

THE BIRTH OF WAR -- A Reading of *Aeneid* 7

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In this essay I will touch on aspects of Book 7 that readers are likely either to have trouble with (the Muse Erato, for one) or not to notice at all (the founding of Ardea is a prime example), rather than on major elements of plot. I will also look at some of the intertexts suggested by Virgil's allusions to other poets and to his own poetry. We know that Virgil wrote with immense care, finishing fewer than three verses a day over a ten-year period, and we know that he is one of the most allusive (and elusive) of Roman poets, all of whom wrote with an eye and an ear on their Greek and Roman predecessors. We twentieth-century readers do not have in our heads what Virgil seems to have expected his Augustan readers to have in theirs (Homer, Aeschylus, Euripides, Apollonius, Lucretius, and Catullus, to name just a few); reading the *Aeneid* with an eye to what Virgil has "stolen" from others can enhance our enjoyment of the poem.

Book 7 is a new beginning. So the Erato invocation, parallel to the invocation of the Muse in Book 1, seems to indicate. I shall begin my discussion of the book with an extended look at some of the implications of the Erato passage. These difficult lines make a good introduction to the themes of the book as a whole (to the themes of the whole second half of the poem, in fact). Erato herself suitably introduces the main subject of this essay: Virgil's focus, throughout the book, on female characters, from Caieta at the beginning to Camilla at the end.

## ERATO

A new day is at hand (or so it seems) as the Trojans finally arrive in the promised land, and Virgil marks the occasion grandly with a new invocation:

Now, Erato, be with me, and let me sing of kings and times and of the state of things in ancient Latium when the invaders first beached their boats upon Ausonia's coasts, and how it was that they began to battle. o goddess, help your poet. I shall tell of dreadful wars, of men who struggle, tell of chieftains goaded to the grave by passion, of Tuscan troops and all Hesperia in arms. A greater theme is born for me; I try a greater labor. (M 45-55)

The first question thinking readers are likely to ask on reaching this passage is, "Why Erato?" Any undergraduate who knows anything at all about the Muses knows that Clio (history), Calliope (epic), or maybe even Melpomene (tragedy) would be a better choice than Erato to help out an epic poet in need of inspiration. Indeed, in the most famous ancient depiction of Virgil, the third-century A.D. mosaic from Tunis, the poet is depicted with a tablet on his lap on which *Musa mihi causas memora* ("Tell me the reason, Muse," 1.8, M 13) can be read, with Clio on one side and Melpomene on the other. Why does Virgil call on Erato?

Obviously Erato's name suggests love or desire, and it makes a kind of sense for her to head a book which is infused from beginning to end with Virgil's love for his native land, expressed again and again as he gives one area after another its moment in the sun. Virgil includes most of the Italian countryside in Book 7, mainly but not exclusively through the catalogue of warriors at the end. The book opens with a lovely evocation of the beautiful grove at Ostia full of brightly colored birds "caressing the heavens with their song" (*aethera mulcebant cantu*, 7.34, my translation). Virgil has chosen not to follow the tradition that brought the Trojans in further south by the river Numicus (the river where Aeneas is traditionally supposed to have died); instead he lands them right at Ostia, which was later to be Rome's busy maritime emporium, full of businesses announcing their trade in grand mosaics, full of houses and temples and eating places, as the visitor today can still see in the very impressive ruins. Thinking this bustling Roman settlement out of existence, Virgil creates, as Aeneas' first stop in Italy, a deserted place of natural beauty and peace. (The moment, like all peaceful moments in the *Aeneid*, is brief-only 120 lines later Aeneas begins to transform the landscape by building Ostia's very first settlement-a military camp.)

The warriors described in the catalogue come from all over Italy: from Caere in Etruria, from various parts of Latium, from the Sabine territory, from all over Campania, from among the Aequians, the Marsians, the Rutulians, and the Volscians. What is more, Virgil turns geographical features into people and makes them leaders of armies from areas that have no connection with their own. This tactic allows him to cover most of the map of Italy, as Professor Louise Adams Holland told my college Virgil class years ago. Almo and Galaesus, the first casualties of the war, are rivers, the Almo a tributary of the Tiber, the Galaesus a river in Calabria. Virgil gives each an identity in his death: Almo, the oldest son of Tyrrhus; Galaesus, a man as just as he is rich. Messapus, who is clearly to be connected with Messapia in the toe of Italy, is made the leader of forces from Southern Etruria; Ufens is a Volscian river turned into the leader of Aequians from Nersa. Halaesus, the traditional founder of Falerii, comes from Campania. Modern students find all catalogues boring, it seems; Italians of Virgil's day were no doubt pleased to hear of their little piece of the country playing a role all those years ago when Aeneas arrived from Troy. Surely Erato helped Virgil express his affection for all these places, some of them no longer in existence, others no longer of any importance in the twenties B.C.

