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HOMER'S FIRST BATTLE SUPPLICATION AND THE END OF VIRGIL'S *AENEID*

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Abstract: One of the less appreciated literary influences on the Virgilian depiction of Aeneas' decision to slay Turnus at the end of the *Aeneid* is the first battle supplication scene in Homer's *Iliad*, the encounter of Adrestus with Menelaus and Agamemnon. Close consideration of Virgil's response to the Homeric scene sheds light on the poet's concerns in his presentation of the choice his Trojan hero Aeneas confronts in light of Turnus' appeal. Acrostics at the end of the *Aeneid* invite further reflection.
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The first supplicant to beg for his life in Homer's *Iliad* is the ill-fated Adrestus, who implores Menelaus to spare him in exchange for a handsome ransom from his father (6.37–62).[1] Adrestus is on the verge of succeeding in his appeal when Agamemnon interrupts the scene. He upbraids his brother for his willingness to consider bargaining with his vanquished foe, asking sarcastically what good Menelaus has ever received from Troy. Chastened by the fraternal correction, Menelaus pushes Adrestus away, and Agamemnon proceeds to kill the defeated Trojan, in accord with his plainly stated heroic code whereby one's foes are to be slain utterly, even the future fighter in his mother's womb. We may quote the passage at length:[2]

Ἄδρηστον δ' ἄρ' ἔπειτα βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Μενέλαος
ζωὸν ἕλ': ἵππω γάρ οἱ ἀτυζομένω πεδίοιο
ὄζῳ ἔνι βλαφθέντε μυρικίνῳ ἀγκύλον ἅρμα
ἄξαντ' ἐν πρώτῳ ῥυμῷ αὐτὼ μὲν ἐβήτην 40
πρὸς πόλιν, ᾗ περ οἱ ἄλλοι ἀτυζόμενοι φοβέοντο,
αὐτὸς δ' ἐκ δίφροιο παρὰ τροχὸν ἐξεκυλίσθη
πρηνὴς ἐν κονίῃσιν ἐπὶ στόμα: πὰρ δέ οἱ ἔστη
Ἀτρεΐδης Μενέλαος ἔχων δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος.
Ἄδρηστος δ' ἄρ' ἔπειτα λαβὼν ἐλίσσετο γούνων: 45

[1] On how such appeals are not unusual for epic heroes in peril, cf. the reflections of Renehan 1987, 99–116.
[2] All quotes from Homer's *Iliad* are taken from West 1998.

ζώγρει Ἀτρέος υἱέ, σὺ δ' ἄξια δέξαι ἄποινα:
πολλὰ δ' ἐν ἀφνειοῦ πατρὸς κειμήλια κεῖται
χαλκός τε χρυσός τε πολύκμητός τε σίδηρος,
τῶν κέν τοι χαρίσαιτο πατὴρ ἀπερείσι' ἄποινα
εἴ κεν ἐμὲ ζωὸν πεπύθοιτ' ἐπὶ νηυσὶν Ἀχαιῶν. 50
ὣς φάτο, τῷ δ' ἄρα θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν ἔπειθε:
καὶ δή μιν τάχ' ἔμελλε θοὰς ἐπὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν
δώσειν ᾧ θεράποντι καταξέμεν: ἀλλ' Ἀγαμέμνων
ἀντίος ἦλθε θέων, καὶ ὁμοκλήσας ἔπος ηὔδα:
ὦ πέπον ὦ Μενέλαε, τί ἢ δὲ σὺ κήδεαι οὕτως 55
ἀνδρῶν; ἦ σοὶ ἄριστα πεποίηται κατὰ οἶκον
πρὸς Τρώων; τῶν μή τις ὑπεκφύγοι αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον
χεῖράς θ' ἡμετέρας, μηδ' ὅν τινα γαστέρι μήτηρ
κοῦρον ἐόντα φέροι, μηδ' ὃς φύγοι, ἀλλ' ἅμα πάντες
Ἰλίου ἐξαπολοίατ' ἀκήδεστοι καὶ ἄφαντοι. 60
ὣς εἰπὼν ἔτρεψεν ἀδελφειοῦ φρένας ἥρως
αἴσιμα παρειπών: ὃ δ' ἀπὸ ἕθεν ὤσατο χειρὶ
ἥρω' Ἄδρηστον: τὸν δὲ κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων
οὖτα κατὰ λαπάρην: ὃ δ' ἀνετράπετ', Ἀτρεΐδης δὲ
λὰξ ἐν στήθεσι βὰς ἐξέσπασε μείλινον ἔγχος. 65

