Introduction

IN THIS BOOK I ARGUE THAT GREEK TRAGEDY PROVIDES THE key to understanding representations of ritual acts in the *Aeneid*. I present evidence for the existence of a systematic use of tragedy in the poem, which consists of intertextual and ritual appropriations, and operates side by side with the poem's allusions to Homer. Moreover, the mobilization of this tragic element is linked to the ideological function of the *Aeneid* and illuminates the complex problem of the poem's orientation vis-à-vis the Augustan regime.

The theme of sacrifice is crucial for an understanding of the intricate relationship between the *Aeneid* and Greek tragedy. For example, the sacrifice of the young virgin Iphigeneia, King Agamemnon's daughter, enabled the Greek fleet to set sail to Troy. This well-known episode in the Trojan War is absent in the Homeric epics but is poignantly dramatized in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Aulis*. When Vergil in the second book of the *Aeneid* offers a powerful description of Iphigeneia's sacrifice as an instance of the brutality of the Greeks, he departs from his primary model, Homer, and rather follows the practice of the Greek tragedians.

In Greece as well as in Rome, sacrificial ritual normally prohibits the sacrifice of humans. In the Homeric epics human sacrifice appears only once,[1] while in tragedy it is regularly used as a means to indicate that the crisis of the plot is simultaneously a crisis in religious (and, by extension, political) institutions. In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, for instance, the

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[1] Achilles sacrifices twelve Trojan youths at the funeral pyre of Patroclus in *Iliad* 23.175–76.

sacrifice of Agamemnon's daughter Iphigeneia leads directly to his mur-
der, in turn, by his own wife, Clytemnestra. This murder is portrayed
as a human sacrifice. This cycle of retribution, inaugurated by a human
sacrifice, thus brings about a political crisis in the kingdom that is ulti-
mately resolved, in the last play of the trilogy, by the foundation of a
whole new system of justice based on courts and the rule of law. The
Aeneid is also rife with human sacrifices, actual and metaphorical, from
its beginning, where we witness the murder of Dido's husband, Sychaeus,
at an altar, to the final slaying of Aeneas' chief antagonist, Turnus, which
is pronounced a sacrifice. The frequency of the motif of human sacrifice
in the *Aeneid* therefore parallels its use in Greek tragedy.

This study does not propose to contribute only to the debate on the
literary pedigree of the *Aeneid*. Rather than studying intertextuality for
its own sake, the book attends to tragedy as a literary model because
it is an ideologically charged choice. Recent interest in the processes
of intertextuality and the centrality of the *Aeneid* as a canonical text
has generated a rich literature with and against which the book works.
Critics focusing on intertextuality have amply demonstrated the ways
in which the poem's systematic allusion to Homer (epic intertext) aims
to establish Vergil as the Roman Homer (Knauer 1964; Quint 1993),
while the poem's reception by contemporaries confirms its unprece-
dented success in this regard. Homer's imprint thus confers a particular
kind of authority on the *Aeneid* that puts it on an equal footing with
the Homeric epics. Moreover, the poem's importance as a new liter-
ary achievement is explicitly connected with an endorsement of the
new political regime because it hails it as the result of a teleological
process rooted in the very beginnings of the Roman nation. I argue,
however, that the poem's systematic engagement with Greek tragedy
(tragic intertext) needs to be read against the epic intertext because it
provides an alternative to the poem's support for Augustan ideology. To
be sure, the *Aeneid* sent a message that met the needs of the dominant
power structure. At the same time, a primary insight of recent criti-
cism on ideology is that ideology is always in dialogue with, and thus
shaped and constrained by, the voices it is suppressing or manipulating.
Criticism on the *Aeneid* has long been divided between those who see it
as a pro-Augustan work and those who see it as deeply pessimistic and
anti-Augustan. My approach contributes to resolving the controversy of

the "two voices" of the *Aeneid* by grounding it in the tension between two generic models, epic and tragic.

The book's attention to ideological matters goes hand in hand with close analysis of intertextual material and suggests a need to broaden the scope of the term "intertextual." The work of Stephen Hinds, Joseph Pucci, and Lowell Edmunds helped the field of classics move away from its rather rigid classifications of allusion and laid fruitful theoretical ground: it defined allusion as a flexible analytical category that encompasses a variety of literary techniques previously ignored or altogether dismissed; emphasized the importance of the role of the reader in activating, retrieving, and ultimately creating meaning; and established that intertextuality in all its complex manifestations is an integral part of all Roman poetry.[2] Allusion, however, is still considered a process strictly embedded in a literary dialogue among authors working within a tradition. In an effort to broaden disciplinary vocabularies, this study builds on these scholars' advances but also employs insights from cultural anthropology and religion in order to interpret ritual representations in the *Aeneid* (Girard 1977; Burkert 1983; Bell 1992). By expanding the term "intertextuality" to encompass ritual representations, I propose that it is no longer a strictly literary process but that it needs to be related to its social context.