Erato must have been hard at work when Virgil created one of the most exquisite pathetic fallacies in Latin literature in his lament for Umbrus near the end of the book. Umbrus-priest, snake charmer, and healer from Marruvium-was unable to "heal the hurt of Dardan steel" (*Dardaniae medicari cuspidis ictum*, 756, M 994) despite his skill, and his homeland mourned for him (all this before the battle really even begins): "For you Angitia's forest wept, the crystal / wave of the Fucinus, for you bright lakes" (*te nemus Angitia, vitrea te Fucinus unda, I te liquidi flevere lacus*, 759-60, M 997-98). I feel sure that Erato inspired that lovely coupling of person and place and tragedy.

A first-time reader of the *Aeneid* is not likely to connect Erato with the poet's task, as I have just done, however. Whatever else it may suggest, the call on Erato indicates that the poet needs fresh creative force and new momentum to tackle what lies before him. (Similar is his invocation of the Muse in Book 1 when he gets to the difficult task of trying to understand the *causas*, the "reasons," for Juno's hatred.) Who better than Erato to keep him from flagging now as he begins the second movement of his epic? The language throughout the invocation suggests toil, ordering, and creation: *expediam* ("I will disentangle"); *revocabo* ("I will recall or call back into being"); *exordia* ("beginnings"). The word *exordium* is a term from weaving: the warp that will form the basis of the woven fabric. Sound and meaning connect *exordia* with *ordo* (ordering, arrangement) in the last line. Erato is to preside over a new birth (*nascitur ordo*); a new order is coming into being in history and in poetry, firmly linked with Italy. And the *major ordo* (grander, more significant ordering or order of things) requires a *maius opus* (greater work, construction, epic poem). The subject matter of the second part of the poem will be grander, the events more significant; something new is coming into being, and the birth process is difficult. It is easy to imagine that the prospect of getting the second half of the poem right was daunting to Virgil. How was he to create a worthy prehistory for Rome? How to express his love of Italy while showing its ambiguous nature? How to paint the Trojan arrival as both a return home and an invasion? The war in Latium as at once a civil war, a replay of the Trojan war, and a pre-enactment of historical Rome's fifth- and fourth-century Latin wars as well as the civil wars of the poet's own day? Erato has a big job ahead of her.

In the triumphantly climactic words: *maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo* ("a greater theme is born for me"), a Roman would hear the ringing opening of Virgil's *Eclogue 4*: *magnus ab integro saeclo rum nascitur ordo* ("the great order of generations is being born anew"). In the *Eclogue*, the poet is proclaiming the beginning of a new golden age. Here in Book 7, he reminds us of that earlier golden-age dream, now that Roman history is about to begin with Aeneas' arrival in Latium, the very place where Saturn presided over the original golden age (8.319-25, M 18-26). Virgil is not just marking the end of Aeneas' *Odyssey*; he is marking the mythological-historical moment when Troy can begin the process of merging with Italy to become Rome. Aeneas is just about to meet with King Latinus, Saturn's direct descendant and so heir to the golden age of the past. Augustus is, so Anchises claimed in Book 6, the ruler "who will renew a golden age in Latium, I in fields where Saturn was once king" (*Latia regnata per arva I Saturno quondam*, 6.793-94, M 105&-51). There is, however, no golden age in store for the protagonists of Book 7. Any golden age is firmly in the past, and the Latins who think of themselves as golden-age people are sorely mistaken. The young men are playing war games when the Trojan embassy arrives, the entrance to the palace is decorated with spoils of war, and Turnus has been fighting Latinus' wars for him—hardly golden-age activities. In fact, the end of the poet's statement of intent in the Erato invocation hooks the wars of Aeneas' day specifically onto the wars of Virgil's own day. A Roman reader hearing *totamque sub arma coactam Hesperiam* ("all Hesperia in arms") could hardly fail to be reminded of the battle of Actium only twelve years before Virgil's death, when, according to

Augustus' own propaganda, *tota Italia* (all Italy) voluntarily swore an oath of allegiance to him against Antony. So intricate are the links between past and future.

Virgil speaks here as an inspired prophet, putting himself in the same category as Helenus in Book 3 and the Sibyl in Book 6. It is clear that this invocation should be connected both with those prophecies (which also predict the war in Latium) and with the poet's first invocation of the Muse at 1.8-11, M 13-18. The opening statement about times and things (*tempora rerum*) is certain to remind us of Jupiter's grand prophecy to Venus when he said of the Romans who will be descended from Aeneas' line: "I set no limits to their fortunes and no time" (*nec metas rerum nec tempora pono*, 1.278, M 389-90). How sharply Virgil has limited the scope of Jupiter's promise. Jupiter offered limitless possibilities, this seer establishes a place and a time for war. Again and again Book 7 at once parallels and contracts or darkens the hopes of Book 1.

