

I Ritual Violence and the Failure of Sacrifice

et quisquam numen Iunonis adorat
praeterea aut supplex aris imponet honorem? (Aen. 1.48–49)

And will anyone still worship Juno's deity
or as a suppliant lay sacrifice upon her altars?

JUNO'S ANGER FUELS THE ACTION OF THE *AENEID*, AND SACRIFICE is at the root of this anger. The performance of sacrifices in her honor validates her deity; it is a tangible form of worship, the basis of exchange between gods and humans, and a locus where the power differential between them is played out. Recent scholarship has amply demonstrated the importance of the role of ritual sacrifice in the *Aeneid*. The work of Bandera (1981), Hardie (1993), and Dyson (2001) has shown that representations of ritual sacrifice, sacrificial symbolism and metaphor, as well as the depiction of various characters as scapegoats, abound in the epic. One thus may speak of the existence of a ritual intertext (Dyson 2001: 13) operative in the poem.

Building on the insights of these scholars, I offer an analysis of the *Aeneid*'s ritual intertext, which I examine along with the poem's allusive intertext. I argue that the poem's ritual representations, metaphors, and symbols are inextricably linked with the deployment of its rich allusive program. Throughout the *Aeneid*, Vergil manipulates a pattern of ritual representations, sacrifice being the most salient among them, absent in the Homeric epics and specific to Greek tragedy. In many Greek plays, ritual perversion symbolically represents a disruption of the religious order that in turn intensifies the conflict and crisis in the tragic plot.

The ritual perversion developed in the course of the play is eventually replaced by a restoration of the disrupted religious order through the correct performance of ritual or the institution of a new cult (Seaford 1994: 368–405). To be sure, the problems, anxieties, and conflicts that ritual corruption brings to the foreground may be far from satisfactorily resolved (Vernant 1988), but ritual correctness is no longer in jeopardy (Seaford 1994: 366–67). In the *Aeneid*, descriptions of perverted rituals often coexist with verbal points of contact with specific moments within Greek tragic texts. As a result, the poem mobilizes a program of sustained allusion to Greek tragedy both through appropriation of specific texts and through the manipulation of the pattern of sacrificial perversion and restoration.

The *Aeneid* does not simply apply the tragic pattern of perversion turned to restoration but transforms it. Viewed through the lens of Greek tragedy, the presence of perverted rituals within the poem creates the expectation of ritual restoration. Yet the poem ends with what I will argue is a poignant moment of ritual perversion and therefore thwarts the expectation of restoration. As a result, the tragic ritual intertext undermines Aeneas' killing of Turnus as an act of retribution and implies the continuation of the cycle of violence. The poem's tragic intertext thus problematizes the very solution necessitated by its appropriation of and engagement with the Homeric intertext.

In an effort to understand the workings of the pattern of ritual corruption and subsequent restoration, the notion of narrative "repetition" as developed by Peter Brooks (1984) and applied by David Quint (1993) in the narrative of the *Aeneid* may be helpful. According to Brooks, narrative is linked intimately with plots of psychic mastery and empowerment. Narrative "must make use of specific, perceptible repetition in order to create plot, that is to show us a significant interconnection of events" (Brooks 1984: 99). For Brooks, narrative is the middle between beginning and end, which is understood as a dynamic "dilatatory space of postponement and error" (96). In this "middle," repetitions "bind the energy of the text so as to make its final discharge more effective" (108). Revisiting past moments within the narrative recalls earlier moments and at the same time varies them, thus proceeding to a desired ending, whereby progress and mastery may be claimed (Quint 1993: 51). Repetition thus creates a return to the text with a difference. Yet there

is always the risk that repetition will become merely regressive and that the plot will be endlessly repetitious. This dual nature of repetition may destabilize narrative progress and interrupt its forward movement.

David Quint argues that the *Aeneid* plots out such a struggle for empowerment. The second half of the poem repeats events of the first half, with a difference, in order to master them: the Trojans are transformed from losers to winners. The two forms of repetition that Brooks outlines, the negative and the positive, correspond to the dual message of Augustan propaganda, "the injunction to forget the past of civil war (so as to stop repeating it) and the demand that this past be remembered and avenged (so as to be repeated and mastered)" (Quint 1993: 52). This type of analysis can be extended to the poem's ritual text, whereby sacrificial perversion constitutes the middle of the ritual narrative, this space of dynamic delay and detour, working toward "recognition and retrospective illumination" (Brooks 1984: 108). In this light, the epic may be said to deploy the repetition of perverted sacrifice in order to revisit it and master it through ritual purity and restoration. I argue that an examination of this repetition of sacrificial perversion reveals that the ending of the ritual plot fails to attain purity and restoration. In other words, the ritual plot does not end with the positive repetition synonymous with mastery as is the case with the narrative plot.

Actual Roman cultic practice attests to the importance of this psychological need for repetition in Roman consciousness. According to the Roman practice of *instauratio*, a ritual act interrupted or executed incorrectly had to be repeated. Throughout the epic, we witness representations of ritual sacrifices in distorted form. These include descriptions of ritual sacrifices or human deaths cast in sacrificial terms. These sacrificial deaths take the form of failed preliminary sacrifices or failed initiations, criminal acts that require retribution, and the specifically Roman ritual of *devotio*. Each perverted sacrifice thus "repeated" reinforces the expectation of ritual correctness that will lead to a discharge of the ritual plot. The notion of "repetition" is thus helpful for understanding the poem's movement toward resolution and end.

The regular, repeated performance of rituals provides the community with the comfort of control over the ever-unpredictable divine. Similarly, in the context of narrative, repetition provides mastery of past events, which in turn enables progress for the future. Yet repetition within the

ritual intertext of the *Aeneid* exposes the failure of ritual, and of sacrifice in particular, to provide such a sense of comfort and mastery.¹ Before I proceed with my analysis of the tragic pattern of sacrificial perversion in the epic, I shall first discuss the different ways in which Homer and Greek tragedy deal with the problem of sacrifice.

I. HOMERIC AND TRAGIC SACRIFICE

Sacrifice plays an important role in the Homeric epics. The sacrifices performed in the course of the epic narrative involve domestic animals, and ritual elements expressing guilt or anxiety at the killing are notably absent (Seaford 1994: 44). Deaths on the battlefield are never depicted in sacrificial terms, and the verb $\sigma\phi\acute{\alpha}\lambda\zeta\epsilon\iota\nu$ is used only of animals (Seaford 1994: 47). “[A]nimal sacrifices that occur in the narrative do in fact contrast with killing in battle: the predictable, peacefully ordered process of killing and cooking the animal ends in the joyful concord of the feast, whereas on the battlefield all is uncontrolled violence” (Seaford 1989: 87). The ritual of sacrifice ends with a meal, which thus helps cement solidarity and cohesion among the members of the group (Burkert 1985: 55–59; Seaford 1994: 44) by containing both the struggle of the animal and the struggle among the humans who witness the sacrifice, two types of violence that could be potentially uncontrollable (Seaford 1994: 49). This positive role of sacrifice necessitates the omission of one of the most famous events of the Trojan War, the sacrifice of Iphigeneia. As a result, sacrifice in Homer establishes a desired communication with the divine; it may be said that it is used to reassure in moments of transition into the uncertainty of war and to mitigate the suffering it causes (Seaford 1994: 49).

Sacrificial ritual is one of the constitutive forces of the tragic plot. Human sacrifice in tragedy perverts actual sacrificial practice, which normally prohibits the slaughter of men. In contrast to Homer and choral lyric, death in tragedy is frequently represented in a sacrificial setting (Burkert 1966: 116). Moreover, killings of humans cast in sacrificial

¹ On repetition and sacrifice in the *Aeneid* viewed from the perspectives of history vs. reality, see Feldherr 2002.

terms often involve members of the same family, a practice wholly absent in Homer (Seaford 1989: 87). At the same time, the perversion of sacrificial ritual sets in motion the unraveling of the entire religious order, which is eventually restored by the end of the play. As a result, sacrificial perversion stands for the greater social disruption and crisis typical of the tragic plot (Foley 1985: 38).

