Who’s afraid of Turnus?

When we read the *Iliad*, we do not feel obliged to belittle Hector on the pretext that he will be ultimately defeated by Achilles. Not only do we recognize that he is fully entitled to defend his Trojan homeland against the Greek invaders, but we have no problem admitting that he surpasses his winner morally, and that he deserves anything other than the cruel death the latter inflicts to him. So why, when we read the *Aeneid*, are we measuring our admiration to Turnus, and are we seeking every opportunity to disparage him, to the point that, if Virgil happens to show him a little bit of empathy, we are prone to consider that as a fault? It is clear for example that in the ninth book the poet has spared nothing to guide the reader’s sympathies towards the unfortunate opponent of Aeneas, to the point that T. E. Page could write that “although Aeneas is Virgil’s hero, still his natural feelings seem to be with Turnus, and almost in spite of his will, he makes him the more interesting figure.”¹ In other words, despite all his efforts to please the sponsor of his poem, namely the emperor Augustus, Virgil would have failed to stifle his own preferences, his own *studia*.² In short, a partial artistic failure³ coupled with a moral fault, that of putting his inner muse at the service of a freedom-destroying regime: the verdict is hardly flattering for the Mantuan poet, but we should nevertheless resign ourselves to accept it if we remain in the logic of the traditional analysis, which views the *Aeneid* as a work of Augustan propaganda. However, this representation is not a fatality. If, taking the clue from M. Vipsanius Agrippa, we realize that Virgil uses a kind of “double writing”, *cacozelia latens*, in order to mask his real thinking under a politically correct appearance, then we might be able to reconcile Virgil with himself, without the need to oppose his consciousness to his subconscious⁴.


³ So Miss Rhona Beare, “Invidious Success: Some Thoughts on *Aeneid* XII”, *Proc. of the Virgilian Society*, 69 (1964-65), p. 30: “I fear that the attempt to glorify success because Augustus was successful has led Virgil to lose sympathy with his own hero, etc.”

⁴ Suet.-Don., *Vit. Verg.*, 44: *M. Vipsanius a Maecenate eum [Vergilium] suppositum appellabat nouae cacozeliae repertorem non tumidae nec exilis, sed ex communibus urbis atque ideo latenis*, The standard translation (D. Wilson-Okamura) reads as follows: “Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa would complain that he was put under the yoke by Maecenas in order to invent a new kind of affectation, neither bombastic nor overly humble, but constructed
Let us recall briefly what was the situation in Latium before the arrival of Aeneas. Book VII offers us the image of a harmonious and prosperous kingdom enjoying the benefits of a deep peace (*longa... pace*, 46), and whose continuity was guaranteed by the engagement of Lavinia, the only daughter of the old king Latinus, with Turnus. This young prince, heir to the Rutulian throne, is gifted of the finest qualities, both physical and moral, and supported by the unanimous favor of his people (v. 473-74):

\[ Hunc decus egregium formae mouet atque iuuentae, \]
\[ Hunc atau reges, hunc claris dextera factis. \]

“Some men were moved by his youth and his strikingly uncommon beauty, / Some by his kingly ancestry, some by his prowess in battle.”

Aeneas comes at the head of his Phrygians, organized as a veritable army. He clearly declares his intentions: he comes to take possession of this territory that, in his view, rightly belongs to him because one of his ancestors would have been Italian, and also because the fates have decided so (*fatis mea debita tellus*, 120, "land owned me by the fates as a debt due"). One would think that these exorbitant claims would face strong opposition from Latinus, but not at all, quite the contrary.

The old monarch, suffering from acute megalomania, imagines that he heard a mysterious voice which promised him universal empire if he married his daughter to a foreigner (v. 96 ff.). Actually, as Amata, the queen, points out to her crazy husband, Turnus might himself be considered as a foreigner, since he was the direct descendent of Inachus and...
Acrisius (v. 371-72). But it would seem that Latinus harbored a secret hostility toward the fiancé of his daughter because he refuses to listen, and already swears only by Aeneas.

Knowing that they are protected, the Trojans behave in Latium like in a conquered country. For example, they do not mind hunting there freely, and it is precisely during such a hunt that Ascanius-Iulus, Aeneas’s own son, shoots an arrow against a beautiful deer, actually a tame and almost sacred animal, which was for Silvia, daughter of a royal intendant named Tyrrhus, like the apple of her eye. Terrified by the almost human complaints of the animal (implorant similius, 502), she calls for help the peasants of the neighborhood, who flock armed with sticks, branches hardened by fire, lumberjack axes. We expect that Aeneas will calm things, but he brings out his army and cut this motley troupe to pieces. As predictable, if no loss is to be deplored on the Trojan side, the dead are numerous among the Latins (Corpora multa uirum, 535), beginning with the young Almo, eldest son of Tyrrhus, and also Galaeus, "the fairest of men" (iustissimus unus / Qui fuit, 536-37), even killed while he attempted to come between the combatants.

Revolted by the Trojan barbarity, the "shepherds" (pastorum, 574) take their dead in their arms and converge in front of the royal palace, soon joined by the crowd of those whose women had followed Amata in the woods. What are they asking for? Not war, as mistakenly believes the doxa, but firm attitude, which only would have had a chance to avoid it. But you might as well try to shake a marine reef (such is indeed the comparison that Virgil, with his specific irony, uses to describe Latinus’s stubbornness: v. 586-90). Latinus indeed has already made his choice: after cursing all his citizens, "these miserable" (O miser, 596), and promising to Turnus "a bitter torment", triste… supplicium, 596-97, he retires ignominiously in his apartments (599-600). Only then is war inevitable (iubebatur, 617). The die is cast, it remains to Juno in person to open the doors of War. And Turnus is the only leader capable of conducting it.

---

8 As notes M. C. J. Putnam [supra N. 6], p. 418, the stag (not killed, but emasculated by Aeneas’s son, as he remarks) “could stand for tamed Italy itself”.

9 This is the same kind of irony as for example at 4.441 ff., where Aeneas is compared to an unshakable oak. Of course, caecum… consilium, 591-92 refers to Latinus (but the doxa, here as usual, is caeca).

10 The Latin miser is ambiguous: “wretched”, but also (though less frequent) “wicked”: see for instance Ter., Eun. 418-19 (hominem perditum / Miserumque); Cic., Verr. 1.137 (miserum atque indignam); Vg, Ecl. 3.27 (miserum… carmen, “a bad poem”, “the work of a bad poet”), and, in the Aeneid, 2.42 (miseri… ciues : cf. Ecl. 1.71), 6.721 (where, symptomatically, E. Norden took miseris as proleptic), 8.488, 8.537, and even 12.261.

Without missing a beat, he brings together a powerful coalition of Italian allies, and then he goes to attack the Trojan camp, wishing to use the absence of Aeneas who has gone to get help from Evander, king of Pallanteum. The assault is vigorously launched. Foremost among his troops, Turnus kills Pandarus and Bitias, two formidable giants appointed to the custody of one gateway, and he enters the camp, where, alone against all, he accomplishes a feat of prowess, until that, overwhelmed by the waves of enemies, he escapes them by jumping into the river, which receives him with almost maternal softness (mollibus extulit undis, 817), as fits the champion of Italian pride and independence. So ends the ninth Book.