Modern readers who know Aeneas' story are likely to connect Erato with the "love story" of Lavinia and Turnus and Aeneas, and rightly so. Lavinia is, in a sense, a second Helen, and the war that breaks out between Latins and Trojans is at least in part a replay of the Trojan War, with the Trojans coming out this time on top. The Sibyl predicted it as such back in Book 6, and Juno will, in just a few lines, call Aeneas a second Paris. What Augustan readers would have perceived in addition is the very suggestive echo of the *Argonautica*. At the beginning of Book 3, the halfway point in his four-book epic, Apollonius calls on Erato for help. The Argonauts have reached their goal, the home of the Golden Fleece. At the beginning of Book 7, the halfway point of *his* epic, Virgil calls on Erato for help. The Trojans have reached *their* goal, the place where the Roman future can begin, and Virgil begins his invocation of the Muse with a literal translation of Apollonius' opening words: "Come now Erato." Apollonius asks how Medea's passion helped Jason bring home the Fleece, making it clear that his Erato is Muse for a love story. But Virgil's story is not a love story; it is the story of war. Note the way Virgil connects Erato specifically with war by introducing his subject matter, war, in the same line as, almost as the conclusion to, his request for the muse's help—a terrible difference from Apollonius' plea. Note too that he has just called Aeneas' men a foreign army (*advena . . . exercitus*), even though they are also peace-seeking exiles returning to their homeland. And because the Trojan force is really an army, it should perhaps not surprise us that Aeneas' first settlement, begun just over a hundred lines after the Erato invocation, is a military camp, not a town.

Parallels with Apollonius bring Jason and Medea into the second half of Virgil's poem in a new guise. As Walter Moskalaw demonstrates, Virgil creates elaborate parallels between the events of Book 7 and the events of Books 1 and 4, directly, and also indirectly through Apollonius. The Erato invocation suggests that Aeneas is a new Jason and Lavinia a new Medea. Virgil fits Lavinia into the Jason and Medea story in another; rather sinister way by drawing on Euripides. One of the most vivid pictures in the excursus into Laurentum's recent past introduced by the Erato invocation is the description of Lavinia's flaming hair, one of the portents of her glorious and deadly destiny (73-77, M 93-98). The words come straight from Euripides' *Medea* (1186 f.) describing the lethal effects of Medea's "gift" on Jason's new young bride. By implication, then, in Virgil's linkage of

Apollonius and Euripides, Lavinia is at once Apollonius' Medea and Medea's nameless victim in Euripides' play, while Aeneas is both Apollonius' Jason who wins Medea and Euripides' Jason who deserts Medea. The Aeneas/Lavinia connection is, through allusion, ill omened indeed.

Furthermore, since Virgil had already equated Dido with Medea in *Aeneid* 1-4, by bringing Medea into his new story he brings back Dido. Virgil makes us aware throughout his poem that we mortals can never leave anything behind. Whatever people do is part of what they are, and whatever the individuals who make up a civilization do is part of what that civilization is. Aeneas deserted Dido in Book 4, but the flames of her pyre follow him into Book 5, he meets her again in the Underworld in Book 6, and her curse (4.612-20, M 845-56) is pretty well fulfilled in the last half of the poem, while her summoning of an avenger from her bones embroils all of Roman history, for Hannibal, the hero of the second Punic War, is clearly the avenger Dido calls up, and the Punic Wars are, in Virgil's representation of history, the direct result of *Aeneid* 1-4.

## THE WOMEN OF BOOK 7

All things considered, Erato seems the perfect Muse to introduce the birth of Roman history, which, in Virgil's picture of things, is the birth of war. What remains is for the poet to set the scene for the war by giving his readers a sense of early Italy in all its variety and to orchestrate the outbreak of the war. This Virgil does in large measure through a cast of female characters. Whatever we are to make of it, it is a fact that female characters predominate in Book 7. It is also a fact that the women of Book 7 play such varied roles in the poem that they cannot be grouped generically, as, for example, sacrifices to Rome's destiny, or irrational forces that must be suppressed in the name of masculine order.' Perhaps it does not mean anything that Juno, Allecto, Amata, Lavinia, Silvia, and Camilla, all of whom play major roles, and Caieta, Circe, Erato, Celaeno, and Danae, who play bit parts in the book, are female. Quite possibly Virgil never thought about the matter at all. Quite possibly he did. Virgil includes Danae, a woman readers cannot have expected to find in Italy, and gives her a story that is significantly different from the usual version. I shall begin my discussion of the women of Book 7 with Danae, even though she does not appear until halfway through the book, because her presence suggests that Virgil was indeed aware of the central role he was giving to women in this section of the poem.

As Allecto flies toward Ardea to infect Turnus with her venom, Virgil interrupts his narrative to give a thumbnail sketch of the city where the action will take place:

the city built by Danae when, carried upon the swift south wind, she founded it as home for her Acrisian colonists. Our fathers used to call it Ardea; and Ardea is still a mighty name, but its great days are done. (M 545-50)

Virgil has changed the traditional story. Normally Danae and Perseus arrive in Seriphos in a chest, set adrift by Danae's father Acrisius who heard that he would be killed by Danae's child.

Mother and son are rescued by the king in a fairly typical story of helpless female rescued by a man, and the real concern is the fate of the baby hero Perseus. Virgil's Danae arrives in Italy in a ship, and there she founds a city for her fellow travelers, just as Dido did. Many commentators, including C. J. Fordyce, T. E. Page, and R. D. Williams, say (ad 372) she marries Pylumnus, Turnus' ancestor, but Virgil does not mention this; his sketch suggests a Dido unencumbered by an Aeneas. Danae's part in Book 7 may be small -- not even a walk-on -- but it is, I think, significant that Virgil has created any part at all for a woman who, like Dido and like Camilla, plays a man's role in a man's world, a woman who is successful, as they are not. Furthermore, there is not a word of Perseus; the story hinted at is a *woman's* foundation story, not an account of the birth of a male hero.