The scene has occasioned scholarly commentary on its depiction of a suppliant's offer of ransom and the firm rejection thereof by Agamemnon.[3] It is in several regards the quintessential Homeric battle supplication passage, complete with the poet-narrator's endorsement of Agamemnon's position as the fitting and proper response to Adrestus' plea (cf. 6.61–2 ὣς εἰπὼν ἔτρεψεν ἀδελφειοῦ φρένας ἥρως / αἴσιμα παρειπών …).[4] Agamemnon corrects Menelaus, as it were; the words of his admonition are followed at once by action, as he slays his brother's suppliant. Consequently, Agamemnon's example inspires Nestor to call out to the Argives to enjoin them to kill their foes and not to worry about spoils; there will be time enough to strip the bodies of their armor once everyone is dead (6.66–71).[5] Agamemnon's successful persuasion of his brother comes without comment from Menelaus; there is only the swift action of the chastened hero in accord with the criticism.[6] If we questioned Agamemnon's intervention, Nestor, at least, operates in accord with it, and endorses its sentiment. Menelaus is overruled by Agamemnon; the Spartan king may be the victor over Adrestus (who was not defeated in

[3] See in particular Goldhill 1990, 373–6; Wilson 2002, 165–7; Scodel 2008, 75–94. For general commentary on the passage note Graziosi and Haubold 2010; also Kirk 1990; and Stoevesandt 2008, *ad loc*.

[4] Note here Naiden 2006, 143–4.

[5] The detail is significant in part because it underscores the uncontroversial nature of Agamemnon's position.

[6] On Agamemnon's effective persuasion of his brother and related instances in the poet note van der Mije 2011, 447–54.

combat, however, but largely because of the entanglement of his horses in tamarisk), but his Mycenaean brother takes charge of the scene and expresses not atypical Homeric attitudes on pity.[7]

This is a passage, then, pregnant with multifaceted reflections on many of the problems of Homeric heroic morality. Adrestus, we might add, is the prototypical suppliant; there is no hint in Homer's narrative of any reason why the appeal should be rejected because of the hero's personal flaw or culpability.[8] Adrestus may not be a particularly impressive warrior, but he is also not marked by any active indulgence in inappropriate behavior that is worthy of note or rebuke (save, at the most, cowardice and trepidation).

Menelaus is depicted as willing to spare Adrestus; this is not in itself something foreign or inappropriate to Homeric battle practice.[9] The morality referenced in the Adrestus scene is complex: Menelaus exercises a willingness to engage in (merciful, we might think) commerce that can be paralleled elsewhere in the epic (indeed, commerce not unfamiliar to Agamemnon), but his brother's call for essentially total war and the giving of no quarter to one's enemies is also not something beyond the scope of Homeric conceptions of propriety (as the poet-narrator's comment at 6.62 confirms). Certainly Agamemnon's mood has changed since 2.229–30, and the Trojans labor under the inevitable consequences of the Paris-Menelaus duel of Book 3 and Pandarus' breaking of the truce in Book 4.[10] The Adrestus supplication vignette presents a richly textured consideration of the limits of mercy; both brothers display acceptable behavior, even if Agamemnon's is the more appropriate, one might argue, for this moment at this stage of the war. We do well to remember that the Homeric epics are not Bronze Age manuals of moral theology. That said, they do present a coherent universe of behavioral expectations, even if straight lines are sometimes delineated crookedly.

We shall consider the importance of this signal Homeric passage for a better understanding of one of the most celebrated supplication scenes in ancient epic: the similarly unsuccessful appeal of the Rutulian Turnus to the Trojan Aeneas for his life at the very close of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Again we may begin by quoting the passage:[11]

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[7] Cf. further here Tuckness and Parrish 2014, 57–8.

[8] Adrestus is snared by Menelaus (rather *more Absalomeo*) after the horses of his chariot became entangled in a tamarisk, a plant that was known for its humble state (6.38–9), in another pathetic detail that increases the sympathy for the hapless prey (cf. Servius *ad* Virgil, *Eclogues* 4.2.1 *myricae virgulta sunt humillima sterilia, quod vulgo tamaricium dicitur*).

[9] See here Stelow 2020, 69–71 (with reference to Agamemnon's own willingness to accept ransoms at *Iliad* 2.229–30, and Achilles' implicit acceptance of the practice at 21.99–113).

[10] Note too Menelaus' wounding (4.127–97).

[11] All quotes from Virgil's *Aeneid* are taken from Conte 2019.

