6 Heroic Identity: Vergil's Ajax

IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTERS, WE HAVE SEEN THAT THE NEXUS OF ritual and allusive intertexts is part of a larger tragic intertext operative in the *Aeneid*, bringing into sharp relief problems surrounding communal unity, national identity, social hierarchy, and gender protocols. In the following pages, I focus on the epic hero and propose that the delineation of his identity relies heavily on Greek tragedy's construction of heroic identity. I argue further that this "tragic" notion of heroism in the *Aeneid* is intimately connected with the problems facing ideas regarding Roman leadership in Vergil's time. The poet's skillful mobilization of the allusive intertext of Sophocles' *Ajax*, one of Greek tragedy's most notable explorations of the contours of heroic identity, reveals that the heroic self is constantly questioned and redefined in the *Aeneid*. As with the problem of ritual, so in the case of the hero the mobilization of the tragic intertext is bound up with the tragedy's political and ideological goals. Similarly, a detailed examination of the deployment of the tragic intertext from this perspective illuminates the role of the *Aeneid* as a national epic of Rome and its empire, as well as its much-contested relationship to Augustan ideology.

Though overemphasized as a feature of Greek tragedy,[1] the concept of the tragic hero may still serve as a good measure of the poem's tragic intertext, since it may readily be juxtaposed with that of the epic hero. In a highly influential essay, Jean-Pierre Vernant posits that tragedy is a particular stage in the development of the categories of action and agent (Vernant 1988b: 71). In contrast to epic and lyric, tragedy, as *mimesis*

[1] On the dangers arising from such an emphasis, see Jones 1962: 13.

> Now Aias came nearby, carrying like a tower his shield
> of bronze and sevenfold ox-hide, which Tychios wrought for him with much toil,
> Tychios, who had his home in Hyle, far the best of all leather-workers,
> who had made him the glistening shield of sevenfold ox-hide
> from strong bulls, and upon it hammered an eighth layer of bronze.

The attributes of the shield are readily transferred to Ajax himself in Odysseus' greeting to him in their encounter in the Underworld (*Od.* 11.556: τοῖος γάρ σφιν πύργος ἀπώλεο [such a great tower of strength you were lost to us]).[5] The name of Ajax's son, Eurysaces, offers further evidence for the shield's exceptional qualities and for its particular connection with the hero. In the aristocratic value system of the Homeric epics, where nobility and valor are transmissible by heredity, the naming of Eurysaces after his father's shield renders this piece of defensive weaponry a constitutive force in the construction of Ajax's identity as well as of the identity of his son.[6]

Scholars have located the central issues of the tragedy in the conflict between Ajax's fixed behavioral code and the ever-fluctuating reality of societal structures.[7] Ajax is a hero of raw physical strength faced with the fragility of his intellectual powers and, though fully cognizant of the demands of the new reality before him, ultimately incapable of embracing the moral relativism it requires. Sophocles manipulates the traditional story of the conflict in terms of the hero's blindness and self-deception, by adding and dramatically intensifying Ajax's return to sanity and full consciousness of his choice of suicide (Rose 1995: 64). Ajax's plight is cast as an insoluble problem that can be resolved only through his self-removal from a society in which he no longer has a place. His raw, heroic nature is balanced by an intellectual recognition of the forces dictating a readjustment of his behavioral code. He finds suicide the only means by which he can maintain dignity without yielding to these forces (Knox 1961: 19–20; Sicherl 1977: 88–91).

[5] In the *Iliad* Helen refers to him in similar terms at 3.229; cf. also *Il.* 6.5 and 7.211.

[6] The importance of hereditary valor is reflected in Sophocles' play both in the scene where Ajax hands over the shield to Eurysaces and in Ajax's words that his son, if he is indeed his, will not be scared by the appearance of blood. See also Goldhill 1986: 187.

[7] See, for instance, Knox 1961; Sicherl 1977; and Bradshaw 1991.

The tragic essence of Sophocles' Ajax cannot be fully appreciated without constant reference to Homer. The hero's tragedy lies in his violation of *aidos*, the very virtue he champions in the *Iliad*, that is, the strong sense of honor that a deep commitment to the community affords. His slaying of the cattle (which in his madness he mistakes for the Achaean leaders) and his subsequent suicide mark a disgraceful betrayal of the loyalties he so fervently safeguarded in the *Iliad*. Ajax's tragic isolation, therefore, is rendered more poignant in view of his Homeric portrayal as the hero most conscious of the communal goals and of the value of camaraderie. Sophocles expresses Ajax's qualities in Iliadic language, and thus constructs a hero larger than life.[8] The play's emphasis on his self-sufficiency stands in sharp contrast with the Homeric image of the man who was the bulwark of his people, who was defined by and in turn contributed to the protection and preservation of his social milieu. Concurrently, the death of the hero, though resulting from his isolation, nevertheless has a profound effect on his dependents. Since Tecmessa's and the Salaminians' survival wholly rests on his (896–902), Ajax's life ends with a further disregard for the immediate familial and civic ties that have hitherto defined his existence.

Ajax, however, cannot be merely reduced to an embodiment of the old heroic ideal that is to be admired but not emulated (Bradshaw 1991). The complexity of his ethical quandary affords no such easy solution. On the contrary, Ajax's moral superiority despite his extremism is powerfully revealed in the second half of the play, in which the gulf separating the hero from his enemies becomes all too apparent.[9] The play offers no comparable moral force to counterbalance Ajax's loss within the value

[8] See Knox 1961: 21, although I do not share Knox's view that the Homeric ideal, at least the one that Ajax represents, is that of the individual hero who is unable to conform to the rules of society (22). On the contrary, Achilles' anger is chastised throughout the poem – and indeed by Ajax himself in his speech in Book 9 – as a paradigm of the destructive consequences of such individualistic behavior, and, as we have seen, Ajax's conduct in battle and elsewhere serves as a positive contrast to that of Achilles. Bradshaw (1991: 118–19) is more to the point when he argues that in Sophocles' tragedy, Ajax assumes an Achillean temperament.

[9] For a good discussion of Ajax's enemies, see Goldhill 1986: 157–60, where he convincingly argues that even Odysseus, who appears as the model statesman in the play, is still far from heroic when compared to Ajax.

system of the new reality (which reflects the realities of fifth-century Athens), and the problem of moral and social evaluation that it poses therefore becomes unsettling because it is ultimately unresolved.[10]

The constant negotiation between Homeric tradition and contemporary reality thus constitutes the backdrop against which the ethical problems posed in the drama are played out. As Goldhill (1986: 161) puts it:

> The problem of the evaluation of humans and humans' conduct in a social setting is developed through the complex network of strands and strains of Homeric and contemporary values, associations, distortions. It is this interpenetration of ideas, this dialectic, whereby the values and characterization of the heroic past and contemporary world clash with, undermine, illuminate each other that makes the moral and social evaluations of Sophoclean drama so complex. The concern with right action and moral judgement in Sophocles' drama is developed through the interrelations of the tragic and Homeric texts. The 'unsettling, questioning process' of this 'intertextuality,' then, informs Sophoclean tragedy. Sophocles may be read for and/or against but never without Homer.

This intertextual relationship between the Homeric tradition and Sophocles' drama in turn constitutes the backdrop against which Vergil orchestrates the interpenetration of epic and tragic allusive intertexts in the construction of the figures of Dido and Turnus, to which I now turn.

II. DIDO

Critics since the time of Servius have recognized that Dido's meeting with Aeneas in *Aeneid* 6 is patterned after Odysseus' brief meeting with Ajax

[10] Bradshaw (1991) argues a similar point, reading the figure of Ajax as an allegory for the city of Athens and as a paradigm for the values and problems that fifth-century Athens faced with regard to her allies. The question of resolution and restoration in the play is, of course, a wholly different matter. Leaving aside the problem of ritual corruption and resolution (on which see Sicherl 1977 and, more recently, Krummen 1998), which is beyond the scope of this Chapter, I simply refer here to the inadequacy of Odysseus as a heroic model to replace Ajax's loss in the play and by extension serve as a wholly satisfactory model for fifth-century Athenian society.

in *Odyssey* 11.543–67: both Dido and Ajax encounter in the Underworld the men responsible for their demise, and both treat them with the same dignified silence.[11] Critics have also long acknowledged that Dido's suicide shares many affinities with that of Sophocles' Ajax.[12] Yet the allusive presence of the Sophoclean Ajax at this important moment in the epic has been treated as an isolated, local[13] – and therefore limited – occurrence, while for many critics the allusion to the Homeric Ajax in Book 6 merely constitutes another instance of borrowing in the larger scheme of Homeric imitation in the *Aeneid*. In what follows, I will explore other intertextual debts to the Homeric and the Sophoclean Ajax in the Dido episode, aiming at challenging the view that the intertextual presence of the figure of Ajax is an isolated instance and locating it within the larger framework of intertextuality in the poem.[14] I argue that Vergil's allusive annotation of Ajax, both as a tragic persona and as a Homeric hero, has important repercussions, since it reveals that the tragic intertext in the *Aeneid* can operate in dialogue with the Homeric allusive intertext.

The unmistakable link between Dido and Ajax is their suicides (König 1970: 215–16; Lefèvre 1978: 9–24; Tatum 1984: 446). Both die by the sword, and both attribute their impasse to the person who supplied them with the weapon (4.646–47 and *Aj.* 665).[15] Dido makes sure that her sister will be the first to find her body (634–40), just as Ajax prays to Zeus that his brother Teucer will be the first to find his (826–28). While Ajax traces the beginning of his downfall to the time when enmity first turned to friendship, Dido considers her encounter

[11] Servius on *Aen.* 6.468: *tractum autem est hoc de Homero, qui inducit Aiacis umbram Vlixis conloquia fugientem, quod ei fuerat causa mortis* [this, however, is taken from Homer, who shows the shade of Ajax avoiding the words of Ulysses because he was the cause of his death]. Both episodes have the same length (twenty-seven lines), a fact attesting to Vergil's careful allusive annotation. See also Norden 1926: 253 and Knauer 1964: 108–12.

[12] Wigodsky (1972: 95–97) identifies a number of useful parallels; Lefèvre 1978 has the most thorough collection of the evidence.

[13] For the term, see Hinds 1998: 129–35.

[14] Some of this has been attempted by Lyne (1987) and Tatum (1984). Feldherr (1999) also explores generic tensions between epic and elegy in the episode of the Underworld.

