

Electronic Antiquity 14.1 (Nov 2010)

The Passions of Achilles: Reflections on the Classical and Medieval Epic

Guest Editor: Rosemarie Deist (University of San Francisco)

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University of San Francisco, October 2008

ROSEMARIE DEIST

University of San Francisco

deistr@usfca.edu

The Passions of Achilles: Translating Greece into Rome

DAVID KONSTAN

New York University and (Emeritus) Brown University

david_konstan@brown.edu

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LAURENCE HARF-LANCNER

Sorbonne nouvelle-Paris III

aurence.harf@wanadoo.fr

Briseis in the Potter's Quarter

PAMELA GORDON

University of Kansas

pgordon@ku.edu

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MARJOLEIN OELE

University of San Francisco

moele@usfca.edu

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ROSEMARIE DEIST
University of San Francisco
deistr@usfca.edu

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EMILY ALBU
University of California-Davis
emalbu@ucdavis.edu

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JOSEPH J. DUGGAN
University of California-Berkeley
joed@berkeley.edu

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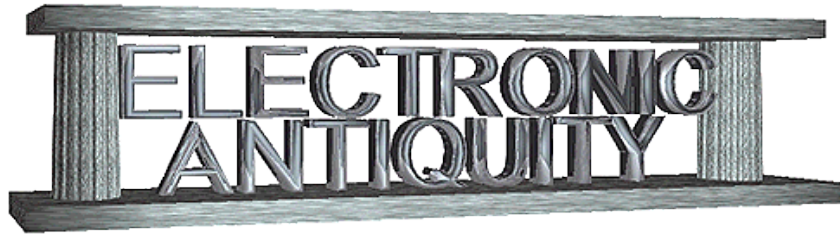
MICHELLE SZKILNIK
Université Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3
mszkilnik@numericable.fr

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MATILDA T. BRUCKNER
Boston College
Bruckner@bc.edu

The Passions of Achilles: Herbort von Fritzlar's *Liet von Troye* and his Description of the Passions of Achilles in Regard to Herbort's Historical Concept

MARIA DORNINGER
University of Salzburg
Maria.Dorninger@sbq.ac.at



The Passions of Achilles: Heroic Character in Classical and Medieval Epic: Introduction

Rosemarie Deist
University of San Francisco
deistr@usfca.edu

Achilles is a hero of epic, a lover of war, and a bearer and conveyor of strong emotions. These qualifications endow Achilles with capacities for intense anger, grief, and love; the power of such experiences is the essence of his character, and is contained in his name in the components *akhos* and *laos*, “grief” and “host of fighting men”.¹ Ancient Greece after Homer knew Achilles well, from the Athenian tragic poets through Plato and Aristotle down to Alexander the Great and beyond. Through the ancient commentators of the third and second century B.C.E. the name “Achilles” became an exemplary concept for the representation of heroic emotions and strong feelings in associations between people.² Alexandrian scholars edited epics and tragedies in which Achilles was

¹ As shown by Nagy 1979:70 with respect to the centrality of Achilles in the *Iliad* and the epic tradition. The transmission of Achilles’ Homeric roots is traced by King 1987; for Achilles as lover, see pp. 171ff. For models of the hero in Homer, see van Wees 1998.

² Decisive for emotions in the classical world is Konstan 2006; on anger, see ch. 2. For anger in the medieval setting, see Rosenwein 1998. The standard work on the variable and adaptable forms of epic in the Romance languages is Duggan 2005.

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present and thus helped create a tradition of Achilles stretching from antiquity to the Middle Ages.

The recognition of Achilles' fundamentally passionate nature is the foundation of this volume and informs its orientation. The essays explore the characteristics and qualities that pertain to heroic character in Homer's and Vergil's epics, and the reception of these traits in late antiquity and the Middle Ages. The character of the hero in the classical and medieval world was on display, intended to be observed and actively evaluated by audiences. Heroic character is revealed over time through the public performances and the emotions they arouse.

This book looks at emotions as an expression of heroic forcefulness that is incited by and responds to the actions of others. Emotions are seen not as internal states but as reactions to provocations that give rise to actions. Such heroic activity is expressed in a vocabulary of emotions which is here probed across cultures, ideologies, and multiple genres of composition, in both literature and philosophy. At the centre is the transmission of the emotion of anger and its resultant effects on behavior. The collection examines the configuration of Achilles' passions over time, adding to the traditional interpretations of Homer and Vergil the ways their concept of heroism is refracted through the lens of late antique and medieval narratives. This method is that of *translatio*.

Translatio is a process of reflecting and connecting. Its *modus operandi* is the display of character and emotions as textual concepts and images. An image is created, deciphered, and then elucidated in a new cultural and ideological refraction. The truth of the text, therefore, is fluid. Its meaning is unveiled in the artistic and intellectual context of the mental impressions and images of a particular civilization. These are received and reflected in the refined and knowledgeable appreciation of the audience. *Translatio* is thus a rendering from one state and appearance to another. The exemplary instance for this volume is epic, which is examined in all its flexibility as it undergoes transformation of substance, form, and condition from Homer to Vergil and on to the Middle Ages.³

The idea of *translatio* places the emphasis on the inner workings of epic and the changes in the nature of heroic character and emotions over

³ For the methodology and system of *translatio*, see Deist 2003a. As a tool of literary criticism, *translatio* is more expansive than the ancient *imitatio*; as a term signifying "emulation" of "authoritative persons or texts," *imitatio* is a method of "absorption and reproduction of good models," thus a device of modern intertextuality: see von Albrecht 1999: 15-16,22.

time. The detailed investigations of emotions in antiquity, the intersection of such emotions with the public world, and the refractions of such understandings in other languages and cultures reveal the range of heroic nature. The essays demonstrate the varying qualities of epic through their engagement with the exemplary figure of Achilles. The chapters are arranged to indicate this movement, and at the same time to exhibit its coherence. The essays begin and end with the hero Achilles and the Trojan War. War, anger, love, suffering and pain, and heroic duty are multiple dimensions of experience represented by Achilles. They are traced through the process of *translatio* to reveal the reinterpretation and adjustments of heroic virtues other times.

Greece is “translated” into Rome through an examination of the differences between the way anger is represented in the *Iliad* and *Aeneid* (David Konstan). Tracing the trajectory of anger in the two poems, and supporting his analysis with reference to Aristotelian, Epicurean, and Stoic texts, Konstan concludes that the very concept of anger differed for Homer and Vergil. Marjolein Oele argues that Aristotle’s theory of suffering (*pathos*) and the emotion of pity (*éleos*) come together in the meeting between Achilles and Priam in *Iliad* 24: Aristotle’s recognition of the power of suffering and his conception of how human life is best lived help to reveal how Achilles and Priam establish a novel kind of friendship. Pamela Gordon shows how the Athenian reception of Briseis, the captive war prize of Achilles, highlights Achilles’ role as lover. The fluidity of images of Briseis in Greek pottery make it clear that there was serious interest in the story of Achilles and Briseis beyond the *Iliad*. The presence of Briseis in the Athenian potter’s quarter gives evidence of her importance to Achilles.

The medieval narrators were confronted with Homeric and Vergilian concepts of emotions and value systems. In the process of *translatio*, they decoded such foreign materials, shifted and recreated meaning, and threw new light on such concepts for a feudal audience within a Christian religious and moral framework. Beginning in late antiquity, Christians took that powerful heritage and made it their own, in the process dismantling the core meanings of pagan tales and replacing them with Christian ways of thinking. The late antique writers were moralists who took aim against what they saw as pagan lust in defense of Christian values. Thus, the late antique master of mythography, Fulgentius, mounted an attack on pagan culture and its heroic ideals, as Emily Albu argues. He took as his target the most influential text from the Roman past, the *Aeneid*. His book-by-book interpretation of the *Aeneid*

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constructs a new ideal for Christian *virtus* by expanding or redefining the concept to include “chastity” and “continence”. Virtue and restraint were for Fulgentius the true content of Vergil’s *Aeneid*.

In the Middle Ages, the *translatio* of Homer and Vergil evolved in new ways. The Homeric and mediaeval epics share certain traits of technique. One is the traditional oral nature of epic. Moreover, with respect to the motivation of conduct, the character of the hero is judged in dialogue and action. An identical scenario in the *Iliad* and *Raoul de Cambrai*, a late twelfth-century *chanson de geste*, is the occasion for an examination of heroic anger by Laurence Harf-Lancner. The emotions of the warrior, the anger specific to Achilles (*mēnis*), the murderous madness of the warrior in battle and the danger of excess (*hubris*) are analysed in both poems. In both epics, savage violence is confronted with humane and moral values. Within the Romance tradition of epic, the renowned hero Roland reveals a new sense of responsibility across a century that evolves over different versions of the epic. Broadly speaking, heroic conduct is seen, as Joseph J. Duggan shows, as a function of intention, not the deeds performed. The issue of legal guilt shifts, under the influence of the scholastic philosopher Peter Abélard, from the sinful act to the intention of the person committing the act. The older layer of jurisprudence in the trial of Ganelon from around 1100 changes into an enquiry into Ganelon’s state of mind a century later. At the end of the Middle Ages, when the distinctions between *chanson de geste* and romance became blurred, ancient heroes merge with medieval heroes. As Michelle Szkilnik argues, by the fifteenth century the *furor* of the ancient warrior serves two important purposes: it is unleashed against enemies of the Christian faith, and it is channeled into values prized in late medieval French courts: submission to the prince and religious duties. At the crossroad of epic and romance, the tale of *Trois fils de roi* combines heroic virtues with Christian duties.

French antique romances (*romans d’antiquités*) refashion Homeric and Vergilian epic materials in the twelfth century through vastly different lenses for the new empire founded by Henry II in England. The transmission from Homer and Vergil is coloured by aristocratic feudal concerns, with Christian moral requirements as the substratum. The romance *Roman d’Enéas* is a *translatio* of Vergil’s Dido (as argued by Rosemarie Deist). In the *Aeneid*, Vergil applies the male Roman value system to Dido, the queen of Carthage, and exhibits the power of suffering through complex mental images of Dido. Betrayed and robbed of motherhood, Dido is transfigured into the exemplary Stoic *vir* worthy

of suicide by the sword. The Roman representation of maleness is thus shifted onto the ideal Roman *matrona*, the *univira* married to just one husband. In a *translatio* of aristocratic principles of power, Dido's Roman capacities for emotion are transformed, in the *Roman d'Enéas*, under the aegis of feudal aristocratic legitimacy and influence. The Trojan War is now seen to revolve around emotion, the *passio* of suffering from the endless destruction of war and the cost of human lives. As Matilda Bruckner shows, the author of the *Roman de Troie*, Benoît de Sainte-Maure, situates his work at the crux of epic, romance, and history. In bringing back Homer and the monuments of the past, the *Roman de Troie*, addressing a francophone public in the context of a Christian society, offers a view of history and human life that is profoundly Homeric in that it accepts the finality of death for all humans in the rise and fall of Priam's Trojan empire. This trajectory of suffering takes the form of a network of predictions and formal lamentations (*plaintes*). The same material is arranged differently in the thirteenth-century German epic *Liet von Troye*. As Maria Dorninger argues, this poem is something of a message to the troubled Empire plagued by continual armed conflict, and the Fall of Troy serves as a cautionary example for a Christian empire. War and destruction are determined by the human passions of greed, betrayal, and by human vulnerability. In this environment, the Homeric Achilles becomes weak in battle, is led into a trap, and is destroyed, as is Troy, by deceit.

The essays in this volume trace, analyse, and synthesize these intricate layers of the transmission of Homeric and Vergilian heroic status and emotions across time and literary categories. Interestingly, the divisions between these categories become less hard and fast when seen in the light of the fundamental issues of war and the hero. In a certain sense, despite the altered cultural conditions of the medieval period, the hero transcends time and place and becomes indeed "classic".

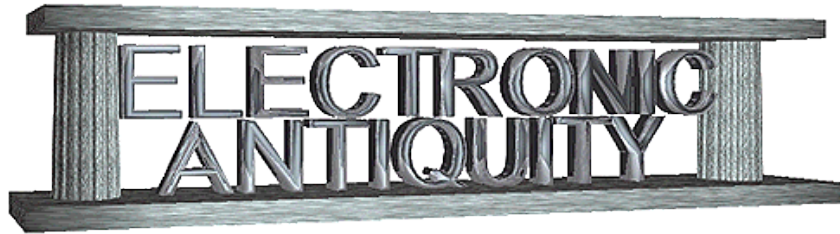
This volume is the result of a colloquium held at the University of San Francisco in 2008. The lively intellectual exchanges among the scholars who came together made this event an experience worth remembering. The highlight of the conference was an unforgettable performance by Stanley Lombardo. Professor Lombardo selected passages from his translation of the *Iliad* in which Achilles' character is prominently visible, and he thereby brought to a conclusion the series of papers on heroic character in epic.

I owe gratitude to my colleagues Stephen Black, Gerard Kuperus, and Marjolein Oele for their support and assistance. The office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences graciously supported this event.

Finally, and above all, I am very thankful to David Konstan for his unwavering encouragement, determination, and active engagement with the production of this volume. The cooperation with David Konstan has been for me a source of sincere pleasure and gratification.

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The Passions of Achilles and Aeneas: Translating Greece into Rome

David Konstan

New York University and (Emeritus) Brown University

david_konstan@brown.edu

The great critic I.A. Richards produced an abridged translation of Homer's *Iliad* under the title, *The Wrath of Achilles* (1950), and to most scholars, the title will seem well chosen (cf. Robert Graves' translation of the entire poem under the title, *The Anger of Achilles* [1959]; also Muellner 1996). The poem begins, famously, with the word *mênis*, an elevated term that, like wrath, is often associated with divine anger:¹ the anger is that of Achilles, who, enraged by the demeaning treatment he has received at the hands of Agamemnon, withdraws from the war and nurses his resentment until his dearest friend, Patroclus, is slain by the Trojan leader Hector; at this point, overcome by grief, he returns to battle to avenge the death by killing Hector. In his anguish, Achilles abuses the corpse of his enemy, until even the gods are appalled at his inhumanity; in the end, he accepts a ransom from Hector's father, Priam, and the poem concludes on a note of reconciliation, though it is mixed with mourning among the Trojans over the loss of their champion.

Virgil's *Aeneid*, which is modelled on both Homeric epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, in almost obsessive detail and yet transforms them at

¹ See Considine 1986: 54; Muellner 1996: 31, who describes *mênis* as "the irrevocable cosmic sanction that prohibits some characters from taking their superiors for equals and others from taking their equals for inferiors."

every turn, begins and ends with anger. Instead of the mutual regard between Achilles and Priam that characterizes the final scene of the *Iliad*, Virgil chose to conclude with a duel between the champions on either side, Trojan and Latin: Aeneas slaughters Turnus in an access of fury brought on by an accidental reminder of the death of his young ally, Pallas, at Turnus' hands. The scene has shocked and disturbed many readers, for the chilling violence with which Virgil elected to end his poem.² Turnus indeed bids Aeneas to have pity on his father -- as a great warrior he would not beg for mercy for himself -- and to give back his body for burial. These words are clearly meant to recall the end of the *Iliad*, and Virgil's decision not to grant Turnus an answer to his prayer, but rather to cut the poem off at the moment that corresponds to Achilles' brutal and pitiless slaying of Hector in Book 22 of the *Iliad*, two books short of the finale, makes the *Aeneid* seem somehow unresolved, even unfinished. Why has Virgil outdone Homer in the ferocity of the ending?

Virgil too opens his poem with a reference to anger, though it is not mentioned explicitly in the first line (*arma* is not quite the same thing as *ira*). Virgil explains that Aeneas is being driven across the seas by fate, and also by the unforgetting wrath of cruel Juno (*saevae memorem Iunonis ob iram*, 4), motives which, to be sure, serve the ultimate objective of the founding of Rome. Nevertheless, Virgil wonders aloud: "can there be such great anger among the gods?" (*tantaene animis caelestibus irae?*, 11). Now, at the beginning of the *Iliad* too the poet poses a question to the Muse who has inspired him: "Which of the gods first brought these two [Agamemnon and Achilles] to contend in strife?" (8). But Homer at once provides the answer: "It was the son of Leto and Zeus," that is, Apollo. There is nothing here of the metaphysical doubt or angst that resonates in Virgil's rhetorical question: Homer asks about the cause of the quarrel, and his Muse provides him with the answer. Virgil's question hangs in the air, and seems suspended over the entire poem, inviting the reader to evaluate the role of the gods, and the nature of anger, at each turn of events.

The difference in the trajectory of anger in the two poems is notable: in the *Iliad*, the hero's wrath gives way to grief for his friend two thirds the way through the poem, and the vengeful fury provoked by this grief is finally assuaged; in the *Aeneid*, divine resentment sets the story in

² For discussion, see Polleichtner 2009: 223-76; bibliography on views concerning the nature of the ending on p. 227 n. 17. See also my review of Polleichtner in Konstan 2011.

motion, and the poem ends with the hero himself acting in anger. In itself, this divergence in the course of anger in the two narratives is no cause for surprise, for they are very different kinds of poems: Homer's is a tale of the falling out between a king and his greatest fighter, a frequent motif in epic worldwide (e.g., *El Cid*, the Persian epic *Shahnameh* by Ferdawsi), whereas Virgil relates the founding of a nation, a genre well developed in earlier Greek literature and which Virgil grafted onto the models of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.³ In addition, Virgil was heir to a tradition that invited the reader's intervention in the text, as it were, deliberately working moral conundrums into his poem, like the famous riddle, exactly halfway through the poem, of the two gates to hell, and Aeneas' puzzling exit from the underworld through the portal of false dreams.⁴ But I wish to explore here the possibility of another reason, in addition to the above, for the differential treatment of anger in the two epics: that the very concept of this emotion differed for the Greek and the Roman poet, or rather, that the Greek and Latin terms that we translate as "anger" did not precisely coincide in meaning. I do not mean that such a conceptual distinction by itself explains the dissimilar structures of the two poems, but recognizing the contrast, if it exists, should contribute to our understanding of how anger functions in them.

Why should we imagine that Greek and Latin terms that we commonly render as "anger" should have differed from each other, or from our own conception of that emotion? By way of an answer to this question, which will at the same time serve as a commentary on how anger was conceived by the two poets under consideration, I shall examine some texts concerning anger, or what we take to be anger, by representatives of three of the major philosophical schools in classical

³ For epics narrating the founding of cities, see Dougherty 1994; Marincola 2001: 11-12.

⁴ Scholars have long puzzled over why Aeneas, after the future of Rome has been revealed to him by his father in the underworld, should not have emerged to the upper world through the gate of horn, through which true shades (*verae umbrae*) pass, rather than that of ivory (*Aeneid* 6.893-99); some have found here evidence of an implicit criticism of Augustus' rule. In my own view, Virgil planted this conundrum midway through the poem just in order to tease his readers, and thereby stimulate them to enter into conversation, as it were, with the text; at the very end of the poem (discussed below), he posed another such dilemma concerning Aeneas' decision to kill the suppliant Turnus. For the idea of the "active reader," who is invited to respond critically to the text, see Konstan 2004, 2006a; Johnson 2010.

antiquity: the Aristotelian, the Stoic, and the Epicurean.⁵ Aristotle, in his *Rhetoric*, has provided the most detailed analysis of the emotions, or rather *pathê*, that survives from ancient Greece, and the *pathos* that he treats first, and in greatest depth, is *orgê*, commonly rendered as "anger."⁶ I quote his definition of this affect: "Let anger be a desire, accompanied by pain, for a perceived revenge, on account of a perceived slight on the part of people who are not fit to slight one or one's own" (*Rhetoric* 2.2, 1378a31-33). Let me highlight three elements in this definition: first, anger involves, or indeed is reducible to, a desire for revenge; second, the desire for revenge is caused by a slight or diminishment, and by this only; and third, that some people, but only some, are not fit to slight another, with the implication that others are indeed fit to do so. Aristotle himself alludes to the opening quarrel in the *Iliad* in illustration of his analysis, and in fact it fits his conception rather well. In depriving Achilles of his war prize -- the girl Briseis -- in order to be compensated for having to surrender his own, at the behest of Apollo, Agamemnon has insulted a man who regards himself as a peer of the king, not a subordinate. As Achilles says to his mother, the sea-nymph Thetis, "wide-ruling Agamemnon has dishonored me [*êtimêsen*]" (1.356; cf. 1.244: Agamemnon "failed to honor the best of the Achaeans"). Enraged by this treatment, Achilles seeks revenge, asking his mother to intercede with Zeus so that the Greeks may suffer losses and thereby realize how great a warrior they have offended. One third the way through the poem, Agamemnon comes to perceive his error, and seeks to appease Achilles' wrath by offering him a huge reparation, thereby restoring his honor among the Greeks. Though Achilles recognizes the meaning of the gesture, he is still too irate to accept it. As he says: "My heart swells with anger when I recall those things, how Agamemnon treated me shamefully before the Achaeans as if I were some vagabond without honor" (9.646-48). Here it is clear that public humiliation is the cause of Achilles' anger, as is also the way in which status, or, in Aristotle's expression, a person's "fitness" to offer an insult, conditions Achilles' response. For if Achilles had really been a "vagabond without honor," then he would not -- could not -- have taken

⁵ For a review of classical theories of emotion, see now Polleichtner 2009: 38-52.

⁶ For a comprehensive discussion of Aristotle's analysis of *orgê* and its application to the interpretation of classical Greek literature, see Konstan 2006b: 41-76; the discussion of Aristotle's view here is based on that chapter.

offense, since it is no belittlement to be treated as an inferior when you in fact are one.

As I have said, Achilles does give over his rage at Agamemnon after his friend Patroclus is killed by Hector, two thirds the way through the poem; from this point on, Achilles' attention is focussed entirely on avenging this latter hurt, which is only assuaged at the very end, with the ransoming of Hector's body. Many critics have interpreted this shift on Achilles' part as a displacement of his rage onto a new object; thus, the *Iliad* remains throughout a poem about anger, directed first at Agamemnon, and subsequently at Hector.⁷ Although this is perhaps satisfying as providing an ostensible thematic unity to the work, it is hard to see how Achilles' emotion in the final segment of the poem conforms to Aristotle's understanding of anger or *orgê*: the slaying of Patroclus scarcely constitutes a slight against Achilles. I have argued elsewhere that the final third of the *Iliad* in fact centers on a different sentiment, namely grief.⁸ Grief too, when one can assign a human cause to the loss, invites vengeance, but it is not precisely the same passion as anger, which, as we have seen, consists -- at least according to Aristotle -- in a diminishment of one's honor. Since we do not live in a society where honor plays so central a role, we may not be as conscious as the Greeks were of the difference between the reaction to an affront or put-down, like what Agamemnon did to Achilles, and the berserk rage inspired by the death of a friend in combat, but I believe that for Homer and his audience, the distinction was significant. Indeed, there is a marginal note in some of the manuscripts of the *Iliad*, going back to ancient commentators, that states: "of the two emotions besetting Achilles' soul, anger [*orgê*] and grief [*lupê*], one wins out.... For the emotion involving Patroclus is strongest of all, and so it is necessary to abandon his wrath [*mênis*] and avenge himself on his enemies" (schol. bT ad *Il.* 18.112-13). I believe that this ancient scholar got it right.

Now, things are never so simple. To begin with, Homer's language is in important respects different from Aristotle's -- it's a bit like Chaucer's in comparison with modern English -- and the word *orgê* does not occur in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*; rather, the epic term most commonly rendered as "anger" is *kholos*, literally a kind of biliousness -- the root survives in the English word "choleric," for example. This term suggests a more generalized kind of bitterness than *orgê*, and can be used, for example, of

⁷ See, for example, Taplin 1992: 193-202.

⁸ See Konstan 2006b: 49-53.

animals as well as of human beings in the epic. Even so, it is employed principally of Achilles' feelings about Agamemnon, and relatively rarely in connection with the desire for vengeance that possesses him upon the death of Patroclus. Corresponding to this uneven distribution of the term *kholos* in the two parts of the epic (if I may so label them), there is a difference in the nature of the intended revenge. What Achilles wants from Agamemnon is the restoration of his dignity among the Greeks, which requires that Agamemnon be humbled; with Hector, it is more a matter of giving satisfaction to his friend Patroclus, as well as of appeasing his own guilt at having sent him into battle, and indeed, when he is prepared to give back the corpse of Hector to his father, Achilles begs the pardon of Patroclus' shade (24.591-95).

Moving now to Rome, in the third book of his *Tusculan Disputations*, Cicero enters upon a discussion of the emotions by inquiring whether the sage is subject to distress (*aegritudo*) and other disturbances of the mind, such as fears, passionate desires, and bouts of anger (*formidines, libidines, iracundiae*, 3.7). Cicero affirms that these feelings, along with pity, envy, and the like, are called *pathê* in Greek, which, he says, would be literally rendered as *morbi* or "sicknesses" in Latin, as being movements of the mind that do not heed reasoned arguments; but because calling the passions "sicknesses" sounds odd in Latin, he prefers *perturbationes*. But Cicero immediately proceeds to dub such sentiments a form of madness (*insania*, 3.8), which, being no less rare a usage, provokes an expression of surprise on the part of his interlocutor. Cicero explains that *insania* basically signifies a lack of *sanitas* or health in the mind, just as *morbus* indicates the absence of health in the body; the emotions deprive us of tranquillity of spirit, and this is just what mental illness is. Since wisdom is the health of the mind, it is incompatible with the passions. Thus, ancient Latin usage (as Cicero interprets it) confirms the Stoic claim that all emotions are a form of madness or mental instability (3.9-10).

Cicero concludes that Latin is indeed more precise than Greek in this respect, since it separates out the mental and the physical. He goes on to explain that in Latin one says that people are "out of control" (*ex potestate*) when they are carried away by desire or anger, "although anger itself is a part of desire; for the definition runs: anger is a desire for revenge" (3.11) -- a point on which the Stoics were in agreement with Aristotle. Aristotle, however, held that anger is a perfectly legitimate response to a slight: whether it is appropriate in a given situation depends on a correct appraisal of the stimulus and a suitably measured reaction.

To be wholly unsusceptible to anger, in turn, he regarded as the sign of a servile disposition (cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* 4.5, 1126a3; 2.7, 1108a8; *Magna Moralia* 1.2, 1191b25). For the Stoics, anger, like all other *pathê*, was on the contrary by definition excessive and insubordinate to reason, and thus incompatible with the serenity of the wise. Cicero now professes to be puzzled as to why the Greeks should call a condition such as anger *mania* ("madness"), and claims that Latin speakers do better in distinguishing between *insania*, which involves a lack of wisdom, and *furor*, or real craziness. The Greeks too, he says, mean to say something of the sort, but they miss the mark by employing the term *melankholia* for the latter condition, as though it were merely a matter of bile and not often a consequence of intense anger, fear, or grief, as happened, for example, to Ajax and Orestes. Someone afflicted by *insania*, according to Cicero, can still manage his own life, more or less -- as indeed a person subject to ordinary anger can; but a person in the grip of *furor* is prohibited from doing so by law. *Furor* is thus a greater thing (*maius*) than *insania*, and yet, Cicero says, the sage is susceptible to it, though not to *insania*. This is in line with the Stoic view that even sages may suffer a physiological or physical trauma which would rob them of their mental faculties (cf. Graver 2002: 83), but of course they would not, like Ajax, arrive at such a state as a result of an excess of passion.⁹

Cicero, then, distinguishes among three categories -- physical sickness (*morbus*) and two types of mental disorder, which we might render as loss of control or hysteria (*insania*) and wholly delusional or raving psychosis of the sort that leaves a person unable to function (*furor*). Anger is an instance of *insania*, and may in extreme cases lead to *furor*, though *furor* may also be produced in other, more organic ways -- and with regard to these, not even the sage is invulnerable.

Christopher Gill, in a study of anger in the *Aeneid* (2004), wisely cautions against expecting to find a systematic attitude toward anger in an epic poem, reflecting the influence of one or another of the philosophical schools, and he offers some illustrations of how anger is treated differently even within a single episode in the poem. As I have suggested, the opening question -- "can there be such great anger among the gods?" -- invites the reader to consider various perspectives on the nature of the emotion. On an Aristotelian approach to anger, it might be

⁹ For the distinction between madness as a result of physical illness, and madness as a consequence of poor character or upbringing, cf. Plato *Laws* 934D-E.

reasonable to suppose that the gods can, and indeed should, harbor anger when they have been offended, since not to do so would be inconsistent with their dignity. For example, Athena is said to have instructed Nautes, alone of all mortals, on "what the great anger of the gods or the arrangement of the fates portends" (5.706-07); the parallelism between the two phrases suggests that the gods' anger works in concert with the divine order, and so is entirely legitimate (cf. 5.781 on Juno's anger; 7.305-06 on Diana's; 11.233, 443 on the *ira deum*).¹⁰ On the Stoic view, on the contrary, divinities are no more capable of experiencing a *pathos* like anger than the sage is. The negative quality of the passion is exhibited by its association with the demonic figure of Allecto (7.326), and the madness that she inspires in Amata, the mother of Turnus' would-be bride (7.345, 445). And yet, the Stoics did have a means of rescuing the text, if they wished: for they were the leading exponents of allegorical reading. Juno's resentment, for example, takes the form of inducing Aeolus, the god of the winds, to stir up a fierce storm that interrupts Aeneas' progress to Italy and forces him to land in Carthage. Juno is the Roman equivalent of Hera, and Hera was, by an easy etymological trick, frequently associated with the air, the Greek *Hêra* being an anagram of *aêr*; so the angry goddess is really just a way of describing a natural phenomenon.¹¹ It is less easy to allegorize Aeneas' wrath in the finale, when he slays Turnus in a fit of passion; the multiple interpretations that the passage has elicited -- some condemning the act as pitiless, others defending it on grounds of political expediency -- suggest, as I indicated above, that Virgil may deliberately have left the question open. And yet, there were lines of defense available to the ancient critic, as we shall see.

It would also be wrong to suppose that Virgil strictly observed the distinction between *ira* or *iracundia* and *furor* that Cicero stipulates: it is under the impulse of a combination of the two, or more precisely, of *ira* and *furiae*, "furies" or "furious passions," that Aeneas plunges his sword into the breast of the defenseless Turnus (*furiis accensus et ira terribilis*, 12.946-47). Elsewhere in the poem too *ira* is associated with *furor*, for example when Aeneas realizes that Troy has been penetrated by the Greeks (2.314-17): "Maddened [*amens*], I grab my weapons. There is not much logic in weapons, but my soul burns to gather a band for battle and race to the citadel with friends. *Furor* and *ira* propel my mind, and I feel

¹⁰ For an Aristotelian account of anger in the *Aeneid*, see Wright 1994.

¹¹ On Stoic allegoresis, see Ramelli 2004.

it is beautiful to die in arms" (cf. 2.355). It seems that Aeneas, who is the internal narrator at this point, is describing what he considers to be an abnormal state of mind, compounded of legitimate rage and battle fury, and this may be a clue to his sentiments in his final act of vengeance. So too, when Allecto plants the torch of madness in the bosom of Turnus, he wakes up in terror, covered in sweat, demands weapons in his madness (*amens*), an evil folly (*scelerata insania*) rages within him, and on top of this there is anger (*ira super*, 7.458-62).

In episodes where either *furor* or *ira* occurs alone, however, the two terms are not necessarily synonymous, and it would sometimes be unnatural to substitute one for the other. For example, in describing the behavior of a seething, rebellious mob, Virgil says (1.150), "torches and stones start flying -- *furor* provides the weapons": he means "frenzy" here, not a justifiable anger; *ira* might have given the wrong idea, as though the rabble had a legitimate grievance. So too, a little later, Jupiter, imagining a far distant future, predicts that unholy (*impius*) Furor will be bound in chains, growling inside the sealed portals of War (1.294-96); a personification of *Ira* would not give the same sense, since decent people would still, one expects, be properly incensed at evil (cf. also 1.348; 2.244 where *furor* is used of the Trojans' decision to receive the wooden horse within their city: *ira* here would be impossible). Dido's passion for Aeneas, despite her responsibilities as queen of Carthage, is several times described as *furor* (4.91, 101, 433, 501, 697); true, at night, as she contemplates her fate, she "tosses on surges of anger" (*irarum fluctuat aestu*, 4.532; cf. 564), but the cause here is her resentment, justified in her mind, at Aeneas' betrayal -- the perfidy (*periuria*), as she puts it, of the Trojan race (4.542).

In war, *ira* is often associated with courage and battle fervor (cf. 5.454, 461 on *ira* in a boxing match). When the Trojans catch sight of Aeneas as he returns from his voyage up the Tiber to Evander's kingdom, they raise a shout, and "new hope rouses their anger" (*spes addita suscitatur iras*, 263). Military fury may be justifiable, when it responds to a wrong on the part of the enemy; but it may also be a sign of barbarity: which is the case depends on the context, for it is up to the poet to disambiguate the idea. There is a telling scene at the beginning of the final book, in which Turnus and Aeneas prepare for combat. First, we are told that Turnus is impelled by furies (*furiis*): sparks fly from his visage as he burns (*ardentis*), fire flashes from his fierce eyes, and he is compared to a bull bellowing on the point of battle; Aeneas, in turn, whets his martial temper and rouses himself in rage (*acuit Martem et se*

suscitat ira, 12.101-08), happy at last to be able to engage with his opponent. Whereas Turnus seems driven by brute energy, as the simile of the bull suggests, Aeneas' behavior is more deliberate and strategic. When a truce between the two sides is threatened, Aeneas calls upon his men to repress their ire (*o cohibete iras!*, 12.314). But when Turnus' divine sister Juturna directs his chariot away from a direct confrontation with Aeneas, Aeneas' wrath truly surges at last (*tum uero adsurgunt irae*, 12.494): exasperated by the treachery of Turnus, he calls upon Jupiter as witness to the broken treaty and, embarking upon an indiscriminate slaughter of the enemy, "he gives free rein to his anger" (*irarumque omnis effundit habenas*, 12.499). Aeneas' rage is thus given a rational motivation -- violating a compact is a sign of contempt for the other and a legitimate reason for indignation -- even as it serves to enhance his ferocity. The two dimensions of anger, as berserker fury and rightful revenge, are thus neatly combined.

Seneca, in his treatise *De ira*, notes that, according to some -- he has Aristotle particularly in mind (1.9.2) -- anger might be justified on the basis of utility, precisely because it excites the spirit to action, and courage in war can accomplish nothing without a dose of rage (1.7.1). He replies, as a good Stoic, that virtue must never find assistance in vice (1.9.1), not even against an enemy -- indeed, least of all then, where "attacks should not be flung about but be controlled and disciplined" (1.11.1). The Roman advantage over barbarians resides precisely in their proneness to anger, just as "it is skill that protects gladiators, whereas anger leaves them exposed" (*ibid.*). On such a strict and consistent view of anger, Aeneas is really no better than Turnus: both are moved by what Seneca regards as vice. Indeed, to the extent that Aeneas intentionally stirs up his own frenzy, he is perhaps the worse offender against Stoic rationality.

But *furor*, we recall, can suggest a mental infirmity so grave as to render an individual legally incompetent, and hence not responsible for his acts -- something like the insanity plea in modern courts. Taking this view rather literally, one might defend Aeneas' conduct in the final scene on the grounds that he was not so much angry as *non compos mentis*, beside himself or under an overpowering influence. Just such an excuse was proposed by ancient commentators, who were trained in judicial arguments. Thus, the ancient commentator Donatus (on *Aen.* 1.347-48) explains that in cases in which *furor*, that is, love or madness (*insania*) or mental sickness (*animi dolor*), drives people to commit grave crimes, they may be pardoned for the deed (*possunt habere veniam*

facti), since such a person has sinned not voluntarily but on account of psychosis (*non voluntate sed furore peccavit*).¹² Though Donatus does not himself apply this reasoning to Aeneas' action, it was in theory available as a way of exculpating him -- though at the cost of calling his sanity into question.