#### CAIETA

[section omitted]

#### CIRCE

The second female presence in Latium is Circe (7. l-24, M 12-30), a much more ominous presence than Caieta, as we find out gradually. In Book 3 Helenus warned the Trojans of Circe, identifying her as one of the dangers that had to be encountered before they could found their city. She seems threatening indeed as the Trojans approach her territory. The alluring sounds and smells Virgil mentions connect her both with Homer's Calypso and his Circe; the howls and groans of her victims connect her with the Underworld. But Helenus' warning seems to have been unnecessary: Circe is not a threat to the Trojans at this moment, Neptune is on the alert to keep them safe, and they sail on to the beautiful wood at Ostia where lovely birdsong replaces the eerie sounds of Circe's kingdom. We may wonder in passing about the nature of a promised land that contains such threats to people's humanity, but the lovely dawn scene at the Tiber mouth is likely to drive Circe from most readers' thoughts, at least for a while.

Circe returns twice in the next three hundred lines. Aeneas does not meet her, but in a way her presence in Italy is even more sinister because he does not get to confront and defeat her as Odysseus did. One of the statues in Latinus' palace is that of Picus, King Latinus' grandfather. He is portrayed wearing the dress of an augur, with a staff, striped toga, and sacred shield (all nice anachronisms connecting Roman times with primitive Italy). Virgil suggests a bizarre relationship between Picus and Circe:

Picus himself, trainer of horses, sat: he whom his bride, Circe, within the clutch of  
lust had struck with her gold rod, transforming him by drugs [literally, poisons into a  
bird with wings of speckled colors. (M 248-52)

Whatever we are to make of this, it is clear that Aeneas, who is supposed to marry into this family

to create the Roman race, is not safely remote from Circe at all.

The last major Circaean intrusion into the poem connects her directly with Aeneas. Things still look good, on the surface. Latinus has received the Trojans handsomely, he has accepted Aeneas in absentia as his son-in-law to be (father-in-law and son-in-law, as Juno will say (317, M 419), reminding every Augustan reader of the deadliness to Rome of a more recent father-, son-in-law pair, Caesar and Pompey (6.82-35, M 1095-109). Now Latinus and Ilioneus exchange gifts (24348, M 319-26; 27-83, M 362-76). Latinus wins the prize for the most ill-omened gift of all in a poem in which presents tend to have deadly implications. The stallions he sends to Aeneas are bastards that Circe bred on the sly from the immortal stallions of her father, the Sun. In Book 3 Helenus gave Aeneas the armor of Achilles' son Neoptolemus as a departure present (3.467-9, M 611-13). This gift has always seemed to me to make a deadly connection between Aeneas and Achilles; now Aeneas will be carried into battle by bastard offspring of the horses of the Sun. The fact that Aeneas will have direct contact, through the horses, with Circe the monster-maker, from whom he was so carefully protected at the beginning of the book, is bad enough; still worse is the additional suggested parallel with the *Odyssey*. Horses of the Sun remind us of the Cattle of the Sun, and, as every Roman would remember; all of Odysseus' men lost their lives because they killed and ate these cattle. The *Odyssey* allusion fits perfectly with Juno's prophetic threat a few lines later:

Then let the son- and father-in-law pay for peace with their own people's death.  
Virgin, your dowry will be Latin blood and Trojan. (M419-21)

The cost of the leaders' quarrel will be high.

In the *Odyssey* Odysseus is able to outwit Circe and win her help thanks to Hermes. In the *Aeneid* Circe infiltrates the Trojan ranks without Aeneas even knowing it. As Kenneth J. Reckford asks in connection with Aeneas' possession of this "gift": "Once war commences, will he keep control of his passions?" Books 10 and 12 give us the answers to that question. Two more brief allusions to Circe ensure that she will never be far from our minds. Angitia, mentioned at 759, is either Circe herself or her niece, possibly Medea, and Circe's ridge is mentioned less than twenty lines from the end of the book. So the dangerous goddess hangs over the book from beginning to end.

## LAVINIA

Lavinia is the central figure in Virgil's flashback into recent Laurentian history (45-106, M 55-134), since she is the bride promised by Creusa (2.783-84, M 105-57). It does not matter what *Lavinia* thinks of the proposal; it does not matter what *Aeneas* thinks of it either-their union is part of the great plan, and fate has taken pains to ensure that Latinus will not marry his daughter off to the wrong man before Aeneas comes on the scene. Lavinia is often adduced to show the cost of

Aeneas' mission to himself. Pale Lavinia cannot compare with loving Creusa or passionate Dido -- not surprisingly, since she is really only a city turned into a woman by inflection. (Take the neuter noun Lavinium, give it a feminine ending and, behold, you have a woman! ) Lavinia can equally well be seen as another sacrifice to male imperialism. So, of course, is Aeneas.

