests.

Two aspects of the *Ludi Saeculares* are especially remarkable. The first is the degree of public participation that was encouraged. The event was publicized months in advance; as Zosimus tells us, officials went around the city inviting people to “a spectacle they had never seen, nor ever would again.”⁵¹ The description is ironically accurate, since it was specifically stated that no one was allowed to watch the *Ludi* more than once in their lives; plus, they were normally to take place every one hundred and ten years, making it highly unlikely that anyone would live to see a second performance.⁵² It was also announced that anyone who wanted to attend needed to undergo purification and expiation in advance. The *XVviri*, including Augustus himself, were present prior to the sacrifices to give to every participant torches, sulphur, and asphalt for this purification.⁵³ Additionally, the ban on unmarried Romans’ attendance at public events was lifted for the *Ludi Saeculares*, further indicating that Augustus wished to involve the entire populace.⁵⁴

This desire reveals the second important aspect of the new *saeculum* that the *Ludi Saeculares* heralded: it was not meant to be a period of passive bliss, but rather one of active participation in the moral life of the city. In this respect it is essential to note that the celebration of the *Ludi* was grounded in the moral legislation of 18 B.C.⁵⁵ Thus married women played an important role: there were banquets at the sacrifices for

⁵¹ Zosimus 2.137.

⁵² *CIL* 6.32323.56, 25.

⁵³ This may well have been a measure intended to increase participation. Cf. Beard, North, Price (1998): 186, 203.

⁵⁴ *CIL* 6.32323.50-57. Severy (2003): 57.

⁵⁵ Galinsky (1996): 100-2; on the subject of Augustus’ moral legislation, see Galinsky (1996): 128-40.

matronae, and one hundred ten of these (a number intended to match the years in a *saeculum*) performed a chorus to Juno. The twenty-seven boys and girls who sang the *Carmen Saeculare* were required to have two living parents.⁵⁶ Horace's poem helps us to understand the connection between morals and the new age:

iam Fides et Pax et Honos Pudorque
priscus et neglecta redire Virtus
audet adparetque beata pleno
Copia cornu. (Hor. *Carm. Saec.* 57-60)

Now Loyalty and Peace and Honor, antique Modesty and neglected
Virtue dare to return, and blessed Plenty appears with a full horn.

The peace and prosperity of the new *saeculum* were shown to be intimately related to the moral behavior of the Roman people. The large role they played in the proceedings surely made them feel this connection more deeply, and Augustus' personal presence and interaction with them indicated how vital their participation in the general project was. The new era was not simply a time of peace to be passively enjoyed; a moral transformation was necessary as well, to distinguish Augustus' *saeculum* from all the others, and to truly make it the *ultimum*.

The second aspect of the *Ludi Saeculares* that should be noted is their emphasis on the relationship between the Roman past and the Augustan future. Sumi notes,

Augustus' objective was not a simplistic revival of the past, which would not have been possible in any case because Rome was now the capital of a worldwide empire, but rather a revival of the values of early Rome within the context of Imperial Rome.⁵⁷

Thus activities which evoked Rome's austere past took place against the magnificent backdrop of Augustus' imperial city. On the first night of the games, plays were

⁵⁶ *CIL* 6.32323.100-110, 134-8, 123-32; cf. Severy (2003): 58.

⁵⁷ Sumi (2005): 244.

performed on an improvised stage, outside of any theater, and with no seating provided.⁵⁸ This would have recalled a much earlier period in Roman history when theaters had not yet been constructed. But the performance probably took place at the Tarentum in the Campus Martius, within sight of the then-under-construction Theater of Marcellus.⁵⁹ The daytime rituals at the major temples obviously took place at some of the most splendid locales in Rome. Participants were reminded of the city's past while being surrounded by images of its glorious, Augustan present, along with glimpses of an even more glorious future. This future was both Augustan *and* Julian: in one of the prayers recited at all of the sacrifices, he would say to the god(s), *fitote volens propitius P.R. Quiritibus, XVvirum collegio, mihi, domo, familiae*; “Be thou willingly propitious to the Roman Quirites, this college of priests, me, my household, and my family.” By praying for his family alongside the people of Rome, Augustus comes close to indicating that they *are* Rome, and that the new *saeculum* would last as long as the continuation of his rule, which itself would continue through his dynasty.⁶⁰

These connections between Rome and Augustus and between past and future were most forcefully made at the conclusion of the *Ludi Saeculares*, when the choir of children sang the *Carmen Saeculare* in front of both the Temple of Jupiter and the Temple of Apollo.

alme Sol, curru nitido diem qui
 promissis et celas aliusque et idem
 nasceris, possis nihil urbe Roma
 visere maius. (Hor. *Carm. Saec.* 9-12)

⁵⁸ *CIL* 6.32323.100-1: *Ludique noctu, sacrificio [co]nfecto, sunt commissi in scaena quoi theatrum adiectum non fuit, nullis positus sedilibus...*

⁵⁹ Sumi (2005): 245, on the reasons for locating the performance here.

⁶⁰ Sumi (2005): 244; Severy (2003): 57. Severy offers a slightly different but perhaps more valuable opinion, arguing that it is only at this time that Augustus' rule ceased to be “charismatic” (i.e. centered on his person), and that prior to examples like the prayer cited above, Augustus' family appeared very seldom in his public displays.

Fostering Sun, who in your shining chariot reveals and conceals the day, who is born as another yet the same, might you never be able to see anything greater than the city of Rome.

The impact of these lines, as the crowd of spectators beheld Sol/Apollo in his chariot atop the temple, must have been tremendous. The god and the *princeps* were the agents through whom Rome's greatness had been revitalized, after a hellish century had threatened to extinguish it. And yet it in so many ways it was the same. While Horace would not go so far as to say it, Augustus did, in no uncertain terms: the Golden Age had returned. Still, as noted above, this Golden Age had not brought about some permanent transformation in human nature, not had it removed the threat of evil. It depended on the continued morality and religious devotion of the whole people. Given the nature of Roman religion, we would expect this latter aspect to manifest itself in an emphasis on sacrifice. But even in this context, Augustus took the idea of sacrifice to a striking extreme. As noted above, he performed the Games' closing sacrifice to Apollo before the god's temple on the Palatine. The very performance of this act established the meaning the whole set of rituals surrounding the *Ludi Saeculares*. It emphasized Augustus' special association with Apollo, to whom the new *saeculum* belonged, while acknowledging the limitations of his own human agency. Despite the fact that Apollo was Augustus' personal deity, he still required proper religious devotion, in the form of sacrifice. While this idea would have been implicit in the scene on the Palatine, it becomes quite explicit in the artistic program of the Ara Pacis, to which we now turn.

III. The Ara Pacis

The year after the *Ludi Saeculares* were performed, fairly significant turmoil in Gaul and Spain demanded Augustus' personal presence, and he left Rome for three years.⁶¹ Upon his return, the Senate offered him a triumph and an altar in the Senate chamber to commemorate his homecoming. He refused both, and instead allowed them to have constructed an altar to the Augustan Peace in the Campus Martius. The Ara Pacis is perhaps the most representative Augustan monument, in terms of both its distinct and innovative artistic style, and its thematic content. Before discussing the altar itself, we need to establish the degree to which it can be interpreted as an accurate expression of Augustus' own thought. This is readily possible, thanks to the discovery of the Tabula Siarensis, on which are recorded the *senatus consulta* that had instituted honors for Germanicus following his death in Syria in 19 A.D.⁶² The document allows us to better understand the degree of involvement the *princeps* had in the planning of monuments decreed by the Senate, and it is in this respect that it is relevant to our present focus. Augustus himself says in the *Res Gestae* that the Ara Pacis had been commissioned by the Senate, a fact that immediately distinguishes it from the Forum of Augustus and other projects for whose financing and construction he took personal credit.⁶³ Yet the Tabula Siarensis shows that the Senate constantly sought the approval and suggestions of Tiberius (and the rest of the imperial family) when planning Germanicus' honors.⁶⁴ The

⁶¹ For the uprisings, see Dio 54.25.1.

⁶² The Tabula Siarensis was discovered in Spain in 1981, and its contents were published by Gonzalez in the *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* in 1984 (Gonzalez [1984]). It was later published by Crawford in his *Roman Statutes* (Crawford [1996]: no. 37), and I follow Crawford's text. Relevant discussions of the document can be found in Rowe (2002): 1-8 and 81-2, and Potter (1987).

⁶³ *RG* 12; cf. Conlin (1997): 41. On the Forum of Augustus, constructed *ex manubiis*, see chapter 2 *infra* n. 51.

⁶⁴ *TS* fr. I.4-8: "... this matter with the consultation of Tiberius Caesar Augustus, princeps... these senatorial opinions be placed at his disposal, and he, with his customary... from the honors that the Senate was

sort of instructions that the Senate and the princeps would discuss and relate to the architects and sculptors were quite precise. The *senatus consulta* recorded on the Tabula Siarensis commissioned the construction of three commemorative arches, in Rome, on the Rhine, and in Asia Minor. For the arch in Rome, the decree specifies the location (in the Circus Flaminius, near the statues already dedicated by Gaius Norbanus Flaccus to Augustus and the Domus Augusta), the material (marble), the arrangement of the statues on the arch, and the precise wording of the dedicatory inscription.⁶⁵ Although no such document exists regarding the construction of the Ara Pacis, we can imagine that it was planned according to a similar process.⁶⁶ With this in mind, we may proceed under the assumption that Augustus had significant input into the physical situation of the altar and its artistic decoration, including the personages chosen for the sculptural reliefs. All of these aspects of the Ara Pacis will prove crucial to our subsequent discussion.

Turning now to the Ara Pacis itself, it is important to bear in mind that it was a working altar, as evidenced by the presence of drain-holes that allowed the blood to be washed out after a sacrifice. Processions probably entered from the portal on the Via Flaminia, which was at ground level, and left from the one that opened into the Campus Martius, which was accessible by nine steps. Holliday notes that this was the exact route by which Augustus entered Rome when he returned in 13 B.C. In the likely event that

resolving ought to be adopted, he may choose... his mother, Julia Augusta, and Drusus Caesar, and the mother of Germanicus Caesar, Antonia... who has also been summoned by them for the decision, they may reckon sufficiently appropriate to be able to be adopted..." (Trans. Rowe)

⁶⁵ *TS* fr. 1.9-21. The inscription is recorded at 12-18: "on the face of this arch, 'The Senate and Roman people have dedicated this monument... to the memory of Germanicus Caesar, since he, having defeated the Germans in war, having repulsed from Gaul... having recovered the military standards, having avenged a treacherous defeat of an army of the Roman people, having put the status of the Gauls in order, as proconsul sent to the overseas provinces to organize them and the kingdoms of the region in accordance with the instructions of Tiberius Caesar Augustus... king of Armenia, sparing himself no effort until by decree of the Senate... was granted to him, he died serving the *res publica*.'" (Trans. Rowe) Cf. Conlin (1997): 42.

⁶⁶ Cf. Conlin (1997): 40-41; Zanker (1988): 98.

this similarity was intentional, this feature represents the extension through time of a historical action by association with a ritually repeated event. Augustus' return thus embodies a timeless reality that occupies a space somewhere between the historical and the mythical.⁶⁷ Reinforcing this interpretation is the presence of similar motifs within the sculptural program itself, which we shall encounter over the course of this discussion.

The north and south friezes depict a procession that includes Augustus, his family, senators, and priests. Some have seen this relief as intentionally unhistorical: Torelli and Galinsky believe that this procession cannot be associated with either the altar's constitution on 4 July 13 B.C. or its dedication on 9 January 30 B.C.⁶⁸ Others, however, disagree. Holliday believes that it depicts the *constitutio*, "a singular event, drawn from profane time."⁶⁹ Bowersock says that the scene is "the procession of the imperial family on the day that Augustus became *Pontifex Maximus*."⁷⁰ Ultimately, Bowersock appears to be closest to the truth on this point, but it is important that we understand why. Augustus is depicted as the *pontifex maximus*, an office that he assumed on 6 March 12 B.C. This would seem to render a dating of 4 July 13 B.C. impossible. Those who wish to date the procession to 9 January 9 B.C., the occasion of the altar's *dedicatio*, must explain the presence of Agrippa, who died in 12 B.C. Bowersock's identification has several problems, however. The first is the presence of four *flamines* on the relief; one of them has to represent the *flamen dialis*, an office believed to have been vacant until 11 B.C.

⁶⁷ To this we ought to compare Feeney's excellent discussion of the way the Roman "anniversary mindset" would have linked events that occurred on the same date and in the same place. Feeney uses the similar example of Augustus' return from the east in 29 B.C. on 12 August, the date of the annual sacrifice to Hercules Invictus in the Forum Boarium. Cf. Feeney (2007): 161-66; also chapter 5 *infra*.

⁶⁸ Torelli (1982): 43, 55; Galinsky (1996): 142. Torelli says categorically that there is no historicity in the Ara Pacis, citing as evidence the presence of the *flamen dialis*, whose office was vacant in 13 B.C. This is also the opinion of Borbein (1975): 245-46 and Settis (in Hofter [1988]: 421).

⁶⁹ Holliday (1990): 545.

⁷⁰ Bowersock (1990): 390 ff.

He responds to this by questioning the textual emendation in Tacitus that gives us this date, and argues that a *flamen dialis* existed since 14 B.C.⁷¹ A more serious problem is the depiction of Drusus in the procession. Drusus had stayed in Gaul after Augustus' departure for Rome, and we have no evidence to indicate that he was back in Rome by March of 12 B.C.⁷² The presence of Agrippa also throws into question the historicity of the procession. He had been in Pannonia to quell a potential rebellion at the beginning of the year, and when he had successfully done so, he returned to Italy. Dio tells us that he went to his estate in Campania, without ever mentioning a return to Rome; there he fell ill and died.⁷³ Augustus received the news of his death between 20 and 23 March; allowing for delays in communication, and for the amount of time Agrippa must have been ill, it seems impossible that he could have been at a procession in Rome on 6 March. The fact that Dio never mentions his presence there indicates as much.⁷⁴

Bowersock wishes to argue against Torelli's and Galinsky's contention that the relief intentionally corresponds to no single historical event, but rather to a generalized conception of Augustan religious performance. His reason for so doing is the belief that the assumption of the title *pontifex maximus* was a momentous occasion for Augustus, so much so that he wished to specifically commemorate it on the Ara Pacis; for Bowersock, "so careless a representation that has nothing to do with reality" would in this context be

⁷¹ Dio (54.36.1) says for the year 11 B.C. that "around this time" a *flamen dialis* was appointed for the first time since Cornelius Merula held the priesthood in 87 B.C. (a gap of seventy-five years). Bowersock says that this need not indicate precisely 11 B.C., and that the insistence on an exact dating to this year has led to the unnecessary emendation of the Medicean manuscript of Tacitus' *Annales* (3.58), which says that the office was empty for 72 years, and would thus place the appointment in 14 B.C. On its own, the argument is plausible.

⁷² Bowersock relies on a rather strained probability, that the opening of war in early 12 B.C. by the Sugambri indicates that Drusus was no longer in Gaul at the time.

⁷³ Dio 54.28 ff.

⁷⁴ For the precise dating of Agrippa's death and the circumstances surrounding it, see *RE* "M. Vipsanius Agrippa."

unthinkable. Part of his rationale is admittedly compelling; the south side of the Ara Pacis looked towards *solarium Augusti*, in which an obelisk was used as the *gnomon* for a gigantic sundial. One feature of this obelisk that would seem to argue for Bowersock's insistence on attention to detail is the fact that on the fall equinox, which also happened to be Augustus' birthday, its shadow pointed directly to the center of the altar, and on the winter solstice, that shadow fell on the line of Capricorn, the sign under which Augustus placed the date of his conception.⁷⁵ Here we observe an almost obsessive preoccupation with detail. However, we have seen that the sun's crucial role in Augustus' self-presentation was in fact intentionally vague, as witnessed by the presence of Sol/Apollo in his chariot atop the Temple of Apollo Palatinus. The mathematical exactitude by which the sundial operated in the setting of the Ara Pacis could thus underscore more vague associations of Augustus with Apollo, and of the semi-historical event depicted on the relief with a more mythical conception of an idealized ritual reality.

All of this suggests the presence of what Galinsky labels "polysemy," which he considers to be the main principle underlying the design of the Ara Pacis. The idea, as Galinsky defines it, refers to "an obviously multidimensional iconography" that allows for a "remarkable and intentional depth and multiplicity of meaningful associations."⁷⁶ Zanker refers to the same concept with the term *Andachtsbild*, "contemplative picture." In this conception, a single icon can evoke a number of meanings and associations, even in an individual viewer.⁷⁷ While useful in other respects, I do not believe that this interpretation can be applied to the procession of the imperial family depicted on the exterior frieze. Though the timing of Agrippa's death and Drusus' trip to Gaul makes it

⁷⁵ Cf. Bowersock (1990): 384-87; see n. 102 below.

⁷⁶ Galinsky (1992): 472.

⁷⁷ Cf. Zanker (2003): 178.

difficult to argue that the frieze is a “photographic” snapshot of the historical procession, the chronology of events is close enough that we need not interpret their presence as evidence that the image is intentionally unhistorical. An artist working several years later, desirous of depicting the *Domus Augusta* as it existed during the procession in 12 B.C., would have included these two figures in his sculpture without being too scrupulous regarding exact dates; even if Drusus and Agrippa were not in the actual procession, they *should* have been. Or perhaps rather, in light of what we know from the *Tabula Siarensis*, Augustus would have advised such an artist (through the *senatus consultum*) to follow this semi-historical version in order to preserve a conception of the *Domus Augusta* that included Drusus and Agrippa. In any event, we have good reason to suppose that the procession on the altar’s exterior frieze is roughly intended to represent a historical procession. This interpretation is in fact quite important for our understanding of the altar as whole; as I shall argue more fully below, it is precisely the historicity of the sacrifices represented on the altar’s exterior that stands out in relation to the scene of sacrifice depicted inside the monument, which is expressly conceived as timeless.

Galinsky’s and Zanker’s related conceptions of polysemy and *Andachtsbild* are thus misapplied to the procession of the imperial family, but they do offer the only satisfactory explanation for the most problematic aspect of the altar’s decoration, the disputed relief on the southern panel of the altar’s eastern façade. Most often associated with Tellus, the relief incorporates elements that properly belong to the iconographies of Venus, Ceres, and possibly Pax as well. In fact, unless the disputed figure represents Pax, that goddess was not depicted on the *Ara Pacis* at all. This seems at first rather startling, and it has actually been argued on the basis of her absence that the monument

we possess is not in fact the Ara Pacis.⁷⁸ More recently, De Grummond has revived the argument that the figure on the southeast corner does in fact represent Pax, in the very old Hesiodic formulation where she is one of the Horae (thus making the two women at her sides her sisters).⁷⁹ This hypothesis cannot be accepted, however, since the Hesiodic version seems to be eccentric; also, in the event that the two smaller female figures are the Horae, the central figure would be more likely to be Aphrodite, following a more mainstream tradition.⁸⁰

The most compelling argument is that advanced by Galinsky, Torelli, and Zanker. All three have claimed that Pax need not have been present on the altar for there to have been an overwhelming impression of the *Pax Augusta*. Galinsky goes so far as to say that an actual image of the goddess would have lessened that impression.⁸¹ Torelli offers the most concise and persuasive interpretation of the female figure, identifying her loosely with Tellus, but saying that she is also Venus and Pax at the same time.⁸² Zanker takes up this line of reasoning with his conception of *Andachtsbild*, as does Galinsky by calling the relief an example of “polysemy.” The argument that there was no direct representation of Pax on the Ara Pacis is ultimately founded on the belief that her attributes are sublimated in the other images shown in the reliefs, as well as in the relationship between those images. Interpretations such as those advanced by Galinsky and Torelli presuppose a degree of syncretism that at first seems impossible in the context of Roman religion. But syncretism has the potential to become polysemy in the presence

⁷⁸ Weinstock (1960).

⁷⁹ De Grummond (1990).

⁸⁰ For the refutation of De Grummond’s idea, see Galinsky (1992): 459-60.

⁸¹ Galinsky (1992): 468: “The fundamental realization of the designers and artists was that the Pax Augusta was too rich a concept to be presented so simply”

⁸² Torelli (1982): 39-42.

of other images that can “reconstitute” the subsumed identities. Thus the female figure on the southeast corner of the Ara Pacis can become one of three different goddesses, depending on the perspective (both physical and aesthetic) from which she is viewed.⁸³ *Pax* is at its core a political concept, and is fully expressed in relation to the image of Mars (depicted in the relief of the Luperical on the northern side of the monument’s western façade), the image of Roma seated on the surrendered weapons of her enemies, and to the successful mission from which Augustus returned in 13 B.C. In this regard we must not lose sight of a key aspect of Venus’ iconography, that of Venus Victrix: Augustus’ *pax* was *parta victoriis*.⁸⁴ But on another level, *Pax* can be represented as Tellus or Terra Mater, who signify the prosperity and fecundity that come with peace, both agriculturally and in a broader social context.⁸⁵ Finally, on the cosmic and religious level, *Pax* is embodied by Venus’ relationship to Mars, and by the harmony between the human and divine that is maintained by sacrifices, such as the ones led by Aeneas and Augustus on the altar’s reliefs.

In the end, *Pax* is represented, but not specifically; each individual image alludes to one of her aspects, and her presence is suggested only by the monument taken in its entirety. This approach stresses the fact that for Augustus, peace was not something “granted” to Rome, nor would it simply appear on its own in the new *saeculum*: it was the result of many codependent factors, including proper religious observance, military success, and general piety. Of course, these factors could be construed as redounding to Augustus’ agency, and one should not ignore that dimension. The intricate alignment of

⁸³ Cf. Galinsky (1992): 472: “To some, including myself, the aspect of Venus may prevail, to others, that of *Pax*, and so on.”

⁸⁴ *RG* 13.

⁸⁵ Momigliano (1942): 229.

the sundial discussed above was probably intended to suggest as much. However, as we first observed in the performance of the *Ludi Saeculares*, Augustus seems to have been keenly interested in making the populace feel involved in the establishment and functioning of his Rome. He wished for *pax* to be seen not as a distant or abstract concept in which ordinary Romans had no role, but as a tangible and synergistic endeavor involving the Roman people and their gods, with the imperial family as mediators.

In this we begin to appreciate the degree to which the *Ara Pacis* is the result of a meticulous design, developed over a number of years, aimed at establishing an intimate rapport between the monument's artistic decoration and its viewers. As Holliday has noted, this rapport was based to some extent on typologies, most of which involve Augustus.⁸⁶ We have seen some of these in the context of the Tellus relief, but all of the motifs function together to establish an idea of the timeless, characteristically "Augustan" sacrifice that ensures the health of the Roman state and the existence of *pax*. As noted, processions probably approached the temple from the city to the east, arriving at the Via Flaminia, the road by which Augustus came to Rome on his return in 13 B.C. They would then circle around the precinct, passing the images of the religious procession on the side walls, and enter from the building's western portal, flanked by the Lupercal and Aeneas reliefs. After the sacrifice, the procession would leave from the eastern portal, flanked by the reliefs of Roma and Tellus, in the direction of the city. These purely physical details involved tremendous symbolism. The ritual performed on the altar would have the sense of being a repetition of the sacrificial procession led by Augustus,

⁸⁶ Holliday (1990): 549.

which itself was a repetition of Aeneas' sacrifice, shown on the adjacent façade.⁸⁷

Together, these imply the form of religious devotion through which Rome progresses from its beginnings (both in the sense of the *gens Romana* through Aeneas, and of the *urbs* itself through the Lupercal) to its end, represented by Roma and Tellus. The Lupercal (which included Mars) and Roma reliefs, associated by their situation on the northern sides of the façades and by their specific reference to the *urbs*, establish the typology of *parta victoriis pax*. Similarly, the two representations on the southern sides of the façades, Aeneas and Tellus, embody the importance of religious devotion and sacrifice in guaranteeing the health and prosperity of the state and its people. In both cases, an essentially timeless reality is established by reference to three points in time, which exist simultaneously in the eternal present of the altar: the past (Aeneas and Romulus), the present (Augustus, the *Domus Augusta*, the priesthoods, and the Senate) and the future (the *gens Iulia*, Tellus and Roma).⁸⁸ In such a way the spatial progression of the ceremony could become another historical instantiation of the idealized, timeless logic established by the ensemble of the exterior reliefs.

This conception of a timeless sacrificial reality culminates inside the precinct walls, where a remarkable frieze functioned as “a visual inscription of the timeless law of the altar, the quasi-hidden inner point where history is inscribed as impersonal and endless myth.”⁸⁹ While parts of it are now lost, this frieze was originally thirteen meters in length, and crowned the whole outer-edge of the U-shaped altar. The sacrifice it

⁸⁷ Cf. Elsner (1991): 52: “This was a process which included the sacrifice Aeneas made long ago, the sacrifice Augustus and the Senate made when the altar was dedicated, the sacrifice that emperor and people would be making every year, the sacrifice in which the viewer had himself participated (maybe last year and the year before) and would make again in the future.”

⁸⁸ As we shall see in the following chapter, Virgil uses virtually the same technique in *Aeneid* 8 to establish a notion of *Roma aeterna*.

⁸⁹ Holliday (1990): 553.

depicts is genuinely idealized, in the sense that Galinsky wishes to ascribe to the Augustan procession on the altar's exterior. Apart from certain markings to identify priestly offices, the figures represented on the interior frieze are completely anonymous, and none of them appear to have portrait features. This stands in stark contrast to the detail with which the religious objects and sacrificial animals are carved, indicating that the scene is meant to evoke the ritual order of the ceremony, rather than any one historical performance.⁹⁰ By embodying the idea of timelessness itself, this frieze becomes the eternal reality implied by the exterior reliefs. As noted, these contain recognizable historical figures, and constitute discrete, historical instantiations of the eternal sacrificial logic shown inside.

This sacrificial process is the precondition for the *Pax Augusta*, which is expressed in terms of a "Golden Age," using motifs found in the literary tradition. It is important to note that this Golden Age is pointedly shown to be tenuous.⁹¹ The promise of the Ara Pacis is not an easy peace simply bestowed upon the Roman people; rather, it implicitly required their cooperation.⁹² We have seen how this idea was incorporated into the performance of the *Ludi Saeculares* in 17 B.C., and how it may also be indicated by the absence of a direct portrayal of Pax on the Ara Pacis. Galinsky believes that it is similarly deployed on the building's exterior floral frieze, which he says "expresses the abundance and fertility of nature without assuming the dimensions of a 'paradisiac'

⁹⁰ Cf. Torelli (1982): 36. Torelli says that the frieze constitutes a figural translation of the *lex arae*. See Holliday (1990): 553 for the details of the sacrificial procession on the frieze.

