EMOTIONS AND THE DEATH OF TURNUS IN VERGIL'S *AENEID* 12

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The study of emotions has become a very popular subject over the last few years, in many areas of research. Certainly, in Classics a number of key publications have contributed hugely to our attempts to come to grips with this profoundly complex topic[1]. One prominent line of approach has been to explore similarities and differences in the perception of the phenomenon of emotions themselves from a diachronic perspective. For example, to try to clarify whether "Roman" anger is the same as "Greek" anger, whether there is any such thing as one particular kind of anger that can be located within a particular national (or differently defined) entity over an extended period of time, and how to trace any cross-cultural developments through time, in the hope, ultimately, of establishing how far ancient experiences, perceptions and definitions differ from what we today commonly think of as emotions.

One main problem in this area is, of course, the simple fact that we do not have any native speakers of the ancient languages. It is thus often difficult to establish the exact meanings of particular terms. All we can do is to seek answers in the texts, to compare these texts, and to see what we can extract from them. Our next problem is that all these texts date from a period stretching, on a well-established time frame, from Homer to Isidore of Seville. Furthermore, the quantity of lost texts is enormous, even if "new" texts continue to be found and published. And the

[1] *E.g.* Susanna MORTON BRAUND and Christopher GILL (eds.), *The Passions in Roman Thought and Literature*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997; William V. HARRIS, *Restraining Rage. The Ideology of Anger Control in Classical Antiquity*, Cambridge and London, Harvard University Press, 2001; Robert A. KASTER, *Emotion, Restraint and Community in Ancient Rome*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2005; David KONSTAN, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2006; John T. FITZGERALD (ed.), *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought*, London and New York, Routledge, 2008.

distribution of texts over the centuries is by no means equal. For certain periods we can base our judgments on considerably more material than for others. Finally, we must be aware at all times of falling into the trap of assuming cultural connection and continuities, based on naïve assumptions about the communality of emotional experience.

At this point, the task may seem impossible. But, with all these caveats in mind, it is possible, and important, to investigate the portrayal of emotions in ancient literary texts. One text in particular has been at the centre of recent work in this field, and that is Vergil's *Aeneid*, and in particular, the epic's closing scene, the killing of Turnus by Aeneas. Our reading of this famous passage will reflect differing approaches to the text. It is not our aim to promote any kind of scholarly consensus. Maybe the open ending of book 12 indicates that it was not consensus that Vergil wanted to establish. Perhaps he intended to invite his reader to ask all the right questions. This suggestion is, needless to say, somewhat speculative and rests ultimately on individual reading experiences. But we will adduce some ancient material that supports our claim. In addition, of course, we hope to emphasize the absolutely central importance of this text for anyone interested in the study of emotions in Roman literature.

Vergil describes the death of Turnus in this way (12.938-52):

stetit acer in armis
Aeneas uoluens oculos dextramque repressit;
et iam iamque magis cunctantem flectere sermo
coeperat, infelix umero cum apparuit alto
balteus et notis fulserunt cingula bullis
Pallantis pueri, uictum quem uulnere Turnus
strauerat atque umeris inimicum insigne gerebat.
ille, oculis postquam saeui monimenta doloris
exuuiasque hausit, furiis accensus et ira
terribilis: 'tune hinc spoliis indute meorum
eripiare mihi? Pallas te hoc uulnere, Pallas
immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit.'
hoc dicens ferrum aduerso sub pectore condit
feruidus; ast illi soluuntur frigore membra
uitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras.

In deep suspense the Trojan seem'd to stand,
And, just prepar'd to strike, repress'd his hand.
He roll'd his eyes, and ev'ry moment felt
His manly soul with more compassion melt;
When, casting down a casual glance, he spied
The golden belt that glitter'd on his side,
The fatal spoils which haughty Turnus tore

> From dying Pallas, and in triumph wore.
> Then, rous'd anew to wrath, he loudly cries
> (Flames, while he spoke, came flashing from his eyes)
> "Traitor, dost thou, dost thou to grace pretend,
> Clad, as thou art, in trophies of my friend?
> To his sad soul a grateful off'ring go!
> 'T is Pallas, Pallas gives this deadly blow."
> He rais'd his arm aloft, and, at the word,
> Deep in his bosom drove the shining sword.
> The streaming blood distain'd his arms around,
> And the disdainful soul came rushing thro' the wound
> (Trans. John DRYDEN).