[15] See Tatum 1984: 446. On Ajax's sword, see Kane 1996; on Dido's, Basto 1984.

with Aeneas, a friendship turned into enmity, to be the catalyst that brought about the violation of her behavioral code. Moreover, specific verbal contact allusively links Dido's and Ajax's dying moments:

> dixerat, atque illam media inter talia ferro
> *conlapsam* aspiciunt comites, *ensem*que *cruore*
> spumantem *sparsas*que manus. it clamor ad alta
> atria: concussam bacchatur *Fama* per urbem. (4.663–66)
>
> She had spoken, and amid these words, her attendants saw her
> *falling* upon the blade, the *sword* foaming with blood
> and her hands *spattered*. A scream rises to the roofs of
> the palace; then *Rumor* runs frenzied through the shaken city.
>
> πέμψον τιν' ἡμῖν ἄγγελον, κακὴν φάτιν
> Τεύκρῳ φέροντα, πρῶτος ὥς με βαστάσῃ
> *πεπτῶτα* τῷδε περὶ *νεορράντῳ ξίφει*, . . . (826–28)
>
> Send a messenger to bring my sad *news* to Teucer,
> so that he may be the first to lift me
> when I have *fallen* upon this *sword freshly spattered*, . . .

Vergil observes the dramatic convention prohibiting depiction of violence "onstage," as the narrative at the decisive moment shifts the focus from Dido herself to her attendants, who see her collapse under the mortal blow.[16] Yet the poet's artistry in the description of Dido's suicide powerfully evokes Ajax's death onstage, and several propositions have been offered for its significance. Lefèvre argues that the figure of Ajax links Dido with the Greek world and serves to contrast her with Aeneas as a Roman (Lefèvre 1978: 24). Tatum draws attention to Dido's adherence to the value of *fama*, which he finds to be corresponding to Ajax's strong sense of *time* (Tatum 1984: 446–51). It is important to recognize, however, that the link between Dido and Ajax is even more complex than these scholars allow: Ajax commits suicide after violating the value

[16] Servius on *Aen.* 4.664: *non induxit occidentem se, sed ostendit occisam. et hoc tragico fecit exemplo, apud quos non videtur quemadmodum fit caedes, sed facta narratur* [he does not show her killing herself, but presents her dead. And this he did after the tragic example, where it is not seen how the slaying occurs but is reported after it has happened].

he championed when alive, that of *aidos*; Dido takes her life after having violated a value very similar to Ajax's *aidos*, that is, *pudor*. Both fall prey to madness, and both experience isolation from their communities. The extremism accompanying the final stages of their lives and the kinship between their personal value systems are painstakingly portrayed in the Vergilian narrative. Most important, both find themselves unable to negotiate an alternative heroic identity when faced with the demands of a new sociopolitical reality.

Dido's heroic stature is established as comparable to that of Aeneas early in the poem; this status is closely related to her role as a public and political figure. Critics have noted that the queen serves as Aeneas' double in many respects (see, for instance, Rudd 1990: 160). Venus' account of Dido's story to her son in Book 1 presents the Carthaginian queen as a woman of virtue, ability, foresight, and courage, and thus claims Aeneas' and the reader's sympathy and admiration. Dido took brave and decisive action when she removed herself and her people from the authority of her ruthless brother and successfully established a new and prospering city.[17] The queen's first appearance in the poem (1.503–508) exhibits her energetic, caring, and just leadership, while the compassion with which she receives the shipwrecked Aeneas attests to her sense of *humanitas* (Monti 1981: 20). With her image as a gifted leader thus established, the narrative of Book 4, in true tragic fashion, shifts the focus to the workings of Dido's mind. The opening of the book shows the queen oscillating between her attraction to the newcomer and the importance of *pudor* in her personal system of values (4.24–29). Dido fervently asserts her loyalty to her dead husband, Sychaeus, linking the concept of *pudor* with the Roman ideal of *uniuira*, an ideal grounded within the larger value system of the entire community.[18] Anna, however, by emphasizing the political

[17] On the political aspect of the enterprise, see Monti 1981: 22.

[18] Rudd (1990: 154–59) and Monti (1981: 53–59) propound the view that Dido's failure to uphold the ideal of *uniuira* was not a crime by Roman standards. Monti recognizes, however, that it came close to being a moral obligation. But even if one concedes that Dido did not violate a moral standard that was upheld in real life (like her literary models, Catullus' Ariadne, Euripides' Medea, and Ajax), her perception of her action as wrong suffices to justify her feeling of isolation, which will eventually push her to suicide. I am also in disagreement with Pavlock (1990: 78), who comments that the poet implies that Dido's

gains that a union with Aeneas would secure, appeals to the queen's strong commitment to the welfare of her city, and therefore effectively alleviates her sister's concerns. Dido's sense of personal honor arises from a steadfast adherence to communal values.

Since Dido's identity is constructed around the ideal of *pudor*, the question of right action and moral judgment that she faces may not be considered apart from her role as a champion of her city's welfare and prosperity.[19] Scholars in search of Dido's "tragic" flaw or *hamartia* usually place emphasis on the violation of her oath to remain loyal to Sychaeus[20] or present the queen as a woman in conflict over her private love for Aeneas and her duty to Carthage (Wiltshire 1989: 90–93, 108–109). While to a certain degree Dido's passion necessitates a choice between clashing polarities (husband vs. lover, private vs. public), when she finally succumbs to that passion she does so in the belief that she is putting her personal desire at the service of her city and people. Her "marriage" to Aeneas is not simply a lovers' union; it also guarantees the permanency of Aeneas' political alliance.[21] Dido's actions are determined through constant reference to her community, and in this regard she is different from the female heroines to whom she is allusively connected: while for Euripides' Medea and Catullus' Ariadne the abdication of familial and communal ties does not significantly affect the survival of their communities, in the case of Dido it is precisely her inadvertent rupturing of the bonds with her people that results in the annihilation of her city. *Pudor* has always been the guiding principle in her actions, public and private: when she later confronts Aeneas about his imminent departure, she refers to *pudor* and *fama* as constitutive elements in Carthage's foreign relations (4.320–23, see Monti 1981: 40), and in her subsequent monologue (534–52) she displays yet again the high value she places on her reputation as an honorable and devoted leader, who, until

persistence in remaining faithful to Sychaeus is ultimately unnatural. Even if this is true, it does not preclude the possibility that Dido herself did not see it in the same way, and I believe it is disproved when the queen is shown with Sychaeus in Book 6.

[19] Monti (1981) has amply demonstrated this much-neglected aspect of Dido's identity.

[20] Williams 1962: 45; 1968: 384–85; Moles 1984, 1987; Harrison 1989: 11–13.

[21] Dido may indeed neglect the construction of the city (4.86–89), but Aeneas has taken over (4.259–61).

Aeneas' arrival, refused to jeopardize her city's independence with a political union that would ensure safety from foreign peril.

Dido's high valuation of *pudor* and extraordinary attachment to her community are qualities she shares with Ajax, the champion of *aidos*. Vergil thus invests Dido with the attributes of a male hero – the male hero par excellence – while he simultaneously casts her as unmistakably female by mobilizing the allusive framework of erotic poetry.[22] The poet's manipulation of these allusive intertexts brings these two facets of Dido's identity to the foreground in order to intensify the loss she incurs with Aeneas' departure. The queen's "female" side is evident in her first confrontation with Aeneas (4.305–30; 365–87): allusion casts the queen as Ariadne pleading with Theseus (Catullus 64.132–201) and as Medea upbraiding Jason in Euripides (*Med.* 465–519) and Apollonius (*Argon.* 4.355–90). At the same time, Dido's reasoning is steeped in the political vocabulary of reciprocity and exchange, when she in effect charges Aeneas with a breach of *fides* (Monti 1981: 39). Aeneas abandons Carthage after exacerbating the hostility between Dido and her political adversaries. Dido, like Ajax, perceives her loss as irreparable, as she finds herself in a world where loyalties unexpectedly shift when friends turn to enemies. As a female heroine, she cannot conceive of life without the object of her desire. As a "male" leader, she is surrounded by angry and predatory neighbors. Dido's "female" and "male" identities are further complicated through allusion to Sophocles' *Ajax*. Surprisingly, the verbal contact is not between Dido and Ajax but between Dido and Tecmessa:

> *si* bene quid de te merui, fuit aut tibi *quicquam*
> *dulce* meum, miserere domus labentis... (4.317–18)
>
> if I deserved any favor from you at all, or *if anything* about me
> gave you *pleasure*, pity my sinking household...
>
> ἀλλ' ἴσχε κἀμοῦ μνῆστιν· ἀνδρί τοι χρεὼν
> μνήμην προσεῖναι, *τερπνόν εἴ τί* που πάθοι. (520–21)
>
> Think of me also; a man should remember,
> *if* he received *any pleasure*.

[22] On Dido and allusion to love poetry, see Tatum 1984: 440–44; Griffith 1995; and Feldherr 1999. On Dido's "male" and "female" attributes, see West 1980.

The similarity of the two women's situation provides a prima facie justification for the presence of the allusion. Tecmessa contemplates the dangers awaiting her in the event of Ajax's death. She appeals to her past devotion and loyalty to him as his wife and reminds him of his responsibility toward his *philoi* in an effort to persuade him not to commit suicide.[23] Tecmessa's entreaties (485–524) insist on the marital bond between Ajax and herself and display her entire dependence on him: without Ajax's protection she faces slavery and possibly death. By stressing the reciprocity central to the relations between husband and wife, Tecmessa constructs herself as a legitimate wife, although her actual status as spear-bride is probably less clear than her rhetoric here implies (Ormand 1999: 110–19). Dido too appeals to a commitment she views as binding.[24] Allusion to this particular segment of the play therefore serves to underscore the ambiguity of Dido's position as Aeneas' wife and illuminates the queen's self-portrayal as a spear-bride facing captivity (325–26 and 330). At the same time, Dido, like Ajax, grapples with a real ethical and political dilemma. She has to learn to live with Aeneas as an enemy and to negotiate the political and personal significance of the injury to her *pudor*.[25] Aeneas' departure threatens Dido in both her "male" and "female" capacities. Her eventual refusal to entertain any moral relativism in finding a solution to her predicament, however, decidedly aligns her with Ajax.

State of mind is a crucial issue in both Sophocles and Vergil. Dido's and Ajax's infringement upon the moral principles they have always

[23] The scene in the Greek play is modeled after *Il.* 6.390–502. Kirkwood (1965: 56–59) has demonstrated the affinity of the two texts and has drawn attention to their contrasts, which he deems more significant than their similarities for the interpretation of the tragedy.