Book 10, with the return of Aeneas, shows a series of successes and setbacks, with many victims on one side or the other, so that a ceasefire is decided between the two armies, the time to recover the dead and give them a decent burial. Among the Latins, defeatism is at work, secretly encouraged by Latinus. One man in particular, a certain Drances, pursues Turnus with implacable hatred, and seeks every means to harm him. Already, having been sent on an embassy to Aeneas, he had taken up the Trojan cause, and when the assembly meets to decide on the continuation or not of the war, he violently takes on the Rutulian chief. Twice Virgil has wanted to mark this traitor of the seal of his disdain. The first time, he says he is animated by a deadly jealousy against Turnus (11.122-23):

\[
\begin{align*}
Tum & \text{ seni}r & \text{ semper} & \text{que odi}si & \text{ et crim}i\text{ne Drances} \\
\text{Infensus iuueni Turno,}\ldots \\
\text{“Drances, an older man, quick to show hatred and hurl accusations,} \\
\text{Ever a personal foe of youthful Turnus…”}^{13}
\end{align*}
\]

Later, when the man is about to pronounce against his opponent a violent and venomous speech, he is introduced with these words (11.336-40):

\[
\begin{align*}
Tum & \text{ Drances idem infensus, quem gloria Turni} \\
\text{Obliqua inuidia stimulisque agitabat amaris,} \\
\text{Largus opum et lingua melior, sed frigida bello} \\
\text{Dextera, consilii habitus non futtilis auctor,} \\
\text{Seditione potens…} \\
\text{“Drances arose. He was hostile as ever. For Turnus’s glory} \\
\text{Raked him with jealousy’s bitterness, evilled his never directly}
\end{align*}
\]

\[^{12}\text{“The river of the country saves him, so dramatically saves him, and so tenderly washes off the blood and dust (but no tears) of conflict, and at heart we are glad.”, W. H. Alexander, “Maius Opus (Aeneid 7-12), Un. of California Publications in Classical Philology, XIV (1951), p. 208.}\]

\[^{13}\text{Note in passing that the mere coordination by –que is enough to suggest a generational conflict.}\]
Confrontational glance. He was free with his wealth, had a gifted Tongue, and a hand ice-slow in a war. Though, in planning, considered Not without value, his strength was subversion."

Turnus’s answer is both dignified and terribly scathing. Besides, Aeneas, breaking the truce, has already resumed hostilities. His plan is to launch on the Latin capital a part of his cavalry, while the bulk of the army, making a detour through the hills, will take the enemy from behind. But Turnus has a solution: he entrusts Camilla, the young Volscian warrior, with the task of protecting the city while he will himself watch for Aeneas in a carefully prepared ambush. Alas, Camille is killed, and Turnus must return in haste, with the enemy already on his heels. End of Book 11.

Under pressure from Latinus, Turnus agrees to duel with Aeneas, but an arrow shot by the augur Tolumnius rekindles the fighting. After various vicissitudes, the duel takes place all the same, and Jupiter, deciding that things have gone far enough, condemns to death the Latin champion. Wounded in the thigh, he falls to the ground, where he is properly "sacrificed" (Immolate, 949) by a seething Aeneas (furiis accensus et ira / Terribilis, “flaring up in fury, / terrible in his rage”, 946-47; feruidus, “blazing with wrath”, 951).

In the light of this summary, it does not appear that Turnus has in any way proved unworthy. Yet the comments do not spare him all kinds of criticisms. Let's go back to review the main of them.

Curiously, at his first appearance in Book 7, Turnus is plunged into a deep sleep (v.413 ff.). He dreams, but under the action of Fury Allecto, the dream will soon become a nightmare. Indeed, as he too weakly reacts (because he already knows) to the announcement she makes him of the intrusion of a foreign fleet on Latin territory, she gets angry and shoves a flaming torch in his heart. Suddenly awakened, the young man rushes out of the palace, calls upon his troops, and raises the banner of resistance. “They must defend Italy and force the enemy back from the frontiers” (v. 469):

*Tutari Italiam, detrudere finibus hostem.*

---

14 As R. D. Williams notes in his edition (Macmillan, 1973), the phrase largus opum “is used to discredit Drances” (as a briber). Indeed, the adjective largus can mean both "rich" and "prodigal".


16 See previous note.


18 Translation by R. Fagles (Penguin Classics 2006).

Such is the episode, and already the interpreters have judged Turnus: without denying his bravery and panache (it would be difficult), they immediately put in doubt the purity of his intentions, accusing him of fighting more for his personal honor than for the Italian cause. In addition to what they subjectively call his stubbornness, his impulsiveness, his boasting, they think they can denounce above all the violence of his character.

Yet the mere fact that the young leader has not yet reacted to the news of a foreign intrusion on Italian soil shows, if need be, that he has nothing of an irresponsible firebrand. The violence he manifests in this case is only temporary, and as violence is rooted in the dark and almost uncontrollable strata of human beings, the poet attributes its origin to the sinister Allecto. But the fact remains that Allecto is here the auxiliary of the Queen of Heaven, who found this only way to ensure the triumph of the right (v. 312):

\[ Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta mouebo. \]

“If I can’t influence powers above, I’ll move Acheron’s waters.”

Allecto is quite capable, it’s her job, to unleash in souls “lust for the sword, the cursed madness of war / and rage to top it off” (v. 461-62):

\[ Saeuit amor ferri et scelerata insania belli, / Ira super. \]

It is true that the phrase \textit{scelerata insania belli} is particularly strong, and at the limit of what the poet had to consent to the official \textit{Aeneid}, that is to say, to censorship, but, again, this fit of fury that seizes Turnus under Allecto’s spur is only momentary and will dissipate as soon as the sinister entity will have regained its underground residence. Then Turnus will find back

---

20 So R. D. Williams [\textit{supra} N. 14], \textit{ad} 406 sq.: “but the allegiance which he owes is primarily his own honour. He stands for individual prowess in contrast with the social responsibility of Aeneas.” The accusation comes up regularly in comments.

21 “Headstrong”, “impetuous”, “boastful”, “violent”: such are the epithets that R.D. Williams reserves to him (\textit{ad} 406 sq.). According to P. Lejay, \textit{Œuvres de Virgile}, Paris, 1913, pp. LIV-LV, Turnus would be “un jeune barbare plein de courage, mais sans équilibre”, a man who “passe brusquement d’un sentiment à un autre et presque toujours le pousse à l’extrême”; J.-P. Brisson, \textit{Virgile, son temps et le nôtre}, Paris, Maspero, p. 326, eager to justify his final execution by Aeneas, is not even afraid to write that “Turnus n’est qu’une brute et c’est comme tel que le traite Enée”.

22 As J. Perret recognizes in his edition (Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1978), p. 100, “le héros doit nous apparaître sympathique, désintéressé, sain.” F. O. Copley, \textit{Latin Literature from the Beginnings to the Close of the Second Century A. D.}, p. 233, portrays Turnus as follows: “strong and vivid personality, a brave and skillful fighter and tactician, a natural-born leader of men, and the only patriot in the land with fire enough in his heart and on his tongue to rally his somewhat listless compatriots against the invading foreigner.”


24 Translation by R. Fagles.
himself: a true leader, endowed with courage, nerve and clear-sighted vision. And by taking at once the measures necessary for the defense of the territory, he still hopes to avoid war. So when, mingled in the crowd of "shepherds" who came to express their indignation in front of Latinus’s palace, he shows them the extent of the ambitions of their aggressors (v. 578-79), it is not, as too easily believed, to fan the flames\(^{\text{25}}\), but rather to strengthen the protesters in their determination to force the old monarch to a firm attitude towards Aeneas, which would be the last chance to save peace.