The Epicureans took a more nuanced view of anger, or at least Philodemus did -- an older contemporary of Virgil's who lived in Rome, worked in Naples, and may well have been Virgil's teacher: he dedicated to Virgil, among others, his treatise on flattery (Armstrong 2004: 2-3). In his essay *On Anger*, written like all his works in Greek, Philodemus distinguishes sharply between *orgê*, which he, like Aristotle, considers a rational response to harm or insult, and the excessive emotion he calls *thumos* or "temper." The difference has to do with the assessment of the reasons for anger: for *thumos* is equivalent to what Philodemus calls "empty *orgê*," that is, anger based on false opinion. As Giovanni Indelli (2004: 105) puts it: "for the Epicureans, then, the difference was quite clear ... between *orgê*, natural anger, springing from motives that are justified, moderate in its duration and its intensity, and *thymos*..., blind and uncontrolled rage, to which the wise man certainly is unable to fall prey." Here, indeed, is a theory that might support the distinction -- always in danger of collapsing -- that Virgil seems to draw between the rightful wrath of his hero and the frantic fury of his opponent. If Jeffrey Fish (2004: 121) is right that "there is reason to believe that only in Philodemus' school, even among the Epicureans, was any theory of anger like this taught" (cf. Ranocchia 2007: 157), then the connection between Philodemus' view and the portrayal of anger in the *Aeneid* may be more than casual. *Ira* might, on this interpretation, represent two different emotions, a justifiable wrath and an unreasoning rage, and it would be the reader's responsibility to discern which of the senses was relevant in a given passage.¹³

Indeed, Vanessa Berger has shown in a study of anger in Livy -- another contemporary of Virgil -- that in his text too *ira* assumes a range of values, both positive and negative.¹⁴ Thus, Livy praises the Sabines for

¹² On Donatus' treatment of the *status venialis* or defense on the basis of non-responsibility, see the excellent account in Pirovano 2006: 93-146.

¹³ On the relevance of philosophical views of anger to the conclusion of the *Aeneid*, see Polleichtner 2009: 258-71.

¹⁴ An earlier version of Berger's paper was presented at a graduate students conference on "Anger in the Classical World," held at the University of Western

launching a war in which they acted not out of anger or passion (*nihil enim per iram aut cupiditatem actum est*), but deliberately and indeed craftily (*consilio etiam additus dolus*, 1.11.5). The Gauls, on the contrary, are, as so often, portrayed as burning with uncontrolled rage (*flagrantes ira cuius impotens est gens*, 5.37.4). At the same time, anger is often said to enhance efficiency in combat. Thus, in the battle at Lake Regillus, when the Romans learn that the Tarquins are among the enemy, their anger cannot be contained, and they rush to engage the opposing army, despite the efforts of their leaders to impose order; the conflict is exceptionally fierce, but in the end the Romans are victorious (2.19.4-5); so too, the Roman exiles on the other side fight the more fiercely because of their resentment at having lost their possessions (2.19.10). Again, Livy reports that during the second Punic war, Marcellus' soldiers were so angry because of a violation of a truce that they stormed the city of Leontium on the first attack (24.30.1). Moreover, anger is sometimes qualified explicitly as *iusta* or just. For example after Scipio's soldiers have mutinied -- their own behavior is characterized as *furor* -- they realize that they must submit to the general's righteous anger while trusting in his clemency (28.25.12-13). Similarly, Roman anger against the Gauls is qualified as *iusta* (23.25.6).¹⁵

Roman anger was a field of contention (as anger should be, I suppose), above all at the time when Virgil was composing his epic. Its meaning was shaped by currents of philosophical speculation as well as by recent historical experience of fierce civil wars driven by rage and the desire for vengeance (Augustus had styled himself as Julius Caesar's avenger or *ultor*), and new hopes for peace in which war's fury would be forever bound in chains. Anger was often justified, even as the need to subject it to strict control was felt to be ever more urgent.¹⁶ Language was developed, as in Philodemus, by which to distinguish legitimate resentment, such as Aristotle recognized, from frenzied rage; frenzy itself was subdivided into episodic madness under the influence of passion and true psychosis that rendered a person *non compos mentis* and irresponsible before the law. Virgil's *ira* runs the gamut of these

Ontario in March 2007. The following examples are borrowed from her study; I am most grateful to her for permission to cite her work.

¹⁵ On just anger in the *Aeneid*, see Wright 1994.

¹⁶ On the need to restrain anger, see especially Harris 2001; Harris argues that the control of anger was perceived as ever more important as civil society increased in scale, culminating in the vast state apparatus of the Roman empire.

meanings, and his poem invites readers, even teases them, to enter into the debate over anger's role on the human plane and the divine.

For Homer, as for Aristotle, anger was also equivocal, and could run to extremes; but it operated largely in the domain of status relations, as a response to slights and perceived injustices against one's honor or due regard, and it was contrasted less with outright madness than with such moral values as indignation (*nemesis*) and respect (*aidôs*).¹⁷ Centuries later, a novelist who made a descendant of Achilles the hero of his romance could compare him to his ancestor as follows: "He traces his lineage back to Achilles as his forebear, and I think he is telling the truth, if one may judge by the stature and beauty of the young man, which bear witness to a nobility worthy of Achilles; except that he is not so arrogant or headstrong as he was, but he mitigates his proud temper with gentleness" (Heliiodorus *Aethiopica* 4.5.5). From the standpoint of the novelist, Achilles seemed unduly prone to rage. In Homer, it was taken for granted that a great warrior would respond furiously to an insult, and Agamemnon's apology proves that he was in the right. In grief too Achilles was extravagant: but I do not read the *Iliad* as a lesson in the avoidance of immoderate anger,¹⁸ but as the story of human passions as they naturally and inevitably arise. Achilles may utter the wish, when he finally rejoins the battle and makes his peace with Agamemnon, that "strife [*eris*] might perish from among gods and mortals, and also anger [*kholos*]..., which is far sweeter than dripping honey in the breasts of men" (*Iliad* 18.107-10). But *kholos*, like *orgê*, was a guarantee of a person's dignity. As Danielle Allen (2000: 129) has written in connection with the classical city-state, anger was obligatory, "insofar as the individual citizen who was sensitive to his honor and guarded it with anger was also guarding his personal independence, greatness, and equality." Roman *ira* too might serve this end, but in Virgil's poem it embraces also the self-destructive passions that motivate civil war, and which blurred the boundary between anger and insanity.

¹⁷ On *nemesis*, see Konstan 2006: 111-28; on *aidôs*, see Cairns 1993.

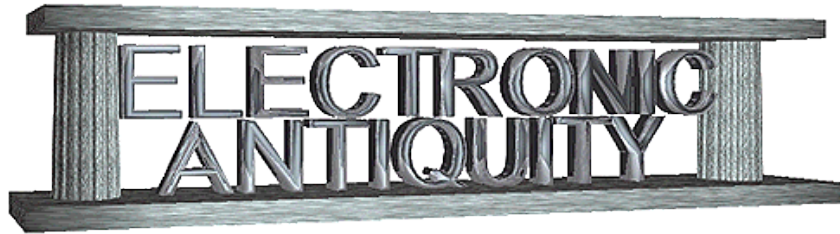
¹⁸ Contra Harris 2001: 131-56.

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The Epic Hero and Excess: Achilles, Hector, Raoul de Cambrai and Ernaut de Douai.

Laurence Harf-Lancner
Sorbonne nouvelle-Paris III
laurence.harf@wanadoo.fr

One of the most well-known scenes in the *Iliad* is the death of Hector in Book 22, in which Achilles, hoping to avenge the death of Patroclus, chases Hector around the walls of Troy. Achilles is at this time inflamed by an anger that is furious, disproportionate, inhuman. This anger is the *Mḗνις*, the first word of the *Iliad*:

Μῆνιν ἄειδε θεὰ Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος
ούλομένην...

Sing, O goddess, the anger of Achilles son of Peleus (1.1; tr. Samuel Butler)

We can compare this anger with *furor*, the murderous madness which overtakes a warrior in combat, as well as with *hybris*, or excess, which is an essential component of the epic hero. Indeed, *furor* and *hybris* are highlighted by an identical scenario in the *Iliad* and in a late 12th century *chanson de geste*, *Raoul de Cambrai*, during the confrontation between Achilles and Hector on the one hand, and between Raoul de Cambrai and Ernaut de Douai on the other. The death of Hector, pursued at the foot of the Trojan ramparts, is surprisingly echoed

in *Raoul de Cambrai* when Raoul mercilessly chases his wounded enemy in order to finish him off. Both heroes respond with the same blind violence to the pleas of the vanquished. This furious madness, scorning moral values, imparts to the epic hero's excess its mythical component.

In Books 20 and 21 of the *Iliad*, Achilles comes to avenge the death of Patroclus and slaughter the Trojans, all of whom have taken refuge behind the walls of Troy, except Hector. Book 22 recounts the long confrontation (230 verses) between Achilles and Hector who, alone, awaits his enemy in front of the Scaean gates despite the pleas of Priam and Hecuba. In spite of his resolution, he is struck with terror at the sight of Achilles and flees, pursued by the Greek:

Ἔκτορα δ', ὡς ἐνόησεν, ἔλε τρόμος· οὐδ' ἄρ' ἔτ' ἔτλη
αὐθι μένειν, ὀπίσω δὲ πύλας λίπε, βῆ δὲ φοβηθείς·
Πηλεΐδης δ' ἐπόρουσε ποσὶ κραιπνοῖσι πεποιθῶς (22.136-
138).

*Fear fell upon Hector as he beheld him, and he dared not stay
longer where he was but fled in dismay from before the gates,
while Achilles darted after him at his utmost speed.*

In their race, they go around the walls of Troy three times, under the gaze of the gods. Zeus weighs on his golden scale the destinies of the two heroes and sees that Hector must die. Tricked by Athena, who assumes the likeness of his brother Deiphobus, the Trojan decides at last to fight his enemy. He soon understands that he is doomed and decides to seek a glorious death by fighting valiantly. This fervour is cut short by the javelin of triumphant Achilles, who, mercilessly, rejects the dying man's entreaty to respect his body and return it to his people. Hector's only remaining recourse is to call upon Achilles the wrath of the gods: "I was sure that I should not move you, for your heart is hard as iron; look to it that I bring not heaven's anger upon you on the day when Paris and Phoebus Apollo, valiant though you be, shall slay you at the Scaean gates" (356-360). He dies soon after predicting for Achilles his imminent death at the hands of Paris.

The pursuit opposes the one running away (φεύγων) and the other pursuing (διώκων, 157). It is assimilated to a hunting scene through a series of comparisons:

ἥντε κίρκος ὄρεσφιν ἐλαφρότατος πετεηνῶν,

ρήιδίως οἶμησε μετὰ τρήρωνα πέλειαν,
 ἢ δέ θ' ὕπαιθα φοβεῖται, ὁ δ' ἐγγύθεν ὄξυ λεληκῶς
 ταρφέ' ἐπαΐσσει, ἐλέειν τέ ἐ θυμὸς ἀνώγει·
 ὡς ἄρ' ὁ γ' ἐμμεμαῶς ἰθὺς πέτετο, τρέσε δ' Ἔκτωρ
 τεῖχος ὑπο Τρώων, λαιψηρὰ δὲ γούνατ' ἐνώμα (139-144).

As a mountain falcon, swiftest of all birds, swoops down upon some cowering dove- the dove flies before him but the falcon with a shrill scream follows close after, resolved to have her- even so did Achilles make straight for Hector with all his might, while Hector fled under the Trojan wall as fast as his limbs could take him .

ὡς δ' ὅτε νεβρὸν ὄρεσφι κύων ἐλάφοιο δίηται
 ὄρσας ἐξ εὐνῆς διὰ τ' ἄγκεα καὶ διὰ βήσσας·
 τὸν δ' εἴ πέρ τε λάθησι καταπτήξας ὑπὸ θάμνῳ,
 ἀλλὰ τ' ἀνιχνεύων θέει ἔμπεδον ὄφρα κεν εὕρηι·
 ὡς Ἔκτωρ οὐ λῆθε ποδῶκεα Πηλείωνα (189-193).

as a hound chasing a fawn which he has started from its covert on the mountains, and hunts through glade and thicket. The fawn may try to elude him by crouching under cover of a bush, but he will scent her out and follow her up until he gets her- even so there was no escape for Hector from the fleet son of Peleus.

ὡς δ' ἐν ὀνείρῳι οὐ δύναται φεύγοντα διώκειν·
 οὔτ' ἄρ' ὁ τὸν δύναται ὑποφεύγειν οὔθ' ὁ διώκειν·
 ὡς ὁ τὸν οὐ δύνατο μάρψαι ποσίν, οὐδ' ὅς ἀλύξει (199-201).

As a man in a dream who fails to lay hands upon another whom he is pursuing- the one cannot escape nor the other overtake- even so neither could Achilles come up with Hector, nor Hector break away from Achilles.

However, when Hector decides to sell his life dearly, one last comparison reverses the roles, turning Hector into the eagle swooping down on a lamb or hare (309-311). But this resistance is short-lived. Fatally hit, the Trojan implores his victor to return his body to his people, albeit in vain.

τὸν δ' ἄρ' ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν προσέφη πόδας ὠκύς Ἀχιλλεύς·
μή με κύον γούνων γουνάζεο μὴ δὲ τοκῆων·
αἶ γάρ πως αὐτόν με μένος καὶ θυμὸς ἀνήη
ὦμ' ἀποταμνόμενον κρέα ἔδμεναι, οἷα ἔοργας,
ὡς οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅς σῆς γε κύνας κεφαλῆς ἀπαλάλκοι,
οὐδ' εἴ κεν δεκάκις τε καὶ εἰκοσινήριτ' ἄποινα
στήσωσ' ἐνθάδ' ἄγοντες, ὑπόσχωνται δὲ καὶ ἄλλα (344-
350).

Achilles glared at him and answered, "Dog, talk not to me neither of knees nor parents; would that I could be as sure of being able to cut your flesh into pieces and eat it raw, for the ill you have done me, as I am that nothing shall save you from the dogs- it shall not be, though they bring ten or twenty-fold ransom and weigh it out for me on the spot, with promise of yet more hereafter.

The pursuit of Hector by Achilles and the pitiless fury of the Achaean are echoed in a key scene of the *chanson de geste*, *Raoul de Cambrai* (Kay and Kibler 1996): the frantic race of Ernaut de Douai, wounded, from Raoul who refuses to spare him. The story of Raoul de Cambrai is that of a rivalry between two lineages for possession of the Vermandois. Raoul was deprived of his fiefdom, the Cambrésis, by the weak and indecisive king Louis, who gives it to his favourite. When Raoul turns of age, he receives as compensation from the king the fiefdom of the first earl to die, that of Herbert de Vermandois, father of four sons, one of whom is the father of Bernier, his squire and friend. To conquer this fiefdom, Raoul stages a raid in Vermandois and, in his fury at having lost two men, burns down the village of Origny and the abbey along with all of the nuns, including the abbess Marsent, Bernier's mother. It is after this that Bernier joins the Vermandois forces. The two armies meet and from the crush of battle a single combat breaks away, positioned at the centre of the account of the battle, between Raoul and Ernaut de Douai, a long confrontation (nearly four hundred verses, from *laissez* 137 to 155) which ends only with the death of the hero himself. Ernaut de Douai is the ally of the Vermandois but also the personal enemy of Raoul since the death of his two young sons, for which he considers the hero accountable. The exchange of challenges between the two warriors is succeeded by jousting with lances and sword fighting. Raoul soon reveals his superiority: with a sword blow, he severs the left

arm of his adversary. Ernaut, mutilated, flees on horseback, chased by his bloodthirsty enemy. Then from *laisse* 142 on, the scene is no longer one of combat, but of hunting and going in for the kill, in which Ernaut, defenseless, recalls, as Hector did before Achilles, the stag hounded by the hunter. The parallelism of the *laisse*s emphasises the stages of this eerie cavalcade, through the repetition of the verbs *hunt* and *flee* and the repetition of three motifs :

- the frantic flight of the vanquished,
- his appeal for pity,
- the fury of the hunter with regards to his prey.

E[rnaus] i monte qi molt fu esperdus,
fuiant s'en torne lez le bruellet ramu ;(...)
R[aus] l'enchausse qi de preis l'a seü.

Fuit s'en E[rnaus] et R[aus] l'enchaussa.(...)
« Merci, R[aus], por Dieu qi tot cria ! » («...)
Et Raous jure qe ja nel pensera
desq'a cele eure qe il ocis l'avra.

Fuit s'en E[rnaus] broichant a esperon ;
R[aus] l'enchausse qi cuer a de felon (2691-2693, 2694-2707,
2708-2709, repeated in 2758-2759, 2768, 2828 and 2832).

Frantic, Ernaut mounted his charger, fleeing in the direction of the dense woodland ... Raoul chased him, keeping close by.

Ernaut flees and Raoul chased him ... « Mercy, Raoul, in the name of God who created everything »... Raoul swore that he would never consider such a thing until he had killed him.)

Ernaut flees, spurring his horse ever faster, Raoul chased him, he who had a vilanous heart.

As soon as Ernaut admits defeat and begs for mercy, the battle should end. Indeed, the code of chivalry forces the victor to spare the vanquished who begs for mercy. As Guillaume d'Orange proclaims in *Le Couronnement de Louis* (Boutet 1996):

Deus ne fist ome qui tant m'ait corocié,
Se tant puet faire que il viegne a mon pié,
Ne li pardoinse de gré et volentiers (1735-1737).

*God never created a man, no matter how much he might have
angered me, should he come to me on foot, that I would not
gladfully forgive him.*

However, Raoul, who has already burned alive the nuns of the abbey of Origny, transgresses once more the moral laws.

This mad race is articulated by three successive encounters; three knights from the clan of Vermandois come, one after the other, to the aid of Ernaut: Rocoul, his nephew, Ybert de Ribémont and finally Bernier, based on a progression meant to amplify the tragedy of the scene. These encounters are also three possibilities for salvation which Raoul lets pass one after the other, persevering in his madness. Rocoul fights first against Raoul, who cuts off his foot, heaps cruel, sarcastic remarks on the two mutilated knights and continues to chase his victim. Ybert de Ribémont and his men capture him, but he is set free by his uncle Guerri le Sor and resumes with more zeal his pursuit of Ernaut. He takes one more step in his excess and sacrilege by dismissing once more an appeal to mercy in the name of God:

« Terre ne erbe ne te puet aténir,
ne Diex ne hom ne t'en puet garantir,
ne tout li saint qe Dieu doivent servir ! » (...)
Cele parole l'a forment empirié
q'a celui mot ot il Dieu renoié (2838-2840, 2843-2944).

*Neither earth nor grass can save you, nor God or man can
deliver you, nor all the saints who serve God! » ... These words
brought much harm upon him for, by saying them, he repudiated
God.*

The jongleur underlines the blasphemy, as does Ernaut himself, who regains confidence faced with the monstrosity of Raoul's words:

« Par Dieu, R[aus], trop te voi renoié,
de grant orguell, fel et outreqidíé !

Or ne te pris nes q'un chien erragié
 qant Dieu renoies et la soie amistié,
 car terre et erbe si m'avroit tost aidié,
 et Dieu de gloire, c'il en avoit pitié ! » (2847-2852).

« By God, Raoul, I see that in your great pride and vile arrogance, you have renounced your faith! Since you repudiate God and his love, I reckon you no more than a rabid dog, for the earth and grass will be quick to come to my aid and the God of glory, in his compassion ».

The third encounter can only be that between Bernier, the instrument of divine vengeance, former friend and squire of Raoul, who killed his mother in the fire of Origny. He appears suddenly after Ernaut's invocation, as if in response to this call for help. His last conversation with Raoul marks the opposition between moderation and immoderation. Bernier reminds Raoul of his previous generosity towards him and his own favours which were so poorly rewarded; he proposes peace, as in their previous encounter (2092-2106 and 2876-289). However, a new element is added: the invocation to God and the appeal to mercy for the defenceless enemy.

E R[aous], sire, por Dieu le droiturier,
 pitié te pregne, laisse nos apaissier,
 et cel mort home ne te chaut d'enchaucier :
 qi le poing pert, n'a en lui q'aïrier (2898-2901).

Raoul, sire, by God who is the judge of us all, take pity and let us make peace. What use is there in chasing this moribund man ? Whoever loses his fist has lost all joy.

But Raoul's heart has become numb and nothing can move him. This is the hero's last refusal, the last rejection of a chance at salvation. The battle is quick, a simple formality: the dice had been cast long ago. Bernier's sword is driven into Raoul's skull. However, the poet does not wish Bernier to be solely responsible for the death of the hero. Ernaut is to be the one to finish off the wounded warrior, as pitiless as Raoul had been with regards to him.

Even after his death, Raoul continues to be an emblematic figure of excess. Guerri has the body of his nephew opened as well as that of the

giant Jean de Ponthieu who had previously been killed by the latter, in order to compare their hearts: the heart of the giant is no larger than that of a child's, while Raoul's heart is the size of a bull's. The hero incarnates the principal epic value, that of prowess, but his destiny demonstrates that in the absence of wisdom, which must act to counterbalance it, the warrior virtue only leads to excess, defeat, and death.

Medieval clerics were not aware of Homer's text, but read the latin adaptations of the *Iliad*. Some of these adaptations modify Hector's death scene and omit the chase scene, as is the case with the *Ephemeris belli Troiae* of Dictys (4th century), the *Historia de excidio Troiae* of Dares (5th or 6th century), and the *Ilias* of Joseph of Exeter (circa 1190). This is also the case with the *Roman de Troie* of Benoît de Sainte Maure around 1160. However, in the *Ilias latina* (1st century) attributed to Baebius Italicus (Scaffai 1982), we once again find Hector struck with terror fleeing Achilles:

Quem procul ut vidit tectum caelestibus armis (...),
pertimuit clausisque fugit sua moenia circum
infelix portis, sequitur Nereius heros:
in somnis veluti, cum pectora terruit ira,
hic cursu super insequitur, fugere ille videtur,
festinantque ambo, gressum labor ipse moratur (22.935-941).

*When, from afar, he saw him with his divine arms (...)
He fled, struck with terror, circling the walls, for it was his
misfortune that the gates should be closed. The hero,
descendant of Nereus, set off in pursuit. As in a dream in
which the heart is in a rage, the first of the two gives the chase
and closes in, the second seems to flee: they both go as fast as
they can, the effort alone slowing their pace.*

Thus, the similarity between the two scenarios is not fortuitous, no more than that of the two heroes, with regards to their murderous violence.

Μῆνις (mênis), is described as divine wrath, fateful, destructive. The term is used for anger which is not human, for the excess and immoderation of Achilles, whereas for mortals (Hector, for example), the

term used is *χόλος* (22.94). It is close in meaning to *furor*, the murderous state of insanity which takes over the warrior.

We also encounter for Raoul de Cambrai a vocabulary belonging to two registers: that of excess and that of madness. One lexical group comes from the area of excess and disorder. The term *desmesure* (excess, immoderation) appears for the first time in the portrait of Raoul, during his dubbing ceremony:

S'en lui n'eüst un poi de **desmesure**
 mieudres vasals ne tint onques droiture,
 mais de ce fu molt pesans l'aventure :
 hom **desreez** a molt grant paine dure (320-323).

*Had he not been somewhat given to **immoderation**, a better warrior for defending a fiefdom could not have been found. But this flaw brought much misery: an **unchecked** man finds it hard to stay alive for long .*

The poet's linking of *desmesure* with *desreé* is meaningful. The adjective *desreé* (unsettled, unchecked), used three different times, is synonymous with *desmesuré*, as is proved by their parallel use in the rhyming words, with regards to Raoul:

Li quens R(aous)^o fu molt **desmesurez**.
 « Fil a putain, ce dit li **desreez** ... (1093-1094)

The earl Raoul had **lost all sense of measure**.
 « Whore's son, says the **unsettled madman** ...

A second lexical group is linked to the register of madness and uncontrollable violence. Raoul is described as *erragiés* (insane) (1296) and accused of *folie* (madness) (1734).

One of the poems in Victor Hugo's *Légende des siècles*, *L'Aigle du casque* (*The Eagle on the helmet*) published in 1876 (Cellier 1967), is directly based on the battle between Raoul and Ernaut, which Hugo had discovered in extracts of the *chanson de geste* published by his first publisher, E. Le Glay. Hugo had considered another title for this poem: *L'Homme sans pitié* (*The Man without Pity*). An ancestral vendetta opposes two Scottish lineages. The two representatives of these families,

Tiphaine, « l'homme fauve » (« the wild man »), and Angus, the « tragique enfant » (« tragic child »), last in the line of the enemy's lineage, are forced to fight one another; the boy, barely a man, is unable to put up any resistance faced with the rugged warrior and flees, chased by his opponent.

Tremblant, piquant des deux, du côté qui descend,
Devant lui, n'importe où, dans la profondeur fauve,
Les bras au ciel, l'enfant épouvanté se sauve. (...)
L'un fuit, l'autre poursuit. Acharnement lugubre !
Rien, ni le roc debout, ni l'étang insalubre,
Ni le houx épineux, ni le torrent profond,
Rien n'arrête leur course : ils vont, ils vont, ils vont ! (...)
Grâce !, criait l'enfant, je ne veux pas mourir ! (252-254, 276-280, 308)

The terrified child flees, his hands in the air, trembling,
spurring his horse on, downhill, straight ahead, anywhere, into
the depths of the forest.
One flees, the other gives the chase. What lugubrious
relentlessness!
Nothing, neither standing rock nor squalid pond nor thorny
holly nor deep mountain stream, stops their chase: they go,
they go, they go ! (...)
Pity ! cries the child, I do not want to die !

Modeled after the medieval poem, the infernal race is interrupted as well by three encounters, three interventions designed to awaken pity in the heart of the pursuer: an old hermit, a group of nuns, and a mother carrying her child in her arms. Like Raoul, the hero is unmoved. Worse, he sacrilegiously rejects the hermit, the nuns, the mother, defies God and kills the child:

Pas de grâce ! Et sinistre, il cria, blasphémant :
Nul ne m'échappera, cieux terribles, quand même
Celui qui m'a bravé, celui que j'ai proscrit
Tiendrait de ses deux mains les pieds de Jésus-Christ !

I shall have no pity ! Sinistrously, he shouts the blasphemy:
No one shall escape me and my wrath, even if he that defied

me and whom I had banished, were holding the feet of Jesus
Christ in his two hands !

Spanning several centuries, we can make out in these three texts the essence of the warrior's violence: the uncontrollable force of the warrior, the *furor* which characterises, for Georges Dumézil (1961), the heroes of the second function, the warrior function. But in the *Iliad*, as in *Raoul de Cambrai*, this savage violence is confronted with human and moral values which are incarnated in Hector and Bernier.

In Hugo's poem, the man without pity is castigated by means of a supernatural intervention giving way to a barbarous and fantastic scene; the guilty party is punished by the emblem of his ferocity, the bronze eagle of his helmet:

Il lui creva les yeux, il lui broya les dents ;
Il lui pétrit le crâne en ses ongles ardents
Sous l'armet d'où le sang sortait comme d'un crible,
Le jeta mort à terre et s'envola terrible (395-398).

*It gouged out his eyes and crushed his teeth;
It clawed his skull with its sharp talons
Beneath the armet, from which blood flowed as if from a
screen,
And threw him down lifeless and flew away on its terrible path.*

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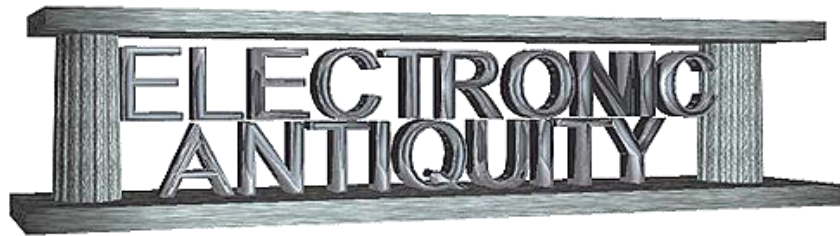
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Briseis in the Potters' Quarter

Pamela Gordon
University of Kansas
pgordon@ku.edu

Briseis, the captive woman given to Achilles as a γέρας (“war prize”), has no name of her own in the *Iliad*.¹ We know her only by her patronymic (“Daughter of Brises”), and her father has no role in Homeric poetry.² Is Briseis also a character with no history, a character invented for the purposes of the *Iliad* only? Or did her character originally inhabit

¹ In the version I presented at the conference, this paper was titled “Temporary Like Achilles,” an allusion to Bob Dylan’s post-*Iliadic* Achilles. Images of the paintings I discuss here can be accessed via hyperlinks within the notes of this essay to the [Beazley Archive](#) at the Classical Art Research Centre, the [British Museum](#), [Google Books](#), and [Perseus](#). Please note that I have not obtained permission to publish the images themselves. Readers who wish to use the images elsewhere must consult directly with the copyright holders. Because some of the URLs may not be stable, I also provide Beazley Archive numbers and museum inventory numbers when possible. Note that the hyperlinks to the Beazley Archive are to the database search page. Insert the Vase Number in the “Simple Searching” function to find the images.

I owe thanks not only to the participants of the conference for their helpful comments, but also to my colleague Stan Lombardo for letting me use his translation of the *Iliad*, and for responding to a draft of this paper. My student Cara Polsley was of great technical assistance.

² On the name “Briseis” see Dué 2002: 3, note 10.

a wider mythological terrain, only to be compressed into her isolated, *Iliadic* role?³ Could the *Iliad's* multiple roles for Briseis (prize, captive, daughter, wife) stem from extra-Homeric variations in her story? She is one of only four women with a speaking role in the *Iliad*. Perhaps that would suggest that she had an earlier, richer life in traditional poetry along with the other three: Helen, Andromache, and Hecuba. These questions have been explored in depth by Casey Dué (2002), who has uncovered glimmers of a pre-*Iliadic* Briseis in Homeric and other archaic texts, and in Greek art.

This paper brings similar questions about Briseis' past to bear on her afterlife. How did Briseis live on in the post-Homeric imaginations of the Greeks? Was she a one-dimensional "war prize," or did she play a broader role? Would a Greek reader (or listener, recipient, or performer) of the story have been satisfied with the terse description in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*: "Briseis, in mythology, daughter of Briseus of Lyrnessus and widow of Mynes; Achilles' slave-concubine, taken from him by Agamemnon and afterwards restored" (Rose 2005)? If so, this would mean that Briseis survived the *Iliad* not only in a compressed form that—over time—had shed its former resonances, but as a diminished character. Or—for scholars who have described Briseis only as "a shadow, a figment of the poet," (Murray 1911: 221) or "a pale figure created by poetry" (Friis Johansen 1967: 153), with no connection to a broader repertoire—this would mean that Briseis remained the minor shadow she always was.⁴

My focus is on Greek vase-painting, where Briseis makes several reappearances during the late 6th and early to mid-5th century. I examine three types of representations of Briseis, and suggest that the diversity of these images attests to fluid relationships between the *Iliad* and the artisans.⁵ This is not to say, necessarily, that the variations were created by painters—the reworking of tradition may have had a broader currency beyond the visual arts. Although I do not argue against the possibility that 5th-century paintings of Briseis engage richer traditional tales about Briseis that existed before and perhaps alongside the *Iliad*, I hope to

³ For "compression" as a term in Homeric scholarship, see Lord 1960: 25-27.

⁴ For Griffin, Briseis "had no real setting, and clearly she is not a real mythological figure" (Griffin 1995: 88).

⁵ *LIMC* (Kossatz-Deissmann 1986) lists 54 ancient representations of Briseis (some certain, some possible), including several vase-paintings that I do not discuss here. Some of them may depict Briseis (unnamed) at the ransoming of Hector and at the tomb of Patroclus.

articulate my sense that the late 6th- and early to mid 5th-century depictions of Briseis are consistent with what may be called a Homer-centric reading.⁶ My position is complicated by the fact that the *Iliad* took multiform shapes in antiquity.⁷ But although the exact contours of this multiformity cannot be mapped, I see a distinction between Briseis' role in the *Iliad* (as she may have been represented—variously—in papyri, ancient quotation, and the medieval manuscripts) and any roles she may have had in broader, pre-*Iliadic* or extra-*Iliadic* traditions. In my view, the most significant images of Briseis represent creative responses to her story essentially as it exists in the text of our *Iliad*.

1. The Other Side of the Vase

A monumental Attic red-figure belly amphora from an Etruscan tomb, now in the Vatican museum, depicts an unhelmeted and relaxed Achilles.⁸ The hero is clearly labeled in Greek letters, and he stands alone, unframed, as though he were a statue against the black field of the vase. The Achilles Painter (so named from this vase) produced this work around 450 BCE, many generations after the composition of the *Iliad*. Does this painting on the name vase of the Achilles Painter have a direct connection with Homer, or with extra-Homeric traditions? Is it simply a generic depiction of the hero? Anthony Snodgrass has written: “A viewer, ancient or modern, looking at a mid-fifth century portrayal of

⁶ See Lowenstam (1997: 21) who identifies “[t]he essential question” as “whether the painters were depicting, with characteristic artistic license, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in the form in which we have inherited them.”

⁷ Variations in the text of the *Iliad* as it survives in ancient quotations, papyri, and the medieval manuscripts demonstrate incontrovertibly that the text was not static in antiquity. On divergent forms of the text, see the ongoing [Homeric Multitext Project](#). But despite the variations, it seems that readers, rhapsodes, and scholars in late archaic, classical, and post-classical antiquity conceived of the *Iliad* as a single text. For the Alexandrian scholars, the diverse texts as they received them were replete with errors and accretions that had developed in the centuries that intervened between their lives and Homer's. Gregory Nagy (2001: 110-111) describes five stages “of progressively less fluidity,” with a definitive era when a “transcript” was produced in Athens under the Peisistradids, a “standardizing” period beginning in the late 4th century, and the period that starts in the middle of 2nd century BCE, when the texts become “scripture.” Nagy describes “ever less multiformity, not absolute uniformity” (2001: 114).

⁸ The [Name Vase of the Achilles Painter](#); Musei Vaticani 16571. Beazley Vase Number: 213821. This vase is over two feet tall (62 centimeters).

Achilles like this one will experience no problems whatever in reconciling the picture with his or her own vision of Homer's Achilles" (1998: 165). Snodgrass uses this vase as an example of a departure from earlier vase-paintings that focused on particular moments and stories. In his view, this vase lacks "the distractions arising from the addition of supporting figures and supplementary detail" that might suggest that the painter is adhering to (or contesting) a particular literary source. But for Steven Lowenstam, the vase seems likely to have a closer connection to our Homeric texts. Lowenstam observes that this Achilles looks more manly than the hero as he is painted by Makron and other earlier artists: "We do not doubt that the Achilles Painter's hero can effortlessly wield the long spear he grasps." He adds: "This portrait of Achilleus may be influenced by performances of something like our *Iliad* at the Panathenaic Festival; the image definitely furnishes a model for Athenian youths to emulate" (2008: 71).⁹

Having benefited from the insightful work of these and other scholars, I would like to suggest that not all viewers—in antiquity or today—would focus their reading of the painting on the same issues mentioned by Snodgrass or Lowenstam. First, the pose of the hero on this pot seems disengaged from the Wrath of Achilles, the theme that unites the forty days of *Iliad*. With his weight shifted to one leg, the hand on the hip, and the apparently fashionable hairdo, this Achilles is not particularly *Iliadic*.¹⁰ At what point in the *Iliad* could he have taken such a relaxed pose? Surely not while Briseis is with Agamemnon, or at any point after the death of Patroclus.