[24] On the "marriage" of Dido and Aeneas, see Williams 1968: 378–83 and Rudd 1990: 153–54.

[25] The allusion to this passage, however, also points to Ajax's peremptory dismissal of Tecmessa's pleas and invites comparison to Aeneas' behavior toward Dido. To be sure, Aeneas does not display Ajax's self-absorption. But we are dealing with the same conflict between love and duty, where duty must prevail. It is also interesting how the critics writing on *Ajax* and on the *Aeneid* are at pains to justify the cruelty displayed by the heroes toward the women. See Poe 1987: 43–45 and Austin 1955: 105–106.

striven to uphold is portrayed as madness caused by divine intervention. Madness alone can account for the disavowal of loyalties: Ajax, the bulwark of the Achaeans, turns against his superiors; Dido forfeits her promise to her dead husband and endangers her city. Divine cruelty is a theme paramount in both texts. Athena's callousness in the Greek play is matched by the business like cruelty of Venus and Juno in the *Aeneid*.[26] Madness is caused by forces external working side by side with forces residing within. Dido and Ajax, formerly wholly invested in the world outside, are now faced with an inner disturbance. As they turn into creatures of the night, their internal anguish stands in sharp contrast to the world around them: Ajax's *mania*, which causes him to slay the cattle, occurs at night time (Padel 1995: 66–70); similarly, Dido's *furor* intensifies during the night (80–83), especially in the poignant moment when the queen's turmoil is pitted against night's quiet rest (522–32). Dido's and Ajax's suicides are not attributable to a bout of madness, however; on the contrary, their mental agony leads them to a new consciousness and enables them to gain clearer vision. Dido and Ajax gauge their options and decide on a solution with remarkable intellectual clarity.

Madness may be temporary, but the isolation it generates is permanent. Dido immediately apprehends her political isolation (320–21, 325–26); loneliness torments her in nightmares (466–68); her nocturnal anxiety revolves around the fear of alienation:

> *'en, quid ago?* rursusne procos *inrisa* priores
> experiar, Nomadumque petam conubia supplex,
> quos ego sim totiens iam dedignata maritos?
> ...
> quis me autem, fac uelle, sinet ratibusue superbis
> *inuisam* accipiet? ...
> ...
> quid tum? sola fuga nautas comitabor ouantis?
> an Tyriis omnique manu stipata meorum

[26] *Aen.* 4.90–128. The scene is very different in tone from the humorous divine exchanges in Apollonius, *Argon.* 3.1–166, where divine frivolity contrasts with human suffering. On this scene, see also Chapter 3, pp. 93–95.

inferar et, quos Sidonia uix urbe reuelli,
rursus agam *pelago* et uentis dare uela iubebo? . . .' (4.534–46)[27]

"See, what shall I do? Shall I try again my former suitors,
only to be *laughed at?* Beg the Numidians for marriage,
whom so often I have scorned as husbands?
. . .
Who, suppose that I wished it, will suffer me or take me,
hated so, aboard their proud ships? . . .
. . .
What then? Shall I by myself accompany those exulting sailors in flight?
Or go against them along with the entire band of my Tyrians,
and drive again out *to sea* and bid set sail to the winds those
whom I barely tore away from the city of Sidon?

Ajax voices similar concerns as soon as he regains his senses:

κεῖνοι [sc. the Atreidae] δ' *ἐπεγγελῶσιν* ἐκπεφευγότες,
. . .
καὶ νῦν *τί* χρὴ *δρᾶν*; ὅστις ἐμφανῶς θεοῖς
ἐχθαίρομαι, μισεῖ δέ μ' Ἑλλήνων στρατός,
ἔχθει δὲ Τροία πᾶσα καὶ πεδία τάδε.
πότερα πρὸς οἴκους, ναυλόχους λιπὼν ἕδρας
μόνους τ' Ἀτρείδας, *πέλαγος* Αἰγαῖον περῶ; (454–61)

they [sc. the Atridae], having escaped, are *laughing at* me;
. . .
and now *what* must *I do?* I who obviously am *hated*
by the gods, *hated* by the army of the Greeks,
and hated by all of Troy and by these plains?

[27] The Vergilian passage also alludes to Medea's speech (Euripides, *Med.* 502–15). The main difference between Dido and Medea, however, is that in Medea's case her isolation is more the result of both her "difference" from the other Greek women (she is a foreigner and a witch) and the crimes she has committed against her family. Moreover, her wounded pride generates further aggression against her enemies, whereas Ajax's and Dido's reasoning ends in self-destruction that is perceived as adherence to a superior moral code. Of course, the allusive material of this passage (*Aen.* 4.522–52) also points to *Argon.* 3.744–801 and Catullus 64.176–83, on which see Pavlock 1990: 81–82.

Shall I cross the Aegean Sea and go home, leaving behind
the station of the ships and the sons of Atreus to themselves?

In both passages the realization of the state of isolation is paired with a newly found awareness.[28] Dido ponders a series of different courses of action: to renew relations with her African suitors is unfeasible in view of her former treatment of them and their present hostility; to sail with the Trojans to Italy is dismissed on the basis of their ungratefulness for her generosity and compassion toward them (537–39). Unable to uproot her people a second time, she comes to the conclusion that she has severed ties with both her people and her enemies. Ajax in his self-questioning also weighs possible options, which he similarly dismisses: to return home dishonored (460–65) or to attack the Trojans and die in battle (466–70). In both cases the characters' attempts to formulate the alternatives to heroic suicide convince them of their impossibility:[29]

ἀλλ' ἢ καλῶς ζῆν ἢ καλῶς τεθνηκέναι
τὸν εὐγενῆ χρή. (479–80)

the noble man must live honorably
or die honorably.

quin morere ut merita es, ferroque auerte dolorem. (4.547)

no, die as you deserve, end your pain with the sword.

The problem of Dido's and Ajax's state of mind is closely connected with the planning and execution of their suicides. Scholarship on *Ajax* has focused on the hero's famous *Trugrede* (646–92) and in particular on the question of whether or not Ajax changes his mind and decides against killing himself.[30] Likewise, critics have debated whether or not

[28] Tatum (1984: 447) comments that both Dido and Ajax now express themselves through monologue.

[29] Knox 1961: 17 on *Ajax*, but the same can be argued for Dido as well. See also Heinze (1915: 136n.1 [= 1993: 115]), who points to Sophocles' *Aj.* 460. On the alternative courses of action that Ajax rejects, see Winnington-Ingram 1980: 28 and Poe 1987: 42. On Dido's, see Pöschl 1962: 85–87; Monti 1981: 56–57; and Pavlock 1990: 81–82.

[30] See Knox 1961; Sicherl 1977; Winnington-Ingram 1980: 46–56; and Poe 1987: 50–71.

Dido had resolved on death at the moment when she first voices the possibility (308, 323)[31] and, if indeed she has, why she delays in implementing it. In both instances, Ajax's *Trugrede* and Dido's speeches (416–36, 478–98, 534–52) are filled with ambivalence and double entendres,[32] and in both cases the characters reveal an obsession with death.

The Greek hero's words mark a recognition of the ever-fluctuating nature of reality, and the moral relativism this entails, which, of course, cannot be reconciled with his concept of personal honor (Knox 1961: 16; Sicherl 1977: 81–91; Winnington-Ingram 1980: 52). He begins with a general statement on the action of time (646–49), followed by the realization that he himself takes part in this temporal order (650–52). It seems that it is a new Ajax speaking when he reveals that he is softened by Tecmessa's words. But his choice of diction also indicates that there is deep irony behind these statements (Knox 1961: 15). Ambiguity is also present when he proceeds to describe how he will perform ritual cleansing, which could refer either to a willingness to return to normalcy or to the ritual washing of his dead body (654–59).[33] The hero then goes on to express in tangible terms what his hard-won knowledge of the law of time and change entails, that is, a reconciliation with the Atridae (666–67): "give in to the gods and show reverence to the sons of Atreus." Again, irony lies behind his word choice: one should show reverence not to humans but to gods.[34] By the time he addresses Tecmessa, therefore, Ajax's decision has been made. His words to her constitute the final arrangements before his death.

[31] Austin (1955: 99) argues that Dido decides on suicide only when she has lost all hope, *contra* Pöschl 1962: 85. That Dido, in employing a *Trugrede*, clearly intends to deceive Anna (478–98) further confirms the parallel between Dido and the tragic Ajax.

[32] See Pöschl 1962: 83–85, where he directly links these features to Greek tragedy but does not identify the kinship with Sophocles' *Ajax*. On the ambiguity in Ajax's *Trugrede*, see Knox 1961: 11–13; Sicherl 1977; and Padel 1995: 71.

[33] Knox 1961: 11 and Sicherl 1977: 78. Along the same lines one may read that his plan to "hide" his sword can mean either that he will simply get rid of it or that he will bury it in his body (Sicherl 1977: 79–80), though I find this reading strained.

[34] Noted by the ancient scholiast. See also Knox 1961: 34 n.85 and Winnington-Ingram 1980: 49.

Dido declares that she is intent on death at the moment she first confronts Aeneas, but does not actually commit suicide until after Aeneas' departure from Carthage. In the meantime (and here she differs from Ajax) she oscillates between alternatives: love and hate, life and death,[35] social decorum and personal desire. Guilt over the violation of her oath to Sychaeus, disillusionment over a love lost, consciousness of her alienation from her people, the daunting prospect of humiliation and mockery by her enemies are all present in her thoughts. But she too, like Ajax, finally comes to an important recognition: the rift between her past and present states brings into question her ability and willingness to continue her existence. The presence of Aeneas has caused an irrevocable disruption of life as she knew it, and her inability to reclaim a meaningful existence in the new terms that his departure imposes pushes her to opt for death. The sinister omens she receives (453–65) and the magic ritual to which she resorts defy every hope that normal life will be resumed (474–521).[36]

The curses Dido and Ajax cast against their enemies only serve to confirm their failure to come to reconciliation with their social milieu. When Dido sees Aeneas sneaking off before dawn, her reaction is violent. Oscillating between madness and sanity, she contemplates once again different courses of action (590–629). She ends her monologue by calling upon the Sun, the Furies, and Hecate to avenge her death. Similarly, in Sophocles' play, Ajax ends his life with a terrible curse on the Atridae. Vergil allusively manipulates Dido's curse so that its first part alludes to the one uttered by the dying Ajax, while its conclusion is intertextually linked to a curse pronounced by Teucer later in the play. The allusive kinship between these three passages is remarkable.[37]

Dido's curse:

> *Sol*, qui *terrarum* flammis opera omnia *lustras*,
> tuque harum interpres curarum et conscia Iuno,
> nocturnisque Hecate triuiis *ululata per urbes*

[35] Pöschl 1962: 86–87. See also Pavlock 1990: 82 on the ambivalence that dominates Dido's speeches.