Ille humilis, supplexque oculos, dextramque precantem, 930
protendens, equidem merui, nec deprecor, inquit:
utere sorte tua. miseri te si qua parentis
tangere cura potest, oro (fuit et tibi talis
Anchises genitor) Dauni miserere senectae;
et me, seu corpus spoliatum lumine mavis, 935
redde meis. vicisti: et victum tendere palmas
Ausonii videre: tua est Lavinia coniux.
ulterius ne tende odiis. stetit acer in armis
Aeneas, volvens oculos, dextramque repressit.
et iam iamque magis cunctantem flectere sermo 940
coeperat; infelix humero cum apparuit alto
balteus, et notis fulserunt cingula bullis,
Pallantis pueri; victum quem vulnere Turnus
straverat, atque humeris inimicum insigne gerebat
ille, oculis postquam saevi monimenta doloris, 945
exuviasque hausit, furiis incensus et ira
terribilis: tune hinc spoliis, indute, meorum
eripiare mihi? Pallas te hoc vulnere, Pallas
immolat, et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit.
hoc dicens, ferrum adverso sub pectore condit 950
fervidus. ast illi solvuntur frigore membra,
vitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras.

Our investigation of the influence of Homer's Adrestus supplication scene on Aeneas' interaction with Turnus will demonstrate that Virgil here makes implicit comment on the actions of his protagonist, via an appraisal that does not redound to the credit of his hero in light of the novel morality that his ghostly father offered as emblematic ideal to the Roman of the future in the misty haunts of Elysium.[12] We shall argue that Virgil intended us to remember here both Homer's Adrestus with the Atridae, and the encounter of Aeneas and Anchises in the Virgilian underworld. Lessons from Book 6 of the *Iliad* and the corresponding book of the *Aeneid* will both be recalled in the last lines of Virgil's work.[13] We shall see how Virgil invites consideration of the implications of the Homeric Adrestus scene, even at the level of acrostic wordplay. Much has been written on the influence of Homer's depiction of Achilles and Hector in *Iliad* 22 on the Virgilian Aeneas and Turnus; our study will focus on the underappreciated shadow of the

[12] On the implications of Virgil's hints a new morality for the depiction of his Trojans as proto-Romans and for the healing of tensions in the wake of the Roman civil wars, see Pollio 2006, 96–107. Cf. Burnell 1987, 186–200.

[13] The *Iliad* 6 passage offers competing visions of how to deal with suppliants; there is a similar dichotomy in the advice offered by the shade of Anchises in Elysium in *Aeneid* 6.

supplication scene of Menelaus with Adrestus that is also cast intertextually over the last lines of the *Aeneid*.[14]

The two supplicatory passages in Homer and Virgil are of similar length. In Virgil Aeneas is in the place of Menelaus, and Turnus of the vanquished Adrestus. Both Menelaus and Aeneas are initially inclined to acquiesce in the appeal of their defeated foeman. At the very least, both men hesitate to consider the appeal. In Homer it is Agamemnon who argues for killing Adrestus, and who carries out the grim deed; in Virgil it is Aeneas who slays Turnus, but via the quasi-invocation and attribution of the act of slaughter to the Arcadian Pallas (cf. 12.948–9).[15] Aeneas sees that Turnus is wearing the spoils that were taken from his young friend; enraged at the visual *tableau* with its grim memory of Pallas' death, he is overcome by rage and slays his conquered opponent.[16] Unlike Homer's Adrestus, Turnus makes his supplicatory prayer under the shadow of a former victim, namely Evander's son Pallas;[17] his culpability for overweening, inappropriate behavior in the despoiling of the young Arcadian stands in marked contrast to the comparative quasi-innocence of Adrestus, guilty at most of cowardice and of fighting on the opposite side of the Atreidae. There are multiple figures named in each sequence: in Homer, the Atreidae and Adrestus (with the latter's father referenced *sine nomine*); in Virgil, there are Aeneas and Turnus, with nominal allusions to Daunus; Anchises; Lavinia; and Pallas. The Augustan poet's supplication scene is thus at once more involved and complex in its web of allusions, not to mention the intertextual reminiscence of Homer's Achilles with Hector, and the Adrestus supplication scene.

The closing, supplicatory passage of the *Aeneid* has been subjected to frequent and controversial analysis.[18] Already in antiquity Aeneas' action was the subject of vigorous debate.[19] The scene derives much of its power from its status as the very

[14] Cf. e.g. Purves 2019, 112 n. 45.; Putnam 1995, 210.

[15] Significant too, perhaps, is the adjective *inimicum* at 12.944 that describes the fateful baldric; it is as if Pallas was personally hateful to Turnus, in an exercise of inappropriate emotional disdain (cf. the different case of 10.489 *et terram hostilem moriens petit ore cruento*, of Pallas as he literally bites the dust). The double repetition of Pallas' name by Aeneas at 12.948 echoes Turnus' *solus ego in Pallanta feror; soli mihi Pallas / debetur* … at 10.442–3.