And there is more. On the reverse of the amphora we see a carefully-dressed woman who stands equally at ease, holding a wine jug in one hand, and a phiale (a shallow bowl used for offerings to the gods) in the other. This scheme of a lone Achilles on one side and an untroubled, elegant woman on the reverse appears on two other vases. On one of them the woman is carefully labeled "Briseis," which makes it nearly certain that all three paintings represent her. On a much earlier vase in the British Museum, a helmeted Achilles (named) appears similarly on

⁹ Lowenstam 2008 was not available at the time I presented the oral version of this paper in September 2008.

¹⁰ The way this Achilles places his weight on one foot echoes the pose of Polyclitus' Doryphoros, a statue that dates to the same era. To demonstrate this, de Cesare 1997 prints photographs of the vase and a Roman copy of the statue side by side ([page 204; Plates 138/ 139](#)).

one side, while Briseis (also named) holds a flower on the other.¹¹ On an analogous Panathenaic Amphora painted by the Kleophrades Painter, now in Basel, an armed Achilles drinks from a wine cup, while a beautiful Briseis holds a wine jug and a flower.¹²

None of these pots presents Briseis in the way she first appears in the *Iliad*: a *geras* or captive woman. Rather than presenting a heroic warrior and his “slave-concubine,” the paintings’ simple schema elevates Achilles and Briseis to a spousal pair, as Patroclus does in his unfulfilled promise in the *Iliad*, and as Briseis does in Ovid’s *Heroides*. At one point in the *Iliad*, Achilles does this too. To quote from Stan Lombardo’s translation:

“Every decent, sane man
Loves his woman and cares for her, as I did,
Loved her from my heart. It doesn’t matter
That I won her with my spear.” (9. 349-352)¹³

ἐπεὶ ὅς τις ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἐχέφρων
τὴν αὐτοῦ φιλεῖ καὶ κήδεται, ὡς καὶ ἐγὼ τὴν
ἐκ θυμοῦ φίλεον δουρικτητὴν περ ἑοῦσαν. (9. 341-343)

What Lombardo translates as “woman” is the phrase “his own... [feminine pronoun]” and might justifiably be translated as “wife.” It is significant that two of the painters present Briseis holding a flower, a gesture that often connotes courtship in a widespread iconography.¹⁴ Achilles looks more like a warrior on the vase in the British Museum, but in all three vases the balance between the portrait of Achilles and the portrait of Briseis is remarkable. Tranquil marriages are rare in Greek

¹¹ [British Museum E 258](#); Beazley Vase Number 200436. This amphora dates to the late 6th or early 5th century. It is signed by Euxitheos, and the painting was attributed to Oltos by Beazley.

¹² Antikenmuseum und Sammlung Ludwig Ka424, [Beazley Vase Number 201661](#). This vase may be roughly contemporary with the name vase of the Achilles Painter. Although neither figure is named, the named figures as painted by Oltos (in the British Museum) provide a clear parallel.

¹³ All translations are by Stanley Lombardo (1997); line numbers given with the translations are the line numbers in Lombardo’s edition.

¹⁴ Ferrari (2002: 29, 30-31) draws connections between “courtship scenes” and various types of scenes in which young girls grasp blossoms. The flowers, along with the girls’ wool baskets, mirrors, and jewelry boxes connote their attractiveness to suitors.

myth, and few balanced pairs appear as a regular motif in iconography. Hector and Andromache may be the most memorable, but perhaps Poseidon and Amphitrite offer the clearest example.¹⁵ Images of Tecmessa standing over the body of Ajax might also offer a distant parallel. One might expect to see Penelope standing by Odysseus, but when he appears with a woman he most often stands instead before Circe. The rarity of images in which a woman is presented as a counterpart or partner to a male mythological figure makes the static representations of Achilles and Briseis all the more striking.

We cannot entirely rule out the possibility that the painters were inspired by some other poem, and Casey Dué (2002) may be right to suggest that Briseis always (even in the vase-paintings) brings with her a trace of a more regional, Aeolic phase of transmission of the *Iliad*. In Dué's scenario, Briseis' rich life in traditional poetry before the *Iliad* began in Lesbos, as is suggested by Homer's reference to the city where other women (perhaps along with Briseis) were captured by the Greeks. In Homer, her character is compressed, but her past incarnations remain as allusions that Homer's audiences may well have caught. But my own sense is that what Gregory Nagy (2001) has called the "Panathenaic bottleneck" cut her off from this tradition, and stripped Briseis of some of her particularity. For later readers and audiences of the *Iliad*, her character is less developed, and to some would seem more generic. And yet I do read the paintings as a response to the *Iliad*. Their inspiration would be Achilles' words at book 9. 341ff. (quoted above), and Briseis' own reference to a promise made by Patroclus: "You told me you'd make me Achilles' bride, told me you'd take me on a ship to Phthia, for a wedding among the Myrmidons." (19. 316-318) ἀλλά μ' ἔφασκες Ἀχιλλῆος θείοιο κουριδίην ἄλοχον θήσειν, ἄξειν τ' ἐνὶ νηυσὶν ἐς Φθίην, δαίσειν δὲ γάμον μετὰ Μυρμιδόνεσσι. These words appear in Briseis' lament over the body of Patroclus (*Iliad* 19. 297-299), which is in turn an *Iliadic* substitute for a traditional lament over the body of her (promised) husband Achilles— in advance of his own death.

¹⁵ Good examples of Amphitrite with Poseidon include a black figure painting attributed to the Painter of Berlin 1686 at the University Museum, [University of Pennsylvania \(MS3441\)](#) and a red figure painting attributed to the Syleus Painter on a [stamnos at the Toledo Museum of Art](#).

For Hector with Andromache, see the much earlier Chalcidian Black Figure krater attributed to the Inscription Painter at the Martin von Wagner Museum, University of Würzburg (L 160), on which [Hector and Andromache](#) face each other while [Helen turns away from Paris](#).

These paintings have no logical, precise mythological time. Are we to imagine that these tranquil images of Achilles and Briseis belong to the years before the events of the *Iliad* took place, or are we to imagine them as portraits from an interlude between the death of Patroclus and the death of Achilles himself? More likely, chronology is of no interest to painter or viewer. When we look at these three amphorae, we also need to forget Achilles' cruel claim in *Iliad* 19 that he wishes that Briseis had been killed long ago:

Well, son of Atreus, are either of us better off
For this anger that has eaten our hearts away
Like acid, this bitter quarrel over a girl?
Artemis should have shot her aboard my ship
The day I pillaged Lyrnessus and took her. (19. 68-72)

Ἀτρεΐδη ἧ ἄρ τι τόδ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἄρειον
ἔπλετο σοὶ καὶ ἐμοί, ὃ τε νῶϊ περ ἀχτυμένω κῆρ
θυμοβόρω ἔριδι μενεήναμεν εἴνεκα κούρης;
τὴν ὄφελ' ἐν νήεσσι κατακτάμεν Ἄρτεμις ἰϙῶ
ἧματι τῶ ὄτ' ἐγὼν ἐλόμην Λυρνησσὸν ὀλέσσας. (19. 56-60)

Perhaps the painters (or the artisans who designed their pattern books; and the clients who may have ordered these pots) knew these lines, but also pushed them out of their memories in favor of a harmonious vision of Achilles and Briseis as a bridal pair. Similar interpretive strategies often operate in more literal terms in modern scholarship, where one line is selected to outweigh another, for the sake of consistency in the narrative or in character portrayal. For example: In his commentary on the *Iliad*, G. S. Kirk doubts “[w]hether Akhilleus would really have taken her back to Phthie as his wife.” In considering this question, Kirk notes Achilles' tears at *Iliad* 1. 349, but adds “that is surely because of the affront to his honour more than through losing Briseis; later... he is to wish that she had somehow died in the sack of Lurnessos.”¹⁶ Within the *Iliad*, Ajax also downplays the importance of Briseis, and protests to Achilles that seven women are better than one.

The static images on the name vase of the Achilles Painter and the other vases that present a similar motif (Achilles on one side; Briseis on the other) occlude Homeric presentations of Briseis as a captive war

¹⁶ Kirk 1985: 88.

prize, and engage instead an interpretation that privileges the promise made by Patroclus. They refer not to a particular moment in mythological time, but to a general and permanent pairing of Achilles with Briseis. Though they may also have had currency elsewhere, in an earlier era, in texts or traditions now lost, the seeds of that union are still there in our texts of the *Iliad*. Thus I view the vase-paintings as painterly extrapolations from, and interpretations of one strand in the *Iliad*. On the amphorae Briseis is no longer the “war prize” of book one, but the bride and wife of books 9 and 19, with whom Achilles lies down in our last glimpse of him in the *Iliad* as we know it today.

2. Contested Narratives

A second category of paintings of Briseis entails a different sort of representation that involves a transparent narrative. Here the paintings may reflect particular texts or stories, though they do not faithfully “illustrate” any scene that survives in our text of the *Iliad*. Compared to the representation of Briseis on the name vase of the Achilles Painter, they may serve as more likely evidence for Homeric multiforms that coexisted with and survived into the 6th and 5th centuries alongside the text(s) as we now have it. But, rather than taking them as illustrations of scenes that belong to non-*Iliadic* traditions, I read them as responses to an *Iliad* that was close to the one that survived into the medieval manuscripts.

These are depictions of the “Removal of Briseis” from Achilles’ tent. First, let us consider a cup by the Briseis Painter (so named from this vase), which was acquired by the British Museum in the 1840’s.¹⁷ This monumental cup was likely produced in the early- or mid-5th century, and had also been imported to Etruria in antiquity to equip a tomb. At 38 centimeters or 15 inches in diameter it is clearly not meant for drinking. Its paintings are detailed and readily legible. On one side of the cup, we see Achilles at the right, sitting in a tent under a marvelous striped awning. Slightly slumped on an ornate stool, he is swaddled in clothing from head to foot, with hand on head, only part of his face visible. This iconographic pose and the expression of grief are familiar from many other images of Achilles. It plays a triple role in the well-attested iconography, being used not only in scenes where Briseis is taken from Achilles (as might fit a scene in *Iliad* 1), but when Achilles is approached

¹⁷ [British Museum E 76](#); Beazley Vase Number 204400.

by ambassadors (as—very roughly—in *Iliad* 9), and also after the death of Patroclus, when Thetis brings the new arms to Achilles (as might fit a scene in *Iliad* 19).

Facing Achilles in this first painting, a man leans on a staff, apparently addressing him. His pose may be consistent with the iconography of Odysseus, but it is hard to say who he is, as no similar character can be placed in the comparable scene in the *Iliad*. With staff in hand, he seems to have traveled to the tent, and should not be Patroclus. Achilles had instructed Patroclus to turn Briseis over to messengers sent by Agamemnon:

Patroclus obeyed his beloved friend
 And brought Briseis, cheeks flushed, out of the tent
 And gave her to the heralds, who led her away.
 She went unwillingly. (1. 357-361)

Πάτροκλος δὲ φίλῳ ἐπεπείθεθ' ἑταίρῳ,
 ἐκ δ' ἄγαγε κλισίης Βρισηίδα καλλιπάρηον,
 δῶκε δ' ἄγειν• τῷ δ' αὖτις ἴτην παρὰ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν•
 ἢ δ' ἀέκουσ' ἅμα τοῖσι γυνὴ κίεν. (1. 345-347)

Exiting left, the two heralds in the painting remove Briseis, precisely as they take her in the *Iliad*. The herald at the far left escorts her away with a hard grip on her wrist. This grasping of the right wrist is a well-known gesture of dominance and possession and—in other contexts—of marriage. Behind Briseis we have the other herald. Neither herald is labeled as Talthibius or Eurybates (as they are called in the *Iliad*), but a reader in search of an illustration could reasonably add their names here. On the other side of the cup, the next moment appears, as though it were the following frame in a filmstrip.¹⁸ The two handles of the cup establish clear division between the two scenes, and in the second one we have Briseis arriving at Agamemnon's camp.¹⁹

Another version of the “Removal of Briseis” theme appears on Onesimos' “Sack of Troy” cup, which until recently was on display at

¹⁸ As Mark Stansbury O'Donnell (1999: 4) writes, “the pictures depict the story by showing multiple moments like a filmstrip.”

¹⁹ Some scholars understand the picture as a scene where Briseis is being led back to Achilles, but the painter has not presented the structure as the same tent. Here columns (instead of the posts and awning) represent Agamemnon's more palatial living space.

the Getty Museum, but has now been returned to Rome.²⁰ This oversized cup (46.5 centimeters in diameter) was mended in antiquity, which suggests that it was a valuable possession that was used or displayed before it was consigned to the tomb whence it was apparently looted in the 20th century. On one side of the cup, a man leads Briseis off to the left, his hand grasping her right wrist. The man is labeled clearly as Patroclus, which might suggest faithfulness to the *Iliad*, where Achilles tells Patroclus to hand her over. But in the *Iliad*, Achilles tells him to hand her over to the heralds. In contrast, this painting presents the herald trailing Briseis. Whom is she being handed over to? He is not labeled, but despite the poor condition of the vase, his feet—crossed at the ankles—can be made out at the far left of the painting. Dyfri Williams suggests that this “arrogantly nonchalant” figure is Agamemnon (Williams 1983: 58). Thus far, it appears that the painter has telescoped three moments into one revolving scene: Patroclus hands Briseis over, the heralds take her, Agamemnon receives her. Further telescoping results in more striking divergences from Homer: at the far right, we have Achilles being restrained by a goddess. In the well-known scene in the *Iliad*, when Agamemnon first asserts his intention to take Briseis, Achilles’ rage almost drives him to kill Agamemnon on the spot. But Athena grabs him by the hair and he pushes his sword back into its sheath. In the *Iliad*, Achilles’ rage is no longer apparent at the heralds’ arrival at his tent, when he acknowledges to them that they are not to blame. After the heralds leave with Briseis, Achilles withdraws to the seashore, and prays to Thetis, who then “rose up from the white-capped sea like a mist.” (1. 373) In the vase-painting, the goddess who restrains Achilles while Briseis is being taken away is not Athena, but Thetis (named). Thus, three *Iliadic* scenes come together: the moment of Achilles’ first rage (suppressed by Athena), the removal of Briseis, and Achilles’ subsequent grief (consoled by Thetis). This painter creatively melds together distinct epic (but non-Homeric) moments, as he does in the interior of this cup, when we have Astyanax and Priam (whose deaths are usually separated in mythological time) dying at the same time. The result in the case of the Briseis scene is a new narrative: Agamemnon or another Achaean warrior is present at the moment when Briseis is taken from Achilles, who flies into a murderous rage, which is checked by the epiphany of his mother.

²⁰ [Mus. Naz. Etrusco Di Villa Giulia 121110](#); Beazley Vase Number 13363.

The third and last version of the “Removal” to consider appears on another monumental cup, now in Paris.²¹ Here too, we have Briseis being led away in the presence of a herald. Again, we have the iconographical language for the capture of a woman: a man grips her firmly by her right wrist, pulling her behind him. In a gesture that connotes modesty, fear, or her status as a bride, Briseis holds her veil in front of her face. But this time, the man with the tight grip on her wrist is clearly labeled not as a herald, but as Agamemnon. If we were illustrating the *Iliad*, we would see two heralds retrieving her while Agamemnon waits back at his own camp. Does the painter know a non-*Iliadic* version of this scene? Or could the painting represent a hypothetical narrative based on the threat made by Agamemnon when he orders the herald to fetch Briseis:

Go to the hut of Achilles, son of Peleus;
Bring back the girl, fair-checked Briseis.
If he won't give her up, I'll come myself
With my men and take her—and freeze his heart cold. (335-
338)

ἔρχεσθον κλισίην Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος·
χειρὸς ἐλόντ' ἀγέμεν Βρισηΐδα καλλιπάρηον·
εἰ δέ κε μὴ δώησιν ἐγὼ δέ κεν αὐτὸς ἔλωμαι
ἐλθῶν σὺν πλεόνεσσι· τό οἱ καὶ ῥίγιον ἔσται. (1. 322-325)

In this case, we would have a painting that fits not the description of a particular scene in the *Iliad*, but a painting of an alternative: Agamemnon will come get her himself if Achilles does not release her to the heralds. Perhaps we should recognize a performance tradition in which it is Agamemnon and not the heralds who take her away.²² These diverse depictions may be evidence for a multiformity that persisted into the 5th century (untouched, perhaps, by Athenian transcripts of the *Iliad*). But I think that it is equally likely that Briseis has come to life among the post-Homeric story-tellers (including the vase-painters in their role as visual story-tellers), and because they now approach her story as though she were real, the details become contested. The painters deliver

²¹ [Louvre G 146](#); Beazley Vase Number 204682. For thorough discussion and bibliography, see Lowenstam 1997: 39-45.

²² See Dué (2002: 28-32) for discussion of scholarship and a list of five passages in which other characters seem to assert that Agamemnon took her himself.

competitive answers to the questions: Who removed Briseis, who handed her over, and how did Achilles react at that moment?

Although he is not named, Odysseus may be present in some of these paintings. This possibility becomes especially interesting when we bring one more image into consideration. This is the tondo of a cup by the Brygos Painter in the British Museum.²³ Here too, we have a trace of Odyssean iconography: the petasos, or brimmed hat. The wearer of the hat is a man who has a veiled woman in tow, his hand grasped tightly around her wrist. The author of the online catalog of the British Museum's collection suggests that this may be a depiction of Briseis being led off by Odysseus, and identification made more attractive by the fact that another theme from the Trojan War appears on the outside of the cup: the vote over the arms of Achilles.²⁴ If the tondo does indeed depict Odysseus with Briseis, any connection with our *Iliad* must be much looser than the connections I see in all of the other images I discuss here.

3. A Trace of a Lost Narrative

A third type of representation of Briseis has survived on two early 5th-century kylikes (cups) by the same painter; one in Tarquinia, the other in Paris.²⁵ The painter is now known as "the Brygos painter," because—while he does not sign his own work—his painting style can be recognized on several (but not all) pots that were signed by the potter or other artisans in the potter's shop: "Brygos made this." On both vases, the paintings are on the tondo the hypothetical drinkers would see as they peer at the bottom of the empty cup. ("Hypothetical" because the cups, being over a foot in diameter, cannot have been produced as actual drinkware.) The outsides of these cups are decorated with violent Trojan War scenes that have no close connections with the *Iliad*, but inside we have a tranquil scene: a young woman with a wine jug faces an old man who holds out a phiale. A shield and sword hanging on the wall suggest that we are to imagine this as a scene in a warrior's home or hut, and in

²³ [British Museum Vase E69, by the Brygos Painter](#); Beazley Vase Number 203901.

²⁴ <[British Museum Collection Database](#)>, <"1843,1103.11">, www.britishmuseum.org/collection, British Museum, <Last modified 02 October 2010>. Online. <Accessed 09/10/2010>.

²⁵ In Tarquinia: [Museo Nazionale Tarquiniese RC 6846](#); [Beazley Vase Number 203903](#). In Paris: [Louvre 152](#); Beazley Archive Vase Number: 203900.

one of the paintings, an architectural column suggests a degree of elegance or substance. In one of the cups, the woman is clearly identified in Greek as “Briseis,” and the man as “Phoenix.” Despite minor differences, the paintings are close in appearance.

If we read this representation of Briseis with Phoenix as an imagined scene that expanded only slightly upon the *Iliad* as we know it, it has no definite place in the forty days of the Wrath of Achilles. And yet it does not contradict the narrative of our *Iliad*, and encompassing it would not require too great an expansion. In the ninth book of the *Iliad*, Phoenix is one of three Greeks (along with Ajax and Odysseus) sent by Agamemnon to Achilles. As Phoenix relates in his speech to Achilles, he had been sent to Troy by Achilles’ father Peleus, to teach Achilles to be “a speaker of words and a doer of deeds.” Are we to imagine both Phoenix and Briseis living with Achilles after Phoenix arrives in book 9, followed by Briseis in book 19?

What is clear is that the Brygos painter associates Briseis with Achilles’ wise counselor Phoenix. A conversation between Phoenix and Briseis is not an obvious development of any particular scene in the *Iliad*, and an *Iliadic* multiform that presents the two together in Achilles’ tent would not require a lengthy departure from the text as we know it. It may be more likely that the paintings respond to an extra-Homeric tradition, and some viewers will see this as a representation of some other, pre-*Iliadic* story about Briseis rather than a scene that takes the *Iliad* as its springboard. But my impression is that a story that featured Briseis and Phoenix together is least likely to belong to an early, pre-*Iliadic* oral tradition because—as many readers have surmised—in our *Iliad* Phoenix looks like a textual interloper (or, an intrusion into a pre-existing “transcript”) who did not have a role in pre-*Iliadic* tellings of the tale. The fact that the ambassadors are described at moments not with plural verbs, but with duals, has suggests that Odysseus and Ajax are treated grammatically as a pair in the traditional language of *Iliad* 9; and that Phoenix is a late addition.²⁶

In Ovid’s *Heroides*, Briseis identifies with the ambassadors and aligns herself closely with Phoenix, even telling the story of Meleager, the very story Phoenix tells to Achilles in the *Iliad*. That detail suggests

²⁶ For summaries of various explanations of the dual forms, see Griffin 1995: 51-53. See also Janko 1998. Nagy (2003: 49-71) reads the alternation between duals and plurals as coherent aspects of the poet’s description of the interactions between the three ambassadors and presents an eloquent argument against the idea that Phoenix is a new arrival in the tradition.

that the paintings have to do with a tradition that Ovid knows well, but for us the links are obscure. At least a generation after Brygos made this kylix in the first half of the fifth century, Sophocles wrote a *Phoenix*, as did Euripides. Given Ovid's frequent intertextual engagements with Greek tragedy, it would be reasonable to posit a connection with either or both of those plays. If that is the case, it would also be reasonable to posit that the Brygos Painter had in mind an extrapolation from Homer that survived long enough for the tragedians to pick it up again. But all we can know for certain is that this imagining of Briseis' story takes place beyond the confines of the traditional story of the *Iliad* as we know it. The quiet scene between Phoenix and Briseis in a warrior's tent may belong to some other, now lost narrative. But that narrative is consistent with the *Iliad*'s integration of Phoenix into the embassy scene.

Conclusion: Briseis among the Vase-Painters

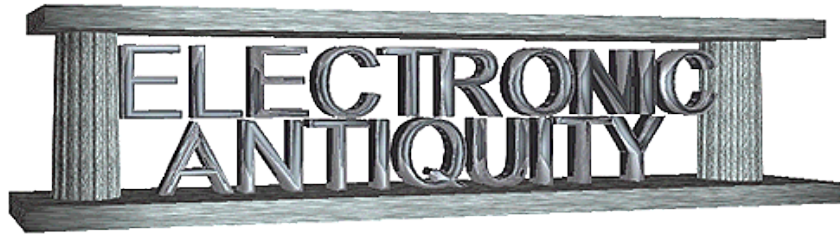
This third type of representation of Briseis as we know it from the hand of the Brygos Painter may lend the weakest support to my claim that late 6th- and early 5th-century vase-paintings are responses to the *Iliad*. But another possibility emerges if we divide the types of scenes into two groups instead of three. The scenes of Briseis' removal from Achilles' tent are tightly connected to particular narratives: "this is how it happened," "this is who took Briseis." The Achilles/ Briseis and Phoenix/ Briseis scenes belong to a different category, one that is not tied to particular moments in a story. The static images that present only the two figures (whether Briseis appears with Achilles or with Phoenix) also make strong assertions. The name vase of the Achilles Painter interprets Briseis as Achilles' rightful partner, and the Brygos Painter's depiction of Phoenix with Briseis arises from a similar impulse. An image in which she is paired with Phoenix likewise elevates her stature from captive woman to that of intimate family member. Phoenix had come to Troy as Achilles' surrogate father, and pairing Briseis with Phoenix puts her not just in Achilles' tent, but in his home. Like the paintings that balance the image of Achilles on one side of the vase with the image of Briseis on the other, the scene takes place beyond the confines of any particular narrative. Its very detachment from a narrative draws attention to the significance of Briseis. Ajax might protest that Achilles is perverse to value Briseis more highly than seven women put together (9. 637-638), but Phoenix is in accord with Achilles.

The vases are evidence of painterly traditions that involved serious engagement with the *Iliad* (or something like our *Iliad*) and with the story of Achilles and Briseis. Although Friis Johansen (1967) overstated the case when he asserted that “[w]hen we meet [Briseis] in art, the source is undoubtedly Homer,” I am in general agreement—provided that our conception of “Homer” acknowledges the multiformity of the *Iliad*—and, further, provided that we take the images not as illustrations of a text, but as responses to and interpretations of the *Iliad* as it was known to its ancient recipients. The painters’ interpretations are likely to have circulated also in song and other media, but I take the painters as valid participants who may have been as adept at expansion and compression as any bard. There is no scholarly consensus about the ancient value of Greek vases. For some, the pots are merely cheap grave goods manufactured in bulk for the export market, but their status as grave goods or their position in the Etruscan market would not diminish the significance of the paintings. The monumentality of the vases reinforces the impression that we are not to take the images as mere decoration. High art or low, they provide glimpses of Athenian responses to Homeric stories. Briseis lived on in potters’ quarter, where the diversity of images attested to disagreements about the particulars of her removal from Achilles’ tent, and where she appeared in the company of Achilles’ wise counselor, or with Achilles himself, as his permanent companion.

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Suffering, Pity and Friendship: An Aristotelian Reading of Book 24 of Homer's *Iliad*

Marjolein Oele
University of San Francisco
moele@usfca.edu

Book 24 of Homer's *Iliad* presents us with one of the most beautiful and chilling scenes of the epic: the scene where Achilles and Priam directly face one another at the point when the suffering (*pathos*) of each seems to have reached its pinnacle. Achilles' suffering is centered on the loss of his best friend Patroclus, while the suffering of Priam – although long in the making due to the attack on his city and his family – has reached a new level of despair with the loss of his dearest son Hector. At first sight, the suffering of each man seems very different in its nature and expression. Achilles grieves over his friend and lifetime companion, and expresses this grief in both deep sadness and rage. In Homer's words:

... But sleep
That masters all had no hold on Achilles.
Tears wet his face as he remembered his friend.
He tossed and turned, yearning for Patroclus,
For his manhood and his noble heart,
And all they had done together, and the woes suffered
together (*tolypeuse syn autoi kai pathen algea*),
The battles fought, the hard times at sea.

Thinking on all this, he would weep softly,
Lying now on his side, now on his back,
And now face down. Then he would rise
To his feet and wander in a daze along the shore.
Dawn never escaped him. As soon as she appeared
Over the sea and the dunes, he would hitch
Horses to his chariot and drag Hector behind.
(Homer, *Iliad*, 24:3-15)¹

By contrast, Priam's suffering is that of a father grieving over the death of his most beloved son. After Priam's son Hector has been killed, Homer describes Priam as petrified – with signs that indicate previous writhing:

.....The old man,
Wrapped in his mantle, sat like graven stone.
His head and neck were covered with dung
He had rolled in and scraped up with his hands.
(Homer, *Iliad*, 24:161-165).

Not only are the nature and expression of their suffering different, these men themselves seem utterly incomparable: Achilles is a young, powerful fighter, and the son of a goddess; Priam is an old, noble yet frail, king of a besieged city, and father to many children. Achilles is fighting on the side of the Achaeans; Priam is king on the side of the Trojans.

Yet, despite the many differences visible between Priam and Achilles, Book 24 of the *Iliad* brings them together in a remarkable fashion. In one of the most intimate moments of the *Iliad*, we find Priam and Achilles crying together – and thereby seemingly identifying with each other, thus overcoming their multiple differences. This paper seeks to analyze in what way Priam and Achilles come to identify with each other, and whether Priam and Achilles ultimately suffer together, or whether their sufferings remain ultimately their own. To answer this question, I will first briefly explore Aristotle's account of (tragic) suffering and discuss his analysis of King Priam's suffering in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Subsequently, I will examine the topic of suffering

¹ Lombardo's translation (1997) slightly modified. This translation will be used consistently throughout this paper.

and co-suffering through the lens of Aristotle's account of pity in his *Rhetoric*, since precisely that account offers us interesting insights on the difference between pity and suffering together.

Part One: Aristotle on Happiness, Virtue & King Priam's Suffering

In Book Delta of his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle provides a list of the different meanings of the term *pathos*. Among its meanings is the sense of *pathos* as a painful and destructive experience. In Aristotle's own words:

misfortunes and pains of considerable magnitude (*ta megethê tôn sumphorôn kai luperôn*) are called *pathê* (*Metaphysics* V.21, 1022b19-20).²

Thus, *pathos*, for Aristotle, can mean that kind of extreme suffering that we encounter in Homer's *Iliad*. In fact, in the *Poetics*, Aristotle explicitly refers to the *Iliad* as a work that is rich in suffering or that is, in his words, "*pathêtikê*" (*Poetics* 24, 1459b14). Yet, we may ask: how does Aristotle conceptualize that experience about which it is so hard to speak? An answer may be found in the following passage of the *Nicomachean Ethics* where Aristotle first explicitly mentions King Priam and his suffering. He writes:

Happiness (*eudaimonia*), as we have said, requires completeness in virtue as well as a complete lifetime. Many changes (*metabolai*) and all kinds of contingencies (*tychai*) befall (*ginontai*) a person in the course of his life, and it is possible that the most prosperous (*malist' euthenounta*) person will encounter great misfortunes (*megalais symphorais*) in his old age, as the Trojan legends tell about Priam. When a person has met a fate such as his and has come to a wretched end, no one calls him happy (*eudaimonidzei*) (*EN* I.9, 1100a4-9).³

² The translation used here is Apostle's (Apostle, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, 1979).

³ Ostwald's translation, 1962, with some small modifications.

In this passage, Aristotle uses the suffering that Priam endures as an example of how a great misfortune can radically affect and alter (*metabolein*) the life of someone who seemed in every way of his life fully flourishing and happy. In fact, in the *Iliad* we find Priam praised for all those aspects of his life – his wisdom,⁴ tremendous political power,⁵ prosperity and his many children⁶ – which are all important conditions for Aristotle’s conception of *eudaimonia* (*EN* I.8, 1099a31-1099b8). Most importantly, Aristotle must have considered Priam as an example of a virtuous person; otherwise he would not have described him within the context of a discussion on virtue and flourishing. For, in Aristotle’s language, only “activities in conformity with virtue constitute happiness” (*EN* I.10 1100b10). Yet, although a virtuous and flourishing person “will not be dislodged easily (*kinêthêsetai raidiôs*) from his happiness by any misfortune that comes along” (*EN* I.11, 1101a9-11) as Aristotle writes, there are exceptions. The case of Priam is so extreme that Aristotle admits that due to his misfortune, Priam can no longer be called a flourishing person. This means that although Aristotle maintains that the virtuous and flourishing person leads a stable life and is not easily moved and dislodged by misfortunes, there are limits to one’s endurance. The case of Priam shows that long-time wisdom, political power, prosperity and, most critically, virtue, can ultimately *not* protect us against extreme adversities.⁷

Aristotle’s recognition of our vulnerability is significant for various reasons. In the first place it shows that Aristotle is very much aware of the fact that we, human beings, are in fact to be characterized by a fundamental lack⁸: our lives as they are lived are only complete when they are filled by others – in particular, those whom we consider our *friends*. As Books 8 and 9 of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* make clear, a life of *eudaimonia* includes a life shared with friends – with friends as our staunchest critics, as mirrors to ourselves, and, poignantly put, as “second selves” whom we see as extensions of ourselves (*EN* IX.9, 1169b7, 1170b7). This dependence upon the other also implies that the loss of friends – in the case of King Priam, his dearest son – constitutes a loss of our own self and thus a threat to our flourishing. Secondly,

⁴ Cf. Hecuba’s address to Priam, Homer, *Iliad*, 24: 202.

⁵ Achilles, in his speech to Priam, describes his political power as “expanding beyond the Hellespont” (Homer, *Iliad*, 24: 543-545).

⁶ Cf. Homer, *Iliad* 24:546.

⁷ Cf. Kosman, 1992, p. 66.

⁸ Cf. Ricoeur, 1992, p. 182.

Aristotle's recognition of our vulnerability implies the recognition of the limits of his own conception of *eudaimonia*. In the face of tragic *pathos*, Aristotle maintains that the virtuous and flourishing person is resilient and can endure much without being moved away from his or her state of happiness. Nonetheless, the fact that extreme and recurrent adversity may lead to our destruction despite our worthiness to be happy signifies that Aristotle recognizes the limits of his theory regarding the power of virtue and admits the questionable nature of the relationship between virtue and happiness.⁹ In other words, Aristotle recognizes suffering as that which threatens to destroy his conceptualization of the goal and purpose of human life.

In the second passage where Aristotle mentions Priam, we again see Aristotle struggle with the same theme of the fragility of happiness, but simultaneously establish that he is unwilling to give up entirely on the strength that human beings may possess in responding to misfortunes, as the following quote indicates:

For in our opinion, the man who is truly good and wise will bear with dignity whatever fortune may bring, and will always act as nobly as circumstances permit [...] If this is true, a happy man (*eudaimōn*) will never become miserable; but even so, supreme happiness (*makarios*) will not be his if a fate such as Priam's befalls him... (*EN* I.10, 1101a1-8)

The case of King Priam once again serves as an example of the overwhelming power that *pathos* may have. Aristotle argues that *pathos* may perhaps not make a flourishing person miserable due to his or her noble way of enduring and acting in these unfortunate circumstances, but this person can certainly not be said to be happy to the fullest extent, or blessed (*makarios*). The case of King Priam cited here also is explanatory of Aristotle's concept of endurance: for, despite his misery and helplessness, Priam finds the strength¹⁰ – helped by Hermes – to visit Achilles in his camp and to plead for the release of the body of his son Hector. In order to provide him proper burial, Priam assembles all the strength he has, amidst all his misery and fear, and thus embodies exactly that which Aristotle indicates as “acting as nobly as circumstances

⁹ Cf. Kosman, 1992, p. 66.

¹⁰ Cf. how Priam is addressed in this case – as having an “iron heart” (24: 521).

permit.” More strongly put, Priam’s actions remind us of the strength and resilience of virtue. In this regard, Priam is the embodiment of Aristotle’s idea that beauty and nobility shine through (*dialampeî to kalon*) (EN I.10, 1100b31-33) even in the most unfortunate circumstances.

Part Two: Pity as Mediated Co-Suffering

In seeking the release of the body of his dead son Hector, Priam appeals to Achilles’ sense of pity. He closes his appeal to Achilles with the following words:

Respect the gods, Achilles.
Think of your own father, and pity me.
I am more pitiable. I have borne (*etlên*) what no man
Who has walked this earth has ever yet borne.
I have kissed the hand of the man who killed my son.
(Homer, *Iliad*, 24: 503-506).

In order to analyze Priam’s appeal to pity, Aristotle’s definition of pity proves useful. He writes:

Pity (*eleos*) may be defined as a feeling of pain (*lupê tis*) caused by the sight of some evil, destructive or painful, which befalls one who does not deserve (*anaksiou*) it, and which one might expect to suffer (*pathein*) oneself or one of one’s own (*tôn hautou*), and moreover when the suffering seems close to hand (*Rhetoric* II.8, 1385b13-16).¹¹

Pity is for Aristotle a painful affect or *pathos* which includes the judgment that someone’s suffering is undeserved and thus unjust, and that this unjust suffering is something that either we ourselves or someone close to us could undergo in the near future. In this definition it is remarkable that pity is not classified among the virtues, but is an affect or *pathos*. This is in sharp contrast to our own contemporary tendency to count pity amongst the virtues,¹² which may be due to its association with

¹¹ Translation Rhys Roberts (1984) modified.