Rituals are increasingly thought of as analogous to culturally produced texts and therefore subject to interpretation and manipulation. Ritual representations mobilize the variety of meanings that a ritual experience affords in order to invest them with new meaning. In this respect, intertextual and ritual appropriations can be seen as comparable: just as a battle scene in the *Aeneid* in appropriating elements from a particular Homeric battle scene offers fresh interpretative possibilities, so the inclusion of a ritual description of a sacrifice points to a common ritual "vocabulary" that in turn may illuminate aspects of the text. Viewed in this light, an examination of intertextual appropriations of Greek tragedies in the *Aeneid* reveals that they are intimately bound up with the poem's rich fabric of ritual representations. Since ritual representations in

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[2] Hinds 1998; Pucci 1998; Edmunds 2001. In the case of Vergil, in particular, valuable interpretations of the allusiveness of the corpus have been and continue to be proposed: Farrell 1991 on the *Georgics*; Conte 1986; Thomas 1986.

the *Aeneid* closely follow the practice of Greek tragedy, they work side by side with other allusive tropes pointing to tragic texts.[3] Recognizing the intricate relationship between intertextuality and ritual is the first step toward understanding the function of the poem's intersection of epic and tragic intertexts.

Once identified, the nexus of intertextual and ritual appropriations is interpreted within the social context of Vergil's own time. Scholars working on Greek tragedy have long recognized tragedy's civic and ideological function.[4] This book, however, does not simply transpose the questions and conclusions of tragedy's critics in the context of Augustan Rome. Rather, it examines how the processes of articulating ideological debate in Greek tragedy are employed and resituates the question of the *Aeneid* as a work that promotes the establishment of a new political regime. In other words, in Greek tragedy, ritual representations, metaphors, and motifs serve as a means of delving into social, political, religious, and ideological issues. I argue that the use of ritual has the same function in the *Aeneid*. Moreover, it is organically linked to the literary process of intertextual appropriation, which is thus viewed as grounded in the social context of Vergil's Rome. In this light, in each chapter I concentrate on issues that are both central to Greek tragedy and fundamental for an understanding of the ideological issues explored in the *Aeneid*: the interconnection of religion and politics as it is manifested in the treatment of the problem of violence in war and sacrifice; the role of the divine in sanctioning and promoting the new state's institutions; the formation of a new identity for Trojans and Latins living together as one people; the values and ideals that their leaders must embody; and the women's

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[3] The problem of Vergil's relationship with Roman tragedy is an important one but is unfortunately complicated by the serious gap in our knowledge of Republican Roman tragic poets. On the positive side, it is well documented that Vergil knew them, since examples of shared language abound. The broader context, however, is irretrievable, though recent studies by Erasmo (2004) and Boyle (2006) have done much to further our understanding. I have analyzed instances of Vergil's appropriation of Roman tragedies wherever pertinent and possible (see, e.g., Chapter 1, pp. 39–40, and Chapter 6, pp. 214–15), but a greater discussion of their import is beyond the scope of this study.

[4] For example, Vernant and Vidal-Naquet 1988; Foley 1985; Winkler and Zeitlin 1990; Seaford 1994.

engagement in the religious, social, military, and political spheres. Such an analysis demonstrates that the ideological tensions that scholars have long identified as informing the fabric of Vergil's poetry are played out in the poem's epic and tragic intertexts.

Although since antiquity tragedy has been hailed as a constitutive element of the *Aeneid*, this is the first systematic, book-length study of the role of tragedy in the poem.[5] My approach has benefited greatly from the work of critics such as Philip Hardie, Denis Feeney, and David Quint.[6] Hardie has demonstrated the importance of the literary motif of sacrifice for an understanding of the problem of violence in Roman epic; Feeney signaled the need to consider ritual representations in studying Latin texts; and Quint explored the close interconnections between the epic genre and the ideology of empire. The present study brings together these different approaches while at the same time using methods and ideas from cultural anthropology, religion, and political theory (Bourdieu 1977; Thompson 1984; Bell 1992) to signal the importance of placing the literary process of intertextuality in a social context. As a result, the book's contribution is twofold: on the one hand, it demonstrates the importance of Greek tragedy both as a literary source for the *Aeneid* and as a site onto which ideological negotiations of acquiescence and opposition are mapped. On the other hand, it develops a theoretical mechanism for reading intertextuality with attention to the workings of ideology.