The sacrifice of twelve Trojan youths (along with the slaughter of horses and dogs) performed by Achilles at the funeral pyre of Patroclus in the *Iliad* (23.175–76) is an exception to the Homeric pattern of sacrifice.² It is an act of unprecedented savagery employed to demonstrate the violence of the hero's grief.³ But this sacrifice differs significantly from those enacted in Greek tragedy. Achilles' sacrificial aggression is directed to outsiders and serves to emphasize that in warfare violence may be uncontrollable. But, despite the violation of sacrificial custom, the religious order appears to emerge intact. Instead, the ritual order is threatened by Achilles' refusal to grant Hector burial, and its disruption is eventually averted by his subsequent reconciliation with Priam and the performance of burial rites (Redfield 1975: 210–23).

II. RITUAL PERVERSION AND TRAGIC INTERTEXT IN THE *AENEID*

In Vergil, the representation of sacrificial ritual often plays the same positive role that it does in Homer: sacrifice is regulated, prescribed, and properly sanctioned by religious custom and law. Aeneas repeatedly displays his piety and technical expertise in a number of such occasions throughout the poem (Bandera 1981: 223). At the same time, Aeneas serves as a paradigm of piety, prefiguring the sacrificial role of the *princeps*

² In the *Odyssey* (4.535 and 11.411), Agamemnon's death is compared to that of a domestic animal. But it is important to note that it is not described in *sacrificial* terms (Seaford 1994: 63). This comparison, however, reverses the sacrificial principle of substitution that prescribes the death of an animal in exchange for the death of a human.

³ See Richardson 1993: 188–89. On Achilles' behavior, see Finley 1977: 137; Segal 1971: 13; and Van Wees 1992: 128.

as a symbol of the religious unity of the empire.⁴ Ritual and sacrifice in particular were such an important part of everyday life that images representing sacrifices came to dominate Augustus' pictorial program. Images of skulls of sacrificial animals, offering bowls, priests' accoutrements, fillets and garlands, are found in almost every building or monument, even if its function was secular. These images encapsulated the nation's renewed piety and the "emotional mood of the new age" (Zanker 1988: 115–18).

Yet the narrative of the *Aeneid* also contains descriptions of sacrificial ritual involving human victims, as encountered in tragedy (Hardie 1991: 33; 1993: 22; 1997b). The sacrifice of humans, normally forbidden by religious law, causes ritual impurity and is a source of pollution, thus distorting the ritual act. In representations of rituals this perversion may also be indicated by the depiction of a rite as its antithetical opposite – the inversion, for instance, of marriage to funeral, as is often the case in Greek tragedy. The violence of perverted sacrifice thus underlies and underscores the tragic conflict.

Aeschylus' *Oresteia* offers a prime example of the ways in which perverted sacrifice pushes forward the development of the plot in many of the Greek tragedies.⁵ Reciprocal violence is the central problem of the trilogy: the murder of Agamemnon by his wife, Clytemnestra, sets in train the series of events that will lead to the foundation of the court, which will replace the old vendetta-like system of dispensing justice. In the plays, the cycle of retribution is cast as a perversion of proper sacrificial procedure. Beginning with *Agamemnon*, all deaths (the demise of the men at Troy, the feast of the eagles upon the hare, the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, the slaughter of the sheep by the lion cub, the murder of Thyestes' children, and the killings of Agamemnon and Cassandra) are

⁴ Hardie 1993: 21–22. He points out that the equation between Aeneas and the *princeps* was evident in visual form in the *Ara Pacis*. On the *Ara Pacis*, Augustus, and images of sacrifice, see also Zanker 1988: 117–18.

⁵ There is plenty of compelling evidence that at least the mythical plot of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* was very well known to Romans. Livius Andronicus has an *Aegisthus*, while Pacuvius has a *Dulorestes*. Accius has written a *Clytemestra* and an *Aegisthus* (some posit that they are the same work). Given the number of plays devoted to this myth, one may safely conclude that Aeschylus' *Oresteia* was an intertext of vital importance to the Roman tragedians.

presented in terms of ritual slaughter. Within this context, sacrificial perversion effaces the differentiation between pure and impure violence and is indicative of a greater crisis in the cultural order, which Girard has famously termed "sacrificial crisis." All boundaries that have hitherto guaranteed the cultural order collapse: the positive and beneficial animal sacrifices are replaced by human sacrifice; men eat their children; women take on male qualities; the hunter becomes the hunted (Griffiths 1979: 25).

In *Choephoroi*, the cycle of retribution draws to a close: Orestes and Electra temporarily end the sacrificial crisis by hurling themselves against Clytemnestra, a common target. The atrocity of children killing their mother is overlooked through the arbitrary assumption that their right to avenge the murder of their father trumps that of Clytemnestra to avenge the sacrifice of her daughter Iphigeneia. This turning point in the trilogy is expressed by the absence of sacrificial symbolism from the murders of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus (Griffiths 1979: 27; Zeitlin 1965: 484). The inadequacy of this resolution, however, is marked by the return of ritual perversion in *Eumenides*, where Orestes' purification at the temple of Apollo fails to absolve him of responsibility for his crime. The problem of the proliferation of reciprocal violence is eventually solved with the foundation of the court of Areopagus and the conversion of the Erinyes to protective forces for Athens and its people. At the end of the play ritual correctness returns, as the solemn procession performed by the Eumenides attests. Aeschylus' deployment of the myth suggests that reciprocal violence cannot be eliminated but only controlled by the *polis*.⁶

The sacrificial symbolism operative in the *Aeneid* has been noted by Bandera (1981) and Hardie (1993: 19–22, 27–29, 32–35), who have successfully applied René Girard's (1977) theory of sacrifice to explicate Vergil's use of sacrifice as a means to explore the problem of violence in the epic. Girard had used the Greek tragedies as a showcase for his

⁶ Griffiths 1979: 29. See also Foley 1985: 40–42. The extent of restoration at the end of the trilogy is the object of heated debate similar to that over the end of the *Aeneid*. This is not the place to enter into the details of this debate, on which see Vernant 1988: 29–48; Goldhill 1984: 262–83 and 1986: 1–32; Seaford 1994: 366–67. The point relevant to my discussion is that ritual correctness is now intact, regardless as to how effective it may be deemed to be.

theory, whereby sacrificial perversion is an indication of a greater collapse of the cultural order, only to be restored through the sacrifice of a scapegoat. This sacrificial victim, willingly sacrificed according to proper ritual custom, is to take on all the impurities and restore unity within the community.

Greek tragedy thus provides a useful pattern of analysis that merits further scrutiny. In what follows I propose a typology of sacrifice that may also prove a fruitful way to explore the problem of ritual perversion within the poem, as each category is intimately connected with the major problems that the epic engages. Sacrifice as initiation relates to the problem of violence and war: the death of the young poignantly underscores the fact that the unanimous community that is to emerge from the carnage will be deprived of its most brilliant and promising component. Criminal acts that defile normal sacrificial practices underline the problem of justice and retribution within the context of fratricide; and the manifestations of *devotio* express in ritual terms the relationship between the leader and his or her community, while also problematizing the notion of scapegoating for the greater social good.

III. FIRST-FRUITS AND INITIATIONS

I. Iphigeneia

As we have noted, the episode of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia is absent from the Homeric epics but is central to a number of Greek tragedies, especially Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Aulis*, where it is cast as preliminary sacrifice for the greater destruction of Troy. In the *Aeneid* too the sacrifice of Iphigeneia could be seen as the starting point for the thrust of the epic plot (Hardie 1993: 27). Several other deaths (those of Icarus, Marcellus, Pallas, and Mezentius) follow the pattern of Iphigeneia's death and are represented as sacrifices in actual or metaphorical terms. The intertextual connection between these deaths and that of Iphigeneia indicate that they constitute repetitions of this earlier sacrifice. As a result, these sacrifices too can be seen as preliminary, foreshadowing the greater sacrifice of Turnus. Sacrificial repetition serves a twofold purpose. As a return *of* the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, it exhibits the perpetuation of the cycle of perversion. As a return *to* the

sacrifice of Iphigeneia, each instance illuminates a different problem that this perversion and crisis generate: parental responsibility for the loss of children, the problematic nature of killing in war, and the need for a different system to dispense justice and retribution. In this section, I shall examine the ways in which the figure of Iphigeneia launches the intertext of sacrificial perversion in the epic.