[36] Pavlock (1990: 83) suggests that Vergil, by connecting Dido with the forces of magic, exposes her ambivalent relation to civilized values.

[37] Heinze 1915: 136 n.2 (= 1993: 115–16) identifies the allusion to *Aj.* 835 and Catullus 64.193.

et *Dirae ultrices* et di morientis Elissae,
accipite haec, meritumque malis aduertite numen
et nostras audite preces...
...
...nec, cum se sub leges pacisque iniquae
tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur,
sed *cadat* ante diem mediaque *inhumatus* harena
haec precor, hanc uocem extremam cum sanguine fundo.
tum uos, o Tyrii, *stirpem* et *genus* omne futurum
exercete odiis, cinerique haec mittite nostro
munera. nullus amor populis nec foedera sunto. (4.607–24)

O *Sun*, with your rays *survey* all the deeds of the *earth*,
and you, Juno, the mediator and witness of these cares,
and Hecate, whose name is *wailed* by night *at the city* crossroads,
and *avenging Furies*, and gods of *dying* Elissa,
hear me, turn your divine anger to the wicked deeds
that deserve it, and hear my prayers...
...
...and when he's entered the terms of an unjust peace,
let him not enjoy his kingdom or the life he longs for,
but let him *fall* before his time and lie *unburied* on the sand.
This is my prayer, this last cry I pour out with my blood.
Then, you, my Tyrians, turn your hatred upon *his children*
and all *their race* to come, make this offering
to my ashes. Let there be no love, no treaty between our peoples.

Ajax's curse to the Atridae:

ἴτ', ὦ ταχεῖαι ποίνιμοί τ' Ἐρινύες,
γεύεσθε, μὴ φείδεσθε πανδήμου στρατοῦ.
σὺ δ', ὦ τὸν αἰπὺν οὐρανὸν διφρηλατῶν
Ἥλιε, πατρῴαν τὴν ἐμὴν ὅταν χθόνα
ἴδῃς, ἐπισχὼν χρυσόνωτον ἡνίαν
ἄγγειλον ἄτας τὰς ἐμὰς μόρον τ' ἐμὸν
γέροντι πατρὶ τῇ τε δυστήνῳ τροφῷ.
ἢ που τάλαινα, τήνδ' ὅταν κλύῃ φάτιν,
ἥσει μέγαν κωκυτόν ἐν πάσῃ πόλει. (843–51)

Come, swift *avenging Erinyes*,
feed on the whole army, do not spare it.
But you, oh *Sun*, who drives your chariot through high heaven,
when you *see* my home *land*,
check your golden rein
and announce my ruin and my *death*
to my old father and my unhappy mother.
Indeed, poor woman, when she hears this news
she will utter *wailing through* all *the city*.

After Ajax's death, his brother Teucer, embroiled in a quarrel with the Atridae, pronounces a curse against whoever would attempt to remove Ajax's son from his father's dead body:

...εἰ δέ τις στρατοῦ
βίᾳ σ' ἀποσπάσειε τοῦδε τοῦ νεκροῦ,
κακὸς κακῶς ἄθαπτος ἐκπέσοι χθονός,
γένους ἅπαντος ῥίζαν ἐξημημένος,... (1175–78)

...and if any of the army
tries to tear you by force away from this corpse,
may that man be *cast* out of the earth *unburied*,
wickedly as befits a wicked man, with the *root* of all his *race* cut off,...

Ajax's curse on the Atridae at once constitutes a rejection of the world of change and a reaffirmation of his own ethical code. Ajax refuses to renegotiate his heroic values in the face of the new reality before him, while his extreme individualism seems out of place in a community defined by reciprocity, compromise, and exchange. Ajax's loss, however, is keenly felt in the latter portion of the play in the petty bickering of the Atridae over the hero's dead body. Teucer's curse, a counterpart to the earlier one uttered by Ajax himself and which reaffirms the old enmities (839–40), underscores this loss.[38] Neither the new ethical code of relativism (which Odysseus recognizes and advocates) nor Teucer's fervent defense of his brother's cause is a match for the higher moral dignity of Ajax's heroic persona.

[38] Kamerbeek 1963: 226. Lloyd-Jones and Wilson 1990 obelize the lines, but, as is obvious from the present discussion, they are perfectly apropos in this segment of the narrative.

Dido, in her curse against Aeneas, turns to her people, confirming once again that the Trojan hero harmed not only her person but also her city. By addressing the Tyrians and proclaiming the future enmity between her people and his, the queen too, like Ajax, reaffirms the values that defined her previous existence by momentarily renewing the ties with her community. Dido identifies with her city in her call for the perpetuation of an enmity that is closely linked with her inability to renegotiate her ethical code in the face of the new reality that Aeneas' mission presents. At the same time, the intertextual connection with Teucer's curse over Ajax's dead body intensifies the certainty of the queen's death and of a future devoid of Dido's heroic values. Dido's intransigence contrasts sharply with Aeneas' ability to adapt to the demands of his new destiny.

The extremism with which Dido and Ajax view reality, their predicament, and their options forces them to turn the sword inward on themselves, thus completing their severing of the external ties of *pudor* and *aidos*. Dido's isolation as she takes her life is mitigated only by her allusive bond to Ajax, since the reader is informed of the presence of her *comites* after the fact. Similarly, Ajax's last farewell is not directed to his loved ones but to the permanent and immovable landscape of his homeland and of Troy. The play's dramaturgy accentuates the hero's isolation. In an extraordinary gesture that defies dramatic convention, the Chorus are removed from the stage and the mortal blow takes place in full view. Ajax's solitude is lamented by the Chorus:

> . . . οἷος ἄρ' αἱμάχθης,
> ἄφαρκτος φίλων.
> ἐγὼ δ' ὁ πάντα κωφός, ὁ πάντ' ἄιδρις,
> κατημέλησα.
>
> (909–12)

> . . . all alone then you bled,
> unguarded from your friends;
> and I, completely deaf, completely ignorant,
> took no care.

Anna's dirge allusively assumes the role of the Chorus:

> his etiam struxi manibus patriosque uocaui
> uoce deos, sic te ut posita, crudelis, abessem?
> exstinxti te meque, soror, populumque patresque
> Sidonios urbemque tuam.
>
> (4.680–83)

Did I build this pyre with my own hands and with my voice call upon
our fatherland's gods, so that, as you lie thus on it, I, cruel one, may
be away?
You have destroyed yourself and me together, sister, the people
and the nobles of Sidon and your city.

Anna's words confirm that Dido's death is a matter not solely of personal but also of political importance; in the same fashion, the Chorus recognize the importance of the leader for the life of the army:

ὤμοι, κατέπεφνες, ἄναξ,
τόνδε συνναύταν, τάλας· . . . (901–902)

alas my lord, you have killed me
your fellow sailor, poor man; . . .

When Aeneas meets Dido in the Underworld (6.450–76), the queen's moral restoration (as she treats Aeneas with indifference and takes her place next to her husband) celebrates the heroic ideals she represents and confirms that her death marks an important loss for the epic's hero and his mission. Scholars have long recognized that the encounter of the two lovers, though inspired by Homer, underscores the "tragic" issues delineated in Book 4. This "tragic" quality has been mainly located in the passage's intertextual debt to Book 4 (Austin 1977: 163). Vergil, however, also manipulates the Homeric text, expanding the allusive space[39] to include Sophocles' *Ajax*, and invites us to tease out the implications of the allusive interplay of all three texts.[40]

More specifically, in Homer Odysseus seeks reconciliation with the slain hero, yet he displays a certain self-absorption in that he neither offers an apology (he instead attributes the unfortunate incident to Zeus' hatred) nor takes the time to persuade Ajax to speak or listen.[41] Aeneas, on the contrary, recognizes his share of responsibility for Dido's plight (*funeris heu tibi causa fui?*, 458), is deeply shaken by her death, and follows

[39] For the term, see Pucci 1998: 43–44.

[40] Other allusive intertexts operative in this passage are discussed by Tatum (1984) and Feldherr (1999).

[41] Jebb (1907: xlii) argues that the Homeric Odysseus is similar to that of Sophocles. While it is true that in Homer Odysseus is moved by pity at the sight of Ajax, here he seems more interested in the implications of his loss for the Achaean army than in the hero's untimely death (*Od.* 11.556–60).

her in tears.[42] Aeneas' sympathy does not merely constitute a display of *pietas*; it also indicates a sincere hope that a final reconciliation with Dido will take place, a hope eventually frustrated by the queen's cold silence. In this light, Aeneas' attitude owes something to that of Odysseus in Sophocles' *Ajax*, who, out of sympathy for the fragility of the human condition (e.g., 121–26), ensures proper burial for the lost hero and champions his restoration. By casting Aeneas as a foil to the tragic (and not the Homeric) Odysseus, Vergil sharply contrasts Odysseus' success with Aeneas' failure in this respect.

The inclusion of the Odyssean model thus serves multiple purposes: Dido's heroic persona is completely restored when she assumes a place by her husband, a restoration that affirms the importance of the heroic ideals she embodies and emphasizes that they no longer have a place in Aeneas' new world. Furthermore, the intertextual fusion of the Homeric and the tragic Ajax in Dido's persona is paired with a conflation of the Homeric and the Sophoclean Odysseus in the persona of Aeneas. In Homer, Odysseus' unsuccessful attempt at a reconciliation with Ajax parallels Aeneas' failure to achieve reconciliation with Dido. At the same time, Aeneas' pity and *pietas* towards Dido in Book 6 evoke the tragic Odysseus, who displayed a similar attitude toward the plight of his foe, convinced the obstinate Atridae to allow his body to be buried, and almost single-handedly effected the restoration of Ajax's heroic status among the Greek army at the end of the play. The active role that the tragic Odysseus played in the hero's restoration is juxtaposed with Aeneas' absence in the process of Dido's restoration, poignantly underscored by his utter surprise at seeing her among the shades in the world below. Aeneas is completely severed from the dangers that the queen's attachment poses for his mission, but this also implies that the new state he is about to create will be deprived of the heroic ideals that she champions.