¹² Cf. Sieveke, 1980, p. 245. Our modern, positive, interpretation of pity is mainly argued for in its association with concepts such as sympathy, compassion or mercy. Modern interpretations of pity are not solely positive, however. Some

concepts such as sympathy, compassion or mercy and our tendency to link pity and compassion to assisting others. Yet, for Aristotle, pity, qua affect, can only be *potentially* virtuous.¹³

When we use Aristotle's account of pity to understand Priam's appeal to pity, two crucial elements stand out. In the first place, Priam lays out before Achilles the great misfortune that has overcome him through no fault of his own, thereby illustrating Aristotle's point that the person to be pitied does not deserve his suffering. Secondly, for Aristotle, pity is felt when one comes to identify with the kind of undeserved suffering of another person as one that can happen "to oneself or one of one's own." In his address to Achilles, Priam invokes pity by asking Achilles to look upon him from the perspective of Achilles' father, who has been deprived of his son for a long time, is frail, and who is worried for his son's life. While Achilles' father Peleus may still hope that his son will return (although Achilles and Priam may know that Achilles is fated to die), all such hope is vain for Priam. Thus, by invoking the memory of Achilles' own father, Achilles is urged to see Priam not just as his enemy, but as a man and father who has suffered greatly – much more than Achilles' own father has in the absence of his son – and thus is worthy of pity.

The connection that Priam urges Achilles to make – to see him through the medium of his own father – is key to the act of invoking pity. Simultaneously, the use of Achilles' father as a medium brings to our attention the interesting distinction that Aristotle makes between unmediated co-suffering and the mediated experience of suffering that he calls pity. Aristotle writes in the *Rhetoric*:

The people for whom they feel pity are: those whom they know, unless they are very closely connected (*oikeiotêti*) to us

interpreters argue that pity may deny the autonomous position of the person pitied, and entails a condescending attitude to the person being pitied (cf. Leighton, 2007, p. 101). Nietzsche's famous critique of pity is that pity multiplies suffering and drains strength from those who pity (*Antichrist*, §7).

¹³ In another passage in the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle draws a stronger conceptual connection between pity and virtue: in *Rhetoric* II.9, 1386b13, he writes that pity (just like indignation) is actually a sign of a good moral character (*êthous chrêstou*), since it indicates the keen observation of injustice.

– for in that case they relate to them as if they themselves are likely to suffer (*Rhetoric* II.8, 1386a17-18).¹⁴

In other words, according to Aristotle, one can only feel pity for those whom one knows, but who are at a distance from one.¹⁵ Pity can never include compassion in the literal sense of the word, since *com-passion*, or *sym-paschō* to use the Greek, implies a “being-affected-together.”¹⁶ In this context, it is worthwhile to notice that the Greeks used the term *sym-paschō* mainly for natural processes. For instance, Aristotle uses this term when he argues that it is better for the foot to be split into toes, because if it were unsplit, the entire foot would be affected if one part of it were harmed (*Parts of Animals*, IV.10, 690b4).¹⁷ This understanding of *sym-paschō* which refers to a simultaneous, unmediated being-affected-together is helpful in order to analyze the above passage, because it seems that it is exactly this notion of *sym-paschō* that is implied when Aristotle speaks of our reaction towards those suffering who are extremely close to us. To indicate this closeness, Aristotle speaks of “close” in terms of “home,” using the Greek term *oikeios*. While the suffering of those close to us, i.e. those who are akin to us and find their origin in the same “home,” implies our own suffering, the suffering of others at a distance implies pity.

To illustrate this difference, we can make use of Aristotle’s example – the case of King Amasis¹⁸ who did not weep when his son was led to his death, but did weep when he saw a, presumably distant, friend begging (*Rhet.* II.8, 1386a19-21). When the person who suffers is extremely close to us, the suffering of the other is directly related to us and, thus, our own. In Aristotle’s example, this explains the absence of tears in the case of the father. Instead of pitying, we suffer, according to Aristotle, the terrible (*deinos*) itself, which, in his words, “drives out (*ekkroutikon*) pity” (*Rhet.* II.8, 1386a22).

Of course, this raises the interesting issue of whether we *can* suffer the same as the other person. Is not someone’s pain fundamentally private and one’s own? Something similar to this question is also raised

¹⁴ Translation Rhys Roberts (1984) modified.

¹⁵ Cf. Konstan, 2006, pp. 201-2. As Konstan points out, it is due to this distance that pity has been negatively interpreted as a “form of contempt.”

¹⁶ Cf. *Historisches Wörterbuch*, 1989, p. 752.

¹⁷ Cf. *Historisches Wörterbuch*, 1989, p. 752, which cites the example of infectious yawning as another natural process of *sym-paschein*.

¹⁸ This example originates with Herodotus’ *Histories* III.14.

in the *Nicomachean Ethics* when Aristotle asks how it is that the pain of suffering is alleviated by sharing the sorrow (*synalgountōn*) with friends:¹⁹ is it because they actually share the burden (*barious metalambanousin*), or does the pain become less through the pleasant presence of one's friend? (*EN IX. 11,1171a30-32*). Unfortunately, Aristotle does not answer this question, but in his choice of words – which are built upon the Greek prefix *syn* – he emphasizes togetherness (*synalgō*, *syllupō*). Thus, Aristotle seems to suggest that close friends and family members *can* actually suffer the same. This, in turn, may be due to Aristotle's conception of friends as second selves (*EN IX.9, 1169b7, 1170b7*).²⁰

For reason of their co-suffering, Aristotle writes in the *EN* that friends should protect friends from suffering along with them, as one should be reluctant to have friends “share in pain” (*syllupein*, *EN IX. 11,1171b8*). Said differently, the added burden of pain which occurs by seeing “an other [i.e. a friend] pained by our own misfortunes” (*EN IX. 11, 1171b5*) is to be prevented. Therefore, Aristotle thinks it is never appropriate to ask one's friends to commiserate with oneself. Nonetheless, this does not preclude that, from the other side, one should not actively seek to support a friend in suffering. In fact, it is more noble to do so without being asked, as Aristotle writes (*EN IX. 9, 1171b22*). Interestingly, we also find this notion of friends suffering together explicitly described in the opening of Book 24 of the *Iliad* when Homer addresses the loss that Achilles feels over his friend Patroclus, describing how Achilles commemorates “all they had done together, and the woes suffered together” (*tolypeuse syn autoi kai pathen algea*) (*Iliad 24: 7-8*). This indicates that the notion of doing and suffering *together* was, throughout the Greek world, crucial for their notion of (true) friendship.

After this detour to the co-suffering that close friends and family-members are capable of, we may find ourselves properly equipped to understand the kind of co-suffering that pity is. What it is not, as we saw in the above, is a direct being-affected-together. Rather, it assumes distance between the pitied and the one who pities. Nonetheless, pity can only be evoked if *somehow* that distance is bridged, while

¹⁹ Cf. Konstan, 2001, p. 57-58 on friends participating mutually in events.

²⁰ What we do and what we suffer does not just originate in the self as we, moderns, have postulated it with our emphasis on independence and autonomy. Instead, what we do and what we suffer is for the Greeks very much a *happening* involving the self. I would thus want to argue that the Greek self is always a being-in-relation.

simultaneously keeping the distance between the pitied and the pitier intact. To cast it in my own terms: this almost paradoxical action can occur through not identifying with that person in particular, but by relating to the kind of person or to the kind of suffering that the person to be pitied undergoes. In short, I would like to argue that it appears that pity is *co-suffering to the second degree* – insofar as we understand and feel the other's pain through a particular medium, which makes the pain felt for the other person more universal and less particular.

In the case of Priam and Achilles, the pity that Priam asks for is provided through the connection with Achilles' father. After Priam has spoken, Homer describes the effects of his speech on Achilles in the following way:

So he spoke, and sorrow for his own father
Welled up in Achilles. He took Priam's hand
And gently pushed the old man away.
The two of them remembered. Priam,
Huddled in grief at Achilles' feet, cried
And moaned softly for his man-slaying Hector.
And Achilles cried for his father and
For Patroclus. The sound filled the room.
(Homer, *Iliad*, 24: 507-513).

In this scene, the paradoxical movement that is pity is beautifully illustrated by Achilles' actions: he first takes Priam's hand in his own hand, thereby showing closeness and intimacy, only to subsequently push Priam away, albeit gently – thereby demonstrating the need for distance. In addition, the scene describes the distance and solitude of suffering: each delves into his own memories and cries for the loss of the one close to him. Nonetheless, we may wonder – isn't there something in this scene that also illustrates these two men suffering together, or is what happens only co-suffering to the second degree? Thus we arrive at the final question of this paper: do Priam and Achilles ultimately *share* something in this moment – or do they, as strangers, recede into their own private worlds? If Aristotle's ideas on pity are correct, the distance between the two has to be preserved, but the question is: is there not something else or more than pity that emerges in their interaction?

Part Three: From Priam to Achilles: The Movement towards Friendship

Perhaps it is worthwhile here to backtrack, and remind ourselves how Priam precisely worded his mission to the Achaeans. Before he left, he prayed to Zeus, and asked that Zeus would send him to Achilles *welcome and pitied* (*philon elthein ēd' eleeinon*; 24: 309). Looking closely at the Greek, we can discern that Priam not only seeks pity from Achilles, but that he also wishes to be received as a *philon*, as someone dear, as a friend.²¹ Thus, what Priam originally seeks from Achilles is not just pity, but also proximity and friendship. Can we find indications that this has been accomplished? To answer this question, we have to first look closely once again at the suffering of each and its causes: Priam's son Hector has killed Achilles' friend Patroclus, while Achilles has killed Priam's son Hector.

While their suffering is ultimately their own private suffering, their sufferings as such are also unmistakably interdependent and intertwined. This means that in crying for themselves, and the loss they have suffered, each of them is also involving the suffering of the other. Thus, no longer can there be question of merely pity for the other, for the pain that Achilles feels is to be directly linked to the pain that Priam feels. In this cross-linking of their pains, the relationship between Achilles and Priam seems to move beyond the simple pity that is experienced between non-intimates. As their sufferings are cross-linked, they are far closer to each other than one would originally surmise.

Thus, pity does only partial justice to describe the relationship between these two men. Yet, does that mean we could speak of their interaction as one that moves in the direction of friendship? A strong notion of friendship must be rejected at first sight. Although Priam may hope that he will be welcomed as someone dear, we also know that the distance between these two men is far too large to call them true friends – friends who see each other as “second selves.” Moreover, as Book 24 also shows, the relationship between the two remains precarious, as Priam's pressing appeal to Achilles, urging Achilles to allow him to bury his son as quickly as possible, is answered by Achilles' angry look and reply that Priam should not “provoke” him and further stir his grief as that might make Achilles harm the old man (24: 558-569). In response, Priam turns frightened (24: 571).

²¹ I owe this important reference of *philon* to P. C. Smith, 2002, p. 392

Nonetheless, we may wonder whether there are no signs in Book 24 of the *Iliad* that draw these men closer to each other, thereby perhaps not demonstrating friendship, but showing a movement towards friendship. The first such indication of proximity and friendship is to be found in the way Priam is described as lamenting the loss of his son Hector: Homer speaks of him as moaning for his “man-slaying Hector” (24: 511-512). It is important to note here that the epithet “man-slaying” is usually attributed to Achilles, thus indicating that in the scene where Achilles and Priam encounter each other, Priam identifies his son as Achilles-like. By appropriating Achilles’ epithet for his son, the distance between Priam and Achilles shortens, thereby allowing Priam to see Achilles as close and dear as his own son Hector. Vice versa, we could argue that something very similar to this happens to Achilles. In feeling sadness for the suffering of his father who still has a son, Achilles is also very much aware of the fact that his own father will soon have no son anymore. Thus, in crying for his own father, Achilles is also invoking the fate of the father who has recently undergone something very similar: Priam. Again this draws Achilles and Priam much closer than originally suspected and beyond the confinement of distance that mere pity seems to imply.

Another indication of a movement towards friendship between Priam and Achilles is found in Homer’s brief description of the scene of the two men sharing a meal (24: 601). The shared meal is highly symbolic of the growing closeness between Priam and Achilles. For it is through food – that which is symbolic for life and growth – that both men overcome their earlier states of hollowness. By eating together, they share in the forceful communion of life that eating is. By eating together, they share with each other in the pleasure of life. In sharing their pleasure, drawn from the same source, they connect to each other on a fundamental human level. Thus, while the scene of both men crying showed them both withdrawing into their own private worlds, the scene of both men enjoying food draws Priam and Achilles much more together.

After connecting to each other in eating, Homer subsequently describes the two men as enjoying a moment of reciprocal admiration, which brings out yet another aspect of their connection:

Then Priam, son of Dardanus, gazed for a while
At Achilles, so big, so much like one of the gods,
And Achilles returned his gaze, admiring
Priam's face, his words echoing in his mind
(Homer, *Iliad* 24: 629-632).

In this scene, Priam and Achilles feel admiration and wonder (*thaumadzō*) for each other. Their reciprocal wonder seems to take them away from their current context and draws them into a dreamlike vision: Priam comes to see Achilles in his idealized form²² as “so much like one of the gods,” and Achilles comes to admire the noble face and words of Priam. The admiration for each other draws Priam and Achilles out of their own familiar frameworks, out of their miserable states, and into a state of recognition: a state of recognition where they do not merely see each other as ‘just’ human, but as extraordinary and almost divine. When they return each other’s glances, the world of private suffering has been left and what takes its place is a moment of pure, almost divine, shared, admiration.

This final moment of admiration shows us much: it shows that Priam and Achilles have moved beyond pity towards a new level of mutual recognition. By first sharing food together and subsequently admiring each other’s almost divine qualities, they have definitely moved beyond pity in the direction of friendship.²³

²² I am grateful to Mathilde Bruckner for drawing my attention to this particular moment of idealization taking place in Book 24.

²³ I would like to express my gratitude to Rosemarie Deist for organizing *The Passions of Achilles* and to all conference participants attending *The Passions of Achilles* for their helpful comments on the first version of this paper, in particular David Konstan and Mathilde Bruckner. In addition, a modified version of this paper benefited from critical comments I received at the 9th annual meeting of the Ancient Philosophy Society in Baltimore in 2009 and I am especially grateful to Michael Shaw for his engaging commentary. I am indebted to Gerard Kuperus for inspiring important changes in the manuscript at various stages of the process, and to Kristin Drake and Heather Fox for their editorial assistance.

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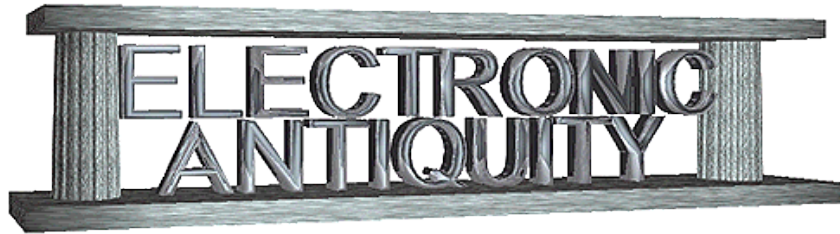
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The Sword of Dido: Pain and Aristocratic Distinctiveness

Rosemarie Deist
University of San Francisco
deistr@usfca.edu

Since the beginning of Vergilian critical scholarship more than a hundred years ago, scholars have directed their attention to the complex texture of the *Aeneid*. The *Aeneid* is an arrangement of densely woven threads of poetic pictures and subtle meanings. Essential in this mental landscape is Vergil's exceptional sensibility to words and images. The depth of Vergil's rich texture comes to the surface in his use of words. The imaginative intensity of his choice of words blends with intellectual vigor and the capacity to feel and empathize. Vergil's words and images, their placement in the narrative, and their intricate interconnections unveil an enigmatic sense of structure. For Vergil, the word is mental activity in intricate placement to be deciphered by the reader. More precisely, the choice of word is the representation of a state of mind.¹

This is nowhere more evident than in the character of Dido, notably in Dido's suicide by the sword. Images of death and the act of suicide by the sword are standard vocabulary in elite cultures in which the sword represents male aristocratic identity. My aim is to explore the power of images for the sword for Dido as a uniquely Vergilian vision. In particular, I shall set Vergil's imagery beside the anonymous French

¹ The power and multiple perspectives of Vergil's art and language are beautifully demonstrated by Jenkyns 1998: 3-21 in particular.

interpreter of the *Aeneid* in the twelfth century. Through the image of the sword, I shall engage directly with the worlds and values of both poets, Vergil's distinguished Roman nobility and the French poet's aristocratic knights, the titled medieval ruling class of noble rank.²

The *Roman d' Enéas* retells Vergil's *Aeneid* in its entirety. It was written in the mid-twelfth century in Anglo-Norman French for the French court of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine in Britain. The poem is part of the so-called *romans d'antiquité* which have Rome as their subject matter and the legitimacy of power through the survival of Roman political sense as their aim.³

In the *Roman d' Enéas*, the poet relies on Vergil's account in a Homeric sense: the appeal for the poet is the *epos*, the story from the past, which he liberally adapts to the feudal aristocratic norms of his time. It is in the portrayal of Turnus that the poet departs most radically from Vergil's vacillating complex hero. Turnus' hauntingly violent death in the *Aeneid* is vastly amplified by the French poet to be in conformity with chivalric ideals. Turnus' claim to Lavinia is transformed to become the central stumbling block to achieving *joie de la cour*, the legal and moral reconciliation of knight and bride. This is articulated in expansive descriptions of the nuptials which terminate in appropriate and expected feudal distributions of lands and retainers. Turnus' death is thus wholly refashioned for the tastes of a medieval aristocratic audience. In the Lavinia story, the process of falling in love occurs in agreement with Ovidian love casuistry and is described in Ovid's erotic metaphors. Questions of right and wrong in the knight's conduct (Enéas) are resolved through monologue and lead to the knight's quest, in which he proves his prowess and worth by overcoming all obstacles in winning the bride.⁴

The sole exception in this pattern of adaptation are the Dido episodes, Books 1-4 in the *Aeneid*. The Dido passages are a phenomenon. They are a line-by-line translation of Vergil, an astonishing

² The symbolism of the sword transcends European traditions: the sword as a representation of aristocratic male honor along with suicide by the sword as aristocratic privilege are fundamental elements in the Japanese samurai code of honor. See Deist 2003b.

³ The *Roman de Thèbes* is, as the *Roman d'Enéas*, anonymous. The *Roman de Troie* and its author Benoît de Sainte-Maure is the subject of Matilda Bruckner's essay.

⁴ For courtly romance as a vehicle of feudal politics and moral didactics in the systematic instruction of aristocratic conduct, see Deist 2003a.

and captivating *translatio studii* and *imperii*, by transmuting Vergil's poetic sensibilities and Roman structures of power, by deconstructing Vergil's distinct vision for Dido, and by converting the understanding of history, tradition, and conventional attitudes in the *Aeneid* to another language and another culture.⁵

In the cultural and political *translatio* from Rome to the twelfth century, Dido emerges in three subtly joined phases (*Aen.* 1, 4, 6). They are Dido's leadership in Carthage (1), her dying and death (4), brought to a final result in the Underworld (6).⁶ All are constructed around the sword, the instrument of her suicide, and its Roman cultural significance. The image of the sword and Dido's suicide are enmeshed with the boy Ascanius (*Aen.* 1, 4). The greater meaning of Dido's suicide resides in the central symbolic references of these episodes.⁷

The occasion is the introduction of Ascanius at Dido's banquet for Aeneas' Trojans. The young boy Ascanius is the conduit to the queen's emotional transformation by activating her long-suppressed sensation of feeling through maternal emotions. The nurturing image of *gremio fovet* is the central topos in the entire passage. The force of the words in this dense scene is such that all thoughts are concentrated on Dido. She "warms and caresses the boy on her knees," and in simultaneous action

⁵ The method and process of *translatio* is discussed in the Introduction of this volume.

⁶ In Books 2 and 3 Dido is silent, nevertheless her presence is overwhelmingly felt. Grimal 1992: 51-52, makes the strong point of Dido's unmatched dominance among female characters in epic.

⁷ Dido's suicide is complex. It is the result of the two wounds she suffers, the metaphorical wound of love and the physical wound from the blade of the sword. Vergil links both wounds structurally by the much discussed image *vulnus sub pectore* (4.67 and 689). *Pectus*, the breast and the seat of deep affections, is pierced by the sword, reinforced by the preposition *sub*. The ablative of place directs attention to the placement of the wound deep inside the breast; Austin 1955: 45 and 198, observes that the wound is "graphic" ("vivit," 67), then "cries aloud" by the whistling noise of the breath forced between the lips from the lung pierced by the sword ("stridit," 689). The image is reconsidered as *sub corde* for Aeneas struggling with his feelings, thrust deep beneath his heart, when confronted with Dido's despair at his leaving (4.333). But *cor* is the heart as the seat of judgment and thought, thus capturing the depth of Aeneas' conflicted decision: Aeneas' words "come slowly and with effort, ("pauca") as Conington 1876: Lib.IV,332, has remarked. Through two images that cannot be seen and described, Vergil "paints the view of each character," as Otis 1963: 49, observes.

unknowingly triggers her own destruction prefixed by Venus' plot to exchange Ascanius with Amor.⁸ (1.718: "gremio fovet inscia Dido, insidat quantus miserae deus"). *Gremium* carries the meaning "womb," linked with *infelix*, "barren" along with "causing and bringing unhappiness." Both images are carriers of strong emotions. The memory of her murdered husband as the catalyst for Dido's unfulfilled yearning for motherhood is the solid underpinning of Dido's character. *Gremium* and *infelix*, released by the young child Ascanius, are critical to provoke Dido's decision of suicide.⁹

Woven into this web of Dido's mind is the image of *venenum* in Book 1, when Venus replaces Ascanius with Amor or Cupid (688). Vergil psychologically reconstructs Amor's traditional role of archer causing instantaneous falling in love.¹⁰ The external impact of Amor's arrow is reversed by endowing Amor with *venenum*, a powerful lethal potion causing ruin and destruction. *Venenum* is a drug and signifies imbibing the fire of passion internally: 1.688: "cum...occultum inspires ignem fallasque veneno" ("that you may fill her with secret fire and with an enchanted drug").¹¹ Dido's imbibing is a gradual escalation of passion in crescendo motion (1.749: "infelix Dido longumque bibebat amorem"). The effect of passion is inexorable by inflicting a wound that is kept alive by passion and cannot heal. Typical for Vergil's intense and condensed style, the destructive power of her passion is confined to carefully placed words of the opening lines in Book 4.1f; each word is a meaningful field of vision: "At regina gravi iam dudum saucia cura/

⁸The image of warmth and nurturing is even stronger in Venus' instructions to Amor to take on the shape of Ascanius: 4. 685-87 „ ut, cum te gremio accipiet laetissima Dido...cum dabit amplexus atque oscula dulcia figet“ (*that Dido at the height of joy and happiness take you on her lap into her arms and give you sweet kisses*).

⁹For *gremium* as a central motif, see the discussion by Lesky 1966: 599. Stroppini 2003: 59ff. and 68 links the root 'fe-' in *felix*, breastfeeding, ("allaiter") and the rupture of generating in *infelix* with Dido's passion and unfulfilled maternal needs; Dido's "maternité frustrée" is the author's central argument.

¹⁰ See Lesky 1966: 594, for Vergil's unconventional use of the mythological tradition of Amor as archer.

¹¹ *Venenum* is any secret means of affecting a thing or a person. In meaning and effect it is related to *phármakon*, which functions as a medicine for disease and a remedy against grief; specifically see my discussion of *phármakon* in Euripides' *Hippolytus*, Deist 2003a: 31f. For the meaning and implications of *phármakon*, see Allen 2005.

vulnus alit venis et caeco carpitur igni” (“moreover, the queen, since a long time sick from grievous longing, nourishes the wound within her veins and is weakened by a fire unseen”). Fused with the metaphors of *venenum* and imbibing inextricable passion and desire is the word painting of fire; it exhausts Dido’s vital powers, consuming all obstacles of private honor and public duty.¹²

The French poet maintains the entire passage to the letter, except for one crucial modification: Ascanius arrives at the banquet “o son barnage” (781), “with his vassals.” In his function as Amor, Dido kisses him, and Ascanius returns her kisses many times over. The term *barnage* is a signifier of the vast feudal network of social and political dependencies in the élite male power structure. In one stroke, *barnage* eliminates the sequence of maternal images and their intricate linkage with Dido’s passion. The subtlety of innocence in Vergil’s child is replaced with the erotic virility of a young feudal lord. It is the suggestion of masculine vigor and procreative power tied to the kiss of Amor that causes in Dido a deadly and incurable intoxication from passion. As in Vergil, the properties of passion are internal and effected through imbibing. Passion is a poisonous inexorable liquid which runs through the queen’s body without measure. Along with poison and its possessive power are repeated allusions to death (1791ff.). For the French poet, such passion constitutes immoderation. The vocabulary for Dido (*boire, mortal, ivrece, poison, folie*) underscores the state of internal excess caused by drinking a poisonous liquid that renders one heady and incapable of reason and measure. These linguistic images are used again at Dido’s suicide to reinforce and finalize her frenzied submission to desire. The images of drinking a drug causing intoxication result in *folie*, a specifically female articulation of *démesure*. Excess and immoderation, *démesure*, are signifiers of the male hero. For the *Enéas* poet, *folie* is a quantitative difference to male excess because it is rooted in *mollitia*, an

¹² Austin 1955: 26 remarks on *caecus* as something not seen or deliberately concealed, hence not even Dido realizes the strength of her passion at this point; in my mind, this is enhanced by the passive of *carpere* as something completed in successive stages. “Venis,” (taken as instrumental ablative is, “probable” for Austin, “doubtless” for Conington 1876: 259), enforces the internal power of *venenum* by weakening Dido’s vital powers. Commenting on the power of the word “cura,” which drives Dido to her horrific purpose, Grimal 1992: 54, contrasts Aeneas’ disciplined Roman core with Dido’s lax “l’âme punique,” which prohibits him to give in to his immense desire; see earlier “sub corde,” n. 7.

inherently female weakness of character. *Folie*, precisely, is the cause for Dido's suicide. The message of the French poet is political: due to women's propensity for excessive emotions, women are unsuited to rule in the feudal aristocratic world.¹³

This interpretation is far from Vergil's uniquely personal and psychological vision. Dido's devoted warm tenderness is manifested in a series of sensations lavished on the innocence of a young boy. The child sets free Dido's capacity for affectionate emotions, which allows passion and desire for Aeneas. These sentiments foreshadow her end. Dido's feelings for Aeneas are a rekindled memory of her strong attachment for Sychaeus ("adgnosco veteris vestigia flammae," 4.23);¹⁴ her emotions for the young child, however, are of a depth and power she has never experienced before.¹⁵ The sequence of internal signs is complicated by Vergil's own warning; in Book 1 Dido is "inscia," not knowing the deadly consequences of her affection for the child which come to fruition in Book 4.

Book 4 is the shortest of the twelve books of the *Aeneid*. Vergil's power is nowhere more vivid than in the density and intensity of images and syntax. It is "Vergil's masterpiece," and it overshadows all other books in the *Aeneid*.¹⁶ The same can be said about Dido herself. No other character, not even Turnus, can match the warmth and personal feeling that Vergil has lavished on Dido. Vergil exposes her thoughts and her mounting despair directly by projecting himself into Dido's mind. Everything is seen through Dido: we read her thoughts and share her feelings. Her personality and suffering eclipse Aeneas' experience and

¹³See my evaluation of Dido's incompatibility with the feudal male power structure, Deist 2003a: 115f. The case for *mollitia* is made and proven by Huchet 1984: 116f.

¹⁴"vestigia" with "adgnosco" are tracks of memory firmly in Dido's mind; see the same exquisite subtlety of knowing and remembering mirrored in Lucretius' image of the cow in the meadows searching for her slaughtered calf: "noscit humi pedibus vestigia pressa bisulcis (*De rerum natura*, 2.356).

¹⁵Jenkyns 1998: 502 n. 114, rightly observes that the Ascanius who awakens maternal feelings in Dido and the boy of 7.107-19 in Latium is much younger than the still very young warrior in the passage of 9.267ff. whom Jenkyns considers to still have "some immaturity," 581. Heinze 1993: 158 n. 11 calculates his age at the burning Troy between 4 and 5 years old, at Carthage, after eleven years of wandering, between 11 or 12, in Latium one year older, while in 9.311 Vergil considers him wiser than his years. Heinze's estimation is supported by Kosthorst 1943: 107ff. Further references in Lesky: 599-600.

¹⁶Quinn 1968: 135.

mission. At the opening of the book Dido is deeply infatuated with Aeneas. Vergil narrates with respect and deep empathy the progressive degradation of her noble character to suicide.¹⁷

The integrity of Dido's character matches the weight and relevance of suicide in Roman ideology. The Carthage constructed by Dido is as dignified as the queen herself: "dux femina facti," a woman is the leader of the act, of the accomplishment, Vergil says (1.364). This is witnessed by Aeneas when observing Dido's dignified comportment as leader of her people. The noun "dux" for Dido is deliberate and full of purpose. The word is predominant among Roman leaders elucidating their qualities and responsibilities. It embodies the exercise of *imperium* and *iustum bellum*. In using *dux* for Dido, Vergil marks a clear distinction between Dido's human dimensions as betrayed woman and her role as *dux* exemplifying public duty.¹⁸ *Dux* is also the signifier for *virtus*, a specifically male contempt for death and pain. The Roman noble male, the *vir*, faces death with calmness, serenity, and courage. The key elements in *virtus* are *constantia*, the brave endurance of pain, and *fortitudo*, the physical and moral strength to face death without fear. Facing death is as important as actualizing it. The most prestigious and superior method of suicide of the noblest Roman hero is the painful and bloody stab wound of the sword, the archetypical Roman act of self-destruction. The wound of the sword is the essence of manhood. Choosing death at a particular time by means of the sword is an act of self-fashioning, of being self-conscious of one's name and accomplishment. This is the Stoic *virtus* of the distinguished Roman élite.¹⁹

¹⁷ Jenkyns 1998: 11-13, eloquently remarks on Dido's exceptional treatment and Vergil's sensitive interest in women.

¹⁸ Dido's vulnerable humanness encapsulates the Roman concept of *privatus*, not holding public office. Grimal confirms Vergil's duality between Dido's "personnalité humaine, de *privatus*," and her public duties as queen, p. 54. Conington, points out the contrast of Dido's hands-on accomplishment in Carthage with "opes," presumably the gold Pygmalion stole from her, in the same line; hence, the terseness of "dux femina facti" is intentional, Lib. I, p. 69.

¹⁹ Edwards 2007: 92, 150. The piercing with the sword is the quintessential Roman death, Martial's *Romana mors*, 111. Virility is "what can be seen on the male's opened body" where "the wounds speak for the quality of the citizen," see Loraux 1997: 89.

Vergil has made Dido a model of Roman male *virtus*. Shortly before her end, Dido takes notice of her life's accomplishments as the founder and ruler of Carthage (4.655). Her recollection brings back to memory Vergil's intentional appellation of *dux* for the queen's dignified leadership on equal footing with a noble Roman leader. Dido finishes her final reflections: "dixerat" (4.663). Next we, and her companions, see her fallen onto the sword, the blade dripping with blood. Dido's death is drawn out and audibly painful by her strenuous attempts to draw breath from her pierced lungs [see n. 7]; her suffering is an exemplar of *constantia* and *fortitudo*. Her suicide represents the Stoic freedom from death, "total independence of the person from all passions and from all wrong desires."²⁰ By focusing on the physical details of death, Vergil portrays her dying as an act of physical prowess. It is an act of self-actualization which is informed by the ethical quality of Stoic philosophy. Vergil embodies Dido with the *virtus* of the dignified Roman Stoic *vir* and hero. The values imbued in Dido are male and in opposition to the *vitia*, the vices of physical and moral weakness associated with women.

In Roman ideology, fear of death is associated with *libido*, violent desire and appetite, caprice, and whim, in short, immoderate passion and lust. It is a feminine and effeminizing vice without dignity or honor; it is the failure to endure pain. The classical Greek and Roman mind believed in a hierarchy of methods of suicide. Death by hanging with the device of the noose was a discourse of shame and despair without manly courage. Hanging was disgraceful and unbecoming of a distinguished hero. Because it does not require *constantia*, it implies moral weakness and is reserved for women.²¹

The sword is the quintessential Roman weapon of destruction. Vergil employs three words for the sword. For Aeneas in battle it is the *gladius*, the sword of the Roman legions and the emblem of the

²⁰ Seneca's "freedom to withdraw" ("libertas recedendi"), Edwards 2007: 101 and n. 109.

²¹ On *libido* and female death, see Edwards: 108, 197-98. On hanging and the noose as a specifically female form of death, "a woven trap" and the interconnections with the feminine values of weaving, see Loraux 1997: 110-11. This brings to mind the suicide hanging of Amata as "hideous death" ("nodum" 12.603). In the *Civil War*, Lucan (9.850), specifically comments on death by poison as an "inactive death" for men and warriors; for the edition see Shackleton-Bailey: 1988. The development and hierarchy of suicide are traced by Fraenkel 1964: 465-67.

experience of war and the warrior. It occurs in the second half of the *Aeneid*, which describes Aeneas' war against the native Italic peoples. For Dido he uses *ensis* and *ferrum*. *Ensis* is a neutral word for the sword without special or heroic effect. It is used in Latin texts as signifying the sword as the instrument that it is. *Ferrum* is the steel of which the sword is made. In this sense, the reality of the sharp steel blade, *ferrum*, slices deeply into the body of Turnus (12.950) and Dido's murdered husband Sychaeus (1.350). But some two hundred lines before Turnus' supplication and death, he rouses his warriors by raising his sword, *ensis*, as the emblem of his fearless prowess in Vergil's admiring vision for Turnus' courage and nobility (12. 730).²²

For Dido, Vergil uses *ensis* and *ferrum* in uniquely original and unexpected ways. *Ensis* occurs twice, first suggestively, when Dido unsheathes Aeneas' sword ("ensemque recludit Dardanium, 4.645), then descriptively, showing the sword foaming with Dido's blood ("ensemque cruore spumantem, 664f.). Typical for Vergil, he does not describe the sword piercing Dido, but rather the effect from falling on the blade after she has spoken her last words, "dixerat" (663f.). The finality of life, enforced by the pluperfect tense, heightens the terrible wound with its unstoppable streams of blood.²³ With *ensis* Vergil forges a link to Aeneas' heroic *virtus*: the sword was Aeneas' gift to Dido in exchange for the jewel-studded sword Dido had given him earlier.²⁴ In the same dense syntactical arrangement of words, Vergil lets us see the cutting blade of the sword, Aeneas' sword, *ferrum* (663f.), in Dido's body.

The neutral meaning of *ensis* is an expected word choice in a poetic setting. From this neutrality, Vergil wrests an entirely unexpected bloody reality and thus an unexpected meaning and reaction: Dido dies a heroic

²² The reality of the blade, *ferrum*, occurs nearly twice as many times in Vergil's works than *ensis*: 131 times for *ferrum*, and 67 times for *ensis*, Wetmore 1961.

²³ For *cruor* and the virility of blood that has been spilled by the blade, see Ernout-Meillet 1985.

²⁴ The difficulty of the two swords, prompted by "quaesitum," (Dido "having asked for it") has been much discussed. For Bradley 1956: 224-236, there are two swords, Dido's jasper-studded Tyrian sword, unfit as a weapon to Aeneas, and Aeneas' Trojan sword for Dido; *ensis* on the pyre designates the *virtus* of the Trojan sword. Basto 1984: 333-338, sees *ensis* as a reference to Aeneas as being the cause of Dido's death, 335; the Tyrian sword transforms Aeneas from warrior to lover, and with this sword Aeneas severs their relationship when he cuts the cables of the departing ships. Aeneas' warrior sword, his gift to Dido, becomes her weapon of suicide. For the diction of *ensis*, see Lyne 1989: 103.

warrior death by the sword that was the conspicuous symbol of Aeneas' warrior prowess and identity. With *ferrum*, however, Vergil operates in the obvious, colloquial, and expected sense of the word. The link is with the blade that cuts; it cuts her body and thus "cuts" Dido from Aeneas. By combining poetic and prosaic words in the elevated setting of epic, Vergil transforms the expected effects of word choice by endowing the sword with unexpected meanings and thereby giving an unexpected meaning to the queen's dignified emotions and death.