The reference to the sacrifice of Iphigeneia occurs as a narrative within a narrative in *Aeneid* 2. The intertext of tragedy thus infiltrates the epic with a reference to an act of ritual perversion, depicting the sack of Troy as an act against religious order and law. Sinon, a Greek, tells a false tale of his escape as he was about to be sacrificed by his fellow countrymen. He explicitly represents his own near-sacrifice as a repetition of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia:

sanguine placastis uentos et *uirgine* caesa,
cum primum Iliacas, *Danai*, uenistis ad oras;
sanguine quaerendi reditus animaque litandum
Argolica. . . . (2.116–19)⁷

You appeased the winds with the blood of a slaughtered virgin
when you, *Greeks*, first came to the Trojan shores;
with blood you should seek your return and make atonement to the gods
with a Greek life. . . .

This episode, as well as Book 2 as a whole, vigorously deploys the problem of human sacrifice by appropriating the function of sacrifice in Greek tragedy. Sinon's words contain verbal contact with the *parodos* of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, which describes the Greek leader's internal struggle as he resolves to sacrifice his daughter Iphigeneia:

βαρεῖα δ' εἰ τέκνον δαΐξω, δόμων ἄγαλμα,
μιαίνων **παρθενοσφάγοισιν**
ρείθροις πατρώιους χέρας
πέλας βωμοῦ. . .
...
παυσανέμου γὰρ

⁷ Characters in bold indicate allusions to *Agamemnon*; characters italicized indicate allusions to Lucretius.

θυσίας παρθενίου θ' αἵματος ὀργᾶι
 περιόργως, ἀπὸ δ' ἀύδαῖ
 Θέμις...

(Ag. 207–17)

[My fate] is hard if I slay my child, the glory of my house,
 and pollute with the streams of a slaughtered maiden's
 blood the hands of the father
 by the altar...

...

for [the gods] desire with great anger
 to appease the winds with a sacrifice and a virgin's
 blood; but Themis
 forbids it.

The point of contact between the two texts appears to be the barbaric nature of human sacrifice, which goes against normal ritual custom. The play's *parodos*, by dramatizing Agamemnon's struggle to choose between success in war and his daughter's life, also indicates that his choice to sacrifice Iphigeneia is not only forbidden by what is right (Themis) but would also inevitably cause ritual pollution (*μιαίνων*, 208).⁸

At the same time, the text of *Agamemnon* renders Iphigeneia's sacrifice even more disturbing by representing it as corruption of the wedding ritual (223–47). In the *Aeneid*, the same inversion of marriage to death emerges through the mobilization of another allusive intertext, Lucretius' description of the same sacrifice (Hardie 1984: 406–407):

Aulide quo pacto Triviai *virginis* aram
 Iphianassai turparunt *sanguine* foede
 ductores *Danaum* delecti, prima virorum.

(Lucret. 1.84–86)

How once at Aulis the chosen leaders of the *Greeks*,
 the first of men, defiled hideously the altar of Diana
 with the *blood* of the *virgin* Iphigeneia.⁹

Lucretius' text focuses on the atrocity of human sacrifice used to serve political ends in order to denounce the barbarism of *religio* and juxtapose

⁸ On pollution, see Parker 1983, especially 104–43, and Douglas 1966.

⁹ *Virginis* could modify either *Triviai* or *Iphianassai*.

it to the freedom that Epicurean thought bestows on humankind (Hardie 1993: 27). The passage conveys the gruesome atrocity of human sacrifice through verbal contact with the *parodos* of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*:¹⁰

nam sublata virum manibus tremibundaque ad aras
deductast, non ut sollemni more sacrorum
perfecto posset claro comitari Hymenaeo,
sed casta inceste nubendi tempore in ipso
hostia concideret mactatu maesta parentis,
exitus ut classi felix faustusque daretur. (Lucr. 1.95–100)

For she was led to the altar lifted by the hands of men, trembling,
not so that, when the formal way of the rites was fulfilled,
she might be escorted by the clear cry of Hymenaeus,
but a pure sacrificial victim at the very moment of marriage,
she might sadly fall in sacrilege slaughtered by her father
so that an auspicious and happy departure would be granted to the fleet.

δικαν χιμαίρας ὑπερθε βωμοῦ
πέπλοισι περιπετῆ παντὶ θυμῶι προνωπῆ
λαβεῖν ἀέρδην... (Ag. 232–34)

Like a goat [her father ordered] that they lift her
above the altar, wrapped in her robes,
facing forward...

Lucretius appropriates Aeschylus' vivid description of Iphigeneia being raised at the altar as a young goat. The sacrificial principle of substitution is violated as human takes the place of animal offering. The most salient connective link between the two passages, however, is the exploitation of the horrible reversal of the marriage ceremony as funeral. The shedding of Iphigeneia's blood is commensurate with the act of defloration (Fowler 1987: 191). As a result, the Vergilian text, through the double (or window) allusion¹¹ to Aeschylus and Lucretius, brings to the

¹⁰ Bailey (1947: 615) and Fowler (1987: 192) have also noted the connection between Lucretius and Aeschylus. Hardie (1984: 407 n.9) notes that Lucretius may be expanding on Aeschylus' use of the term *proteleia*. Hardie (1993: 27) argues that Lucretius has made use of Euripides' *IA*.

¹¹ On that type of allusion, see Nelis 2001: 5.

foreground both the heinousness of human sacrifice and the tragedy of a virgin's death, which negates the woman's transition from adolescence to adulthood.

Iphigeneia's failed initiation into adulthood is closely linked with her representation in *Agamemnon* as a preliminary offering for the eventual fall of Troy, signaled by the naming of Iphigeneia as *proteleia naon* (226). The reference to the *proteleia* – that is, preliminary sacrifices of any kind, but particularly those performed before the marriage ceremony – has particular resonance. The poet employs a word with happy and festive connotations to describe a gruesome act (Fraenkel 1950.2: 41). The young girl, instead of offering *proteleia*, has herself become *proteleia* (Zeitlin 1965: 466). The effect of the word has also been employed earlier, in the opening of the play (Ag. 65): the Chorus relate the pains of the war (for Greeks and Trojans alike) before the fall of Troy, since the news of the sack of the city has not yet reached Argos. In this passage too an auspicious term of sacrifice describes men slain in the battles preceding the final destruction of Troy (Zeitlin 1965: 465). The poet thus links the death of Iphigeneia with the deaths of the men at Troy as preliminaries to the "sacrifice" of Priam's city. In other words, the sacrifice of Iphigeneia is going to be repeated on a grander scale that involves the destruction of an entire city. At the same time, Iphigeneia's death is also preliminary to the series of sacrificial deaths that unfolds throughout the play. With each new death her sacrifice returns to demonstrate the perversion generated by a justice system resting on reciprocal violence as a means of retribution.

Iphigeneia's sacrifice as preliminary to that of Troy is also a major motif in the *Aeneid*. Although Sinon casts his own near-sacrifice as a repetition of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, we eventually find out that he is a human foil to the Trojan horse, consecrated to bring destruction to the enemy. Rather, the sacrifice of Iphigeneia is repeated in the case of Laocoon and his sons. The fall of Troy constitutes a corrupted sacrifice, evident in the description of the death of Priam by his household altar, with the king symbolically standing for the city itself (2.550–58).

In Aeschylus, Iphigeneia's sacrifice is also inextricably linked with the problem of kin killing, which the trilogy explores and eventually resolves with the foundation of the first court. The problem resonates in the *Aeneid*, as the epic also proposes that the problem of civil war

will permanently end with the foundation of a new order, represented by Aeneas' new settlement in Latium. The return of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia over the course of the epic relates to the problem of civil war and all that it entails. In the following sections, I will examine the contours of sacrificial perversion in the poem and its subsequent demand for restoration.

2. Icarus and Marcellus: Untimely Death and Parental Guilt

Sacrifice paired with the pain and guilt accompanying parental loss are themes that define the episode of Daedalus and Marcellus in Book 6. The death of Icarus may be read as a preliminary sacrifice foreshadowing that of Marcellus. The themes of perverted sacrifice and failed initiation link Daedalus' loss of his son with Augustus' loss of his heir by placing blame for the problem of generational continuity on the figure of the father.

Icarus and Marcellus frame the beginning and the ending of Book 6, both young men whose parents survived their death. The narrative of this dark and complex book begins with Daedalus' settlement in Cumae after his son's demise and the dedication of his wings to the temple of Apollo. Daedalus' loss is connected with that of Iphigeneia through a mobilization of the tragic intertext of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*:

redditus his primum terris tibi, Phoebae, sacrauit
remigium alarum posuitque immania templa. (6.18–19)

Having returned first to these lands, he consecrated to you, Phoebus,
the oarage of his wings and built a great temple.