The study begins with an exploration of the various ways in which the *Aeneid* represents ritual acts and argues that throughout the epic, Vergil

[5] In antiquity, Servius (*Aen.* 4.471, 664) and Macrobius (*Saturnalia* 5.18–19) thought that Vergil knew the Greek tragedies and borrowed from them. In more recent times, the rather impressive volume of scholarship constitutes ample proof: Heinze 1915; Conington 1884.2: xxxv–vi; Pease 1935: 5–6; Duckworth 1940, 1957; Jackson Knight 1953: 133–40; Pöschl 1962 *passim*, especially 60–138, 1978; Quinn 1968: 323–49; Von Albrecht 1970 (although he reaches a negative conclusion); Wigodsky 1972: 91–97; Manuwald 1985; Feeney 1991: 129–87, *passim*; Fernandelli 1996a, 1996b; Hardie (1991, 1993, 1994, 1997) has attempted a deeper and more comprehensive probe into the tragic elements in the *Aeneid*. See also the three doctoral dissertations on the subject: Fenik 1960; König 1970; and Panoussi 1998. On the "tragedy" of Dido, see Wlosok 1976; Muecke 1983; Clausen 1987: 53–57; Jacobson 1987; Moles 1984, 1987; Harrison 1989; Spence 1991; Swanepoel 1995; and Fernandelli 2002.

[6] Hardie 1993; Feeney 1998; Quint 1993. See also Kennedy 1992.

manipulates a representational pattern absent in the Homeric epics and specific to Greek tragedy: ritual corruption followed by ritual restoration. According to this pattern, rites executed incorrectly in the course of a tragic play are ultimately performed correctly, thus restoring ritual purity. The first chapter traces the trajectory of the ritual intertext from distortion to restoration as a means to deploy issues of violence, justice, and retribution. The next chapter attends to Dido's suicide, the killing of Turnus, and the problem of ritual purity and closure. I suggest that the representation of both Dido's and Turnus' deaths is associated with the Roman ritual of *devotio*, although it is ultimately a distorted version of that ritual. Chapter 3 concludes the examination of this pattern by focusing on the divine role in the process of reconciliation and restoration and reveals that divinities willfully follow the same pattern of ritual distortion as humans and undermine any prospect of divine and human *concordia*.

The next two chapters turn to women's engagement with ritual and its repercussions on civic order and the nascent civic identity. Chapter 4 focuses on women's worship of Bacchus and their performance of bacchic rituals, actual or metaphorical. Women's execution of ritual acts is far from ritually correct and fuels the forces of irrationality and war. In Chapter 5, I focus on the contribution of women's rituals to the poem's creation of a new civic identity for Aeneas and his men. Vergil employs the specifically female ritual of lamentation to comment on the impact that grief and loss have on public life and to illustrate proper ways of rendering that grief a positive force for the new nation under Aeneas. Women's rituals are shown to disrupt or oppose Aeneas' mission. Even so, through their ritual activity women emerge as empowered representatives of a point of view that runs opposite to the one that champions victory and empire.

The next portion of the book tackles issues of empire and the identity of the hero therein. Chapter 6 demonstrates that in the *Aeneid*, Roman heroic identity is defined through constant reference to Homeric heroic identity and fifth-century Athenian civic identity as it is deployed in Greek tragedy. Issues of identity and moral action explored in Sophocles' *Ajax* are crucial to Vergil's portrayal of Dido and Turnus, who also find themselves unable to adapt to the social and political structure of Aeneas' new order but also offer themselves as laudable models of heroic behavior.

The analysis presented in these chapters reveals that Vergil adopts and manipulates the conflicts and ambiguities inherent in Greek tragedy in order to express anxieties about Augustus' new sociopolitical order. In the final chapter, I suggest that the problem of the *Aeneid* as pro- or anti-Augustan needs to be reformulated. In an effort to do so, I use insights from recent studies that emphasize the dynamic nature of ideology (Bourdieu 1977; Bell 1992) and argue that it is more instructive to read the presence of Greek tragedy in the *Aeneid* as a means through which ideological points of view of resistance and acquiescence are negotiated. In this light, the generic tensions between epic and tragedy can be seen as reenacting ideological tensions. The failure of ritual to achieve restoration forces the reader to confront the problems inherent in the new sociopolitical order that the poem seeks to assert. At the same time, however, this voice of dissent is instrumental in shaping the poem's celebration of the Augustan regime. The *Aeneid* thus emerges as a text in which these contesting ideologies still struggle for supremacy, with the poem oscillating between endorsing Augustus' new regime and questioning its methods and efficacy. Attention to dynamic processes of questioning and examining as well as of affirming and resolving the new sociopolitical institutions reveals the central role of the poem's generic and ideological tensions and provides important insights into the formation of Augustan ideology and Roman identity.

PART I

RITUAL

SECTION A

SACRIFICE

1 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 repre-
sentations 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.

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