⁹¹ Galinsky (1996): 152. Galinsky discusses the realism that one observes in the representations of the various Golden Age motifs.

⁹² Cf. Elsner (1991): 52: "In looking at the altar, Roman viewers did not simply see images of a sacrifice that once happened. They saw a cultural process in which they themselves became involved... In this sense, the sacrificial process, of which the Ara Pacis was the setting, was permanently incomplete and yet always temporarily fulfilled by the viewer's own participation in the sacrificial rite."

Golden Age.”⁹³ Additionally, darker elements are interspersed in the generally idyllic setting of the frieze. Amid floral motifs that recall the acanthus and water lilies of Virgil’s Fourth Eclogue, one finds scorpions, and a snake attacking a bird’s nest.⁹⁴ The *pax* of the Augustan Golden Age is implied to be perpetually threatened, and in need of preservation through the continued practice of sacrifice.

The most important recurrent image of Golden Age fecundity on the altar is that of the cow. A cow is shown on the Tellus/Terra Mater relief to indicate the “fruitful plenty in the years of the *Pax Augusta*.”⁹⁵ But in much the same fashion that we have observed in Virgil’s *Georgics*, this image is rendered problematic by the other references to cattle in the altar’s decoration. The interior frieze shows a cow or an ox being led to sacrifice, hinting at the paradoxical relationship between prosperity as represented in the Tellus relief and the sacrifice that guarantees it. Indeed, the artists of the Ara Pacis seem to have been deeply conscious of this fact: on the interior of the altar are shown cow skulls hung with garlands. Elsner rightly perceives tremendous significance of this image:

“The fruitful bliss of the Italia scene, cow and all, is insured by the procession of cows to their death at this very altar, by the cows becoming the skulls from which the garlands hang. The visual pun works in both Latin and English: the garlands *depend* on the skulls. The cow, a recurring image in its different forms in the precinct, is a visual metaphor for the reciprocity of sacrifice, for what depends on what and for the cost of Augustan plenty. The scene of Italia could not be there but for this altar, could have no meaning but for the skulls.”⁹⁶

⁹³ Galinsky (1996): 152.

⁹⁴ Virg. *Ecl.* 4.18-20:

At tibi prima, puer, nullo munuscula cultu
errantis hederas passim cum baccare tellus
mixtaque ridenti colocasia fundet acantho.

⁹⁵ Elsner (1991): 58, cf. also Pl. V.

⁹⁶ Elsner (1991): 59.

Elsner sees the resultant Augustan Golden Age as a “fantasy” of perfection paid for by the blood of sacrificial victims, which “must be constantly interpreted to mean life” in order to “keep the anarchy of its possible (negative) implications at bay.”⁹⁷ “Fantasy” is an unfortunate and tendentious choice of words. In the first place, the results that Augustus claimed to have procured were real. Second, these effects become a “fantasy” only if one is not aware of the price at which they come, and that price is certainly emphasized by the altar. Ultimately, Elsner’s use of the word “fantasy” seems to imply criticism of Roman belief in the connection between ritual practice and tangible results, which we are in no position to judge.

Still, Elsner is right to appreciate the problematic character of sacrifice as depicted on the Ara Pacis. My contention is simply that this characterization was not the involuntary manifestation of “deeper ideological contradictions,” but was present to some extent in the mind of Augustus.⁹⁸ As noted at several points in our discussion, he is likely to have played an important role in choosing the decoration of the monument. With this in mind, could there possibly be a more direct association between the positive and negative aspects of sacrifice than cow skulls hung with garlands? The image is so strong that it seems absurd to ascribe its presence to the involuntary manifestation of “deeper ideological contradictions” in Roman culture. Other voices in that culture were certainly not oblivious to these supposed contradictions. Foremost among these was Virgil, as we saw in the last chapter. The presence of similar ideas in the Ara Pacis is enough to merit

⁹⁷ Elsner (1991): 61.

⁹⁸ Cf. Elsner (1991): 61: “The art of the Ara Pacis could not work without an intense cultural framework of meaning to keep the anarchy of its possible (negative) implications at bay. It is because religion is about the most essential things, that it shows up so strongly a culture's deeper ideological contradictions in the face of precisely the most essential things.” Elsner comes very close to what is essentially a deconstructionist reading of the monument, which leads to a conclusion that I believe is directly contradicted by the altar’s imagery.

the conclusion that Augustus was also sensitive to the inherently problematic character of sacrifice.

Thus the *Pax Augusta* as conceived on the Ara Pacis is pointedly shown to have its basis in a process that is fundamentally imperfect. In order to continue, it is also tenuously reliant on that process. Ovid gives us a sense of this in his entry for the feast of the monument's *dedicatio* on 30 January:

horreat Aeneadas et primus et ultimus orbis:
si qua parum Romam terra timebat, amet.
tura, sacerdotes, pacalibus addite flammis,
albaque perfusa victima fronte cadat:
utque domus, quae praestat eam, cum pace perennet,
ad pia propensos vota rogate deos. (Ov. *Fast.* 1.717-22)

May the world, near and far, tremble at the race of Aeneas; if any land fears not Rome, let it be because it loves her. Add incense, priests, to the flames of Peace, let a white victim fall, its forehead anointed with wine, and ask the gods who reward pious prayers that the house, which gives us peace may last forever with that peace.

A white victim also appears in Horace's *Carmen Saeculare*:

quaeque vos bubus veneratur albis
clarus Anchisae Venerisque sanguis,
impetret, bellante prior, iacentem
lenis in hostem. (Hor. *Carm. Saec.* 49-52)

Whatever he of Anchises' and Venus' pure blood (a warrior before, now gentle to the fallen foe) begs from you with white bulls, grant him his prayers.

While this poem was performed in 17 B.C., well before the completion of the Ara Pacis, it expresses the same idea: Augustus' agency in history is comparable to that of a priestly sacrificant.⁹⁹ His sacrifices during the *Ludi Saeculares* (particularly the one to Apollo

⁹⁹ Elsner (1991): 59 is especially strong in his reading of this passage: "Significantly, the image of blood—which echoes in the references to war and sacrificial slaughter—is transferred to the Princeps upon whom the success of these acts depends. To be Augustus is an act of blood (in both the kin and carnage senses of

that concluded the Games) enables the peace that Horace describes in the passage cited earlier in this chapter. We can now situate that passage in a more meaningful context:

iam Fides et Pax et Honos Pudorque
priscus et neglecta redire Virtus
audet adparetque beata pleno
Copia cornu. (Hor. *Carm. Saec.* 57-60)

Now Loyalty and Peace and Honor, antique Modesty and neglected
Virtue dare to return, and blessed Plenty appears with a full horn.

This is precisely what the Ara Pacis tells us, and both Horace and the altar emphasize that for as long as time exists, this peace and prosperity can only be maintained by sacrifice. In no way is a millennial or eschatological transformation of the world implied, and Augustus' self-presentation in this instance should be seen as genuinely humble. He refrained from promoting a messianic or cosmic formulation of his role in the establishment of peace; instead choosing to be shown as a historical figure, who acts as mediator between the gods and the Roman people by participating in the timeless ritual depicted on the interior frieze. The outside association with Aeneas does not make Augustus seem more "mythical"; instead, it makes the founder of the Roman race seem more historical, engaged in the same sacrificial act, and occupying the same position in relation to the spiritual forces that guide Rome's destiny.

This was a humble admission. But generally speaking, Augustus was not a humble man. While not ashamed to acknowledge his proper place in relation to the gods (at least while he remained alive on earth), he never missed an opportunity to glorify his actions within the human sphere. This dichotomy explains how the strikingly moderate "cosmic" claims made by the Ara Pacis could exist literally in the shadow of the almost

the word), and upon the Augustan blood of divine progeniture, war, and sacrifice rests the image of the golden age of Augustan plenty."

megalomaniacal *solarium*.¹⁰⁰ It was noted above that the altar was positioned in such a way that its precise center would fall under the shadow of this monumental *gnomon* on Augustus' birthday (23 September). On the date assigned to his conception (21 December) the shadow would land on the line of Capricorn; a perpendicular line drawn from this point would intersect the altar precisely at the equinoctial line. This equinoctial line in fact determined the exact positioning of the east and west openings of the Ara Pacis, which it intersected on a perpendicular axis.¹⁰¹ The immense significance that Augustus attached to the astrological signs of both his conception and his birth (Capricorn and Libra, respectively)¹⁰² is conveyed in an anecdote reported by Suetonius. As a young man, Octavian visited a mathematician named Theogenes, who after learning the date of his birth jumped up excitedly, and then bowed down to venerate the future *princeps*. The sign of his birth became so important to him thereafter that he later had a coin struck with the image of Capricorn.¹⁰³ Of course, Augustus' actual *dies natalis* made him a Libra, but it is apparent that the sign of one's birth or conception could be interchangeably invested with the same importance. Perhaps not coincidentally, Romulus' retrospective horoscope had been prepared by Varro's friend Tarutius, from which it was discovered that Rome's founder had also been conceived under Capricorn and born under Libra. Thus Manilius made a consciously pregnant statement when he

¹⁰⁰ The best studies of the *solarium* are two done in German by Buchner; the most complete is Buchner (1982), which updates the work of his earlier (1976) study.

¹⁰¹ These complex observations and reconstructions were made by Buchner (1982): 27 ff. and repeated in summary form by Bowersock (1990): 387.

¹⁰² The question regarding the signs of Augustus' birth and conception is a rather thorny area that does not merit long discussion here; Bowersock has convincingly solved the problem that troubled both Housman and Goold by showing that Augustus' conception occurred under Capricorn, his birth under Libra. Cf. Bowersock (1990): 384-87. Bowersock provides a brilliant discussion of the important role played by these astrological motifs in Augustus' thought in general, and in the arrangement of the obelisk and the altar, basing his ideas on Suetonius and Manilius. This section, along with Buchner's work, informs the interpretation I present here.

¹⁰³ Suet. *Aug.* 94.12.

wrote of Libra, “under which sign was born Caesar...who now founds Rome and curbs the world.”¹⁰⁴

The same idea must have occurred to Augustus during the planning of the Ara Pacis in relation to the *solarium*. One other consideration that surely played a role is the fact that 23 September and 21 December are the dates of the autumnal equinox and the winter solstice. Against the backdrop of the ever-revolving cycle of nature, the *solarium* emphasized the regenerative significance of Augustus’ conception and birth by linking them to the yearly “birth” of the sun. In this respect we ought to note again that the Tellus/Roma side of the Ara Pacis faced directly east along the equinoctial line. Thus when each subsequent ceremony had recreated the original Augustan/Julian sacrifice, they would exit towards a regenerated Rome, in the direction of the rising sun.

IV. Conclusion

A good closing commentary on the material discussed in this chapter is the final poem in the fourth book of Horace’s *Odes*. We have seen how the physical layout of the Ara Pacis suggests a specific conception of the historical progression of Rome, all the way from its origins to the final realization of its Apollonian destiny under Augustus. A procession would have entered the precinct between the images of Aeneas and Romulus on the west façade, and exited towards the east and the rising sun flanked by Tellus and Roma, embodying different aspects of the Augustan peace. Horace’s poem reads like an exact inversion of this progression. It begins by naming Apollo:

Phoebus volentem proelia me loqui
victas et urbis increpuit lyra,
ne parva Tyrrhenum per aequor

¹⁰⁴ Manil. *Astron.* 4.773-77; cited by Bowersock (1990): 387.

vela darem... (Hor. *Carm.* 4.15.1-4)

Phoebus rebuked me with his lyre, I who wished to speak of battles and conquered cities: "Trust not your little boat to the Tyrrhenian sea."

This is no ordinary *recusatio*, for in the next line we learn the real reason for Horace's inability to take up the grand military themes of epic:

...tua, Caesar, aetas
fruges et agris rettulit uberes
et signa nostro restituit Iovi
derepta Parthorum superbis
postibus et vacuum duellis

Ianum Quirini clausit et ordinem
rectum evaganti frena licentiae
iniecit emovitque culpas
et veteres revocavit artis

per quas Latinum nomen et Italae
crevere vires famaue et imperi
porrecta maiestas ad ortus
solis ab Hesperio cubili. (*Carm.* 4.15.4-16)

Your age, Caesar, has brought back to the fields rich crops, and restored to our Jove the standards that you snatched from the haughty pillars of the Parthians, and closed the Gate of Quirinus, and put the rein on license that strays beyond the proper limits, and chased out wickedness, and revived the old arts, through which the Roman name and Italian power grew, and the fame and majesty of the empire spread from the sun's Hesperian resting place to the place from which it rises.

Apollo's reprimand is shown to be a mere metaphor for the real event that prevented Horace from writing about martial themes: the establishment of peace by Augustus. The *princeps* is identified with Apollo, but as we saw in both the temple on the Palatine and in the Ara Pacis, this identification is subtle and inexact. The same implicit association of Augustus with Apollo occurs at the exact middle of the poem, where Horace turns from

the moral and social transformation effected by Augustus to his political accomplishments in the subjugation of Rome's enemies:

custode rerum Caesare non furor
civilis aut vis exiget otium,
non ira, quae procudit ensis
et miseras inimicat urbis.

non qui profundum Danuvium bibunt
edicta rumpent Iulia, non Getae,
non Seres infidique Persae,
non Tanain prope flumen orti. (*Carm.* 4.15.17-24)

With Caesar as protector, neither civil strife nor violence will banish the peace, nor will rage, which forges swords and sets miserable cities at enmity. Neither will those who drink from the deep Danube break the Julian laws, nor the Getae, nor the Seres, nor the faithless Persians, nor those whose race is sprung near the Don.

The ode concludes by again placing these events in the divine sweep of Roman history, stretching back to Troy and Aeneas:

nosque et profestis lucibus et sacris
inter iocosi munera Liberi
cum prole matronisque nostris,
rite deos prius adprecati,

virtute functos more patrum duces
Lydis remixto carmine tibiis
Troiamque et Anchisen et almae
progeniem Veneris canemus. (*Carm.* 4.15.25-32)

And we, on both working and holy days, amidst the gifts of joyful Liber, having duly prayed to the gods with our wives and children, shall sing to the accompaniment of Lydian flutes the virtuous deeds of our leaders, and of Troy, and Anchises, and of the offspring of gracious Venus.

Horace's ode reads like a poetic commentary on the ideas that inspired the Ara Pacis, and also on its actual physical details, to the extent that as we read the poem we can envision a literal tour beginning in Rome and ending outside of the altar's western façade.

For this reason it is tempting to think that Horace was inspired by the monument, but this was not the case: *Carmina* 4 was composed in 13 B.C., four years before the completion and dedication of the Ara Pacis.¹⁰⁵ The similarities are not coincidental, however. It is known that Augustus' relationship with his artistic "advisors" was characterized by a significant mutual influence, especially with regard to the representation of his historical role.¹⁰⁶ Whether Horace was directly a part of this dialogue is immaterial; he was clearly impacted by its spirit, which gave rise to both his final ode and to the Ara Pacis. Both associate Augustus with the completion of Roman history, conceptualized as a linear process beginning with the mythical origins of Rome and terminating with the accomplishment of an Apollonian *saeculum*. If one wants to speak of an Augustan artistic and architectural "program," it is necessary to begin with this fundamentally historical idea, which has been the consistent feature of all of the examples considered in this chapter. However, all of these examples demand that alongside this grand historical claim, we also note that in his historical agency, Augustus never transcended the limitations of his own humanity. As we saw in Virgil, the Augustan agent is a mediator between two worlds, the temporal and the eternal. Now we shall see how Virgil lifts this dichotomy from his contemporary historical and political context, and uses it as the basis for a meditation on one of the basic problems of human existence.

¹⁰⁵ I agree with Putnam (1996): 23 n. 6 on the dating of Book 4 to 13 B.C., as opposed to other suggestions that have been made, most notably that of G. Williams, who places their composition in 8 B.C. (Williams [1972]: 44-49). While the last poem of the book seems so evocative of the Ara Pacis, Putnam points out that Drusus plays a prominent role in two odes, a fact that seems inappropriate considering he had died in 9 B.C.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Galinsky (1996): 154, citing Zanker (1987): 180.

Chapter 5

Mythical and Historical Time in the *Aeneid*

I. Introduction

The great Virgilian scholar Jacques Perret claimed, “Dans l’*Énéide*, personne n’est heureux.”¹ Up to this point, the present study seems to support that conclusion. The notion that history amounts to nothing more than an inescapable cycle of sacrifices is a bleak one. If this were the only dimension present in the *Aeneid*, there could be no disputing the poem’s hopelessness. But Virgil at least assumes the veneer of hope and optimism. We hear it in Aeneas’ exhortation to his men during the storm in Book 1: *forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit* (*Aen.* 1.203). The idea that there will be some future redemption of present and past miseries is all that keeps the *Aeneid* from being completely bleak. Still, how reassuring are these promises? In chapter 2 of this study, we examined the sacrificial logic that underlies much of Virgil’s poetry, in which the flourishing of human society is predicated upon the suffering of a victim. The efficacy of

¹ Perret (1967): 346.

sacrifice is a small consolation when these effects are perpetually accompanied by the need for further suffering.

The historical vision of the *Aeneid* is essentially connected to the problem of sacrifice through the prophetic image of Augustus' triumph on Aeneas' shield. Temporally, it is the furthest event referenced in the poem. If there were nothing beyond the historical arc of the narrative, we would be compelled, as Hardie's argument presupposes,² to rest our final judgment of both the *Aeneid* and of Virgil's motivations on this scene. Is Augustus' sacrifice really a symbol of cosmic fulfillment? To phrase this question in the similar terms I have used in the present study: is temporal existence perfectible? It can only be so if we accept that sacrifice is capable of being unproblematic. There are essentially two ways in which this can be the case. The most simplistic view would argue that sacrificial violence in the *Aeneid* is justified by its effect: the establishment and maintenance of Roman *imperium*, perfected in the *Pax Augusta*. It is true that Virgil offers this justification at several points in the poem, most notably in its major prophetic moments. However, these prophecies themselves end with images of sacrifice, loss, and the continued possibility of violence.³ More fundamentally, had Virgil wished to emphasize the positive results of sacrifice, he would have included some form of denouement following Turnus' death. Instead, the poem strikingly ends with a sacrifice, just as it had begun with one: in terms of absolute chronology, the first major action of the *Aeneid* is the offering of the Trojan horse, which is followed by the

² Hardie (1986) and (1993): 20.

³ E.g. the image of *Furor impius* at 1.294-96, the reference to Marcellus' death at 6.867-86, and the *caesi iuveni* on Aeneas' shield at 8.719.

death of Laocoon and his sons (a death described in sacrificial language).⁴ Thus in temporal terms, the entire narrative of the poem is framed by this device, through which Virgil draws emphasis away from the beneficial effects of sacrifice and towards the problematic character of the practice itself.

The only other possibility for a positive interpretation of sacrifice in the *Aeneid* involves the qualitative differentiation of the sacrificial act from more impious forms of violence. This is what Hardie has attempted to do through his application of Girard's notion of the sacrificial crisis. On such a view, by depicting Aeneas' killing of Turnus as a sacrifice, Virgil characterizes the act as an example of purifying, beneficial, violence, as opposed to senseless murder motivated by *furor*.⁵ But practically speaking, in the *Aeneid* the difference between these two types of action is largely superficial. In Book 2, as we have seen, Pyrrhus is also depicted as a priest who sacrifices Polites and Priam. Despite the fact that his action is called *scelus*, it advances history just as much as Aeneas' ostensibly "pure" sacrifice of Turnus. The moral character of these actions is not wholly irrelevant (we shall explore why this is the case in the conclusion of this chapter), but it effectively has no impact on the progression of history in the epic. Although oblivious to the fact, Pyrrhus occupies the role of priest just as much as Aeneas, who uses the word

⁴ On the notion that the *Aeneid* "begins" with these sacrifices, see Hardie (1993): 19. Hardie writes, "The *Aeneid* begins and ends with sacrifice." Following Burkert (1979): 61-2, he links the Trojan horse to ancient scapegoat rituals, and emphasizes the two scenes that accompany its entry into Troy: the speech of Sinon, who claims to have escaped from being sacrificed, and the death of Laocoon and his sons, who becomes a victim at the very altar on which he was preparing to sacrifice a bull.

⁵ Hardie (1993): 21 (with quotes from Girard [1977]): "The disappearance of the sacrificial rites coincides with the disappearance of the difference between impure violence and purifying violence... The sacrificial distinction...cannot be obliterated without obliterating all other differences as well" (p. 49). For Girard, the accepted practices of sacrifice, 'beneficial violence,' are a mask for the harmful violence that without sacrifice would rage uncontrolled (p. 37). The killing of Turnus is the act on which Roman cultural order is founded; Virgil narrates a senseless vengeance-killing which is masked, in the words of the killer, as a sacrifice, but whose true nature many readers experience as quite other. As 'sacrifice' the death of Turnus represents the reimposition of order; but as uncontrolled rage, revenge pure and simple rather than the judicial retribution envisaged by the terms of the treaty, it retains its potential to repeat itself in fresh outbursts of chaotic anger (the dreary catalogue of vengeance killings of Roman civil war)."

immolat. Similarly, when Neptune kills Palinurus for the salvation of the “many,” he does not conceive of himself as a priest; nonetheless, the latter’s death is explicitly described as a sacrifice.⁶ These instances show that the sacrificial character of history will inevitably manifest itself, regardless of whether an “agent” exists who is consciously willing to occupy the role of a pious sacrificant.

At this point we are brought back to the old, tired debate between “pessimistic” and “optimistic” critics of Virgil’s poetry. Hardie (who situates his conclusions in the “optimist” camp) and Morgan would have us believe that the unresolved tension implied by the existence of sacrifice at the “end” of history is somehow acceptable. But to claim that the image on the shield represents the achievement of cosmic balance is to ignore all of the troubling imagery that Virgil associated with sacrificial victimization, particularly through the image of the *caesi iuvenci*. With a similar realization in mind, Bandera acknowledges that “pessimistic” readings do have some merit:

“More recently...the death of Turnus has not been working as effectively as it used to in the minds of critics... as the sacrificial effectiveness of the poem decreases, the underlying symmetry and the violent reciprocity of the parties becomes increasingly evident. And as the death of Turnus becomes more and more problematic, the meaning of the poem as a whole begins to oscillate, as if unable to control the violence on which it rests... The new critics are, in a sense, right: how can such a poem be read as a prophetic symbol of the glory and stability of the Roman empire?”⁷

The pessimist-optimist debate, which has thankfully become less prevalent in recent years, always has the potential to re-emerge due to the fact that most readers of the *Aeneid* demand that the sacrificial problem (whether or not they understand it in those terms) be resolved at the literal end of the poem. This involves an understandable, but

⁶ Cf. chapter 3 *infra*.

⁷ Bandera (1981): 236-7.

false, assumption. *A priori*, we have no reason to approach the *Aeneid* as a non-linear narrative, at least in its basic architecture. But as I have argued, when we become sensitive to the sacrificial characterization of history, and to the fact that instances of sacrifice frame the poem as whole, we realize that from beginning to end the *Aeneid* has less to do with temporal progress than with the idea of temporality itself. Fundamentally, we are no closer to some perfected ideal of human existence at the end of the poem than we are at the beginning. Nor are we closer to such an ideal when we observe the massive sacrifice that Augustus will offer in his triple triumph, which is effectively a historical repetition of all the other sacrifices referenced in the *Aeneid*, and of the original ox-slaying in *Georgics* 2 that landed humanity in its current predicament. Sacrifice, and consequently temporality, retain their problematic character in these extremes of history, and cannot be comfortably integrated into the order of the perfected cosmos. But what if this tension is resolved in the poem's middle, as opposed to its end? While Perret's observation that no one is happy in the *Aeneid* is true for almost the entire epic, the souls who inhabit Elysium constitute a notable exception: Virgil uses the adjectives *fortunatus* and *beatus*.

In this chapter, I shall argue that the moral tension of the *Aeneid* is set up in such a way that it can only be resolved by a release from the temporal, physical world. We have already discussed at length the first part of this proposition in our analysis of the relationship between sacrifice and temporal history in the poem. Of particular importance in this scheme is the Stoic idea that history is the work of a divine, creative intelligence, which both the Stoics and Virgil identified with fire. In the following pages, we shall again turn our attention to this aspect of the poem, but this time we shall focus

on the specialized conception of *ekpyrosis* that Virgil employs. In its most common formulation, Stoic *ekpyrosis* is a universal event: all of existence is consumed by the divine, fiery *logos*, and time itself comes to an end. Thus the fate of all living things is subsumed into the *telos* of history, and we cannot properly speak of an individual eschatology. Virgil eschews this model of *ekpyrosis* in favor of an eccentric, non-universal formulation, precisely in order to allow for the release of the individual soul from the temporal world. From this choice arises a duality in the *Aeneid*, consisting in the simultaneous presence of an eternal and a temporal arc. This duality manifests itself in one of the more striking and unappreciated features of the poem: Virgil alludes to two distinct Golden Ages. We shall first follow the temporal arc of the poem, which culminates in the “imperfect” Golden Age represented on Aeneas’ shield. Then we shall turn to the true, metaphysical Golden Age represented by the eternal beatitude of the souls in Elysium. Using a conception of historical progress that derives from Lucretius (and perhaps Posidonius), Virgil establishes a tenuous yet meaningful relationship between the temporal and eternal worlds, based on a Pythagorean-inspired system of *reincarnation—purification—release*. It is within this context that Aeneas sees the Pageant of Roman Heroes, which will serve as the starting point for our final discussion of the relationship between mythical and historical time. First, however, we need to fully understand what these terms mean, and how they function in the *Aeneid*.

II. Mythical vs. Historical Time

During Aeneas' visit to the Arcadian settlement of Pallantium, the future site of Rome becomes the locus for an extraordinary "collapsing" of time. Virgil transports us to a narrative perspective from which we see the whole of Roman history, from Aeneas' time to that of Augustus. For a brief instant in *Aeneid* 8 we are compelled to see the city's chronology from a perspective not unlike that of Jupiter, for whom the whole tableau of "Rome" is visible at once.⁸ Effectively, we stand with Virgil outside of both the *Aeneid* and the history it recounts, viewing time from the standpoint of eternity. As I shall now argue, in this episode Virgil separates "mythical" from "historical" time, and in so doing establishes a distinction that is crucial to our understanding of the poem as a whole.