The French poet translates Vergil's ingenious interplay between tradition and unique intention into a statement of the dimensions of feudal power. This is accomplished by restructuring the image and significance of the sword. The method of suicide, fundamental for Vergil in signifying male character, puts the poet's message into effect. In medieval political theory, the sword is the emblem of justice and equity. It is wielded by the knight, the protector of empire and Church, to sever the wrong from the right for the common good.²⁵ Hence, the sword demonstrates the just transportation from life to death. For the poet it is a critical tool to justify Dido's suicide in feudal and political terms.

Dido's last reflections are the concerns of a feudal sovereign who has failed. She does not recall her accomplishments as Vergil's queen, but she laments the detriment of losing vassals and reputation (2050-53). Before she dies, Dido formally abandons passion (1976-2006). Dido's reflections before her suicide are a *plainte*, a monologue of love's emotional vagaries in the social context of gender. Excessive private female feelings are contrasted with public order and power that is upheld by males. On the pyre, she falls onto the sword, on the bed in which she and Enéas slept together. The French poet places emphasis on the bedcovers, the image of the physical union that signals *folie*, immoderate desire and *mollitia*, female weakness. The contrast to Vergil could not be stronger. The *cubile*, the sacred marriage bed of the *coniuges*, signals that the union of Dido and Aeneas is an offense to tradition. The union is out of custom, thus unstable and disrupting serenity. The diverging intentions of both poets have become obvious now; Vergil stresses character and continuity while the French poet operates within male qualifications of power in the feudal order. Dido, for the French poet, is not part of the system.

Dido's suicide is the poet's final assertion of being out of the feudal order. In a reversal from Vergil's monumental effect after the act, we

²⁵ Dickinson 1927.

witness Dido thrusting the sword into herself in a mere two lines (2031f.). It is an act that truly cuts out *folie*, female emotions and aspirations that are dangerous to society. This is the function of the medieval sword in the hands of the knight. The medieval sword is a cutting instrument, not the stabbing weapon of the Roman short sword. It is long and heavy, must be wielded with both hands, and is essentially unsuitable as an instrument of self-destruction. Dido's epitaph confirms that female rule constitutes intemperance because women are prone to emotional imbalance, "folement" (2138-44). Female rule upturns the divinely governed order of the world.²⁶ This instability has been corrected by the sword.

The sword is a symbol of justice exercised by an élite group of men. The poet uses the sword as a memento of female passion and the usurpation of feudal power by female *engin*. *Engin* is a talent of the mind by which Dido acquired Carthage from the reigning princes of the region. Political power is presented by means of Dido's mental powers. By relentlessly underscoring the absence of *engin* in the reigning barons, the poet magnifies her female gifts of wit and intelligence as unfit for public rule.²⁷ The sword is the realization of the aristocratic separation between gender and power. Therefore, immoderation and excess must lead to death; "moi, estovra morir," (1856), as Dido had realized at Enéas' departure. Her suicide is a moral necessity in that it is a social necessity (the verb *estovoir*). It is not the choice of Vergil's queen who painfully scrutinizes living against dying to restore her moral standing in line with Roman expectations of honor and continuity.

The death of Dido is brought to a final end in the Underworld. Vergil's Dido in Book 6 turns away from Aeneas and turns to Sychaeus. With this gesture she utterly rejects the liaison with Aeneas as out of custom and returns to the tradition and dignity of the Roman *coniunx* (6.472-74), which she had violated during the hunt in the grotto where she and Aeneas had wrongfully consecrated their physical union ("coniugium vocat, hoc praetexit nomine culpam," 4.173). The *coniunx* passages uphold the cherished and sacred Roman custom of *univira*, the woman who has only one husband and remains faithful to him after his

²⁶ The epitaph renders Dido "virtually out of time, literally monumental but historically ineffectual," as Baswell 1996: 200, has observed.

²⁷ For *engin* as a specifically female quality in the aristocratic power structure, see Deist 2003a: 171-74. Baswell 1996: 184-200 explores *engin* as containing commercial and erotic excess linked to gender.

death.²⁸ The concept of *univira* must be seen in the nexus of the Augustan reforms of the marriage and divorce laws, the *Lex Julia (de maritandis ordinibus* and *de adulteriis coercendis)* or Julian Laws of 18 B.C. With these laws Augustus passed legislation enforcing remarriage for divorced women and widows and honing the attractions of marriage with penal legislation. In the intent of these laws, he shifted the guidance of private morality to the control of formulated law. In a direct rebuke to tradition, Augustus diminished the customary and official power, *potestas*, of the *pater familias*.²⁹ By making Dido an emblem of *univira*, Vergil questions the Augustan legislation. Instead, he advocates the restitution of marriage to its ancient dignity and a return to traditional social customs and structures because they alone guarantee a harmonious blossoming of human nature in continuity.

The French Dido's last words are in the spirit of feudal and Christian *miser cordia*: "Gel vos pardoins, sire Eneas,"(2067); she forgives Enéas. Dido's guilt is a female transgression of male values and Christian marriage vows (2652-60).³⁰ She regrets the excess of passion by which she dishonored her feudal husband and lord ("por son forfait se vergondot," 2662).The path of her destruction was invested in the transformation of Ascanius. Rooted in innate female *mollitia*, Dido succumbs to boundless desire manifested in *folie*, female *démesure*. While Vergil does not let Aeneas escape the range of Dido's suffering, the French poet lets Enéas affirm her admission of guilt by extricating himself from any culpability.

²⁸ The *matronae* riding in their carriages in the shield of Aeneas are depicted as "castae," morally pure, hence chaste and powerful symbols of *univira* (8.665); this honor is bestowed on them due to their loyalty to the state, see Williams 1983: 155. Austin 1979: 167, points out that Sychaeus, through his death by murder, has no place in the *lugentes campi*, but Vergil has placed him where he can protect Dido against Aeneas, whose presence interferes with her *univira* status.

²⁹ The literature on *univira* is not abundant but considerable, mostly of older date. The most recent study on Augustan moral reforms and legislation is Galinsky 1996:131, further 369: the consequences of the legislation and the risks for Augustus are "the profound disaffection of the very nobility, senatorial and equestrian, with whose consensus he wanted to govern." For earlier opinions, see Heinze 1994: 99 and n. 16 with further references; Williams 1958: 16-29; Funke 1965-66: 183-89; Khan 1967: 34-36; Rudd 1976.

³⁰ Mora-Lebrun 1994 : 204, rightly sees the motif of culpability as the major departure from Vergil. *Engin* in this sense is the absence of authentic virtue; it is "faux savoir," and therefore a contamination of the true virtue of a king.: 197.

The guilt of both Didos is grounded in transgressions against authority. Vergil enforces obedience to the power of Roman tradition, while the French poet delegates Dido's offense to the recognized male rights and duties of the feudal order. The French poet maintains Vergil's physical framework of the Underworld, but he transforms it into a feudal state of mind. In the *Enéas*, Dido's death is the poet's final *translatio* of Vergil's autonomous male gesture of noble suicide, a meaning obliterated in agreement with the poet's political and moral intentions for a medieval aristocratic audience.

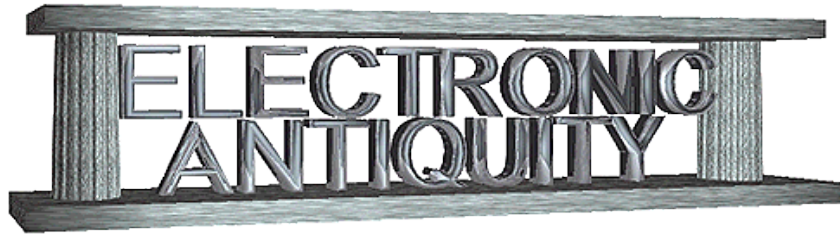
Vergil has pictured Dido's state of mind in a series of related parts. The duality of the woman betrayed by the innocence of a child and the Stoic *vir* dying by the sword is reconciled in the Underworld with Dido's foundational characteristic of honor in her role as the steadfast and morally pure Roman *matrona*, the exemplar of *univira*. Vergil's enigmatic art is nowhere stronger than in the complex compositional mastery of Dido. As I continue to study Vergil's exceptional artistry through his words and images, I have come to appreciate and admire the accomplishment of Vergil's French translator. The French poet has turned Vergil's unrivaled transfiguration of Roman male authority residing in the sword into a convincing affirmation of feudal moral duties. The vehicle for this thorough change in the form and substance of male power are the emotions of Dido. I conclude that the Dido episodes in the *Roman d'Enéas* are a veritable and bold *translatio studii et imperii* of Vergil's powerfully personal Dido and of Vergil himself as uniquely and distinctly Roman.

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Fulgentius the Mythoclast: Cooling Pagan Passions in Christian Late Antiquity

Emily Albu
University of California-Davis
emalbu@ucdavis.edu

Imagine the daunting challenge faced by architects of late antique cultural climate change.¹ By the sixth century of its own era, Christianity had long since muscled out Greco-Roman paganism as the dominant religion around the Mediterranean. But pagan practices had not entirely disappeared. And pagan culture remained deeply embedded in the ancient lands where it had developed and flourished, intimately interwoven into the fabric of human thought and existence. This traditional culture “was the only culture there was” – in the words of Alan Cameron.² Christians needed to hijack that powerful heritage and turn it to their own ends. Writing in North Africa, most likely in the mid-

¹ This paper continues the argument begun in my “Disarming Aeneas: Fulgentius on *Arms and the Man*” (Albu 2009). I am grateful to Rosemarie Deist for nudging me to return to Fulgentius and for organizing such a stimulating gathering, and I thank the colloquium participants – especially David Konstan – for their valuable suggestions. The bibliography of Gregory Hays (<http://people.virginia.edu/~bgh2n/fulgbib.html>) greatly facilitates any research on the mythographer. I also benefited from generous research assistance by Andrea Wheeler.

² As reported by Scourfield 2007: 3.

to late-sixth century (Hays 2003), Fulgentius joined the ranks of Christian mythographers working to undo the web of ancient tales about gods and heroes and nurture a fundamentally different way of thinking and being. His *Mitologiae* (*Mythologies*) took aim at the foundational stories of paganism, ridiculing their gods and heroes consumed by shameful lust. In a companion piece, the *Expositio Virgilianae Continentiae* (*Explanation of Virgilian Content / Continenence*), he reinterpreted the most influential text from the Roman past, Virgil's *Aeneid*, as a guide to attaining virtue by subduing the passions.³

In his *Mitologiae*, then, Fulgentius rewrote Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, forcing his readers to view the pagan gods through the prism of Christian sensibilities. Here of course he ignored the solemnity of Roman cult practice, which – as pagans persuasively argued – had earned the divine benevolence that protected Rome for a thousand years. Other Christian writers, most notably Augustine, had already made the case against Roman *religio* by demeaning earthly splendor and elevating the expectation of a glorious eternal existence. Fulgentius took a lower road, seeking out and exploiting the vulnerabilities that left the old gods ripe for his peculiar brand of Swift-boating. So, for instance, Fulgentius did not challenge the majestic Capitoline Jupiter. He tackled instead the randy Zeus already skewered by ancient Romans like Plautus in his comedy *Amphitryo*.

Where Plautus's benevolent tone had tweaked the god's seduction of a dutiful wife, Fulgentius blasted away at the evil lust that he saw lurking in virtually all the shameful deeds of the old gods. Perhaps in part because he ultimately could not erase those repugnant tales from the cultural memory, he also found ways to redeem them, often by making them metaphors for the struggle against the passions, especially lust.⁴ Venus is lust, of course (*Mit.2.1*), but so, improbably, is Antaeus, the giant crushed by Hercules (*Mit.2.4*), whose love for Omphale likewise symbolizes the battle against lust (*Mit.2.2*). And when Fulgentius

³ All references to the texts are to Fulgentius, *Opera*, ed. Helm: book and chapter for the body of the *Mitologiae* (cited as *Mit.*); page and line for *Continentia* (cited as *Cont.*) and for the prologue to the *Mitologiae*. Gregory Hays is completing a new edition for Oxford University Press. Hays has argued for an “easy coexistence of Christian faith and pagan culture” in Fulgentius' day (Hays 2004: 127-31).

⁴ For more on the examples given here, and others, see Albu 2009.

interprets Scylla as “disorder” (*confusio*; *Mit.*2.9), he asks, “*Et quid confusio nisi libido est?*” (“And what is disorder if not lust?”).⁵

If the *Mitologiae* dismissed pagan tales as lust-driven obscenities, the *Expositio Virgilianae Continentiae* showed how correct interpretation of one ancient text could reveal the path to virtue, that is, restraint. The punning title makes Fulgentius’ point.⁶ This *Explanation of Virgilian Contents* – as it is usually translated – also offers an *Explanation of Virgilian Contenance*. Fulgentius wanted his reader to approach the *Aeneid* as a moral corrective to pagan lust.

To insert this perspective, Fulgentius used all the ample rhetorical tools at his disposal, from raw humor and sarcasm to mesmerizing allegory and literary allusions, first to make the old stories pathetic and utterly unpalatable so that no Christian could hear them again without recoiling in disgust, and second to reorganize the Christian mind so that Christians could simultaneously find an altogether different way of understanding the old stories. For his remarkable success with these tasks, we should call him, not mythographer but mythoclast, myth-buster. His disorienting imagery did scramble the brains of his readers, who absorbed his techniques and learned to think like him by dismantling heroic characters and action and then picking through the wreckage to find moral truths that lay within the rubble.

Fulgentius’ favorite tool in his toolbox was allegory. Here he followed a long classical tradition of allegorizing myths. As early as the sixth century B.C.E., some Greek writers were interpreting the ancient tales allegorically.⁷ Especially they worked to free Homer from accusations of ignorance and naiveté or from charges of obscenity and impiety. Like some of those earliest Greek allegorizers, Fulgentius was fond of using etymologies to uncover ethical or psychological revelations, disclosing the secret nature or meaning of some entity. So, he reasoned, the giant Antaeus got his name from the Greek *antion* (“contrary”), making him a kind of lust, contrary to chastity or virtue

⁵ Translations from the *Mitologiae* are my own adaptations of the sometimes misleading translation by Whitbread 1971. Except where otherwise indicated, translations of the *Expositio* are by Hays 2008.

⁶ If Fulgentius himself did not create this title, an early copyist with a sure sense of the author’s wit and intent aptly named the work. For more on this pun, see Albu 2009: 25.

⁷ This summary draws on the introduction to ancient Greek allegorizers in Russell and Konstan 2005: xiii-xxvii.

(*Mit.* 2.4), just as another foe of Hercules, the cattle thief Cacus, represented evil (in Greek, *kakon*; *Mit.* 2.3).

The names of Antaeus and Cacus lie at the simplest end of the Fulgentian spectrum that reached to the supremely inventive in the *Continentia* with characters like Palinurus and Misenus. So the Greek *mîsos* (“hatred”) and *ainos* (“praise”) combined to name Misenus, the Trojan whose boasting cost him his death (*Cont.* 95.17-18; 96.3-4). The name of Palinurus, Aeneas’ helmsman who fell asleep and slipped overboard on the escape from Troy, Fulgentius connected with Greek words for “wandering vision” (*planê* and *horaô*). We might expect that etymology to explain the helmsman’s fatal loss of concentration as he drifted off to sleep. But Fulgentius had his narrator, Virgil, tie it to the wandering eye of lust, referring readers to other examples in his corpus: Dido’s frenetic exploration of Aeneas’ body with impassioned eye (*Aen.* 4.362-4) and the “wandering tracks of a bull” (*Ecl.* 6.58). Lust, it seems, was relentlessly on Fulgentius’ mind, and he saw it lurking in passages whose signification was sometimes overt (Dido’s gaze) yet frequently obscure (Palinurus’s destiny). Late antique and medieval mythographers had a penchant for combining such moralizing and allegory to achieve their aims, and arguably none used these more ingeniously than Fulgentius.⁸

It was one thing for Fulgentius to allegorize and otherwise dispose of the **Greek** myths in his *Mythologiae*. He found it easy to skewer the Greek gods, whose exploits often seemed salacious by Christian standards. But what of the **Roman** myths as brilliantly reworked in Virgil’s *Aeneid*, by far the most prestigious and influential masterpiece of Latin pagan literature? In Fulgentius’ day, the Virgilian corpus was still enormously popular. Fulgentius could by no means remove the *Aeneid* from the cultural memory of his contemporaries.⁹ But he could do something even better – replace the old reading with an altogether new interpretation of the text. He could use the *Aeneid*’s prestige to build a tale of Everyman’s ideal moral progress from bawling infant to wise adult. This virtuoso performance, twisting the epic into a completely different story with its own distinctive ideology, also let him turn his

⁸ On the mythographers’ predilection for moralizing and allegory, see Chance 1990: 1.

⁹ On Virgil’s importance in the literary culture of late antiquity, see Scourfield 2007: vii, 8-16; and the magisterial collection of texts and discussion in Ziolkowski and Putnam 2008.

own potentially tedious narrative on the virtues into something weirdly compelling.

Readers in our own age can rarely resist mocking a treatise that seems to us so absurdly disconnected from its alleged textual source. Although allegorical interpretation enjoyed a long run as a favored method of literary criticism that unlocked the deep meanings of puzzling texts, it strikes most readers today as outrageously contrived and often downright silly. When extended allegories themselves fell from favor in the sixteenth century, changing tastes also soon removed the allegorical method from common and accepted use. W.H. Auden called the demise of allegory one of the rare “revolutionary changes in sensibility or style.”¹⁰ This shift signaled a profound transformation in readers’ habits of mind. When Fulgentius was writing, however, the allegorical method was deeply admired as an invaluable means to understanding old tales and texts in a culture that was itself undergoing radical transformation. Indeed, this late antique deconstructionist was writing on the cutting edge of scholarship, “the first surviving author to give a global allegorization of the *Aeneid*” (Ziolkowski and Putnam, edd. 2004: 660).

The *Continentia* flaunts, if somewhat playfully, Fulgentius’ formidable erudition. It begins with a bravura summation of the true sense buried in each of the *Eclogues* and in the books of the *Georgics*, “so interspersed with mystic matters that in those books Virgil has included the very core of almost every art” (*Cont.* 83.10-12). But the *Aeneid* is his chief concern here, and so the *Continentia*’s primary narrator summons Virgil himself to serve as the perfect guide to its real intent. Fulgentius’ narrator requests a simple explanation suitable for school children, but he wants the pagan poet to know that he himself is the poet’s intellectual equal as well as his cultural superior, as a Christian:

“Most famed of Italian bards,” he begins, “please remove your wrinkled frowns and sweeten the sour temper of your lofty mind with a taste of delightful honey. For I do not seek in your texts what Pythagoras busies himself with in his harmonic numbers, or Heraclitus with his fires, or Plato with his ideals, or Hermes with his stars, or Chrysippus with his numbers, or Aristotle with his perfect forms; nor am I concerned with what Dardanus sang of powers, or Battiades of demons, or

¹⁰ Auden 1915: 15; as cited by Russell and Konstan 2005: xxiv.

Campester of ghosts and spirits of the lower world. I am looking only for those trifles that schoolmasters (*grammatici*) expound, for monthly fees, to little schoolboys” (*Cont.* 85.17-86.6).

By this ingenuous disclaimer, as scholarly as it is ostentatious, Fulgentius displays his own pretensions to learning and suggests the erudition and wit that he will muster to deconstruct the *Aeneid*.

In the *Mitologiae* he had used a technique found in other mythographers of late antiquity, cutting apart the old stories and shattering their poetic coherence, as Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski has explained, making the individual pieces ripe for clever interpretive ridicule (Blumenfeld-Kosinski 1997: 7).¹¹ In the *Continentia*, Fulgentius applied a variation on this segmentation, analyzing individual episodes and characters but sewing the pieces back together to make a fresh garment. He kept a coherent narrative, if an altogether different one.

Late antique writers frequently practiced this technique simultaneously to use and abuse the pagan classics, stealing ancient material and ridiculing it at the same time. The most radical form of this segmentation, of course, is the cento, constructed entirely of lines lifted from the works of ancient authors and reassembled in a new order.¹² Fulgentius himself played with the genre, borrowing lines from earlier writers and, in at least one case, fashioning “a kind of miniature cento” from Virgilian and Terentian sources (*Mit.* 9.24 – 10.5; cited in Hays 2004: 115). Two longer patchworks from the Virgilian corpus survive from the fourth century C.E.: the *Cento Probae*, or *De Laudibus Christi*, probably by Faltonia Betitia Proba, and the *Cento Nuptialis* by Ausonius. From the same material, Proba and Ausonius wove wildly dissimilar narratives, one pious and quite serious, and the other jocular and risqué (Scourfield 2007: 11-13; and McGill 2007: 173-93).

The *Cento Probae* aims to “show that Virgil sang of the holy gifts of Christ” (*Vergilium cecinisse loquar pia munera Christi*, line 23). Appended to this cento in several manuscripts is a brief letter inviting the Emperor Arcadius (383-408) to see “Virgil changed for the better”

¹¹ See also Hexter 1989.

¹² See Malamud 1989: 37, on the ways that the cento changed readers’ understanding of the *Aeneid*. Also consider the *sortes Virgilianae*, the habit of seeking prophecy by opening the *Aeneid* and blindly pointing to a passage.

(*Maronem mutatum in melius*) in this edifying text. The marriage cento by Ausonius, for its part, arguably changed Virgil for the worse. Its final section reuses Virgilian lines to create a graphic description of sex in the bridal bed. Here are passions unintended by Virgil but evoked from his verse to arouse or amuse another emperor, Valentinian I (364-75).¹³

I have written elsewhere of the ways that Fulgentius used the technique of segmentation to disentangle Aeneas from his heroic context and create a new reading for the *Aeneid* (Albu 2009). As a guide to the *Aeneid*'s true meaning, Fulgentius produced the author himself to expound the *virtus* his work embodied. Did any reader imagine that Virgil wrote a national epic of warfare and civic responsibility and the cost of Roman imperial destiny? Under Fulgentius' peculiar questioning, his cranky Virgil strips away that apparent plot as mere dross, coded allegory for the true story within. The epic's famous beginning – *arma virumque cano* – it turns out, actually promises a discourse on the acquisition of virtue, since *arma* stands for *virtus*, and *vir* means *sapientia*. “For complete perfection consists in bodily strength and intellectual wisdom” (*Cont.* 87.5-6).

This introductory passage shows that Fulgentius also knew about the wrath of Achilles. Here he has Virgil recite the opening line of the *Iliad* in Greek to explain that he put *arma* (manliness) before the individual man (*virum*) just as Homer put “wrath” before “Achilles,” “indicating the man's anger before the particular man”:

Μῆνιν ἄειδε θεὰ Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος. . .

The wrath, do sing, o goddess, of Peleus's son Achilles. . .

Fulgentius recalls this famous line, however, merely to explain why he violated standard rhetorical practice by placing the attribute, wrath, before the person being described. He does not pause to consider the prominent role of anger in the *Iliad* or to compare the passions in Greek and Roman epics. His brief citation of *Iliad* 1.1 offers a reminder, perhaps unintended, that the *Aeneid* continues an ancient epic tradition similarly vulnerable and subjected to mythographic analysis. But

¹³ For the reactions of modern critics, who found the poem “obscene,” “shambling,” and “crude,” see Malamud 1989: 37. For text, translation, and brief commentary on selected lines, see Ziolkowski and Putnam 2008: 472-5. The following pages in this volume (475-80) contain selections from Proba's quite different Virgilian cento.

Fulgentius' task here lies with the Roman epic, to which he returns after a brief interjection from the narrator on Biblical precedent for a similar rhetorical device.

Fulgentius' bag of rhetorical tricks lets him burrow beneath the *Aeneid's* surface narrative of the hero's adventures, baring the correct message of man's ideal life journey. His protagonist is a generic Everyman, whose moral development Fulgentius identifies through milestones in Aeneas' wanderings and battles – from birth (the shipwreck in book one; *Cont.* 91.9-11) to the purging of childish tantrums and adolescent passions that allows a mature understanding of virtue (the underworld encounters of book six; *Cont.* 98.1 - 102.18) and finally the continuing struggles and victories over passion, ultimately represented by Turnus, who is (in Greek) *thouros nous*, the enraged mind (*Cont.* 105.13-14).

Fulgentius has no difficulty making the Dido episode of *Aeneid*, book 4 fit within his pattern. Here he can take up his favorite theme from the *Mitologiae*, the passion of lust that Everyman must outgrow. As his Virgil explains:

“Released from his father's control, then, in the fourth book he goes a-hunting and feels the burning of lust and while driven by a storm and clouds – as it were, in confusion of mind – commits adultery. And after dallying there for a long while, at Mercury's instigation he abandons the lustfulness which he wrongfully embraced. For Mercury represents the god of intelligence. Thus at the instigation of intelligence the youth deserts the bounds of lust. And once it has been rejected, desire perishes and, having burned itself out, is turned to ash. For when [lust] is expelled from the youth's heart at the bidding of intelligence, it gutters in the ashes of oblivion.” (*Cont.* 94.16 - 95.1; trans. Hays 2008: 668).

Likewise, episodes in the following book five can support Fulgentius' argument. Here Aeneas, having forsaken Dido's embrace, honors the memory of his father with funeral games. For Fulgentius these exemplify the proper and virtuous exercise of the body. The destruction of the ships illustrates the progress toward maturity as flames recall the fire imagery of the *Aeneid's* fourth book: “Then too they burn the ships, that is, the dangerous instruments in which youth was blown by the tempestuous surges of billows and shaken daily, as it were, by perilous

storms. All of these are consumed by the overpowering fire of intellect, and as knowledge increases they pass quietly into the ashes of oblivion” (*Cont.* 95.8-13; trans. Hays 2008: 668).

The most attention, though, goes to the more edifying book six, with Aeneas’ journey to the underworld, now that “the shipwrecks of youthful instability have been put behind him.” Virgil continues (*Cont.* 98.1-3; trans. Hays 2008: 669):

And so [having obtained] the golden bough, that is, learning,
he visits the underworld and examines closely the mysteries
of knowledge.

These mysteries include the deepest agonies of the human condition: grief and sickness, hunger and wars; the passion of avarice and the apathy of sloth; and ultimately old age and death.

Then, initiated into deeper wisdom, he sees the shades of great
men, that is, he contemplates the glories and triumphs of virtue
(*Cont.* 99.6-8; trans. Hays 2008: 669-70).

This seems to be the culmination of the journey to virtue, ending with two more reminders of the passions subdued. First the pious man views the punishment of Deiphobus, whose name Fulgentius translates as either “fearful terror” or “public terror,” destroyed by Menelaus, “public virtue” (*Cont.* 99.8-11). Next he sees Dido, “symbolizing the shade of lust and the desire of old, now powerless. For when wisdom is meditated upon, the lust that had perished from disdain is grievously recalled to mind through repentance” (*Cont.* 99.18-21; trans. Hays 2008: 670). The remaining encounters in the underworld reinforce the lessons the good man has learned. He turns away from the wicked who are enduring eternal torments (*Cont.* 101.5-15) and enters Elysium, where at last he meets his father Anchises, who “stands for the Greek *ano is scenon*, that is, ‘one dwelling [on high]’; for there is one God, the father, the king of all, dwelling alone on high, who in fact is seen when revealed by the gift of knowledge” (*Cont.* 102.4-13; trans. Hays 2008: 670-1).

This analysis of book six would be the perfect place for Fulgentius to conclude, with his virtuous man receiving from the father the “hidden mysteries of nature . . . and things yet to come.” But with, alas, six more books to go (superficially on the wars in Italy), Fulgentius speeds through them (*Cont.* 103.13-197.4), with just a single sentence serving

all of book eleven. He seems to have read carefully only the opening lines (*Aen.* 11.1-11), skimming over the celebrated passages that frame this book, the lament for Pallas (*Aen.* 11.24-98) and the death of Camilla (*Aen.* 11.497-835), episodes especially evoking the sense of pathos that permeates Virgil's epic. Touches of Virgilian pathos – as we shall see – only rarely fell within Fulgentius' limited range of emotions. Yet the omission of these and other critical scenes might merely mean that Fulgentius, like so many readers of his age and our own, read closely just the *Aeneid*'s first six books. Then again, he may simply have found the epic's last half difficult to squeeze into his narrative. There he has identified isolated characters and episodes that he could interpret as challenges to Everyman's final triumphs, but he seems also to have lost interest in his commentary and to be racing toward the conclusion.

As David Konstan reminds us, Virgil's epic ends as it began, with anger.¹⁴ Though Fulgentius may seem capable of assigning any meaning to any text he set his mind on, the *Aeneid*'s famous conclusion posed a problem even for this mythoclast. Aeneas' killing of the suppliant Turnus has troubled many a reader. Here is Stanley Lombardo's translation of the passage that follows Aeneas' wounding of his enemy in single combat (Lombardo 2005: 339-40):

Huge Turnus

Sank down on one knee. The Rutulians
Leapt up with a shout, and the woods and hills
Echoed their groans. Humbled, Turnus
Lifted his eyes to Aeneas
And stretched forth his hand in supplication:

“Go ahead, use your chance. I deserve it.
I will not ask anything for myself,
But if a parent's grief can still touch you,
Remember your own father, Anchises,
And take pity on Daunus' old age,
I beg you. Give me or if you prefer,
Give my dead body back to my people.
You've beaten me, and the Ausonians
Have seen me, beaten, stretch out my hand to you.

¹⁴ In the introduction to his paper in this collection, “The Passions of Achilles and Aeneas: Translating Greece into Rome.”

Lavinia is yours. Let your hatred stop here.”

Aeneas hesitates, ready to spare his rival, when he sees:

The belt of young Pallas, whom Turnus had killed
And whose insignia he now wore as a trophy.
Aeneas’ eyes drank in this memorial
Of his own savage grief, and then, burning
With fury and terrible in his wrath, he said:
“Do you think you can get away from me
While wearing the spoils of one of my men?
Pallas
Sacrifices you with this stroke – Pallas –
And makes you pay with your guilty blood.”

Saying this, and seething with rage, Aeneas
Buried his sword in Turnus’ chest. The man’s limbs
Went limp and cold, and with a moan
His soul fled resentfully down to the shades.

How to decipher this disquieting violence, this apparent act of passion, if you are determined to read it as the final deed of a man elevated by his intellect to perfect wisdom? Fulgentius simply omits the episode. He has already defined Turnus as *thouros nous*, an allegorical representation of the enraged mind – so Aeneas’ rage against Turnus would seem to disrupt that argument. Casting around for an episode in book twelve that he **can** shoehorn into his moral interpretation, Fulgentius’ Virgil seizes upon the moment when the nymph Juturna, Turnus’s sister, takes the place of Metiscus, the driver of Turnus’s chariot. “Juturna,” this Virgil explains,

symbolizes destruction, which remains *diuturne* [for a long time]. Thus destruction is the sister of a raging mind. But the fact that she drives his chariot and speeds him away from death – this is clearly because destruction can prolong furor so that there is no end to it. . . . This is why she is called immortal, while Turnus is called mortal; for the mind’s rage is quickly finished, but the damage it does remains and is long-lasting” (*Cont.* 106.10 - 107.1; trans. Hays 2008: 672).

This assumption, that momentary rage brings lingering harm, cannot allow Fulgentius to interpret the *Aeneid's* final episode, an act of violence that seems to reveal a serious lapse in the pilgrim's progress. Fulgentius concludes, instead, with a little discourse on the passions, as exemplified by the drivers of Turnus's chariot: Metiscus (here from Greek *methuskô*, "intoxicate") and Juturna (from *diuturne*, destruction which is "everlasting"). In seizing the reins from the temporary rage of drunkenness, she delays her brother's fate but cannot forever postpone the vagaries of Fortune. For Fulgentius the spinning wheels of her chariot symbolize this volatility of Fortune's wheel. And as the wheel of Fortune whirls, Fulgentius abruptly ends with "the swift revolution of time" . . . *temporis uolubilitatem. Finit.* "The end." In the single line that forms his coda (*Cont.* 107.5), Fulgentius bids farewell to an unnamed *dominus* and, with this valediction, simply stops.

Where does that leave the Virgilian passions, then, in a work posing as a guide for the path to a manliness controlled by enlightened self-restraint (*Cont.* 89.14-15)? This process of maturation, Fulgentius has Virgil explain, leads the young man to abandon the passions, burying lust (called variously *amor* and *libido*) "in the ashes of oblivion" (*Cont.* 94.20 – 95.1). Yet the *Continentia's* tone throughout undermines this professed goal. The work is emotional and frequently attuned to the pain of human existence – even displaying some of the *Aeneid's* sense of *lacrimae rerum*. Occasionally Fulgentius grazes the surface of Virgilian pathos as, for instance, when his Virgil interprets the name of Achates, Aeneas' companion, as derived from "*acon etos*, that is, the 'habit of sadness'" (*Cont.* 92.15-21). He moves here to a lofty note, quoting Electra's opening lines in the *Orestes*: "for human beings are joined to sorrows from infancy," as Euripides writes:

There is nothing terrible one can describe
no suffering or event brought on by god
whose burden humanity may not have to bear.

Fulgentius translates the Greek and then comments: "There are no weapons against grief except the tears with which an infant asserts and consoles itself, for not until the fifth month do we just barely get to laugh, whereas tears may flow at the very threshold of life" (*Cont.* 93.2-5). In this portion of the *Continentia*, as elsewhere in this text, the tone of the tract works against its message that the wise man attains "wisdom of

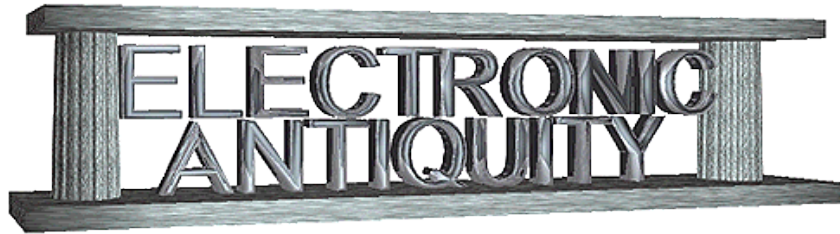
temperament,” in a blessed state of tranquility. For the narrator of this work, life is too wretched to admit serenity.

Virgil’s humanity and depth of emotion have shifted here to a fundamental distaste for the human condition, a sentiment unredeemed by the majestic calm at the core of the *Aeneid*. The *Continentia* is fraught with emotion. Its conclusion reinforces this pervasive sense of disquiet. Does this agitation principally exhibit Fulgentius’ rhetorical skills? Or does it communicate his frame of mind? Perhaps the tone of this work reflects the turbulence at the core of its author’s time and place. Since we cannot precisely identify Fulgentius’ North African milieu, we can only guess at likely circumstances. If Fulgentius was writing shortly after 550 as Gregory Hays has suggested (Hays 2004: 102), for instance, he may have witnessed the Byzantine conquest over Vandal occupiers in the 530s or its aftermath, the consequent administrative and religious upheavals. Plague and famine reached Africa in the early 540s. Berber raids sometimes disrupted daily life. And the varieties of religious experience – “the heresies, schisms, paganisms, debates, persecutions and vitality of African religion in the Roman, Vandal and Byzantine periods” (Handley 2004) – might have conspired to unsettle a dogmatic mind. In such a precarious environment, Fulgentius has perhaps not attained the sanctuary, the serene wisdom that his work proclaims. In the contentious pages of his interpretive text, the wrath of Achilles and the rage of Aeneas surrender to the righteous anxiety of the Christian mythographer.