We have observed the connection of Lavinia with Medea, with Dido, and with Helen. In addition, she is a typical upper-class Roman daughter whose marriage is arranged for her for political reasons by her father. As far as I can make out she never even meets Aeneas. She is rushed off and hidden in the woods by her mother in a faked Bacchic frenzy after Amata has been infected by Allecto. What does Lavinia think about any of this? We do not know. She never speaks, she never acts. After her brief part in Book 7 she vanishes from the poem until Book 12, where she makes two appearances, in each case reacting to a situation in which her mother is involved. At 12.6-70 (M 88-94) Lavinia blushes after her mother has told Turnus that she will die if he dies and that she will never accept Aeneas as son-in-law. (What does this mysterious blush suggest? Lavinia's embarrassment at her mother's excessive regard for Turnus? Her own love for Turnus? Virgil does not tell us.) The last time Lavinia appears is as a silent mourner after Amata's suicide. She is the first to tear her hair and cheeks in lamentation (12.605-6, M 812-14).

The poem does not ask us to imagine the kind of marriage Aeneas and Lavinia will have after the poem ends, for Virgil says nothing of it, and Augustan Romans certainly did not look for happiness in political marriages anyway. To a modern reader, however, the omens do not look good for a union between a woman who was perhaps in love with another man and the man who is responsible for the moral collapse of her father, for the burning of her city, for the suicide of her mother, and for the death of her cousin (or fiancé, if she thought as her mother did). Virgil throws out one tantalizing detail in Book 6, though. According to Anchises, Lavinia will raise Aeneas' late-born son Silvius in the woods (6.764-5, M 1009-10).<sup>16</sup> Obviously this is one of Virgil's many aetiological etymologies designed at once to explain a family name and to connect present day Latium (where we will shortly meet Silvia) with later Trojan-Latin history; perhaps it is only meant to imply a well-wooded spot in Italy, but it does seem suggestive, in a poem that is full of dysfunctional families, beginning with Aeneas' own, that Lavinia should rear Aeneas' child in the woods. And, of course, the woodland domicile connects the future child of Aeneas with the present-day Camilla, raised in the woods by her father Metabus who was, like Mezentius, thrown out of his city by his subjects (11.539-2, M 707-10).

CELAENO

Virgil connects his digression into recent Laurentian history with Aeneas' story by restating the Trojans' arrival at Ostia:

But racing wide across Ausonia's cities, swift Rumor had already carried them [warnings], just at the time the Trojan crewmen fastened their fleet along the grassy



riverbank. (M 131-34)

*Laomedontius*, "Laomedon's" or "Laomedontian," is much more specific and much more negative than Mandelbaum's "Trojan," as we can see if we look at *Georgics* 1.501-2: "long since we have paid with our blood for Laomedontian perjuries" (*satis jam pridem sanguine nostro /Laomedontae luimus periuria Troiae*). Virgil could have used the more neutral "Trojan" or "Dardanian." He chooses, instead, to remind us of King Laomedon, Priam's father, who tricked the gods and perjured himself twice causing the destruction of the first Troy. This is the legacy Virgil reminds us of just as the Trojans arrive to found their own city. Dido was the person who last used the word, and she knew exactly what she meant when she asked, "do you not yet know, not feel, the treason of the breed of Laomedon?" (*nescis heu, perdita, necdum I Laomedontae sentis periuria gentis?*, 4.541-2, M 749-50). Is it to remind us of this, perhaps, that Virgil refers to Fama (described so graphically in Book 4) in the line before he mentions Laomedon? In any case, the Harpy Celaeno used the adjective when she was cursing the Trojans in Book 3 (248, M 321). So it seems safe to assume that Virgil meant something specific and negative when he chose the word here.

This brings us to Celaeno's reappearance in Book 7. For once a prophecy turns out (or so it seems initially) to be much less dire than it sounded. The Fury's prediction that the Trojans would have to eat their tables before they could found their city terrified them (3.259-62, M 337-0). In Book 7 it seems to be a joke. "Hey, we're eating our tables," laughs Ascanius, when the Trojans eat the wheat cakes they had been using as plates. We remember Celaeno, Aeneas does not. We remember that the Celaeno episode was modeled on the Cattle of the Sun episode in *Odyssey* 12; Aeneas remembers a totally different occasion, one we know nothing of: Anchises apparently told him that when hunger forced the Trojans to eat their tables on an unknown shore they would be able to build their city. Certainly Aeneas' interpretation is auspicious, and it is clear that he is right in one sense at least this is the place they will build the new Troy. Virgil's description of the table-eating is strange, however:

... they turned upon the thin cakes with their teeth; they dared profane and crack and gnaw the fated circles of their crusts with hand and jaw; they did not spare the quartered surfaces of their flat loaves. "We have consumed our tables after all," Iulus laughed... (142-48)

The language suggests profanation; it reminds us of *Odysseus'* men killing the cattle of the Sun and so recalls our memory of Celaeno's prophecy, the polluted feast and her terrifying words. In Aeneas' remembered version, Anchises told his son the table eating would be a sign that they should start to build; his own interpretation of the hunger is that it is their last hurdle, the end of their misfortunes. He is so wrong. What is to come is worse than anything the Trojans have suffered before. Thus Celaeno is an ominous presence in *Aeneid* 7 even though she seems to be absent. The *Odyssey* continues to be present in a sinister way in Virgil's *Iliad*, and the Trojans' past

misdeeds (after all, they went against all standards of proper behavior when they killed someone else's cattle and then tried to drive off the rightful owners) follow them into the new world.