The dichotomy between mythical and historical time is the basis for an important discussion in Dennis Feeney's study of the Roman calendar, in which he specifically examines the ideas at work in *Aeneid* 8.⁹ As Aeneas arrives at the site of Rome, Evander is presiding over a sacrifice to Hercules, in commemoration of the hero's delivery of Pallantium from the monster Cacus. The ritual would have been instantly recognizable to an ancient Roman: it is the sacrifice to Hercules Invictus at the Ara Maxima in the Forum Boarium, performed each year on 12 August.¹⁰ This passage in fact belongs to a specific literary genre, that of the *fasti*. Here Virgil anticipates Ovid, whom we associate much

⁸ *Aen.* 1.257-96.

⁹ Feeney (2007): 161-66.

¹⁰ Cf. Feeney (2007): 159.

more readily with the form.¹¹ He uses special language to emphasize the ritual's origins in real historical time, retrieving them from the shadowy realm of myth:

Non haec sollemnia nobis,
has ex more dapes, hanc tanti numinis aram
vana superstitio veterumque ignara deorum
imposuit: saevis, hospes Troiane, periclis
servati facimus meritosque novamus honores. (*Aen.* 8.184-89)

No empty superstition, removed from knowledge of our ancient gods, impels us to these solemnities, to this traditional feast, to this altar of so great a presence: rescued from savage perils, Trojan guests, we perform them, renewing well-deserved honors.

The key words in this passage are *vana superstitio*, *ignara*, and *novamus*. By qualifying *superstitio*, a word that literally signifies “that which stands beyond [sc. human experience],” as something *ignara veterum deorum*, Evander characterizes Hercules’ feat as something knowable within the normal epistemological framework of physical time, i.e. history.¹² *Novamus*, “to make new,” carries here the force of “represent” in its literal sense. But taken together, the commemoration and the act it recalls are in fact detached from history, and come to signify a timeless reality. By framing the narrative of Hercules and Cacus within the ritual itself, Virgil makes the original act and all subsequent thanksgivings present in a single moment that occupies a space somewhere between myth and history.

A peculiar effect of the Roman *fasti* was the creation what Feeney describes as “wormholes.”¹³ The association of a specific date with events from the distant past,

¹¹ Barchiesi (1997): 92-104 discusses how Ovid borrowed from the “wormhole” technique that Virgil uses here (discussed below).

¹² Servius implies a reference to Lucretius (*Ad Aen.* 8.187): *secundum Lucretiam superstitio est superstantium rerum, id est caelestium et divinarum, quae super nos stant, inanais et superfluous timor.*

¹³ Feeney (2007): 162. Feeney aptly uses the idea of a “wormhole,” which physicists use to describe fissures in space and time: “Thanks to the Roman *Fasti* you can travel between time zones through a version of what the space-time physicists call a wormhole. Through the superimposed layers of the *fasti*, 12 August 1177 B.C.E. can take you tumbling down to 12 August 29 B.C.E.”

accompanied by rituals that recreate that past, transports one vertiginously across, or rather beyond, time. The Romans developed an “anniversary mentality” that established connections between events even where there were none, and made real connections even more meaningful.¹⁴ The ritual and the history told by Evander transport Aeneas back in time to the moment of Hercules’ heroic act, which had occurred on that very day. From the temporal standpoint of the *Aeneid*, the connection extended into the future as well: on 12 August 29 B.C., Augustus arrived outside of Rome as he returned from the east. The next day, he would celebrate his triple triumph, which not coincidentally is the last image described on Aeneas’ shield at the end of Book 8. Thus our gaze is simultaneously telescoped both forward and backward to the extremes of history. One notices at this point the striking similarity that exists between Virgil’s technique and the one used in the relief program of the Ara Pacis, where transcendent and timeless concepts are evoked by means of reference to multiple historical reference points. This similarity is no accident, for the technique, as we have seen, is extremely effective at establishing typologies. Through this “collapsing” of history, Virgil essentializes a historical moment. Evander gives thanks to an idealized hero-figure (simultaneously Hercules, Aeneas, and Augustus) for the deliverance of an essential, eternal Rome from an archetypal danger.¹⁵ Space is given the same treatment as time: the site of Pallantium is described in terms of landmarks that would not exist until Virgil’s day. The physical space becomes the means by which we intuit an idealized Rome: a city that transcends the material world, one whose entire history inhabits an eternal present.

¹⁴ Cf. Feeney (2007): 149, 158.

¹⁵ For the identification of these three figures in this passage see Otis (1964): 335.

While Virgil certainly knew Plato's *Timaeus*, there is no direct evidence that he had the dialogue specifically in mind when constructing the two modes that form the temporal architecture of the *Aeneid*. Nevertheless, Timaeus' conception of time as the "moving image of eternity," which will become important when we turn to Virgil's Underworld, can help us to understand the relationship between the two worlds of the *Aeneid*.¹⁶ Historical events are discrete points in time and space, and collectively they suggest a reality that exists neither in time nor in space. As we have already seen, historical time in the *Aeneid* is largely structured according to Stoic doctrine, in which fire is identified as the intelligent, creative force (*logos*) behind the universe. In the *Aeneid*, fire, the quintessential classical emblem of flux and change, is the force that animates the moving image of eternity that time represents. In making this association Virgil advances the idea that history is simultaneously creative and destructive. But in *Aeneid* 8, he also hints that something exists beyond the temporal process of history. I shall now argue that this division operates in the *Aeneid* as a whole, and informs the choice of philosophical content that we find in the poem. Virgil adopts a specialized, non-standard conception of Stoic *ekpyrosis*, in which this dissolution is conceived as local, rather than universal. Such a distinction allows for the existence of two separate dimensions in the architecture of the *Aeneid*. The first is temporal, which we have interpreted as constituting the sacrificial and historical arc of the poem. The second, eternal dimension is shown in Elysium, where the inherent tensions of this sacrificial process are finally resolved. To see how this duality functions in Virgil's epic, we need to understand the reasons that motivated him to follow the "eccentric" Stoic doctrine, as well as the implications of this choice for the broader meaning of the poem.

¹⁶ Cf. chapter 1 *infra*.

III. Stoic *Ekpyrosis* in the *Aeneid*, Revisited

As noted in chapter 3, very few of Stoicism's tenets were actually adhered to by all who professed to be Stoics, making it difficult to discuss the discipline's core set of doctrines. *Ekpyrosis* and *palingenesis*, which form the basis for the Stoic notion of eternal recurrence, are no exception in this respect. While certainly in the minority, there were notable Stoics who rejected *ekpyrosis* in its traditional, universal formulation. This rejection went hand in hand with an acceptance of the Aristotelian doctrine that the universe has no beginning or end, and was thus coupled with a denial of exact cyclical recurrence. As we shall now see, Virgil's account of the destruction of Troy follows this "eccentric," non-universal conception of *ekpyrosis*. In light of the relationship in the *Aeneid* between Stoic cosmology and Virgil's sacrificial model of temporality, I shall argue that this choice prevents us from seeing the total establishment of cosmic order in the *telos* of history shown on the last panel of Aeneas' shield.

In the second century B.C., two notable Stoics eschewed the perfectly cyclic model of time traditionally adhered to by members of the school. One of these was Boethus of Sidon, who emphatically denied that the entire world was subject to dissolution and regeneration. Boethus held that only the fixed stars are comprised of the substance of god, which departs from the position of earlier Stoics like Zeno and Chrysippus, who firmly believed that the divine was immanent in the world.¹⁷ Consequently Boethus did not believe the world to be a living entity.¹⁸ This precludes the possibility of *ekpyrosis* and *palingenesis*, which were seen to represent the life cycle of the *logos* that permeates the world.

¹⁷ Diog. Laert. 7.148.

¹⁸ Diog. Laert. 7.143.

Another Stoic who rejected the doctrine of recurrence was Panaetius of Rhodes (185/180-110/100 B.C.). Panaetius was responsible for introducing formal Stoic teaching to Rome soon after the battle of Corinth in 146, when he became part of the celebrated intellectual circle surrounding Scipio Africanus.¹⁹ In 129 he returned to Athens to head the Stoa, (the leading Stoic of the next generation, Posidonius, was among his students). Panaetius flatly rejected the doctrine of *ekpyrosis*.²⁰ His reasons for doing so are difficult to discern, but they become clearer when we learn that he was, according to Cicero, the only Stoic who rejected astrology.²¹ Part of the traditional Stoic rationale for belief in astrology was the concept of divine providence; if the gods were interested in human welfare, they would give signs so that people could know the future.²² In addition, a belief in astrology is necessitated by the determinism that inevitably results from the teleological materialism of the Stoic system. A chain of causality exists, whereby every event in the world is seen to be the cause of some effect that will result according to rational principles. Thus the relationship between all causes and effects is theoretically knowable. Panaetius was, as Long says, less committed than were his Stoic predecessors to the connection between all things in the universe.²³ More specifically, he is alleged by Cicero to have believed that the stars, where the *logos* resides, are too far from the earth to postulate their causal relationship with the world; this causal relationship is the basic justification for astrology.²⁴ It appears that these factors lay behind his departure from

¹⁹ For a discussion of both Panaetius' and Polybius' coming to Rome, see Walbank (1965).

²⁰ Panaetius fr. 64-66, 68 [van Straaten]; Cic. *De Nat. Deor.* 2.46.118-119 ; see also Colish (1985): 25, 117.

²¹ Panaetius fr. 74 [van Straaten].

²² *SVF* 1191-95; cf. Long (1986): 211-212.

²³ Long (1986): 212.

²⁴ Long (1986): 212; cf. Panaetius fr. 74 [von Straaten].

mainstream Stoic doctrine, since universal *ekpyrosis*, *palingenesis*, and exact cyclical recurrence require that the world be infused with god in every part.²⁵

Panaetius certainly had contact with Polybius, who also was a part of Scipio's intellectual circle.²⁶ Elements in the historian's thought show tendencies that indicate either Panaetius' influence, or a common source of inspiration. In his famous excursus on the types of constitution, Polybius implies that history follows a cyclic pattern; still, in his scheme there is no mention of universal destruction, or of exact recurrence.²⁷ In this sense he is a theorist of historical, rather than cosmological, recurrence.²⁸ He says that political societies emerge from the human remnants of great catastrophes (floods, famines, crop failures, etc.) and that the pattern of destruction and regeneration will continue "often in the future."²⁹ Like Panaetius, but unlike earlier Stoic philosophers, Polybius does not indicate that the entire cosmos will be consumed and reconstituted. One might claim, as Trompf does, that as a historian, such questions did not concern him: "Polybius was primarily interested in human affairs rather than the general laws of nature or in metaphysical questions about changing phenomena."³⁰ However, his apparently

²⁵ Inexplicably, Dyck sees a tendency to overstate Panaetius' innovation, claiming that the "only" doctrines he professed that were not anticipated by his predecessors were the non-belief in astrology and recurrence (Dyck [1996]: 23-28). These do not strike me as minor or superficial aspect of Stoic orthodoxy. For a fairer estimation of Panaetius originality and innovation, see Pohlenz (1949).

²⁶ In Cic. *De re pub.* 1.21.34 Laelius mentions that Scipio, Polybius and Panaetius were in the habit of discussing political matters together (*persaepe te cum Panaetio disserere solitum coram Polybio*), although of course the *De re publica* is semi-fictional. Walbank (1965): 1 notes a passage from Velleius Paterculus (1.13.3): "According to Velleius, Scipio kept Polybius and Panaetius, *praecellentis ingenio uiros*, beside him *domi militiaeque*." Trompf (1979): 7 asserts that Polybius may have been Panaetius' closest colleague. My hope is that the present discussion will suggest at least the possibility that the two were familiar with each other's work.

²⁷ Polyb. 6.3-9.

²⁸ The terminology comes from Trompf's excellent study of recurrence ideas in Polybius' history. Cf. Trompf (1979): 6 ff.

²⁹ Polyb. 6.5.4-6: Ποίας οὖν ἀρχὰς λέγω καὶ πόθεν φημι φύεσθαι τὰς πολιτείας πρῶτον; ὅταν ἢ διὰ κατακλυσμοὺς ἢ διὰ λοιμικὰς περιστάσεις ἢ δι' ἀφορίας καρπῶν ἢ δι' ἄλλας τοιαύτας αἰτίας φθορὰ γένηται τοῦ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένους, οἷας ἤδη γεγρονέαι παρελιήφαμεν καὶ πάλιν πολλάκις ἔσεσθ' ὁ λόγος αἰρέει.

³⁰ Trompf (1979): 6.

close acquaintance with Panaetius would have made him aware of the relevant philosophical issues as well, and as Trompf notes, one sees in the *Histories* distinct elements of Aristotelian cosmological thought on the unbroken continuity of the cosmos, which was opposed by Stoic cyclic theory.³¹ Trompf claims that the general doctrine expounded by Polybius, the *Anacyclosis*, “represents a rather special adaptation of classical cosmologies.”³²

The specific element of Polybius’ *anacyclosis* that allows us to classify it as an example of historical (rather than cosmic) recurrence is his claim that societies are founded by the remnants of major disasters.³³ The fact that people survive indicates that these catastrophes are local, rather than universal. Moreover, they occur within temporal bounds and do not “reset” the entire process of history in the way that universal *ekpyrosis* was believed to do.³⁴ In this respect Polybius reproduces an image popularized by Plato. In the *Laws*, the Athenian stranger claims that civilization is periodically destroyed by floods, pestilences, and other catastrophes, and that society is then reestablished by those who had found places of refuge: “small sparks of the human race preserved on the tops of mountains.”³⁵ A similar idea is put forth by Critias in the *Timaeus*, who says that Solon learned in Egypt that civilization is periodically destroyed by flood or fire. According to the Egyptian, those who dwell near water survive fires, while those who dwell in the mountains survive floods; these then go on to found society anew.³⁶

³¹ Trompf (1979): 12.

³² Trompf (1979): 14.

³³ Trompf (1979): 7.

³⁴ Thus Trompf (1979): 13: “From the start Polybius makes it plain that his cycle operates strictly within historical bounds. Certainly this historicization is more in agreement with Plato and Aristotle than it is with the Stoics.”

³⁵ Pl. *Leg.* 677a (Jowett trans.)

³⁶ Pl. *Ti.* 22c-e.

Several aspects of Virgil's description of Troy's destruction appear to rely on this conception of history.³⁷ First, Aeneas watches the beginning of the scene from his rooftop, and he is compared to a shepherd who observes from a mountaintop the destruction of society's achievements by flood or fire.³⁸ The prominence of flood imagery in an episode in which fire is the main destructive force is also significant, and indicates that Virgil had a form of catastrophe theory in mind similar to those espoused by Plato and Polybius.³⁹ Finally, Aeneas and the Trojan remnant flee to the mountains in order to escape death, and in a sense it is there that the new, Roman period of history is born.⁴⁰ By concluding his account of the *ekpyrosis* of Troy with this detail, Virgil adopts a position fundamentally opposed to mainstream Stoic thought. In their traditional, universal formulations, *ekpyrosis* and exact recurrence establish a perfectly efficient teleological system, in the sense that everything in the universe is part of the process by which history resolves itself in the final conflagration. The *telos* of all things is simply the *telos* of the divine, fiery *logos*. For Virgil, the process of history is nowhere near so efficient. Cyclic catastrophes are local, and, as we see in the *ekpyrosis* of Troy, do not affect the whole universe. This position has two implications that are of the utmost importance to our understanding of the poem's overall meaning. First, history is not perfectible, in that it cannot end. Periods within it may end, but temporal existence continues, and there is no resolution of all things into a single *telos*. Second, precisely because history is a non-efficient system, it is possible for individuals to permanently

³⁷ For Virgil's possible use of Plato's *Laws* in the *Aeneid*, see note 151 below.

³⁸ *Aen.* 2.304-8. Cf. chapter 3 *infra*.

³⁹ Cf. again the verses referenced in chapter 3: *Aen.* 2.419: *saevitque tridenti spumeus atque imo Nereus ciet aequora fundo.* *Aen.* 2.496-99: *Non sic, aggeribus ruptis cum spumeus amnis exiit, oppositasque evicit gurgite moles, fertur in arva furens cumulo, camposque per omnis cum stabulis armenta trahit.*

⁴⁰ *Aen.* 2.804, 3.1-12.

escape from it. Exact recurrence demands that souls return to inhabit the same bodies in the next cycle; without this necessity, a genuine eschatology is possible, and this enables the specialized characterization of Elysium that we shall examine later in this chapter.

Thus we see again the duality that is explicitly established by the juxtaposition of historical and mythical time in *Aeneid* 8. These two dimensions each have their own resolution, although that of historical time is intentionally shown to be partial and problematic. Virgil's non-universal interpretation of the Stoic model of time is the result of his sacrificial conception of history, which leaves the basic tension of human existence unresolved at the furthest extension of that history (as represented on the last panel of Aeneas' shield). This temporal arc exists against the eternal backdrop of mythical time, and to highlight this Virgil incorporates into his scheme a feature that to my awareness has not been recognized: the notion that there are two types of "Golden Age." The first exists within historical time, and thus does not transcend the sacrificial logic that defines temporality. As such it corresponds closely to Augustus' conception of his own reign that we examined in the previous chapter. Like Augustus, Virgil subtly emphasizes the limitations the new *aetas aurea*, which ultimately conforms to a moderated approximation of humanity's ideal state.

IV. Virgil and the Ages of Man

1. Pyrrhus and the Iron Age

The destruction of Troy culminates with the death of Priam at the hands of Pyrrhus. Mocking the aged king's rebuke of his impiety, Pyrrhus drags Priam to the same altar where he had just murdered Polites:

Hoc dicens altaria ad ipsa tremementem
traxit et in multo lapsantem sanguine nati,
implicuitque comam laeva, dextraque coruscum
extulit, ac lateri capulo tenuis abdidit ensem.
Haec finis Priami fatorum; hic exitus illum
sorte tulit, Troiam incensam et prolapsa videntem
Pergama, tot quondam populis terrisque superbum
regnatorem Asiae. Iacet ingens litore truncus,
avulsumque umeris caput, et sine nomine corpus. (*Aen.* 2.550-58)

Thus speaking he led him to the altar itself, trembling, slipping in the blood of his child, and he grabbed his hair with his left hand, and with his right he drew his flashing sword, and plunged it up to the hilt in his side. Here was the end of Priam's fortunes; by lot he so perished, having seen Troy burned and Pergamum toppled, he who once ruled so proudly so many of Asia's peoples and lands.

Shortly afterward, Virgil describes the destruction of Troy with an elaborate simile that evokes the scene of Priam and Pyrrhus, still fresh in our minds:

...ac veluti summis antiquam in montibus ornum
cum ferro accisam crebrisque bipennibus instant
eruerere agricolae certatim; illa usque minatur
et tremefacta comam concusso vertice nutat,
volneribus donec paulatim evicta, supremum
congemit, traxitque iugis avulsa ruinam. (*Aen.* 2.624-31)

...just as when on a mountain top woodsmen strive to fell an ancient ash tree, hacked with many blows from iron and axes; it threatens to fall, it lurches, leaves trembling and crest swaying, until little by little, overcome by its wounds, it groans its last and crashes down, torn away from its joints.

Three words occur in both passages: *traxit*, *comam*, *avulsa* (*avulsum*), while a fourth, *tremefacta* in the ash-tree simile, echoes *tremementem* in the death of Priam. A fifth word in the earlier passage, *truncus*, can of course refer to either a decapitated body or to a felled tree (cf. *OLD* "truncus"). Let us also recall that the predominant Homeric epithet for Priam is "he of the fine ash-spear,"⁴¹ as well as the fact that the tree's Latin name (*ornus*)

⁴¹ ἐνμμελής; cf. *Il.* 4.44-47:
αἶ γὰρ ὑπ' ἡελίῳ τε καὶ οὐρανῶ ἀστερόεντι

could designate a spear made from its wood. On the whole, the simile causes us to equate in hindsight the death of Priam with the fall of Troy.

This is in itself nothing remarkable; the description Priam's death is momentous enough that such a simile seems simply to heighten the tragedy of the episode. But the rich allusiveness of the ash-tree simile extends even further, to the famous account of the metallurgic Ages of Man in Hesiod's *Works and Days*. There he says that the bronze race of men (γένος χάλκειον) was sprung from an ash-tree (ἐκ μελιᾶν).⁴² The likening of Troy to a felled ash-tree is the only simile in all of Virgil's works that involves this variety of tree.⁴³ Its use in connection with the simile that describes the fall of Troy cannot have been accidental. It is Priam's ash-spear, now weak and harmless, which hangs uselessly in the boss of Pyrrhus' shield: the aged king, representing the Trojan name, is powerless in the face of an overwhelming doom. I contend that the city's destruction is meant to mark the termination of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the impious *aetas ferrea*. We have already seen in chapter 3 that Virgil combines the fall of Troy with the Stoic idea of *ekpyrosis*, in order to situate the event in the sacrificial process of history. By also identifying it with a transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age, Virgil superimposes the motif of the Metallurgic Ages onto this sacrificial conception of history. This association ultimately results in the specialized characterization of the Augustan Golden Age that operates throughout the *Aeneid*. To

ναιετάουσι πόλῃες ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων,
τάων μοι περὶ κῆρι τίεσκετο Ἴλιος ἱρή
καὶ Πριάμος καὶ λαὸς εὐμμελίω Πριάμοιο.

⁴² Hes. *Er.* 143-155:

Ζεὺς δὲ πατὴρ τρίτον ἄλλο γένος μερόπων ἀνθρώπων
χάλκειον ποιήσ', οὐκ ἀργυρέω οὐδὲν ὁμοῖον,
ἐκ μελιᾶν, δεινόν τε καὶ ὄβριμον·

⁴³ Observed by Estevez (1981): 320.

fully understand how this figure is conceived, we must first look at the trope of the Metallurgic Ages, both in Virgil's own poetry and in the classical literary tradition.

2. The Metallurgic Ages in Virgil's Works

As a preface to the sections that follow, I shall briefly list the occasions where Virgil explicitly describes the different ages of the Metallurgic scheme.⁴⁴ His first treatment was of course *Eclogue* 4, in which he describes the return of Saturn's reign (*Saturnia regna*, *Ecl.* 4.6), when a golden race will rise throughout the world (*gens aurea*, 4.9). During this *palingenesis*, all the negative developments of the baser ages will be reversed: the earth will produce its bounty spontaneously (4.18-22, 37-45); men will no longer leave their homes to travel the seas (4.38-39); war and discord, "traces of the ancient crime," will finally cease, both among humans and in nature (4.14, 17, 22-25). The crowning event will be Virgo's descent to earth; the constellation was said to be the goddess Iustitia (sometimes called Astraea; also Dikē or Erigone in Greek), the last god to live among humans before they became too wicked.

There are two direct references to the Golden Age in the *Georgics*. In Book 1, Virgil tells of the time before the reign of Jove (i.e. Saturn's kingdom). As in *Eclogue* 4, the description focuses simultaneously on the agricultural and the socio-political aspects of the period. In addition to the total lack of agriculture, a significant feature of the age was the non-existence of private property:

Ante Iovem nulli subigebant arva coloni;
ne signare quidem aut partiri limite campum
fas erat: in medium quaerebant ipsaque tellus
omnia liberius nullo poscente ferebat. (*G.* 1.125-28)

⁴⁴ Cf. Baldry (1952): 88-89. Baldry lists instances of the Golden Age in classical literature and provides a discussion (although overly focused on Hesiod) of Virgil's sources.

Before the reign of Jove no ploughmen subjugated the fields; indeed, even to mark out possession of a plain, or to divided it by boundaries, was a sacrilege. They gathered sustenance in common, and the earth herself bore a all things more freely when no one demanded them.

Later, at the conclusion of *Georgics* 2, Virgil compares the happy life of the farmer to the one lived by “golden Saturn” before he was replaced by Jove (2.538). Here farming is in fact praised (2.513-31), and contrasted with the political and economic obsessions that plague other walks of life (2.495-512).

In *Aeneid* 6, when Aeneas sees the soul of Augustus in the Underworld, Anchises identifies him as the man who will found anew the Golden Age (*aurea saecula*, 6.793-94) in Latium, in fields once ruled by Saturn. Aeneas actually sees these fields when he visits Pallanteum. Evander tells him of the *aurea saecula* that humans enjoyed under the reign of Saturn, before a “duller age” took its place, marked by wars and the “lust for gain” (*decolor aetas, amor habendi*, 8.326).

This brief list contains the more important stock images that Virgil uses to describe the cycle of the Ages of Man. We shall refer to these images in the discussion that follows, as well as to others that are less prominent but no less important. Already after this brief survey we see inconsistencies and apparent contradictions in Virgil’s various formulations that lead us to question whether we can actually attribute to him a singular conception of the Golden Age. To answer that question, we need to consider the place that Virgil’s treatment of the Ages of Man occupies in the literary tradition, both before and after the *Aeneid*.

3. The Literary Tradition, After and Before Virgil

a. Ovid *Metamorphoses* 89-150

While it may seem unnecessary to reference a later text, Ovid helps us to better understand the literary tradition that existed in the late-first century B.C., while illuminating the points at which Virgil departs from that tradition. In *Metamorphoses* 1, Ovid outlines his own version of the ages of history, according to the same four-period scheme laid out by Virgil. Ovid's Golden Age mirrors the palingenesis of *Eclogue* 4: oxen had not yet been put to the yoke, oak trees sweated honey, and man did not sail the seas on ships of pine. As noted above, sailing to foreign lands is for Virgil a defining characteristic of the *aetas ferrea*. In *Eclogue* 4, it is classed among the *priscae vestigia fraudis* that will survive for a time into the new Golden Age:

Pauca tamen suberunt priscae vestigia fraudis,
quae temptare Thetim ratibus...[iubeant] (*Ecl.* 4.31-32)

But a few traces of the ancient taint will endure, which compel men to
test the sea with oars...

In *Georgics* 1, he classifies seafaring among men's innovations during Jove's Silver Age.⁴⁵ In *Georgics* 2, he speaks with pity of those "who tempt the blind seas" and who "exchange their homes for exile, seeking another country."⁴⁶ He contrasts their misery with the happy existence of the farmer, who lives a life such as "Golden Saturn" did while on earth.⁴⁷ In the Fourth Eclogue, when the new Saturnian/Apollonian age arrives,

⁴⁵ *Georg.* 1.136-37:

*Tunc alnos primum fluvii sensere cavatas;
navita tum stellis numeros et nomina fecit*

⁴⁶ *Georg.* 2.503-4:

*sollicitant alii remis freta caeca ruuntque
in ferrum, penetrant aulas et limina regum*

⁴⁷ *Georg.* 2.513-40, esp. 538: *aureus hanc vitam in terris Saturnus agebat*

man will no longer brave the seas in his pine ships: *cedet et ipse mari vector, nec nautica pinus mutabit merces* (*Ecl.* 4.38).