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The Hero Roland and the Question of Intentionality

Joseph J. Duggan
University of California-Berkeley
joed@berkeley.edu

Roland, nephew of the emperor Charlemagne and leader of the rearguard in his army, is the most renowned hero of the tradition of epic in the Romance languages. He is the hero, of course, of the *Song of Roland*, which has survived in seven substantial versions. The best known is the Oxford version, a text of nearly 4,000 lines composed in assonanced verse paragraphs called *laissez*. It is both the oldest text and the most widely known. In fact, it is the only version that is commonly read outside the small circle of academic specialists in the *Song of Roland*. The longest complete version, however, which is in rhymed *laissez*, is found in the Châteauroux and Venice 7 manuscripts (*CV7*), and at just under 8400 lines it is over twice the length of the Oxford text. This paper will focus on Roland as he is presented in the Oxford version, which dates from around 1100, with concluding remarks on *CV7*, which dates from a century later.

A controversy raged among specialists in French epic in the 1960's and 1970's about how to interpret Roland's character in the Oxford *Song of Roland*. This conflict was initially framed in terms of whether Roland was presented as worthy of praise for defeating the Saracen enemies of Charlemagne or of blame for excessive pride. In the Oxford version, the hero encourages his men in their battle against the Saracens with the exhortation "Let a bad song not be sung about us!" (*Male cançun de nus*

*chantét ne seit!*¹), “bad song” having here the sense of unfavorable or condemnatory song. In this construct, the epic song is itself the instrument for sanctioning good or bad conduct, and the *Song of Roland*, while it is in this sense a “bad” song about Roland’s step-father Ganelon who betrays the French rearguard to the Saracens, is a “good” song about the French who die in the battle of Roncevaux.

But how does this accord with Roland’s own conduct in the song? After the rearguard under Roland’s command is subjected to a surprise attack by an immense army of Saracens led by King Marsile of Saragossa, Roland at first refuses to call back the main body of Charlemagne’s army and insists on having the rearguard alone repel the Saracen attack, only blowing his elephant-tusk horn, the *olifant*, when the time for effective reinforcement has passed. He only blows the horn so that Charlemagne and his men, returning, can bury the bodies of the Frankish warriors. His delay results in the destruction of the entire rearguard, twenty thousand men in all. Roland himself dies, not from a wound inflicted by the enemy, but rather from the force of blowing the *olifant*, which causes his temple to burst (ll. 1764, 1786). This is not a suicidal act but a manifestation of the hero’s strength, which is prodigious to the point of causing him mortal injury.

It is interesting to compare Roland’s actions in the poem with the stances of other heroes. In this typology, the closest are heroes in the Germanic tradition. This is not surprising because, although the language of the *Song of Roland* is Old French, a linguistic descendant of Spoken Latin, Roland is, after all, a Frank, that is to say he belongs to the West Germanic people that first crossed the Rhine in the third century and later established itself as the dominant power in Gaul. To take just one parallel with the heroic stance found in the *Song of Roland*, in the tenth-century Anglo-Saxon *Battle of Maldon*, one of the warriors defending his land against a force of Danish invaders exhorts his companions by saying: “Thought shall be the harder, heart the keener,/ Mood the more, as our might lessens.” With this sentiment in mind, the English defenders fight until they are all killed (*Battle of Maldon*, Alexander 1970, ll. 312-13). Roland utters a similar sentiment when he is told that the Saracen forces far outnumber the rearguard: “My desire (*talenz*) grows all the greater on this account!” (*Oxford Roland*, l. 1088) and his men likewise fight until they all die. The heroic code can be summed up as the determination of

¹ L. 1014. All references to the Oxford *Song of Roland* are to Ian Short’s edition in Duggan 2005, vol. 1.

the hero and his warband not merely to accept death in battle, but to take advantage eagerly of the opportunity of giving their lives in defense of the collectivity to which they belong: being outnumbered only increases the desire of Roland and his companions to fight on. This determination allows them to conclude their lives without incurring the shame that accommodation and retreat would bring. Roland names the collectivities that he wants to avoid shaming: first his political group (invoked as *France*, the Frankish land and people, ll. 1054, 1064), and then his kin group (l. 1063). Similar sentiments are found in the Icelandic saga where, for example, Gunnar dies at the hands of his enemies in *Njal's Saga* rather than take refuge to fight another day.

Looking at the fates of other heroic figures, one finds that Siegfried in the *Nibelungenlied* is killed by Hagen, who strikes him in the back with a spear. Beowulf is poisoned while doing battle with a dragon. The Cid and Girart de Roussillon die of natural causes. In the French epic, Raoul de Cambrai is killed in battle by his former squire Bernier. Guillaume d'Orange dies in a monastery. While helping to build the cathedral of Cologne, Renaut de Montauban is killed by rival workmen. The Irish CuChulainn is killed by the blow of a spear. In ancient epic, Hektor is killed by Achilles, who in turn dies, outside the plot of the *Iliad*, when shot in the heel by one of Paris's arrows. No other epic hero of whom I am aware dies by the force of his own act as Roland does in blowing his *olifant*. To what do we owe the singularity of Roland's death in the pantheon of epic heroes?

No discussion of Roland's character is complete in isolation from his precise relation to his own lineage. That Roland is Charlemagne's son, conceived as a result of the emperor's incestuous relationship with his own sister, is reflected, beginning in the twelfth century, in a number of iconographic and textual sources.² One of the best known of these is a stained-glass window from around 1225 in the ambulatory of Chartres cathedral devoted to Charlemagne (Lejeune and Stiennon 1971: 1, pp.

² Although this was known to scholars since the nineteenth century, interest in the topic was revived by Baudouin de Gaiffier (1955) and the ground-breaking analysis in Lejeune 1961. De Gaiffier, concentrating on the Latin tradition, pointed out that the legend that Charlemagne was guilty of mortal sin is found in three texts of the ninth century, but only one, Walafrid Strabo's *Visio Wettini*, specifies a sin of the flesh, undefined. Lejeune provided a subtle reading of the scene of the naming of the ambassador, with its emphasis on Ganelon as Roland's step-father, as influenced by knowledge of Charlemagne's sin of incest.

145-52, 169-77, 192-98, and Maines 1977). A panel in that window shows Roland blowing the *olifant* and attempting to break his sword against a boulder while a hand reaches down from a cloud. In another panel in the same window, an angel delivers a document to a priest who is saying mass at an altar. The priest is the emperor's confessor St. Giles. Charlemagne is on the left. The story behind the image is that, after having intercourse with his sister Gisele, Charlemagne refrained from confessing this sin of incest to Giles. The document is a letter from God himself, delivered by the angel Gabriel while Giles is saying mass. It contains a message to the effect that, as a result of Charlemagne's action, his sister is pregnant with a son who is to be named Roland, and that the emperor is to take care of him because someday he will need him. Roland is thus both Charlemagne's son and his nephew, the unadulterated offspring of the Frankish ruling family. Furthermore, the message instructs Charlemagne to marry his sister off to a certain Milon. When confronted with the information in the message from God, Charlemagne confesses his great sin and is absolved.³

Although a sin of Charlemagne is mentioned in the tenth century *Life of St. Giles*, which is the first work to recount the Mass of St. Giles, the narrative I have just presented is found in the earliest text to identify the precise nature of the sin, branch I of the *Karlamagnús Saga*, a thirteenth-century Norse compilation of the life of Charlemagne up to the battle of Roncevaux (see Heiatt 1975-80, branch 1, chapter 36). (On the interpretation of Charlemagne's sin as necrophilia or sodomy outside the French tradition, see Hafner 2002.) The saga was compiled for King Hakon IV of Norway, who reigned from 1217 to 1263. Branch I of the *Karlamagnús Saga* appears to be based largely on now-lost versions of Old French epic poems that likely dated to the twelfth century (Aebischer 1972: 19). In the fragmentary Occitan version of the *Song of Roland* known as *Ronsasvals*, Charlemagne himself mentions, in his regrets over Roland's body, that he has sinned with his sister:

“Fair nephew, I had you, through my great sin,
From my sister, and through my fault,

³ In the original organization of the window depicting the Mass of St. Giles, the panel opens a sequence of scenes representing Charlemagne's Spanish expedition, which terminates with a panel announcing Roland's death. See Maines 1977, pp. 821-23, who posits that the window combines the legends of Charlemagne's Sin and combat with the Saracens of Spain, largely based on the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, in an affirmation of Christian triumph.

For I am your father, likewise your uncle,
And you, dear lord, are my nephew and my child.”

Ronsasvals is dated to between 1180 and 1250.⁴ An Italian romance of the late fourteenth century, the *Spagna*, also has Charlemagne call the dead Roland his nephew and son (*nepote e figliulo*; see Roques 1940-41: 458). The legend of Roland’s incestuous birth may also have been known to the author of *Roncesvalles*, depending on how one interprets a line: see Horrent 1951: 22, and Lejeune 1961: 346-47. The fourteenth-century French epic *Tristan de Nanteuil* narrates Charlemagne’s Sin in leisurely detail. Although in this poem the Mass of St. Giles takes place in Avignon, it also leads to the revelation that Charlemagne impregnated his sister (ll. 21707-08). According to the text:

The sin was horrible; it was not known;
But some explain, and they are the most knowledgeable,
That it was the sin when he engendered Roland
In his own sister; and we continue to suppose this
For no one relates it to you exactly;
But many do imply it thus.⁵

Finally, in the late fourteenth century, Jean d’Outremeuse refers to the story obliquely, calling Roland “the nephew or son of Charles” and a

⁴ Gouiran and Lafont 1991, ll. 1624-27:

“Bels neps, yeu vos ac per lo mieu peccat gran
de ma seror e per mon falhimant,
qu’ieu soy tos payres, tos oncles eyssamant,
e vos, car senher, mon nep e mon enfant.”

See Schulze-Busacker 1989 for the dating.

⁵ Sinclair 1971, ll. 21705-10:

Le peché fut orribles, on ne le sot neant;
Mais li aucun esponent et tous ly plus sachant
Que se fut le peché quant engendra Roland
En sa sereur germaine; se va on esperant,
Car il n’est nul qu’au vray vous en voit recordant,
Mais ensemment le vont plusieurs signiffiant.

The whole tale of Charlemagne’s Sin occupies ll. 21499-21710 of *Tristan de Nanteuil*. The cathedral of Sainte-Croix in Orléans was also said to have been the locus of Giles’s mass and in the sixteenth century claimed to possess the document written by the hand of God. See Vulliez 1990. In the *Karlamagnús Saga*, the incest and, presumably, Giles’s mass take place in Aachen.

“bastard” in his universal history *Ly Myreur des Histors* (Goosse 1965: 15).⁶

The widespread diffusion of this story is worthy of remark. In addition to the stained-glass window in the cathedral of Chartres, that same cathedral contains three other representations of the Mass of St. Giles—a stained-glass lancet window in the clerestory of the north nave (Manhes-Deremble 1993: no. 133b), a wall painting in the chapel of St. Clement in the crypt, and a sculpture on the south portal (Rolland 1982: 271)—witnesses to the overriding importance that the cathedral’s canons accorded to the story of the emperor’s sin and Roland’s incestuous birth (see also Sauerländer 1972: 433). A fresco dating to around 1170 from the chapel of Saint-Laurent in the parish church of Le Loroux-Bottereau near Nantes shows St. Giles absolving Charlemagne and the emperor’s sister Gisele preparing to marry Milon (Davy 1999: 150-53). A fresco in a church at Saint-Aignan-sur-Cher in the Loire Valley from around 1200 includes a cycle of St. Giles that depicts the saint saying mass in the presence of Charlemagne, a rolled scroll, and a boy who appears to be Roland (Kupfer 2000: 649, and 2003: 98-99). Another fresco, this one from the late thirteenth century in the abbey of Aiguevive in the Loire valley, depicts St. Giles, Charlemagne, Gisele, and the hand of God bestowing a blessing, and in a sculpture on the main portal of the abbey an angel is portrayed bearing a rolled piece of parchment, representing the message relating Charlemagne’s Sin (Demaux 1982: 279-92 and Kupfer 2003: figure 102). From the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century comes a wall painting in Civray near Poitiers showing the Mass of St. Giles and Charlemagne’s confession (Deschamps and Thibout 1963: 131-32). The famous reliquary of Charlemagne in the cathedral of Aachen, from 1215, includes a bas-relief depicting a double scene: Charlemagne confessing to Giles and also kneeling before an altar at which Giles says mass. An angel descends holding a scroll on which is written: “The mortal sin is turned into a venial one” (Schnitzler 1959: 19-21 and figure 41; for the inscription, see Arens 1921: 164, 193), but there is no allusion to the nature of the sin. Finally, St. Giles is depicted celebrating his mass in the presence of Charlemagne and Gisele in the Psalter of Lambert le Bègue made for Beguines of the city of Liège, which dates from around 1260 (ms. 431 of the Université de Liège;

⁶ A miniature in a fifteenth-century manuscript of *Ly Myreur des Histors* depicts the Mass of St. Giles and the saint showing the message to Charlemagne. See Demaux 1982, vol. 1, p. 290.

Lejeune and Stiennon 1971: vol. 1, plate V; Demaux 1982: 289). The tale of Charlemagne's paternity is obviously not a localized curiosity but a narrative that enjoyed wide distribution in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, in France, Flanders, Germany, and Italy. Dozens of European churches have St. Giles as their patron, and the city of Saint-Gilles-du-Gard in Southern France is named for him.

The Oxford *Song of Roland* is a spare text that contains very little commentary. For that reason, when the poet does comment, the weight of the intervention is all the more striking and worthy of notice. In line 2098, the poet declares: "He who does not know that much has not understood it at all." This statement serves to focus attention on the three preceding lines, which contain an oblique reference to the tale of Charlemagne's Sin. Archbishop Turpin, one of Charlemagne's most skilled warriors, has just succumbed to the enemy and the text mentions that when Charlemagne returned to the battlefield he found Turpin's body surrounded by the corpses of four hundred Saracens. Recounting this, says the poet, are the tradition (*geste*) and he who was on the battlefield, namely "the baron ... Giles, for whom God makes miracles and made the document that is in the monastery at Laon" (*li ber ... Gilie, por qui Deus fait vertuz/ e fist la chartre el muster de Loim*, ll. 2096-97), probably the monastery of St. Vincent. Even though this passage is earlier than any other reference of its kind, it seems highly probable that the collocation of Giles's name with miracles and a document made by God himself must refer to the Mass of St. Giles and the circumstances of Charlemagne's Sin. Looking again at line 2098, I believe that the object of the verb *entendre* 'to understand' is the story told in the *Song of Roland* itself. An alternate interpretation, taking *chartre* as synonymous with *geste*, is not in keeping with the sense of *chartre*, which designates a short document and not a tradition or a history. It also trivializes the claim that "he who does not know that much has not understood it at all." For me, *tant*, 'that much,' refers to the message miraculously delivered by the angel to St. Giles, namely that Roland is the son of Charlemagne. What is in danger of not being understood is the meaning of the *Song of Roland* itself.

Before dying, Roland asks forgiveness for all the sins he has committed in his life (ll. 2368-72). Angels, including Michael and Gabriel, descend to convey his soul directly to paradise (l. 2396). He dies as a victor rather than as a result of wounds inflicted by the enemy, entering heaven after calling back the Franks and insuring that the warriors of the rearguard can have a fitting burial. But if Roland is

victorious at Roncevaux, why does he die there of his own prodigious effort? The answer depends on whether we concentrate on the hero's immediate motivation for fighting to the end, that is to say his adherence to a heroic code, or, step back from the action of the poem to take into account the circumstances of his birth.

I believe that Roland dies in the *Song of Roland* as no other hero does because his birth has resulted from an act of incest. He dies as divine punishment for the sexual passion of his father, which led to his own conception. Is it likely, however, that a hero would be killed off for an offense that was the result not of his own intention but of someone else's, namely that of his father?

The Middle Ages knew two radically different types of sin. The first was the sin for which one's personal intention was irrelevant, namely Original Sin, committed by Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden when they ate the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, which according to Christian doctrine resulted in human concupiscence. The authorities for the concept of original sin are Paul's Epistle to the Romans (5:12-21) and Epistle to the Corinthians (15:22), which declare that sin entered the world through the action of Adam, all of whose descendants suffered the effects of his misdeed. Original Sin is only redeemed ultimately through the death of Christ and God's grace.

The other type is personal sin. Even after confessing this kind of sin, the sinner had to undergo punishment to pay for having sinned. Charlemagne is forgiven, but must still suffer punishment for having committed incest. This punishment is his son Roland's death. In the Oxford version, after returning to the battlefield, Charlemagne searches for Roland's body and mourns him for 90 lines, distributed in no fewer than seven consecutive *laissez* (*laissez* 204-210, ll. 2855-2944). At the climax of this long passage, the emperor says that the one who has killed Roland has shamed France (*Ki tei ad mort, France dulce ad hunie*, l. 2935): since it is the force of Roland's horn-blast that has killed Roland rather than a blow from any weapon, Charlemagne must be referring to a more distant cause, either himself or the traitor Ganelon.⁷ That the reference is to Ganelon is the traditional interpretation of this line, but that Charlemagne may be referring to himself is suggested in the line that

⁷ The variant cause of death, mentioned explicitly in the *Pilgrim's Guide to Santiago de Compostela* and implied in the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, namely that Roland expired from thirst, is discussed in Grisward 1982.

immediately follows, in which the emperor expresses the wish that he himself should die.

In his *Ethics*, the great scholastic philosopher and theologian Peter Abelard, building on the thought of his teachers William of Champeaux and Anselm of Laon who in turn were influenced by Augustine, developed in the late 1130s the concept that sin depends not so much on the nature of the sinful act as on the intention of the person committing the act (Clanchy 1997: 84, 129).⁸ The theory of intention was, in fact, the central concern of Abelard's *Ethics*, which is the main reason why he has been called "the first modern man" (see Chenu 1969: 32). Abelard went so far as to declare that those who crucified Christ were committing no sin if they believed they were pleasing God (Clanchy 1997: 215). Carrying his logic further to consider the nature of expiation, Abelard held that it is not the performance of acts of penance that leads to the remission of sins but rather the sinner's intent in feeling genuine sorrow for having sinned, even if this intent preceded the act of confessing to a priest. The primacy of intent was a revolutionary idea at the time, since the issue of legal guilt had previously centered above all on the question of whether the offensive act was in fact committed by the accused, rather than on the state of mind of the person committing it. Although Abelard's idea was not immediately taken up by those whose responsibility it was to judge the sinfulness or the illegality of actions, it slowly worked its way into both moral theology and jurisprudence and is, of course, the crucial principle according to which actions are judged in modern courts. This emphasis on state of mind rather than the action committed was part of a larger movement taking place in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries that has been called the "awakening of conscience," another of whose manifestations was the practice of private confession to a priest followed by penance that did not need to be performed in public, both confirmed by the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. It was decreed at this same council that clergy were forbidden to participate in the judicial ordeal, the so-called "judgment of God."

The trial of Ganelon in the Oxford *Song of Roland* reflects an older layer of jurisprudence and includes a judgment of God in the form of

⁸ Abelard's teaching career was brought to a close by his trial for heresy at Laon in 1140. He appears to have been born in 1092 or 1094 (Clanchy 1997: 174) and was also tried for heresy at Soissons in 1121, as a consequence of which the first edition of his *Theologia* was burned. Pope Celestine II and Abbot Peter the Venerable of Cluny, however, appear not to have acquiesced in this view of Abelard as a heretic (Clanchy 1997: 218).

trial by combat. The outcome depends on the victory of Charlemagne's kinsman and champion, Thierry, over Pinabel, Ganelon's kinsman. The judicial combat only takes place when Thierry objects to the outcome of a trial by jury which, if allowed to run its course, would have resulted in Ganelon being permitted to reconcile with Charlemagne without suffering punishment. Even though the principle that Roland's function as a member of Charlemagne's army should have protected him against attack by any of the emperor's men (Oxford version, l. 3828: *Vostre servise l'en doiüst bien guarir*), and even though the traitor himself abruptly raises the defense that Roland had cheated him out of material goods, the trial includes no inquiry into Ganelon's state of mind. In fact, such an inquiry would have anticipated the establishment of inquisitorial procedure that took place only toward the very end of the twelfth century in reaction to the emergence of heresies. After Thierry kills Pinabel, thirty hostages who stood as guarantors for Pinabel are hanged, with no inquiry into their states of mind or personal guilt either. Their execution is likely carried out because Pinabel was the champion of Ganelon, who betrayed the emperor's own son, Roland, equivalent to an act of regicide.⁹

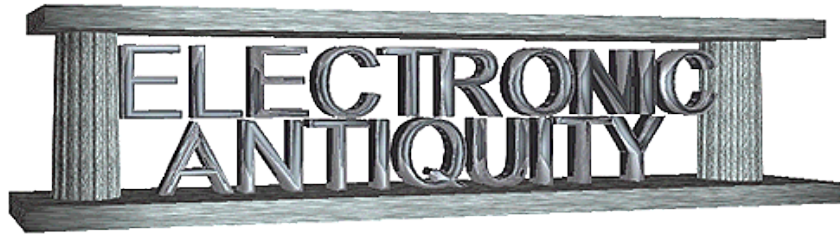
The rhymed *Song of Roland* in the Châteauroux and Venice 7 texts also presents Roland as dying from his own horn blast. Roland's death was too well known to be altered with impunity. But this rhymed version frames the notion of responsibility differently. To begin with, the name of St. Giles appears nowhere and the text merely mentions that God makes miracles for Charlemagne and that an unspecified written greeting (*salu*) is preserved at Laon (l. 3600). Thierry is not Roland's kinsman but his squire (l. 7905). He wins the battle against Pinabel, but there are no hostages given in the trial scene so their execution does not occur. Contrary to the Oxford version, the emphasis is on Ganelon's state of mind, as he confesses his guilt just before being executed. Between the Oxford and CV7 versions, nearly a century elapsed, a period in which concepts of responsibility and justice were transformed by the emerging importance of intentionality.

⁹ The municipal law of Cuenca (Spain), based on Visigothic tradition which is a branch of Germanic customary law, specifies that in the case of regicide not only the perpetrator but his entire family are condemned to death (Duggan 1992).

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Three new worthies: *Les Trois fils de roi*

Michelle Szkilnik
Université Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3
PRES Sorbonne Paris Cité
EA 173: Centre d'Études du Moyen Âge
Paris, France
mszkilnik@numericable.fr

If you undertake a holy journey against the Turks in Sicily, your fame, after your death, will surpass Alexander's and Hector's renown.¹

Here is the claim made by young knights at the court of France, eager to accompany Phelippe, son of the king of France, on a crusading mission to Sicily, in the anonymous romance *Les Trois fils de roi*. Such is the prestige of ancient heroes in the late Middle Ages that a religious expedition against the enemies of Christianity is compared, albeit

¹ The French text actually reads: "Se vous empreniés cestuy voyage, vous auriés toute la sieulte du monde. Chascun seroit joyeux de soy mettre soubz vous. Oncques Hector de Troyes ne Alexandre n'eurent la renommee que vous auriés après vostre mort!", *Les Trois fils de roi*, ed. Giovanni Palumbo, Paris: Champion (CFMA), 2001, p. 93 (In the text the number in parentheses indicates the page number in Palumbo's edition).

deemed superior, to the deeds of pagan characters involved in wars that to the eyes of Christians were far from holy. The ideal represented by ancient warriors had been displaced in the 11th and 12th centuries by that of Christian knights. Charlemagne, Roland and his peers had successfully outshone the illustriousness of Hector and his likes in a new form of epics, the *chanson de geste*. Ancient heroes did survive, even thrive, in many narratives such as *romans antiques*, but they led a career parallel to that of Christian knights, even if some mutual influence can be detected. They merged again, so to speak, at the end of the Middle Ages: on the one hand, the distinction between romance and *chanson de geste* became very blurry. On the other hand, Antiquity was very much in fashion, especially at the court of Burgundy. The height of this genuine *Antiquity-mania* was reached during the reign of Philippe le Bon, who, in 1430, founded the Order of the Golden Fleece, promoting Jason as the patron of this elite knightly fraternity. He also encouraged the redaction, compilation and translation of books recounting the deeds of ancient heroes as well as works of art (paintings, tapestries) celebrating them². Yet Philippe was also obsessed with the desire to lead a new crusade against the Turks whose western progression was becoming more and more threatening. Thus the old *chanson de geste* ideals were very much admired too and they combined with ancient values. I propose to analyse *Les Trois fils de roi*, a romance written in the middle of the 15th century, very likely at the court of Burgundy, in order to assess the influence of medieval and ancient epics, and to determine which values it upholds. I contend that this romance advocates a new kind of prowess and of "worthies".

According to its modern editor, Giovanni Palumbo, *Les Trois fils de roi* was either presented to Philippe le Bon, or first to Jean V de Créquy

² See Georges Doutrepont, *La littérature française à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne. Philippe le Hardi, Jean sans Peur, Philippe le Bon, Charles le Téméraire*, Paris, 1909 (Genève: Slatkine, 1970); Jean Rychner, *La littérature et les mœurs chevaleresques à la cour de Bourgogne*, Neuchâtel: Secrétariat de l'Université, 1950; *Splendeurs de la Cour de Bourgogne*, ed. Danielle Régnier-Bohler, Paris: Laffont (coll. Bouquins), 1995; Jacques Monfrin, "Le Goût des lettres antiques à la cour de Bourgogne au XV^e siècle", *Bulletin de la société nationale des Antiquaires de France*, 1967, p. 285-287. For a good recent summary (accompanied by a bibliography), see Sandrine Hériché, *Les Faicts et les Conquestes d'Alexandre le Grand* de Jehan Wauquelin, critical edition, Genève: Droz, 2000, introduction p. XI-XVII.

and his wife, who subsequently gave the original copy to the Duke³. Philippe then asked his scribe David Aubert to provide a new copy of the romance. Aubert dutifully complied, but as is usual with this *escripvain*, introduced many stylistic variants, as well as a dedicatory prologue to Philippe le Bon⁴. Of the 8 remaining manuscripts, 5 give the prologue, a sign that this romance is strongly connected with the Burgundy court. *Les Trois fils de roi* tells the story of three young princes, Phelippe, Onffroy and David, respectively sons of the kings of France, England and Scotland, distressed by the fate of the kingdom of Sicily and Naples: Turks are besieging cities, raiding the countryside, and the king, his wife and their beautiful daughter Yolente are in danger. Hiding their intentions from their fathers, Phelippe and Onffroy secretly leave their countries, change their names, and fight incognito the Infidels in Sicily. As for David, he is sent with a contingent of young nobles to Italy. While the fleet is trying to land despite the fierce opposition of the Turks, a violent storm disperses or sinks the Christian ships. David is taken prisoner. He eventually manages to join up the Christians and becomes fast friend with the other two heroes. The three princes amply prove their valiance and their faith during that war and after the resounding defeat of the Saracens, they reveal their identity. Their fathers having opportunely died upon their return or during their absence, they become kings. This brief summary, which does not do justice to a well-crafted story, also conceals the close relationship between the romance and the historical context in which it was written. As Giovanni Palumbo remarks in his introduction, many characters bear names of historical figures, such as Alphons, Charles, Frederich, Ferrant, Onffroy/Humphrey, David, Yolente⁵. The crusading atmosphere, the imminent threat posed by the Turks on the verge of taking over the kingdom of Sicily, the tergiversations of the different European courts, all recall 15th century circumstances: the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the numerous talks about sending troops against the Turks. As for the episode of the *vœux du*

³ *Les Trois fils de roi*, introduction p. 37.

⁴ On David Aubert, see *Les manuscrits de David Aubert "escripvain" bourguignon*, textes réunis par Danielle Quéruel, Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1999; and Richard Straub, *David Aubert, escripvain et clerc*, Atlanta-Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995.

⁵ Introduction p. 71. This play on names contributes to the complex intermingling of reality and fiction, a characteristic of *chansons de geste*, according to J. Frappier, as quoted by Palumbo, p. 73.

paon, it evokes the famous *banquet du faisan* held at Lille in 1454⁶. This complex interaction between historical reality and literature in the 15th century, each one influencing the other, is well-known⁷ and *Les Trois fils de roi* offers one more example of this mirroring phenomenon. I will not dwell on this aspect which has been investigated by Palumbo, but I will concentrate on the epic tradition inherited by our romance.

Les Trois fils de roi describes a war against the Infidels. The kingdom of Sicily has been invaded by Saracens, led by the *Grant Turk* and his brother, Fierrabras, king of Persia. Alphons, king of Sicily, who married the daughter of the king of Spain, hoping that this alliance would provide him support in his war against the Turks, finds himself isolated and on the verge of defeat, despite the numerous calls for help sent to all the European courts. This situation undoubtedly inspired by reality as I have suggested⁸ also recalls scenarios in numerous *chansons de geste*. The traditional enemy is the Turk who embodies all the features of the villain. Whereas his brother and his son have names, the leader of the Saracens is simply referred to as "le Turk" or "le Grant Turk" (103). He and his allies are said to hold "la dampnable loy de Mahom" ("the despicable law of Mohammed", 86, 88). The Turk is cruel and disloyal, given to fits of rage to the point that he forgets his son, his brother and

⁶ See Jacques Paviot, "Burgundy and the Crusade", in *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century. Message and Impact*, ed. Norman Housley, London: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2004, p. 70-80. Giovanni Palumbo, "Le Livre et histoire royal (ou Livre des trois fils de roys): politique, histoire et fiction à la cour de Bourgogne", in "A l'heure encore de mon escrire". *Aspects de la littérature de Bourgogne sous Philippe le Bon et Charles le Téméraire*, études rassemblées et présentée par Claude Thiry, *Les Lettres Romanes*, n° hors série (1997), pp. 137-145. In the same volume, Jean Devaux, "Le Saint Voyage de Turquie: croisade et propagande à la cour de Philippe le Bon (1463-1464)", p. 53-70.

⁷ See Michel Stanesco, *Jeux d'errance du chevalier médiéval, aspects ludiques de la fonction guerrière dans la littérature du Moyen Age flamboyant*, Leiden: Brill, 1988. Michel Zink, "Le Roman" in *GRLMA VIII-1*, 1988, p. 197-218.

⁸ J. Paviot recalls that in 1451, at the chapter of the Order of the Golden Fleece, Jean Germain delivered a "homily, in the course of which he described the terrible desolation of the Church militant, the conquests of the Moors [sic] in Syria, the profanation of the Holy Places, the Muslim attacks on Cyprus and Rhodes, and the conquests of the Turks in Asia and Greece." ("Burgundy and the Crusade", p. 72). On the numerous diplomatic missions aiming at convincing European princes to take part in a crusade, see p. 74-75.

his faithful men and puts their lives in jeopardy by his rash behavior⁹. As befits such a character, the Turk is killed in the final battle between Christians and Saracens. The Turk's son, Orkais, and his brother, Fierrabras, are more positive. The young Orkais will eventually make friends with the three Christian princes and convert in the hope of gaining Yolente's hand. As for Fierrabras, he is a strong and valiant warrior, true to his word. Taken prisoner, he is released against hostages and on the promise to liberate all Christian prisoners in Saracen lands. When back in his country, he loyally complies and saves the life of Onffroy despite the Turk's fierce opposition¹⁰. For an audience familiar with *chansons de geste*, the name Fierabras calls to mind a famous Saracen giant who defies Charlemagne, fights in single combat with Olivier, Roland's companion, is captured by the Christian knight and converts to Christianity before becoming a holy man, saint Florent. His story first told in a 12th-century *chanson de geste* was extremely popular in the Middle Ages and several prose versions (either *derimages* or adaptations) as well as translations in many languages remain as testimonies to its success¹¹. At the court of Burgundy, a version of Fierabras' story was included in the *Croniques et Conquestes de Charlemaine*, a compilation made by David Aubert, the same scribe who copied one of the manuscripts of *Les Trois fils de roi* (BNF, fr. 92), as already mentioned. There is another intriguing link between these two texts: the prologue to the first volume of the *Croniques et Conquestes de Charlemaine* is dedicated to "monseigneur de Crequy" (13), and the prologue to the second volume (as well as the explicit) to Philippe le

⁹ "Et par la grant fureur ou il estoit, il oublia toute amour paternele, avec ce aussi tous les services que les seigneurs payens qui estoient prins avec son filz luy avoient fait. Avec ce mist il en oubly son propre frere, quy estoit prisonnier de celluy qu'il vouloit faire pendre, par lequel, en le rendant, il le pavoit reavoir ou Orkais, son filz." (*Trois fils de roi*, p. 289).

¹⁰ The Turk, not knowing that Fierabras has already sent Onffroy back to the Christian lines, tries to seize his brother's prisoner in order to have him killed. Revolted by this treason, Fierabras gives up the war and retires to his kingdom. We do not learn of his subsequent fate.

¹¹ *Fierabras*, ed. Marc Le Person, Paris: Champion, 2003, p. 12-15 and p. 197-200; André de Mandach, *Naissance et développement de la chanson de geste en Europe. V. La geste de Fierabras*, Genève: Droz, 1987. See also Frédéric Duval, *Lectures françaises de la fin du Moyen Age. Petite anthologie commentée de succès littéraires*, Genève: Droz, 2007. Duval devotes a notice to *Fierabras* (p. 398-405).

Bon¹². Both the *Croniques* and *Les Trois fils* thus exhibit the same ambiguity about the original patron of the work, Jean de Crequy or Philippe le Bon, another sign of the likely influence of the *chanson de geste* on our romance. One of the reason *Fierabras* was popular with the dukes of Burgundy might be that it celebrates the deeds of Guy de Bourgogne who marries Floripas, sister of Fierabras, and becomes king of Spain¹³.

The connections between *Fierabras* and *Les Trois fils de roi* are striking. In both texts, Fierabras, whose overconfidence in the romance recalls the giant's arrogant challenge in the *chanson de geste*, is captured at the beginning of the story. In *Les Trois fils de roi*, the Saracen has conquered the city of Feude, near Capoue whose captain is Olivier, brother of the king of Sicily's senechal, Ferrant. Having learned that Ferrant is back from Spain and is visiting his brother, he decides to make a show of his power near Capoue, in the hope of making prisoners who will inform him on the success of Ferrant's mission in Spain. The Christians, seeing that the Saracens are much more numerous, do not reply at first to his provocation. Nonetheless when the enemies split in smaller groups to surround the city, they come out and after a fierce combat, they manage to capture Fierabras. Although Fierabras is taken by the *Depourveu* (the nickname Phelippe took when he left France in secret), it is no accident that one of the characters in the episode, Olivier, bears the same name as Fierabras' adversary in the *chanson de geste*. Olivier is only a minor character in *Les Trois fils de roi*, second to his brother Ferrant. Yet he is praised for his wisdom in warfare matters: "Olivier (...) estoit homme fort duit a la guerre" ("Olivier was very skilled in military matters", 107). Thanks to the brothers' good judgment (for Ferrant is as prudent as Olivier), Fierabras' scheme does not succeed, and, worse, results in his capture. Another detail is amusing: Ferrant, as noted by Palumbo, is the name of the son of Alfonso the Magnanimous, king of Naples. But it is also that of Olivier's horse in *Fierabras*. In the 12th century *chanson de geste*, Olivier has a very special relationship with his horse, "le blanc Ferrant d'Espeigne"¹⁴. Olivier blesses it, when his squire brings it to him, and talks to the animal with affection. David Aubert's version of the story only mentions the name of the horse and

¹² *Croniques et Conquestes de Charlemaine*, ed. Robert Guiette, Bruxelles: Palais des Académies, 2 volumes, 1940 and 1943.

¹³ See André de Mandach, *La geste de Fierabras*, p. 67-72.