τρόπον αἰγυπιῶν οἷτ' ἐκπατίοις ἄλγεσι παιδῶν
 ἔϋπατοιῖ λεχέων στροφοδινοῦνται
 πτερύγων ἐρετμοῖσιν ἐρεσσόμενοι,
 δεμνιοτήρη πόνον ὀρταλίχων ὄλεσαντες... (Ag. 50–54)

Like eagles, in extraordinary grief for their young,
 fly around high over their beds
 driven by *the oarage of their wings*,
 having lost their toil of guarding their nurslings' nest.

In Aeschylus, the two vultures that have lost their young and utter mourning cries stand for the Atreidae, who have lost Helen. The theft

of children and the parental cries of mourning also recall the death of Iphigeneia. Just as Paris is guilty of stealing Helen, so Agamemnon is guilty of the death of his daughter. By casting Agamemnon as both victim and transgressor, the simile encapsulates the paradox of right and wrong in the play (Lebeck 1971: 8–9).

Daedalus too, like the vultures in the simile, has suffered parental loss and is partially responsible for his son's death. In Vergil, tragic metaphor becomes actuality, as Daedalus and his son turn into birds. Yet parental guilt comes to the foreground with the consecration of the wings, the father's artifact that caused the son's death. Daedalus' failure to express through his art his son's passing may be due in part to his share of responsibility for it, a culpability that emerges through the passage's intertextual contact with the Greek play. At the same time, Icarus' loss is the last episode in a series of images in the temple constructed by Daedalus that tell the story of sons killed or sacrificed: the murder of Minos' son, Androgeos; the drawing of the lot for the yearly sacrifice of the Athenian youths as retribution for that murder; the love of Pasiphae for the bull; the construction of the Labyrinth; and the story of Ariadne, who fell in love with Theseus (20–30). The last three scenes depict events resulting in the death of another "son," the Minotaur. The theme of children lost or sacrificed thus suggests that Icarus' death is a like sacrificial offering. Moreover, the presence of the tragic intertext within this framework indicates that it is a return of the initial sacrifice of Iphigeneia. At the same time, just as Iphigeneia's death prefigured the fall of Troy, so the story of Icarus is preliminary to the other loss at the end of the book, that of Marcellus.

The numerous parallels between Icarus and Marcellus have long been noted.¹² The death of Augustus' successor constitutes yet another instance of repetition within the framework of sacrifice just outlined. Marcellus, who died of illness at a very young age (see also Hardie 1993: 92), claims

¹² See Segal 1966: 50–54. The passage also shares affinities with Pallas' portrayal; most notably, they are both referred to as *miserande puer* (6.882 and 10.825, as well as 11.42). See also Austin 1977: 267 on *egregius* as an epithet describing Pallas and Lausus (10.435) as well as Turnus (7.473). For Marcellus' loss as the failure of Augustan Rome to avert the death of the young heir, see Putnam 1995: 116, 164, 90.

a position among these virginal sacrificial deaths through his connection with Icarus (and, by extension, Iphigeneia), as well as with Pallas and Lausus, whose deaths are also cast in sacrificial terms. Ritual vocabulary of sacrifice is found in Anchises' description of him as a gift of the gods taken away too soon (*donum*, 6.871, a term indicating an offering and a sacrifice).¹³ In this light, the darkness around the youth's head (6.866) that prefigures his untimely death may also be read as a mark analogous to the *uitta*, the head garland worn by animals about to be ritually slain.

Reading the death of Marcellus in the context of sacrifice is congruent with Roman notions surrounding his death, as a note by Servius (on *Aen.* 1.712) reveals. Servius tells us that in the funeral speech for his nephew, Augustus said that the young man was "devoted" to premature death (*inmaturae morti devotum fuisse*) (Hardie 1993: 29). In Roman ritual, *devotio* is the sacrifice of the leader to the gods of the Underworld so that victory may be secured. Marcellus' death, though due to illness and not the result of a military campaign, still did not prevent Augustus from painting his portrait along the lines of such hallowed Roman leaders as the Decii.

Mourning and guilt appear to cause the failure of Daedalus' art, thus rendering the consummate artist unable to express his bereavement. A father's mourning returns in the case of Marcellus, where ritual at first appears as perhaps a more successful outlet for the expression of grief: Marcellus emerges as the son of Rome, with the landscape of the city participating as a mourner in his funeral lamentations (872–74). Marcellus is also Anchises' son (*o gnate*, 868), who is thus shown to perform the ritually appropriate funerary gestures (883–86). But here too ritual fails to provide relief, as Anchises pronounces its emptiness (*inani / munere*, 885–86). The enjambment emphasizes with particular poignancy that ritual may be the only locus for the expression of grief, even if it is unable to contain it.¹⁴

¹³ See OLD s.v. 2. Anchises later names the flowers he offers Marcellus *dona* (885). See also the use of *donum* as sacrifice at *Aen.* 3.439.

¹⁴ See also Austin 1977: 273. The same word is used by Andromache to describe the cenotaph of Hector at *Aen.* 3.304. On the failure of ritual in Andromache's case, see Chapter 5, this volume, pp. 146–54.

Furthermore, as the primary mourner, Anchises assumes a role befitting a mother rather than a father. His lament, placing emphasis on death and the past, is thus incongruent with his task as Aeneas' guide to his Roman future.¹⁵ If Anchises is relegated to the role of a motherly figure, then Augustus emerges as the sole father of the lost Marcellus, the public mourning for a leader lost thus giving way to private grief. Furthermore, the connection with Icarus intimates that responsibility for his death may lie in part with the demands of a dynastic empire.

3. Pallas and Mezentius: *Primitiae* as Preliminary Sacrifice

Critics have long noted the depiction of Pallas' death as marriage and deforation.¹⁶ Building on these readings, I argue that the rich ritual symbolism surrounding his killing displays the connection between war on the battlefield and ritual perversion and prefigures the death of another "virginal" figure, that of Turnus. Like other sacrificial deaths in the poem, this one too constitutes a repetition of the earlier sacrifice of Iphigeneia in *Aeneid* 2. Allusion to Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* confirms the tragic origin of this nexus of intertextual links and reinforces the notion that the reader experiences Pallas' death as a return of the death of Iphigeneia. Aside from the motif of marriage to death that Vergil here manipulates, the ritual and allusive intertexts of this episode indicate other important implications of this death. Just as Iphigeneia's sacrifice was preliminary to the greater sacrifice of Troy, so the sacrifice of Pallas is preliminary to the greater defeat of the Latins, embodied in a series of deaths (Lausus, Mezentius), all cast as preliminary sacrifices before the killing of Turnus at the end of the poem. As a result, Turnus' death is foreshadowed in both the narrative and on the ritual plot with the expectation that it will restore the distorted ritual order.

There are both intertextual (Aeschylus) and intratextual (Vergil) points of contact between Pallas and Iphigeneia.¹⁷ Evander's lament at

¹⁵ On the mourner as linked with death and the past, see Seaford 1994: 86, 167; Van Gennep 1960: 147; and Chapter 5, this volume, pp. 146–59.

¹⁶ Gillis 1983: 69–77; Putnam 1995: 38–41; Fowler 1987: 192, 194; Mitchell 1991: 227–30.

¹⁷ On the term "intratextuality", see Sharrock 2000: 1–39.

the corpse of his son appropriates a passage from the *parodos* of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*:¹⁸

primitiae iuuenis miserae bellique propinqui
dura rudimenta, et *nulli exaudita deorum*
uota precesque meae! . . .

(II.156–58)

Wretched first-fruits of youth and harsh initiation to
a war so near home; and *no one of the gods listened*
to my vows and prayers! . . .

λιτᾶν δ' ἀκούει μὲν οὔτις θεῶν,
τὸν δ' ἐπίστροφον τῶν
φῶτ' ἄδικον καθαιρεῖ.
οἶος καὶ Πάρις ἐλθῶν
ἐς δόμον τὸν Ἀτρειδᾶν
ἦισχυνε ξενίαν τράπε-
ζαν κλοπαῖσι γυναικός.

(Ag. 396–402)

No one of the gods listens to his prayers,
and [the god] destroys the unjust man
who is involved in such deeds.
Such a man was Paris, who came
to the house of the Atreidae
and disgraced his hosts' table
by stealing his wife.