Like Virgil, Ovid shows navigation of the sea to be a marker of cyclic decline, maintaining that there was no sailing in the Golden Age:

nondum caesa suis, peregrinum ut viseret orbem,
montibus in liquidas pinus descenderat undas,
nullaque mortales praeter sua litora norant. (*Met.* 1.94-96)

Not yet had the pine, cut down from his mountains, descended into the liquid sea so that he might see pilgrim lands, and mortals knew only their own shores.

Later, it is the first Iron Age activity that he describes:

vela dabant ventis nec adhuc bene noverat illos
navita, quaeque prius steterant in montibus altis,
fluctibus ignotis insultavere carinae... (*Met.* 1.132-34)

They put their sails to the wind, although they did not know their use well as of yet, and the ships' keels that stood before in the tall mountains, dance in unfamiliar waters.

Ovid takes up another idea found in Virgil with his use of *scelus*. Men during this age were distinguished by their extreme wickedness (*scelus*) and lack of *pietas*. Even the harsh Bronze Age, which he only mentions briefly, was not so debased:

Tertia post illam successit aenea proles,
saevior ingeniis et ad horrida promptior arma,
non scelerata tamen; (*Met.* 1.125-27)

The third race came after, of bronze, fiercer in their hearts and more prone to horrible war, but not yet wicked.

By contrast,

de duro est ultima ferro.
protinus inrupit venae peioris in aevum
omne nefas: fugere pudor verumque fidesque;
in quorum subiere locum fraudesque dolusque
insidiaeque et vis et amor *sceleratus* habendi. (*Met.* 1.127-31)

The last is of hard iron. Immediately every sort of sacrilege burst into this age of inferior natures: shame, truth, and faith flee; in their place entered deceit, guiles, trickery, violence, and the love of gain.

At the end of the passage, Ovid references Astraea's departure from earth after humankind's wickedness had reached an unbearable pitch.

victa iacet *pietas*, et virgo caede madentis
ultima caelestum terras Astraea reliquit. (*Met.* 1.149-50)

Pietas lay conquered, and the Virgin Astraea was the last of the gods to leave the earth, soaked with slaughter.

As noted above, Astraea was an alternate name for the goddess Iustitia, who in the most common mythological formulation was the last god to leave the earth, whereupon she became the constellation Virgo. Virgil alludes to this myth twice in the *Georgics* (1.33 and 2.474) and most significantly in *Eclogue* 4, where he speaks of the Virgin's return (4.6). He too uses the word *scelus* (*sceleris vestigia nostri*, 4.13). The noun *scelus* and the opposed term *pietas* link the approaches of Virgil and Ovid to the *Iustitia* myth and to the whole degenerate cycle of ages. It is not by coincidence that the pairing appears during the fall of Troy, as Priam is about to die. He chastises Pyrrhus in the following words:

“At tibi pro scelere,” exclamat, “pro talibus ausis,
di, si qua est caelo pietas, quae talia curet,
persolvant grates dignas et praemia reddant
debita, qui nati coram me cernere letum
fecisti et patrios foedasti funere vultus.
At non ille, satum quo te mentiris, Achilles
talibus in hoste fuit Priamo; sed iura fidemque
supplicis erubuit, corpusque exsangue sepulchro
reddidit Hectoreum, meque in mea regna remisit.” (*Aen.* 2.535-43)

“But for your wickedness,” he cried, “for having dared such things,
may the gods who keep watch over such things, if there is such a thing
as pietas in the heavens, return you proper recompense and just

payment, you who have made me watch in person the death of my son, you who have fouled this face with slaughter. Not even Achilles, whose offspring you lie to call yourself, was thus with his enemy Priam. But he felt shame before the rights and trust of suppliants, and he gave back the bloodless body of Hector for the tomb, and he sent me back into my kingdom.”

For all his rage, Achilles had adhered to a fundamental standard of *pietas*. His offspring, representing the new generation and the next age, against whom Priam’s ash-spear is impotent, is wholly savage. Ultimately, it is the lust for gain, Ovid’s *amor sceleratus habendi*, which motivates the iron race, as Aeneas learns when he goes to look for Creusa and sees sacred objects, torn from all over Troy and piled as booty in the sanctuary of Juno (2.761-77).

b. Catullus 64.397-408

The use of the transition from *pietas* to *scelus* as a marker of cyclic decline can be traced back to Catullus. *Metamorphoses* 1.144-48 recalls the section at the end of

Catullus 64, where the poet refers to the *tellus scelere imbuta*:

sed postquam tellus scelere est imbuta nefando,
iustitiamque omnes cupida de mente fugarunt,
perfundere manus fraterno sanguine fratres,
destitit exstinctos natus lugere parentes,
optavit genitor primaevi funera nati
Liber ut innuptae poteretur flore novercae,
ignaro mater substernens se impia nato
impia non verita est divos scelerare parentes,
omnia fanda nefanda malo permixta furore
iustificam nobis mentem avertere deorum.
quare nec talis dignantur visere coetus
nec se contingi patiuntur lumine claro. (Catull. 64.397-408)

But afterwards, the earth was infected with unspeakable crime, and all chased justice from their greedy hearts: brothers drenched their hands in brothers’ blood, the son ceased to mourn his dead parents, fathers longed to see the funerals of their first-born, that freely they might

deflower the unmarried stepmother, unholy mothers lay with unknowing sons, not fearing to defile the household gods with crime; the heinous and the holy were mixed in wicked furor, and the upright concern of the gods left us. Wherefore they no longer wish to be seen at such meetings, nor will they suffer to be met in the daylight.

Ovid's version is a close paraphrase, culminating with the same type of result:

vivitur ex rapto: non hospes ab hospite tutus,
non socer a genero, fratrum quoque gratia rara est;
inminet exitio vir coniugis, illa mariti,
lurida terribiles miscent aconita novercae,
filius ante diem patrios inquirit in annos. (*Met.* 1.144-48)

They lived on plunder: guest was not safe with host, father-in-law with son-in-law, kindness was even rare between brothers. Husbands were eager for the death of their wives, wives for the death of their husbands. Dreadful stepmothers mixed deadly aconite, and sons inquired into their father's years before their death.

For Catullus as well for Ovid, the transition to impiety is complete, and the break with the divine is permanent. Mankind has stepped irrevocably onto the path towards complete moral decline, with no hope of regeneration.⁴⁸ To symbolize this, humans cease to exist in communion with the gods: Ovid's Astraea is thus analogous to the unnamed gods in Catullus 64.

Virgil was intimately familiar with Catullus' poem, as evidenced by the Praise of Country Life in *Georgics* 2. There he alludes to Catullus' line, *perfudere manus fraterno sanguine fratres*, in almost the exact words: *gaudent perfusi sanguine fratrum* (*G.* 2.510).

Contrasting the miserable life of city-dwellers is the happy life of the farmer, whose wholesome joys are precisely opposite to the misery we see in Catullus: the love and

⁴⁸ Barchiesi (1997): 234-37 provides a good discussion of the inherent pessimism of Ovid's Golden Age, even in light of his anti-primitivist description of Rome at *Ars Am.* 3.113-22 (cf. esp. 3.121-22: *Prisca iuvent alios: ego me nunc denique natum / Gratulor: haec aetas moribus apta meis*). As Barchiesi notes, Ovid praises modernity for its sophistication, but in no way implies that it represents a return to any of the positive features of the Golden Age. In this sense, Ovid's view of progress is quite different from that of Virgil, who (as we shall see below) believed that human agency could guide society to a genuine improvement in all senses, short of effecting an eschatological transformation.

loyalty of family and a chaste and pure household (*G.* 2.523-25).⁴⁹ Farmers, according to Virgil, live the life that Saturn did during his reign on earth: that is to say, they live in a sort of Golden Age. Moreover, these were the last mortals to enjoy the company of Iustitia, and she as she ascended to the heavens she left her imprint on them (*vestigia*, 473-74). This motif is also present in *Eclogue* 4, where it functions in reverse: Virgo/Iustitia is about to return (*Ecl.* 4.6) because, during the consulship of Pollio, the last traces of the ancient taint (*scelus*) will be done away with (4.13). Thus Virgil's prior use of the trope in which humanity moves from *pietas* to *scelus* to a rupture with the divine shows quite forcefully that the close proximity of the first two elements in Priam's death scene were not haphazard. In Catullus' poem we see that the terms had become semantically fixed in the context of the cycle of ages; Ovid, a reader of both Catullus and Virgil, used the trope in similar fashion to denote historical decline. In light of this tradition, we see more evidence that the appearance of this motif in the narration of Priam's death is intended to herald the transition from Bronze to Iron Age.

c. Aratus *Phaenomena* 96-136

Both Ovid and Virgil knew their Catullus, as we have seen, but their specific treatments of the Ages of Man myth are indebted to a far broader tradition stretching back to Hesiod's famous account in the *Works and Days*. One particular author from that tradition stands out in the context of the present discussion: Aratus, whose astronomical epic *Phaenomena* was extremely popular in the first century B.C. Both Virgil and Ovid relied heavily on his etiological myth describing the origins of the constellation Virgo

⁴⁹ Compare these negative social traits of the Iron Age to Hes. *Erg.* 170-201, where most of these motifs originate.

(*parthenos* in Aratus' Greek), and the innovations they made within a specifically Aratean context help us to understand precisely what each intended in his version. The general similarities between the three authors are immediately apparent. Aratus describes the time when this goddess lived on earth: during the Golden Age she presided over a race of men who knew nothing of strife, battle, or sea-travel. These men called her Justice (*Dikē*), and for them she provided laws and "kind judgments." She also farmed the land, with the help of oxen, and allowed humans to live care- and work-free lives, so long as they were just. Then came the Silver Age. As people became more wicked, Justice began to reproach them, and to withdraw from their company. When the Bronze Age arrived, humankind reached such a degree of wickedness that Justice could no longer bear their company. They forged weapons and ate the flesh of oxen; disgusted, Justice flew to heaven and became the constellation that sits below Boötes (her mythical father).

d. Aratus, Virgil, Ovid, and Historical Decline

The degree to which Virgil and Ovid followed Aratus rather than Hesiod in their formulations of the Ages of Man can be seen by their use of specifically Aratean innovations. For Hesiod, the contrast between seafaring and farming has no relevance to the cycle of ages. While navigation is not mentioned in the section that describes the Ages of Man, Hesiod later says that it should be avoided in favor of an agricultural lifestyle. However, that lifestyle itself is an Iron Age development, which shows us that by this point Hesiod no longer has the Metallurgic Ages specifically in mind. Aratus blended elements of Hesiod's myth of the Metallurgic Ages with details found elsewhere

in the *Works and Days*, particularly in the section on the Just City. He specifically links navigation to the decline from one metallurgic age to the next:

χαλεπή δ' ἀπέκειτο θάλασσα,
καὶ βίον οὐπω νῆες ἀπόπροθεν ἠγίνεσκον. (*Phaen.* 110-11)

Far from them was the cruel sea and not yet from afar did ships bring
their livelihood

We have already seen how Ovid and Virgil excluded navigation from the Golden Age, each considering it to be one of the constituent factors of the Iron Age (*G.* 1.136-37; *Met.* 1.132-36). They seem in this case to have been following the Aratean model as opposed to the Hesiodic one.

By comparing Virgil's stance on agriculture to that of Ovid, we can better appreciate the extent to which the former followed Aratus.⁵⁰ Ovid offers the least problematic view of the three by adopting a stance of unqualified primitivism. He says that in the Golden Age, nature's bounty was entirely spontaneous: untilled fields put forth crops, rivers flowed with milk and nectar, oak trees sweated honey, and wild fruits and berries were plentiful (*Met.* 1.101-12). The vegetarian population lived happily like this until the reign of Jupiter, when man was forced to adopt agricultural practice:

semina tum primum longis Cerealia sulcis
obruta sunt, pressique iugo gemuere iuveni. (*Met.* 123-24)

Then for the first time crops were planted in long furrows, and bullocks
groaned, pressed to the yoke.

Aratus' scheme is more ambiguous. Farming was for humans a negative consequence of their wickedness, but in itself it was not intrinsically bad. Dikē had practiced it, and had even used oxen:

ἀλλὰ βόες καὶ ἄροτρα καὶ αὐτὴ πότνια λαῶν

⁵⁰ For a thorough discussion of the Aratean parallels in the finale of *Georgics* 2, see Gale (2000): 38-39.

μυρία πάντα παρέιχε Δίκη, δώτειρα δικαίων. (*Phaen.* 112-13)

But the oxen and the plough and Dikē herself, queen of the peoples,
giver of things just, abundantly supplied their every need.

The relationship between agriculture and the Golden Age is portrayed inconsistently by Virgil. In the renascent Golden Age of *Eclogue* 4, as we have seen, the earth will go back to providing for all of humankind's needs, and labor will cease. *Georgics* 1 makes clear that humans began to farm during the reign of Jove, after the end of Saturn's reign, which Virgil there associates with the Golden Age. But within the *Georgics* themselves, he takes a very different stance on agriculture. In the Praise of Country Life at the end of *Georgics* 2 (490-542), he reiterates the contrast between the pristine happiness of mankind and the degenerate avarice of subsequent periods, again associating seafaring and exile with this decline.⁵¹ But he then proceeds to glorify farming in striking terms. In contrast to the urbanite, the farmer stays at home, surrounded by a loving family, his animals, and his possessions, lacking neither work to keep him busy nor the bounty of the earth (513-31). This, says Virgil, was the ancient life of the Sabines, the Etruscans, and the early Romans:

Hanc olim veteres vitam coluere Sabini,
hanc Remus et frater, sic fortis Etruria crevit
scilicet et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma,
septemque una sibi muro circumdedit arces. (*G.* 2.536-40)

Such life of yore the ancient Sabines led,
Such Remus and his brother: Etruria thus,
Doubt not, to greatness grew, and Rome became
The fair world's fairest, and with circling wall
Clasped to her single breast the sevenfold hills.

⁵¹ Cf. *G.* 2.503 (*sollicitant alii remis freta caesa*) and 511-12 (*exsiliosque domos et dulcia limina mutant, atque alio patriam quaerunt sub sole iacentem*).

But it is not simply “postlapsarian” cultures whose happiness lay in the practice of farming. Such was the life during the Saturnian age as well:

Ante etiam sceptrum Dictaei regis et ante
inpia quam caesis gens est epulata iuencis,
aureus hanc vitam in terris Saturnus agebat. (*G.* 2.536-38)

Indeed, before the reign the Dictaeon king, before the impious race of men feasted on slaughtered bulls, such life on earth did golden Saturn lead.

It thus seems that in the latter passage Virgil locates agriculture in the Golden Age, while previously he had said that farming was a necessity imposed upon humankind once it had deteriorated from its original state of innocence.

4. Virgil’s Historical Golden Age

Solving this apparent contradiction requires that we be sensitive to the specific language that Virgil uses, and that we fully understand the implications of his reference to Aratus. We should note that in the above passage, Virgil’s exact words are *aureus hanc vitam in terris Saturnus agebat*. Thus, no more is claimed than that Saturn practiced farming, while men were presumably idle. For Aratus as well, farming was an exclusively divine activity during the Golden Age; as we saw in the quote above, he specifically ascribes its practice to the goddess Dikē. It is clear that in Virgil’s Saturn we see the analogue to Aratus’ Dikē. Both are divine figures who understand the secrets of the earth and know how to bring forth its bounty.

Within the literary tradition, Virgil’s own innovation was to give implicit credit to Jove, who forced humans to learn Saturn’s work.⁵² If we return to the passage from *Georgics* 1, it becomes clear that Jove in fact rendered a service to humans by putting an

⁵² For a similar interpretation, see Reckford (1958): 84.

end to their idleness, since he thus set them on the path towards an understanding of the natural world:

Ille malum virus serpentibus addidit atris
praedarique lupos iussit pontumque moveri,
mellaque decussit foliis ignemque removit
et passim rivis currentia vina repressit,
ut varias usus meditando extunderet artis
paulatim et sulcis frumenti quaereret herbam,
ut silicis venis abstrusum excuderet ignem. (*G.* 1.129-35)

[Jove] put poisonous venom into deadly snakes, and made the wolf rob,
and the seas move; he took honey from the leaves, hid fire, and stopped
the vine that flowed everywhere in streams, so that experience might
inquire and forge gradually all sorts of *artes*, and seek in furrows the
blade of corn, so that it might strike the fire hidden in the veins of flint.

The last two images of finding corn in furrows and of drawing the hidden fire from flint have a particularly Lucretian resonance. Lucretius assigned an important role in the progression of history to human-discovered technology, which complements the progressive drive of Nature.⁵³ In a tradition going back to Epicurus himself, humans were considered to be generally unimpressive among animal species until necessity forced them to develop various arts.⁵⁴ In Lucretius' formulation, human agency, with nature as its teacher, is the vehicle by which improvement enters the world.⁵⁵ The sages, "who excelled in the vigor of their minds,"⁵⁶ were the people who brought improvement to humankind. This was the case both in the practical sciences and in philosophy: the

⁵³ In their earliest state, humans are said to have lived like wild beasts (*Lucr.* 5.931-32). Eventually they passed from this bestial state to a fully "human" one (which Lucretius characterizes as more comfortable and "soft") through technological innovations like clothing, shelter, and fire, which produced actual evolutionary changes in humans (5.1014 ff.). On Lucretian evolution, see Campbell (2000): 146-57.

⁵⁴ Epicurus said that if the processes of nature had been left alone, humans would have been among the most disadvantaged of the animals. See Lactantius *De Opificio Dei* 2.10 = Epicurus fr. 372 [Usener]; cf. Edelstein (1967): 136.

⁵⁵ *Lucr.* 5.1094-1104; here Lucretius gives the history of the use of fire by humans, making the point that lightning demonstrated its existence, and the sun showed examples of how it could be used.

⁵⁶ *Lucr.* 5.1107. For the broader context, cf. *Lucr.* 5.1105-12. Lucretius makes clear that this applies not only to scientific, but also to political innovations, which he ultimately traces to the same origin, i.e. nature.

inventor of clothing and the discoverer of fire had done an invaluable service to humankind; so too had Epicurus, who lifted the veil of superstition that had been the product of primitive man's interaction with the world.⁵⁷ He had, in Edelstein's words, "started mankind on the road that led to insight into the laws of the universe and thus to a true conception of man's destiny."⁵⁸

Virgil picks up on this idea beginning with his account of the Jovian age. By making life harder for humans, Jove actually set in motion the idea of progress. There is a certain Euhemeristic quality to Virgil's account. Saturn could be considered to represent the individual or group of individuals who first obtained knowledge of these *artes*.⁵⁹ If we were to Euhemerize the myth a little more ourselves, we might say that Jove's service to humankind was to supplant Saturn, who kept people in a state of perpetual infancy by monopolizing these *artes*. The younger god becomes an almost Promethean figure, who lifts up humankind by forcing it to abandon its childlike existence.⁶⁰ People would no longer have an easy life, but they would also no longer be like the animals, among whom, as Epicurus taught, humans are perhaps the least well-equipped. Thus, Virgil's evaluation of the historical development of agriculture is largely Lucretian and Epicurean.⁶¹ Indeed, if we care to locate a Lucretian echo in Virgil on this

⁵⁷ On Lucretius' anti-primitivism, see Lovejoy and Boas (1965): 241. Lovejoy and Boas compare Lucretius' progressivism to that of Rousseau, whose ideal human condition was not the most primitive state of existence, but rather *la société naissante*, a stage in between wholly primitive and overly-civilized.

⁵⁸ Edelstein (1967): 137.

⁵⁹ Ryberg (1958): 126 makes a similar observation: "Another influence upon Vergil's gradually developing concept may have been the *De re rustica* of Varro, which alludes to the farmers of Italy as the surviving stock of Saturn. That association, together with the identification of Saturn with the Greek Kronos and the Euhemeristic interpretation of Saturn as an early king in Italy, provided the nucleus for Vergil's connection of both Saturn and the country dwellers of Italy with the Golden Age."

⁶⁰ Ryberg (1958): 127 makes the unfounded and unnecessary assumption that it was Saturn who taught men to farm; it is evident both in the *Georgics* themselves and by comparison with Aratus that Saturn/Dikē monopolized their knowledge, and it was through Jove that men learned it for themselves.

⁶¹ Gale (2000): 39 ff. agrees with this claim to an extent, but stresses that there is a tension present in Virgil's appropriation of Lucretius' scheme. As I show below, it is more than a tension: Virgil in fact

point, it is worth noting that Lucretius only glorifies the innocence of the state of nature, while acknowledging that in other respects existence in such a state is nasty, brutish, and short.⁶²

In his broader *oeuvre*, Virgil extends the application of the term *artes* beyond the agricultural context in which it appears in the *Georgics*, and in so doing he combines the myth of the Ages of Man with a notion of progress that resembles certain teachings of Posidonius. According to Seneca, Posidonius believed that farming and other skills originated with philosophers/sages, and existed since the beginning of the world:

[Posidonius] then passes on to the farmer. No less eloquently does he describe the ground tilled once and again by the plow, so that the loosened earth might more easily allow roots to enter; then the seed is sown, and the weeds pulled by hand, lest anything by chance should grow and harm the crops. He says that this also is wisdom...(Sen. *Ep.* 90.21)

Seneca further cites Posidonius's stance on the political and social organization of the Golden Age, which resembles a Platonist-inspired Euhemerization of the Dikē story in Aratus:

In that age, which they call Golden, Posidonius judges that government was conducted by the wise. These checked their hands, and protected the weaker from the stronger, and the persuaded, and dissuaded, and showed what was useful and useless. Their prudence provided that nothing should be lacking to their people, their courage warded off dangers, their beneficence enriched and adorned their subjects. It was a duty to command, not a royal luxury. No ruler lorded his power over those to whom he owed that power, nor did anyone have either the impulse or the cause to do wrong, since he well obeyed one who ruled well, and the king could threaten nothing worse to disobedient subjects than that they leave his kingdom. (*Ep.* 90.5)

refers to separate Golden Ages, one transcendent and one temporal. The apparent tension stems from the fact that Lucretius' conception only applies to the temporal sphere, and in many ways incompatible with Virgil's metaphysical Golden Age.

⁶² Lucr. 5.953-1012; cf. Ryberg (1958): 127: "The earliest state of man is not one of natural innocence and happiness but the primitive savagery described in the Lucretian account." Cf. also Lovejoy and Boas (1965): 239-40. For another useful comparison between these sections of the *Georgics* and Lucretius' poem, see Hardie (2009): 41-52.

Καί ἐ Δίκην καλέεσκον· ἀγειρομένη δὲ γέροντας
ἦέ που εἰν ἀγορῇ ἢ εὐρυχόρῳ ἐν ἀγυιῇ,
δημοτέρας ἦειδεν ἐπισπέρχουσα θέμιστας. (*Phaen.* 105-7)

And men called her Justice; she, assembling the elders, be it in the marketplace or in the wide streets, spoke to them, urging judgments kinder to the people.

The fall from this pristine state occurs, according to Posidonius, when vice crept into human affairs at the end of the Golden Age.⁶³ For Aratus, it occurred gradually, as the golden race slowly deteriorated into silver and then bronze, culminating with the departure of *Dikē* from the world. Similarly for Virgil, the latter ages of history are marked by discord, avarice, and impiety.⁶⁴ Contrasted with *fortunatus ille* (*Georg.* 2.493) is the hypothetical city-dweller, whom Virgil describes in the following terms: he is swayed by public honor, prone to strife with his very brother, beset with worry and envy, destructive to himself and his fellow man, and generally experienced in all the ugliness of the degenerate world. Two characteristic features of the debased ages, impiety and exile, are emphasized at the climax of the section:

gaudent perfusi sanguine fratrum,
exsilioque domos et dulcia limina mutant
atque alio patriam quaerunt sub sole iacentem. (*G.* 2.510-12)⁶⁵

Men rejoice, soaked in the blood of their brother, and they exchange their homes and their cherished thresholds for exile, and they seek a country that lay beneath a foreign sun.

However, both Virgil and Posidonius show that within this initially degenerative framework, regeneration and even improvement are made possible by a class of historical agents best described as “sages.” In Seneca’s letter we find Posidonius’ conception of a

⁶³ Sen. *Ep.* 90.6: *Sed postquam subreptibus vitiis in tyrannidem regna conversa sunt...*

⁶⁴ Gale (2000): 38 notes that the gradual departure of *iustitia* has more in common with Aratus’ extended narrative than with Ovid’s abrupt one.

⁶⁵ As discussed above, cf. Catull. 64.399, *perfudere manus fraterno sanguine fratres.*

“Golden Age,” in which technologically simple societies were ruled by just kings. But when expanded power had led to tyranny, and technological advance had given rise to vice, philosophers could manage the situation in such a way as to effect a global improvement. These were the contributions of the Solon and the other legendary lawgivers renowned for their *sapientia*; such men enabled a system that combined technological and moral progress.⁶⁶ In short, history for Posidonius is an essentially constructive process guided by philosophers/sages, who act as the vehicles of Providence.⁶⁷ The *Georgics* are generically confined to the subject of farming, and as such they treat just one branch of the understanding that humankind was able to access after Jove ended Saturn’s reign. But Virgil subtly hints at the broad application of this understanding in *Georgics* 2, where he implies that the category of *artes* includes much more than simply farming. We are told:

Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
atque metus omnis et inexorabile fatum
subiecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis avari. (*G.* 2.490-93)

Happy he, who is able to know the causes of things, who casts beneath
his feet all fears, and inexorable fate, and the din of greedy Acheron.

These lines occur after a passage in which Virgil outlines his grander ambitions to write a cosmological poem:

Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Musae,
quarum sacra fero ingenti percussus amore,
accipiant caelique vias et sidera monstrent,
defectus solis varios lunaeque labores;
unde tremor terris, qua vi maria alta tumescant
obcibus ruptis rursusque in se ipsa residant,
quid tantum Oceano properent se tinguere soles
hiberni, vel quae tardis mora noctibus obstet. (*G.* 2.475-83)

⁶⁶ Sen. *Ep.* 90.6.