But Virgil, always careful to hide his dangerous anti-*Aeneid*, has this ambiguous phrase to set the mood of the demonstrators: *Martemque fatigant*, 582, which is generally interpreted as the expression of a war cry ("wearying Mars with war cries")\(^{\text{26}}\), whereas it’s more likely a protest of these civilians against the disproportionate military attack they have just suffered\(^{\text{27}}\). Admittedly, however, the next two lines somewhat push our hand (583-84):

\[
\text{Ilicet infandum cuncti contra omina bellum,}
\]

\[
\text{Contra fata deum peruerso numine poscunt.}
\]

"Some perverse force makes them want – just saying the word should be outlawed - / War. They don’t care that it goes against omens and fate set by heaven."

Thus, Virgil would bother to intervene personally in his poem to accuse these angry men of being rabid warmongers, and we would doubt? The problem is that this hateful stigmatization of the protesters\(^{\text{28}}\) falls in total contradiction with the powerful empathy shown by the poet to these same "shepherds" so savagely attacked by the Trojan army. This empathy is perceptible through various signs, starting with the choice of the term *pastores* for people some of whom appear to be rather loggers. We are thus discreetly referred to the world of the *Bucolics* and

\(^{\text{25}}\) "excités par Turnus", according to J. Delille (Paris, 1804, Argument du chant VII).

\(^{\text{26}}\) R. Fagles; " clamoured incessantly for an appeal to Mars" (W. F. Jackson Knight); “and cry: ‘War! War!’” (A. Mandelbaum, Bantam, 1961); “chant endlessly: ‘Mars! Mars!’” (F. Ahl).

\(^{\text{27}}\) For this sense of *fatigare*, see for instance 4.572 (*sociosque fatigat*), 6.533 (*quae te fortuna fatigat*), Lucr. 3.1169 (*saeculumque fatigat*). This *fatigat* is taken up at the next line by crepat. The misinterpretation of this word is of great consequence for final judgment on the execution of Turnus by Aeneas, as evidenced for example by E. A. Fredricksmeyer, “Structural perspectives in *Aeneid* VII”, *CJ* 80 (1985), pp. 236-37, who, after interpreting *Martem fatigant* as a "clamor for war", feels comfortable to conclude that “when Aeneas slays Turnus, Aeneas serves as the executor of divine judgment against the agent of Hell Fury”.

\(^{\text{28}}\) The insistence on spewing invective on the protesters is as brutal as clumsy. R. D. Williams [*supra* N. 14] observes that the same idea is repeated four times (*infandum, contra omina, contra fata deum, peruerso numine*), but he fails to wonder about this sudden "reversal of sympathy".
encouraged to seek parallels. Farmers driven from home by intruders: this situation described by Turnus (v. 421-22, 425) is that of Meliboeus in the first eclogue, as well as of Moeris in the ninth (but being too old to go into exile, he had to resign himself to serve the new owner). Even worse, Moeris and (his son) Menalcas had only narrowly escaped death in attempting to defend their property against armed Caesarean veterans (Ecl. 9.14-16): the anecdote is found in ancient biographies of Virgil, and it’s perhaps not absurd to recognize in the two shepherds a representation of the poet and his father. Observe that the two main victims of the Trojan brutality are a young man described as "child" (puerum, 575) and an elderly man (senior, 535), who, moreover, do not bear banal names, since Almo forms a near anagram of Maro, Virgil’s cognomen, with a simple substitution of liquid (Almonem / Maronem), and Galaesus spontaneously evokes a certain old man of Tarentum (Georg. 4.125 ff.) who might well represent the poet’s own father.

It’s clear anyway that the poet has taken pains to arouse the compassion of the reader towards his "shepherds". Everything contributes to this goal: Almo’s tender age, Galaesus’s high virtue (iustissimus unus, 536), his killing "while he offered himself as a mediator of peace" (Dum paci medius se offert, 536), and finally the pathetic scene where their exposed bodies seem to cry justice in the face of a dramatically irresponsible king. Even a simple detail speaks volumes about the intimate feeling of the poet: it is, at line 575 (foedatique ora Galaesi), the enhancement of the term ora, "his face" certainly, but first and above all "his lips", “his mouth", referring of course to Dum paci medius se offert, which is thus enlightened: Galaesus was hit in the face, in the mouth, even as he exhorted the fighters to peace.

30 See my Violence et ironie…, pp. 66-68.
31 ibid., pp. 69-72.
32 Literally: "the face (the mouth) of the mangled Galaesus", instead of an expected “the mangled face (mouth) of Galaesus”. As notes R. D. Williams, ad loc.: “this places extra emphasis on ora.” Compare “Galaesus with his butchered face” (R. Fagles), and “the head of the butchered Galaesus” (F. Ahl). F. Roiron, Etude sur l’imagination auditive de Virgile, Paris, 1908, pp. 139-40, suggests that obtestantur, 576 could "impliquer la présence à l’esprit du poète du mot foedus contenu matériellement dans foedati", and he supposes that “les Latins sont de bonne foi dans leurs plaintes, que par conséquent, ils ne se sentent pas seulement battus, mais injustement traités”.
33 One thinks of Tarquitus beheaded by Aeneas "as he begged in vain and prepared to keep pleading" (orantis … dicentis, 10.554-5), to Pharon who receives a javelin "full in his screaming mouth" (clamanti… in ore, 10.323),
We will therefore eliminate without hesitation these two verses (583-84) that so outrageously contradict the author's intentions, and we will do so with even less regret that they are, both in substance (ilicet should announce something new; unintelligibility of peruerso numine; impossibility of the phrase contra fata deum taken as Virgil’s personal judgment)\textsuperscript{34} and for the form (false parallelism bellum / deum), perfectly unworthy of the prince of poets\textsuperscript{35}. It is as if "someone" leapt in the breach opened by the ambiguous Martemque fatigant to make responsible for the war the very people who are demonstrating to denounce it. Somebody? Who but the man who oversaw the publication of the poem after the death of its author, the man who had every interest, by some occasional “helping hand” of this kind, to stifle the real Virgil’s Aeneid by his own Aeneid, the epic that he, as emperor, had officially sponsored\textsuperscript{36}?

After the interlude of Book 8, devoted to Aeneas’s visit on the site of the future Rome, Turnus makes a triumphant return in the poem. So glorious is even his performance in Book 9 that the doxa, unable to attack the hero himself, turns, as we have seen, against his creator, guilty of having done him too beautiful.

Yet he commits a fault, only one, in this book, if we can call a fault rather than impetuosity and fighting spirit the fact of not having thought to bring his companions in the camp where he had managed to introduce himself (v. 756-59):

\[
\textit{Diffugiunt uersi trepida formidine Troes,}
\]

\[
\textit{Et si continuo uictorem ea cura subisset,}
\]

\[
\textit{Rumpere claustra manu sociosque immittere portis,}
\]

\[
\textit{Vltimus ille dies bello gentique fuisset.}
\]

“Spooked by this figure of terror, the Trojans retreated and scattered. Had it occurred to the victor, in fact, to break open the barriers Instantly, using his hand to let allies in through the gateway, This would have marked Troy’s last day of war, last day of existence.”