#### OUTBREAK OF WAR: JUNO, ALLECTO, AMATA, AND SILVIA

Virgil concludes the first movement of Book 7, the Trojan arrival in Latium and alliance with Latinus, with the words "bringing back peace" (*pacemque reportant*, 285, M 377), as Ilioneus and his embassy return from Laurentum. The next verse shows us Juno, a more sinister and powerful force than she was in Book 1. Appropriately enough, she seems to be en route from Greece to Carthage. In the light of this book her machinations in Book 1 seem almost innocuous. There she bribed Aeolus, a minor godling, to do her bidding, creating the storm that brought the Trojans in to Carthage. One Trojan ship was lost but this damage was relatively minor, and it seems slight indeed when we think that in the Odyssean prototype all Odysseus' men are killed. And Poseidon/Neptune, instead of creating the storm, puts an end to it. Aeolus and a storm cannot compare in horror (or in the magnitude of disastrous effect) with Allecto and civil war. True, the storm brought Aeneas to Carthage and changed the course of Roman history (if we assume that the Punic Wars are the direct result of the meeting of Dido and Aeneas). The war that is Juno's handiwork in Book 7 results, by the end of the poem, in irredeemable loss. Nearly every character we care about is killed and Roman history seems compromised beyond repair. It is no wonder that many readers find the ending of the poem profoundly disturbing.

Allecto is one of Virgil's most powerful (in all senses) female characters. She is a Fury, a denizen of the Underworld, one of many creatures Aeneas was protected from in Book 6 that are let loose to make trouble for Trojans and Italians in Book 7. In Book 6 the Furies (Virgil does not name them but they are traditionally called Tisiphone, Megaera, and Allecto) reside between War and Discord, *Bellum* and *Discordia*, on the threshold of the Underworld (279-1, M 37-72). Later in Book 6 Tisiphone the avenger (*ultrix*), whose very name suggests vengeance (*tisis* in Greek being the equivalent of *ultio* in Latin), is depicted calling her sisters to punish the guilty in Tartarus:

Tisiphone at once is the avenger, armed with whips; she leaps upon the guilty, lashing them; in her left hand she grips her gruesome vipers and calls her savage company of sisters. (M 755-59)

She is playing the role we would expect of a Fury. Furies are, as any reader of the *Oresteja* knows very well, closely connected with blood 'guilt and vengeance. It is clear from the many allusions to Aeschylus' trilogy in Virgil's Allecto episode that he has that aspect of the Furies' function very much in mind. But he has added something new for his Allecto. In fact he prepared us for it when he initially stationed the bedrooms of the Furies between War and Discord and gave Discord the snaky hair of a Fury. Virgil's Allecto is not an avenger, she is discord personified: "in [her] heart are gruesome wars and violence and fraud and injuries" (*cui tristia bella I iraeque insidiaeque et crimina noxia cordi*, 325-26, M 431-32). She is hated by her own father and sisters, can turn

brother against brother, wreck homes and kill. She has a thousand names and a thousand ways of doing harm. Juno does not need to bribe Allecto, as she bribed Aeolus; she does not even have to tell her what to do.

Allecto knows just where to go to cause trouble. She heads for the queen who wants Turnus to marry her daughter. Amata (the loved one, an odd and suggestive name for a proto-Roman matron) is strangely involved with her nephew and hoped for son-in-law Turnus: *adiungi generum miro properabat amore* (57), "she was, with strange passion, pushing for Turnus to be joined as son-in-law" (my translation: Mandelbaum's "wished to see him as her son-in-law," 72, does not get the force of the Latin). Amata is a perfect target for Allecto because of her passionate nature, her strange love for Turnus, her hostility to an outsider as husband for her daughter, and (one imagines) her distress at the dangerous precedent set if mothers have no say at all in the choice of their daughter's spouse. (After all, as Catullus wrote in poem 62 [lines 63-64], a girl's virginity has three parts: one third belongs to her father, one to her mother, one to herself. Latinus is taking more than his share.) The Latin women agree, apparently, since they follow the queen when she says, "if care for a mother's rights still gnaws at you" (*si juris materni cura remordet*, 402, M 535). By working on the queen, Allecto fomented dissension not only in the royal family but in the city at large. Following Amata's lead, the Laurentian women take to the hills in a pseudo-Bacchic frenzy and hide Lavinia from her father. Dissension in the royal household is the first cause of the war; from there it spreads to others. (At 580-82, M 763-69, the husbands of the women who left home demand war.) Allecto knows her business; she has created the sort of rift between the sexes we know from Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, a split that could destroy Laurentian society.

Allecto's attack on Amata is reminiscent of Venus' plan, carried out by Cupid, to infect Dido with love for Aeneas in Book 1: "inflamm *I* the queen to madness and insinuate *I* a fire in Dido's very bones" -*rentem I incendat reginam atque ossibus implicet ignem*, 1.659-60, M 921-23). Virgil uses language drawn right from Book 4 when he describes how Allecto's venomous snake, now a disease, coils Amata's bones with fire: "entwined her bones *I* in fire" (*ossibus implicat ignem*, 355, M 469-70). Love, hate, war -- they are fatally linked in the world of the *Aeneid*.