III. TURNUS

Much like Dido, Turnus' figure also problematizes established notions of heroic identity and proper behavior in the face of ethical dilemmas

[42] This contrast is noted by Tatum (1984: 445).

circumscribed by ineluctable Fate and evolving social structures. In the case of Turnus, Vergil deploys allusive material from the Iliadic and the Sophoclean Ajax in order to achieve specific narrative strategies: a series of allusions to a pair of Homeric episodes establish the hero's prowess as a warrior as well as his extraordinary talent in military defense. Once annotation[43] to Ajax is launched through reference to the epic's code-model (Homer), the tragic *Ajax* enters the intertextual map, creating a new allusive space that necessitates a renegotiation of the hero's identity in view of the new (tragic) allusive material.[44] The reader is now forced to admit that another model, Sophocles' tragedy, is at work. These allusive subtexts operate in conjunction, but they also intensify and reinforce one another: the Homeric material invites the reader to revisit and reinterpret it in light of the tragic appropriations, while the tragic is mobilized by and relies on the Homeric in order to fulfill its interpretative potential. More important, the Homeric material is put to work in the service of a broader pattern of narrative allusion that is in effect tragic.[45]

Furthermore, Turnus' intertextual connection with the figure of Ajax permits a reading of his *furor* and *violentia* as facets of the poem's articulation of a new definition of heroic (and, by extension, Roman) identity and the tensions and conflicts that such a redefinition necessarily generates. The linking of Ajax and Turnus therefore establishes a Homeric archetype of military excellence for the Vergilian hero, while his association with the Greek hero most conscious of the communal goal calls into question his image as an egotist who causes death and destruction to his community in order to avenge his own wounded pride. As a result, Turnus' *furor* and *violentia* are fueled by a desire to fulfill his responsibility toward his people, a responsibility inextricably linked to his own sense of honor. The tragic Ajax displays a similarly misplaced determination that leads him to madness, disillusionment, and death. Turnus, however, like Sophocles' Ajax and, of course, Dido, engages in action

[43] On annotation as "footnote," see Hinds 1998: 1–5.

[44] See Conte 1986: 31 and Hinds 1998: 41–43 for a discussion of "code" model and "exemplary" model.

[45] A similar case is argued by Hinds (1998: 140) for Horatian and Ovidian allusion in Statius' *Achilleid*.

that pits him against the interests of his community and that results in his complete isolation from it. Unable to adjust to the kind of moral relativism that would enable a peaceful coexistence with the Trojans, he also embodies a heroic ideal that, though laudable, can have no rightful place in the Roman future. The tension between the celebration of this ideal and the realization that social change has rendered it obsolete is precisely the point of Sophocles' drama. Just as Ajax's tragedy relies on the audience's knowledge of his Homeric past, so the Homeric qualities of Turnus, painstakingly established earlier in the narrative, underscore Vergil's engagement with similarly tragic issues.

The most impressive set of intertextual associations firmly linking Turnus and Ajax is found in the first display of Turnus' warrior talent as Book 9 draws to a close. In the absence of Aeneas, the Rutulian hero is given a proper *aristeia* when he combats the host of the Trojans alone. This segment of the narrative annotates its allusive debt to two Homeric passages, each attesting to Ajax's talent in the face of overwhelming odds. The first passage is from *Iliad* 11:

Ζεὺς δὲ πατὴρ Αἴανθ' ὑψίζυγος ἐν *φόβον* ὦρσε·
στῆ δὲ *ταφών*, ὄπιθεν δὲ σάκος βάλεν ἑπταβόειον,
τρέσσε δὲ παπτήνας ἐφ' ὁμίλου, θηρὶ ἐοικώς,
ἐντροπαλιζόμενος, ὀλίγον γόνυ γουνὸς ἀμείβων.
ὡς δ' αἴθωνα λέοντα βοῶν ἀπὸ μεσσαύλοιο
ἐσσεύαντο κύνες τε καὶ ἀνέρες ἀγροιῶται,
οἵ τέ μιν οὐκ εἰῶσι βοῶν ἐκ πῖαρ ἑλέσθαι
πάννυχοι ἐγρήσσοντες· ὁ δὲ κρειῶν ἐρατίζων
ἰθύει, ἀλλ' οὔ τι πρήσσει· θαμέες γὰρ ἄκοντες
ἀντίον ἀΐσσουσι θρασειάων ἀπὸ χειρῶν,
καιόμεναί τε δεταί, τάς τε *τρεῖ* ἐσσύμενός περ·
ἠῶθεν δ' ἀπονόσφιν ἔβη *τετιηότι θυμῷ*·
ὣς Αἴας τότ' ἀπὸ Τρώων *τετιημένος* ἦτορ
ἧΐε πόλλ' ἀέκων· περὶ γὰρ δίε νηυσὶν Ἀχαιῶν. (11.544–57)

But father Zeus sitting on high rose *fear* upon Aias.
He stood *stunned*, and cast the sevenfold ox-hide shield behind him,
and *drew back*, glancing at the crowd of men, like a wild beast,
turning about, retreating step by step only a little;
as when country men and their dogs drove

a tawny lion away from the fold of their cattle,
and will not let him take as prey the fattest of the oxen,
watching all night; yet he, hungry for meat,
charges on, but to no avail; for javelins thick and fast
dart against him from the bold hands of the men,
and the flaming torches, and at these *he recoils* though he is eager;
and at dawn he goes away *with sullen heart*;
so Aias, *sullen* at heart, drew back from the Trojans
much against his will; for he feared greatly for the ships of the Achaians.

The alluding text reads as follows:

...Turnus paulatim excedere pugna
et fluuium petere ac partem quae cingitur unda.
acrius hoc Teucri clamore incumbere magno
et glomerare manum, ceu saeuum *turba leonem*
cum *telis* premit *infensis*; at *territus* ille,
asper, acerba tuens, retro redit et neque terga
ira dare aut uirtus patitur, nec *tendere* contra
ille quidem hoc cupiens *potis est per tela uirosque.*
haud aliter retro *dubius* uestigia Turnus
improperata refert et *mens exaestuat ira.* (9.789–98)

...Little by little Turnus drew back from the fight
and made for the river and that place encircled by the water.
The Trojans pressed in on him with loud cries all the more fiercely
and massed their ranks; as when a *crowd of men* presses on
a savage *lion* with *menacing* spears; and he, *frightened*,
but still *fierce, glaring angrily, draws back*, yet his *rage*
and his courage do not let him turn his back; nor *is he able to make his way*
through the men and their weapons, eager though he is.
Just so Turnus *in doubt* traces back his steps
unhurried and *his heart is seething with rage.*

Turnus, like Ajax, is compared to a lion cornered and seemingly helpless. The emphasis in both passages is on the hero's extraordinary ability in defensive battle. Turnus' representation as a force of *violentia* in the poem is sustained and reinforced by the emphasis on the beast's violence and anger, while the Iliadic passage only stresses the feeling of terror inspired

by a divine power.[46] Vergil, however, by including a reference to the lion's *uirtus* (Schenk 1984: 208), further diverges from the Greek text, which only makes mention of the beast's physicality, hunger, and frustration. This addition imparts information on both the high quality of the hero's performance in battle and his moral compass. Moreover, the pairing of *ira* and *uirtus* as subjects of the same verb (*patitur*) suggests a deeper and more important connection between the two words. The lion's anger surfaces as a consequence of *uirtus*, a desire to continue fighting prescribed by the conventions of heroic behavior in a social setting. Vergil thus causes the boundaries between simile and narrative proper to collapse temporarily as he turns the narrative focus away from the lion and back on Turnus. The Rutulian's anger in this instance, aroused by his inability to live up to the heroic code by which he abides, emerges as natural and justified.

The conclusion of Turnus' retreat is drawn from another Homeric passage where Ajax is again the protagonist:[47]

> Αἴας δ' οὐκ ἔτ' ἔμιμνε· βιάζετο γὰρ βελέεσσι·
> δάμνα μιν Ζηνός τε νόος καὶ Τρῶες ἀγαυοὶ
> βάλλοντες· δεινὴν δὲ περὶ κροτάφοισι φαεινὴ
> πήληξ βαλλομένη καναχὴν ἔχε, βάλλετο δ' αἰεὶ
> κὰπ φάλαρ' εὐποίηθ'· ὁ δ' ἀριστερὸν ὦμον ἔκαμνεν
> ἔμπεδον αἰὲν ἔχων σάκος αἰόλον· οὐδ' ἐδύναντο
> ἀμφ' αὐτῷ πελεμίξαι ἐρείδοντες βελέεσσιν.
> αἰεὶ δ' ἀργαλέῳ ἔχετ' ἄσθματι, κὰδ δέ οἱ ἱδρὼς
> πάντοθεν ἐκ μελέων πολὺς ἔρρεεν, οὐδέ πη εἶχεν
> ἀμπνεῦσαι· πάντῃ δὲ κακὸν κακῷ ἐστήρικτο. (*Il.* 16.102–11)

> Aias no longer held his ground; for he was pressed by the arrows.
> The will of Zeus overcame him and the proud Trojans
> with their weapons; and around his temples the shining helmet
> was ringing terribly as it was struck; it was struck constantly
> on the well-wrought cheekpieces; and he grew tired on his left shoulder,
> always holding up firmly his gleaming shield; yet they could not
> drive him away, though they pressed their weapons around him.
> And his breath always came out painful, and much sweat

[46] The words in italics in each passage reflect these respective emphases.
[47] Hardie (1994: 245–46) also notes Ennius' adaptation of the Homeric passage.

was pouring down from every limb, nor could he catch
his breath at all, but from everywhere evil was piled on evil.

ergo nec clipeo iuuenis subsistere tantum
nec dextra ualet, iniectis sic undique telis
obruitur. strepit adsiduo caua tempora circum
tinnitu galea et saxis solida aera fatiscunt
discussaeque iubae capiti[48] nec sufficit umbo
ictibus; ingeminant hastis et Troes et ipse
fulmineus Mnestheus. tum toto corpore sudor
liquitur et piceum (nec respirare potestas)
flumen agit, fessos quatit aeger anhelitus artus. (9.806–14)

And the young man neither with his shield nor his right hand
can hold his ground; he is overwhelmed by the missiles thrown
against him
from all sides. The helmet around his hollow temples echoes with
constant ringing and its strong bronze is cracked open by stones,
and the plumes are shaken out from its crest, nor does his shield's boss
withstand the blows: both the Trojans and Mnestheus with the force of
lightning
step up with their spears. Then sweat runs over his whole body
and flows in a pitchy stream (he had no power to breathe)
and painful panting shakes his weary limbs.