⁶⁷ Cf. Gabba (1991): 212.

Me before all things may the sweet Muses accept, the Muses whose rites I perform pierced by a great love, and may they show me the paths of the heavens and the constellations, the sun's eclipse and the different labors of the moon; from where comes the earthquake, by what force the deep seas swell and sink back upon themselves, with their barriers burst; why the winter sun hurries to extinguish himself in the ocean, or what delay slows the lingering nights.

These lines, heavily indebted to Lucretius, show us that *cognoscere causas rerum* needs to be taken in the broadest sense possible, as referring to a truly universal understanding. Only after this is established does Virgil praise agricultural practice, placing it within this broader context:

Fortunatus et ille, deos qui novit agrestis,
Panaque Silvanumque senem Nymphasque sorores. (*G.* 2.490-94)

Happy too is he, who knows the rustic gods: Pan, and old Silvanus, and the sisterhood of the nymphs.

It is now apparent that “farming” in the *Georgics* is used as a stand-in for all of the *artes* by which human existence has been gradually improved. The *felix* in the first passage are the “sages” who possess knowledge of these *artes*, and are thus the agents of progress in history.

The gradual realization of *artes* in the broadest possible sense is represented by the historical arc of *Aeneid*, and culminates in the establishment of a new Golden Age by Augustus:

Augustus Caesar, divi genus, aurea condet
saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva
Saturno quondam...(*Aen.* 6.792-94)

Augustus Caesar, the offspring of a god, who will found again golden ages in Latium, in fields once ruled by Saturn...

As Ryberg notes, *rursus* and *quondam* are both ambiguous words, and have the effect of implying that the new Golden Age will be greater than the first.⁶⁸ Augustus is in this scheme the ultimate sage in the Posidonian sense, achieving the highest possible form of historical progress through his mastery of the political *artes*. For Augustus would carry Rome's civilizing influence to other nations:

Caesar dum magnus ad altum
fulminat Euphraten bello victorque volentes
per populos dat iura... (*G.* 4.560-62)

While great Caesar thundered in war along the deep Euphrates, and as victor spread law among willing peoples...

And more importantly, he would bring peace to Rome and to the world:

...dirae ferro et compagibus artis
claudentur Belli portae; Furor impius intus,
saeva sedens super arma, et centum vinctus aenis
post tergum nodis, fremet horridus ore cruento. (*Aen* 1.293-96)

The Gates of War, of with their grim iron and compact joints, will be closed; And sitting within upon his savage arms, his hands bound behind his back by a hundred brazen knots, impious furor will rage horribly from his bloody mouth.

In short, he would be the master of the "Roman" *artes*, which Anchises distinguishes from all other forms of progress in *Aeneid* 6:

tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento,
hae tibi erunt artes; pacisque imponere morem,
parcere subiectis, et debellare superbos. (*Aen.* 6.851-53)

⁶⁸ Ryberg (1958): 129: "'Condere saeculum' parallels the ritual formula 'condere lustrum' even more closely than the common phrase 'condere urbem,' and it has been suggested that there is intended at least a faint echo of the double meaning. If that echo is listened for it hints, with 'flattering ambiguity,' that the founder of the new Golden Age will be like Jupiter, the son greater than his father who brought to a close the reign of Saturn. This would be a very subtle compliment, precariously poised between the implication of divinity contained in the comparison with Jupiter and the unfortunate linking of Jupiter with the Iron Age. The use of *quondam* would suit this meaning, implying possibly a contrast with the one-time Golden Age, and *rursus* might refer equally well to the restoration of the Saturnian Age or to a second succession of a son greater than his father."

You, Roman, remember to rule the nations by your authority, for these are your *artes*: to impose the custom of peace, to spare the conquered, and to battle down the proud.

Thus, in its political dimension, the new Golden Age will involve the closest possible historical approximation of the great mission imposed on the Roman race by Anchises.

It is important that we specify that this is an approximation, however. The flaw that undermines Philip Hardie's otherwise excellent reading of the *Aeneid* is the fact that he interprets Augustus' historical actions as bringing about a universal transformation. He sees the device on Aeneas' shield as the climax of the epic and as the symbol of this universality.⁶⁹ There are specific problems with Hardie's argument. First, unlike the Homeric shield of Achilles, Aeneas' shield is not a symbol of the whole cosmos, as Hardie maintains. Even if we accept his claim that there is no contradiction between the cosmic universalism of Achilles' shield and the exclusively Roman vision in Virgil's version, the description in the *Aeneid* is not self-contained, as would necessarily be the case if it were universal. Achilles' shield begins by showing the creation of the heavens and the earth.⁷⁰ Conversely, Aeneas' shield begins not with the earliest known point in time; indeed, it does not even begin prior to the events of the *Aeneid*, but rather starts with the race of sprung from Ascanius.⁷¹

The aspect of the shield that is the most damaging for Hardie's argument, however, is the last panel, where, at the moment of Rome's greatest triumph, Augustus presides over a massive sacrifice. As I have already argued, this sacrifice maintains the favor of the gods by whose aid Augustus' Rome had triumphed over its enemies. If we

⁶⁹ Cf. Hardie (1986): 362-75, especially 362: "The Virgilian universe is one that is pervaded by Roman power," and 365, where Hardie discussed the "mystical equation of the city with the universe, which has no essential link with empirical reality."

⁷⁰ *Il.* 18.483-89.

⁷¹ *Aen.* 8.629: *illic genus omne futurae stirpis ab Ascanio.*

define the “universe” as referring to all that exists, it is plain that Roman power as represented in the center of the shield does not extend that far, or there would be no need for religious practice to maintain the harmony between the divine and human worlds. The fact that this arrangement can only continue by practicing a ritual that Virgil elsewhere describes as *impius* shows decisively that Rome’s *imperium* absolutely cannot be identified with the whole of the universe.

If anything, Aeneas’ shield symbolizes a temporal succession, and not the eternal universe. Expressions that Hardie takes as universal seem to me to be better understood as temporal, and intended to indicate the extreme to which Augustus’ Rome could advance without transcending the limits of that temporality. Here I direct our attention back to our discussion in chapter 4, where we looked at the development of Augustus’ Apollonian ideology. In examining the role that Virgil’s Fourth Eclogue may have played in that process, we noted the distinct possibility that Virgil derived his conception of an Apollonian Golden Age from the Neopythagorean lore of Nigidius Figulus. The specific fragment that raises this possibility is recorded by Servius Danielis, who quotes Book 4 of Nigidius’ *De Diis* to explain the Eclogue’s *iam tuus regnat Apollo*:

Certain authorities, among them Orpheus, distinguish the gods and their types by the divisions of time and ages: first comes the reign of Saturn, then Jove, then Neptune, then Pluto; others also, like the magi, say that there will be a reign of Apollo, in which it must be determined whether they predict a conflagration, or rather, an *ekpyrosis*.⁷²

An interesting parallel exists between this system and the layout of Aeneas’ shield, where we are given three salient spatial indications. At the top of the shield is Manlius, standing

⁷² Nigidius Figulus fr. 67 [Swoboda]: *Quidam deos et eorum genera temporibus et aetatibus <distinguunt>, inter quos et Orpheus: primum regnum Saturni, deinde Iovis, tum Neptunium, inde Plutonis; nonnulli etiam, ut magi, aiunt Apollinis fore regnum, in quo videndum est, ne ardorem, sive illa ekpyrosis adpellanda est, dicant. (Neptunium is Swoboda’s emendation of Pierre Daniel’s Neptuni).*

before the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline (*in summo custos Tarpeiae Manlius arcis stabat pro templo et Capitolia celsa tenebat, Aen. 8.653-54*). *Hinc procul*, “far from this” (which in the case of a shield can only signify opposite, i.e. the bottom), we are shown a vision of the Underworld, where the virtuous dead are kept separate from the wicked. Thus we know what stands at the top and bottom of the shield. The description of what lies between these (*haec inter*) begins with the sea, the setting for the drama of Actium that culminates with Augustus seated on the threshold of the Temple of Apollo Palatinus, presiding over his Roman *imperium*. In this way, the shield is thematically (as well as spatially) divided among the domains of Jupiter, the dead, Neptune, and Apollo.

The association between Nigidius’ account of the Ages of Man and the layout of Aeneas’ shield is conjectural, but it allows us to understand the fundamentally temporal quality of the *ekphrasis*. The four spatial regions of the shield are listed in the same order as the gods in Nigidius’ series of ages, and correspond to chronologically successive moments in Roman history. As noted above, by beginning with Ascanius, the narrative of Roman history begins within the framework of time. It also presupposes the continued existence of time after Augustus’ victory, since sacrifice is by nature performed with a future intention. Thus, Augustus’ Golden Age exists within, and does not transcend, the temporal order. Nigidius’ reference to *ekpyrosis* is even more instructive. Universal *ekpyrosis* occurs at the moment when history reaches its full expression, thereby becoming identical with the divine *ratio*, which (as noted above) was thought by the Stoics to be a fiery substance. If the Apollonian *regnum* were to conclude with a universal conflagration, it would represent the true end of history, and indeed the transfiguration of temporality into an eternal entity. It is remarkable that Virgil eschewed

this conception of *ekpyrosis* in favor of the eccentric model discussed above, since all signs indicate that this latter version did not cohere with mainstream Stoic opinion in the first century. Posidonius, Panaetius' successor as the leading Stoic at Rome and one of the major intellectual figures of the first century B.C., reaffirmed the doctrine of *ekpyrosis* in its traditional, universal sense. In the next generation, Seneca also assumed that *ekpyrosis* and *palingenesis* involve the destruction and reconstitution of the entire universe.⁷³

We might initially say, as Trompf does of Polybius, that Virgil "was no cosmologist," and that he approaches catastrophe theory from a historical, rather than cosmological, perspective.⁷⁴ But this would be incorrect on two fronts. First, it is widely acknowledged that Virgil *was* interested in cosmology, as evidenced by his stated desire in *Georgics* 2 to write a cosmological poem, and by the influence of diverse branches of ancient cosmology on the *Aeneid*, as discussed by Hardie.⁷⁵ Second, Virgil refers to another philosophical tradition in which the issue of eternal recurrence was discussed: Pythagoreanism. Competing traditions regarding the question existed in that school as well, and Virgil notably follows sources that had excluded the possibility of cosmic dissolution and exact historical recurrence. As we shall now see, this enabled him to maintain the distinction between the temporal and the transcendent in the *Aeneid*, a distinction that gives rise to what is best considered the poem's other, metaphysical Golden Age.

⁷³ Cf. Sen. *Q Nat.* III.29-30; Posidonius fr. 97a. On Posidonius' position, see Edelstein (1967): 173 n. 85. Edelstein also discusses Seneca's position on the same page.

⁷⁴ Trompf (1979): 6.

⁷⁵ Virgil states his desire to write a cosmological epic at *G.* 2.475-89. Despite my disagreement with the book's conclusion, Hardie (1986) offers an excellent survey of ancient cosmological poetry and its potential influence on Virgil.

V. Virgil's Metaphysical Golden Age: The Underworld

If we wish to speak of a Roman cosmos at any point in the *Aeneid*, we need to distinguish “cosmos” (i.e. the discernible order of the world) from “universe” (all that exists). Virgil does precisely this by explicitly describing two solar systems in Book 6. That which we have examined in to this point is the one Anchises describes to Aeneas:

Principio caelum ac terras camposque liquentis
lucentemque globum Lunae Titaniaque astra
spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus
mens agitat molem et magno se corpore miscet. (*Aen.* 6.724-27)

First, a spirit within nourishes heaven and earth, the watery plains, the bright sphere of the moon and the Titanian star; Mind, infused through its limbs, moves the whole mass and mixes itself with the corporeal frame.

This description reflects the Stoic conceptions of the cosmos that we have examined, in which the entire world is permeated by the divine *logos*. However, it also recalls the cosmology in Plato's *Timaeus*, where the physical world is said to be a living organism, animated by Soul.⁷⁶ The Demiurge fashioned the stars and the planets in order to bring about time in this created world.⁷⁷ The extent to which Platonic texts influenced Virgil's conception of the Underworld goes largely without saying.⁷⁸ Even beyond this, in a large number of ancient cosmologies the stars and planets are the constituent elements of the

⁷⁶ Pl. *Ti.* 30a-b: “...when he was framing the universe, he put intelligence in soul, and soul in body, that he might be the creator of a work which was by nature fairest and best. Wherefore, using the language of probability, we may say that the world became a living creature truly endowed with soul and intelligence by the providence of God.” Also 92c: “We may now say that our discourse about the nature of the universe has an end. The world has received animals, mortal and immortal, and is fulfilled with them, and has become a visible animal containing the visible and the sensible God, who is the image of the intellectual, the greatest, best, fairest, most perfect and the one only begotten heaven.” (Jowett trans.)

⁷⁷ Pl. *Ti.* 38b-c: “Time, then, and the heaven came into being at the same instant in order that, having been created together, if ever there was to be a dissolution of them, they might be dissolved together. It was framed after the pattern of the eternal nature, that it might resemble this as far as was possible; for the pattern exists from eternity, and the created heaven has been, and is, and will be, in all time. Such was the mind and thought of God in the creation of time. The sun and moon and five other stars, which are called the planets, were created by him in order to distinguish and preserve the numbers of time.” (Jowett trans.)

⁷⁸ Cf. West (1987): 10-13. West in fact interprets Virgil's “Golden Bough” as an acknowledgement of his debt to Plato's underworld myths, via reference to a passage in Meleager's “Garland.”

cosmos.⁷⁹ Thus it is significant that the region occupied by Virgil's *sedes beatae* is described in the following terms:

Largior hic campos aether et lumine vestit
purpureo, solemque suum, sua sidera norunt. (*Aen.* 6.640-41)

Here a fuller *aether* clothes the fields in brilliant light, and they know their own sun, their own stars.

This second set of heavenly bodies provides a clear indication that Elysium represents a world beyond the visible cosmos. But Virgil does not rest with Timaeus' formulation either. The temporal cosmos fashioned by Timaeus' Demiurge is a perfectly teleological entity, representing a perfect system that, once created, admits neither entry nor exit.⁸⁰ On the other hand, Virgil conceived of the temporal world as a fundamentally tragic and self-consuming organism that is only redeemed by the possibility of escape. Virgil's Elysium, where one finds the true, metaphysical Golden Age, is based on ideas of a far more mystical and religious character than the philosophically-oriented system described by Timaeus. These ideas originated in a specialized form of Pythagoreanism, whose genesis and character requires some attention.

⁷⁹ For a discussion of the stars' role in forming the cosmos (particularly with regard to temporality) in various ancient philosophical systems, see Stamatellos (2007): 120-134, especially 130.

⁸⁰ Cf. von Leyden (1964): 43: "There can be no doubt that Plato thought that in this capacity time is cyclical and that the universe as a whole is a kind of spherical space-time." Timaeus' cosmology (which, it should be emphasized *contra* von Leyden, is not necessarily identical to Plato's) is cyclical; as already discussed at length, this necessitates that the visible cosmos be an efficient teleological system for which there is neither escape nor entry. On this point, see especially Saunders (1973): 233-34. To describe the systems found in the *Laws* and the *Timaeus*, Saunders uses the term "scientific eschatology," which is essentially equivalent to my conception of "teleology" (cf. chapter 1 *infra*): "My view of the passage is then that Plato wants to provide, on the grounds that it has a high persuasive value, a—if I may again use the word—scientific eschatology, cast in terms of physical processes... He wants to refer to, without precisely explaining in detail, the actual physical theory and procedures he has in mind—i.e. those of the Timaeus, where such an eschatology had already been sketched."

1. Pythagoreanism

What Pythagoreanism meant in the ancient world is as vexed a question as the identity and teaching of the historical Pythagoras himself.⁸¹ For the sake of relevance, I shall not discuss all of these issues here, but we do need to understand one aspect of the Pythagorean question that is of crucial importance for our purposes. In his *Life of Pythagoras*, Porphyry claimed that the following ideas could be traced with certainty to the teachings of Pythagoras himself: that the soul was immortal and migrated to another body after death; that, as a result, kinship existed between all living things; that nothing that happens is new, and the same events occur an infinite number of times.⁸² In the nineteenth century, Erwin Rohde, encouraged by Porphyry's "intelligent caution," concluded that these attributions had been made correctly.⁸³ On the other hand, Nietzsche, Rohde's contemporary and friend, was firmly convinced that a doctrine of eternal recurrence was not part of Pythagoras' teaching, and that it had entered the system of later Pythagoreans in the mid-fourth century B.C.⁸⁴ In fact, he completely excluded Pythagoras from the list of philosophers, and attributed the philosophical-sounding elements of the school (like exact, "mathematical" recurrence) to later figures in the tradition.⁸⁵

Later studies, particularly those by Burkert, have increased the likelihood that Nietzsche was correct. Burkert has persuasively shown that the explicitly mathematical and philosophical material in the Pythagorean tradition can be largely traced to the fourth century B.C. Ultimately, this material derives from a group of Pythagoreans called the

⁸¹ Two useful modern studies of this question are Kahn (2001) and Riedweg (2002).

⁸² Porph. *Vit. Pyth.* 19

⁸³ Rohde (1871): 554-76.

⁸⁴ On the positions of Rohde and Nietzsche, see Bishop (2004): 156.

⁸⁵ Nietzsche's ideas about Pythagoreanism are discussed in Bishop (2004): 155-69.

mathematici, who prevailed over another branch, the *acusmatici*, in a schism that occurred in the school in the fifth century B.C. According to Iamblichus' *Life of Pythagoras*, the *acusmatici* (Hearers) learned certain doctrines through questions and responses that they memorized by rote in auditions; the sense is that Pythagoras was concerned that they know simply the correct dogmas, while attaching no importance to the rationale behind them. The most important and extended teachings that Pythagoras gave to the *acusmatici* were on the subject of sacrifice, and on ritual as it pertained to burial and the migration from this life to the next. An example: "Bread is not to be broken, for it contributes to judgment in Hades."⁸⁶ According to Iamblichus, Pythagoras gave the other group, the *mathematici* (Learners) the same precepts, but also included detailed explanation of their rationales along with demonstrations, since these students possessed sufficient intellect.

Based on his reading of Iamblichus, and also of the fragments we possess from Aristotle's lost treatise on Pythagoras, Burkert argues that the method used to teach the *acusmatici* reflects the true character of early Pythagoreanism, and that Pythagoras fit the role of a holy man and a religious leader far more than that of a philosopher in the tradition of Thales and Anaximander.⁸⁷ The doctrine of exact, mathematical recurrence was the product of the philosophical speculation of the later school, once it came to be dominated by the heirs of the *mathematici* in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.

Pythagoras' actual teaching, on the other hand, appears to have been quite similar to

⁸⁶ Pythagoras' teachings to this group seem to have been in the form of questions and answers, such as the following: "What are the Islands of the Blessed? The sun and the moon. What is the Oracle of Delphi? The teractys. What is harmony? That in which the Sirens are... What is the most just thing? Number... What is the most beautiful? Harmony." (Iamb. *Vit. Pyth.* 18.82)

⁸⁷ For the complete argument see Burkert (1972): 192-213.

Orphism in many respects.⁸⁸ The most important of these teachings with regard to the present study was the idea that through ritual practice (specifically some form of initiation), one could obtain permanent release from the cycle of reincarnation through a sort of divinization. We know with reasonable certainty that the god Bacchus-Dionysos played an important role in a large number of Orphic theogonies and cult practices.⁸⁹ Dionysos was considered to be the son of Zeus and Persephone. The Titans devoured him, and in his anger Zeus incinerated them with his thunderbolt. From the ashes sprinkled on the earth the race of man arose; thus, by virtue of its bodily aspect, human existence carries within it both the divinity of Dionysos and the guilt for his death. This idea is expressed on an Orphic Gold Leaf found at Pelinna in Thessaly in 1980:

Now you have died and now you have been born thrice blessed, on this day. Say to Persephone that Bacchios himself has released you. Bull, you jumped into the milk. Quickly, you jumped into the milk. Ram, you fell into the milk. You have wine as your fortunate honor. And an end awaits you under the earth, such as the rest of the blessed have.
(P1)⁹⁰

Already here we have the sense that this “end” is final, but there are other tablets that offer confirmation. These include several found at Sybaris, which make up the Compagno collection. One example is the following:

Out of the pure I come, Pure Queen of Them Below,
Eukles and Eubouleus and the other Gods immortal.
For I also avow me that I am of your blessed race,
But Fate laid me low and the other Gods immortal
.....starflung thunderbolt.
I have flown out of the sorrowful weary Wheel.
I have passed with eager feet to the Circle desired.
I have sunk beneath the bosom of Despoina, Queen of the Underworld.
I have passed with eager feet from the Circle desired.
Happy and Blessed One, thou shalt be God instead of mortal.

⁸⁸ On the similarities between Pythagoreanism and Orphism, see Bremmer (2002): 11-26.

⁸⁹ Cf. Burkert (1972): 128 ff.

⁹⁰ In the edition of Tsantsanoglou and Parassoglou (1987).

A kid I have fallen into milk.⁹¹

Another reference to divinization is found on Timpone Grande tablet A:

Hail, thou who hast suffered the Suffering. This thou hadst never suffered before.

Thou art become God from Man. A kid thou art fallen into milk.

Hail, hail to thee journeying on the right.....

...Holy meadows and groves of Persephoneia.⁹²

Whether or not we can accept these clear allusions to permanent divinization as evidence of a widespread Orphic “dogma” is a matter of heated contention.⁹³ However, what is incontestable is that whatever “Orphism” was, it serves as a precedent for the idea that an escape from history (i.e. a series of bodily existences) is possible.

Two sources from this period (both of which Virgil used) indicate the hazy distinction that existed between Orphism and Pythagoreanism at an early date. The first is Empedocles of Acragas, who appears to have revered Pythagoras.⁹⁴ He spoke of his

⁹¹ Translated by G. Murray in Harrison (1903): 667-69. Cf. Brandon (1965): 91-92, also Guthrie (1993): 173.

⁹² Murray trans. in Harrison (1903): 663.

⁹³ On this issue see Torjussen (2005): 290-97. In modern scholarship, Orphism has been at different times regarded either as a consistent religious system or as essentially a creation of the Pythagoreans. After Comparetti unearthed the Thurii tablets and interpreted them as evidence for a regularized Orphic belief system, such eminent classicists as Rohde (1903) and Harrison (1903) saw no problem with using the terms “Orphic religion” and an “Orphic Church.” Wilamowitz (1931) was more skeptical, claiming there was nothing inherently “Orphic” in the Gold Leaves. Linforth (1941): 288 pressed this doubt even further, arguing that the available evidence provided no coherent picture of an organized religion, and that the label Orphic could only be applied to “the things to which the name Orpheus is constantly attached.” This opinion was eventually adopted by M.L. West as well (West [1983]: 3). The debate came full circle when Zuntz (1971) thoroughly analyzed the Thurii Leaves again, as well as others leaves that had been found subsequently, and determined that the corpus of evidence had nothing to do with Orphism at all, but was a product of south Italian Pythagoreanism. During most of this time, one of the lone voices to maintain that a somewhat regularized form of Orphic practice existed in the ancient Mediterranean was Guthrie, who doggedly placed the term “Orphic Movement” in his book title (Guthrie [1993]). Guthrie’s stance has been vindicated now that a workable interpretation of the Derveni Papyrus is finally available (Betegh [2004]). The similarities between some of the ritual practices described by the Derveni commentator and evidence found on the Gold Leaves seems to indicate that commonalities existed in Orphic practice across the Mediterranean.

⁹⁴ Cf. Porphyry, *Vit. Pyth.* 30 = DK 31B129: And there was among them a man of unusual knowledge, and master especially of all sorts of wise deeds, who in truth possessed greatest wealth of mind for whenever he reached out with all his mind, easily he beheld each one of all the things that are, even for ten and twenty generations of men. For Virgil’s use of Empedocles, see Nelis (2004).

own reincarnations, recalling having been a girl, a bush, a bird, and a fish.⁹⁵ Empedocles' famous Love-Strife duality bears some resemblance to the Orphic attitude to the body. He held that the soul of each living being was originally united to the great, intelligent cosmic sphere ruled by Love. Eventually, Strife separated this soul from the sphere of Love and imprisoned it in a body. Here it is doomed to wander the earth for a time, in a series of incarnations, perhaps for as long as three thousand years.⁹⁶ The element of Empedocles' system most reminiscent of Orphism is his notion of divinization. He claimed that he was in the process of living out his last incarnation before becoming a god, and (according to a famous legend) died by leaping into Mt. Etna in order to prove it.⁹⁷ Afterwards, all that remained of him was a bronze sandal, spewed back by the volcano. This detail recalls an important motif from the mythical and magical symbolism of the period: in the Orphic tradition, such an event was a sign that Hecate had granted the magician access to the Underworld.⁹⁸

Pindar's connection to Orphism and Pythagoreanism is even more important for our discussion of the *Aeneid*. Pindar spent time at Acragas, Empedocles' birthplace, and composed a distinctively Orphic ode on the occasion of the tyrant Theron's victory in a

⁹⁵ Hippol. *Haer.* I.iii.2 = DK 31B117

⁹⁶ "thrice ten thousand seasons" DK 31B115.6.

⁹⁷ The account reinforces what Empedocles consistently said about himself during his life: he had already become a god through knowledge of his imminent divinization. Cf. DK 31B112: "I go about you as an immortal god, no longer mortal."