¹⁴ See *Fierabras*, v. 237-241.

adds that the horse knew him better than any man in the world¹⁵. The author of *Les Trois fils de roi* seems to have used names found in *Fierabras*, but redistributed them with humorous fantasy.

Another episode of *Les Trois fils de roi* is probably inspired by *Fierabras*: the *emir* Balan, father of Fierabras in the *chanson de geste*, is besieging Aigremore. While the Christians are foraging outside the city, Gui de Bourgogne is captured. Balan decides to have him hanged in view of the besieged, hoping that they will come out to save him. The Saracens bring Gui to the gallows, beating him. He has a rope around his neck and he is blindfolded¹⁶. The Christian knights do come to the rescue and liberate him. A similar scenario is used in *Les Trois fils de roi*: the Turk is besieging Naples and manages to capture the *Surnommé* (another of Phelippe's pseudonyms). He wants to hang him in view of the besieged. He himself beats his prisoner and takes him to the gallows with a rope around his neck. The *Surnommé's* friends rescue him. In the resulting battle, the Turk is killed. As for Balan, he is later captured during yet another battle around Aigremore and since he refuses to convert, he is beheaded by Ogier.

What makes the connection between the *chanson de geste* and the romance even stronger is the religious fervor that permeates them both. According to Marc Le Person, the editor of the 12th century version, *Fierabras* adopts a clear hagiographic slant. It celebrates the conquest of power and lands over pagans, the extension of the kingdom of God at the expense of the Saracens: "jamais une chanson de geste n'aura illustré avec autant de force l'un des thèmes essentiels du genre épique:

¹⁵ "En apres, demanda Ferrant son destrier, qui mieulx le congnoissoit que homme nul du monde." (*Croniques et Conquestes de Charlemaine*, ed. Guiette, vol. 2, p. 32). The fourteenth-century anonymous prose version (*Fierabras, roman en prose de la fin du XIV^e siècle*, critical edition by Jean Miquet, Ottawa: éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1983) does not mention the name of the horse. As for Jehan Bagnyon's *Histoire de Charlemagne* (ed. Hans-Erich Keller, Genève: Droz, 1992), it states that his horse was "entre les aultres special [et] se nommoit Ferrant d'Espagne." (p. 36).

¹⁶ *Fierabras*, v. 3568, v. 3596-3596a. *Croniques et Conquestes* : Gui is "lyé et les yeux bendez et vilainement demenez" (p. 68. No mention of the rope tied around his neck). Jehan de Bagnyon: [les sarrasins] "ne cesserent point de frapper sur son corps de gros bastons de pommier, qui du tout luy tresperçoi[en]t la cher. Vous pouvez pensser en quel estat estoit son corps quant on le desrompoit ainssy villaynement. Quant il avoit les mains liees derriere son dos moult estroittement, quant il sentoit une grosse corde en son col, quant il avoit les yeulx bendés et n'y veoit riens ne ne sçavoit ont il ailloit...." (p. 112).

"essaucier seinte crestienté" ("no other *chanson de geste* illustrates with such strength one of the essential topics of the epic genre: the exaltation of holy Christianity"¹⁷). *Les Trois fils de roi* similarly exalt the heroic acts of Christian knights fighting for "accroistre et augmenter la Crestienté et la garder d'oppression" ("to expand and accrue Christianity and protect it from oppression", 327). When the old German emperor dies and it is time to elect a new one, the king of Sicily is chosen because "c'estoit celluy quy pour la foy catholique avoit eu plus a endurer et, d'autre part, c'estoit celluy quy plus avoit hanté la guerre contre les ennemis de nostre foy." ("he was the one who had endured most hardships for the Catholic faith and besides, he was the one who had most waged war against the enemies of our faith."³²⁰).

Exalting the Catholic faith entails fighting and killing the Infidels or converting them. The *motif* of the Saracen's conversion appears twice in the romance. The Turk's son, Orkais, has been taken prisoner, like his uncle Fierabras. He makes friends with the Christian heroes and falls in love with Yolente, daughter of the king of Sicily. He then converts in order to be able to take part in a tournament, the prize of which is the beautiful maiden. The romance does suggest that his conversion is merely tactical: baptism is his only means of conquering Yolente; yet he rightly fears the reaction of his people (404-405). As it turns out, Yolente will marry Phelippe, king of France, and Orkais will have to be content with one of Onffroy's sisters. Nonetheless, Orkais does not abjure his new faith and proves his commitment later on by redeeming all Christian captives in Muslim lands. His Christian friends praise his "bonne volenté (...) qu'il avoit au bien et accroissement de la Crestienté" ("his good will to favor the interests and growth of Christianity", 440) and vow to help him in case his subjects were to rebel "a cause du saint sacrement de baptesme que de nouvel il avoit receu" ("because he had recently received the holy sacrament of baptism", 440). Whereas Fierabras, the Saracen giant of the *chanson de geste*, converts because he has been touched by divine grace, Orkais converts for love. Such conversions, that François Suard dubs "les miracles du sentiment" ("miracles of emotion"¹⁸), are fairly common in *chansons de geste*. What is more original is that the Saracen is deprived of the reward attached to his conversion and yet does not recant. The second occurrence of the

¹⁷Fierabras, p. 184.

¹⁸ François Suard, *Guillaume d'Orange. Etude du roman en prose*, Paris: Champion, 1979, p. 429.

conversion *motif* is also unusual in that it involves a woman showing some resistance. Orkais, now baptised and named Charles, wants to marry his sister to his friend Ector, now king of England. Yet the maiden must convert first. Although aware of the honor and sensitive to the young king's charm, she firmly refuses on the grounds that she will endanger her soul. For a few days neither threats nor exhortations from her brother, blandishments from ladies and from princes can change her mind. Her steadfastness is actually admired since it shows her "franc vouloir" ("constancy of her will", 427), her independence and loyalty to her religion. Saracen knights refusing to convert are familiar characters in *chansons de geste*. As we have seen, Balan, Fierabras's father in the *chanson de geste*, would rather die than be baptised. But usually their tenacity, often mixed with fierceness, is condemned as mere stubbornness. Orkais's sister is more akin to Orable in the Prose *Guillaume d'Orange*. In this late prose adaptation of the well-known *chanson*, Orable is torn between her love for Guillaume and her loyalty to her people. Reflecting on both religions, she finally decides that Christianity is better than her own faith and then converts¹⁹. As for Orkais's sister, she is instructed by two or three clerics into "le mistere de la foy Jhesu Crist" ("the mystery of Jesus Christ's faith"), to such effect that "a paines se elle ne cuidoit estre dampnee de tant de reffus que fait avoit." ("hardly did she not believe that her long resistance had condemned her to hell", 430). She is then baptised and marries Ector. Both women thus convert on religious grounds, because they now perceive the superiority of the Christian faith. In *Les Trois fils de roi*, the conversion *motif* is not a mere cliché. It strongly contributes to the religious meaning of the romance.

If the crusading atmosphere is thus very obvious and the values celebrated by *chansons de geste* such as *Fierabras* have found their way into this 15th-century romance, what about ancient virtues, so much prized at the court of Burgundy? Echoes from the Ancient world can be heard as well, yet much more faintly. I quoted at the outset of this paper the statement made by Phelippe's companions at the court of France, comparing his future fame should he go on a crusade, to that of Alexander and Hector. Later on, the great battle opposing pagans and Christians before Naples is said to have resulted in the worst number of casualties since "la grant bataille de Thesalle" (314), i.e. the battle of Pharsale opposing Pompeius and Cesar.

¹⁹ See Suard, *Guillaume d'Orange*, p. 432-433.

More interesting than these mere allusions are the names that the princes choose when hiding their identity. Whereas Phelippe picks a pseudonym, *le Depourveu*, referring to his situation (later changed by the daughter of the king of Sicily into *le Surnommé*), his two companions adopt names of ancient heroes. Onffroy, son of the king of England, changes his name to Ector (258). Although neither the author nor the character explains his choice, any 15th-century reader would have thought of the Trojan hero. Hector was very much admired in the late Middle Ages and was from the very start one of the three pagan *preux* alongside Cesar and Alexander, in the famous list of the Nine Worthies²⁰. Onffroy is later referred to as *le gentil Ector* and *le preu Ector* (268, 279). Both adjectives reinforce the link between the modern hero and his namesake, especially the second one which is most often attached to the name of the ancient hero.

As for David, son of the king of Scotland, he pretends to be called Athis. Less famous than Hector, Athis is an Athenian knight in the *Roman de Thèbes* as well as in its original model, Statius' *Thebaïde*. He is also one of the two main characters in the well-known 13th-century romance *Athis et Prophilias*²¹. One more detail reinforces the correlation between the hero of this last text and the character in *Les Trois fils de roi*. On arriving in Italy (149), David lands in Gaiette (the modern Gaète in the province of Latium), a city later conquered by the three companions (321). But Gaiete is also the name of Athis' wife in *Athis et Prophilias*. As already noticed in the case of Ferrant et Olivier, it looks like the author was playing with names found in various sources, transferring them from animals to human beings, from human beings to places.

When the three companions take back their original identities at the end of the romance, Athis reverts to David and *le Surnommé* to Phelippe, yet Onffroy remains Ector. Why does he keep his borrowed name? I believe that it has to do with the status acquired by the heroes. The three companions, Ector, David, Phelippe, form a glorious triad, a short list of *preux*, which intersects with the list of the Nine Worthies. As already mentioned, Hector is one of the three pagan Worthies, David one of the three Jewish ones²². As for Phelippe, he is not one of the three Christians,

²⁰ The first occurrence of this list is found in the *Vœux du Paon*, a 14th-century romance by Jacques de Longuyon. It had become extremely famous by the 15th-century.

²¹ There is also an Athis in the Prose *Guillaume d'Orange*. See Suard, p. 510.

²² The other two pagans are Alexander and Cesar, the two Jewish, Judas Maccabeus and Josue.

who are Arthur, Charlemagne and Godefrey of Bouillon. Orkais, son of the *Grant Turk*, does take the name of Charles, after his conversion,. Yet Orkais, while presented as valiant, is not on the same footing as the three princes. Charles is also the name of Phelippe's father, the king of France at the beginning of the romance. But, as we have seen, Charles refuses to take part in a crusade and even to send troops. Why is the main hero named Phelippe rather than Charles? It looks like the writer wants to promote a new worthy, replacing or displacing Charles. While Charlemagne, in the epic tradition, and in particular in *Fierabras*, was the leader of the crusading mission, in *Les Trois fils de roi*, Phelippe is the new leader of the war against the Saracens, even if he is never the official chief of the Christian army. Palumbo remarks that "Phelippe, le héros du récit, porte un nom habituel dans l'onomastique royale française, qui est, en même temps, un hommage évident au duc Philippe le Bon." ("Phelippe, the hero of the narrative, has a name common in French royal onomastic, which is, at the same time, an obvious homage to the duke Philippe le Bon")²³ The romance character is thus a strange combination of historical figures: future king of France, he bears the name of a famous duke of Burgundy who dreamed of crusades, although never went. By choosing as its hero a French king, the writer sets his romance in a series of texts stressing the historical subordination of Burgundy to France²⁴. Yet by naming him Phelippe, he flatters his patron and recalls Philippe's leading role in the 15th-century crusading aspiration.

Whatever the reason for this preference, what matters, for my purpose, is that by putting forward three *preux* whose virtues are extolled as the most valuable, the most honorable, the author is in effect redefining prowess. While his heroes might inherit names from pagan and Jewish *preux*, their values are thoroughly Christian. This is why Phelippe can surpass Alexander and Hector, according to his young companions. This statement that we were tempted to dismiss as mere *cliché* (for new heroes are always compared to ancient ones) takes its full meaning here. Alexander and Hector, however admirable, embody ancient values superceded by Christian ones²⁵. Phelippe is not destined to equal ancient heroes but to supplant them. What makes the three

²³ intro. p. 72.

²⁴ See J. Devaux, "*Le Saint Voyage de Turquie...*", p. 66.

²⁵ Unknowingly, the author of *Les trois fils de roi* echoes Chrétien de Troyes' prologue to the *Conte du Graal*: Chrétien opposes Philippe de Flandres' charity to Alexander's *largesse*.

companions superior to their ancient counterparts, is that they are engaged in a different kind of war. They are not fighting for glory, booty, land conquest, but for "la garde et la deffense de la foy" ("to keep and defend [Christian] faith" 124), "pour [l]a sainte foy [de Nostre Seigneur Jhesus maintenir" ("to maintain the holy faith of our Lord Jesus Christ", 88).

The other quality that distinguishes them from ancient heroes as well as from epic heroes such as Roland is their profound humility. The best example is Phelippe who, despite being the son of the most powerful prince in the Christian world, accepts to humble himself, to follow the examples of martyrs and saints whose lives he has been assiduously reading. When his father refuses to let him go to Sicily he retreats into his room where he reads the lives of saints and martyrs:

"Et se retray en une petite chambrette a part et aucuns de ses plus privez avec luy, ausquelz il fist lire plusieurs histoires et vies de sains, servans a la foy crestienne, par lesquelles histoires il veoit les paines et travaulz que les sains, appostres et martirs, avoient souffert pour acquerre la gloire pardurable."

("he retreated in a small room aside with some of his most intimate attendants and asked them to read several stories and lives of saints, who served the Christian faith, by which stories he saw the suffering and hardships endured by saints, apostles and martyrs in order to gain eternal glory." 93).

Heeding the call of the Gospel, he decides to abandon his kingdom and all his friends to go to Sicily (94). He secretly leaves the court of France and rides alone to Spain, a difficult and trying journey:

"En tres brief terme et avant qu'il fust parvenu es Espaignes il fu si deffait et amaigry que peu de gens l'eussent recongneu. Car il n'avait pas la gouverne ne les aises delicieux qu'il avoit accoustumez, dont tant luy desplaisoit que, se la grace de Dieu ne l'eust reconforté, je ne croy pas que il fust venu jusques es Espaignes sans estre en tresgrant dangier de sa vie."

("In a short time and before he reached Spain, he was so wasted and so emaciated that few people would have recognized him. For he did not have the way of life and the

luxuries that he was used to, a condition most unpleasant to him and if he had not been comforted by divine grace, I believe that he would not have reached Spain without putting his life at risk. 97).

When in Spain, he stays with a family of bourgeois who take good care of him when he becomes ill. He recovers after being seriously sick for more than six months, and enters the service of Ferrant, the seneschal of the king of Sicily. Ferrant, who has come to Spain to secure assistance for his master, thinks that he has been unsuccessful since he could not convince the king of Spain to send any troops. He does not know that by bringing with him this new young servant, he will change the fortune of war. Yet from the start, everybody is aware of the young man's virtues. Ferrant is deeply impressed by his companion's humility, beauty, and behavior:

"Et si pensoit en son coeur que s'en armes et vaillances il avoit autant de vertus qu'il a bon corps et belle maniere, ce seroit la plus parfaite chose que Nostre Seigneur Dieu eust fait naistre puis le temps de sa passion."

("And he thought in his heart that if his valiance and his ability in combat were equal to the beauty of his body and to his natural elegance, he would be the most perfect being that God our Lord had brought to life since the time of His Passion."106).

This surprisingly strong statement suggests an analogy between Phelippe and Christ himself: as Christ came down to earth and became man to save mankind, Phelippe left his kingdom and became a simple knight to save Sicily. This analogy is strengthened later on. First, Olivier's men recount that:

"ung jenne homme, comme ung angle en beaulté et comme ung saint Jeorge en vaillance, leur estoit venu, et oncques puis sa venue ne avoient eue que bonne adventure et tous leurs faiz estoient venus a bonne conclusion."

("a young man, an angel in beauty, a saint George in valiance, had come to them, and since his coming they had met only

good fortune and all their undertakings had come to a good end." 168).

Striking is the repetition of *venu(e)* (come), as verb or noun: Phelippe's arrival is presented as an advent of almost religious significance. When Phelippe, rescued by his companions after his near-death at the hands of the Turk, goes through the town, people are so comforted by his sight "qu'il sembloit que Dieu feust descendu entr'eulx" ("it seemed that God had descended in their midst." 292). Then the king of Sicily compares Phelippe's achievement in the war to the grace of the Holy Spirit:

"Puis la venue du Surnommé, oncques mal ne nous advint par sa seule vaillance, comme se la grace du Saint Esperit nous fust survenue."

("Since the Surnommé's coming, no harm befell us, thanks only to his valor, as if the grace of the Holy Spirit had come to us."338).

For most characters in the story, war against the Saracens is seen as a Christian duty, whether they take it on or not. For Phelippe, it is also an *imitatio sanctorum et martyrium*, i.e. an *imitatio Christi*. But for those who meet the young knight, he is a God-sent being, an angel, a reincarnation of saint George, who, as in many *chansons de geste*, comes to the rescue of Christian knights.

His companions, Ector and Athis, are as humble and devout as he. Indeed the three friends share the same virtues, the same ideals to the point that "la pensee d'eulz trois estoit toute une" ("the three of them shared only one way of thinking", 315)²⁶. Their humility and meekness at home are matched only by their fierceness on the battlefield:

"Quant ilz estoient a l'ostel retournez et qu'ilz estoient desarmez, ce sembloient a veoir propres angles tant humbles, doulx et courtois se moustroient; et armez, entre leurs ennemiz,

²⁶ See also p. 279: "Tant amoient les trois compaignons l'un l'autre que freres germains ne pouoient plus ne mieulx amer. Oncques n'eurent que ung logis, une bourse et ung seul vouloir. Jour de leur vie n'eurent une felle parole ensemble."

ilz estoient tant cruelz que le plus assureé ne les ouzoit attendre ne regarder tant les doubtoient."

("When they were back in their lodgings and had put down their arms, they looked like genuine angels so humble, meek and courteous was their behavior, yet, when armed, among their enemies, they were so cruel that the most confident adversary did not dare wait for them nor look at them, for he feared them highly." 315).

Their submission to their master Ferrant²⁷, their patience in all their trials, their modesty when their identity is finally revealed, all are Christian virtues that explain and justify their heroic deeds:

"Chascun recordoit les biens et les vertus des trois jennes serviteurs de Ferrant, et disoient que Nostre Seigneur Dieu propre pour le recouvrement de ce royaume, le Tout Puissant de sa tres benigne grace, les avoit celle part envoyés."

("Everybody was recalling the worth and the virtues of Ferrant's three young servants and was saying that God Our Lord, the All-Powerful, with kind Grace, had sent them that way for the recovery of this kingdom only." 325).

In *Fierabras*, Olivier, and not Roland, fights the Saracen giant. Fierabras had asked to face either Roland, Olivier or Ogier the Dane. Charlemagne first requests Roland to take up the challenge. But Roland's feelings are hurt: the night before, he was teased by Charlemagne and some of his old companions who had come to his aid to Olivier's rescue during the day. Charlemagne bragged that the old knights had fought better than the young ones²⁸. Let the old ones take up

²⁷ When Phelippe first enters Ferrant's service, he somewhat resents having to put up with the Turks' provocation. He then disregards his master's order to retreat and unwillingly puts Ferrant's life in danger. Conscious of being responsible for a *mesaventure*, he manages to save his master and to capture Fierabras (108-110). He thus had to learn humility and submission.

²⁸ "Puis le soir vous vantastes, quant fustes enyvré./ que li viel chevaliers qu'avies amené/ L'avoient [mout] miex fait que li geune d'asé.", v. 159-161 (Then at night, while drunk, you bragged that the old knights that you had brought with you had done quite better than the young ones).

the challenge, scorns Roland when urged to fight Fierabras²⁹. A violent quarrel ensues, during which Charlemagne strikes Roland who draws his sword against the emperor and squarely refuses to go and fight. Olivier, although seriously injured the day before, accepts the challenge. Roland's arrogant behavior and his subsequent anger call to mind Achilles' wrath, as Le Person notes in his introduction:

"la rancœur et la fureur de Roland contre Charles (...) rappelle la célèbre colère d'Achille, replié sous sa tente et refusant de partir au combat, dans l'Iliade, sentiment épique par excellence."

("Roland's resentment and his rage against Charles recalls Achilles's famous anger, when the hero retreats into his tent and refuses to fight, an exemplary epic feeling."185).

Achille's passion is thus transferred to Roland in *Fierabras*. Yet Roland's rage does not have the same damaging consequences as Achilles'. It merely disqualifies him, in favor of Olivier who outshines his old companion, so much so that in *Les Trois fils de roi*, Roland disappears altogether! Whereas Fierabras, Olivier, even his good horse Ferrant, find their way into the story, with major transformations as we have seen, Roland's name is never even cited. The reason is that Roland, like Achilles, embodies virtues that are not valued in our romance: violence, excessive pride, disobedience. In the 12th century, the *chanson de geste Raoul de Cambrai* questions *demesure* by staging a hero prone to that passion. It condemns Raoul's excess, yet betrays its fascination for a superhuman hero, inhabited by *furor*³⁰, and thus capable, like Roland, of the most amazing feats³¹. Raoul is reprovved not because of his

²⁹ "Or i para des viex con vos en aidere[z]", v. 164 (We shall see how the old knights will come to your rescue).

³⁰ On the notion of *furor*, see David Konstan's essay.

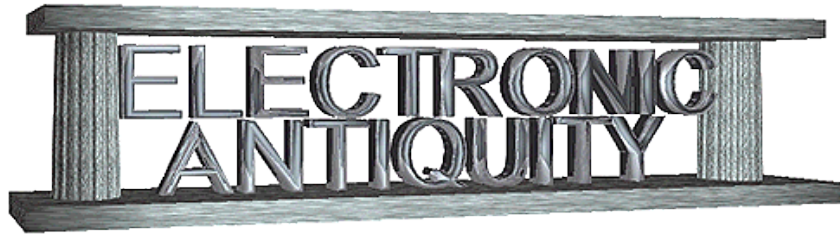
³¹ See Laurence Harf-Lancner's essay.

violence, but because he misdirects it. By the 15th century, *Les Trois fils de roi* completely exclude such passion and promote three heroes remarkable precisely because of their humility. These new worthies may take up names of ancient heroes such as Hector, they may fight the same enemies as Roland, yet they embody values that were prized, if not practiced, in 15th-century courts: meekness, submission to the prince, piety and willingness to comply with one's religious duties. The warrior's *furor* has been controlled and will be unleashed only in very specific circumstances: on the battlefield, against enemies of the Christian faith. At the cross road of epic and romance, *les Trois fils de roi* combines heroic virtues with Christian ones.

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Between Prophecy and *Plainte* in the *Roman de Troie*

Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner
Boston College
Bruckner@bc.edu

If we wanted to define human civilization in a single pregnant formulation, we could say that it's the formal power to transform into value that which in nature hastens toward death.¹

Taking his cue from the “eye-witness” accounts of Dares and Dictys, Benoît de Sainte-Maure “translates” the entire history of the Trojan War from beginning to end, indeed from multiple beginnings in the stories of Jason and the Argonauts and Helen’s abduction by Paris, to the successive endings in the deaths of individual heroes, the annihilation of Troy, and the victors’ unhappy homecomings.² As Greeks and Trojans fight their way through cycles of destruction and restoration, Benoît’s thirty thousand plus octosyllabic verses are scanned by the repeated

¹ Ernesto De Martino, *Morte e pianto rituale* (p. 214), quoted and translated by Harrison 2003: 71.

²Benoît admits to adding “a few good words” (*aucun bon dit*, 142), while maintaining complete fidelity to his sources, Dares’ sixth-century *De excidio Trojae*, his main source, and Dictys’ *Ephemeris belli Trojani*. Both are chronological and continuous surveys of the war based on the Homeric cycles elaborated since Antiquity from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

refrains of events predicted and lamented. A network of announcements, foreshadowings, and predictions anticipate in general and in detail the chronological sequence of disastrous actions to come, “à venir” in Benoît’s French, producing *Aventure*, one of the narrator’s key terms linked to the inevitabilities of *Destinee* and *Fortune*.³ Those anticipations are inextricably intertwined with a series of formal lamentations, set pieces of rhetorical display that connect personal and communal responses in the face of death and the dead one whose body lies before the mourners and unleashes their grief, confirming that what was to come has indeed arrived. Doomsday prophecies and dolorous “plaintes,” announced and pronounced by characters and narrator alike, together form a nexus that crisscrosses the whole trajectory of Benoît’s romance.

When seen in conjunction with one another, prophecy and lament offer a privileged view into the philosophy of history, human life, and art inscribed in the *Roman de Troie*, where the chain of cause and effect builds inexorably from one act of violence to the next, triggered by the mechanism of revenge and required by the code of chivalric honor that motivates both Greek and Trojan knights, the medieval avatars of Homeric heroes. If the narrator seems to flirt again and again with the possibility that actions might turn out differently, no sooner does he open some wiggle room to escape from Fortune’s downfall, than the force of destiny reasserts itself with an effect paradoxically all the greater to the extent that the unavoidable is so often tied, as the narrator remarks, to such small things, “si petite achaison” (10182):⁴ the misprisions of rumor, the attractions of a woman. The interlocking set of prophecy and *plainte* forces characters as well as readers to acknowledge what we all know from the beginning, what destruction, what death has always been there from the start, however much we (or they) seek to deny it. Human lives lost will not return when Troy is restored, and even that restoration will remain temporary, subject to a new round of destruction in the apparently endless cycle round Fortune’s wheel. Only the work of art that transposes event into monument can escape the losses incurred through the passage of time and the replacement of successive

³ Benoît’s adventure is not yet connected to the excitement of the unexpected, as it will be in later twelfth-century romance.

⁴ See also 17551, 19299; cf. 18174, 18189-90. The two editions referenced here are Constans 1968 and Baumgartner and Vielliard 1998. Both editions use the same verse numbers.

civilizations.⁵ The claimed Trojan and Greek sources, already transposed into Rome's Latin, make way for Benoît's French translation; antiquity yields its riches for a new Trojan War, elaborately reinvented for the twelfth-century public associated with the court of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine. From the vantage point of the twenty-first century, we can measure across the chain of literary treasures what remains and what inevitably changes. The goal of this study then is discover what the rhetoric of prophecy and lamentation, commonplaces of history and epic, essential building blocks in the architecture of Benoît's romance, reveal about this medieval story of Troy.

In the *Roman de Troie*, prediction and lament face each other like book ends, neatly placed around the events narrated: prophecies, dream visions, divine oracles look forward to future action; the mourner's *planctus* turns back toward the past and confirms prophecy's fulfillment. Together they furnish a series of parentheses within parentheses, successively opened and then gradually closed. Of course, the interplay of shifting perspectives in time is more complex, as it plays with and against the rigorously linear progress of the narrative, intertwining past, present, and future. Mourners also look toward a future bereft of the loved one whose death they would share; occasionally they even see death imminent and pronounce their lament in its expectation. From the characters' point of view, the sequence of events cannot jump the natural order of unfolding time, though the special insight offered by predictions might give them some advantage in anticipating what lies ahead, some knowledge to avoid the disasters announced. Instead, prophecy remains largely powerless on the level of action, powerful rather on the level of knowledge and emotion. It weighs heavily on the readers who share the author/narrator's omniscience from the very beginning. Prediction and lament fit together so snugly, over and over again, that our sense of foreboding grows ever stronger; fatality despite foreknowledge takes and keeps hold even when the narrator or characters hypothesize other possible endings. If the Trojans hadn't failed to burn the Greek ships, if Achilles marries Polyxena ...

To appreciate further why these tantalizing "ifs" can never materialize, I would like to sketch an overview of who speaks in the voice of prophecy and lamentation and, especially important, where or when the author/narrator deploys their performances in direct discourse

⁵ Benoît's *uevre* (literary work) is tied to the characters' *uevre* (action, event, exploit). On the "polysemous *uevre*," see Rollo 1998: 204-5.

to structure the rhythm of his narrative. Prophesying and lamenting are equal opportunity modes of speech: male and female characters appear in both categories, although Benoît's romance particularly favors the female representatives. Not surprisingly, these non-heroic, supporting roles feature women, while the heroes of war are necessarily men. But we may wonder if the performance of these speech acts does not require a kind of heroism that complements, as it comments on, that of the warriors.

Helenus and Cassandra, brother and sister among the sons and daughters of Priam and Hecuba, are both identified as diviners (*devins*, *deviner*—e.g. 2940-2, 2953-4), but Paris also claims a view into the future, thanks to the dream that is Benoît's rationalized version of the Judgment of Paris (3845-928). According to the not disinterested dreamer, the gods promise success for a revenge attack on the Greeks who destroyed the first Troy, killed Priam's father, and kidnapped his sister. The real diviners quickly correct this false vision with a triple, cross-generational round of baleful prophecies about the new Troy's destruction, should Paris marry a Greek woman. First Helenus speaks to the family of divinely inspired visions, sent to him three times (3961, 3946-82). Then, after Troilus rejects the warning as lying cowardice, Panthus recalls before the assembled counsellors that his father Euforbius, whose prophecies have already been verified, gave the same warning repeatedly before he died at the age of 360 plus years (4089-104). Finally, as the Trojans prepare to leave, Cassandra's voice rings out: Troy will be reduced to ashes, if the ships depart; death, ruin, and long exile await them all (4144-56). But three warnings sound in vain; in the narrator's words, Fortune was too much their enemy (4165-6). As the fatal action unfolds, Cassandra continues to berate the Trojans with her dire predictions of Troy's destruction, though each time she is locked away in a room so that no one can hear her cries.⁶ Her prophecies will be poignantly remembered when mourners lament the deaths of Hector and Paris, and they reverberate in the narrator's own ironic comments on the characters' *mesaventure* (4124), his frequent warnings to readers about deaths soon to be told. After Troy's ruin, Cassandra launches a new

⁶ The narrator reports two more of her speeches at considerable length, when Paris and Helen marry (4883-928) and when Trojans and Greeks bury the dead after the second battle (10417-46).

series about the Greek homecomings, thus extending her oversight of the action through the final phase of catastrophic events.⁷

The narrator's foresight is at once widest in scope and most specific in the detailed unfolding of ruin and death. The long summary of events (145-714) that follows his ample prologue operates much like the characters' predictions:⁸ he foretells the future for his readers in "brief words" (145) that occupy 570 verses, a monstrous amplification of the exordial topic announcing a work's subject. *Amplificatio* is Benoît's default mode. His summary outlines all the major events that will be retold, from Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece, the first provocation in the chain of vendettas, to the realization of Ulysses' dream cryptically announcing his death at the hands of Telegonus.⁹ Every subsequent move is foreseen: "I will speak to you of Peleus ... and you will hear the prophecies ... and after how Tenedon was taken and by whom ...," and so on and so on. The forward thrust of the summary reaches to the very end of the romance and allows us to anticipate and then tick off each event as it occurs in the story. At verse 30301, with nothing more to tell, the narrator announces the epilogue (with some understatement) in the very next verse: "Here we will end in fitting measure, our book has lasted quite a bit" (*Ci ferons fin, bien est mesure:/Auques tient nostre livre e dure*, 30301-2).

Benoît is equally generous with specific reminders of each new disaster about to unfold. He undercuts Paris' great satisfaction with the raid on Tenedon and the treasure stolen from the Greeks (including Helen): "from now on folly grows" (*Dès ore engroisse la folie*, 4602). Sagitaire's valor will not last long (6905-6). By falling in love with Polyxena, Achilles has planted death in his breast (17538-9). Many more will die before the end of the day (14265-6), this last example a kind of leitmotif repeated countless times in the battle descriptions. But the pièce de résistance of the narrator's warnings is the death of Hector, announced three days and a thousand verses before Achilles actually strikes the mortal blow.

⁷ Except for her particular focus on Agamemnon's and Ajax's untimely endings, Cassandra's prophecies generally operate on a large scale and sketch out the major thrust of the action, once Paris leaves for Greece and Helen.

⁸ Cf. Gauthier 1992.

⁹ When the dream announces that his son will kill him, Ulysses tries to prevent the parricide by imprisoning Telemachus. Without knowing the existence of Telegonus, the son engendered with Circe, the father assumes that Telemachus is thus designated.

A! las, quel perte e quel dolor
Lur avendra ainz le tierz jor,
E cum pesante destinee!
Ne sai cum seit por mei contee,
Ne sai cum nus le puisse oïr.
Le jor deüssent bien morir
Que lur avint, ce fust bien dreiz;
Si angoissous e si destreiz
Furent puis tant cum il durerent.
Onques joie ne recovrerent
Ne je ne sai mie coment. (15237-48)

Alas! what a loss and what sorrow will come to them before three days, and what a heavy destiny! I don't know how it will be told by me nor do I know how anyone can hear it! The day that it befell them, they should have all died, that would have been fitting. They were so anguished and distressed for as long as they lived. They never recovered joy and I don't know how they could have.

Anguished tones of lamentation fill the narrator's prediction, which concludes with a recall of Cassandra's prophecy: "what the wise Cassandra said will now soon happen" (*Ce que dist Cassandra la sage/Avendra tot, des ore mes*, 15252-3). The fatal trap will soon snap shut, and the same exclamations will reappear in his comments, when Hector falls back from his horse, dead, livid and pale: "Alas! what a heavy destiny ... and what a heavy adventure" (*Ha! las! cum pesante aventure!.../E cum pesante destinee!*, 16231, 16233). What is to come has come with the force of malevolent destiny, and Benoît, knowing that recovery is impossible, shares the suffering of all Trojans in the tragic loss of their champion.

This dovetailing of prophecy and lament brings into focus one of the particular traits of Benoît's narrator who, unlike his characters, is able to operate in both modes of discourse. To be sure, the characters who announce the future also suffer grief, as described by the narrator countless times for all participants. But they do not mourn in the form of a *planctus*, lamentation in direct discourse that may accompany other traditional expressions of mourning: tearing out hair and scratching one's face, rending clothes, weeping and crying out, fainting, and so on. The

voice of grief as a rhetorical display is reserved for others—and shared by the narrator: Priam for his father and Troy after the first destruction; the narrator for Protesilas killed during the first battle; Achilles for Patroclus after the second battle; Paris for his brothers, Hector struck down in the tenth battle and Deiphobus in the twelfth; two sets of collective female mourners for Hector; Hecuba for two sons, first Hector and later Troilus, killed in the nineteenth battle; and finally Helen for Paris, killed in the twentieth battle. After Troy's fall, two examples occur when death is imminent: the narrator for Polyxena, the only female character whose heroic death as sacrifice merits a formal expression of grief and regret, and Telegonus for Ulysses, when he learns that it is his father he has mortally wounded (30200-15).¹⁰

The list gives some sense of how the author has spread a dozen laments judiciously throughout his narrative, from the pre-history of war (triggered by the first Greek incursion into Trojan territory during Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece), through all the major stages of the Trojan War's twenty-three battles, and on into the aftermath of Troy's destruction, followed by the debacles of Greek homecomings. Equal numbers are pronounced by male and female protagonists, five by men, five by women, but they are differently weighted not only in terms of the character of each gender's *plaintes* but also in relation to their placement with particular emphasis around two key deaths, Hector's at the center of the romance and Paris' as the last of Priam and Hecuba's sons.¹¹ If all laments share certain key features (the apostrophe to the dead, the vocabulary of affection and praise, sadness and suffering, Benoît's predilection for anaphora), there is one important element shared only by the three men who formally lament, and that is the link they establish between the pain felt before the corpse of a fellow knight and their call for revenge. In this respect, their lamentations are part of the relentless chain of cause and effect, the push for vendetta that fuels the entire cycle of destruction. Priam's lament addressed to his father, "good knighthood" (2892), the noble people of Troy, noble ladies and noble maidens, whose husbands, sons, brothers, nephews, and friends have been killed, sees no possibility of leaving behind sorrow and recovering joy without taking vengeance on the Greeks. Deiphobus specifically

¹⁰ See Huchet 1984, on the question of the dead father, "une obsession constante" in the *romans antiques* (91), and specifically on Ulysses' two sons (92).