It is not very difficult to perceive through these lines the secret wish of the poet, his regret. But far from charging his hero, he hastens to show him absorbed through the pursuit of

\textsuperscript{34} Cf. the article referred to supra N. 11 (p. 231); http://www.virgilmurder.org/images/pdf/god.pdf, at the end.


\textsuperscript{36} See previous note.
the Trojans fleeing in disorder before him. So why is it that just after these four lines, he slaps him in the face (v. 760-61):

\[\text{Sed furor ardentem caedisque insana cupido / Egit in aduersos.}\]

“Fury for battle, however, mad lust for the kill, drove this ardent
Warrior’s hand straight ahead at the foe.”?

It takes however a great deal of bad faith to confuse Turnus’s laudable ardor and bravery in the fight (\textit{furor}: cf. Turno ... \textit{furenti}, 691) with murderous rage or madness, when \textit{sedato pectore}, at v. 740, is clear evidence that the hero perfectly keeps his temper in the middle of the fray. But this hateful tone is the very signature of the interpolator we saw at work earlier (7.583-84), and who proves just as awkward, since his \textit{aduersos} laughably forgets that the Trojans turned their backs (\textit{succiso poplite}, 762; \textit{fugientibus}, 763): a detail that translators discreetly pretend not to notice\textsuperscript{37}.

We arrive at Book 10. Aeneas is back, accompanied by an Etruscan army and a cavalry detachment commanded by Pallas, the young son of Evander. In the generalized confrontation that follows, Turnus and Aeneas will distinguish themselves each in their own manner, with a clear superiority of the second in terms of cruelty, sadism and cheating\textsuperscript{38}. Turnus, for his part, has nothing to be ashamed of in this respect. A terrible warrior, yes, but a loyal warrior.

The time of the final duel between the two leaders has not yet come, but when successively Turnus faces Pallas, and Aeneas Lausus, i.e. two opponents of comparable strength, age, and rank (Lausus, as Pallas, is the son of a king, even if Mezentius is a fallen king), it is as if they measured each other remotely. Therefore, a comparison is required between these two duels to determine who, in this case, Aeneas or Turnus, most deserves our esteem.

1) \textbf{Before the fight}

When engaging in combat against Pallas, Turnus expresses a wish that commentators do not forgive him (v. 443):

\[\text{Cuperem ipse parens spectator adesset.}\]

“My only wish his father himself had been here to watch.”\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{37} “forced him on to the attack” (W. F. Jackson Knight); “on against his enemies” (A. Mandelbum); “straight ahead at the foe” (F. Ahl); “against his foes” (R. Fagles);


\textsuperscript{39} Translation by W. F. Jackson Knight.
To cite R. D. Williams: “This remark is savage in the extreme, and… alienates the reader’s sympathy.” Yet isn’t it normal that the king who so foolishly engaged his son in an injust war would be punished through this very son? Turnus’s wish, shall we say, is a way for him to reject on the father the full responsibility for the fault, while clearing the son, to whom these words are not addressed.

To Lausus who has come to the rescue of his injured father, Aeneas launches this warning (v. 811-12):

Quo moriture ruis maioraque uiribus audes?
Fallit te incautum pietas tua.

“Why all this hurry to die – as you will? You are not up to this challenge, Your sense of righteous devotion has lured you to rashness!”

Yes, we heard right: the pious Aeneas, pius Aeneas, blames a son for his filial piety pushed up to bravery. Few commentators care to note this devastating irony, and when they do, they do not draw any consequences.

2) The fight

Turnus leaves his opponent the advantage of the first throw. Then, he throws his spear in turn and mortally wounds Pallas.

Aeneas takes advantage from the fact that Lausus protects with his shield the retreat of his father to hit him in the back.

Here the veil is torn, the official Aeneid is shattered, and it’s only by a prodigy of his art of writing that the poet manages to save the appearances, we mean the dummy Aeneid.

40 R. D. Williams [supra N. 14], ad loc. Simingly, A. Bellessort (Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1936), ad loc.: “Il y a de la cruauté dans le caractère de Turnus.” But it was already Servius’s conviction: asperse et amare dictum.

41 A. Bellessort has this comment: “L’humanité est, comme toujours, du côté d’Enée.”

42 “It is very ironical for Aeneas to chide Lausus for too much pietas…”, observes R. D. Williams, ad loc. M.C.J. Putnam, “Pius Aeneas and the metamorphosis of Lausus”, Arethusa 14 (1981), p. 141, states that on this occasion “pius Aeneas performs the greatest act of impietas by killing first the son who protects, then his wounded father.”

43 This is exactly what happened to the valiant Halaeus, who had his chest pierced while he was protecting Imaon with his shield (10.424-25).

44 Cf. the article referred to supra N. 38. We will add here two additional clues for this forfeiture of Aeneas: 1) Quo ruís? It is in these terms that at v. 811, he addresses Lausus before piercing him: but we know that the young man at this moment is retreating (v. 800); 2) At 11.55-56, he announces to Evander that his son, at least,
3) **After the fight**

Turnus returns to the Arcadians the corpse of Pallas after having stripped off its sword-belt.

It is part of the heroic conventions to despoil the enemy you have killed, and Pallas would have done the same in case of victory (but he would not have been content with the belt: v 423, 462); furthermore, the poet is careful to point out that the young man is already dead (exanimem, 496) when his winner, stamping his foot on the body (laeuo pressit pede, 495) – how could he do otherwise? -, strips off the precious belt. Pallas dreamed of doing the same thing, but on his enemy alive (semineci, 462)!

Yet for the doxa Turnus must always be wrong. In particular, one does not forgive him for sending this message to the old Evander (492):

\[ Qualem meruit, Pallanta remitto. \]

“he deserves to receive Pallas home in the state that I send him.”

But this message is far from unequivocal, since it conceals at least three senses: if *meruit* refers to Pallas, it can theoretically be as laudatory as malicious, and we have seen that Turnus does not try in any way to devalue his opponent. Now, if *meruit* applies to Evander, it transfers on him the full responsibility for this drama, so confirming the interpretation we proposed for v. 443 (“I only wish his father himself had been here to watch.”)

It’s to a dying man, who agonizes in atrocious suffering (*ora modis… pallentia miris*), “that face growing stunningly pallid”, 822; and cf. *dolorum*, 863) that Aeneas, with assumed compassion and deep concern (but no remorse), addresses a small homily supposed to console him of his death (*miseram solabere mortem*, 829). But under the guise of paying tribute to his young
opponent, he submits him to the additional punishment of his derision: *laudibus istis* (“your exploits”, your glory, which is so relative: *istis* virtually depreciative); *laetatus* (“you have had a good time”, now it’s over); *si qua est ea cura*, I allow you funeral, “if that’s a problem”\(^48\). And this supreme sarcasm (v. 829-30): *tamen… solabere… Aeneae magni dextra cadis*, “But… you can be consoled by this: / You fall beneath the hand of great Aeneas.”\(^49\) So he dares boast of his own piety (*pius Aeneas*, 826), his greatness, his magnanimity, in front of a man he has so cowardly shot! This height of cynicism should unseal once and for all the eyes of the Trojan’s admirers, and it is true that his words have shocked\(^50\), but nevertheless the doxa remains firm on its conformist positions. Aeneas continues to be commended for his attitude, and one compares favorably his piety and humanity with the alleged ferocity and barbarity of the chivalrous Turnus. Suffice it to quote J. Delille: “Mais la barbare férocité de Turnus fait ressortir ici le caractère d’Enée, et le présenté à l’admiration comme le héros le plus accompli: sa douleur en voyant expirer l’infortuné Lausus est parfaitement exprimée.”\(^51\)