⁹⁸ This important observation has been made by Kingsley (1998): 234 ff. (especially 238), who relies on Dietrich's interpretation (Dietrich [1891]: 42-44) of a similar image in the Paris Magical Papyrus (*PGM* 4.2292-4 and 2335). Kingsley argues that the mere fact that Empedocles wore bronze sandals (which would be impractical if not impossible for any length of time) suggests that the leaping into the volcano was construed as a ritual in the Orphic or magical tradition. He additionally argues that the detail of the sandal was originally part the story and not a later accretion. While the date at which the sandal story entered the legend is disputed, both Heraclides of Pontus (fourth century B.C.) and Timaeus of Tauromenium (third century B.C.) mention it. Cf. Timaeus ap. Diog. Laert. 8.67, 71-72 = *FrGH* 566; Heraclides ap. Diog. Laert. 8.67 = *FrGH* 83.

chariot race in 476 B.C. (when Empedocles was a young boy).⁹⁹ To preface this poem, we should first look at a fragment from Pindar's *Threnodies* which is strikingly similar to the Pelinna Gold Leaf:

“But, for those from whom Persephone exacts the penalty of their ancient guilt, in the ninth year she again restores their souls to the sunlight above; and from these come revered monarchs, and men who are swift in strength and supreme in wisdom; and for the rest of time, they are called blessed heroes by men.” (fr. 133 [Maehler])

The Second Olympian Ode, in which Pindar describes in detail the process of divinization, supplements this fragment. When one has endured three lifetimes on each side of the cycle of reincarnation, his guilt is expiated and he is sent to the Isle of the Blessed:

Those who endure three times on each side, and manage to keep their souls free from all injustice, follow Zeus' road to the end, to the tower of Cronus; there the ocean breezes blow around the Isle of the Blessed. (Pind. *Oly.* 2.68-70)

This Isle is inhabited by the heroes, the class of people who, since the Homeric epics, had been accorded a permanent life of bliss in Elysium.¹⁰⁰ The Ode to Theron and the *Threnody* explain each other, and the resulting vision is characteristically Orphic. Persephone exacts the penalty from a guilty soul for a period of time in Hades; when this is done, the soul returns to the earth and inhabits the body of a hero or monarch. To this class of human being is granted the right to pass permanently to Elysium.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Cornford (1991): 229 says that the poem can be classified “unhesitatingly” as Orphic. It may well have been the case that the Orphic character of the poem is due not to Pindar's, but to Theron's religious persuasion.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Homer *Od.* 4.56, where Proteus tells Menelaus that he will not die, but will go to the Elysian Fields. Pindar seems to echo this passage with his mention of “Ocean breezes” blowing around the Isles of the Blessed. Cf. also Hesiod, who says that the race of heroes that arises between the Bronze and Iron Ages will not die, but will be sent to the Islands of the Blessed (*Nesoi Makarôn*, the same name used by Pindar) where they will live forever, ruled by Kronos.

¹⁰¹ Pindar may be hinting at a similar notion in his First Olympian Ode: “A god is set over your ambitions as a guardian, Hieron, and he devises with this as his concern. If he does not desert you soon, I hope that I

This idea is especially appropriate in poems written to praise monarchs and victors in athletic contests, like Hieron of Syracuse or Theron of Acragas. In fact, fragment 133 helps us to better understand why *Olympian 2* contains its eschatological middle section in the first place. Pindar offers a consolation (despite the insistence of some that the poem is uniformly epinician):¹⁰² although great men and their glorious achievements may be forgotten in time, there exists for them an eternal, spiritual reward. Greatness in this world predicts a blessed immortality in the next. As a result, Pindar includes an innovation that is entirely striking in the context of the Homeric tradition that he surely has in mind: he places Achilles in Elysium, and gives a brief list of his glorious deeds.¹⁰³ Thus, the above-cited passage from *Olympian 2* is prefaced by the following lines:

To attempt a contest and be successful brings release from sadness.
Wealth adorned with excellence brings many opportunities, rousing
deep wild ambitions; it is a brilliant star, a man's true light, at least if
one has and knows the future. (*Oly.* 2.51-55)

The general implication in Pindar, while not explicitly stated, seems to be that the Islands of the Blessed are accessible to all, but not directly. Humans ascend through various levels of corporeal existences, culminating in an incarnation as a great man or hero, with this serving as the final step towards divinization. This perhaps gives new meaning to a

will celebrate an even greater sweetness, sped by a swift chariot, finding a helpful path of song when I come to the sunny hill of Cronus. For me the Muse tends her mightiest shaft of courage. Some men are great in one thing, others in another; but the peak of the farthest limit is for kings." (*Oly.* 1.106-14)

¹⁰² Nisetch (1989): 3; Nagy (1979): 171.

¹⁰³ The most memorable image of the dead Achilles in antiquity occurs at *Od.* 11.478-91, where Odysseus meets Achilles in Hades. The dead hero says that it is better to be the most wretched slave alive than king of all the dead. For the strong Homeric influence of the middle passage of *Olympian 2*, see the previous note.

motif that appears frequently in an Orphic context, that of the “Soul-Ladder” by which one ascends to Elysium.¹⁰⁴

2. Neopythagoreanism

Beyond the literary influence of Pindar, we can better appreciate how this form of Pythagoreanism might have reached Virgil in the first century by considering the phenomenon of Neopythagoreanism. Here Nigidius Figulus is again important.¹⁰⁵ Cicero credits him with having revived Pythagoreanism in Italy.¹⁰⁶ Dickie discusses Nigidius merely as a scholar-magician, but he also notices what may be a crucial piece of evidence from the scholia to Cicero’s *In Vatinius*: there we find a description of Nigidius that says he was an extremely learned man, to whom “very many people” would come. These people were criticized by their detractors as belonging to a disreputable gang, but they considered themselves to be followers of Pythagoras.¹⁰⁷ In the pseudo-Ciceronian *In Sallustium*, Sallust is said to have associated himself with the “sacrilege of Nigidius,”

¹⁰⁴ Pindar mentions that Thetis climbs a ladder to ascend to Olympus (fr. 30 [Maehler]), and fifth century vase paintings show the Thracian women who murdered Orpheus with tattoos of ladders on their arms. A.B. Cook (1925): 124 speculated that a ladder was part of Orphic ritual practice. The motif is discussed by Guthrie (1993): 208.

¹⁰⁵ Gellius (*Noc. Att.* 4.9.1) says of Nigidius: *homo, ut ego arbitror, iuxta M. Varronem doctissimus*. The standard edition of his fragments (most of which are found in Pliny, Gellius, and Nonius) is Swoboda (1964). Unfortunately, there have been few dedicated studies on Nigidius Figulus, owing perhaps to the scant nature of his extant writings. The most important and insightful works are not in English. The fundamental study is by Carcopino (1943) in his book on Neopythagoreanism at Rome. Others include: Della Casa (1962); Legrand (1931); D’Anna (2008); and Ducos’ entry for Nigidius Figulus in Goulet (2005). The best work in English is Rawson (1985).

¹⁰⁶ Cic. *Tim.* fr. 1. Cicero dedicated his translation of Plato’s *Timaeus*, which Rawson characterizes as “Pythagoreanising” (Rawson: [1985]: 291), to his close friend Nigidius (cf. Cic. *Ad. fam.* 4.13). There, he mentions how his work revived the discipline of the Pythagoreans, which had nearly become extinct in Italy and Sicily. Some, especially Rawson, have taken this to be a flattering exaggeration, but there are good reasons to believe that it is sincere. On this see Carcopino (1943): especially 198. Carcopino’s argument is ultimately that an organized Neopythagorean cult, headed by Nigidius, existed at Rome in the mid-first century B.C.

¹⁰⁷ Schol. Bob. *In Vat.* 14: *Fuit autem illis temporibus Nigidius quidam, vir doctrina et eruditione studiorum praestantissimus, ad quem plurimi conveniebant. Haec ab obtrectatoribus veluti actio minus probabilis iactitabatur, quamvis ipsi Pythagorae sectatores existimari vellent*. See Dickie (2001): 165.

being twice called before a tribunal and barely escaping condemnation.¹⁰⁸ Carcopino has argued that political factors were at work in the disrepute of the Neopythagorean sect at Rome, and that for this reason Cicero was unsuccessful in pleading with Caesar for the pardon of Nigidius, after the latter had been exiled for being a Pompeian.¹⁰⁹

This disrepute may account for the fact that a later, more substantial example of Neopythagoreanism at Rome, the Basilica at the Porta Maggiore, was located outside of the city.¹¹⁰ The specifically Neopythagorean character of the building was established by Cumont and Carcopino.¹¹¹ Apotheosis appears to have been the dominant theme of the basilica's interior. The focal point of the basilica's decoration is a large bas-relief in the apse. On it are depicted two rocky cliffs, separated by a stormy sea. From the one on the right, a woman holding a lyre steps calmly off the edge while a cupid pushes her from behind. In the water below there stands a cloaked figure, holding a boat with which he appears ready to catch the woman in her fall. On the opposite cliff a young man stands in a dejected pose with his head resting on his hand. A fourth figure stands on a third

¹⁰⁸ [Cic.] *In Sallust.* 14. This has been taken by some to imply that the arts Nigidius practiced were subject to the *lex cornelia de sicariis et veneficiis*. It seems fairly clear that when Dio, using legal language (45.1.4, *αἰτίαν*), says that Nigidius was charged with practicing forbidden arts, he must have been referring to prosecution under the *lex cornelia*, or some other similar law. Rives (in Ando [2006]: 47 ff.) raises serious doubts about whether this aspect of the *lex cornelia* was actually in force during the first century B.C., eventually concluding that there is not enough evidence to believe it was. Ellart (2009): 215-16 takes a more moderate stance, acknowledging that the original law did treat magic to some extent, but that criminal suits involving astrology (which he believes applied in the case of Nigidius) would have been prosecuted according to the *lex iulia de maiestate*. He suggests *maiestas* as the possible charge on the belief that astrology and magical practices were sometimes connected with treasonous conspiracies. In any event, there is little doubt that some such law existed in Nigidius' time.

¹⁰⁹ Carcopino (1943): 198: "Il est a présumer que le nombre et l'ardeur de ces amis paralysèrent, au lieu de la stimuler, la clémence de César: plus que le Pompéien vaincu, ce que l'*imperator* devait redouter en Nigidius, c'était le mystagogue vénéré, le chef obéi de la 'loge' pythagoricienne la plus considerable de la ville."

¹¹⁰ Discovered forty-two feet underground at the Porta Maggiore in 1915, the building dates from between A.D. 45 to 54. It is thus the earliest the earliest-known adaptation of the basilica plan for religious purposes. The best studies of the structure are still those produced in the immediate aftermath of its discovery, especially Carcopino (1943) and Strong and Joliffe (1924). More recent studies include MacKendrick (1983): 182-89 and Joost-Gaugier (2006): 154-65. On the significance of the location, see Joost-Gaugier (2006): 157.

¹¹¹ Cumont (1918) and Carcopino (1943).

promontory that seems to rise out of nowhere over the left-center of the sea. He holds a bow and appears ready to welcome the woman. In the sea below a fifth figure holds an oar while blowing a horn.¹¹² Cumont was convinced that this scene was an allegorical representation of the fate of the soul according to Orphic-Pythagorean doctrine: in essence, a Last Judgment. The veiled woman holding the lyre represents a Pythagorean initiate about to be transported over the water to the Isles of the Blessed, while the unhappy man on the left had remained uninitiated and now faced eternal separation from the god.¹¹³ Curtis disagreed with this interpretation, and argued instead that the woman was Sappho, mad with love for Phaon, making her famous “Leucadian Leap.”¹¹⁴ Carcopino connected these two interpretations by means of a passage in the elder Pliny’s *Historia Naturalis*, which mentions the Sappho-Phaon legend as being of great importance to the Magi and the Pythagoreans.¹¹⁵ Joost-Gaugier summarizes the resulting interpretation:

Here is Sappho, holding her lyre to her breast and taking her suicidal leap, from the Leucadian cliff and the Temple of Apollo, into the sea—that is, towards the altar below. Apollo, the god of Leucadia and Pythagoras, to whom she dedicated her leap and her lyre... extends his right hand in a gesture of protection—or benediction—and assurance that he will rescue her and transport her to the land of the sun. Thus Sappho’s immortality is assured.¹¹⁶

The theme that unites this central decoration to the rest of the images found in the basilica is that of deliverance from death and evil through initiation into the mystery, with

¹¹² For an image of the relief, see Strong, Joliffe (1924): pl. IV.

¹¹³ Cumont (1918): 52 ff.

¹¹⁴ According to the version told by Ovid at *Her.* 15.189. Cf. Curtis (1927): 146 ff.

¹¹⁵ Plin. *HN* 22.9: *ob hoc et phaonem lesbium dilectum a sappho, multa circa hoc non magorum solum vanitate, sed etiam pythagoricorum.* This passage occurs in the context of discussing the *centum capita* (modern *eryngium campestre* or “panicaud à cent têtes” in French). This plant, once thought to have aphrodisiac properties, was sometimes said to have been the cause of Sappho’s infatuation with Phaon.

¹¹⁶ Joost-Gaugier (2006): 162; cf. McKendrick (1983): 187: “This is not suicide, but liberation from earthly love into an eternity of perfect harmony of the senses with the sublime and the supernatural.”

the promise of permanent happiness through apotheosis. The basilica's vaulted ceiling was literally covered with stucco bas-reliefs, and the largest of these depict scenes of divinization, including Ganymede being taken to Olympus to be Jupiter's cupbearer, the rape of one of the Leucippides by one of the Dioscuri, the apotheosis of Hercules, and the sacrifice of Iphigenia.¹¹⁷ A smaller relief shows a young man holding what appears to be a willow branch and leading a woman by the hand; this can be none other than Orpheus, leading Eurydice back from Hades.¹¹⁸ The only intact column in the central nave shows a hero seated in a garden while a woman serves him a tray of apples; this is Hercules in the garden of the Hesperides. Bayet has shown that the garden was an image of the Isles of the Blessed, while Strong points out that Hercules' voyage there in search of the Golden Apple was a clear symbol of the soul's journey to the other world.¹¹⁹ Alongside these images of eternal beatitude are representations of sin and punishment. These include Pasiphae, Medea and her murdered children, Phaedra as she tries to seduce Hippolytus, Pentheus dismembered by his mother, and Marsyas being flayed alive for challenging Apollo. The most important of these depicts the Danaids carrying water in

¹¹⁷ On the Ganymede myth as an example of apotheosis, see Strong (1921): 75. The Leucippides were Messenian princesses whom the Dioskouroi abducted to be their brides. Their fiancés, Idas and Lynkeus, fought the Dioskouroi over the rape. One of the Dioskouroi, along with both Idas and Lynkeus, were killed. In the end, the Dioskouroi and the Leucippides were taken to heaven as gods by Zeus. Cf. Theoc. *Id.* 22.137 ff., Ov. *Fast.* 5.709 ff. The sacrifice of Iphigenia could be interpreted along the same lines; in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* she was rescued by Artemis at the moment of the sacrifice, and she became the goddess Hecate (preserved in Paus. 1.43.1). Cf. Strong (1921): 82.

¹¹⁸ Carcopino (1943) believed that the two figures in this relief were in fact Helen and Paris. However the willow branch is the key, for according to Pausanias' description of the Lesche at Delphi, Orpheus was shown by Polygnotus seated in the Grove of Persephone, touching a willow-branch. Robert (1895): 122 believed that Orpheus needed this willow branch to access Hades, and that this was the Golden Bough of Virgil. It would be unusual for there to have been no image of Orpheus in the sanctuary, given the popularity of the motif across a number of religions. For the "happy" aspect of the myth (Orpheus reunited with Eurydice after his death) see Strong (1921): 80 and MacKendrick (1983): 186.

¹¹⁹ Bayet (1922): 255; Strong (1921): 101.

sieves, which Carcopino has interpreted as a representation of the punishment endured in Hades by those uninitiated into the mysteries.¹²⁰

Thus the remains of the Porta Maggiore basilica give the overwhelming impression that the rituals practiced there emphasized the essentially mystical character of early Pythagoreanism.¹²¹ Indeed, everything about the basilica, down to its architectural layout, exemplifies the Pythagorean *religion*, and distinguishes this from Pythagorean *philosophy*.¹²² Not a single image found in the Porta Maggiore basilica remotely indicates a belief in cyclic recurrence or a perfectly mathematical cosmos. Numerical symbols exist, but they clearly yield precedence to the mystic doctrines of initiation and apotheosis.¹²³ Thus we have evidence for a “new-old” form of Pythagoreanism practiced at Rome in the first century A.D.

As noted above, the basilica at the Porta Maggiore is a first century A.D. structure. However, coupled with what we know about Nigidius Figulus, it provides us with a reasonable idea of the nature of Pythagorean practice at Rome in the first century B.C. Together, these examples present us with considerable evidence to suggest that the form of Pythagoreanism that Virgil encountered in the first century B.C. had resurrected the mystic, Orphic character that distinguished the school in its early period. With this in

¹²⁰ Carcopino (1943): 280-91.

¹²¹ This may also account for the discovery of pig-bones beneath the altar. Cf. Kahn (2001): 9. Following Burkert, Kahn notes that Pythagoras himself does not seem to have demanded strict vegetarianism, nor did he ban all animal sacrifice (only that of cattle). This, as Burkert argued, was most likely a concession to the civic religion of the time (Burkert [1972]: 182, interpreting *Iambl. VP* 85). Kahn’s belief is that strict vegetarianism developed after the collapse of Pythagorean political power, when the sect was fragmented into much smaller groups that constituted an apolitical “counterculture.”

¹²² On the religious significance of various architectural features, see Carcopino (1943). Carcopino notes that the pool in the atrium blocked direct entry to the nave; one would have had to enter from the left or right side aisle. He made the connection between this and a fact recorded in Iamblichus, that Pythagoras made his followers enter the sacred space on the right and leave on the left.

¹²³ For examples of numeric symbolism in the basilica, see Carcopino (1943): 247-57, and Joost-Gaugier (2006): 161. Most of the instances of numeric symbolism seem relatively superficial, e.g. the number of tables, the number of seats at a table, etc.

mind, we are now equipped to understand the implications of Virgil's choice to follow this quasi-religious doctrine in his description of Elysium.

3. Virgil's *sedes beatae*

In Book I of the *Georgics*, Virgil gives his famous encomium of Augustus, wondering by what means the *princeps* will become a god. The final possibility mentioned is that he might ascend to the heavens and join the constellations, where “a space is opening between Erigone and the grasping Claws” (I.33-34). On a literal level, this is a clever compliment to Augustus based on his astrological sign, since the space between Scorpio and Virgo is occupied by Libra.¹²⁴ However, these lines are more than just flattery. In certain Pythagorean eschatological formulations, such an ascent could be used to represent divinization: the souls of the just were said to inhabit or to become stars.¹²⁵ In the *Aeneid*, Virgil's allusion to the *sidus Iulium* when describing the pivotal

¹²⁴ On Augustus' astrological sign, see chapter 4 *infra*.

¹²⁵ The most important sources for this doctrine among the Pythagoreans are the so-called Pythagorean Notebooks (*Pythagorikai hypomnēmata*). The title refers to a section in Diogenes Laertius' *Lives* (8.25-35) that summarizes Pythagorean doctrine. Diogenes' source was Alexander Polyhistor, whose own source was allegedly a set of notebooks written by the first-generation followers of Pythagoras. While the Notebooks were purported to contain the master's own teachings, they are generally to be considered pseudonymous, since the Pythagoreans typically discouraged the production of written tracts that could be used for mass consumption. That said, Pythagorean scholars tend to date the Alexander's source to around 300 B.C. (cf. Kahn [2001]: 75; Burkert [1961]: 27; Festugière [1945]). The Notebooks were certainly well established by the mid-first century B.C., and may have represented a source-text for those who approached the subjects of Pythagorean cosmology and eschatology. Of particular note is the brief eschatological section, where we are told that the impure (*τὰς ἀκαθάρτους*) are kept separate by the Furies in unbreakable bonds, while the pure souls (*τὰς καθαρὰς*) are allowed to ascend to the “uppermost region” (*τὸν ὑψιστον*) (Diog. Laert. 8.31). The scheme outlined appears to presuppose the permanent separation of soul from body resulting from either divinization or damnation. The “uppermost region” refers to the eternal and divine celestial aether, where all is immortal and eternal. If the soul resides there in its purified form, it would essentially have become an immortal god, no longer subject to death. Cf. Diog. Laert. 8.26-27: “The uppermost air is ever-moved and pure and healthy, and all within it is immortal and consequently divine. The sun, the moon, and the other stars are gods; for, in them, there is a preponderance of heat, and heat is the cause of life.”

figures in Roman history seems to indicate that a heavenly ascent is the reward for those who have lived an excellent life.¹²⁶

The scheme that Virgil follows in *Aeneid* 6 at first appears different; he locates the *sedes beatae* in the Underworld:

Hic manus ob patriam pugnando vulnera passi,
quique sacerdotes casti, dum vita manebat,
quique pii vates et Phoebos digna locuti,
inventas aut qui vitam excoluere per artes,
quique sui memores alios fecere merendo,
omnibus his nivea cinguntur tempora vitta. (*Aen.* 6.660-65)

Here are those who suffered wounds fighting for their countries, those who were chaste priests while alive, pious poets who spoke things worthy of Phoebus, those who ennobled life through the skills they discovered, and those who by their merits earned remembrance among men; the temples of all these were crowned with snow-white bands.

On the one hand, we can interpret the souls mentioned here as people who during their lives rose to the level of “sage,” in the sense we used above when discussing Posidonius. As noted in that section, this designation could include people who made noble contributions in politics, poetry, and the *artes* in general.¹²⁷ Virgil here adheres to the sentiment expressed by Posidonius when he glorified the “philosophers” who brought positive change to the world. However, in its basic elements, Virgil’s Elysium is the result of Pythagorean influence. It is clear that the souls who inhabit this region have achieved permanent release from the body. We can be certain of this based on the

¹²⁶ Cf. Williams (2003).

¹²⁷ Taken in the context of Virgil’s *oeuvre*, the emphasis is certainly on the moral and the political. Cf. Wallace-Hadrill (1982): 27: “*Mos*, as opposed to law, was what for Virgil’s Latinus or for Tacitus kept primitive man in his state of innocence. Augustus is seen as filling the role of Saturn in setting a shining example of correct behaviour, *mos*.”

literary precedent that Virgil follows most closely in this passage: the *Threnody* of Pindar cited above.¹²⁸ Beginning at 6.640, it is possible to establish a line-by-line connection:

Largior hic campos aether et lumine vestit
purpureo, solemque suum, sua sidera norunt. (*Aen.* 6.640-41)

Here a fuller *aether* clothes the fields in brilliant light, and they know their own sun, their own stars.

τοῖσι λάμπει μὲν μένος ἀελίου τὰν ἐνθάδε νύκτα κάτω,
φουνικορόδοις δ' ἐνὶ λειμώνεσσι προάστιον αὐτῶν... (Pind. fr. 129
[*Thren.*] 1-3)

For these the might of the sun shines during the night, and they have place before the city in meadows red with roses...

The only change Virgil makes to Pindar's poem is the reference to the second set of celestial bodies, a device that, as we have already seen, emphasizes Elysium's division from time and history. Virgil continues his imitation of Pindar:

Pars in gramineis exercent membra palaestris,
contendunt ludo et fulva luctantur harena;
pars pedibus plaudunt choreas et carmina dicunt. (*Aen.* 6.642-44)

Some exercise their limbs in the grassy wrestling ground, they contend in sport and grapple on the yellow sand; others beat dances with their feet and sing songs.

καὶ τοὶ μὲν ἵπποις γυμνασίοισι τε
τοὶ δὲ πεσσοῖς
τοὶ δὲ φορμίγγεσσι τέρποντα, παρὰ δὲ σφισιν
εὐανθῆς ἅπας τέθαλεν ὄλβος· (Pind. fr. 129 [*Thren.*] 6-9)

¹²⁸ Among scholarly interpretations of this section of the *Aeneid*, surprisingly few have noted the singular importance of Pindar in this section. Norden (1903): 288 recognized that “Die Möglichkeit [of Pindar’s influence on Virgil’s Elysium section] kann nicht bestritten werden,” particularly due to the “Die starke Betonung des agonistischen Sports.” He goes no further than this, however, and he does not discuss the potential thematic significance the allusion might have. Others have mentioned a possible connection, but only in passing; these include Solmsen (1968): 12 n. 29, (1972): 32; and Brenk (1999): 100-17. Molyviati-Toptsis (1994): 38, 43 is the only recent scholar to devote more than cursory attention to the possibility that Pindar informs not only the poetry but also the ideas at work in this section of the *Aeneid* (although she does not note fr. 129 or 133). She argues, as I do, that the eschatology of *Aeneid* 6 incorporates a specifically Orphic-Pythagorean conception of *lysis* from the cycle of incarnations, followed by divinization. Her hypothesis was roundly, and incorrectly, criticized by Torjussen (2008).

Some delight themselves with horses, some with wrestling, and others with draughts, and with lyres; while beside them blooms the fair flower of perfect bliss.

“Bliss” (ὄλβος) at the end of these lines is key, for it is used to describe the absence of toil that the blessed enjoy in Elysium. This becomes clear in the next fragment of Pindar’s *Threnody*:

ὄλβιοι δ’ ἅπαντες αἴσα λυσιπόνων τελετᾶν. (Pind. fr. 131a [*Thren.*])¹²⁹

...all blessed by the destiny of initiation freeing from toil.

“Toil” is to be understood in the Hesiodic sense, as the physical labor that humans have been forced to endure since their fall from an ideal state. The relation of this fragment to the myth of the Ages of Man becomes clear when we compare it to a passage from Pindar’s Second Olympian Ode:

ἴσαις δὲ νύκτεσσιν αἰεὶ,
ἴσαις δ’ ἀμέραις ἄλιον ἔχοντες, ἀπονέστερον
ἐσλοὶ δέκονται βίοντα, οὐ χθόνα τα-
ράσσοντες ἐν χερσὶ ἀκμᾶ
οὐδὲ πόντιον ὕδωρ
κεινὰν παρὰ δίαίταν, ἀλλὰ παρὰ μὲν τιμίαις
θεῶν οἴτινες ἔχαιρον εὐορκίαις
ἄδακρυν νέμονται
αἰῶνα, τοὶ δ’ ἀπροσόρατον ὀκχέοντι πόνον. (Pind. *Oly.* 2.56-67)

But having the sun always in equal nights and equal days, the good receive a life free from labor, scratching with the strength of their hands neither the earth nor the waters of the sea to obtain a scant livelihood. But those who willingly kept their oaths enjoy a life without tears among the honored gods, while the others undergo a toil that is unbearable to look at.

In the lines that open the section on Elysium, Virgil uses a number of similar words in close concentration to capture the semantic range of Pindar’s Good-Blessed (ἐσλοὶ-ὄλβιοι): *laetus, amoenus, fortunatus, beatus*. The inhabitants of this region lead the same

¹²⁹ In his reconstruction, Maehler places this line after fr. 129 (cf. Maehler [1989]: 118). For a discussion of these fragments and their ordering, see Lloyd-Jones (1985): 255-56.

existence afforded to the Blessed in Pindar's account, freed from all toil. Virgil shows this through the reference to sports, dancing, and music, and also by showing "lances fixed in the ground" and "unyoked steeds" (651-52).¹³⁰ The last image is in fact lifted from the endings of *Georgics* 1 (512-14) and 2 (541-42), where it functions as a symbol of release from strife and from toil. It also makes us recall the yoking of oxen that Virgil portrays as an acceptable practice in the temporal Golden Age, but which has no place in the true paradise described in *Eclogue* 4:

robustus quoque iam tauris iuga solvet arator; (*Ecl.* 4.41)

Now also the sturdy ploughman will loosen the yoke from his oxen.