The importance of the baldric of Pallas to the unfolding of the action and to the anger of Aeneas is immediately obvious. However, consideration of the various levels on which Aeneas' glance at the armour functions invites readers into a spiral of vertiginous complexity, as amply reflected in scholarly disagreement over interpretation of the text's ultimate meaning[2]. For example, the role of Pallas is a key element in the large-scale thematic pattern linking Aeneas' final act in the epic to the killing of Turnus by Achilles in revenge for the death of Patroclus in Homer's *Iliad*[3]. But from appreciation of the much-debated Homeric intertext, we must also make the jump to the architecture of Augustan Rome, and to consideration of the fact that the Danaids were depicted in a portico adjacent to the temple of Apollo on the Palatine. Furthermore, the reader must also relate the scene to examples of ecphrasis earlier in the poem, especially those in which Aeneas is presented as a viewer of scenes from Greek 'myth', such as the scenes depicted in Dido's temple of Juno and the temple of Apollo at Cumae (1.453-493 and 6.14-41).

[2] See Nicholas HORSFALL, *A Companion to the Study of Virgil*, Leiden, Brill, 1995, pp. 192-216, for discussion. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the contributions to this volume, we have kept bibliographical annotation to a minimum. Most scholarly discussions now take their starting point from Karl GALINSKY, "The Anger of Aeneas", *AJP* 109, 1988, pp. 321-348. Those interested in taking their reading further should consult Horsfall's survey, the papers in MORTON BRAUND and GILL, *op. cit.* n.1, Michael PUTNAM, "Virgil's *Aeneid*", *in* John M. FOLEY ed., *A Companion to Ancient Epic*, Malden M.A./Oxford, Blackwell, 2005, pp. 452-475; Niklas HOLZBERG, *Vergil. Der Dichter und sein Werk*, Munich, C.H. Beck, 2006, pp. 204-210 and Wolfgang POLLEICHTNER, *Emotional Questions. Vergil, the Emotions, and the Transformation of Epic Poetry*, Trier, Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, forthcoming. Chapter 9 of the latter book was one of the starting points for this paper.

[3] See Georg N. KNAUER, *Die Aeneis und Homer*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979[2] [1964].

All of these elements or connections have been used in one way or the other to promote particular interpretations of the text. For many years this debate turned on such terms as 'Augustan' and 'anti-Augustan', 'optimistic' and 'pessimistic', 'Harvard-school' and 'European'[4]. More recently, it is specifically the anger of Aeneas and its philosophical background which have become the focus of attention, but in the end the aim of most critics is either to establish a strong closural reading which explains and essentially justifies Aeneas' action or to promote a more open reading of the text which allows space for reactions which can be traced anywhere along a line running from mild concern about the motivation of the action to downright moral condemnation of the hero. Ultimately, any new attempt at a closer reading of the text is likely to reveal yet further levels of complexity, creating greater heat but – most likely – no more light. It is our aim in this paper to propose a reading of the passage based on Stoic theories of emotion, while at the same time pointing to those aspects of the text which will be seen by many either as suggesting other interpretations or as disproving that reading. It will not be possible, given the space available, to cover every aspect of the text and acknowledge every angle of interpretation, but we hope to be able to show how profound scholarly disagreement over the meaning of this scene and its function in the epic as a whole is ultimately a reflection of one important function of the text: the investigation of emotional responses in early Augustan Rome. Seen thus, Vergil's *Aeneid* may be taken as a key text for anyone interested in studying the history of emotions.

We will look first at some of the complexities arising from attempts to interpret Vergil in Homeric terms. There is no doubt that the anger of Achilles and his killing of Hector are obvious points of comparison. Subsequently, we will look in more detail at Vergil's presentation of the anger of Aeneas and the ways in which it resonates within the *Aeneid*. Finally, we will offer a Stoic reading of the emotion of anger, while illustrating alternative approaches.

I.

Wounded, Turnus is seen wearing the piece of armour he had taken from Pallas. This reminds Aeneas of what really happened back in book 10, when Turnus mistreated the corpse of his fallen enemy and scorned and laughed at Pallas' father (10.490-509). Subsequently, Pallas' father, Evander, asked Aeneas for vengeance for this son in book 11 (152-181). It is this mixture of influences that explains the following words (12.947ff.):

[4] *Cf.*, *e.g.*, the remarks of Karl GALINSKY, *BMCR*, 2008 06.29.

