GREEK TRAGEDY IN VERGIL’S “AENEID”
Ritual, Empire, and Intertext

This is the first systematic study of the importance of Greek tragedy as a fundamental “intertext” for Vergil’s Aeneid. Vassiliki Panoussi argues that the epic’s representation of ritual acts, especially sacrifice, mourning, marriage, and maenadic rites, mobilizes a connection to tragedy. The tragic-ritual model offers a fresh look into the political and cultural function of the Aeneid, expanding our awareness of the poem’s scope, particularly in relation to gender, and presenting new readings of celebrated episodes, such as Anchises’ games, Amata’s maenadic rites, Dido’s suicide, and the killing of Turnus. Panoussi offers a new argument for the epic’s ideological function beyond pro- and anti-Augustan readings. She interprets the Aeneid as a work that reflects the dynamic nature of Augustan ideology, contributing to the redefinition of civic discourse and national identity. In this rich and lucid study, readers will find a unique exploration of the complex relationship between Greek drama and Vergil’s Aeneid and a stimulating discussion of problems of gender, power, and ideology in ancient Rome.

Vassiliki Panoussi is Assistant Professor of Classical Studies at the College of William and Mary. She received her Ph.D. from Brown University and has previously taught at the University of Virginia and Williams College. Her research focuses on Roman literature of the late Republic, the age of Augustus, and the early empire as informed through the study of intertextuality, cultural anthropology, religion, and sexuality. She has published several articles on Roman poetry and prose and is currently at work on a book on women’s rituals in Roman literature.
For my parents
GREEK TRAGEDY IN VERGIL’S “AENEID”

Ritual, Empire, and Intertext

Vassiliki Panoussi
College of William and Mary
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press
32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013–2473, USA
www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521895224

© Vassiliki Panoussi 2009

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2009

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data
Panoussi, Vassiliki, 1967–
Greek tragedy in Vergil's Aeneid: ritual, empire, and intertext / Vassiliki Panoussi.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-521-89522-4
1. Virgil. Aeneis. 2. Epic poetry, Latin — Greek influences. 3. Epic poetry, Latin — History and criticism. I. Title.
PA6825.P27 2008
873'.01–dc22 2008030568

ISBN 978-0-521-89522-4 hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate. Information regarding prices, travel timetables, and other factual information given in this work are correct at the time of first printing, but Cambridge University Press does not guarantee the accuracy of such information thereafter.

© Cambridge University Press
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledgments</th>
<th>Acknowledgments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PART I. RITUAL

#### SECTION A. SACRIFICE

1. **Ritual Violence and the Failure of Sacrifice**
   - I. Homeric and Tragic Sacrifice 16
   - II. Ritual Perversion and Tragic Intertext in the *Aeneid* 17
   - III. First-fruits and Initiations 20
     1. Iphogeneia 20
     2. Icarus and Marcellus: Untimely Death and Parental Guilt 25
     3. Pallas and Mezentius: *Primitiae* as Preliminary Sacrifice 28
   - IV. Crime and Retribution 35
     1. Crime: Sychaeus and Lausus 36
     2. Retribution: Pyrrhus and Helen 41

2. **Suicide, *Devotio*, and Ritual Closure**
   - I. Dido's Ritual Slaughter 45
   - II. Turnus' *Devotio* and Ritual Closure 56
     1. The Ritual Intertext of *Devotio* 57
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Livy's <em>Devotio</em> and the <em>Aeneid</em></td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ritual, Tragedy, Closure</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SECTION B. RESTORATION**

3 The Fragility of Reconciliation: Ritual Restoration and the Divine  

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Versions of Juno: Furies and Ritual Pollution</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Furies as Agents of Discordia</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Venus, Juno, and the Fragility of <em>Concordia</em></td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Transforming Juno: Ritual Restoration in <em>Aeneid</em></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Change of Venue: The Dirae and the <em>Oresteia</em></td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. The Mediation of Pallas</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. Ritual and Empire</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SECTION C. WOMEN'S RITUALS**

4 Maenad Brides and the Destruction of the City  

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Bacchus in Greece and Rome</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Tragic Maenads</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Maenad Brides</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Amata</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Dido</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Sibyl and Helen</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 Mourning Glory: Ritual Lament and Roman Civic Identity  

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Lessons in Ritual Mourning</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Andromache</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Creusa</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Ritual Lament and Civic Identity</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Anchises' Funeral and Hero-Cult</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Trojan Women</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contents