Vergil's intertextual debt in this instance is to a crucial moment in the *Iliad*, the burning of the ships, a moment when the Greek fleet faces total destruction. The main point of comparison in both passages is Turnus' and Ajax's physical fatigue, the gradual loss of vigor that results in ultimate retreat. Turnus is welcomed by the friendly waters of the Tiber;[49] Ajax's withdrawal is followed by Hector's success in setting the Achaean ships on fire, an event that leads to the subsequent *aristeia* and

[48] The OCT text punctuates after *capiti*, thus taking *umbo* to mean the top of the helmet. I follow *Skutsch* (560) and Hardie (1994: 247), who take *capiti* with *iubae* and translate *umbo* as the boss of the shield.

[49] To be sure, Turnus' escape evokes the famous leap of the Roman hero Horatius Cocles: the Rutulian takes on the role of one of the most famous saviors of Rome. See Hardie 1994: 248–50.

death of Patroclus. Ajax here stands for the Greek army as a whole, his suffering exemplifying the communal suffering caused by Achilles' individualistic behavior (Janko 1992: 330). The two Homeric passages with Ajax as the main figure merge into one in the Latin, a powerful annotation of the allusive connection between Turnus and the Greek hero. As a result, the mobilization of the Homeric intertext, far from casting Turnus as a man pursuing personal gain, renders him a champion of the safety of the Latin community.[50]

This link between the Homeric Ajax and Turnus is anticipated by an allusive gesture framing both the beginning and the ending of the "Turnus narrative" of Book 9 with the figure of the Greek hero. When the reader first encounters Turnus in this book, Vergil footnotes Homer as his source for what follows by appropriating the epic motif of the invocation to the Muses.[51] Turnus, acting here as another Hector, prepares to set fire to the Trojan ships, which are saved from incineration by the aid of Cybele. At this critical moment for the Trojan fleet, Vergil interrupts the flow of the narrative to summon the Muses:

> Quis deus, o Musae, tam saeua incendia Teucris
> auertit? tantos ratibus quis depulit ignis?
> dicite: prisca fides facto, sed fama perennis. (9.77–79)

[50] The Homeric passage describing Ajax's retreat is also particularly relevant to the action of the Vergilian narrative, both structurally and contextually. In the *Iliad*, Hector's triumph over the worn-out Ajax at 16.113–22, which follows the passage quoted earlier, is undercut by the reader's knowledge that Patroclus is about to counterattack (Janko 1992: 292). Similarly, in the *Aeneid*, Turnus' retreat foreshadows his ultimate defeat at the poem's close (see Hardie 1994: 242–44). Moreover, this particular Iliadic incident is part of a series of duels between Hector and Ajax begun in Book 12, in which Ajax is represented as the bastion of the entire Achaean defense (Schadewaldt 1966: 69). In addition, the present confrontation between the two Iliadic heroes by Protesilaus' ship is connected with the fight in Book 11: the affinity between the two Homeric episodes rests not only on the predominance of the figure of Ajax in both instances but also on the utilization of the same narrative technique: the poet of the *Iliad* builds the expectation of a final combat that he consistently suspends for a later moment in the story (Schadewaldt 1966: 70), a technique also used by Vergil later in Book 12.

[51] Hinds (1998: 34–47) offers a very useful discussion on the uses of *topoi* as invoking the literary tradition in its entirety.

What god, O Muses, turned such a fierce blaze
from the Trojans? Who drove away such great a fire from their ships?
Tell me: belief in the event is old, but its fame is enduring.

Vergil's manipulation of a familiar Homeric motif serves as yet another reminder of the epic literary tradition to which his poetry ascribes. Of the six similar invocations found in the *Iliad*, however, Vergil mobilizes the one most appropriate to the larger allusive scheme of his narrative, the reworking of the Homeric burning of the ships:

Ἔσπετε νῦν μοι, Μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι,
ὅππως δὴ πρῶτον πῦρ ἔμπεσε νηυσὶν Ἀχαιῶν. (*Il.* 16.112–13)

Tell me now, you Muses who have your homes on Olympos,
how fire first fell upon the ships of the Achaians.

This allusion not only places emphasis on Turnus' failure to burn the Trojan ships by juxtaposing it to Hector's success in the *Iliad*;[52] it also pauses the narrative to call attention to the fact that the Homeric passage at work in this instance belongs to the same narrative segment on which the final scene of Turnus' jump into the Tiber is modeled. Thus Turnus' first and last actions in the book are allusively linked, and, more importantly, by the time the narrative of Book 9 has come to a close, Turnus has been transformed from Hector to Ajax, from aggressor to defender.[53]

[52] For the inversion of the Homeric model, see Hardie 1994: 89. Vergil also inverts the order of the formula of invocation by posing first the question and then the request: the placement of the imperative *dicite* in the first metrical *sedes* followed by a pause places special emphasis on the request.

[53] This self-conscious pause is important for the authentication of the poem's place within the epic tradition as well as for securing the status of Homeric warrior for Turnus. Vergil here builds on the self-conscious manipulation of the "Muses" motif in Homer. As De Jong (2004: 45–53) has convincingly argued for the *Iliad*, calling upon the divine authority of the Muses does not demote the narrator's poetic activity; on the contrary, it calls attention to the poet's authority precisely because of his alignment with the divine. In the case of Vergil, the use of the "Muses" motif further serves to underscore the particular literary tradition within which the poet's activity takes place. The poet complements his imperative to the Muses with a phrase that confirms the literary aims of his annotation: the reason given for the invocation is continuity between past, present, and future (*prisca fides facto, sed fama perennis*, 79), achieved only

Aside from the Homeric Hector, Achilles, and Ajax, after whom Turnus' persona has hitherto been crafted, the figure of Sophocles' Ajax is added to the allusive map. In Book 10 Turnus shares the foreground of the action with Aeneas, as this portion of the epic contains the slaying of young Pallas, which provides the impetus for the poem's ending. Concurrently, the reader gains a deeper insight into Turnus' mind, since during the *aristeia* the narrative focus stays on him. This concentration on the inner workings of the hero's mind triggers in turn a shift in the models utilized in order to achieve this goal. The reader is thus invited to renegotiate the Homeric qualities of Turnus in light of the allusive tragic material. Moreover, this mobilization of the tragic intertext, far from constituting an isolated occurrence, persists until the end of the poem.

Before I discuss the systematic nature of Vergil's manipulation of the Sophoclean tragedy, it is instructive to trace how the shift in the allusive model occurs. Midway through Book 10, Turnus, tricked into following a phantom of Aeneas, is removed from the battlefield. As soon as he realizes what has happened to him, he utters a despondent soliloquy:

> 'omnipotens genitor, tanton me crimine dignum
> duxisti et talis uoluisti expendere poenas?
> quo feror? unde abii? quae me fuga quemue reducit?
> Laurentisne iterum muros aut castra uidebo?
> quid manus illa uirum, qui me meaque arma secuti?
> quosque (nefas) omnis infanda in morte reliqui
> et nunc palantis uideo, gemitumque cadentum
> accipio? quid ago? aut quae iam satis ima dehiscat
> terra mihi? uos o potius miserescite, uenti;
> in rupes, in saxa (uolens uos Turnus adoro)
> ferte ratem saeuisque uadis immittite syrtis,
> quo nec me Rutuli nec conscia fama sequatur.' (10.668–79)

through the power of poetry, which the narrator owes to his association with the Muses. The emphasis on the epic task therefore reinforces simultaneously Vergil's epic heritage and Turnus' Homeric pedigree. The importance of the allusive play at work here is further emphasized by Vergil's use of the same device in the opening of the book's section dealing with Turnus' *aristeia* proper (see 9.525–28 and *Il.* 11.218–20). On the double reworking of the Homeric model and on the firing of the tower, see Hardie 1994: 171.

'Almighty father, did you think me deserving of so great
a disgrace and wish me to incur such a punishment?
Where am I taken? From where have I left? What flight pulls me back
and how?
Will I see the walls or the camp of Laurentum again?
What of the group of men who followed me and my standards?
Did I leave all of them (unspeakable) to a heinous death
and now do I see them scattered and hear their groans
as they fall? What am I to do? What earth would now gape
deep enough for me? Rather, you winds, take pity on me;
dash this ship on the reefs, on the rocks (from my heart I beg you)
and cast it on some savage sandbanks, where neither the Rutulians
nor rumor privy to my shame may follow me.

Critics have acknowledged the kinship between Turnus' predicament and that of Sophocles' Ajax, as well as the similar manners in which they choose to face it.[54] But how is the situation that Turnus faces more tragic than Homeric? And how does one determine that the model at work is no longer Homer's Ajax but that of Sophocles? Tragic discourse engages the simultaneous presence of the categories of human agency and divine will and grapples with the tension between active and passive, intention and constraint;[55] Turnus' predicament and behavior in this instance neatly fit this definition of the tragic hero. Manipulated by Juno and Jupiter and deceived into chasing Aeneas' phantom, Turnus soon becomes painfully aware that he is caught between his own personal code of ethics and the divine at work.

There are indeed many points of contact between Turnus and Sophocles' Ajax in this instance. Ajax was also deceived by a deity as to the identity of his enemies. In the passage quoted earlier, Turnus' address to Jupiter first contains a realization of his *crimen*, that is, his absence from the line of duty; when the hero speaks of punishment, he refers to the dishonor that accompanies such action. Initially fearing that he

[54] See Pöschl 1962: 107–108 and Schenk 1984: 114. The latter, however, condemns the hero for exceeding the Homeric norm of "*Selbstwertgefühl*." See also Harrison (1991: 231), who compares Turnus' monologue to those uttered by "disturbed and abandoned heroines such as Medea and Ariadne."