> *tune hinc spoliis indute meorum*
> *eripiare mihi? **Pallas** te hoc vulnere, **Pallas***
> ***immolat** et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit.*

The acting person in this scene is on one level presented as Pallas, not Aeneas himself. Two goals are thus achieved: first, Aeneas can be seen as not filling the role of the Homeric Achilles; and more importantly, the moment of vengeance may be interpreted as a sacrificial act. By using the word *immolat* and the anaphora of Pallas Aeneas sets in motion a whole series of cross-references and creates implications which must be explained.

Aeneas, first of all, aligns himself with the young prince Pallas. The reader will remember that after having heard of his death, Aeneas had looked for young enemies to sacrifice at the burning of Pallas' corpse. In turn, we must also pay attention to an additional Homeric precedent for Turnus becoming a ritual victim. Achilles captures twelve young Trojans and throws them into the fire of Patroclus' funeral pyre (*Il*. 18.336f.; 21.27f.; 23.175f., 181f.). Interestingly, their death is described as ποινή – blood price – for Patroclus' death. While the corpses of the twelve Trojans are eaten up by the fire, Achilles himself says that he does not want to make Hector's corpse a funeral offering for Patroclus (*Il*. 23.182f.). The dogs are supposed to eat it. But Aphrodite and Apollo see to it that Hector's corpse remains untouched (*Il*. 23.184-191) so that Priam subsequently can get the corpse back. This nexus ties together Aeneas' anger, the penalty Turnus has to pay, and the ritual killing of Turnus. Aeneas is fulfilling his duties towards Pallas and Euander in a more justifiable way than Achilles. Aeneas treats his opponent in a way that is markedly the opposite of how Achilles had treated Hector. After all, we do not hear anything about how Aeneas treats the corpse of Turnus. But how to make sense of the complex links similarities and differences between Aeneas and Achilles?

On the one hand, Aeneas seems to be just like Achilles here. And Achilles is a brutal warrior. Already in *Il*. 18.336f. he promises to kill twelve young Trojans in honour of Patroclus. The feeling that accompanies this intention and the deed is deep anger as Achilles himself tells us (χολωθείς). Speaking from the author's point of view, Homer does not approve what Achilles has in mind. In *Il*. 23.176, when Achilles with his own hand kills the twelve Trojans and throws them into Patroclus' pyre, Homer says that Achilles intended to do "bad" things: κακὰ δὲ φρεσὶ μήδετο ἔργα. This Homeric phrase does not *necessarily* entail a moral judgment on the part of the poet, but it surely offers one way of interpreting Achilles' gesture. Aeneas follows this epic precedent and captures

four young enemies for the funeral pyre of Pallas (*Aen*. 10.517-520) in anger (*ardens, Aen*. 10.514), and sends them with the *pompa funebris* to Euander with the clear intention that they are to be sacrificed (*Aen*. 10.519f.: *inferias quos immolet umbris*. *Cf*. *Aen*. 11.81-84, esp. 81f.: *quos mitteret umbris / inferias, caeso sparsurus sanguine flammas*). Unlike Homer, Vergil interestingly refrains from any judgment of this deed and intention. He does not prejudge what Aeneas does, even if clearly this practice was regarded as a horrific custom by the time of Vergil. On the other hand *cf*. Suetonius' report on human sacrifices that were allegedly ordered by Augustus in honor of Julius Caesar: *Aug*. 15. At any rate, a hero of Achilles' times has to follow a different code of behaviour. But subsequently, Aeneas goes on to kill numerous enemies in an extraordinary fit of violent rage, in his attempt to get to Turnus on the battlefield (10.510-605).

The capture of the victims for Pallas, is followed by a key scene in which Mago pleads for his life (*Aen*. 10.521-536). When Mago goes so far as to hint that Aeneas could make much money out of sparing his life (526-529), there is a link to the scene between Menelaus and Adrastus in *Iliad* 6 where Adrastus, a Trojan, promises money to Menelaus in case he spares his life (46-50). But on that occasion, Agamemnon and Nestor come and remind Menelaus of his real duties, namely to fight and kill enemies. In turn this scene is important for *Aeneid* 12 and the exchange between Turnus and Aeneas. Turnus does not attempt to bribe Aeneas, but maybe there is, in Homeric terms, an obligation on Aeneas' part to kill his enemies, not to spare them.