PART II. EMPIRE

6 Heroic Identity: Vergil’s Ajax
   I. Homeric and Sophoclean Ajax 177
   II. Dido 178
   III. Turnus 182

7 Contesting Ideologies: Ritual and Empire 198

Bibliography 218
General Index 227
Index of Texts Cited 241

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org
This volume began its life as a doctoral dissertation under the supervision of Michael Putnam. My first thanks go to him for encouraging the project and for providing guidance, insight, and such standards of scholarship as I can only strive to follow. Many people and institutions have helped in the writing of this book. My terrific colleagues and students at my new home, the College of William and Mary, make it a joy to go to work every day. During the six happy years I spent at Williams College, my colleagues Meredith Hoppin, Kerry Christensen, Matthew Kraus, David Porter, and Charlie Fuqua offered friendship, unstinting support, and sage advice. Many thanks to Eleni Manolaraki and Erika Nesholm for all our fun conversations on and off topic. Other colleagues and friends, Denise Buell, Monique Deveaux, Tess Chakkalakal, and Olga Shevchenko, contributed much to my thinking and patiently listened to my ideas and worries.

In the years it took me to write this book I have incurred many institutional debts. Williams College provided me with a generous leave, during which most of the writing took place. At that itinerant time of my life, people at various institutions happily offered me a place to work and/or access to their libraries: Gonda Van Steen, David Christenson, and Marilyn Skinner at the University of Arizona; Bill Godfrey at SUNY Stony Brook; Ann Vassaly at Boston University; Gareth Williams at Columbia University; Sara Lindheim at UC Santa Barbara; Peter Knox at the University of Colorado at Boulder; and Pam Esposito, secretary of the Physics Department Theory Group at Brookhaven National Laboratory, eagerly provided administrative help and good cheer. The final revisions of the book were made possible by a Summer Research Award granted
Acknowledgments

by the College of William and Mary. I would also like to extend a heart-felt thanks to the William and Mary Women's Studies Program, and in particular to Suzanne Raitt and Christy Burns, for granting me funds to hire a research assistant.

Portions of the book have been presented at the University of Arizona, Case Western Reserve University, Boston University, Yale University, SUNY Buffalo, Smith College, Drew University, Kenyon College, the University of Virginia, the Williams College Humanities and Social Sciences Forum, and the annual meetings of the American Philological Association and of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South. I am grateful to these kind audiences for their incisive comments and criticism and especially to Neil Coffee, Paolo Asso, and Ann Ellis Hanson.


Several people read parts of the manuscript, helped improve it, and offered much needed encouragement: Antonis Augoustakis, Denise Buell, David Christenson, Andrew Feldherr, Meredith Hoppin, Bill Hutton, Leon Kojen, Brian Martin, Sara Myers, Marilyn Skinner, Barbette Spaeth, Angeliki Tzanetou, and my late dear friend Shilpa Raval. I am deeply grateful to my editor, Beatrice Rehl, for believing in this project and to the anonymous readers for their thoughtful and helpful comments. My copy editor, Russell Hahn, saved me from many an error, while Kate Mertes did the general index with great care. Beth Block, my undergraduate research assistant, cheerfully performed the thankless task of checking references and bibliography with patience and diligence. Of course, I alone am responsible for any remaining errors.

Many other friends and colleagues helped me along the way: Bonnie Gordon, Elizabeth Meyer, John Miller, K. Sara Myers, Sophia Serghi, and Evgenia Smirni did much to inspire and to encourage. Amanda Jablonski, the world’s greatest babysitter, provided peace of mind when
Acknowledgments

I needed it most. Angeliki Tzanetou’s steadfast support and generous friendship made this a better book.

My family deserves much of the credit for the completion of this project. My father-in-law, Nikolas Orginos, has helped in more ways than he knows. My husband, Kostas Orginos, and our two precocious children, Nikolas and Anna, offered joyful distractions and pushed me to the finish line. The greatest debt, however, is to my parents, Meletis and Kaiti Panoussi, who did their best to prepare me for this endeavor, endured a long separation, and even provided help with childcare during the last stages of revision. For these reasons, and many more, my gratitude to them is acknowledged on a separate page.

When citing ancient texts, I have used the standard Oxford or Teubner editions. Ancient authors and texts are abbreviated according to the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, while journal abbreviations follow those of the *Année Philologique*. All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.
Abbreviations