In short, Turnus, whatever he does, attracts all the blame; Aeneas, whatever he does, attracts all the praise. Let’s salute here a miracle of *cacozelia latens*, even though that miracle was somewhat aided by the occult forger (*latens*, he too) we have seen operating twice above, and whose hand we might also suspect in a third occasion, at v. 501-502, just after Turnus seized Pallas’s fatal belt, and the poet lets out this seemingly heart cry (v. 501-502):

*Nescia mens hominum fati sortisque futurae
Et seruare modum rebus sublata secundis !*

“All the human mind, knowing nothing of fate or the future,

\(^48\)“in case you were worried”, F. Ahl; “if it offers any solace”, R. Fagles. One could also refer *cura* to the Shades (“if Shades still care for that”, A. Mandelbaum), which are only ashes, according to *Pious Aeneas (Manibus et cineri):* epexegetical *et:* cf. 4.34), or absolutely: “if this is worth bothering about”.

\(^49\)Translation by A. Mandelbaum.

\(^50\)So, A. Cartault [*supra* N. 1], p. 746, on v. 830: “un mot qui nous semble peu modeste et qui choque le goût moderne”; A. Bellessort [*supra* N. 40], *ad loc.:* “Nous aimons moins cette grandiloquence”; Perlkamp attributes to Virgil and not to Aeneas the lines 825-830a, while replacing *remitto* by *remittit*. According to A. J. Boyle, “The meaning of the *Aeneid*: a critical inquiry”, *Ramus* 1 (1972), p. 68, Aeneas’s remark “simply misses the point. Pity conjoined with such naivety is a terrifying sight.”

\(^51\)J. Delille [*supra* N. 25], *ad* v. 812.
Nothing about moderation when puffed with success and good fortune!”
This *seruare modum* is really surprising, since Turnus has just shown perfect loyalty and moderation, notably by abstaining from any insult to his victim, and limiting himself to strip off the belt. Just suppress line 502, it remains the pure and poignant emotion of a cry from the heart, where a hero’s particular tragedy serves as an emblem of the tragic human condition.
But we will not leave this tenth book without noticing a detail which, although minimal in appearance, casts light on the real feelings of the poet towards his characters, it is the glorious phrase *iuuenis memorande* (v. 793) by which he commends in person the heroic Lausus, as a reply to Aeneas’ s condescending *misrande puer* (v. 825)\(^52\). The voice of Aeneas covered and condemned by that of Virgil: that’s the official *Aeneid* supplanted by the real *Aeneid*.

The eleventh Book should rather frustrate the critics who are systematically hostile to Turnus. With what pride the Rutulian chief meets Drances’s venomous allegations, with what energy he supports the failing morale of the Latins, how quickly and with what nerve he organizes the defense against the unexpected attack of the Trojans, we mentioned above\(^53\).
But despite this, his detractors do not surrender. As Camilla’s death forces him to give up his battle plan which would probably have ensured his victory, he is accused of having committed a serious mistake in judgment by relying on the young queen to sustain the Etruscan assault during his own absence.
But it’s wrong to underestimate the Volscian queen\(^54\). Let’s remember the impression she gave us when, at the end of Book 7, she proudly rode at the head of “her squads blooming bright in their bronze-plate”, *florentis aere cateruas*, focusing on herself all looks and all

---

\(^52\) It is true that at 6.882, this same *miserande puer* designates Marcellus without any trace of impairment, but Marcellus had died in bed without having yet shown anything heroic, while Lausus was killed in action after a series of exploits. This is also the case for Pallas, which makes somewhat patronizing the *miserande puer* Aeneas addresses him *post mortem*, 11.42.

\(^53\) J. Delille [*supra* N. 25], *ad* 11.425, p. 259, pays fitting tribute to this “chef aussi ferme dans le danger qu’il a été éloquent dans la discussion”.

\(^54\) So, for instance, J. Perret [*supra* N. 22], *ad* v. 498: “Mais tout esprit rassis trouvera Turnus fort imprudent d’être entré aussitôt dans les vues de cette innocente (*mecum partire laborem*, v. 510); décidément cet homme n’était ni capable ni digne de conduire l’Italie.”
imaginations. Her mere presence in the coalition adds to it something like an extra soul, a grace, a talisman.

Yes, it's true that she is not without flaws: she too much likes violence and war, and her thirst for booty will cause her ruin. Her hubris on the battlefield even looks sometimes like Aeneas’s boasting (thus, 11.686 ff. “But still, you will carry no trifling / Name to your fathers’ ghosts: you died by the spear of Camilla.”). Great also is her presumption, for in her first encounter with Turnus, without waiting for his instructions, she presents her own plans (v. 502-6), as she is confident of blocking by herself, sola, the way to the Etruscan cavalry. She says she will go to the forefront of the fighting, while Turnus will remain at the back before the walls. Delicate moment: Turnus must assert his authority without offending the sensibilities of a valuable ally. He begins by greeting and complimenting his interlocutor (v. 508-9):

\[\text{O decus Italiae virgo, quas dicere grates} \]
\[\text{Quasue referre parem?} \]

“What adequate thanks can I offer you, Italy’s virgin
Glory? How can I repay you?”

Then, with a calculated emphasis, he congratulates her on her courage (omnia quando / Iste animus supra, "since your wonderful spirit / Soars above everything": the touch of irony is almost imperceptible), before proposing her, as a partner of equal dignity, to share the task with him (mecum partire laborem). Finally, after explaining his action plan, he assigns her a role that is not exactly the one she had hoped: she will defend the city in collaboration with Messapus, while Turnus will set up his ambush. A final phrase condenses perfectly this mixed gentleness and firmness, this iron hand in a velvet glove (v. 519):

\[\text{Ducis et tu concipe curam.} \]

Indeed, depending on whether ducis refers to Camilla or to Turnus, the sentence can mean "You also, take over the responsibilities of a chief", or "You too, like the other chiefs placed under my command, must understand the responsibilities which are mine” (that is to say: “bow to my command”). The final sense is a combination of the two: Camilla will exercise a real command, but under the orders of a supreme leader.

As much as valiant fighter and redoubtable orator, Turnus therefore proves to be a fine psychologist and a valuable leader of men, perfectly capable of heading up the Italian coalition. But yet, it will be said, whatever his exceptional qualities, the fact remains that his plan will fail. But do we have the right to blame him? Had he not taken all the desirable precautions by associating with Camilla the strong and solid Messapus (v. 518-20)? Could he
foresee that the death of the young queen would cause a general panic? Admittedly, had he waited a while before abandoning his ambush, he would have won a great victory, but he believed, on the basis of a distraught messenger, that the city needed the most urgent relief. Call it, if you will, precipitation, but Virgil forbids us from condemning his hero by making it clear (v. 901) that his sudden bewilderment was caused by Jupiter’s relentless hate, this same Jupiter who will soon launch his Fury on him (Juppiter hostis, 12.895):

Ille furens (et saeua iouis sic numina poscunt)
Deserit obsessos collis, nemora aspera linquit.

“He’s in a fury now – that’s what Jupiter’s brute will requires – So he abandons his hilltop ambush and leaves the rough forest.”