On the other hand, and on another view of the poem's close, the words of Anchises at *Aeneid* 6. 853 must surely resonate at the climactic moment: *parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*. Or again, it may be argued that Anchises' advice, couched in terms meaningful for a historically distant Roman audience, are irrelevant to the Homeric and Trojan context of the second half of the epic. (Aeneas nowhere seems to act in light of the revelations offered him by Anchises' speech in book 6 or Vulcan's shield in book 8. Vergil himself says in the end of book 8 that Aeneas does not understand the pictures on his shield (730). And as it is the case with other prophecies as well, Aeneas seems to be particularly stubborn when it comes to following their advice.)

Dramatically of course, the heroic Aeneas has a mind of his own. He himself explains why he executes Mago. Unlike Menelaus, Aeneas does not need anyone else to do his thinking for him. Turnus, by killing Pallas, has made it impossible to strike any deals regarding ransom for captives. In *Iliad* 6 Agamemnon pointed out that Menelaus had not been treated mercifully by the Trojans and Nestor directed Menelaus' attention to the fact

that Troy needed to be destroyed first and booty taken later (*Il*. 6.56f and 70f). For Aeneas, booty does not count at all. The death of Pallas is marked as the step too far, the violation that cannot be reversed. Mago, just like Turnus in the end of the *Aeneid*, reminded Aeneas of his own father and of being Iulus' father (*Aen*. 10.524). Aeneas, however, is convinced that the members of his family would decide (*sentit*) not to accept any ransom for prisoners under the present circumstances (*Aen*. 10.534). Aeneas poses in this case already as somebody who executes a sentence that was allegedly decreed by his family's ancestors and by his son (*Aen*. 10.534):

> *Hoc patris Anchisae manes, hoc sentit Iulus*.
>
> So judges the shade of my father Anchises. And so judges Iulus
> (Trans. David WEST).

As far as the ancestors of Aeneas are concerned, it is clear that they are of course dead, like the Pallas who is said to be the author of Turnus' death sentence. Just as in Pallas' case, dead people and also the interests of his son are the reason for Aeneas to kill in this instance. And we can observe that Aeneas has a reason to kill Mago that is beyond pure self-interest or simply a result of emotional distress.

This explicit recourse to Mago's own speech (*Aen*. 10.534 answers 524f.) remains important for Turnus' death. Again, Aeneas transfers the authority to decide finally between the death and life of a defeated enemy to a third party. And again, there are strong reasons for interpreting his words and act in the terms set by Homeric precedent. When Aeneas says that Pallas himself sacrifices Turnus (*Aen*. 12.548f.), this statement counters Turnus' plea to Aeneas to think about Daunus and Anchises. Daunus was Turnus' father, Anchises the father of Aeneas. What Turnus wants is, of course, to point out that Achilles, after having slain Hector, had a visitor in his tent, Priam, the king of Troy and father of Hector. But Turnus' allusion is factually wrong: Daunus is not the king of the city he claims to be defending; Latinus is playing that role.

Turnus should also have thought of Euander. He had even insulted him instead of paying heed to the question of his own father's reaction to his son's death. On many levels, Turnus has failed and has done nothing to deserve to be spared; quite to the contrary (*Aen*. 12.949, *poenam* ***scelerato*** *ex sanguine sumit*). Mago, who wanted to bribe Aeneas in order to save his life, is killed as a suppliant in *Aen*. 10.521-536, according to the regular pattern of behaviour in the *Iliad*. Aeneas needs to emerge from this Homeric background, just as we are obliged by the poem's intertextual strategies to see him within in. The more 'civilized' or Roman his behaviour, the more remarkable it seems.

This is, however, not the only element from the final scene that we can also find in book 10. It's not in the same scene, but in the immediate vicinity. For, the explicit idea of making sacrifices returns in the next scene. Aeneas 'sacrifices' (*immolat*) Haemonides at *Aeneid* 10.541. This death, however, is told by Vergil in six verses only. No emotions are brought to bear here. The scene itself is uneventful in this regard and only in combination with the surrounding killing scenes, is it meaningful for the portrayal of Aeneas' emotions. Looked at from this perspective, Turnus' death marks the end of this series of ritualized killings following the death of Pallas.