The gods' deaf ears to Evander's prayers are intertextually linked with the gods' indifference to the prayers of (and indeed the destruction of) an unjust man (φῶτ' ἄδικον καθαιρεῖ, 398) such as Paris. The breakdown in the communication between man and god as expressed by Evander is usually the result of human transgression, as the passage in Aeschylus clearly indicates. Evander's allusive link with Paris seems to attribute to him some guilt over the outburst of war between Trojans and Latins, an outburst that Juno has related to the start of the Trojan War earlier in the book (*quae causa fuit consurgere in arma / Europamque Asiamque et foedera soluere furto?* [what was the cause for the raising of arms / between

¹⁸ Noted by Conington (1884, 3: 332).

Europe and Asia and for breaking their treaty by stealing?], 10.90–91).¹⁹ Juno's words also point to this passage in the Greek play, with the word *furto* translating κλοπαῖσι.²⁰ As a result, this second Trojan War demands the death of another Iphigeneia, Evander's son Pallas.

The account of Pallas' *aristeia* in Book 10 renders the necessity of his death all the more poignant, bringing into full view the young hero's potential as a leader on the battlefield. Like Nisus and Euryalus, however, Pallas also fails in his first foray into the world of the adult warrior.²¹ The theme of failed male initiation is brought up by the narrator (*haec te prima dies bello dedit, haec eadem aufert* [this day first gave you to war, this same day takes you away], 10.508) and in Evander's lament over his son's dead body (*bellique propinqui / dura rudimenta*, 11.157). The themes of virginity, defloration, and marriage to death therefore collude in order to render Pallas a failed bride, linking his plight with that of Iphigeneia (Fowler 1987: 192). Pallas' feminization goes hand in hand with the notion of sacrifice, both expressing his failure to make a successful passage into male adulthood.

Pallas is thus appropriately named *primitiae* in the passage quoted earlier. The word is normally used for the first-fruits, that is, vegetable offerings to the gods at the harvest. Here it is employed to indicate the death of Pallas. At the same time, as a word suitable for vegetable offerings, it also denotes the perversion of bloodless offering to human sacrifice. As a result, Pallas' death is described in vocabulary specifically sacrificial. Within this context, Pallas' *primitiae* harks back to Iphigeneia's *proteleia*. That virgin's slaughter constituted a horrible perversion of wedding to sacrifice; as we have seen, the young girl, instead of offering *proteleia*, becomes *proteleia*; similarly, Pallas' killing is cast as a virgin's marriage

¹⁹ Quint (1993: 50–96) discusses the war in Latium as a positive repetition of the Trojan War, since the Trojans are now the winners. Juno's use of the plural in her words describing Helen's theft as a beginning is yet another indicator of repetition: *soceros legere et gremiis abducere pactas* [choosing fathers-in-law and abducting betrothed girls], 10.79. For an opposing view arguing for Juno's misrepresentation of events here, see Harrison 1991: 79.

²⁰ See Fraenkel 1950, 2: 210 on the uniqueness of the use of the word κλοπή, and Harrison 1991: 83.

²¹ On Nisus' and Euryalus' deaths as failed initiations, see Hardie 1994: 24–29 *et passim* and 1997b: 320–21.

to death (see note 16 to this chapter). The use of *primitiae* also suggests a perversion of normal agricultural procedures and corrupts the fertility of the earth (Lyne 1989: 160): instead of offering *primitiae*, Pallas becomes *primitiae*. In both instances, we have an inversion of the sacrificial principle of substitution: in Iphigeneia's case, human replaces animal offering; in Pallas', human replaces vegetable offering. Warfare is thus shown to pervert both the wedding ritual, with its promise of offspring and continuity, and earth's fertility. Pallas' slaying is a preliminary sacrifice, a repetition of that of Iphigeneia, and it too will generate more sacrificial deaths.

The death of Mezentius, the Etruscan leader fighting on the side of the Latins, repeats Pallas' death in its function as preliminary sacrifice to that of Turnus. This repetition attests to the persistence of the problem of ritual perversion. Pallas and Mezentius may appear unlikely partners in this, yet they embody two contradictory aspects important in the portrait of Turnus: his appearance as at once a virginal figure who fails initiation and as a seasoned warrior and opponent worthy of Aeneas.

The most salient link between Mezentius and Pallas occurs in the opening of Book 11, which picks up at the aftermath of the battle and focuses on Pallas' burial. In the first scene, Aeneas dresses a tree trunk with the spoils of Mezentius and dedicates it to Mars with the following words:

... haec sunt spolia et de rege superbo
primitiae manibusque meis Mezentius hic est. (11.15-16)

... These are the spoils and the first-fruits
 from a proud king and *this is Mezentius by my hands.*

The use of *primitiae* to describe enemy spoils points to a reversal of rituals associated with peace and war: a term connected with agriculture and fertility, as we have seen, now refers to enemy spoils dedicated to Mars (Lyne 1989: 160) and to a bloody tree trunk that stands for a human body.²² The equation of the tree trunk with the slain Mezentius can be attributed to Roman beliefs in the animism of trees (Thomas 1988: 263)

²² The description of the trophy emphasizes its relation with the actual human body. See Conington 1884, 3: 318.

and to cultic practice that sanctioned the dressing of a trunk with an enemy's weapons. Macrobius (*Sat.* 3.5.10) tells us that the reference to *primitiae* here looks back to a tradition according to which Mezentius had demanded that the Rutulians offer to him the *primitiae* destined for the gods.²³ Once the recipient of *primitiae*, he has now become *primitiae* himself (Burke 1974b: 29). Again, a word denoting a bloodless offering is used to describe a blood-spattered corpse.

The sacrificial character of the use of *primitiae* in this instance is furthered by an intertextual connection with Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*. Clytemnestra, having just killed her husband, boasts of her deed over his lifeless body:²⁴

... οὗτός ἐστιν Ἀγαμέμνων ἐμός
 πόσις, νεκρός δέ, τῆσδε δεξιᾶς χερὸς
 ἔργον, δικαίας τέκτονος. τὰδ' ὦδ' ἔχει.²⁵

(Ag. 1404-406)

... This is Agamemnon my
 husband, now dead, a deed of this right hand,
 a just workman. So these things stand.

Clytemnestra's words replicate the epic formula proclaiming the death of the enemy in battle. The transference of the epic heroic code to a wife's gloating over her husband's murder makes the moment particularly horrific. The allusion casts Aeneas' epic boast in a new light as it equates the tree trunk that stands for Mezentius with the lifeless body of the murdered Agamemnon. Aeneas' claim of responsibility for the death and

²³ Macrobius informs us that the tradition goes back to Cato's *Orig.* 1: *ait enim Mezentium Rutulis imperasse ut sibi offerrent quas dis primitias offerebant, et Latinos omnes similis imperii metu ita vovisse: 'Iuppiter, si tibi magis cordi est nos ea tibi dare potius quam Mezentium uti nos victores facias.' ergo quod divinos honores sibi exegerat, merito dictus a Vergilio contemptor deorum* [for he says that Mezentius ordered the Rutulians to offer to himself the first-fruits they used to offer to the gods and that all the Latins, out of fear of a like command, said the following prayer: "Jupiter, if your heart desires that we make these offerings to you rather than Mezentius, make us the winners." So because he demanded divine offerings for himself, Vergil deservedly calls him despiser of the gods]. See also Burke 1974b: 29 and Gottoff 1984: 196.

²⁴ Noted by Conington 1884, 3: 319.

²⁵ Characters in italics indicate allusions; characters in dotted underline denote textual equivalents.

despoliation of his foe (*manibusque meis Mezentius hic est*, 11.16), a claim appropriate to the heroic code in battle, is implicitly associated with killing a member of one's own family. The casting of Aeneas' killing in battle as a murder within the family is also congruent with the epic's consistent depiction of the war in Latium as civil war.