It is thus under the sign of the victimization of Turnus, condemned in advance by the master of Olympus, that we enter the twelfth book. If it had depended on him, he would have continued the fight, but the pressure exerted by Latinus and his clan fully committed to the Trojans was too strong. He therefore resigns himself to accept the duel with Aeneas, without being spared however Latinus’s as honeyed as offensive speech, advising him to immediately clear the way to Aeneas, return home, and permanently renounce to Lavinia. Hearing this, Turnus is literally at loss for words. Then, “when his power of speech is recovered” (Vt primum fari potuit, 47), he responds to the king whom he persists in calling "father", pater (v. 50), and even "excellent father", optime ... pater, as if to remind him his perfidy, that he will never follow the path of dishonor. Fortunately, he still has the unwavering support of Queen Amata, but she later will commit suicide on the false report of his death (v. 593 ff.). Then we will see Juno, his powerful heavenly protector, withdraw from the struggle, under the constraint of Jupiter (v. 841-42). And even the passionate Juturna, warned by the horrible hiss of the Fury, will, sick at heart, abandon to his fate her beloved brother (v. 869 ff.). But already from the line 147, the nymph, enlightened by Juno, had understood that Luck, Fortuna, had deserted their camp.

So, all misfortunes accumulate against Turnus, and even the queen’s suicide is a blow from Fortuna (Accidit haec... fortuna, 593). Turnus knows he has nothing positive to expect from this goddess (v. 637):

55 The messenger causes him "violent distress" (W. F. Jackson Knight), at the same time that she brings him “word of stark disaster” (R. Fagles): remarkable is the double meaning in v. 897 (juueni ingentem fert tumultum). Tumultus is properly "state of emergency".

56 Turnus is certainly animated by a warlike fury, but mostly he is furious at having to give up his ambush.
Nam quid ago, aut quae iam spondet Fortuna salutem?

“What can I do? Does some twist in my fortunes now promise me safety?”

To his sister, he declares he is ready to follow “where god, where cruel Fortune is calling us” (v. 677):

Quo deus et quo dura uocat Fortuna, sequamur.

This assurance he boldly reaffirms before the entire army (v. 694):

Quaecumque est Fortuna, mea est.

“Anything Fortune may have in her plans is for me.”

But if Fortune is against you, that automatically means it promotes your opponent. That is why one startles when Aeneas, addressing his son, has the gall to present himself as unloved by Fortune (v. 435-36):

Disce, puer, uirtutem ex me uerumque laborem, / Fortunam ex aliis.

“Learn from me, lad, what courage involves and the meaning of effort.

Others can teach you of Fortune.”57

And this, just after Venus came down specially from heaven to heal his wound! Now we know what close acquaintances exist between Venus and Fortune58; and in this very passage, the intervention of the former is announced by a mention of the second (Nulla uiam Fortuna regit, 405), as if the arrival of Venus had to end the lack of Fortune (nulla Fortuna).

Similarly, Aeneas is virtually equated with Fortune at lines 677-78, when Turnus says: “I will go where Fortune calls me ... I will fight with Aeneas”)59. Turnus on the contrary can only rely on his uirtus (conscia uirtus, 668). So, when the two champions are finally about to confront each other, and the poet comments that Fors and Virtus miscentur in unum, 714, the attentive reader will not hesitate about the true meaning of this enigmatic sentence: “Fortune and Virtue confront each other”60. It’s therefore pure imposture on the part of Aeneas to claim

57 Note the zeugma: literally, Aeneas says his son: " Learn chance", as if chance could be learnt, or required an effort, in the same way as the practice of virtue. Hence Servius’s involuntarily funny remark (ad 3.260): Subaudis opta ("supply opta").


59 By relating this uocat Fortuna with uirum [sc. Turnum]... magna / Voce uocat [Aeneas], 482-83, one can perceive the close proximity between Aeneas and Fortune. It is interesting that Servius, at least three times (ad 4.615, 8.110, 9.3), defines Turnus’s audacia as a uirtus sine fortuna.

60 My translation. The doxa does not capitalize Virtus and Fortune, which radically change the meaning: “What’s luck, what’s skill, all merges to oneness.” (F. Ahl);”fortune and fortitude mix / in one assault.” (R. Fagles).
for himself the role of the virtuous man as opposed to the lucky man (the antithesis was classic). But this kind of pharisaical self-righteousness is almost his trademark: remember the famous *Sum pius Aeneas*, 1.378, or the *magnus* and *pius* he awarded himself in front of the dying Lausus (cf. *supra* p. 13).

In fact, when it comes to virtue and piety, what Aeneas shows in this last book of the poem is for instance the barbarian ultimatum he addresses the Latin city at v. 565-73 (unconditional surrender or total annihilation), or the murderous rage which leads him to plunge his sword into the body of an unarmed Turnus. Here, Virgil has certainly gone as far as he could to encourage his readers to judge and condemn Aeneas, and many indeed are those whom the final behavior of the "pious" Trojan repels. But the poet takes care simultaneously to lull Cerberus, we mean censorship, as he explains Aeneas’s anger by his purportedly "pious" willingness to avenge the young Pallas (v. 948-49):

> **Pallas te hoc uolnere, Pallas**
>  *Immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit.*
>  "Pallas gives you this death-stroke, yes Pallas
>  Makes you the sacrifice, spills your criminal blood in atonement!"

Yet, of the alleged "villainy" committed by Turnus in defeating Pallas and stripping him of his baldric, we know what to think (cf. *supra* p. 12). Turnus was not at fault in this case, and the baldric is just a false pretext seized by Aeneas to get rid of a hated rival. No doubt this brutal truth would more easily urge itself upon the reader without the fraudulent line 10.502 (*supra pp. 13-14*) which turns into a heinous crime an act which perfectly complies with all heroic conventions. Indeed, the explicit condemnation of Turnus by the author himself (actually, by Augustus) cannot fail to encourage exegetes to criticize the Rutulian champion on all occasions, including in this twelfth book which is potentially so

---

61 The bibliography is enormous, and we will not even try to skim it here. It seems that the balance of power between those who approve Aeneas’s act and those who disapprove it, which was still favorable to the first until the end of the twentieth century (“nos reconstructions de l’horizon d’attente ancien tendent à être favorables à l’acte vindicatif d’Enée”, wrote for example P.-H. Schrijvers, “La valeur de la pitié chez Virgile…”, in *Présence de Virgile*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1978, p. 492), tends to gradually switch in the opposite direction. A recent point of the question can be found in the *Virgil Encyclopedia* (2014), entry “Aeneid (ending of)”.