Allecto's next stop is Ardea and Turnus. We do not get to know Turnus until Amata has infected him, as one of the teachers at the NEH Institute pointed out, so we cannot really tell what he might have been like otherwise. Presumably he was the sort of person who would be susceptible to fury, but all we know about Turnus before his meeting with Allecto is that he is the handsomest of Lavinia's suitors, well-descended, and, in Amata's view at any rate, Lavinia's betrothed. He does not seem unduly upset about the Trojans when Allecto arrives in his bedroom masquerading as a priestess of Juno. In response to Allecto's inflammatory speech he laughs and tells her in effect to go mind her knitting, as any young man might do when confronted with an old woman interfering in what he regards as men's affairs. Only after Allecto reveals herself and hurls her torch at him does he become the fiery warrior he is in the rest of the poem. Turnus and Amata are to be the Dido of this half of the poem; her passion for him and his *amorferri* ("passion for iron," 461; M 609: "lust for the sword") are the equivalent of Dido's all-consuming love for Aeneas: the madness

of all three god-inspired.

Allecto's second target is as well chosen as her first. The sphere of discord has widened. When the Trojans arrived in Latium, Turnus and Latinus were allies. Then Latinus allied himself with Aeneas, with the result that Turnus now sees himself as the enemy of both Trojans and Laurentians. Latinus has, in his view, "polluted the peace" (*polluta pace*, 467, my translation). It will take Allecto's next move to ally Latinus and Turnus *against* the Trojans. Virgil has changed the story found in other authors including Livy; instead of having the Trojans allied *with* Latinus *against* Turnus, he has allied *against Aeneas* all the peoples of Italy except for Mezentius' Etruscan enemies. Rome's history begins with common hostility against Trojan invaders.

Meanwhile Allecto moves on to her next target, Ascanius' hunting dogs, in order to make the Trojans guilty both of the deed that actually begins the war and of spilling first blood. Ascanius loves to hunt, as we remember from Book 4. Hunting is ambiguous in the *Aeneid*, as many scholars have noted. It can be seen positively, as after the Trojans' arrival in Libya when Aeneas brings back seven deer for his men, but it frequently has negative tones, as in the Carthaginian hunt and the Dido/deer simile. The last time the Trojans hunted in an unknown land without permission was in Book 3 on Celaeno's island. The Trojans do not seem to learn from their mistakes. Aeneas seems to use poor judgment when he starts to build his city before hearing the result of his embassy to the king. It is equally poor judgment on Ascanius' part to go hunting in someone else's land without asking, particularly after what happened in Book 3. Allecto makes sure the dogs' canine instincts are directed against the target that will do the greatest damage possible and move the conflict to a still larger sphere.

And what are we to make of Silvia's deer? Like so much in Italy, it is a strange mixture of the wild and the tame. It is the special care of Silvia, whose name connects her with Aeneas' own descendants, the Alban dynasty. Virgil seems to ask us once again to think of the conflict as a civil war. Appropriately, the first human victim of the conflict will be one of Silvia's brothers. (The second, Galaesus, is not only the richest and most just of Italians of that day, he is killed while trying to make peace.) Ascanius goes after the tame stag "inflamed with love of praise" (*eximiae laudis succensus amore*, 496, M 655). *Amor*, "love" or "desire," is always dangerous in the *Aeneid*, as indeed it is here. Virgil makes the significance of this attack clear in words that bring back Dido, "this hunting was the first cause of the troubles" (*quae prima laborum I causa fuit*, 481-82, M 63-37).<sup>23</sup> Once again love and war seem intimately related.

Ascanius' shot, so an undergraduate told me, is the worst kind of shot a hunter can make, a "gut shot." There is a terrible irony in Virgil's *nec dextrae erranti deus afuit* ("some god did not allow his faltering hand to fail," 498, M 65-57). In other words, Allecto did not let him miss, but his hit was an error and caused not only suffering to the deer, which would have died painfully, my student informed me, but to the whole world of Latium.

After Allecto sounds the trumpet call that brings the farmers to the rescue and sheds the first blood so that there can be no going back, she reports to her boss in heaven that she can get neighboring cities involved through rumors (shades of Fama in Book 4?) and "fire hearts with love

for insane Mars . . . and sow arms through the fields" (*accendamque animos insani Martis amore I . . . spargam arma per agros*, 550-51, M 722-26). Juno sends her back to the Underworld; she herself will put the finishing touches on the war. Heaven will replace Hell in the final stage of bringing to birth a forbidden war (as Jupiter tells the gods in the council of the gods at the beginning of Book 10). For Juno's final touch Virgil invents for Laurentum gates of war traditionally associated with Rome and imagines the Roman consul ritually opening the gates after the Senate has decided on war. In Book 7, since Latinus refuses to declare war on the Trojans, Juno flings them open herself. Everyone knows that the Gates of War were closed only three times in Rome's history, twice during Augustus' lifetime. Virgil seems to have invented this Laurentian ritual to make a connection between the closing of the Gates in Rome (1.293-94, M 412-14) and the present war. In other words, Juno opens the Gates of War in Laurentum in Book 7 to announce a sequence of wars that will not end until a distant day in Rome's future (that is, if we believe Jupiter when he is trying to cheer up his daughter in Book 1). That original Roman prophecy is so compromised by the end of the poem that the chance of Furor being (and/or staying) bound seems slim indeed. In any case, Juno has shown herself to be as much a fury from Hell as is her handmaiden Allecto.