[55] Vernant 1988b: 79 on the tragic hero.

will be unable to return, his thoughts next turn to his comrades. The hero appears genuinely concerned for their safety, which he perceives as his responsibility (*quid manus illa uirum qui me meaque arma secuti?*, 672): this is a fine display of the Homeric quality of *aidos*, which we have seen that Ajax embodies in Homer, and which Vergil so carefully established for Turnus in Book 9.[56] We witness firsthand his profound desperation and sorrow as he addresses the winds in his desolation and asks them to aid him in his death. Turnus' dejected monologue ends with a reference to his moral obligation to his people and to *fama*, the values that define his place within his community and that he believes he has forfeited. The same betrayal of the ideals that defined his existence presented Sophocles' Ajax with no alternative other than suicide. Turnus readily attempts the same:

> haec memorans animo nunc huc, nunc fluctuat illuc,
> an sese mucrone ob tantum dedecus amens
> induat et crudum per costas exigat ensem,
> fluctibus an iaciat mediis et litora nando
> curua petat Teucrumque iterum se reddat in arma.
> ter conatus utramque uiam, ter maxima Iuno
> continuit iuuenemque animi miserata repressit. (10.680–86)
>
> So Turnus spoke, and his mind wavers now this way, now that,
> whether in madness he should throw himself on his sword
> at such disgrace and drive the cruel blade through his ribs,
> or plunge into the sea, make his way to the winding shore
> by swimming and once again return to the armed Trojans.
> Three times he tried each way; three times great Juno
> prevented him, and, pitying the young man in her heart, held him back.

Thus Turnus, like Dido, struggles between his "internal spontaneity . . . and the destiny that is fixed for him in advance by the gods" (Vernant 1988b: 79). The hero's proposed recourse to action takes two forms, both of which are tantamount to suicide: significantly, the first possibility he entertains is suicide in the manner of the Sophoclean Ajax. Death is finally averted

[56] Pöschl (1962: 108) comments that Turnus here first acknowledges his "guilt," meaning his resistance to Aeneas. But I believe that it is clear that Turnus blames himself for leaving his comrades to their fate, not for causing war against Aeneas.

through divine interference, but nevertheless, both Turnus' perception of his relationship with his comrades and his resolve to overcome his impasse honorably serve to underscore his full adherence to the heroic code, which in turn counterbalances his cruelty in the slaying of young Pallas. The reader also gains a glimpse into the workings of the hero's mind and the fragility of his intellectual powers when pitted against divine will.

Vergil's reworking of the tragic Ajax in the figure of Turnus continues in full force in Book 12. Turnus now displays a fierce determination to adhere to a system of values no longer effective against Aeneas and the new order he represents. This determination, arising from the hero's deep commitment to the common interest, turns into a violent rage that is usually explained in terms of *furor*, the irrational, dehumanizing, and barbaric force of the epic that Aeneas (and Rome) must strive to vanquish. Book 12 opens with a powerful illustration of Turnus' *violentia*: the army's defeat (*infractos . . . Latinos*, 1) is transferred to Turnus himself through a simile in which he is likened to a lion wounded (*saucius ille graui uenantum uulnere pectus*, 5) yet angered and dangerous (*fremit ore cruento*, 8).[57] The wound represents both the defeat in battle and the blow to Turnus' honor that the delay of the final confrontation with Aeneas causes. Yet the hero's violent rage is also linked to his allegiance to the value of *aidos*: he declares his readiness to shoulder the responsibility for his community and fight Aeneas in a duel that will determine the outcome of the conflict (*solus ferro crimen commune refellam*, 16).

Latinus and Amata make an attempt to avert Turnus from fighting what they know is a doomed war. According to the heroic code by which Turnus abides, commitment to the common enterprise goes side by side with commitment to one's family. Latinus, at the close of his appeal, reminds the hero of his responsibility his aged father:

> respice res bello uarias, miserere *parentis*
> *longaeui*, quem nunc *maestum* patria Ardea longe
> diuidit. (12.43–45)

[57] The best discussions of the simile are still, I think, those of Putnam (1965: 153–58) and Pöschl (1962: 109–11), who include in detail the links with Dido's wound in Book 4. On *eros* and war, Dido and Turnus, see in addition Putnam 1999. On the scene and its Homeric models, see Schenk 1984: 146–50. Also note how the world of the narrative and the world of the simile merge in the identification of Turnus with the lion, just as happened earlier in Book 9.

> Consider war's changing fortunes. Take pity on your *old father*,
> whom now his homeland Ardea keeps far away
> *in sorrow*.

Commentators point to *Iliad* 22.38–76 as the model for this scene, where Priam urges Hector, a hero famous for his familial loyalty (Bradshaw 1991: 118), not to fight Achilles, and compare Turnus' refusal to comply with the old man's request to that of Hector (Schenk 1984: 152–56). Turnus' alignment with Hector's decision undeniably foreshadows his ultimate death, while at the same time underscoring his valor. Despite these obvious connections, however, the Homeric scene lacks the overwhelming presence of the divine *fata*, the predetermined outcome of the duel, as in the Vergilian narrative. Within this context of divine constraint, Latinus urges Turnus to acknowledge the fluctuating nature of fortune in war (*respice res bello uarias*, 43) and the necessity to yield.

The conflict between intention and constraint, the individual's personal sense of honor and the shifting demands of the communal goals, mobilizes the emergence of the tragic intertext in Vergil's epic. Indeed, verbal contact can be located between Latinus' words and Tecmessa's address to Ajax in the Sophoclean play:

> ἀλλ' αἴδεσαι μὲν πατέρα τὸν σὸν ἐν λυγρῷ
> γήρᾳ προλείπων, . . .
>
> (506–507)
>
> but, show regard for your *father*, whom you're deserting
> in *sorrowful old age*, . . .

As we have seen, Ajax's inability to adapt to the ever-fluctuating realities of wartime politics is the Sophoclean play's chief crisis. In this particular scene, Ajax, his hands still stained with the blood of the slaughtered sheep, has just become aware of his actions. Tecmessa and the Chorus, however, speak of him as suffering from *nosos* (mental derangement) and therefore still presenting a danger to himself and others. Tecmessa attempts to dissuade him from compromising himself and his family any further. Her speech opens with a statement on the mutability of fortune imposed on all humans by the divine, and she offers herself as an example: once a princess, she is now a spear-bride wholly dependent on her captor, with whom her loyalties now lie. She then goes on to appeal

to Ajax to honor his familial ties to herself, their son, and his father. Tecmessa's words prefigure Ajax's own realization of the mutability of fortune later in the play.

Turnus and Ajax both display a rage that feeds on their weakened state, an internal madness that intensifies their separation from the external world. Ajax is "sick," while Turnus is a wounded lion. Like Ajax, who refuses to give an answer to Tecmessa's pleas and thus further compromise the heroic code of honor, so Turnus in his reply to Latinus reaffirms his decision to fight to the death in order to preserve his honor:

> quam pro me curam geris, hanc precor, optime, pro me
> deponas letumque sinas pro laude pacisci.
> et nos tela, pater, ferrumque haud debile dextra
> spargimus, et nostro sequitur de uulnere sanguis. (12.48–51)

> the anxiety you feel for my sake, most noble one, I beg you
> for my sake to put aside and let me bargain death for honor.
> I too, father, can hurl weapons and no puny sword with my
> right hand, and from the wounds I give blood flows as well.

Both in Sophocles' play and in Vergil's epic the hero's "sick" rage, which breeds a misguided confidence, is followed by the realization of his ultimate failure and exclusion from his social milieu. As the narrative proceeds, Turnus' confidence is gradually depleted, but his loyalties remain unfailing. At the moment he hears the wailing from the besieged city, he comes to the realization that this war has taken a turn that will eventually destroy his community. His words to his sister reflect the sorrow and grief of a leader unable to help his people, recalling thereby the earlier moment of his removal from the battlefield in Book 10 as well as the grim disillusionment of Sophocles' Ajax:

> exscindine domos (id rebus defuit unum)
> perpetiar, dextra nec Drancis dicta refellam?
> terga dabo et Turnum fugientem haec terra uidebit?
> usque adeone mori miserum est? uos o mihi, Manes,
> este boni, quoniam superis auersa uoluntas.
> sancta ad uos anima atque istius inscia culpae
> descendam magnorum haud umquam indignus auorum. (12.643–49)

am I to suffer our homes be destroyed (this one thing is left)
and not refute Drances' charges with my right hand?
Shall I turn my back and will this country see Turnus on the run?
Is is so terrible to die? You, Shades, be kind to me,
since the goodwill of the gods above is turned away from me.
I shall come down to you, a soul unstained and innocent of this crime,
never unworthy of my great ancestors.

ἐγὼ δ' ὁ κείνου παῖς, τὸν αὐτὸν ἐς τόπον
Τροίας ἐπελθὼν οὐκ ἐλάσσονι σθένει,
οὐδ' ἔργα μείω χειρὸς ἀρκέσας ἐμῆς, . . .

καὶ νῦν τί χρὴ δρᾶν; ὅστις ἐμφανῶς θεοῖς (437–39)
ἐχθαίρομαι, μισεῖ δέ μ' Ἑλλήνων στρατός,
ἔχθει δὲ Τροία πᾶσα καὶ πεδία τάδε. (457–59)

but I, his son, having come to the same land
of Troy with no less might
and having accomplished no lesser deeds with my hand . . .

and now what must I do? I who obviously am hated
by the gods, hated by the army of the Greeks,
and hated by all of Troy and by these plains . . .

Turnus, like Ajax, places himself within the family tradition and, like the Greek hero, asserts that he has done his share dutifully; both conclude that divine will is against them and that they have brought harm to their people. This constitutes the acknowledgment of an inner defeat, more profound and disturbing than the defeat in battle; Turnus, like Ajax and like Dido, experiences the loss of all that has hitherto defined his existence.

Tangible confirmation of this recognition comes immediately afterward, when Turnus is informed of Queen Amata's death and sees the tower that he himself had built collapse in smoke and flames:

Ecce autem flammis inter tabulata uolutus
ad caelum undabat uertex turrimque tenebat,
turrim compactis trabibus quam eduxerat ipse
subdideratque rotas pontisque instrauerat altos.
'iam iam fata, soror, superant, absiste morari;
quo deus et quo dura uocat Fortuna sequamur.
stat conferre manum Aeneae, stat, quidquid acerbi est,

morte pati, neque me indecorem, germana, uidebis
amplius. hunc, oro, sine me furere ante furorem.' (12.672–80)

But look, a whirling spire of flames was rolling
from floor to floor toward the sky and got hold of a tower,
a tower that he himself had built with beams fastened together
and he had put wheels underneath, and placed long gangways.
"Now sister, now fate has won, stop your delays;
let us go where god and cruel Fortune call.
I am resolved to fight Aeneas, resolved to bear any bitterness
in death, and you will not, my sister, see me disgraced
any longer. Let me first, I beg you, seethe in this rage."