62 With the verb *immolare*, Aeneas, more "pious" than ever, poses as a sacrificing priest. Curious priest indeed, boiling with rage and fury, *furiis accensus et ira /Terribilis!* As M. C. J. Putnam observes [*supra* N. 6], p. 426: “The verb *immolat* is the same as Virgil uses to describe Aeneas’ seizure of the sons of Ufens as human offering on the pyre of Pallas (10.519)”. 
fatal to the fiction of a "pious Aeneas"\textsuperscript{63}. And after all, doesn’t he admit himself that he deserves what happens to him (\textit{merui}, 931)? Except that this \textit{merui}, as the \textit{meruit} of 9.492 (\textit{qualem meruit Pallanta remitto}), bears an ambiguity\textsuperscript{64} which is clarified in the final \textit{indignata} (v. 952), expressing Turnus’s protestation against the unfairness of his fate, an unfairness still crowned by Aeneas’s contemptuous silence in response to his request that his body at least would be returned to his old father (already the Trojan had scorned Mezentius’s request to be buried next to his son: 10.903-6). If Aeneas had remembered the fine precept enunciated by his father Anchises (6.853):

\begin{quote}
\textit{Parcere subiectis et debellare superbos}
\end{quote}

“Mercy for those cast down and relentless war upon proud men.”\textsuperscript{65} he would have spare his adversary, who, \textit{humilis supplex}, admits his defeat in front of the two armies. \textit{Humilis supplex}: this self-humiliation is well suited to satisfy a doxa so prejudiced against him, but by taking the attitude of a supplicant, Turnus does not degrade himself, since even Juno is not afraid to appear \textit{supplex} before Aeolus, a subordinate god (1.68), as well as Venus before her son \textit{Amor} (1.666), and furthermore it’s not for himself, but for his father, that Turnus makes his plea. As to the adjective \textit{humilis}, the context emphasizes its etymological sense ("he's down"), similar in this to \textit{superbus} on line 326, which, before all moral connotation, first marks the movement of a man getting on a horse\textsuperscript{66}.

Although Turnus is noble and generous\textsuperscript{67}, arrogance is certainly not in his character. When at the threshold of this book he is compared to a lion, one concludes too quickly to his ferocity and indiscriminate violence, even to the point of assimilating him to the \textit{Furor impius} mentioned by Jupiter in 1.296, under the pretext that \textit{Furor}, like our lion, has "a bloody

\textsuperscript{63} We should not forget in this regard that Aeneas will forbid anyone, under pain of death, to give Turnus a sword to defend himself (v. 758-62).

\textsuperscript{64} F. Ahl ("I’ve deserved it all") and R. Fagles ("I deserve it all") are concordant, but compare for instance “je l’ai mérité” (A. Bellessort) with “j’en ai fini” (J. Perret).

\textsuperscript{65} “to spare the defeated, break the proud in war.” (R. Fagles); “to spare defeated peoples, tame the proud.” (A. Mandelbaum); “to show mercy to the conquered, and to wage war until the haughty are brought low.” (W. F. Jackson Knight). But it might be that \textit{subiectis} (etymologically contrasting with \textit{superbus: sub / supra}) refers to the weakest, the lowest, rather than to the defeated.

\textsuperscript{66} This \textit{superbus} is quite different from Aeneas’s \textit{superbo} (\textit{bello... superbo}, 8.118 (he dares to accuse of arrogance the Laurentine shepherds he has so savagely attacked!), or from the \textit{iussa superba}, 12.877, referring to Jupiter's decision (fundamentally unjust and tyrannical, no doubt) to hasten Turnus’s death.

\textsuperscript{67} For this \textit{superbus}, R. Fagles has “in a flash of pride”.

19
mouth, ore cruento. Yet the difference is great, because if the blood *Furor* vomits is necessarily the blood of its victims, the one that appears on the mouth of our seriously injured lion (*graui ... uolnere*, 5) is none other than its own. Hence the violence that inhabits it, a violence sublimated by its almost desperate courage (but "happy" nevertheless: *gaudet*, 6) against the hunters who encircle it, just like Turnus’s violence (*uiolentia*, 9) is stimulated by adversity and exacerbated by the unworthy proposals of Latinus (*uiolentia*, 45). This violence wholly turned to heroic action and fulfillment of duty can only force admiration, especially in contrast to the surrounding spinelessness.

Turnus, with a superb impetus, “rushes outside, hurries back to his palace, / Ask for his horses” (v. 81-82), and proceeds to put on his armor for the decisive battle. He did not wish this duel, but he will face it without fear, and the feeling that dominates in him during these preparations, as earlier in the lion, is even joy (*gaudet*, 82). So we remain amazed, soon after, when we see the same Turnus trembling with fear, his face pale and broken down before the two armies (v. 219-21)! Of course, traditional commentators take advantage of these three lines to discredit and disparage the rival of their dear Aeneas; but others, more aware of the secret intrigues of Emperor Augustus, will unhesitatingly attribute him the authorship of these three malicious lines.

**Conclusion**

---

68 So for instance G. K. Galinsky, “Aeneid V and the *Aeneid*”, *AJP* 89 (1968), p. 175: “Turnus clearly is identified with *Furor impius*”; R. D. Williams, *ad loc.*: “Turnus represents the violent forces which must be conquered before Roma’s era of ultimate peace can be achieved.”

69 It is of course tempting to hold against Turnus that he is, as says P. Lejay (*supra* N. 21], pp. LIV-LV), "le seul caractère auquel Virgile applique le mot de violence (X, 151, XI, 354, 376, XII, 9, 45)“. But in 10.151, Aeneas is the speaker, in 11.354 it is Drancès (!), and in 11.376, it may be the author, but he has enough legitimized this "holy violence", stressing the baseness of the man who has aroused it. Scholars do not observe enough, it seems, that Virgil himself pays homage in his own name to Turnus when, at 12.234-35 (*ille quidem… uivitosque per ora feretur*), he transfers on this hero the famous epitaph of Ennius (*uolito uivos per ora uirum*), after having already taken it over on his own behalf in *Georg*. 3.9 (*uictorque uirum uolitare per ora*). The poet speaks here through the voice of the valiant Camers, directly inspired by the sublime Juturna.

70 [http://www.virgilmurder.org/images/pdf/interpolaug.pdf](http://www.virgilmurder.org/images/pdf/interpolaug.pdf). It is also obvious that the *Adiuuat* who introduces these three verses is used against the grain ("The appearance of Turnus helps Latins to get... discouraged")!

Placed under constant surveillance by the political regime during the ten years he wrote the *Aeneid*\(^{72}\), Virgil was writing on the razor's edge, until an exasperated Augustus snatched the reed pen from his hands. In the state in which its author had left it, the divine *Aeneid* was ready to burst from his misleading and protective bark: it was absolutely necessary to avoid this. Hence the recurrent, brief but targeted, interventions in the text, some of which we have spotted in this essay (and see below). But why is it that such gross manipulations could deceive so many generations? Would it not be that by systematically adopting an interpretation favorable to Aeneas, we are persuaded to meet the intentions of the poet, without suspecting that by doing so, we help to strengthen the wall erected by the imperial forger to prevent the emergence of a sense so devastating to himself, as to all tyrants and all religious hypocrites? It is tragic.- jym (01.01.2016).

**Addenda (or rather Delenda)**

1) *Amata, that viper, Amata, that criminal?*

At lines 349ff. of Book 7, once can read:

*Ille inter uestis et leuia pectora lapsus*

*Voluitur attactu nullo fallitque furentem*

*Vipeream inspirans animam…*

“It [the symbolic snake Allecto has just flung at the queen] glides between her robes and her smooth breasts but she feels nothing, no shudder of coils, *senses nothing at all as the viper breathes its fire through the frenzied queen.*”\(^{73}\)

Slightly later, at 7.385ff., we read this:

*Quin etiam in siluas simulato numine Bacchi*

*Maius adorta nefas maioremque orsa furorem*

*Euolat et natam frondosis montibus abdit…*

“She even darts into forests,

---

\(^{72}\) It is well known that Augustus pestered Virgil with letters to inquire about the progress of the *Aeneid* and ask the poet for excerpts (Suet.-Don., *Vita Verg.* 31; Macr., *Sat.* 1.24, 10-12). He even required that Virgil read aloud before him the Books 2, 4 and 6 (Suet.-Don., *Vita Verg.* 32).