The allusion to Clytemnestra's words also broadens the sacrificial implications of Aeneas' use of the term *primitiae*. Throughout the play, and particularly in the speech preceding these words, Clytemnestra's murderous act is depicted as a perverted sacrifice. Images of perversion in the realm of agriculture follow Clytemnestra's description of ritual distortion, when she declares that in being sprinkled with her husband's blood she rejoiced like corn rejoices in the gift of Zeus' rain at the birth time of the buds (1389–92).²⁶ Likewise in the *Aeneid*, perversion of ritual (*primitiae* used to describe a tree trunk symbolizing a human body) and perversion of agriculture render Mezentius' death yet another instance of repeated sacrificial corruption.²⁷

In this light, Aeneas' performance of human sacrifice is different from its Homeric counterpart, where human sacrifice threatens but does not ultimately pervert the ritual order (*Il.* 21.27–28). In the *Aeneid*, by contrast, the distortion of the ritual order underlies actions occurring on the battlefield. Upon learning the news of Pallas' death, Aeneas captures eight Rutulians to be slain on Pallas' pyre (10.518–20) and enters battle himself on a killing rampage, mercilessly slaughtering (among numerous others) a suppliant (Magus), a priest of Apollo, and a son of Faunus.²⁸

²⁶ The theme of nature's perversion is continued in the Chorus's response to the queen (1407–408). See Conacher 1987: 54. On the perversion of agriculture, marriage, and sacrifice in this instance, see also Goff 2004: 310.

²⁷ The sacrificial nature of the death of Mezentius is also noted by Leigh (1993: 95–101), who reads him as a *devotus*.

²⁸ The first killing (536) resembles Achilles' killing of Lycaon in *Il.* 21.34–135, and, as Harrison (1991: 207) has pointed out, it also alludes to that of Priam. The second killing of the priest is Vergil's addition. The vocabulary is strongly sacrificial. Vergil once again makes use of the motif of the priest/sacrificer turned into the sacrificed (see also Hardie 1984: 408 n.12): *Haemonides, Phoebi Triviaeque sacerdos, / infula cui sacra redimibat tempora uitta, / . . . / quem . . . / immolat* [Haemon's son, priest of Phoebus and Trivia, his temples crowned by the sacred headband, . . . him . . . [Aeneas] sacrificed], 537–41. The use of *immolare* is particularly poignant (see Putnam 1994: 185–86). See also Dyson 2001: 186.

As Aeneas' human captives are about to be slain, the narrator emphasizes the violations of proper sacrificial ritual:

uinxerat et post terga manus, quos mitteret umbris
 inferias, caeso sparsurus sanguine flammās,
 indutosque iubet truncos hostilibus armis
 ipsos ferre duces inimicaque nomina figi. (11.81–84)

And he tied behind their backs the hands of those he would send to the shades
 as funeral offerings, about to sprinkle the flames with slaughtered blood
 and he bids the chiefs themselves carry trunks clothed
 in enemy's weapons with the foes' names attached.

Both the use of the word *inferias* to indicate human offerings and the sprinkling of the funeral flames with blood are inconsistent with regular funerary ritual (see Toynbee 1971: 50). Ritual perversion is once again found side by side with the appearance of *tropaea*,²⁹ providing yet another link between human sacrifice and Mezentius' transformation into a *tropaeum*. The practice of dedicating *tropaea*, though ritually correct by itself, follows the atrocious act of human sacrifice. As in the earlier case of Mezentius, the animism of tree trunks symbolically casts them as victims comparable to those sacrificed at Pallas' funeral pyre.³⁰

²⁹ Dyson (2001: 186–87) demonstrates the connections between sacrificed humans and *tropaea* as foreshadowing the eventual killing of Turnus.

³⁰ Another link between the killings of Pallas, Lausus, and Mezentius is visible in Vergil's use of sexual imagery in the battle narrative. When Aeneas prepares to give Mezentius the final blow with his sword, the vocabulary recalls the "sexualized" encounter between Turnus and Pallas: 10.896 alludes to 10.475 (and also to 4.579). So the image of Pallas' "defloration" spills over to Aeneas' killing of Mezentius. The vocabulary of penetration is present in the description of Mezentius' spoils in the next book as well (11.8–10). The use of sexualized vocabulary is indicative of the close affinity between the themes of virginity and sacrifice in the book. The possibility of such a reading in this instance may be bolstered if we compare Ovid's manipulation of the same phrase (*vagina liberat ensem*, *Met.* 6.551) as Tereus prepares to cut off Philomela's tongue after raping her. The same phrase recurs at *Fasti* 2.793 right before Lucretia's rape. For the significance of this use, see Raval (1998: 122–26), to whom I am grateful for these parallels. See also Richlin 1992: 163.

The designation of Pallas and Mezentius as *primitiae* is related to the issue of sacrificial perversion, as their deaths both constitute preliminary sacrifices for the eventual death of Turnus.³¹ In imagining Turnus as a *tropaeum* of Pallas (II.173), Evander's lament provides a connective thread between Pallas and Mezentius.³² The linkage of these two disparate figures may be explained if we read them as embodying different and even conflicting aspects of Turnus' character. At the moment of death, Turnus' baldric assimilates Pallas' feminine virginity (Mitchell 1991: 230). And just as proud Mezentius undergoes a profound change after the death of his son,³³ Turnus too is a hero violent and proud, yet he too elicits the reader's sympathy at the moment of his final humiliation and defeat.

IV. CRIME AND RETRIBUTION

The theme of crime and retribution is paramount in the deployment of the sacrificial intertext of the poem. A series of sacrificial deaths illustrates the problem of justice and appropriate punishment in the new order that Aeneas represents. As Aeneas' journey progresses, so does his quest for a system that will guarantee the dispensation of justice in his new-found city. The problem of ritual perversion and of sacrifice in particular illustrates the obstacles inherent in an order that rests in the hands of one individual. Aeschylus' *Oresteia* explores the same problem through the theme of kin killing and proposes as a solution the foundation of the first court – that is, the transference of dispensation of justice from the *oikos* to the institutions of the *polis*. The *Aeneid*, on the other hand, as Hardie has noted (1997b: 317), seeks to reassure the war-torn Romans that where the institutions of the Republic failed, monarchy will succeed.

³¹ Commentators have been puzzled over the problem of offering *primitiae* after three books of war: "... the offering is here to Mars, as [Aeneas] himself admits, and there is no reason to suppose any direct reference to 'spolia opima,' which could not be won from Mezentius, as he was not the real leader of the enemy" (Connington 1884, 3: 318).

³² Dyson (2001: 193) argues that Evander's wish comes true, as Turnus, clothed in the spoils of Pallas, becomes a living *tropaeum*.

³³ Putnam 1995: 146. On the "transformation" of Mezentius, see Burke 1974a: 201–209 and Gotoff 1984: 191–218. See also Leach 1971: 86–87.

Within this context, the motif of perverted sacrifice is deployed in order to highlight the problem of crime and just retribution. Intertextual appropriations of the *Oresteia* surface once again within the text of the *Aeneid* and bring into sharp relief the problem of repeated sacrificial perversion and the need for ritual restoration. As was the case with the preliminary sacrifices, the ritual intertext is again marked by corruption that requires ritual purity and restoration. In what follows, I discuss the sacrificial deaths of a number of figures closely linked with crime and punishment, either as blatantly criminal acts calling for retribution or as acts of retribution as atrocious as the crime itself. The deaths of Sychaeus and Lausus are examples of the former, the death of Pyrrhus and the near-death of Helen of the latter.

1. Crime: Sychaeus and Lausus

The murder of Dido's husband, Sychaeus, is the first in the poem's series of murders, atrocious crimes demanding retribution, which are represented as perverted sacrifices. The theme of sacrifice in this instance explores the problem of justice within the context of domestic and civil strife. Moreover, these deaths contain intertextual and intratextual appropriations, thus mobilizing the motif of repeated sacrificial distortion in demand of purity and restoration.

The first victim of perverted sacrifice appears in Book 1, where Venus tells Aeneas Dido's troubled story: the queen's husband, Sychaeus, was murdered by her brother, Pygmalion:

quos inter medius uenit furor. ille Sychaeum
 impius ante aras atque auri caecus amore
 clam ferro incautum superat, securus amorum
 germanae; . . .

(1.348–51)

Among them [Pygmalion and Sychaeus] fury came about. The former, against all piety and blinded by love of gold, secretly murdered with the sword unsuspecting Sychaeus by the altar, indifferent to his sister's love; . . .