Turnus' words again display his disillusionment but also his strong sense of honor and pride, a pride similar to Dido's, which dictates that the only possible way out of an impossible situation is an honorable and self-inflicted death. Yet there is a further connection that involves the tower itself. Turnus' first exploit in Book 9 (530–37) was to burn the tower of the Trojans. Aeneas' action here corresponds to that of Turnus in Book 9 and "is part of a larger movement of inversion whereby the beleaguered Trojans end up in the role of Homer's city-sacking Achaeans."[58] Moreover, the tower's collapse serves as a metaphor for Turnus' own death (Pöschl 1962: 128), while at the same time it implies an identification of the hero with the defensive structure. Vergil thus effectively links Turnus with Ajax at this crucial moment of Turnus' disillusionment, by concretizing and then inverting the Homeric metaphor of Ajax as a tower: as already mentioned, Odysseus' address to Ajax in the Underworld appropriates the image of the tower for the hero himself (see note 5 to this chapter).

Despite his recognition of the fate that awaits him, Turnus appears determined not to yield but to abide by his code of honor until the end. He appears unable to entertain any notion of moral relativism that would permit him to adjust to the demands of the new order that the gods have in store for the Latins and the Trojans. He shares the tragic Ajax's (and Dido's) intransigence and extremism, which run contrary to the demands of the individual's submission to the greater enterprise of

[58] Hardie 1994: 175. He also points out the allusions to the incident in Book 12. See Hardie 1994: 173, 175.

Rome.[59] The tragedy of Ajax rests on his betrayal of the very values that he has championed in the *Iliad*, especially his loyalty to the common cause. Turnus too, because of his inability to conform to the new role his community is called on to play in Aeneas' Latium, finds himself in complete isolation, grasping at his outdated sense of honor and rushing to certain death as a result. Turnus thus embodies the clash between the necessity to adapt to a new social order and the inability to do so while still abiding by the (Homeric) heroic code. Since the foundation of the new Latium with Trojans and Italians in equal partnership marks both Rome's beginning and the rebirth of the Roman state under the Augustan regime, the Rutulian hero poignantly exemplifies the powerful tensions and conflicts inherent in the social and political changes these processes entail. Concurrently, Turnus' imminent death represents the loss of a vital moral force that necessitates the articulation of a comparable, if not superior, ethical code for Aeneas' Latium. Just as Odysseus in the Sophoclean play emerges as the alternative model to Ajax in the post-Achillean times and in the new sociopolitical reality of fifth-century Athens, so Aeneas constitutes the alternative to Turnus' outdated heroism in the new Latium and in the new reality of Augustan Rome.

Yet another allusion to the tragic Ajax distorts and confuses Aeneas' emergence as a superior moral force in the poem. Before the final confrontation between Aeneas and Turnus, intertextual evidence forces us to pause and ponder a rather unexpected connection between Ajax and the poem's hero. While Aeneas, his wound healed, prepares to reenter the fray, he imparts the following advice to his son:

> disce, *puer*, uirtutem ex me uerumque laborem
> *fortunam* ex aliis. (12.435–36)
>
> *son*, learn valor from me and true toil;
> *fortune* from others.

Scholars have located the model in Sophocles' *Ajax*:[60]

> ὦ παῖ, γένοιο πατρὸς εὐτυχέστερος,
> τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ὁμοῖος· καὶ γένοι' ἂν οὐ κακός. (550–51)

[59] For the imperial politics of Rome, see, for instance, Lyne 1983; Hardie 1986; Quint 1993: 21–96; and Gurval 1995.

[60] Macrobius (*Sat.* 6.1.58) states that Vergil's source was Accius' *Armorum iudicium* (*TRF* 156): *uirtuti sis par, dispar fortunis patris.* Jocelyn (1965: 128) interprets

son, may you be more *fortunate* than your father,
but in everything else like him; then you would be no coward.

The Vergilian reader may initially be puzzled by this allusion, since, apparently, the connection between a hero bent on suicide and the soon-to-be-victorious Aeneas is far from obvious.[61] Both Vergil and Sophocles in this instance appropriate the Iliadic Hector's farewell to his son. In this segment of the play, the Sophoclean Ajax evinces a stern arrogance, which sharply contrasts with Hector's modesty and fatherly ambition that his son may surpass him in valor (Kirkwood 1965: 58). The intersection of the Homeric and tragic in *Ajax* is also superbly manipulated by Vergil, as Aeneas too shares in this contrast with the Iliadic Hector. Furthermore, Sophocles' Ajax, in his preceding monologue, came to the agonizing realization that he had failed to succeed his father, Telamon, in honorable repute through lack of fortune; he now looks upon his son to win heroic accolades in the line of male succession (Winnington-Ingram 1980: 30–31). In this light, Aeneas' advice to Ascanius looks forward to a similar contingency. At the final moment of Turnus' supplication, the Trojan hero will in effect betray his own father's legacy (Putnam

this as spoken "not by an Ajax bent on suicide, but by an Ajax conscious of his *uirtus*, despite the decision given against him in the matter of Achilles' armour, and wishing to recover his reputation among men by a glorious deed in battle. Vergil's copy of Accius' sentence is more comprehensible on such an interpretation." *Contra* Wigodsky (1972: 95–97), who argues that the lines can be said to have been taken from the Greek text. See also Lefèvre 1978: 25. Whatever the context in Accius may be, the Vergilian text contains allusions to Sophocles' *Ajax*, which need to be interpreted in their own right. Lyne (1987: 4–12) also argues that the model for Aeneas here is the tragic Ajax. I believe that the evidence presented here adds force to this argument. For Aeneas as *ductor Rhoeteius* and implications of apotheosis, as well as a justification for the killing of Turnus, see Rowland 1992.

[61] Fowler 1919: 86 well illustrates the reader's puzzlement: "All the commentators, down to Mr. Page, tell us that Virgil is 'copying' the famous lines in Sophocles' *Ajax*... Virgil may have been thinking of them, but he must have seen that the circumstances of Ajax and Aeneas were very different. Ajax had been mad: he is the protagonist of a tragedy; Aeneas had no special cause to lament his misfortunes, nor was it his habit to do so. We need not go to the Greeks for what is a truly Roman sentiment. In the family, the Roman boy learnt to live a manly life, and to face life's painful struggles with a good heart: what *fortuna* might mean for him he might learn from any other teacher, from his experience of the world."

1965: 192–94). As a result, he falls prey to anger and *furor*, the uncivilized forces he has tried to combat and conquer throughout the epic. The Aeneas of the final scene of the poem, who in his avenging wrath kills Turnus the suppliant, is as much a deluded hero as the blinded Ajax who brought death to the sheepfolds of the Achaeans. The tragic Ajax as intertextual subtext aligning Aeneas with Dido and Turnus further complicates and problematizes his heroic identity. Aeneas, the model hero of a new social order, may be said in this instance to share Ajax's misplaced adherence to a moral code no longer viable, as well as the fragility of his state of mind.

In the scene of the final duel between the two heroes, the figure of Ajax returns as a foil to Turnus. Aeneas strikes Turnus' breastplate and shield with his spear:

> uolat atri turbinis instar
> exitium dirum hasta ferens orasque recludit
> loricae et clipei extremos *septemplicis* orbis; (12.923–25)
>
> the spear flies like a black whirlwind
> bringing grim death and and pierces the rim
> of the corselet and the outermost circles of the *sevenfold* shield;

The word *septemplicis* is a *hapax* in the Vergilian corpus. Similarly, Ajax's shield is the only shield in the *Iliad* that has seven ox-hide layers (see note 4 to this chapter), and it is the same one that Ajax entrusts to his son in Sophocles' tragedy when he asks to be buried along with his other weapons:

> ἀλλ' αὐτό μοι σύ, παῖ, λαβὼν τοὐπώνυμον,
> Εὐρύσακες, ἴσχε διὰ πολυρράφου στρέφων
> πόρπακος ἑπτάβοιον ἄρρηκτον σάκος,... (574–76)
>
> but, son, take this from which you have your name,
> Eurysaces, hold it, wielding it by the well-sewn
> handle, my unbreakable *sevenfold* shield,...

In the Greek play, the shield serves as a reminder of Ajax's heroic past: his enormous physical power, his talent in military defense, and his role in the Trojan war as a bastion of the entire Achaean army. It is a visible symbol of both his bodily strength and his *aidos*, and hence a constitutive

element of his identity as a hero. The allusive appropriation of Ajax's shield in the scene of Turnus' final defeat achieves a similar goal: it is a reminder of the Rutulian's past services and loyalty to his people and of his inadvertent betrayal of his community's enterprise. In this light, Turnus' actions, like Dido's, are not motivated by self-interest, as scholars usually argue. To be sure, he has a personal stake in the matter; but, like Dido, he believes that his personal interest coincides with the common goal. As in the case of Sophocles' Ajax, his tragedy lies in his realization that the two have ceased to be identical and his inability to reconcile his own sense of honor with the demands of this new reality.

All the preceding allusions, Homeric and tragic, intersect in this final scene as Turnus once again takes on Ajax's attributes.[62] The rich allusive texture of the Sophoclean play puts the Homeric material to work as a backdrop against which the tragedy of Ajax is to be measured. Similarly, the Vergilian epic appropriates Homeric material in order to establish Turnus as a valiant warrior, but utilizes the tragic Ajax in order to reveal his moral agony and the fragility of his state of mind in the face of divine manipulation (Juno) and opposition (Jupiter). The appropriation of the Homeric epics sufficiently enables Vergil to celebrate the ideals of the Homeric (and Roman) behavioral code as well as to endow his poem with the luster and authority that its literary pedigree implies. But in the case of Turnus, as in the case of Dido, the Homeric material serves to deploy a systematic tragic intertext, without which it would be impossible to appreciate the profound problems, tensions, and conflicts inherent in the sociopolitical changes that Aeneas' new order and, by extension, Augustus' Rome bring to bear.

[62] As Aeneas hesitates over the suppliant Turnus, he catches sight of the baldric that the Rutulian had taken from the young Pallas (12.940–44). The use of the word *infelix* attributed to the baldric constitutes another tragic gesture: see Conington 1884, 3: 484 (quoting Heyne on 12.940): "this passage is quite in accordance with the feeling expressed in Greek tragedies, that what was given by, or taken from, an enemy, brought ill fortune with it. In *Iliad* 22.322 a chance is given to Achilles' weapon, because Patroclus' armor does not fit Hector. Hector, according to Sophocles, was dragged around the walls of Troy by the belt which Ajax had given him, while Ajax killed himself with the sword of Hector."

GREEK TRAGEDY IN VERGIL'S "AENEID"

Ritual, Empire, and Intertext

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