## CAMILLA

We come now to our final section of the book and the mysterious female with which it closes. Camilla comes as a surprise; no reader would, I think, expect to find a woman included in a catalogue of warriors. There is no woman in the equivalent passages in the *Iliad* or Apollonius' *Argonautica*. Camilla's name would no doubt remind a Roman both of the great Camillus who saved Rome in the dark days of the Gallic invasion in 390 B.C. and of Roman religious ritual (a *camillus* being a boy attendant to a priest), in each case an equation of a female with a male figure. Camilla is similar to Dido in that she ignores traditional female roles. Virgil's characters do not seem to hold this against her—both young men and older women admire her (812-13, M 106-8), and it is clear from Book 11 that Turnus thinks of her as his equal. Unlike Dido, Camilla is not a civilizer; quite the opposite. And, as we will learn in Book 11, she is a virginal devotee of the goddess Diana, the goddess Dido resembled but, unfortunately for her, was not (1.498-504, M 702-11). Camilla is a free spirit, like Harpalyce who can outstrip the river Hebrus (1.311-17, M 448-50). Camilla can outrun the winds; she could, it seems, even run over fields without bruising the grain and over water without wetting her feet (808-11, M 106265). This comparison between Harpalyce and Camilla is disturbing because it was Venus who was compared with Harpalyce in Book 1 when she was masquerading as a Diana figure in order to set her son up for Dido in Carthage. Once again we see how Carthage casts a long shadow over the *Aeneid*.

Camilla gets the last word in a book that, as we have seen, uses an extraordinary array of women characters to paint the portrait of pre-Roman Italy and Troy's impact on it. I believe Camilla, huntress turned warrior, represents Italy as it is when Aeneas arrives—its youthful energy

and its paradoxical mixture of pastoral peace and militarism. The final verse in the book perverts the pastoral into the military before our eyes: *pastoralem / praefixa cuspide / myrtum* ("pastoral" / "tipped with a spear point" / "myrtle"); before we even get to the myrtle wood of the shepherd's staff, we find that it has been transformed into an implement of war. When the Trojans arrived in Latium Italy seemed to be at peace, though hedged round by war (in the past, in the distance, in the future). By the end of Book 7 war is here to stay.

The war that Book 7 introduces is, as we have seen, the first of Rome's civil wars; it is also a second Trojan war. But this Trojan War will have no *Iliad* 24, no meeting of two enemy chiefs who can --for a night, at least -- rise above their mutual hatred as Priam and Achilles do. Book 7 is also the beginning of Virgil's *Oresteia*, with Furies loose in the house of Latinus, in the city of Laurentum, and in the cities connected with Laurentum that will become Roman Italy. But this *Oresteia* will have no transformation of Furies into Kindly Ones who will confer peace and prosperity on Italy. Allecto may be sent back to hell, but Juno can do the job without her; and even Jupiter has a Dira (another kind of Fury) up his sleeve for Book 12. Maybe Furor will one day be bound, as Jupiter claims in Book 1, but, as I read the poem, it will not happen soon.

Read light novel online for free The best light novel reading site.Â daughter alone conceive a firebrand and travail of bridal flames. Nay, even such a birth hath Venus of her own, a second Paris, another balefire for Troy towers reborn.' These words uttered, she descends to earth in all her terrors, and calls dolorous Allecto from the home of the Fatal Sisters in nether gloom, whose delight is in woeful wars, in wrath and treachery and evil feuds: hateful to [327-360]lord Pluto himself, hateful and horrible to her hell-born sisters; into so many faces does she turn, so savage the. Chapter Summary for Virgil's The Aeneid, book 7 summary. Find a summary of this and each chapter of The Aeneid!Â In Aeneas's legendary time, they seem to function more than symbolically: Juno opening the Gates of War appears to actually cause war to break out, prompting the gathering of armies in a country that was previously "all unstirred, inert." Furthermore, continual reminders of the high price in suffering, doubt, and conflict are Virgil's way of reminding the reader of the ultimate value placed on the founding of Rome. These are my theme, and how the war began, And how concluded by the godlike man: For I shall sing of battles, blood, and rage, Which princes and their people did engage; And haughty souls, that, mov'd with mutual hate, In fighting fields pursued and found their fate; That rous'd the Tyrrhene realm with loud alarms, And peaceful Italy involv'd.Â A larger scene of action is display'd; And, rising hence, a greater work is weigh'd. Latinus, old and mild, had long possess'd The Latin scepter, and his people blest: His father Faunus; a Laurentian dame His mother; fair Marica was her name. But Faunus came from Picus: Picus drew His birth from Saturn, if records be true. Thus King Latinus, in the third degree, Had Saturn author of his family.