Though this occurrence of domestic strife concerns Carthage, it is also paradigmatic for Aeneas' future course of action in Latium. Book 1 takes

great pains to highlight the similarities between Dido and Aeneas as leaders; therefore, the fate of Tyre invites comparisons to that of Troy. Dido's just leadership in the new city offers Aeneas a model of governance. The use of the word *furor* to describe Tyre's political tribulations also has obvious resonance for Aeneas, since the same word describes civil strife throughout the poem. As a result, the reciprocal violence between Sychaeus and Pygmalion should be viewed within the context of violence among kin, a central issue in the poem as a whole. Furthermore, in this case too, as in Greek tragedy and throughout the *Aeneid*, the killing of kin begets sacrificial perversion. Pygmalion's murder of his brother-in-law at the altar, the first corrupted sacrifice in the poem, has a programmatic function and calls attention to the problem of retribution. Dido punishes her brother by leaving, carrying with her the gold that Sychaeus had hidden from Pygmalion. Like Aeneas after the fall of Troy, she founds a new city. In her dying words, Dido refers to her punishment of her brother as one of her life's accomplishments (*ulta uirum poenas inimico a fratre recepi* [I avenged my husband by punishing my brother who is my foe], 4.656). Dido thus avoids the continuation of sacrificial perversion and civil strife by removing herself from Tyre (she may be said to act as a Girardian scapegoat)³⁴ and by founding a new community where justice is paramount and where the danger of civil conflict is averted.

The poem's emphasis on Dido's heightened sense of justice can be seen in her first appearance in the epic, where she is in the process of giving laws and assigning tasks:

iura dabat legesque uiris, operumque laborem
partibus aequabat iustis aut sorte trahebat: (1.507-508)

She was giving laws to her men, and was assigning
the labor of the tasks in equal shares or by drawing lots:

Dido's highly successful way of dealing with crime while avoiding the sacrilege of retribution sets up a model of leadership for Aeneas, which he fails to

³⁴ Reading Dido as a scapegoat in this instance may explain her paradoxical likening to Diana, the virgin huntress, in her first appearance in the poem (1.498-502). In addition, the imagery of virginity suggests that she too, like Nausicaa in the *Odyssey* and Medea in the *Argonautica*, is destined to fall in love with the hero of the poem.

heed. By contrast, the heroic code by which our hero abides dictates the use of violent retribution, whereby sacrificial perversion proliferates. At the same time, Dido's solution to the problem of retribution creates the expectation that sacrificial repetition will eventually provide restoration and closure.

Pygmalion's murder of Sychaeus resurfaces in Aeneas' killing of Lausus in Book 10, thus raising the problems of *pietas*, sacrilege, and justice in times of civil war. After Juno removes Turnus from the battlefield, the Etruscan Mezentius replaces him as leader of the Latins. A bitter fight ensues. When Mezentius is wounded by Aeneas, his son Lausus runs to his aid and loses his life. At the moment of Lausus' death, Aeneas pauses, moved by the young man's filial piety:

at uero ut uultum uidit morientis et ora,
 ora modis Anchisiades pallentia miris,
 ingemuit miserans grauius dextramque tetendit,
 et mentem patriae subiit pietatis imago. (10.821–24)

But when the son of Anchises saw the dying boy's look
 and his *face*, his *face pale in wondrous ways*,
 he heaved a deep sigh in pity and stretched out his right hand,
 and the *image* of paternal piety entered his mind.

The scene is rich in implications for Aeneas' role as a son and a symbol of *pietas*.³⁵ The lines also evoke the language describing the dead Sychaeus, whose killing was the first corrupted sacrifice in the epic:

ipsa sed in somnis inhumati uenit imago
 coniugis ora modis attollens pallida miris;
 crudelis aras traiectaque pectora ferro
 nudauit, caecumque domus scelus omne retexit. (1.353–56)

But in her sleep came the very *image* of her unburied
 husband, lifting up to her his *face pale in wondrous ways*;
 he laid bare the atrocious altar and his breast pierced
 with the sword and uncovered all of the secret crime of the house.

³⁵ On Aeneas' *pietas* and the killing of Lausus, see Johnson 1976: 72–74 and Putnam 1995: 134–51. For an opposing view, see Lee 1979: 89–93. The phrase *pietatis imago* also invites comparison with Nisus and Euryalus (9.294), as well as the detail of the tunic (cp. 10.818–19 and 9.488–89) a few lines above.

Like Sychaeus (1.350), Lausus too is unsuspecting (*incautus*, 10.812). But while in Book 1 the apparition of the ghost of Sychaeus reveals to Dido the atrocity of a crime, in Book 10 the sight of Lausus' lifeless face reveals to Aeneas that in the heat of the battle he has destroyed a symbol of *pietas* and thus violated the very quality that defines his person. Lausus reminds Aeneas of the function of *pietas*, which normally saves, not takes, lives (Putnam 1995: 135). Furthermore, Aeneas' association with Pygmalion, the perpetrator of Sychaeus' atrocious murder and a figure embodying the opposite of *pietas* (*impius Pygmalion*, 1.349), implicitly casts Lausus' death as sacrificial and locates the motif of crime and punishment within the context of sacrificial perversion. The connection between Lausus' death and that of Sychaeus represents this battle as civil conflict.

The sacrificial character of Lausus' slaughter and the theme of crime and retribution are also put to work through intertextual and intratextual contact with the death of Priam. The description of Lausus' dead body rests on the detail of his hair, now defiled by blood (*sanguine turpantem comptos de more capillos* [**defiling with blood** his hair neatly arranged], 10.832) which points to the death of Priam as described in Ennius' *Andromacha*:³⁶

haec omnia uidi inflammari,
Priamo ui uitam euitari,
Iouis *aram sanguine turpari*.

(91–94 *Jocelyn*)

I saw everything in flames
Priam losing violently his life,
the *altar* of Jupiter defiled with his blood.

In Priam's case the spilling of his blood creates pollution: proper sacrificial procedure prescribes that the blood of the sacrificial victim be collected in a vessel by the officiating priest and then spilled over the altar.³⁷ The perversion of ritual incurred through the dirtying of the altar in the death of Priam has no precedent in Euripides and thus appears particu-

³⁶ Bold characters indicate intertextual links between *Aen.* 10, Ennius, and Lucretius; characters in italics indicate intertextual contact between Ennius and Lucretius.

³⁷ *Jocelyn* 251; cf. also Aesch., *Sept.* 275; Eur., *Ion* 1126–27.

lar to Ennius.³⁸ *Jocelyn* (252) rightly suggests that Ennius introduces the detail of sacrificial pollution in order to arouse Roman religious sensibility. The allusion has important implications: it casts Aeneas as a double of yet another transgressor, Pyrrhus, who also killed a son (Polites) in the sight of his father (*patrios foedasti funere uultus* [you defiled the father's sight with his son's death], 2.539). Lausus' death is implicitly cast as a corrupted sacrifice similar to that of Priam.

The allusion to Ennius also recalls Vergil's description of the death of Priam at the altar (2.550–53). In the *Aeneid*, the death of the king of Troy is explicitly linked with the theme of crime and retribution: Pyrrhus' sacrilegious behavior is contrasted with that of his father, who respected Priam's supplication and averted sacrificial perversion by granting Hector burial. In his dying words, Priam curses Pyrrhus to find punishment for his crimes, a punishment that eventually comes, as we learn from Andromache in Book 3 (330–32). As a result, Lausus' death in this case too is cast as a crime that requires retribution and restoration of the ritual purity. Aeneas' share of responsibility in the creation of sacrificial perversion demonstrates the inadequacy of violence to resolve conflict, as it is able to transform a hero from a symbol of *pietas* to an architect of atrocious crimes.

Further intertextual borrowing intimately links Lausus' fate to that of Iphigeneia and, by extension, to the major problem of repeated sacrifice of virgins in the poem. Lausus' bloodied hair evokes the sacrifice of Iphigeneia in Lucretius:

Aulide quo pacto Triviai virginis *aram*
Iphianassai turparunt sanguine foede. (1.84–85)

How once at Aulis [the Greeks] defiled hideously
the *altar* of Diana with the blood of virgin Iphigeneia.

Iphigeneia's death not only underscores the notion that the theme of sacrificial perversion is here at work but also places emphasis on the guilt of the perpetrator of the sacrilegious act. Though the Vergilian text alludes to Lucretius' version of the virgin's sacrifice, its close affinity with Vergil's own rendition of Iphigeneia's death in Book 2 and with that in Aeschylus'

³⁸ Cf. Eur., *Hec.* 21–24; *Tro.* 16–17 and 481–83.