This connection between books 10 and 12 raises a crucial point concerning the interpretation of Vergil's intertextual strategies at the end of the poem. We have been tracing some of the ways in which the reader is obliged to interpret Aeneas' final act in Homeric terms. But appreciation of the connections between, for example, the killings of Mago, Haemonides and Turnus brings to the fore the role of intratextual currents, so that the reader must be prepared to allow word and actions from within the poem itself to affect reactions to the death of Turnus. For example, we must look at the Turnus who cuts off the heads of slain enemies and decorates his chariot with them while these heads are still dripping blood (*Aen*. 12.511f.) as a Cacus-like figure in this regard (*Aen*. 8.195-197).

There is no parallel for this kind of behaviour in Homer or Apollonius Rhodius. An immediate Roman reaction probably would be that people who are *crudeles in bello* should not be spared (Cicero, *de off*. 1.35), but it is difficult to see how the force of the poem's intratextual memory can be ignored.

II.

The striking presentation of the killing Turnus as a sacrificial act is part of a strategy by which Vergil sets his Aeneas apart from other epic heroes. But, the question remains, why Vergil does this.

First of all, we need to take due note of the fact that Vergil portrays Aeneas as acting in extreme anger, *furiis accensus et ira / terribilis* (12.946f.) This aspect, naturally, has sparked major controversy among scholars. For some readers, Aeneas is thus reduced to the same level as many other actors in the text. Others, ask how one thinks a hand-to-hand combat is fought. Numerous passages from all epic poems that deal with killings in combat, including the Aeneid itself, show that it is normal to be acting in an aggressive mood while fighting, and the attitude is easily traced in antiquity. Plato, for example, at *Laws* 731b, says that a wrongdoer cannot be punished without some emotions on the side of the pun-

isher: τοῦτο δὲ ἄνευ θυμοῦ γενναίου ψυχὴ πᾶσα ἀδύνατος δρᾷν ("*And this no soul can achieve without noble passion*" Transl. Robert G. BURY). Perhaps fighting in cold blood is possible only in modern times with modern technologies. On the other hand, having explained the presence of *ira* in the verses mentioned above with some commonplace philosophy, a more detailed argument rooted in the thinking of antiquity may be assembled

First of all, the very origins of Turnus anger in the poem comes from the Fury Allecto herself, in book 7. She fires up Turnus' anger and causes him to fight against Aeneas in the first place (*Aen*. 7.445-474). If Aeneas' acts *furiis accensus*, and it is accepted that we may be unsure whether to read *furiis* or *Furiis* at 12.946, the goddesses of revenge are present from the beginning to the end of Turnus' life in the poem. On the one hand, this reminiscence of book 7 may be though to justify Aeneas' act, since it fits into an ever-present thematic pattern based on gigantomachy, by which the forces of Olympus (cf. *coruscat* at *Aen*. 12.919, assimilating Aeneas' final spear-throw to Jupiter's thunderbolt) must always defeat the manic violence of the underworld. On the other hand, the similarities between the fiery anger of the two men may be thought to offer a way of assimilating Turnus and Aeneas, or at least making it harder to distinguish them in any clear-cut way. At this point, it will be objected by some that the adjective *pius* is the characteristic epithet of Aeneas throughout the poem.

Such epithets are part of epic convention, but already in Homer we see that epithets are quite often used in a way that supports the general plot. The same is the case with Aeneas' here, where his final act may be seen as an act of piety towards Evander. Through the very fact that Aeneas is executing a sacrifice here, we see his *pietas* in its most clear-cut form. For others, of course, the emphasis must be on the ironic fact that *pietas* creates the logic on which violent slaughter may be justified. Here too, close attention to the actual vocabulary chosen by Vergil is vital. In a context of Aeneas' violent anger and Turnus' death-wound, which is placed precisely, *sub pectore*, is it possible to avoid recalling the poem's opening? There Juno's anger (*Aen*. *iram*, 1.4; *irae*, 1.11; *irarum*, 1.25) means that she harbours an eternal grudge, *aeternum servans* ***sub pectore*** *vulnus* (1.36), before the pun on Achilles' Iliadic *menis* in her opening words ***men****(e)* ***in****cepto* (1.37) reinforces the relevance for the *Aeneid* as a whole of the *Iliad*'s exploration of epic anger. For some readers of the poem this kind of approach is meaningless, for others, it is a natural way to read the poem's based on appreciation of its dense intratextuality and Vergil's self-allusive style.