[16] Significantly, the first visual response of Aeneas to Turnus as he makes his supplication is one of apparent pity. At 12.939 *Aeneas volvens oculos dextramque repressit*, the Trojan hero is depicted as staying his right hand as he runs his eyes over his enemy; his mood changes only after the baldric is noticed at 941. That is the sight on which Aeneas then feasts his eyes (945–6 *ille oculis … / … hausit*).

[17] *Aeneid* 10.439–505, on which see especially Harrison 1991, *ad loc*.

[18] For a start, cf. the sober, reliable commentaries of Tarrant 2012; also Traina 2017, *ad loc*.

[19] Cf. Ceccarelli 2012, 71–99 (with reference to the comments of Lactantius in his *Divinae institutiones* (5.10.1–9)).

close of the poem, with its abrupt ending and seeming lack of neat resolution.[20] The focus of much of this scholarly debate has been on the question of the appropriateness of Aeneas' action in slaying Turnus.[21] Unlike his epic predecessor Homer, Virgil offers no explicit authorial comment such as we find at *Iliad* 6.61–2. The closest the poet comes to editorializing Aeneas' action is in such descriptions of the Trojan hero as … *furiis accensus et ira* (12.946) and *fervidus* (951) as he notices that Turnus is wearing the spoils of Pallas; cf. also *terribilis* at 947.[22] *Fervidus* of Aeneas connects in sound effect to the *ferrum* of 950 that is the instrument of his hot rage and vengeance for the slain Arcadian. Turnus is expressly described as *humilis* and *supplex* (930) as he makes his prayer (930 *precantem*); his words may stir Aeneas and inspire hesitation and reflection, but the visual import of the spoils he fatefully donned conquers any supplicatory vocabulary, no matter how masterful or how effectively combined with humble action.[23]

Turnus offered Aeneas two possibilities: either return him to his father Daunus alive, or at least return his body (12.935–6 *et me, seu corpus spoliatum lumine mavis, / redde meis* …).[24] Virgil is silent on the willingness of the Trojan hero to grant the second alternative, given the abruptness of his poem's ending.[25] The first option was the one Aeneas was leaning toward choosing, before his eyes beheld the ominous object.

Turnus is the principal antagonist of Virgil's epic. In contrast, Adrestus is the name of as many as four figures in the *Iliad*.[26] Interestingly, the last of these is

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[20] See further here Molyviati-Toptsi 2000, 165–77.

[21] I.e., the oft-seen division between so-called optimistic and pessimistic readers, with the former inclined to absolve Aeneas of impropriety. Cf. among older commentators Mackail 1930, 511: " … Virgil's perpetual sense of pity is touched with indignation that the Powers who control life should themselves be so pitiless …," as if the immortals required Aeneas' act; also the defense of the Trojan by Fowler 1919, 155–6 (with focus on the problematic case of Turnus' despoiling of Pallas, which follows on Homer's Hector and the similar treatment of Patroclus' Achillean arms; at *Iliad* 17.198–208 Homer's Zeus considers such donning of a slain enemy's army to be insolent with reference to Hector; cf. *Aeneid* 10.501–5, where the poet-narrator offers his own ominous reflection on Turnus' action. The forecasting of the ultimate resolution of the epic serves in part to increase the emotional import of Aeneas' hesitation at 12.938–41).

[22] The fiery imagery associated with Aeneas contrasts effectively with *frigore* at 12.951, of the dead Turnus.

[23] Note here Anderson 1993, 165–77.

[24] For a good consideration of the implications of Turnus' requests and the poet's treatment of Aeneas' response, see Edgeworth and Stem 2005, 3–11.

[25] The end of Book 10 and the opening of 11 offer an example of Aeneas' treatment of a defeated foe (and the Achilles of *Iliad* 22 looms large in the epic memory); the poet Mapehius Vegius rectified any perceived lack of final polish simply by composing a Book 13, complete with a tidy answer to a difficult problem. Certainly a requiem for Adrestus is not a concern of the Atreidae.