Agamemnon allows a consideration of the death of Lausus through the issues that preoccupy Vergil's and Aeschylus' texts. Aeneas' responsibility for Lausus' death may thus be said to be comparable to that of Agamemnon. Aeneas' disregard for his role as a father and son in the heat of the battle is analogous to Agamemnon's disregard for his role as a father in his desire for political and military gain. Aeneas' words of consolation to Lausus, that he fell at the hands of a great enemy (himself) (10.829–30), testify to the fact that he places greater emphasis on his role as a warrior even as he realizes Lausus' extraordinary *pietas* as a son. Aeneas' act, then, is implicitly cast in multiple ways as one crime in a long list of repeated perverted sacrifices. It remains to examine the workings of retribution that have the potential to allow ritual correctness to occur.

2. Retribution: Pyrrhus and Helen

The problem of violent retribution, a central preoccupation within the poem, is discernible in the case of the death of Pyrrhus, about which the reader is informed in Book 3. When Aeneas arrives at Buthrotum, he meets Andromache pouring libations at the cenotaphs of Hector and Astyanax. The Trojan woman recounts the fate of her late husband Pyrrhus:

ast illum ereptae magno flammatus amore
 coniugis et scelerum furiis agitatus Orestes
 excipit incautum *patriasque* obruncat ad *aras*. (3.330–32)

But Orestes, incensed by great love for his stolen wife and driven by the furies punishing crimes caught him unsuspecting and murdered him at his *father's altar*.

Pyrrhus' death at an altar replicates his slaying of King Priam, thus fulfilling the king's dying wish for retribution:

at tibi pro scelere,' exclamat, 'pro talibus ausis
 di, si qua est caelo pietas quae talia curet,
 persoluant grates dignas et praemia reddant
 debita...' (2.535–58)

But, he shouted, "in return for such a crime, for such deeds, if there's in heaven any piousness that cares for such things,

may the gods repay you with worthy thanks and return the rewards
that are your due . . .”

The language of exchange places great emphasis on Pyrrhus' death as punishment for his atrocity against Priam. The exactness of the retribution is rendered even more explicit in the almost identical repetition of line 2.663 (*patrem qui obruncat ad aras*) in 3.332 (*patriasque obruncat ad aras*; see also Austin 1964: 250). At the same time, the use of the adjective *incantum* (3.330) evokes Sychaeus' murder at the altar (1.350), which now stresses the sacrilegious nature of Pyrrhus' murder. The perpetrator of perverted sacrifice dies like a sacrificial victim, at the altar, in a place of worship (Delphi).³⁹ The theme of sacrificial perversion thus continues, and, even as justice appears to have been served, ritual purity is not restored.

The description of Pyrrhus' death appropriates Euripides' dramatization of the death of Pyrrhus/Neoptolemus in *Andromache*, a play important in *Aeneid* 3. Neoptolemus is the first war criminal; in addition to Priam's killing, he is credited with a host of other murders, including the hurling of Astyanax over the walls of Troy and the sacrifice of Polyxena. Euripides' play, however, is silent about Neoptolemus' culpability (Allan 2000: 26). On the contrary, Orestes' involvement with his death at Delphi and the depiction of his murder as an act of cowardice seem Euripidean inventions. *Andromache* thus highlights the troubling aspects of the revenge taken by Apollo, who wanted Neoptolemus' death because he was offended by Priam's murder at the altar (Allan 2000: 28–30). Neoptolemus is portrayed as an ambushed victim, dying at the altar like a sacrificial animal.

Vergil mobilizes the intertext of this particular version of Pyrrhus' death and attributes to Orestes two motives. Of these, Orestes' jealousy over Pyrrhus' marriage to Hermione is petty; the other, however, is seriously disturbing: Orestes is said to be driven by Furies (*furiis agitatus*), an image recalling his representation at the famous tragic simile in *Aeneid* 4 linking him explicitly to the matricide (471–73),⁴⁰ Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*

³⁹ On the problem of *patrias aras*, see Williams 1962: 125.

⁴⁰ Mynors does not capitalize *furiis*. Nor does Williams (1962: 124–25), although he notes that “the story of the avenging Furies in Aesch. *Eum.* is present as an overtone.”

(1048–1062), and Euripides' *Orestes* (36–38). The text's emphasis on Orestes' state as fresh from the matricide problematizes his killing of Pyrrhus in a manner similar to the *Oresteia's* dramatization of the quest for retribution and a viable system of justice.⁴¹ In Aeschylus' play, both Agamemnon's guilt and the problematic nature of Orestes' revenge are paramount for the development of the trilogy.⁴² Similarly, in the *Aeneid*, both Pyrrhus' atrocity and his punishment are cast as perverted sacrifices and thus amount to further delays on the path toward ritual restoration.

The issue of retribution as a crime-upon-crime first surfaces in Book 2 when Aeneas feels the urge to kill Helen. Had he done so, he would have committed human sacrifice, since the woman, hidden in the temple of Vesta, was sitting at the altar (*abdiderat sese atque aris inuisa sedebat*, [she had hidden herself and was sitting invisible at the altar], 574). Aeneas, though overcome by anger for his fallen city (577–87), appears sane enough to be aware of the sacrilegious nature of the action he contemplates: *exarsere ignes animo; subit ira cadentem / ulcisci patriam et sceleratas sumere poenas* [fire burned in my heart; anger came over me to avenge my falling city and to exact punishment with a crime] (575–76). Aeneas' startling use of the word *sceleratas* reflects his recognition of the problems arising from this type of retribution.⁴³ The killing of Helen would replicate the murder of Priam (Reckford 1981: 88) and would thus constitute a similar act of sacrificial perversion.

⁴¹ The phrase *patrias aras* contains allusion to *Ag.* 1277, where Cassandra refers to her death at her father's altars (*βωμοῦ πατρώϊου*) while she contemplates her impending death and predicts Clytemnestra's own death at the hands of Orestes. Zeitlin (1965: 471) suggests that the words may recall at once the sacrificial killing of Iphigeneia by her father and the tradition of Priam's death at the altar. A similar argument can be made for this instance in the *Aeneid*. Pyrrhus' death thus mobilizes the network of repeated sacrifices in the poem.

⁴² It should also be noted that Agamemnon's guilt is directly linked to the atrocities the Greeks committed at Troy (Lebeck 1971: 37–46; Conacher 1987: 7–16, 23–28). So the parallel between him and Pyrrhus is quite exact.

⁴³ I read *sceleratas* as meaning "sinful, atrocious." *OLD* s.v. 3b gives "app. of punishment inflicted on the guilty." However, the *OLD* offers only the present passage as evidence for the existence of this meaning. C. Day Lewis's translation is in agreement with my reading: "punish her crime by a crime upon her." See also Reckford 1981: 87.

Aeneas' subsequent inner monologue incites him to go through with his impulse, his reasoning proclaiming the punishment just and deserving: *et sumpsisse merentis / laudabor poenas* [I shall be praised to have exacted deserving punishment] (585–86).⁴⁴ Aeneas' desire to kill Helen recalls Orestes' plan to kill Helen in Euripides' *Orestes* (Reckford 1981: 90–93). In the play, Orestes' action is presented as a repetition of the killing of his mother (Reckford 1981: 92). Aeneas' association with Orestes exemplifies the problematic nature of violent retribution. Venus' intervention, which alone saves Aeneas from becoming another Pyrrhus, or another Orestes, also serves to reinforce the need for a different way of dispensing justice that promotes rather than undermines ritual purity.

Perverted sacrifices thus constitute delays in the ritual plot's movement toward closure, which intensify the expectation for restoration. Each sacrificial repetition is part of a dynamic space of a ritual text, where interconnections of events are illuminated and provide the reader with a compass with which both the narrative and the ritual texts may be navigated. The *Aeneid* appropriates and manipulates the tragic pattern of sacrificial corruption and purity so as to render the eventual restoration of the disrupted religious order even more effective. In other words, on the level of the ritual plot, as in the narrative plot, Aeneas and his Trojans are promised to be hailed as proponents of a new and enlightened system of justice and of a new and enlightened system of governance. Sacrificial corruption is synonymous with the ailments of the previous religious and political order, which Aeneas (and his successor Augustus) will restore to its rightful and deserving place. An examination of the deaths of Dido and Turnus in the following chapter will demonstrate, however, that, at least in the ritual plot, sacrificial perversion persists, sacrifice fails in its mission to guarantee the proper communication between human and divine, and Aeneas' new system of justice proves unable to restore the desired ritual purity.

⁴⁴ I read *merentis* as accusative plural. On the possibility of *merentis* as genitive singular and the grammatical difficulties involved, see Austin 1964: 227.

GREEK TRAGEDY IN VERGIL'S "AENEID"

Ritual, Empire, and Intertext

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