\(^{73}\) Translation by R. Fagles (here and after).
feigning she’s in grip of Bacchus’ power,
daring a greater outrage, rising to greater fury,
hiding her daughter deep in the mountains’ leafy woods.”

That the Queen is the toy and the prey of Allecto, it is a reality (v. 378-84 and 404-5), but it seems absurd to accuse her of nefas (crime, sacrilege), and even maius nefas (!), since neither before nor after she commits any crime, unless it is a crime for a mother to want to put her daughter away from the madness of a father. Yes, Amata will eventually commit suicide (nefas)\(^{74}\), but this is not the point. As to assimilate her with a viper, how not to be shocked and revolted by such an insult launched against this beleaguered mother who is animated by a legitimate revolt against a husband who sacrifices his own daughter to his measureless ambition? Translators vainly try to soften the phrase uipeream inspirans animam. To breathe a viper breath into her frenzy\(^{75}\), that’s a lot, but much more than breath, the term anima cannot be prevented from meaning the person itself, its very soul (cf. e.g. 12.230, 648). We assist so to a total infection, a transformation of the queen to a viper.

One is thus led to doubt the authenticity of the lines 350b-51a and 386, a doubt which is reinforced by a careful examination:

-1) v. 350b-51a: This sentence, let alone the awkward juxtaposition of the two adjectives furentem and uipeream, and the fact that fallit adds nothing to attentu nullo, is simply impossible in its expected sense, namely, as R. Fagles understands, that the queen “senses nothing at all as the viper breathes its fire” into her frenzy. Indeed, the verb fallere followed by an accusative can only mean "fool someone vigilance” (on the model custodem fallere), and it would have to be accompanied by a nominative\(^{76}\) (present participle of a verb meaning "to make mad”) to give the sense of “it drives her crazy without her knowledge”.

Moreover, the queen is not yet furens, as evidenced by the subsequent text, in particular the reasonable and so moving speech she addresses to Latinus (v. 359-72). That is why one invokes here a proleptic effect\(^{77}\), but a verb like fallere, which has nothing factitive,

---


\(^{75}\) “it breathes its viper breathe into her frenzy” (A. Mandelbaum).

\(^{76}\) Cf. 12.634: nequiquam fallis dea, “it is in vain that you disguise your divinity” (W.F. Jackson Knight).

\(^{77}\) So R. D. Williams [supra N. 14], who wrongly compare 1.659-60 (furentem / Incendat reginam), since, unlike fallere, incendere is factitive. In an example such as fallit te incautum pietas tua, 10.812, there is no prolepsis
is just unable to introduce a prolepsis. Conclusion: we should mercilessly throw out of the 
Aeneid these carbuncles which parasite it.

-2) v. 386: Apart from the absurdity of such an accusation, since nefas is not based on 
anything, and maiorem... furorem is denied by sine more furit, 377, the line 386 denounces 
itself by its particular heaviness (adorta... orsa: and that, after a first participle: simulato). It's 
a deadweight which regrettably delays the irresistible impulse of the queen towards the free 
forests (Euolat).

Is it necessary to wonder about the origin of these malevolent insertions? Amata is a 
visceral enemy of "pious Aeneas". With the sure instinct of a mother, she has immediately 
seen through this adventurer: he is a hypocrite, a robber (perfidus ... prae do, 7.362), a new Paris (363-64), who must be driven into the sea at the earliest. How could Augustus, who 
loved to contemplate himself through his supposed Trojan ancestor, resist the temptation to 
pour his viperous venom and hatred on the noble and courageous Amata? All manuscripts 
give these verses, which proves that they were part of the original edition of the Aeneid, an 
edition tightly controlled by... Augustus.

2) Turnus the bull (12. 101-6)?

His agitur furiis totoque ardentis ab ore  
Scintillae absistunt, oculis micat acribus ignis  
Mugitus ueluti cum prima in proelia taurus  
Terrificos ciet atque irasci in cornua temptat  
Arboris obnixus trunco uentosque laces sit  
Ictibus aut sparsa ad pugnam proludit harena.

“Frenzy drives him. Turnus’ whole face is abraze, 
showering sparks, his dazzling glances glinting fire –
terrible, bellowing like some bull before the fight begins, 
trying to pour his fury into his horns, he rams a tree-trunk, 
charges the winds full force, stamping sprays of sand 
as he warms up for battle.”

since Lausus right now is incautus, i.e. not protected by his shield: fallit correctly means that his filial piety 
causes his fault, but this meaning cannot apply in the case of Amata.
After his proud attitude towards Latinus’s defeat, Turnus rushed into his home to prepare his horses and arm himself for battle. Virgil spends no less than fourteen cheerful verses to these preliminaries, then another six to the vibrant invocation, kind of Schwertlied, the hero addresses his spear (v. 81-100). The moment seems then badly chosen to compare Turnus to a bull, especially as he has just been likened to a lion! This comparison is moreover introduced in a particularly clumsy way, since we are told literally that "his eyes are sparkling like when a bull is terrifyingly roaring".

Note that of these six verses, the last three are repeating almost word for word Georg. 3.232-34, which depicts a bull that has been defeated once, and is preparing for the revenge. But first Turnus has never yet met Aeneas in single combat, and secondly this parallelism with an angry animal charging at a tree-trunk, harassing the winds and scattering the dust cannot fail to ridicule the Rutulian hero. At the end of the book, when the two champions will face each other for the ultimate fight, then, but only then, will the poet legitimately and effectively be able to compare them with two bulls in the arena (v. 715-22).

For the other three lines, the third owes almost everything to this passage in question (v. 715-16), while the other two are too bad to be Virgilian. Saying that “his whole face is abraze and sends sparks flying”, " and that "fire is glittering in his eyes" is already repetitive and even burlesque, but In addition the verb absistunt is too weak to express the action of sparking, and the term ore, in the sense of “face”, badly conforms, even accompanied by a pathetic toto, with Virgilian use. Finally, His agitur furis clashes violently with the previous twenty verses, depicting a Turnus as calm as determined, as endearing as heroic. On the other hand, this hateful expression would take sense as the response of "someone" who mirrored himself in Aeneas, and received as a personal insult the effeminate portrayal Turnus had just

---

78 It does not help that the word mugitus is emphasized by its position at the beginning of verse and in anteposition to the conjunction (mugitus ueluti cum). It's like sparks, scintillae, became roaring, mugitus!

79 As R. D. Williams notes, the image is taken from Plautus (Men. 830) and Lucretius (3.289), but, as he says, "much bolder" (or with bad taste?).

80 Already in the plural, the word by Virgil usually tends to remember its sense of "lips", "mouth" (see above p. 8 and N. 32-33), but more so in the singular. It is also not excluded that the forger would have found natural the transition from "mouth" to "roaring" (but a mouth that throws sparks!). This improper use of ora is probably not found by chance in the (spurious, too) line 8.229 (ora ferebat to mean "he looked to"?): it is like a signature (cf. the article referred to supra N. 35, pp. 21-24).
painted of the latter, with “his tresses crimped / with a white-hot curling-iron dripping myrrh”. You can probably guess. -jym (2016.01.01).