[26] There is the Sicyonian king and father of Aegialeia (2.572) and of Deïpyle, the wife of Tydeus (14.121), whose horse is Arion (23.347); the son of Merops and brother of Amphius

named as the first victim of the aristeia of Patroclus (cf. 16.692–4); Homer's Patroclus is the principal epic model for Virgil's Pallas. Patroclus' first victim was an Adrestus; Pallas' last victim, after a fashion, would be Turnus. The Adrestus of *Iliad* 6 meets his doom in association with the two sons of Atreus, the renowned Greek brothers; Turnus dies at the hand of Aeneas, unquestionably the mightiest of the Trojan survivors, though of less glorious fame during the great war than such heroes as the Atreidae.[27]

Both Adrestus and Turnus invoke the image of the father; for Adrestus, the point is that his (unnamed) father will supply a ransom for his son's life (6.49–50 τῶν κέν τοι χαρίσαιτο πατὴρ ἀπερείσι' ἄποινα / εἴ κεν ἐμὲ ζωὸν πεπύθοιτ' ἐπὶ νηυσὶν Ἀχαιῶν), while for Turnus, there is the question of Aeneas having pity on Daunus' old age, coupled with the powerful evocation of Aeneas' own father Anchises (12.932–4 … *miseri te si qua parentis / tangere cura potest, oro* (*fuit et tibi talis / Anchises genitor*) *Dauni miserere senectae*).[28] The Homeric ransom economy from the Adrestus passage has been replaced by the rather more intangible concepts of *misericordia* and *memoria*,[29] borrowed in part from the powerful appeal of Homer's Priam to Achilles that he remember the plight of his own father and so take pity on another sire.[30] The spoils that matter are the arms of Pallas; Turnus speaks of being despoiled of the light (12.935 *corpus spoliatum lumine*), but what looms large is his taking and wearing of Pallas' baldric. There is, too, a powerful reminiscence of the appeal of Priam to Achilles from *Iliad* 24.486–506, in which the Trojan king makes note of the potential grief of Achilles' father Peleus.[31] Daunus is still alive and in the pitiable state of old age; he does not take active part in the Virgilian narrative.[32]

Regarding the Atreidae, Menelaus is the brother who was wronged by the Trojans via the abduction of his wife Helen by Paris; he is also depicted by Homer as the one willing to consider sparing Adrestus: the more justly aggrieved

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(2.830), both slain by Diomedes (11.328); as well as Agamemnon's victim in Book 6 and Patroclus' in 16. It is not certain whether there is overlap to be found here.

[27] Note the interesting and obscure reference of *Iliad* 13.459–61, where Aeneas is described in passing as being angry with Priam, given that despite his prowess in battle he never received due credit.

[28] On Virgil's Anchises cf. further Wiik 2008; also Lloyd 1957, 44–55; Canciani 1985, 158–62; Thomas 2014, 74–6.

[29] We may observe *miseri* and *miserere* in close correlation at 12.932 and 934; in the latter verse note also the name *Anchises* in prominent position, in framing order with *Dauni* around *genitor*.

[30] Cf. *Iliad* 24.486 ff.

[31] On the Virgilian portrayal of the best of the Achaeans, see especially Smith 1999, 225–62.

[32] For this shadowy yet significant minor character cf. Noonan 1993, 111–25, with particular reference to the possible connection between Turnus' father and the Roman god who figures in the drama of 12.766 ff.

party is the more reasonable or merciful in the present instance, one might argue.[33] Agamemnon, in contrast, calls for the death of every last male Trojan, even the child in his mother's womb (cf. 6.55–60); he endorses a vision of utter destruction, one in which there is no room for either mourning or memory of the dead.[34] In Virgil, Aeneas is portrayed as enraged because of the slaying of Pallas; interestingly, he casts the killing of Turnus in terms of a revenge that is envisaged as being carried out by the dead Arcadian (12.949–60), perhaps with some intention of transferring the responsibility for the deed to Pallas.[35] Pallas will enact the posthumous punishment for his own slaughter; Virgil's *poenam* … *sumit* (12.949) responds to Homer's mention of ἄποινα (6.46): the *poena* for Pallas' death is the life of Turnus.[36] The visual invocation of the *puer* via Aeneas' glimpse of Pallas' baldric proves to be more powerful than Turnus' appeal to the image of the father (cf. 12.943 *Pallantis pueri* with 932 … *parentis* and 934 … *genitor*).[37] Mention of the father prompts hesitation in both Homer's Menelaus and Virgil's Aeneas (even if for different reasons); the remembrance of the youth/surrogate son Pallas provokes anger in Aeneas, while Homer's Agamemnon is not depicted explicitly as being angry, for all his argument in favor of slaughtering even Trojan infants.[38] Agamemnon's is the unemotional, cold rationale of battle reckoning: he has no personal interest in Adrestus, and indeed argues for a treatment of one's enemies where the desideratum is oblivion. There