Another example is to hand. The verb used of Aeneas' final blow is *condit* (*Aen*. 12.950). Is it an act if irrelevant association to wish to relate

this verb to its double use at *Aeneid* 1.5, *dum* ***conderet*** *urbem*, and 33, ***condere*** *gentem*? If we wish to make the connection, what may it signify? Again, should we seek assimilation or differentiation? Is it more important to see Turnus' death as the event which finally ensures the founding of Lavinium and the subsequent coming to be of the Roman people? Or is it necessary to admit that in the Roman consciousness the foundation of Rome is always linked to an act of killing, and that in Aeneas and Turnus we see shades of Romulus and Remus? Is the sacrificial act to be seen as restorative and constructive, or merely another act of violence in a never-ending series?

III.

Given such radically opposed interpretative strategies, one's head spins. But a relatively straightforward reading which was clearly accessible to contemporary Romans may solve many of the problems. On the one hand, the final scene makes clear why Aeneas kills Turnus. Aeneas himself tells Turnus the reason why he is killed: Pallas' death demands Turnus' death, which in turn may be seen in straightforward Stoic terms. Seneca in *de ira* 1.12 (*dial*. 3.12) discusses at length the reactions of a man to the sight of his father being murdered and his mother being raped (*dial*. 3.12.1):

> *Quid ergo? – inquit – vir bonus non irascitur, si caedi patrem suum viderit, si rapi matrem?*
>
> "What then?," he said, "A good man does not begin to feel angry, were he to see his father being slaughtered and his mother raped?"

Seneca denies that a man will be confused by his emotions, but will in fact kill the murderer of his father because of his *pietas* (*dial*. 3.12.1f):

> *Quid autem times, ne parum magnus illi stimulus etiam sine ira pietas sit? … Pater caederetur, defendam; caesus est, exsequar, quia oportet, non quia dolet.*
>
> But why are you afraid that piety would not be a great enough stimulus for him even without anger? … I would defend my father if he were attacked; is he slain, I will avenge him, because the obligation exists, not because it hurts.

In what follows after that passage, Seneca undertakes to show the need for an approach to avenging one's father's murder out of a sense of loyal duty with foresight, using judgment and acting voluntarily, not

under the impulse of some outside force. Of course, Seneca writes a few decades after Vergil. We do not have significant primary sources written by Stoic authors in Rome from the time of Vergil. Yet, parents, as is significant for Aeneas' avenging Pallas, are in this regard no different case than other human beings to whom we are attached in some way or another. Friends belong in that group as well (*dial*. 3.12.5):

> *Irasci pro suis non est pii animi, sed infirmi; illud pulchrum dignumque, pro parentibus, liberis, amicis, civibus prodire defensorem ipso officio ducente, volentem, iudicantem, providentem, non impulsum et rapidum*.
>
> To start feeling angry for one's family is not the sign of a pious mind, but of a weak mind; it is good and becoming to go forth as the defender for one's parents, childrens, friends, and citizens as it is required by one's obligation and as somebody who wants to do it, with judgment, with foresight, not impulsively or hastily.

Seneca introduces a feeling of *pietas* as a stimulus that will make us avenge our loved ones. Of course, he rejects indiscriminate anger as the appropriate reason for revenge, if it is just an excuse for one's submission to emotions or is valuing each loss as weighing equally heavily, regardless of the lost good (*dial*. 3.12.3f.). As the general statement that Seneca puts into Theophrastus' mouth shows (*Irascuntur boni viri pro suorum iniuriis*. Good men get angry over injuries done to the members of their families), Seneca argues against what normally in his time was considered to be a matter of common sense. But Seneca says that this approach often leads to the opposite result of the one desired in anger (*dial*. 3.12.5):

> *praerapida* [*sc. ira*] *et amens, ut omnis fere cupiditas, ipsa sibi in id in quod properat opponitur.*
>
> Overly hastily and insanely, as almost every desire behaves, it [sc. anger] poses an obstacle for itself towards the very thing it is aiming at.

Seneca wants the son to achieve his goal. *Pietas* with foresight, so to speak, is better than anger with unexpected consequences.

In this context, it is important to ask whether Aeneas is acting hastily when he kills Turnus. At first, Turnus' words seem to sway his opinion. Like Menelaus in *Iliad* 6, but for different, morally better reasons, Aeneas is inclined to spare Turnus. Then the baldric enters the stage. Vergil does not explicitly tell us how much time Aeneas needs from seeing the baldric to killing Turnus. The only indication that some time

elapses in between is the verb *hausit*. On the other hand, this word shows that Aeneas' attention is completely taken by what he sees. And after Aeneas has taken a good look at the baldric, he kills Turnus while speaking (*dicens* 12.950), and the verdict is couched in sacrificial vocabulary. Does Aeneas, even under great emotional distress, act as a good man who instinctively – by predisposition – knows what is best?