In the *sedes beatae*, we finally see what Virgil considered to be the true Golden Age: a happy and everlasting life without work, which souls pass in childlike innocence.

We should also note that this blessed state completely preserves the soul's individuating characteristics for eternity, a fact that some have erroneously disputed.¹³¹ The identities of the blessed are imminently recognizable: Orpheus has his priestly garb and his lyre, Teucer and the ancient Trojans have their horses, their chariots, and their weapons, and Virgil pointedly mentions Musaeus by name. Here we must seek to correct what is an obvious textual problem at 6.739-47. The clear rapport between Virgil and Pindar, along with its thematic implications, makes it impossible to accept that 743-44 come before, and not after, 747.¹³² The idea that Elysium could be treated as a place of

¹³⁰ On the sports contests, cf. Norden (1903): 288.

¹³¹ Most notably Brenk (1999): 293.

¹³² To my knowledge, Goold is the only editor to have noticed this, in his 1999 Loeb Edition. He argues that in an early edition (perhaps that of Varius, cf. Donat. *Vit. Verg.* 39-40) 743-744 were omitted during copying as a result of homoeoteleuton with 748 (*per amplum—per annos*) and them mistakenly replaced after 742 *igni*, rather than 747 *ignem*. These lines were rearranged in their proper order in the 1479 edition by Parmensis, who also corrected a similar mistake at 8.654. (Goold [1999]: 584; cf. also 14 for the possibility that this error originated with Varius).

purgation in any ancient formulation is patently absurd and has no precedent. The removal of the “inbred taint” must follow directly the actual description of the punishment by fire and water, leaving us with:

Ergo exercentur poenis, veterumque malorum supplicia expendunt: aliae panduntur inanes	740
suspensae ad ventos; aliis sub gurgite vasto infectum eluitur scelus, aut exuritur igni;	
donec longa dies, perfecto temporis orbe, concretam exemit labem, purumque relinquit aetherium sensum atque aurā simplicis ignem.	747
quisque suos patimur Manes; exinde per amplum	743
mittimur Elysium, et pauci laeta arva tenemus;	744

Therefore they are schooled with punishment and pay the penalty for ancient crimes. Some hang, stretched out to the empty winds; from others stain of guilt is washed away in deep eddies or is burned off by fire, until at the completion of times cycle, length of days has removed the inbred taint, and left pure the ethereal sense and the fire of the simple aura. We each suffer our own punishment. From there we are sent to spacious Elysium, and a few possess the happy fields.¹³³

Following the incorrect ordering of these lines, Brenk was led to assert that those in Elysium are subject to Stoic “reintegration” into the *aether* (*apokatastasis*).¹³⁴ It is clear from Virgil’s description that the part of the universe in which Elysium is situated is not governed by Stoic cyclic principles, above all since the obvious inspiration behind the passage explicitly describes a release from cycles of recurrence. The reference to a higher order of heavenly bodies, which transcends those that govern the temporal world, cements this interpretation.

¹³³ The alternative gives the following nonsensical translation: “Therefore they are schooled with punishment and pay the penalty for ancient crimes. Some hang, stretched out to the empty winds; from others stain of guilt is washed away in deep eddies or is burned off by fire: each suffers his own purgation. From there we are sent to spacious Elysium, and a few possess the happy fields, until at the completion of times cycle, length of days has removed the inbred taint, and left pure the ethereal sense and the fire of the simple aura.”

¹³⁴ Brenk (1999): 115-17.

Virgil's citation of Pindar is the key required to illuminate the eschatology presented to us in the Underworld.¹³⁵ It is essentially Pindaric, and consequently old-Pythagorean.¹³⁶ There is the three-fold division of punishment—purgation—beatitude. Belief in reincarnation exists alongside a doctrine of *lysis* or release, through which the soul can obtain eternal happiness in the *sedes beatae*. This release follows the absolution of guilt by means of the purification described by Anchises. Here again the terminology (6.739, *veterumque malorum*; 744, *infectum scelus*; 746, *concretam labem*) is taken directly from Pindar. In fragment 133, which most likely comes from the same *Threnody* as fragment 129, he wrote,

οἴσι δὲ Φερσεφόνα ποιῶν παλαιῶ πένθεος
δέξεται, ἐς τὸν ὑπερθεὶν ἄλιον κείνων ἐνάτω ἔτει
ἀνδιδοῖ ψυχὰς πάλιν, ἐκ τᾶν βασιλῆες ἀγαυοί
καὶ σθένει κραιπνοὶ σοφία τε μέγιστοι
ἄνδρες αὔξοντ'· ἐς δὲ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἦροες ἀ-
γνοὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπων καλέονται (fr. 133)

But, for those from whom Persephone exacts the penalty of their ancient guilt, in the ninth year she again restores their souls to the sunlight above; and from these come revered monarchs, and men who are swift in strength and supreme in wisdom; and for the rest of time, they are called blessed heroes by men.

We have connected this to Orphic religious belief by means of a phrase inscribed on one of the Pelinna Gold Leaves:

Now you have died and now you have been born thrice blessed, on this day. Say to Persephone that Bacchios himself has released you. (P1)¹³⁷

¹³⁵ The comparisons shown here are convincing enough, I believe, to refute Thomas, who has said, “With the exception of Horace, Roman poets seem to show little interest in (or possibly little understanding of) Pindaric poetry.” Thomas (1983): 95.

¹³⁶ Solmsen sees the section as inspired by Orphism; we have already seen that at various times in its history Pythagoreanism was so similar to Orphism that it was virtually indistinguishable. Cf. Solmsen (1968): 11-12. Solmsen, speaking of the souls who inhabit Elysium, writes: “In fact, if one figure had a claim to head this august company, it would be the prophet who had shown his followers the road to salvation, and in spite of all justified warnings, I venture to suggest the name of Orpheus. For a scheme of the kind is actually found in the Sixth Book of Virgil's Aeneid.”

¹³⁷ Tsantsanoglou and Parassoglou (1987).

In chapter 3 of the present study, we noted in passing that Virgil's description of the *bugonia* ritual, which connects the origin of bees to the sacrifice of a bullock, can be interpreted as a metaphor for the Orphic conception of human existence. In the most common Orphic account, Dionysus, often associated with a bull, is killed and eaten by the Titans, whom Zeus in turn incinerates with his thunderbolt. Humankind rises from the ashes, and thus contains both the god's divinity and the taint of the Titans' crime.¹³⁸ Since the bees of *Georgics* 4 metaphorically represent humanity, we traced the sacrificial nature of human history back to this original crime.¹³⁹ Given the sum of what we have examined, it is now apparent that by paying the penalty for this, the souls who occupy the *sedes beatae* in *Aeneid* 6 have been released both from the tomb of the body and from history. This is made clearer by the simile Virgil uses to describe to souls that hover near Lethe, possessed by the dire longing (*dira cupido* at 721) to return to the prison of a body:

ac velut in pratis ubi apes aestate serena
 floribus insidunt variis, et candida circum
 lilia funduntur strepit omnis murmure campus. (6.706-9)

Even as when in meadows during the calm summer bees alight upon the various flowers, and stream around the white lilies, and the whole field resounds with their humming.

Virgil's choice of bees here is striking; there is no reason why one would associate *a priori* souls with the insects. Moreover, the when Homer used insects to describe large crowds, he primarily chose flies, most notably in the famous extended simile that

¹³⁸ Burkert (1972): 128 ff.

¹³⁹ Ch. 3 *infra*. Cf. Ross (1987): 189; Habinek (1991): 210-211; Hardie (2009): 51-52.

precedes the Catalogue of Ships in *Iliad* 2.¹⁴⁰ In that passage, Homer says of the Achaean warriors,

And they stood in the flowery meadow of Scamander, countless in number, as are the leaves and flowers in their season. Just as the many tribes of swarming flies buzz about the herdsman's pasture in the springtime, when milk wets the pails, such a number of long-haired Achaeans stood in the plain against the Trojans, eager to destroy them utterly. (*Il.* 2.467-73)

Based on the reference to flowers and meadows, it appears that Virgil's simile is yet another refiguring of a Homeric precedent to suit the thematic needs of the *Aeneid*. The souls in *Aeneid* 6 are compared to bees because they are about to reenter the sacrificial dimension of the temporal world.

Pindar also helps us to contextualize Virgil's view of historical progress in the eschatology of *Aeneid* 6. We have seen how fragment 133 supplements *Olympian* 2 by specifying when the final release of the soul from the body occurs. "Revered monarchs, and men who are swift in strength and supreme in wisdom" (Pind. *Oly.* 2.68-70) represent souls who are in their third and final incarnation, after which they will obtain a permanent place in the Isles of the Blessed. Above, we noted the inhabitants of Virgil's Elysium, who fit a similar description:

Here are those who suffered wounds fighting for their countries, those who were chaste priests while alive, pious poets who spoke things worthy of Phoebus, those who ennobled life through the skills [*per artes*] they discovered, and those who by their merits earned remembrance among men; the temples of all these were crowned with snow-white bands. (*Aen.* 6.660-65)

The last human incarnation of these souls represented the final rung on the ladder to godhood: by occupying the highest human forms and showing themselves to be "supreme

¹⁴⁰ Cf. also *Il.* 16.641-44, where in a similar formula the Achaeans are said to throng about the corpse of Sarpedon like flies.

in wisdom,” they are absolved from the penalty of their guilt (i.e. being condemned to occupy a body) and quit the physical world forever. These “blessed heroes” become, in Virgil’s account, the sages who occupy the *sedes beatae*; among these, cultivators of the political and moral *artes* featured prominently.¹⁴¹

In *Aeneid* 6 this region is located in the Underworld, in keeping with the generic constraints imposed by the epic tradition; however throughout his works Virgil syncretically associates eternal happiness with an ascent to the stars. Thus, by “spreading a victor’s laws among willing nations,” Augustus had “essayed the path to Olympus” (*Georg.* 4.560-62), thus the heavens opened the space between Virgo and Scorpio to welcome him as a god (*Georg.* 1.32-42). For the same reason, Apollo tells Iulus,

Macte nova virtute, puer, sic itur ad astra,
Dis genite et geniture deos. (*Aen.* 9.641-42)

Hail thy new valor, boy, both child and father of gods! Thus runs the way to the stars.

It is this conception of progress in history, inspired by Lucretius and Posidonius, that allows Virgil to bridge the divide between the two worlds of the *Aeneid*. In a sense, it connects the two Golden Ages as well: those who succeed at establishing the historical Golden Age are permitted to participate in the true, metaphysical one. However, it needs to be emphasized that *Aeneid* 6 presents a personal, not a universal or political, eschatology.¹⁴² The tension that results from this fact is related to the tension that we have observed in Virgil’s sacrificial conception of history, and together these create the

¹⁴¹ It is worth noting the similarity between Virgil’s eschatology and that of Cicero in the *Somnium Scipionis* (*Rep.* 6.13): *omnibus qui patriam conseruauerint adiuuerint auxerint certum esse in caelo definitum locum, ubi beati aeuo sempiterno fruuntur*. The relation of Cicero’s vision to what I consider “old” Pythagorean ideas is something that merits a study of its own. For the similarities, see Lamacchia (1964), Otis (1959): 170-71, and Molyviati-Toptsis (1994): 47.

¹⁴² Cf. Solmsen (1968): 14: “[Virgil] has given us a glimpse of another destiny of man which transcends his patriotic or historical mission, providing for his life a religious orientation.”

dramatic intensity of the poem's final six books. To understand how, we shall now turn to the last scene in Book 6, Aeneas' departure by the Gate of False Dreams.

4. The Parade of Heroes and the Gates of Dreams

One of the negative aspects of *Quellenforschung* is the tendency, when taken to its logical extreme, to reduce a text to merely the sum of its parts. No less a scholar than Norden was guilty of this when he attempted to explain the end of Book 6.¹⁴³ He cites Moschus' second Idyll, which recounts Europa's dream, and references an obscure Hellenistic belief that dreams occurring before midnight are false, while those that come after midnight are true. For all we know, Virgil did have this notion in mind. However, that would simply lead to another question: why did he have Aeneas leave the Underworld before midnight, when dreams are false? Certainly, he was not constrained to do so. Interpretations of the passage have generally taken two forms: those like Norden's, which see it as the result of some obscure and ultimately insignificant technicality;¹⁴⁴ and more recently, those who interpret it as a vaguely pessimistic commentary on Roman history and the Augustan "program."¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Norden (1903): 348-49.

¹⁴⁴ These interpretations appeared primarily in the earlier part of the twentieth century. Highbarger (1940) located the ivory gate at the Vestibulum Orci (6.273) where the false dreams are gathered on the elm tree; Aeneas leaves by the ivory gate because he must go out by the same gate wherein he entered. Rolland (1957) argued that Aeneas must exit by the ivory gate because he had left the golden bough in Elysium; lacking it, he needed to evade the watching Manes in order to get out. Ooteghem claimed that Aeneas had to leave by the ivory gate because he was not a true shade. These are some representative examples of a type of interpretation that, like Norden's, only describe dreams in general, while saying nothing about the scene's relation to Aeneas' experience of the Underworld. These ultimately underestimate the significance of this crucial passage and contribute little to our understanding of the poem.

¹⁴⁵ Among these are the members of the so-called Harvard School of Virgilian criticism. Clausen interprets the departure by the Gate of Ivory as having a negative meaning based on the material that precedes it. The fact that the parade of Roman heroes ends with the younger Marcellus leads Clausen to argue that in the *Aeneid* Virgil acknowledges Rome's achievements, but makes no pretenses regarding the suffering and loss that these entail. See Clausen (1964): 145-46: "Virgil values the achievement of Rome - there are those proud lines (6.847-53) in which he renounces every claim for Rome save that to imperial grandeur - and he

Certainly the pessimists have more to offer in this debate, and while in the present study I have advanced a largely non-pessimist interpretation of Virgil's portrayal of Augustan Rome, I believe that there is a grain of truth in the arguments of those who perceive a rather dark signification to the final scene of *Aeneid* 6. O'Hara's study on the prevalence of deceptively optimistic prophecies in the *Aeneid* makes brief note of Aeneas' departure by the Gate of False Dreams. He claims that it serves to align Anchises' Roman prophecy with the other "overly optimistic" prophecies of the *Aeneid*.¹⁴⁶ O'Hara does not pursue this observation any farther, and at first glance it would appear to be completely unsubstantiated. It is not easy to undermine historical fact, and everything shown to Aeneas by Anchises *did* materialize.¹⁴⁷ No one in Virgil's day would dispute the historicity of the figures we see in the Pageant of Illustrious Romans. But it is not, on the whole, a historical vision. Unlike the images on Aeneas' shield in Book 8, the Roman heroes do not appear in chronological order. Augustus appears immediately after Romulus and before Numa. Julius Caesar and Pompey are mentioned before those who conquered Greece. Beyond this point, the narrative loses all chronology, and we see (in order) Cato the Elder, Cossus, the Gracchi, the Scipios, and Fabius Cunctator. Then Anchises outlines the Roman mission, before showing to Aeneas

remains aware of the inevitable suffering and loss: it is this perception of Roman history as a long Pyrrhic victory of the human spirit that makes Virgil his country's truest historian." Boyle (1972), not a member of the Harvard School, argues that Virgil's use of *falsa* is meant to show that the Roman ideal of empire is a false hope that cannot be realized. This makes the human cost involved in the attempt to realize that empire all the more tragic and absurd. Tarrant (1982) comes closest to my view in arguing that the Gate of Ivory does have a negative effect, but only with regard to the physical world (not the contents of the vision of the Underworld): "...as a living person, Aeneas belongs to the corporeal realm and is tainted by its false emotions; the world from which he has come and to which he will shortly return is in this respect not more, but less real than that of the blessed spirits." A third sort of interpretation has been offered by West, who argues that Virgil's account of the Underworld is so heavily reliant on Plato that he adopts the Socratic pose of questioning the literal truth of myths regarding the afterlife. See West (1987); cf. *Phd.* 114d, *Resp.* 382d). Overall the argument is weak (there is no textual evidence in the passage to support it) and unproductive.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. O'Hara (1990): 171-72.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. West (1987): 14.

the older and younger Marcellus.¹⁴⁸ In addition to the lack of chronological order, Anchises leaves out many negative details of Rome's history, particularly those relating to internal conflict. Remus is never mentioned; Julius Caesar and Pompey are shown in harmony with one another, and Anchises mentions only the possibility of war between the two.

Molyviati-Toptsis notes the chronological inconsistency and the omission of certain details, and proceeds to make the same point that O'Hara implies: Anchises gives an overly optimistic narration of Roman history because he wants to ensure that Aeneas fulfills his mission.¹⁴⁹ This interpretation is interesting, but wrong, since Anchises shows no hesitation in expressing the full tragedy of the younger Marcellus' premature death.¹⁵⁰ But it does show us that in many ways, Anchises' prophecy does not reflect historical reality. In my view, Romulus, Augustus, and Numa are grouped together thematically, on the basis of their roles as "founders" of Rome (to resurrect Livy's term). The first founded the city, the second its *imperium*, and the third its religion. After these three (who stand thematically, and not chronologically prior), Virgil purposely jumbles the order of the rest, in order to emphasize that the vision occurs beyond history. The object of the narrative is not to give a diachronic account of the story of Rome; rather, it provides a synchronic description of Eternal Rome and the people who matter most in it. Earlier in this chapter, we saw how the "wormhole" technique used by Virgil to narrate Evander's sacrifice at the Ara Maxima makes one aware of an eternal reality.

Specifically, to perceive that reality one needs to somehow transcend the unique moment

¹⁴⁸ Servius also noted the confused order (*Ad Aen.* 6.756): *nam qui bene considerant, inueniunt omnem Romanam historiam ab Aeneae aduentu usque ad sua tempora summatim celebrasse Vergilium quod ideo latet, quia confusus est ordo.*

¹⁴⁹ Molyviati-Toptsis (1995): 650.

¹⁵⁰ Clausen (1964) is especially strong on this point.

in time that he currently occupies. From such a vantage point, one can understand history from the perspective of eternity: as a series of discrete historical instantiations that collectively form a timeless idea. The eternal vision that Aeneas took with him as he left the Underworld lost its truth value once he re-entered the temporal world.

This is the cosmic, timeless vision that Hardie unsuccessfully tries to locate on Aeneas' shield. We can now perceive that the tension inherent in history, which we have discussed so often in this chapter, is resolved in the timeless realm of Elysium. No image illustrates this better than that of the souls of Caesar and Pompey:

Illae autem, paribus quas fulgere cernis in armis,
concordes animae nunc et dum nocte premuntur... (*Aen.* 6.826-27)

Those souls you see, who gleam in their matching arms, in harmony
now and as long as they are confined by the night...

These two figures, instantly evocative of civil war, and by consequence of the sacrificial process of history, are at peace with one another precisely because in the Underworld they exist outside of time. When Aeneas leaves Elysium, he carries with him a vision that loses its meaning in the temporal dimension. What he had seen was true in the reality of mythical time, but manifestly false historically. Something similar is alluded to when Anchises says of Caesar and Pompey:

...heu quantum inter se bellum, si lumina vitae
attigerint, quantas acies stragemque ciebunt. (*Aen.* 6.828-29)

...alas, how great the war between them, if they achieve the light of
life, what battles and bloodshed they will incite!

These lines show us that the distinction between historical and eternal truth has a moral dimension, as well as an epistemological one. Anchises' formulation of the Roman

mission also loses something when Aeneas returns to the world above. To see what exactly this was, we turn once again to the death of Turnus.

VI. Conclusion: The Death of Turnus Revisited

We saw at the end of the previous chapter how the fundamentally sacrificial character of history made Turnus' death at the hands of Aeneas inevitable. While on its own this admission is bleak, its tragedy is intensified by the vision Virgil has provided of a dimension where such a necessity does not exist. This tragedy stems not so much from particulars, since Turnus did in fact deserve to die, if for no other reason than because he broke the truce. As Aeneas chases the fleeing Turnus during the climactic duel, Virgil emphasizes Turnus' culpability with a pointed citation of Plato's *Laws* on the ineluctability of justice in both life and death:

Quae nunc deinde mora est? Aut quid iam, Turne, retractas?
Non cursu, saevis certandum est comminus armis.
Verte omnis tete in facies et contrahe quidquid
sive animis sive arte vales; opta ardua pennis
astra sequi clausumve cava te condere terra. (*Aen.* 12.889-93)

What delay is there any longer? Why do you draw back, Turnus? We contend not in a race, but rather in hand-to-hand combat with savage arms. Change yourself into all shapes and gather up whatever you can of courage or skill; choose, if you will, to seek the lofty stars with wings, or to hide yourself in the hollow earth.

This—as we declare to the youth who fancies that he is neglected of the Gods—is the law of divine justice—the worse to the worse, the better to the better, like to like, in life and in death. And from this law no man will ever boast that he has escaped. Even if you say—‘I am small, and will creep into the earth,’ or ‘I am high, and will mount to heaven’—you are not so small or so high that you shall not pay the fitting penalty, either here or in the world below. (*Leg.* 905a, Jowett trans.)

By alluding to this passage, and by doing so just before the image of Pallas' belt inflames Aeneas' rage, Virgil shows in no uncertain terms that Turnus has merited punishment.¹⁵¹ What makes Turnus' death so troubling is the fact that it demonstrates the impossibility of ever realizing the true Golden Age on earth. As Aeneas contemplates being merciful in his moment of hesitation, he comes close to fulfilling his father's admonition. But when he is shaken out of this contemplative vacuum by the sight of the belt, which is above all a reminder (*monumenta*, 12.945) of the past, we are confronted again with the cold reality of time and history. Aeneas has an obligation, conditioned by *pietas*, to that past.¹⁵² But his use of the word *immolat* (12.949) show us that there is a future dimension to the act as well. Sacrifice is *for* something, and Turnus' death is demanded by the future, as the parallel with Palinurus indicates.¹⁵³ He is a sacrificial victim, but the sacrificant is not Aeneas, nor in actuality is it Pallas; it is history.

The interpretation that I have offered of the role that Pallas' sword belt plays in Aeneas' killing of Turnus largely ignores the famous image depicted on it. This is intentional: as a *monumenta doloris*, it is not so much the scene of the Danaids that impels Aeneas to kill Turnus, as it is the mere fact that the belt had been worn by Pallas. Aeneas emphasizes precisely this:

Ille, oculis postquam saevi monimenta doloris
exuviasque hausit, furiis accensus et ira

¹⁵¹ The passage from the *Laws*, taken in the context of the whole dialogue, also makes reference to reincarnation (on which cf. Saunders [1973]: 233 ff.), which perhaps explains Virgil's reference to that process when he has Aeneas say "Change yourself into all shapes..."

¹⁵² Cf. *Aen.* 11.176-79, where Evander says to Aeneas,
Vadite et haec memores regi mandata referte:
quod vitam moror invisam Pallante perempto,
dextera causa tua est, Turnum natoque patrique
quam debere vides.

¹⁵³ Nicolls observation is instructive here: like Palinurus, Turnus exemplifies a mindset (one that places excessive emphasis on *fortuna*) that has no place in the Augustan world. Cf. Nicolls (2001): 196; cf. also chapter 3 *infra*.

terribilis, “Tunc hinc spoliis indute meorum
eripiare mihi?” (*Aen.* 12.945-48)

[Aeneas], after his eyes had drunk in the trophy, the reminder of cruel grief, on fire with rage and terrible in his wrath: “Are you to be snatched away from me, clad in the spoils of my own?”

Within the narrative of this climactic scene, the sword belt functions simply as a reminder that Turnus had killed Pallas, which recalls to Aeneas the grief he had felt at that moment, along with his duty to “his own.” The image of the Danaids is there primarily for *us*, Virgil’s readers. This image has become one of the more vexing issues in Virgilian scholarship, and I shall not attempt to “solve” the problem here.¹⁵⁴ However, two important interpretations of the Danaid myth existed in Virgil’s time, and these help us to conclude our analysis of sacrificial action in the poem.

On the one hand, the myth of the Danaids contains an example of mercy, which would have been readily translatable to the Julian notion of *clementia* that Anchises alludes to in the Underworld. Scholars tend to agree that Aeschylus’ Danaid trilogy was the most readily available source for Virgil’s reception of this myth.¹⁵⁵ The only surviving portion, the *Supplices*, treats the Danaids’ appeal to Pelasgus to protect them from Aegyptus and his fifty sons, whom they were being forced to marry.¹⁵⁶ While the other two parts of the trilogy are lost, we know that the Danaids were ultimately forced to marry the sons of Aegyptus, and that all but one, Hypermestra, followed Danaus’ order to

¹⁵⁴ Harrison (1998) offers an excellent survey of scholarly opinion on the issue.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Harrison (1998) and Keuls (1986). Often noted in support of this claim is the strikingly Aeschylean tone of *Aen.* 10.501-502: *Nescia mens hominum fati sortisque futurae et servare modum, rebus sublata secundis.*

¹⁵⁶ The basis of the Danaids’ appeal to Pelasgus is their common mythical descent from Io. This reflects the Argive aspect of the story which is also potentially important in our reading of the last scene in the *Aeneid*. For Turnus’ Argive ancestry and for the Argive origin of Ardea, see *Aen.* 7.371-72, 410; 10.76, 618-20. For further discussion of the significance of this motif, see MacKie (1991): 263-65, and Buchheit (1963): 113.

kill their bridegrooms.¹⁵⁷ The murderous Danaids fit into a typically Aeschylean pattern, where a violent action in the first play of a trilogy begets another violent action in the second. Victimized by violence in the *Supplices*, the Danaids become its perpetrators in the *Aegyptii*.¹⁵⁸ Through her mercy, Hypermestra brings about an end to this cycle.¹⁵⁹ A poem of Horace, written shortly after the dedication of the Temple to Apollo (and thus during the years when Virgil was composing the *Aeneid*) emphasizes the heroic mercy of Hypermestra, and demonstrates that this was a plausible reading of the myth during the period:

me pater saevis oneret catenis,
quod viro clemens misero peperci,
me vel extremos Numidarum in agros
classe releget:

i pedes quo te rapiunt et aurae,
dum favet nox et Venus, i secundo
omine et nostri memorem sepulcro
scalpe querelam.' (*Carm.* 3.11.45-52)

Let my father bind me in cruel chains, for I, merciful, have spared this wretched man; let him ship me away, even to the furthest reaches of Numidia: go where your feet and the breeze takes you, while night and Venus grace us, go with my blessing, and as remembrance carve on my tomb this sad tale.