[33] Note also that Turnus explicitly renounces any claim to Lavinia as part of his appeal (12.937); Menelaus is willing to spare Adrestus despite Helen's continued uncertain status (admittedly, Adrestus is not Paris). Turnus proceeds to admonish Aeneas about indulging in hate (12.938 *ulterius ne tende odiis* …); he argues as if the account ledgers were now settled, when for Aeneas the blood debt owed to Pallas remains unpaid. Lavinia is presented in something of the position of Helen; Aeneas is cast in the role of the predatory Paris, with Turnus as the aggrieved, quasi-Menelaus. We may compare here how when Homer's Menelaus is wounded by Paris, the blood on his thigh is compared to the scarlet on ivory when a woman stains the cheek-piece for horses; this memorable image is exactly borrowed by Virgil for the description of Lavinia's blush in the presence of Turnus as her mother Amata makes her appeal to the Rutulian to refrain from further combat. The blush serves to fire Turnus' ardor; he views himself as the new Menelaus, robbed by the neo-Paris. See further on this Danek 1997, 91–104; more generally on Lavinia cf. Formicula 2006; Fratantuono 2008; D'Alessandro Behr 2014.

[34] Cf. 6.60 … ἀκήδεστοι καὶ ἄφαντοι, of the imagined Trojan dead. Agamemnon defines the parameters of the disposition of the defeated.

[35] The problem has occasioned much critical response; for a start see Esposito 2016, 463–81.

[36] The sibilant sound effects of *scelerato ex sanguine sumit* veritably hiss out Aeneas' rage.

[37] In Virgil, the topos of prematurely doomed youth supplants the Homeric conception of Patroclus as being older than Achilles, even if not by much (cf. *Iliad* 11.787). Further on the Virgilian preoccupation with prematurely dead youth, see especially Sisul 2018.

[38] Agamemnon uses the argument that nothing good has come to Menelaus from Troy, and so why should he provide a boon to his foes; cf. 6.56–7 … ἦ σοὶ ἄριστα πεποίηται κατὰ οἶκον / πρὸς Τρώων …

is an element of the genocidal in Agamemnon's logic; he is far past the point of extending any heroic courtesies to the Trojans, or even of considering the sparing of Trojan male children. But there is no personal grievance with Adrestus *per se*.

In brief, Turnus and Aeneas both come to their encounter with weightier considerations than Adrestus and the Atreidae: the Rutulian has his history with Pallas working against him, while the Trojan has his encounter with the shade of his venerable father in Elysium to haunt him. The reader of the end of Book 12 of the *Aeneid* is invited to recall lessons from Book 6, as well as from Book 6 of the *Iliad*. Indeed, the dual elements of Anchises' advice to the future Roman (*parcere subiectis* on the one hand, *debellare superbos* on the other) recall the dual examples of Homer's Menelaus and Agamemnon. In Virgil there is no contradiction: the *subiecti* and the *superbi* deserve different responses.[39] In Homer there is somewhat more room for nuance and seeming contradiction, one might conclude: Adrestus is the equivalent of Virgil's *subiectus*, but Agamemnon is not wrong to demand his death, even if Menelaus is not necessarily wrong, either, in considering exchanging mercy for money.[40] One salient feature is that Homer's passage does not much involve anger and wrath; Virgil, in contrast, is deeply concerned with this emotion in the last lines of his poem, just as is at its outset in the problem of Juno's wrath and its ominous consequence for the Trojan exiles.

To summarize: Menelaus is inclined to do nothing that Agamemnon himself does not do elsewhere, or that Achilles does not envision as possible. The objection of Agamemnon (complete with the poet-narrator's approval) is perhaps rooted in a question of timing, not a criticism of the nature of his brother's act. Then, too, Homer may be self-contradictory, and not the composer of a consistent moral code for heroes. Likeliest, we would argue, is that there may simply be a range of acceptable heroic behaviors, and that in the immediate context (i.e., in the wake of the events of Books 3–4 in particular), Agamemnon's action is the correct one.

In Virgil, Aeneas in his decision to kill Turnus arguably follows the admonition of Evander, not of Anchises' shade; Aeneas does not spare the subjected, though he does beat down the one who was proud enough to don Pallas' baldric. The choice Aeneas makes is taken indisputably in burning anger, like that of

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[39] And the possibility that Turnus straddles both of these categories in light of his despoiling of Pallas is at the heart of the problem of the end of the poem: an argument can be made that he is both *subiectus* and *superbus*, with a resultant seemingly impossibly correct choice for Aeneas. What is beyond dispute is that the rage of Juno from the start of the poem (1.4, etc.) has been inherited in the end by Aeneas; this is the rebirth of the rage of Achilles from the Homeric *Iliad* (1.1), without the possibility for the quelling thereof such as found in that epic's last book.

[40] Cf. the conflict in Virgil between the admonitions of Anchises in Elysium and the appeals of Pallas' father Evander at 11.175–81: Aeneas is caught between the competing moral visions of the two fathers.