IV.

It is time to come to a conclusion. Many people have found reason to quarrel with Vergil over the design of his last and final scene of his *Aeneid*. One reason is, we think, the absence of an independent kind of independent judgement. Aeneas is in a sense legal counsel, presiding judge, and executioner at the same time. Admittedly, in our time where international war crime tribunals and courts have been established repeatedly, Aeneas' behavior seems to be outdated. But in Seneca too, the one who killed the father dies without having been allowed an independent trial. Many people today would regard this kind of "justice" as a criminal act[5]. Seneca apparently did not. Rather, he introduces piety as the moral authority to which punishment of a murderer is owed. Emotions, if "applied" correctly, justify themselves, and lead to morally high ends.

For decades now, the end of the poem has been read by many in terms of binary oppositions such as optimism and pessimism, Augustan and anti-Augustan. There should be not any doubt that this debate has sharpened sensibilities and significantly improved the level of the debate. It may be the case, however, that the approach based on reader-response, however formulated, has been allowed to go unexamined for too long.

Perhaps for a moment we should stop trying to find the right way to explain the correct philosophical framework within which to situate the anger of Aeneas. Instead, maybe we should allow its full force to the complexity of the text and appreciate that it is the text which is asking difficult questions. Given the brilliant primacy accorded by Vergil to the themes of anger and revenge at this key moment in the epic, and given the text's overall implication in the contemporary Augustan world and the post-civil war context in which revenge was a central issue, the issue may not be whether the text is Augustan or not, Stoic or not, optimistic or not, but whether faced with this text we as readers are Epicurean, Stoic,

[5] Anecdotally, experience from our seminars indicates that this is the case. There is always at least a slight majority in favour of Turnus when the students are asked whether their gut feeling says that Aeneas' behaviour can be justified.

Augustan or optimistic? Intense scholarly disagreement is partly a function of the questioning nature of the poem.

In antiquity it was a normal procedure to take Homeric epic poetry as the basis for moral education in school. The answers to all questions could be found in his epic poems. The exegesis of many passages was easy, because, for example, Odysseus' arrogant and overly curious behavior towards Polyphemus was punished even in the *Odyssey*. But by not indicating what the outcome was in the case of Turnus' death and presenting us with the such an abrupt end, Vergil seems to avoid giving answers and to encourage us to ask questions instead.

Moving again from Homer to the Augustan world, those two great axes on which so much on this poem turns, we must allow that this text is both a product of its age and a searching investigation into one of the key narratives of its *Princeps*, a man whose grip on power was being consolidated even as Vergil composed his epic and who worked with both the possibility of clemency and the threat of revenge in the years after Actium. Ultimately of course, it was the latter which he was to emphasize at a crucial moment (*Res Gestae* 2): *Qui parentem meum iudicaverunt, eos in exilium expuli* ***iudiciis legitimis ultus*** *eorum facinus…*'. Just as Augustus proclaims, '*I drove into exile the murders of my father and avenged their crime by lawful proceedings*', so many Romans will have interpreted the end of the *Aeneid*. The ancient meaning of those lawful proceedings does not need to be identical with our understanding of what constitutes "lawful proceedings"[6]. At any rate, Augustus' intention becomes clear: perhaps he wanted to answer what may have been either contemporary or later popular concerns about how he avenged Caesar's death. Augustus apparently worked on his *res gestae* until he died and therefore maybe wrote chapter 2 like Seneca also many years after Vergil had passed away.

As moderns, we may be happy with that historicized reaction and lay emphasis on Augustan peace, justice and order, or we may also allow ourselves to reflect that the very terms on which such a judgment is based reflect at least some of the causes of the tragic convulsions of the decades through which Vergil lived his life. As examples in the modern world show, the processes of reconciliation following civil conflict demand a subtle balance on all sides about what it is necessary to remember, and what it is better to forget: at least for the moment.

[6] This becomes apparent from our other sources about Augustus' claim. See, e.g. John SCHEID, *Res gestae divi Augusti. Hauts faits du divin Auguste*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2007, p. 30.