These two pieces of evidence indicate that in the first century B.C., reference to the Danaids was capable of evoking the merciful act of Hypermestra, and it seems highly probable that Virgil was aware of this aspect when he chose the myth as the decoration

¹⁵⁷ For a reconstruction of Aeschylus' *Danaid* trilogy (which included the *Supplices*, the *Aegyptii*, the *Danaides*, as well as the satyr play the *Amymone*) see Winnington-Ingram (1961).

¹⁵⁸ An observation well expressed by Winnington-Ingram (1961): 141-42: "The victims of violence in the *Supplices* become violent agents in the sequel, for violence breeds violence, hubris breeds hubris. Even in the *Supplices*, for all their claims to *sophrosyne*, the Danaids showed a potentiality of violence. There they threatened to kill themselves rather than submit to wedlock: in the outcome they kill their bridegrooms. Thus the themes of $\beta\acute{\iota}\alpha$ and $\upsilon\beta\rho\iota\varsigma$ prominent in the *Supplices*, were carried over into the later plays."

¹⁵⁹ This appears to have led to her acquittal in the *Danaides*, where she responds to the charge of impiety for having disobeyed her father. On this, and on Hypermestra's motivation for sparing her husband, see Winnington-Ingram (1961): 147-50.

on Pallas' belt. Indeed, Conte's observation that the belt is an image of *mors immatura* hints at a sort of murderous circularity that could be stopped by an act of mercy.¹⁶⁰ If the image of the Danaids reminds us at the moment of Pallas' death that his life was cut off prematurely, does it not have a similar effect when worn by Turnus (particularly in light of the Argive connections)? But in the epic's final scene, it is this image that ironically turns Aeneas *away* from *clementia*, and towards *ultio*.

It is here that we can properly formulate an evaluation of the moral character of Aeneas' killing of Turnus. It was noted earlier that the effective difference between "pure" and "impure" violence is shown to be negligible with regard to the inexorable progress of history.¹⁶¹ The unwitting sacrificant Pyrrhus is in essence as much an agent in the creation of Rome as Aeneas is when he consciously immolates Turnus. But we cannot assume a moral equivalence between Pyrrhus' and Aeneas' actions. In the Augustan period, the Danaid myth was most obviously associated with vengeance and justice. We saw in chapter 4 that the statue group in the portico of the Temple of Apollo Palatinus was an allusion to the moral order of the Apollonian (and by consequence the Augustan) world, where no crime could escape punishment. Virgil's reference to the similar notion in Plato's *Laws* establishes this dimension in the climactic duel between Aeneas and Turnus.¹⁶² Aeneas has no agency, *per se*, in determining whether his killing of Turnus is a sacrifice or not:

"Pallas te hoc volnere, Pallas
immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit." (*Aen.* 12.948-49)

¹⁶⁰ Conte (1986): 185-95.

¹⁶¹ For this, see the discussion of Hardie (1993) and Girard (1977) in the introduction to this chapter.

¹⁶² Cf. n. 151 *supra*.

He abandons himself to the sacrificial process of history, in an act that represents the culmination of his development into a viable *auctor* in that process. Still, the image of the Danaids shows us that Aeneas' action was not one of senseless violence or intentional *scelus* (as was the case for Pyrrhus), but rather one of *ultio* based on *pietas*. This distinction redeems Aeneas' act of vengeance and situates it within the nexus of terms that Augustus himself would later adopt in his forum. Of course, *ultio* is not unproblematic in itself, as the common juxtaposition with *clementia* (both in this passage from the *Aeneid* and in the Forum of Augustus) indicates. Ultimately, its necessity is a function of the problematic, sacrificial character of history, and as such represents a sort of "fallen" virtue that accompanies temporal existence, as emphasized by the tension between Anchises timeless call to *clementia* and the action demanded of Aeneas in a historical moment. It is precisely this awareness of the moral cost involved in sacrifice that makes Aeneas' killing of Turnus "virtuous."

However, as noted, the act itself has an importance in the scheme of history that is independent of Aeneas' intention. Had he operated from the same motivation as Pyrrhus, who was consciously impious when he killed Priam, what actual difference would there have been? Both of these murders are ultimately explained by the sacrifice of Palinurus, random and arbitrary. Regardless of the moral character of the sacrificant, the sacrifice will take place, and it will have its effects. In the final scene of the *Aeneid*, Aeneas' motivation only serves to intensify the hope that such virtue will be rewarded by a release from the basically cruel necessity of history.

Chapter 6

Conclusion: Nostalgia and Hope

Virgil was not alone among first-century Roman poets in alluding to the existence of separate historical and eschatological Golden Ages. There is evidence from Augustan poetry that the literary culture of the period was aware of the fundamental impossibility of utopian visions, or as discussed in chapter 1, “immanent eschatologies.” The third poem in Tibullus’ second book of Elegies is imbued with pessimistic longing for a return to the innocence of the Saturnian Golden Age. Tibullus has accompanied his patron, M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus, en route to the east (perhaps as the latter went to assume his command of Syria in ca. 29 B.C.), but has fallen ill and is forced to disembark at Corcyra. The central section of the poem laments the necessity of sea travel that originated with the end of the Saturnian age:

quam bene Saturno uiuebant rege, prius quam
tellus in longas est patefacta uias! (Tib. 1.3.35-36)

How well they lived under the reign of Saturn, before the earth was
opened to distant voyages!

From here Tibullus launches into a description of the Golden Age that makes reference to several of the stock images we saw in the previous chapter. Pine trees had not yet been cut down to build ships (37-38), and commerce, particularly between distant lands, did not yet exist (39-40). Labor did not yet exist: bulls had yet to be put to the yoke and horses were still untamed (41-42), and nature provided all the sustenance that humans required (45-46: oaks that sweated honey and ewes who offered their milk-laden udders willingly to shepherds). Peace reigned throughout the world: houses had no doors, presumably because crime was non-existent (43-44), and war did not yet exist (47-48). All this came to an end with the reign of Jove, which Tibullus describes in extremely negative terms:

nunc Ioue sub domino caedes et uulnera semper,
nunc mare, nunc leti multa reperte uia est. (1.3.49-50)

Now under the dominion of Jove, death and wounds come unceasingly;
now sea-travel, now so many sudden ways to die.

Tibullus contrasts the debased Jovian age with the afterlife, of which he gives an account reminiscent of that found in Pindar's poetry. In Elysium, the earth put forth cassia and roses of its own accord, and the blessed souls who live there are wreathed with garlands.¹ Meanwhile the Danaids receive the famous punishment shown on the relief in the Porta Maggiore basilica, and Tityus and Tantalus suffer the same fates that Virgil describes for them in the *Aeneid* (6.595 and 602-3). These inhabit the *sedes scelerata*, an epithet that has tremendous significance with regard to both the *scelus—pietas* trope in the literary tradition, and to Virgil's *sedes beatae*. In short, Tibullus' afterlife is

¹ Tib. 1.3.58-62. Cf. Pind. fr. 129 [*Thren.*] 1-3, "For these the might of the sun shines during the night, and they have place before the city in meadows red with roses..." (see chapter 7 *infra*); also Pind. *Ol.* 2.74, "With wreaths and garlands of flowers they entwine their hands..."

conceived in Pythagorean terms, just like Virgil's. As Virgil also did, Tibullus construes the eschatological reward of the virtuous as a *palingenesis* in the scheme of the Ages of Man. His Elysium is a lover's paradise, in keeping with the overall theme of his *Elegies*, but the allusion to Pindar's Second Olympian Ode also shows it to be a recapitulation of the Saturnian Golden Age.²

The sentiment expressed in this poem is essentially the same as that which we find in Horace's Sixteenth Epode. There too the true Golden Age is shown to exist across a divide that can be traversed only by means of a radical transformation of nature. The premise of the poem is clearly intended to be read ironically: Horace addresses a hypothetical Roman civic assembly and suggests that the solution to the misery of the civil wars is to relocate the populace by boat to the Islands of the Blessed. Life there is again described in the terms of the Golden Age:

...arva beata
petamus, arva divites et insulas,
reddit ubi cererem tellus inarata quotannis
et inputata floret usque vinea,
germinat et numquam fallentis termes olivae
suamque pulla ficus ornat arborem,
mella cava manant ex ilice, montibus altis
levis crepante lympa desilit pede.
illic iniussae veniunt ad mulctra capellae
refertque tenta grex amicus ubera
nec vespertinus circumgemit ursus ovile
nec intumescit alta viperis humus;
pluraque felices mirabimur...(Hor. *Ep.* 16.41-53)

The fields, the happy fields let us seek, and the Prospering Isles, where the untilled land yearly produces Ceres' bounty, and the vineyard flourishes with no pruning, and the branch of the never-failing olive blossoms, and the dark fig adorns its native tree, from the hollow oak flows honey, from the high mountains gentle waters trickle down in a murmuring stream. There unbidden come the she-goats to the milk-

² Cf. Pind. *Ol.* 2.70-71, in which context the above quotation is set: "...to the tower of Cronus, where ocean breezes blow around the Island of the Blessed."

pails, and the friendly flock returns with stretched udders, nor does the bear growl about the sheep in the evening, nor does the deep earth swell with snakes; these and many more things shall we marvel at...

With its biting irony, this poem somewhat resembles Swift's *A Modest Proposal*; it is patently ridiculous to even entertain the idea that all the problems of human existence could be solved simply by getting on a boat. Horace heightens the absurdity through the mock-seriousness of the proposal's setting, and also through the idea of sea-travel itself. As we saw in chapter 5 and in Tibullus' poem above, navigation of the sea was considered to be an evil development of the debased ages. In the Sixteenth Epode, Horace emphasizes the idea that one must sail to the Isles of the Blessed. He cites the famous story from Herodotus of the Phocaeans, who loaded onto a ship and moved to Corsica rather than suffer Persian domination.³ The proposed Roman voyage is described as one final, necessary trip, after which seafaring will be forbidden by an oath.⁴ Horace asks the Romans to vow never to return to Italy unless a long list of bizarre portents occurs. Some of these portents are brilliantly ironic reversals of the utopian motifs found in the other Golden Age accounts:

novaque monstra iunxerit libidine
mirus amor, iuuet ut tigris subsidere cervis,
adulteretur et columba miluo,
credula nec rivos timeant armenta leones
ametque salsa levis hircus aequora. (*Ep.* 16.30-34)

[when] a miraculous desire shall unite monsters by a novel lust, such that it will please tigers to mate with hinds, and the dove be polluted with the kite; such that the trusting herds will not fear the pale lions, and the he-goat, now grown refined, will love the salt sea.⁵

³ Hor. *Ep.* 16.17-22, citing Herod. 1.165. Cf. Harrison (1989): 273.

⁴ Hor. *Ep.* 16.25-24.

⁵ Cf. Virg. *Ecl.* 4.22: *nec magnos metuent armenta leones.*

At the close of the poem, Horace cites three notorious examples of people who voyaged everywhere, but never reached the Isles of the Blessed: the Argonauts, the Phoenicians, and Ulysses' fleet. All three of these groups lacked the necessary piety to reach this paradise, as Horace indicates in the last four lines:

Iuppiter illa piae secrevit litora genti,
ut inquinavit aere tempus aureum,
aere, dehinc ferro duravit saecula, quorum
piis secunda vate me datur fuga. (*Ep.* 16.63-66)

Jupiter set apart these shores for a pious people, when he debased the golden age with bronze; with bronze, and then with iron he hardened the ages, from which there will be a happy escape for the pious, according to my prophecy.

The reference to piety in these lines hints at the only real solution to the misery of Horace's audience: death. "Sailing to the Isles of the Blessed" functions here as an ancient analogue to the modern "following the Road to Glory"; it is a euphemism for dying. The reward for the pious in death is Elysium, and Horace implies that this is the only Golden Age troubled Romans of the civil war period could find.⁶

In my discussion of *Eclogue* 4 in chapter 4, I considered the poem in terms of the sources that inform Virgil's conception of an Apollonian *ultima aetas*, which represents a sort of *palingenesis* to an idealized, pristine mode of human existence. Such an analysis operates within the framework of a scholarly tradition that Nisbet has described as a debate between "Easterners" and "Westerners."⁷ The "Eastern" tradition, beginning in modern times with Norden (but essentially stretching back to the various Christianizing

⁶ Cf. Hes. *Erg.* 168 ff.: "But to the others father Zeus the son of Kronos gave a living and an abode apart from men, and made them dwell at the ends of earth. And they live untouched by sorrow in the Islands of the Blessed along the shore of deep swirling Okeanos, happy heroes for whom the grain-giving earth bears honey-sweet fruit flourishing thrice a year, far from the deathless gods, and Kronos rules over them." (Evelyn-White trans.)

⁷ Nisbet (1978).

interpretations of the Middle Ages) seeks to read Virgil's poem as a fundamentally mystical and religious piece, inspired by messianic ideas that originated primarily in the East.⁸ It is opposed to the position that Nisbet calls "Western," which generally argues for the Hellenic and Hellenistic inspiration of the poem, and mostly denies the mysticism or messianic sentiment argued for by the Easterners. Nisbet shows that *Eclogue* 4 can be adequately interpreted without much reference to sources outside of the western literary and philosophical tradition, to which Virgil had easier access. At the same time, he hints that globally, the Easterners may offer better readings of the poem as a whole.⁹ While he does not elaborate much on this point, I take it to imply that the tendency of the "Westerners" to locate direct historical and political references in the poem's imagery grossly ignores the fundamentally mystical speculation that comprises the poem's true *raison d'être*. In light of the evidence we possess, we ought not to assume that this speculation has anything to do with Eastern messianic prophecy, but this admission does not exclude the possibility that the poem takes a Western approach to similarly speculative and mystical problems. Horace's Epode potentially validates such an interpretation. It was composed at the same time as Virgil's Fourth Eclogue, and the rapport between the two poems is unmistakable.¹⁰ The order of their appearance is disputed,¹¹ but my belief is that the question of chronology is immaterial: the two poems

⁸ Nisbet (1978): 47.

⁹ Nisbet (1978): 74 n. 144: "Yet there is also much to criticize in the Westerners' underestimation of this supremely beautiful poem."

¹⁰ Cf. Ryberg (1958): 116-17; Wimmel (1953); Snell (1938): 340-41; Witte (1922): 14 ff. Ryberg calls the two poems "companion pieces."

¹¹ Büchner believed that Horace's poem was written first, and that Virgil's eclogue was a hopeful reply to the seemingly desperate Epode. His basis for this claim is the belief that such a biting response from Horace to Virgil could not have been conducive to the lifelong friendship shared by the two. Cf. *RE* 8.1204-6. The anteriority of *Eclogue* 4 has been argued by Ryberg (1958), Snell (1938), and Witte (1922). In any case, these commentators believe that whether Virgil's or Horace's poem came second, the later work was composed in reaction to the first.

are complementary rather than reactionary. The irony of Horace's poem allows us to understand that the regeneration described in the Fourth Eclogue is conscious hyperbole when applied to a political and historical event. Was Virgil, who in the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid* shows such a profound awareness of the limitations of temporal existence, so oblivious to the obvious absurdity of an "immanent eschatology," of which Horace bitingly wrote at the same time? In the end, *Eclogue 4* is perhaps best understood as alluding (in more cheerful fashion) to the same irony that informs *Epode 16*. In different ways, both poems hint at the place where humans are to find true and final bliss. Implicit in each is the fallacy of looking for a political solution to problems that are far more profound and existential.

All three poets would later acknowledge that humanity could arrive at a new Golden Age; however, all three also show that this new age would be of a different order than the *Saturnia regna*. Instead, it would arrive under the guidance of Apollo, and would entail no radical transformation of human nature. In chapter 4, we saw how both Horace's *Carmen Saeculare* and *Carmen 4.15* depict a new, blessed age whose continuation is dependent on morality and religious observance. Tibullus also speaks of an Apollonian Golden Age in Book 2 of his *Elegies*. The poem's opening address to Phoebus is striking in light of the negative characterization of the *regnum Iovis* in *Elegy 1.3*:

sed nitidus pulcherque ueni: nunc indue uestem
sepositam, longas nunc bene pectus comas,
qualem te memorant Saturno rege fugato
uictori laudes concinuisse Ioui. (Tib. 2.5.7-10)¹²

But come shining and fair: now put on your choicest garment, now
comb well your flowing locks, come as they recall you to have been

¹² Cf. Tib. 1.3.49: *nunc Ioue sub domino caedes et uulnera semper...*

when you sounded the praise of victorious Jove, with Saturn chased
from his throne.

It is probably significant that the poem is in the form of a prayer for Messalinus, the son of Messalla, on the occasion of his installation into the college of the *XVviri sacris faciundis*, who were in charge of interpreting the *libri Sybillini*. As discussed in chapter 4, Apollo was considered the source of the Sibyl's prophetic power, and it was by means of a rediscovered Sibylline prophecy that Augustus could mark the arrival of the Apollonian *saeculum* with a performance of the *Ludi Saeculares*.¹³ Tibullus' poem recounts the prophecy that the Sibyl gave to Aeneas about the foundation of Rome, either at Cumae or while he was still in the Troad.¹⁴ We are given a glimpse of the site of Rome at the time of the prophecy, which Tibullus describes using terms uncannily similar to those found in *Aeneid* 8. Cows grazed on the Palatine; the *arx* was covered with thatch-roofed huts. Then, almost incredibly, he introduces bucolic imagery,¹⁵ which shows us that at this moment, Rome is in the midst of the primitive, pre-Saturnian state described by Virgil:

Lacte madens illic suberat Pan illicis umbrae
et facta agresti lignea falce Pales,
pendebatque uagi pastoris in arbore uotum,
garrula siluestri fistula sacra deo,

¹³ Cf. chapter 4 *infra*.

¹⁴ I shall presently suggest that Tibullus may have relied on Virgil's version of the Aeneas myth in *Elegy* 2.5, or perhaps rather that the two poets collaborated. Cairns has argued that Tibullus actually refers to a Sibyl in the Troad (rather than the Cumaean Sibyl) in order to better praise Messalinus. He says that Tibullus wished to assert the antiquity and prophetic authority of the collection of oracles that Messalinus would work with, gathered primarily from Erythrae in 76 B.C. (cf. ch. 4 *infra*). There was no need for Tibullus to "enhance" the Erythraean collection, as Cairns puts it: this collection was comprised of Erythraean oracles precisely because it was believed that she had become the Cumaean Sibyl. However, I do believe that the meeting between Aeneas and Sibyl is shown by Tibullus to take place in the Troad, a detail that Cairns says must derive from a Hellenistic source. The language that describes the meeting indicates that Aeneas was still within sight of Troy as the Sibyl gave him the prophecy, made all the more difficult to believe because he saw his city in flames (19-22). This detail seems to indicate that it was Virgil who innovated by placing the encounter at Cumae. Cf. Cairns (1979): 75-76.

¹⁵ On the bucolic imagery, cf. Cairns (1979): 80-81.

fistula cui semper decrescit harundinis ordo:
nam calamus cera iungitur usque minor. (2.5.27-32)

There lay Pan beneath the ilex' shade, drenched with milk, and wooden
Pales, shaped by rustic knives, and there hung on a tree the prayer of a
roving shepherd, and the chattering pipe sacred to the woodland god,
the pipe whose row of reeds becomes ever shorter: for each reed joined
by wax is smaller than the last.¹⁶

When Tibullus speaks glowingly of the Jovian age, he is in fact expressing an anti-
primitivist opinion. The sentiment is also found in the Sibyl's prophecy, where she warns
that this idle existence is about to come to an end:

carpite nunc, tauri, de septem montibus herbas
dum licet: hic magnae iam locus urbis erit. (2.55-56)

Graze now, bulls, the grass upon the seven hills, while it is still
possible: for here will be the site of a great city.

Tibullus next describes the period of civil war using a list of portents and prodigies
(2.5.67-78), which Apollo puts an end to:

haec fuerant olim: sed tu iam mitis, Apollo,
prodigia indomitis merge sub aequoribus. (2.5.79-80)

These things have been in the past: but you, Apollo, having now
become gentle, have buried these prodigies beneath the untamed seas.

Apollo's victory ushers in a new, agricultural Golden Age. The wreaths and garlands that
crowned the blessed in Elysium in *Elegy* 1.3 now adorn tables and goblets at a rustic
festival. As in the earlier description, the only serious business left will be love. Only at
the end does Tibullus return to the genre of love elegy, playfully begging Apollo to make
weapons disappear, so that Cupid would no longer need to carry his bow and arrows. But

¹⁶ Cf. *Aen.* 8.314-18:

Haec nemora indigenae fauni nymphaeque tenebant
gensque virum truncis et duro robore nata,
quis neque mos neque cultus erat, nec iungere tauros
aut componere opes norant aut parcere parto,
sed rami atque asper victu venatus alebat.

even here, the prayer begins on a serious-sounding note (2.5.105-6): *pace tua pereant arcus pereantque sagittae*, “in your peace may bows perish, and let arrows perish too.” This is the Augustan Golden Age that Virgil alludes to in the *Georgics* and *Aeneid*, that Horace glorified in his fourth book of odes, and that Augustus himself prayed for at the *Ludi Saeculares*.

Tibullus’ poem is remarkable, both in itself and because of the remarkable rapport that exists between it and Virgil’s poetry (especially the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid*). The details that he provides of the Aeneas myth, which was by no means consistent prior to the fame of the *Aeneid*, are strikingly consistent with those shown by Virgil.¹⁷ As Virgil does within the *Georgics* (especially between Books 2 and 3, as we saw in chapter 3), Tibullus revises the pessimism he had expressed earlier. Tibullus constructs a new, Apollonian Golden Age that represents the furthest advance of human progress, just as Virgil did.¹⁸ This was also the claim Augustus wished to make for himself in the visual program of his forum.¹⁹ Tibullus shows us that Virgil was not alone in the way he interacted with both his tradition and with his contemporary world, and the similarities between the two poets indicate that this may have been a shared endeavor. The poetry of Virgil, Tibullus, and Horace also shows that the *palingenesis* of the Saturnian Age was in fact a literary trope meant to signify an eschatological transition from this existence to the next. Tibullus in particular, with his description of the Underworld in *Elegy* 1.3, shows evidence of having been influenced by the same philosophical and religious sources as Virgil, particularly Pythagoreanism.

¹⁷ On the origins of the Aeneas legend, see Cornell (1995): 63-67; also Perret (1942).

¹⁸ Cf. chapter 5 *infra*.

¹⁹ Cf. chapter 4 *infra*.

Over the course of this study, we have discussed Virgil's interaction with various optimistic and pessimistic views of time and history. I have chosen to conclude with a brief analysis of Tibullus' and Horace's poetry because it shows how these currents of thought played an important role in the broader intellectual culture of Augustus' Rome. We can now see the opposite extremes in attitude that a poet could assume when expressing his generalized worldview. He could be unflinchingly pessimistic, as Horace is in his Sixteenth Epode; or he could be unabashedly optimistic, as Virgil is in his Fourth Eclogue. A comprehensive approach to these poetic accounts of the Golden Age, conducted with an eye for the intricate allusiveness by which they operate, shows that these extreme voices are either ironic or hyperbolic, and almost never sincere. Ultimately, Virgil, Tibullus, and Horace all acknowledged that the world could get better given the right circumstances, and above all through the agency of someone who could properly guide society. Their persistent pessimism stems from the belief that this person could not effect a radical change in the nature of the world. As we saw in chapter 4, this is what Augustus' propaganda also showed: while he was quite willing to acknowledge the capability of his agency, there was the implicit admission that his Golden Age would not be transcendent.

Two things set Virgil apart from his contemporaries. First, more than any other voice from the first century, he emphasizes that the tragedy of human existence is specifically a function of time. Time in Virgil is a great paradox. It can certainly be constructive, especially if we look at the arc of progress in human history, but one way or another, time also inevitably means death and decay for mortals, as he says so movingly in the *Georgics*:

Optima quaeque dies miseris mortalibus aevi
prima fugit; subeunt morbi tristisque senectus
et labor, et durae rapit inclementia mortis. (*Georg.* 3.66-67)

The fairest times of life are the first to flee for wretched mortals; there comes sickness, and sad old age, and toil; and finally the mercilessness of harsh death takes them away.

Virgil's way of presenting his own visceral reaction to this paradox was to apply to it the Stoic idea that history is essentially a conflagration, resulting in the full realization of the fiery, intelligent *logos*. Similarly, his longing for an escape from the process of history found a natural means of expression in the older, eschatological form of Pythagoreanism that we find in Pindar's poetry. It is this aspect of Virgil's poetry that many have described as pessimistic. But it should be clear at this point that pessimism is the wrong word, since it literally signifies the belief that the future will be worse than the past. The better term for what Virgil felt is *nostalgia*, literally "the painful longing to return home." Thus in the *Aeneid*, final happiness and the true Golden Age are represented by the soul's return to its divine and timeless origins in the Underworld.

The second element that distinguishes Virgil's poetry from that of his contemporaries is the idea that one's contribution to humanity's progress can effect this escape from history. Like *Iustitia*, who for both Virgil and Aratus ascended to the heavens after cultivating the *artes* among human beings, Augustus would rise among the stars after his death as a reward for his accomplishments in the temporal sphere.²⁰ The same principle is at work in Elysium, where the souls of the Blessed enjoy final beatitude as a reward for their contribution to the perfection of history. Thus the objection of Norden and Otis discussed in chapter 1, that the mythological story of Rome has no meaningful connection to the philosophical conception of the *sedes beatae*, is unfounded.

²⁰ *G.* 1.32-4.

The true meaning of the Roman story can only be understood in its relation to universal history and to the process of time itself. The famous Romans of *Aeneid* 6, Aeneas, and Augustus himself, are shown to be agents of progress in the realization of the Roman ideal, insofar as it is possible in the temporal world. Virgil shows what Augustus himself would later admit: such progress is by no means a given, and its accomplishment requires both the right people and the cooperation of the gods. Just as the term “pessimism” is misapplied to the tragic elements of the *Aeneid*, the relative certainty in a better future implied by “optimism” has no place in Virgil’s view of history; the more apt word is “hope.” The *Aeneid* is at once a poem of hope in the possibility of historical improvement, and of longing for the true perfection that the soul once enjoyed, and which it might obtain again.

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