Achilles with Hector and, in the divine machinery of the *Aeneid*, of Juno with respect to the Aeneas and his Trojans.[41]

The name "Adrestus" may connote inevitability or that which cannot be escaped.[42] Adrestus is the "Inescapable."[43] While some might argue that the meaning of the name does not necessarily fit the Homeric context particularly aptly (unless the point is to emphasize how the tamarisk-trapped Adrestus cannot escape death), we shall now explore how it is most fitting for the Virgilian reminiscence, in which Turnus experiences retribution for his behavior with Pallas, even as Pallas' avenger Aeneas experiences nothing less than the rebirth of Achilles' Iliadic wrath, and the taking on of the Junonian rage that has plagued him for a dozen books – a high price indeed for the vengeance wrought for his Arcadian friend.[44]

We have observed how fathers figure in both the Homeric and the Virgilian supplication scenes. Turnus' mention of Anchises in his appeal for his life recalls the admonition to the imagined Roman of the future given by Aeneas' father's shade in Elysium:[45]

> *tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento:*
> *hae tibi erunt artes; pacisque imponere morem,*
> *parcere subiectis, et debellare superbos.* (6.851–3)

Much has been written on these verses and their connection to the end of the epic; it is difficult to ignore them in interpreting the final movement of the poem, even if the conclusions drawn may be diverse.[46] *Parcere subiectis*, suffice to say, is not an injunction easily paralleled in Homer, even if Menelaus' interaction with Adrestus offers sufficient evidence that the sentiment existed, at least theoretically or as part of an exchange equation whereby one could pay in gold for one's life. Anchises' shade enunciates a development of doctrine, a veritable paradigm shift: *parcere* is introduced to the vocabulary of warfare, and without mention of ransoms or blood prices.[47] If Trojan Aeneas is to take on the Roman mantle, his

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[41] The emphasis on anger at the of the *Aeneid* may reflect the Epicurean philosophical concern with the emotion and its consequences. See further here e.g. Armstrong and McOsker 2020, 32 ff.

[42] Cf. e.g. Benardete 1969, 19–20.

[43] Cf. the Nemesis-like goddess Adrestea, cited in the fragmentary epic poet Phoronis (*PEG* 2) and in Aeschylus (*TrGF* 158), though not in Homer.

[44] In Homer Adrestus cannot escape death; in Virgil the same is true of Turnus, though there is also the added relevance of the fate of Aeneas *vis-à-vis* his response to the Rutulian's appeal.

[45] For what follows, cf. Putnam 2011.

[46] Detailed commentary on the import of this celebrated passage may be found at Horsfall 2013; cf. also Austin 1977, *ad loc*.

[47] Much of the debate on the significance of Anchises' admonition to the end of the epic centers on the contrasted imperatives at 6.853 *parcere subiectis* and *debellare superbos*; Turnus can be labeled both *subiectus* and *superbus* in the final scene of the poem, the former by virtue of his

vocation is not that of Homer's Agamemnon, ready even to slay enemy babes in the womb. Turnus was not privy to the vision in Elysium and to the encounter of Aeneas with his father's shade; the reference to Anchises at 12.933–4 expresses a generic sentiment of shared humanity and paternal affection. It takes on all the greater import for the reader who remembers Aeneas' underworld sojourn. Aeneas, *in fine*, is not to follow the *exemplum* of the Mycenaean monarch; he is invited to hark to the ghostly summons of his own father. Perhaps he is to go a step beyond even the seemingly merciful Menelaus, who was ready to barter blood for treasure.[48]

Adrestus faced two brothers of diverse inclination; Turnus is at the mercy of a hero to whom two fathers beckon. Evander's admonition is eminently Homeric in its conception; the shade of Anchises offers advice to the Roman of the future that is rooted in the poet's own conception of the demands of reconciling once bitterly opposed factions in the wake of decades of internecine strife.[49]

Turnus had referenced his father Daunus in the context of the commonplace sentiment of sympathy for aged, lonely sires; he is utterly unaware of what Aeneas experienced during his katabasis. Homer's Agamemnon rejected the offer of a father's wealth and treasure; Virgil's Aeneas does not recall his own father's musings on the treatment of those who are *humilis* and *supplex*. The rage occasioned by the glimpse of Pallas' baldric suspends any exercise of reasoned reflection; the *Aeneid* ends with Aeneas as *fervidus*, his last action the killing of Turnus that loosens the Rutulian's chill limbs in death.[50] Leaving aside question of authorial intention in revising the poem, there is no question that the poem ends with an abruptness that has inspired understandable disquiet.[51]

The final scene of the *Aeneid* offers two haunting acrostics, whatever we may conclude about the complex moral problems of weighing mercy and revenge,

defeat in single combat, the latter with reference to his donning of Pallas' arms. We may note, too, that Turnus does not make any offer of a price or ransom in his appeal to Aeneas: his request for mercy is rooted entirely in the question of compassion for an aged father, and with the deliberate pathos of introducing Anchises to the equation (in part so as for the reader more readily to recall Aeneas' quasi-school lessons in Elysium).

[48] The Roman of the future is enjoined to observe a tricolon of commands: *pacisque imponere morem* (6.851) references setting the terms of peace, which is presented anterior to the balanced imperatives of verse 852 (which are in part epexegetical). The intensive prefix of *debellare* underscores the notion of finishing what was one started.

[49] The vision of 6.851–3, in other words, is eminently Augustan in its import.

[50] We may compare 12.951–2 of Turnus with the first appearance of Aeneas in the poem at 1.92 *Extemplo Aeneae solvuntur frigore membra*, of the hero in mortal terror during the Junonian storm.

[51] Cf. the not dissimilar case of the close of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*; also the even more problematic close of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*.

justice and compassion.[52] These acrostics neatly encapsulate the weighty controversies that mark the end of Virgil's epic. At verses 12.931–4, we read the present imperative *PUTA* in longitudinal acrostic (***p****rotendens* / ***u****tere* / ***t****angere* / ***A****nchises*) just as Turnus invites Aeneas to do just that, namely to think and to reflect on his actions.[53] This is an acrostic whose challenge has been taken up by countless readers of Virgil. Then, at 944–7, we find *SIET* spelled out (followed by *EI*) in similar acrostic pattern, just as the Trojan hero resolves to slay his vanquished foe, with the archaic present subjunctive offering a solemn comment on the last act of Aeneas in the epic, even as it expresses the will of the livid, wrathful hero.[54] The last movements of Virgil's epic thus invite the reader to indulge in reflection, just before we learn of Aeneas' definite rejection of his father's Elysian advice, and of his reversion to a heroic morality that Homer's Agamemnon would champion, as also the Achilles of *Iliad* 22.[55] Homer's first supplicant is thus echoed in Virgil's last, with the sad reminder that some destinies are indeed inescapable.

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[52] On the increasingly popular subject of Virgilian acrostics one may consult Katz 2014, 8 and 1396–7; also Katz 2013, 1–30 (with convenient summary and references on the subject). Acrostics occasion varying degrees of acceptance; vowel quantities do not constitute a *sine qua non* for the principally visual phenomenon.

[53] We might note also the acrostics *era* at 12.935–7, just as Turnus comes to note that Aeneas may marry Lavinia; and *te* at 947–8, in two verses that emphasize the second person personal pronoun (947 *tu*; 948 *te*). Acrostic reading is often an exercise in subjectivity: we would argue that *puta* and *siet* (followed at once by *ei*) are too meaningful in context to be fortuitous accidents; *era* and *te* are also not without readily grasped contextual meaning. In acrostic puzzles, the most common type manifests as a reading of the first letter of successive verses, such that one may visually read a word down the left side of the page. *Puta* and *siet* are good examples of words that fit the context. In contrast, e.g., *aer* at 934–6 seems accidental (unless we are to remember the *aër* that was the traditional provenance of Juno, the goddess whose wrath has been, in some sense, transferred to Aeneas in the final verses of the poem; *aer* and *era* are overlapping acrostics, with possible evocation of the dread goddess). *Siet ei* works with either Turnus or Pallas as the referent of the demonstrative (e.g., with a meaning of "let it be for him," i.e. as an offering for Pallas, or of the fate of the doomed Rutulian). Further on the complex question of the rage that Aeneas acquires at the epic's close, see *inter al*. Newman and Newman 2005, 171–2, with connection of the furious Dido to the similarly livid Aeneas). As often in Virgil, many factors converge in one inter- and intratextual puzzle.

[54] Turnus' death verse is the last line of the epic; it is identical to 11.831, of the demise of Camilla. In the immediate wake of her death the acrostic *sit* may be read (11.832–5), in interesting parallel of both shared lines and parallel acrostics.

[55] Though not the hero of *Iliad* 24. Fittingly, the *puta* acrostic that invites a recollection of the admonition of the shade of Anchises in Elysium ends on a verse that opens with the name ***A****nchises*. The acrostic *siet* ends with the adjective *terribilis* of Aeneas, the penultimate description of the hero *insignis pietate*. An archaic subjunctive, as Aeneas' action harks back to the similar state of the wrathful Achilles with Hector.

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