¹¹ Their deaths are given special emphasis by their numerical placement in the tenth and twentieth battles.

requests Paris to avenge him against Palamedes to ease his death, and Paris readily agrees in his *plainte avant la lettre*. Achilles mourns his beloved Patroclus and sets into motion Hector's long sought after death, which not only comes at the midpoint of Benoît's romance but serves as its centerpiece.

What about the distribution of Greek and Trojan lamentations? Only three Greek deaths are mourned with rhetorical setpieces, two of them connected with the greatest heroes of Homeric epic: Achilles lamenting the death of Patroclus (as he does in the *Iliad*) and the son of Circe's lament for his father Ulysses, the now problematic hero projected by later tradition and highlighted with a good deal of ambivalence throughout the *Roman de Troie*. The first Greek death marked with a *planctus* is that of Protesilas (7519-30). Addressing the fallen warrior, the narrator regrets the prowess and suffering of the man who first took the port. But most especially, he honors and praises the Trojan who killed him: Protesilas inaugurates the series of many Greeks killed by Hector. "With you the one who will make a ruin of the Greeks inaugurated his career: during it, many will die by his right hand; it cannot be otherwise" (7527-30). From the narrator's perspective, prediction and lament once again interlock. And Benoît, writing for an Anglo-Norman king who traces his ancestry back to one of the heroes to escape Troy's destruction, shows more favor to the losing side whose greatness outshines that of the victors. Demonstrated in multiple ways, that favor also includes a greater focus on heroic Trojan deaths, six of which are highlighted by laments, including all those spoken by female mourners.¹²

Women's voices are traditionally associated with mourning and lamentation, and they are certainly privileged in Benoît's romance to give the keenest, deepest expression to the unutterable grief that accompanies the destruction of Troy and the death of their loved ones. In the context of war, mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters are the ones left behind to suffer the consequences of men's martial actions. The indirect victims of the contest and the killing are themselves unable to take up the sword of revenge. In this respect, the clerkly narrator's own use of the *planctus* resembles that of his female characters, removed

¹² Within the pattern of lamentations, two key figures are set above all the others: Hector first and foremost, regretted by male and female voices in two individual and two collective laments, and Paris, who performs two *plaintes* for his brothers before becoming himself the object of Helen's lamentation (the most rhetorically developed *planctus* in the romance, 22920-311).

from the exploits of war and yet registering its effects. Of course, the women are not immune to a desire for vengeance: after Troilus' death, Hecuba awakens from three days of coma to plot betrayal and seek revenge against Achilles through the arm of her son Paris. Within her lament for this last son, Helen gives a new twist to the motif by calling for Priam and Hecuba's vengeance to fall upon her, the cause of so much suffering. The anomaly of Helen's situation, the lone Greek lamenting a Trojan, will require further comment below. But in general, Benoît's female mourners gaze most intently at the face of death represented by the corpse that lies unmoving before them, forcing them to feel the pain of separation, the loss of a life, and the dread prospects for their own lives as they contemplate a future without the fallen hero.¹³

Those female voices intertwine with the narrator's in order to carry the weight of Hector and Paris' deaths, the heaviest blows that signal the end of Priam's Troy long before we arrive at the actual ending. Andromache's dream vision of her husband's death triggers an elaborate series of failed efforts by herself, Priam, and Hecuba to keep Hector off the field of battle where he is destined to meet Achilles' sword thrust.¹⁴ There are a number of striking elements in the narrator's representation of Andromache's role here. Her dream is the second of three prophetic visions reported by characters—and the complex features they all share become particularly clear in this example. On the one hand, these dream visions provide accurate predictions of a specific future action whose imminence is thus enhanced. On the other, none of the dreams are correctly interpreted by the dreamer (although each interpreter errs in a different way). Here Andromache suggests to Hector that by foretelling her husband's death the gods have offered him an opportunity to avoid what the dream reveals: the divine powers do not want him to die and thus order him not to fight that day (15313-24). That reprieve is nowhere evident in the action and her interpretation reflects primarily, as it does with Paris and Ulysses, a desire to change the course of destiny. Their visions of the future, more limited than Cassandra's general prophecy of Troy's destruction, fit precisely into the stream of detailed, "mini-predictions" constantly announced by the narrator. Alone among these prophetic dreamers, Andromache will share other characteristics with the narrator as well. I suggested earlier that those who foresee the future do

¹³ Cf. Croizy-Naquet's review of the tradition and the distinction between epic lament and female spoken lament in the *romans antiques* (1990: 77-8).

¹⁴ The Old French passage occupies seven pages in Baumgartner and Vielliard's bilingual edition (even numbered pages, 342-54).

not formalize their grief in *plaintes* but I must admit that Andromache acts as something of an exception to the general rule in two instances connected to Hector's death.¹⁵

First, when the narrator informs us that the gods tell Andromache what lies ahead "with signs and visions and interpretations [i.e. premonitory warnings of the future]" (15285-6), he dramatizes the announcement by anticipating her future loss and pain (15287-300). Andromache twice addresses her husband (15301-24 and 15468-84) in an effort to dissuade him from battle before and after he arms. At the prospect of his imminent death, she speaks of her grief with great intensity and anguish. Marvels are signs that demonstrate and admonish, so she wants Hector to know her dream, as well as her anguish (15301-305). Her own body is on the point of failing, such is her fear that she will soon see the body of her husband brought to her on a bier, since the gods have shown her that he will die this very day (15312, 15318). The language she uses imagines that future scene and, though the circumstances are different, her lamentation anticipates the premonitory laments of Paris and Telegonus when Deiphobus and Ulysses lie mortally wounded before them.

Hector is angered by his wife's request, and indeed that anger will grow to hatred when he realizes that Priam has sent out the Trojan army without him. The narrator describes Hector as "enragiez" (15402), enraged to the point that he tells his wife she has lost his love forever (15404-5—cf. 15453-4). "Enraged" is the very adjective used by Andromache to describe Hector in her second attempt to stop him from going out to battle, after Hecuba has fruitlessly begged her son through thirteen verses of direct discourse (15436-48) to think about the women he is leaving behind, defenseless, their hearts breaking, ready to die of grief. "Cruel heart, mad wolf, why don't you take pity for his sake?" (*Cruels de cuer, lous enragiez, / A quei ne vos en prent pitiez?*, 15477-8). Holding up their infant son, Andromache begs this mad wolf to take pity on his son, his wife, mother, brothers, father, on himself. The wife's plea reprises the mother's, as Andromache asks Hector why he desires death so soon, why he desires to abandon so quickly those who must perish without him (15479-84). Before the promised ending, the wife's

¹⁵ However correctly he anticipates his own desire to kidnap Helen, Paris presents a false view of the future when he interprets his dream to fit the Trojans' already expressed desire to seek revenge in an expedition against the Greeks. Thus I do not consider him to be an exception like Andromache to the general separation of prophecy and lament among the characters.

variation on a *planctus* combined with prophecy ends by echoing the narrator's own exclamations of pain at the tale he must relate: "Alas! what an evil destiny" (*Lasse! cum male destinee*, 15485).

Hector's refusal to heed reiterated warnings is explicitly motivated by his sense of honor and fear of shame, personal and public emotions that go to the heart of the Trojan War. Hector speaks several times of the shame he must avoid (15343ss, 15581), and his reaction is later confirmed by the Trojans who mock a man frightened by dreams (15683-5).¹⁶ In this scene, as Hector arms, his eyes glinting with anger, the narrator describes him as more fierce than leopard or lion (15558), animals traditionally deployed to describe knightly prowess. The comparison is more flattering than Andromache's mad wolf and translates the worthy qualities Hector personifies as the Trojans' primary defender. We are in no doubt that Hector occupies the apogee of the narrator's admiration as well as that of his countrymen and women. The long encomium of Hector's accomplishments (16815-48), which follows the description of his tomb and sums up his prowess without peer, recalls the praise Charlemagne bestows on his dead nephew in a famous *planctus* at the center of the *Song of Roland*. For a contemporary francophone public, the long list of Roland's conquests may echo in the enumeration of kings Hector killed with his own hands; the narrator cannot even list the more than 300 dukes, admirals, and captains he killed. If only Adventure, Envy, and Destiny hadn't intervened, if only Hector had lived two or more years longer, he would have destroyed his enemies (16840-3). Not even Achilles who killed him is Hector's equal. Indeed, the narrator insists here, as at the moment of death, on the stealth of that cowardly blow, slipped in when Hector is distracted by trying to capture a Greek king (16219-28, 16816-19). Neither Hector nor "the scoundrel" Achilles (16222) will meet death in a fair fight, "cors a cors" (16816), as if these great heroes cannot be brought down except through some devious ploy. Both Achilles and Hector are propelled to their encounter with death by the fury of their anger, exploded when they see the comrades they abandoned on the verge of defeat without their aid. The madness caught by Andromache's crazy wolf metaphor—a madness expressed by Hector in the sudden hatred of his beloved wife, by Achilles in the sudden forgetting of his love for Polyxena—seems to

¹⁶ Just so, Troilus condemned the first prophecy of Troy's destruction as cowardice coming from Helenus.

confirm the old saying that the gods first drive mad those they would destroy.

Andromache joins in the avalanche of mourning unleashed by the arrival of Hector's corpse in Troy. Here the narrator pulls out all the stops, orchestrates the sequence of laments like the antiphons of antique tradition, alternating choral responses and individual lamentations. First the maidens and ladies of the city perform as a chorus, saluting Hector in a double series of anaphores that praise his prowess as defender and mourn his loss (16329-39): they will soon be led away as captives; "your death is so savage that it is neither reasonable nor right for us to live on after you" (16348-52). Paris serves as a kind of *princeps planctorum* for the men. In his twenty-verse lament (16377-96), framed by the narrator's descriptions of his grieving father, brothers, and friends, Paris again highlights Hector as their defender, wonders who can hold up their standard as he did, before vowing to avenge him even at the price of his own death. Hecuba now arrives, accompanied by Andromache and Helen. They can hardly stand as they weep, beat their palms, sigh with tears running down their faces. Together they regret their "evil destinies" (16417-18) and lament briefly as a chorus: "Oh, Cassandra, yours and Helenus' prophecies are so very true, would they had been believed, then it would not have so ill befallen us. Alas, so wretched, how will we ever again be happy?" (16418-24). The voice of Hecuba continues alone for the next thirty-two verses (16425-56), before the narrator takes over to describe all the torment felt by Andromache, Helen, and Polyxena.¹⁷

As the leader of the female chorus, Hecuba speaks directly to her son's body. Hers is the fourth, the culminating *plainte* for Hector. She is a mother lamenting the loss of all joy, all love; her son and defender lost, in whom can she find delight, what can she expect from the future? The intimacy of their link is expressed here in the dialogue between *je* and *tu*, I and thou:¹⁸

¹⁷ Hector's wife has grieved so much all day she must be carried off; disfigured by her acts of mourning, she lies in her bed and thinks—or is it the narrator? free indirect discourse seems to move between their two voices—how Troy would still be safe if only her warning had been heeded. Now the dolorous destructions have come to pass and still will come (*Li dolerous destrüement/Sunt avenu e avendront*, 16477-8).

¹⁸ Theirs is a physical intimacy that connects Hecuba to the son born from her own body, a motif she does not yet articulate as such but will do so elaborately in her later lament for Troilus (21702-50).

“Filz, fet Ecuba, quel atente?
En cui avrai ja mes entente?
En cui sera mes mis deliz?
Trestoz mis joies est feniz,
Perdue ai ma deffensïon.
N’aveie amor se a tei non.” (16425-30)

“Son,” said Hecuba, “what expectation? In whom will I place hope anymore? In whom will I find delight? All my joys are finished; I have lost my defender. I placed all my love in you.”

Rhetorical embellishments of question and anaphora, rhyme and negation, carry the pain of her first reaction looking to the future and seeing nothing. “Son, sweet friend, ... dear son”—two further apostrophes move into a second phase (16431-9); *je* speaks to *vous*, the formal you, as Hecuba gazes at her son’s face, his closed eyes. She believes he is not dead, commands him to open his eyes and look at her, chastises the child who refuses to speak to his mother. The moment does not last long: “Dear son, you cannot open your eyes.” He can no longer return her gaze, share the living contact of a look exchanged. Now she can connect past and present: this marvel, this anguish is indeed the sorrow anticipated by her sighs, by the great disquiet of her wandering spirit; every day since the war began has been prelude to this moment. She looks more closely at her son’s corpse.

“Soz vos vei la terre vermeille
Del sanc qui del cors vos avale.
Ha! cum vei or cel bel vis pale,
Douz, biaux e proz, pius e rianz!” (16440-3)

“Under you I see the earth red from the blood that pours from your body. Ah! how pale I now see this beautiful face, sweet, handsome and smiling, filled with prowess and piety!”

Hector is now addressed by his personal attributes and public virtues: sweet, handsome, and smiling, filled with prowess and piety. But the list of adjectives used to personify him seem strangely displaced, after the blood pouring out of his body has turned red the earth underneath him, leaving his beautiful face pale. Hecuba sees that now and will continue to

embroider on what she can and cannot see, or rather sees and does not want to see, as she turns again to the future.

“Que fara mes li reis Prianz?
Qui li fara ja mes la rien
Por que il ait joie ne bien,
Confortement ne alegrance?
A! douz amis, quel atendance!¹⁹
Cum vos departez tost de nos!
Dreiz est que nos muirons o vos,
Que nos ne vos veions morir,
Ne par force çaien saisir
As enemiz—cui Deus maldie!—
Par cui avez perdu la vie.” (16443-54)

“What will Priam do from now on? Who now will do for him something that brings him joy or good, comfort or happiness? Ah, sweet friend, what hope? How soon you have left us! It is right that we die with you, that we not see you die, nor be seized right here by the enemies—God curse them!—by whom you have lost your life.”

The dialogue is now between *vous* and *nous*, we two, father and mother. In the *Life of Saint Alexis*, one of the earlier monuments of French literature, mother, father, and wife each have a *planctus* to speak their grief for son and husband. Here the father, fainting thirty times over his son’s corpse, is unable to utter a word of lamentation. But his wife now enlarges her mourning to include his. Priam’s future, like hers, can no longer have any cause for joy. The parents of a dead son, the king and queen of a Troy at the mercy of its enemies will have no comfort, no further happiness. Her questions furnish their own answers and make the son’s death, which they should not have to witness, a vision of their own future deaths when the Greeks will seize them right in their own citadel.²⁰

¹⁹ We can hear in this question and rhyme an echo of Hecuba’s opening line (16425). Cf. her lament for Troilus—no more “atendement” (21747)—and Achilles’s own use of *atendance* (17712). This related set of terms functions as a sort of leitmotif through which love stories parallel war stories in Benoît’s romance.

²⁰ Hecuba’s interjected malediction, asking God to curse the Greeks, will echo in her subsequent lament for Troilus, where she complains bitterly against the

Robert Pogue Harrison speculates, along with Vico and Hegel, on the trajectory traced in human history from the unarticulated vowels of animal grief to the stammering stops of consonants, the articulated language of human lament.²¹ He argues that “it is in the objectified death of the other ... that we must first look for the ground of the conjunction between language and death” (171). In Harrison’s view, Hegel’s “sublated or removed self” is located in the human corpse before whom we grieve and discover our own “‘negative self of desire’ ... the self’s impossible desire to reunite what death has separated” (65). In a brief study of both antique and modern laments, Harrison explains how this rhetorical act accomplishes the work of mourning, transposing grief from sign to symbol, that is from personal, annihilating emotion to public gesture. In that symbolic mode, the mourner moves from the expression of the negative self (“I want to die with you”) to the obligation of separation (“I must return to life”). In the face of the other’s dead body, the now “mortalized” self must acknowledge, as all humans must, that “death [is] the very condition and ground of life” (70). Benoît’s romance articulates this acknowledgment repeatedly through the interlocking mechanisms of prediction and lamentation, but it also demonstrates the resistances and difficulties his characters (and we humans) experience in accepting that obligation, most especially when confronted by the corpse of a loved one.

In Hecuba’s lament, she sees her son dead. Although she passes through a moment of illusion, wants to believe him still united with her in life, she soon sees (again) that they are irrevocably separated by the threshold of death. In Hector’s dead body, she can now foresee her own death and that of Priam who stands here not only as the other parent but as a figure of the soon-to-be-destroyed city of which he is king. The closing words of her *planctus* are keyed to irreparable loss: Hector has lost his life, and she will never see him again. What she sees before her is an empty corpse, not the living, laughing, courageous defender of his mother and all the other inhabitants of Troy who live now on sufferance in the expectation of their own deaths. Hecuba ends by invoking God not to curse his killers this time, but to request that she live no more. She does not accept the separation of death, still seeks the son she will never see again: may they at least be united in the absence of life.

gods, Mars, Jupiter and Pluto, who hate the Trojans and love their enemies, however many sacrifices she offers them (21715-40).

²¹ 2003: 55-71.

“Nel verrai ja, lasse cheitive!
Ja Deu ne place que plus vive!” (16455-56)

“I shall never see him again, miserable wretch that I am! May
it please God that I live no longer!”

With her final words, Hecuba faints over Hector’s body, effectively initiating her withdrawal from the living, leaving behind the formal language of grief.

But she will not die here, not yet; the mother will have time to grieve for other sons.²² Benoît brings Hecuba on stage to lament that other Hector, the son for whom she lived after Hector’s death, as she makes clear in her *planctus* (21741-6). Why did she give birth only to see her sons die? How can a mother forced to bear such grief not kill herself with her own hands (21705-14)? There is no future to expect (*Or n’i a mais atendent*, 21747). With Troilus dead, what was still a question when she mourned Hector—what expectation? what hope? (*quel atente? ... quel attendance?*)—is one no longer. Once again, Hecuba closes her lament longing to join her son in death.²³

The mother grieving for her sons is the very image of life’s paradox, life intertwined with death, the human condition pushed to the limit of suffering. The one who gives life bestows death with that gift but hopes never to see it, hopes only to see the side of laughter and delight, not unbearable sorrow when life given ends, against the natural order of things, before her own. Hecuba’s reiterated desire for death is not fulfilled until she has seen the death of her last child, Polyxena, sacrificed to Achilles’ vengeance, according to Calchas’ divine augury. In Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (XIII, 553-78), Hecuba’s grief now reaches the point where she can no longer articulate it with words but only the howls of a dog. Dictys, Benoît’s source here, alludes to her bodily

²² Hecuba’s grief for her sons is anticipated repeatedly: by Paris (18728ss), by a dying Deiphobus (19120), by the narrator, when he announces that Troilus will soon die (20660-4).

²³ In addressing Troilus, “Son” (“Fiz”) at the end of her *planctus*, Hecuba rephrases a number of motifs from her lament for Hector: she assures Troilus that her soul and spirit, which lived and delighted in him, will abandon the sorrowful body from which she desires escape and go to him (21741-51). Fainting over the body he has left behind, she remains unconscious for so long that no one thinks she can still live.

transformation only in the name of the place where she is buried, Cynossema, monument of the dog. In the *Roman de Troie*, filled with grief and anger (26554-5), “enragee” (26556) like her son Hector, Hecuba attacks her daughter’s murderers with insults, sharp knives, stones and sticks, until they finally tie her to a stake and stone her to death, burying her in a place called “Engrés” (26575), that is, ferocious, violent. The canine allusion is muted but not entirely erased.²⁴ In whatever version, it is as if this mother maddened by grief has retraced in reverse the fundamentally human trajectory from death to mourning to language, having run through that course too many times to bear. No further *planctus*, no transformation of private grief into public mourning, no preservation of being in human language, only removal, destruction, and death remain to unite her with the nothingness that her children have become.

But we must move back from this figure of maternal annihilation to witness at least briefly two other laments, one spoken by, one spoken for a woman, two other female figures, Helen and Polyxena, who fail to become the mothers who might carry on the Trojan line beyond the city’s destruction. First, Helen of Troy as she is named in legend, but of course she is not Trojan except by abduction from her Greek husband, by adoption through marriage to Paris. At 92 verses, her *planctus* for a fallen husband is the longest by far in Benoît’s romance (22920-311). It serves both character and author as a vantage point from which to look backward and forward over the entire course of the war, summed up and cristallized through Helen’s role in it, the war’s causes and effects laid bare in her person.²⁵ As the narrator pointedly observes, with Paris’ death what Cassandra promised is readily observable by all: “Des or veit hom les devinailles/Que Cassandra aveit pramis!” (22850-1).²⁶

Helen starts her lament in indirect discourse by regretting Paris’ prowess and beauty. It is indeed beauty that has made of these two lovers the perfect couple. Then Helen’s own words burst through, as if the

²⁴ The narrator reports reading in his source that Hecuba only feigned madness to make the Greeks kill her and put an end to prolonged suffering (26578-82). He offers his own lament that such a noble lady should meet so shameful an ending (26585-90).

²⁵ See Croizet-Naquet 1990.

²⁶ The term *devinailles* designates a divine prophecy in Benoît’s usage, but we can also think of “riddle” as it is used elsewhere: the riddle of what will finally bring down Troy as foreseen by Cassandra is solved when the last son dies and Priam buries the signs of his kingship with him.

narrator can no longer contain the intensity of her mourning. She speaks her grief directly to Paris: “In sorrow, tears and weeping, says she, beloved fair lord, I shall die, since I have lost you thus” (*En duel, en lermes e en plor./Fait el, biaux sire amis, morraill/Quant je ensi perdu vos ai*, 22920-2). Love and death are intertwined here, as they will be once again in the last twenty-three verses, when she fervently declares her love, calls upon death to take her, and begs Paris to accept her company. Benoît borrows from troubadour lyric the motifs of *fin’amor*, the lover dying for love, the vows of fidelity, but he makes those familiar words reverberate in a new light as Helen speaks her love to a dead Paris, ends her lament by asking his spirit to wait while she kisses “your face, your eyes, and your beautiful mouth” (23010-11). Love generally does not make a pretty picture in the *Roman de Troie* with its tales of Briseida’s betrayal of Troilus and Achilles’ fatal passion for Polyxena. However perfectly matched Paris and Helen may have been, the center and greater part of her lament acknowledges the tragic dimension of their attraction, not just for themselves, now waiting on the two sides of life and death, but for Priam, Hecuba, their children, and all of Troy. Only one corpse lies before her, but Helen can see in it so many others that have already died or will soon do so. Weighed down by guilt, Helen laments in large measure for herself as the cause of such destruction: why her? why was she born for such a destiny (22934)?²⁷ The hour her life began was cursed, and it will end in an even worse one (*En maudite ore comença./En plus male definera*, 22955-6). With these words Helen reprises the very same couplet used earlier by the narrator, right after his anguished forecast of Hector’s death (15261-2). He, too, spoke of a “male ore” beginning and ending even more badly, producing *malheur*, misfortune, from *mala ora*, the evil hour marked by the stars and their baleful influence over the doings of men. This is the fatality—Destiny, Adventure, Fortune—that hangs over all the participants, using their desires and volition to its own purposes, willy nilly. Helen is the personification of Benoît’s “little causes” that lead stupidly, nonsensically, but inexorably to big catastrophes. In his recital of the Trojan War, she is not even the first cause of strife between Greeks and Trojans, and yet she continues to bear the brunt of the gods’ (and history’s) charge. Helen’s expressions of overwhelming grief, her desire

²⁷ “If only this strange fruit of the father who engendered her had never been born” (22936-7). There is much to be done comparing the motif of birth in Hecuba’s and Helen’s usage (cf. the use of *mar* in the *Chanson de Roland*).

for death, her willingness to be sacrificed on the alter of Trojan revenge, all work to excuse her guilt and endear this faithful daughter of Priam and Hecuba to all those who witness her suffering—including the author Benoît, for it seems to me that Helen and Hector are his preferred hero and heroine among all the characters, if we judge by narratorial comments and overall arrangement of materials.²⁸ But however unfair, Helen's guilt will not disappear from the romance, and she will not get her wish to unite with Paris in death. It is not the abducted wife who will be sacrificed but a more innocent maiden whose loveliness rivals Helen's own.

When Polyxena's imminent death is announced, lamentation breaks out among the city's people. After giving an ample description of their collective sorrow, the narrator assumes the voice of the *princeps planctorum* to approve their reaction, praise Polyxena's great beauty, and regret that she will not pass it along to any descendants.

Las! quel damage e quel dolor!
 Ancor en fust le mont meillor
 Se de li fussent heir eissu.
 Ço qu'ert de bel i fu perdu:
 Sor autres fussent remirables
 E de beauté resplendissables
 Cil qui de li fussent estrait.
 Las! tant i ot doloros plait!
 Cum pesme mort e com haïe! (26457-65)

Alas! what evil and what sorrow! The world would at least have been a better place if descendants had been born from her. That which was beautiful was lost in her: above all others those who descended from her would have been worthy of admiration and resplendent in beauty. Alas! this is such a sorrowful affair! What a terrible and detestable death!"

Repeated exclamations show how the narrator shares in the common grief for an undeserved death (26466-70). When he mourns the loss of innocent life, however, it is not just Polyxena's but the lives of all those

²⁸ Consider the comparison with Briseida, the other woman who has changed sides. Helen may not occupy a lot of narrative space but her deployment at key moments is crucial (cf. Croizet-Naquet 1990).

who might have been born from her, the heirs who would have contributed their beauty to the city of Troy.

As Emmanuèle Baumgartner noted, Benoît presents Troy as the epitome of courtly civilization, uniting wisdom, love, prowess, and courtesy.²⁹ It is the loss of such extraordinary beauty that he laments, here and throughout his romance. Whereas Hecuba's overwhelming grief for her daughter leads to silence and death, the narrator's ability to sustain the work of mourning, turning past sorrow into public testimony for later generations, continues beyond Troy's destruction to announce the "destinees" (26597) of the victorious Greeks whose violence will soon turn back on them.³⁰ In the aftermath of ruin, Benoît follows Greeks and Trojans into a new generation, introduces yet another renewal of Troy, effected by Andromache's two sons, one born of a happier union with Hector, the other born from captivity with Pyrrhus. With Achillides, the grandson of the greatest Greek hero, and Laudamanta, the son of the unsurpassed Trojan hero, the future opens once again to hope and expectation (*bone atendance*, 29793). These two loving brothers, who grow up to become outstanding knights worthy of their forebears, together raise up the lineage that was destroyed and, thanks to Pyrrhus' son above all, restore Troy to great honor and joy, with Priam's line back on the throne.³¹

²⁹ Baumgartner 1989 and 1996.

³⁰ The Greeks' homecomings are destined to become "their great trouble and their great and fierce harm" (26595-6: "lor grant encombrier/E lor damage grant e fier"), punishment for their violations.

³¹ In these final gestures of Benoît's romance (followed only by the contrasting account of Ulysses' death at the hands of his son), we can see realized the program of Troy's restoration promised by Achilles in his bid to marry Polyxena (Baumgartner and Viellard 1998, pp. 426ss, 488ss, especially 22026-33). We can also see a return to the prior unity that should have brought together Greek and Trojan lines, all descended from Pelops, according to Antenor in the report of his peace mission to the Greeks (25028-35): "We all descend from the same lineage ... There should be great love between Greeks and Trojans" (25032, 25034-5). Like the lineage of Cadmus, those other brothers of an Œdipal past represented for a contemporary francophone public in the *Roman de Thèbes*, the Greeks and Trojans of Hector's and Achilles' generation have acted like fratricidal brothers, worthy descendants of the god-tempting, filicidal Pelops. With a new generation, their common ancestry can once again emerge, resuscitated and made whole in the lives and deeds of Andromache's Greek and Trojan sons. Cf. Crozet-Naquet 1997.

It may not be surprising then that, among all the female protagonists who predict and lament, it is only Andromache who, like the narrator, is able to cross the line between prophecy and *planctus*. Baumgartner sees Andromache as a figure for the city of Troy, since her portrait, given at the beginning of the war along with all the family portraits, is the only one to unite all the virtues Benoît associates with Troy: “She was very wise, she was very beautiful, she was very courteous/courtly, she greatly loved honor and prowess” (2950-2). Another virtue should be added to the list: fertility, abundance, maternity, the ability to create a new generation, produce a new, old line that restores what was lost. In this respect, Andromache serves as a figure of the author as well. In fact, Benoît shares in and shares with the constellation of female characters explored here their power to predict, their eloquence in mourning, their motherhood transposed as productivity, and even their beauty, as the author becomes a figure for his *oeuvre*, his work.

To sum up finally, death and restoration operate on three levels within and through the *Roman de Troie*: on the individual and family level, as we see with Andromache and her two sons; on the political level, if we remember Benoît’s Anglo-Norman public, first and foremost the English monarchs, descendants of the Trojan Brutus and founders of another new Troy; and on the literary level, when we consider how Benoît situates his work at the crux of epic, romance, and history, setting himself up as the successor to Homer’s poetic greatness and the historical truth claimed by Dares and Dictys. Thanks to the interplay of prophecy and lament, we have been forced to accept the finality of death that takes away each human born into life, whatever rebirths may occur for cities. We may still wonder if Benoît the courtier insinuates doubts about the future of the new empire founded by Henry II, an English restoration resurrected from the ashes of the previous generation’s civil war, and no doubt a glorious achievement but subject, as was Priam’s Troy, to the vicissitudes of rise and fall, the destiny of another rising power, the rival French monarchy which also claims Trojan ancestry.³² What of the romancer’s own achievement, his effort to bring back to life the monuments of the past, while at the same time making his own bid for literary posterity? Although Benoît rejected Homer as a model (and probably had no direct knowledge of his work), what stands out at the end of this study is the paradox of a twelfth-century author who, despite

³² Cf. Rollo’s argument (1998: 207-22). This cycle will continue to be a family affair.

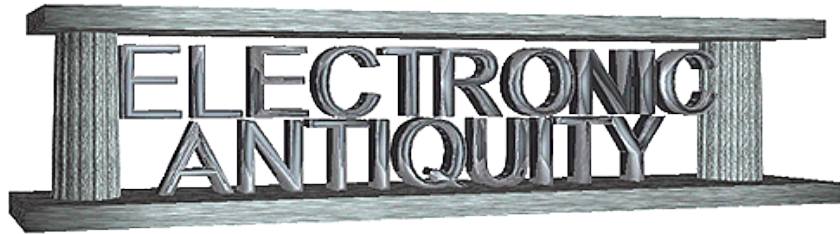
anachronisms that place him and his francophone public in the context of a Christian society, has nevertheless managed to offer a view of history and human life that seems to me as profoundly and gloriously pessimistic as that conveyed by the pagan Homer's *Iliad*.³³ Such is the power of *translatio* and the continued necessity of acknowledging that we humans all share the inevitability of death. Such is the power of language that seeks to preserve what must be lost, whether in a mourner's lament or a medieval romance of the Trojan war.

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³³ On Benoît's deliberate use of anachronism see Petit 2002.

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**The Passions of Achilles: Herbolt von Fritzlar's "Liet von Troye"
and his Description of the Passions of Achilles in light of Herbolt's
Historical Concept**

Maria Dorninger
University of Salzburg
Maria.Dorninger@sbg.ac.at

Translation by Kandace Einbeck, Ph.D.

1) Introduction

There once lived in Greece a King named Peleas. He was noble and powerful. He lived in splendor in his castles and in his country. Food and (costly) garments were abundant at his court. (LT 99-105)¹

With these words, Herbolt von Fritzlar begins the introduction of his "Liet von Troye" (Song of Troy). But what first appears to be a fairy-tale idyll, is soon revealed as deceptive. For this king, who is supposed to

¹ All references to Herbolt refer to the sole edition by Karl Frommann: Herbolt's von Fritslâr liet von Troye (=LT). Special characters are represented in brackets: *Von kriche(n) landen wilēn was/ Ein kvnic der hiez peleas/ Edel vn(d) riche/ Der lebete herliche/ In burge(n) vn(d) in lande(n)/ Vo(n) spise vn(d) vo(n) gewanden/ Was die vulle in sime hofe.*

possess all sorts of virtues, lacks one very important one: he is an unfaithful person. He behaves faithlessly toward his nephew and future heir, Jason, whom he pretends to send out in search of the Golden Fleece in hopes that he will never return. And so, the history of the destruction of the city of Troy evolves, leading finally to the story of Aeneas in Italy. The battles for Troy, in which the hero Achilles plays a special role, take center stage in this work of 18,458 lines. Achilles stands out not only for his courage in battle, but also for his passions. In this paper I will outline how Herbort presents Achilles, how he integrates Achilles into the context of the work, and Herbort's historical concept, which is essential to the portrayal of his protagonist, and hope that by doing so, I will evoke further interpretations. First, it will be helpful to provide some brief information about this author.

2) Herbort von Fritzlar

The author of the "Liet von Troye", Herbort states his name at the end of his novel (LT 18450). Little is known about him. He identifies himself as a *gelarter schulere*, a learned scholar, and must therefore have enjoyed a religious or theological education. According to Joachim Bumke, it is not clear whether Herbort was a member of the clergy at the court of Thuringia or at the Monastery for Canons of St. Peter in Fritzlar. He might have been working as a master or teacher at the monastery.²

His patron was Landgrave Hermann of Thuringia, who gave Herbort the source document for his novel. Herbort includes a dedication to Hermann in his epic. During the first, that is to say, minor destruction of Troy, as Herbort portrays it, the author outfits the leader of the Greeks with the coat of arms of the Ludowingians; a red and white striped lion on a blue field (LT 1326-1335). There is evidence of this coat-of-arms being used in Thuringia as far back as 1179.³ Even though Herbort is often ranked only as a second- or even third-rate poet in the literary histories (Gustav Ehrismann, Helmut de Boor),⁴ some see him in a more positive light. Rolf Bräuer speaks of the "impressionistic - expressive scene and plot" seen in his works.⁵ Herbort's (middle German) language shows rhetorical training, and he shows a marked inclination to omit

² Bumke 1979: 165.

³ Bumke 1979: 165, Schröder 1910: 360.

⁴ To the statements of Ehrismann and de Boor compare Lemmer 1981: 31, Dorninger 2002, 145sq. note 44.

⁵ Bräuer 1990: 158.

conjunctions.⁶ His modest goal is to increase the number of poets, that is to be counted as one of them, and he seeks to reach this through his epic (LT 18456sq.). This claim should probably be counted as an introductory topic, a modesty topos. The very transmittal of the text has indeed justified this modest goal. There is only one complete manuscript of his epic, dating from the year 1333. It was written in Würzburg for the Teutonic Knight Wilhelm von Kirweiler. In this text, the "Liet von Troye" is seen as a prelude to Heinrich von Veldeke's "Eneit." In addition to this one complete manuscript, only three fragments from the 12th century have been preserved. However, the novel may have been more widely distributed than is apparent.⁷ It is considered to be the first extant German-language version of the Trojan material, since the 12th-century 'Vorauer Alexander' by Pfaffe Lamprecht only mentions a description of the conflict in passing. The German-language portrayals of the material reach their zenith in Konrad of Würzburg's "Trojanerkrieg" (Trojan War).

3) Herbort's Sources

Herbort himself is aware of the material's tradition and writes:

*Ze kriechen was sin erste stam/ In latin ez dannen quam/
Hine(n) ist ez an daz welhishe kvme(n)* (LT 49-52)

*Its beginning was in Greece, then it came into Latin and from
there into French.*

Herbort does not refer directly to Homer's work, which, according to Hugo von Trimberg, had not yet been translated into Latin by the turn of the 13th to 14th century. There was a rather suspicious attitude toward Homer during the Middle Ages, since he had, after all in some sense, given the gods to Greece as Hesiod had done. However, Homer was

⁶ Worstbrock 1964: 256, Steinhoff 1981: 1027f., Fromm 1993: 253-256.

⁷ With regard to Wilhelm von Kirweiler, see Bumke 1990: 422. For further literature, the manuscripts, their dating (one complete in Heidelberg and three fragments, two of them of the 13th century), and the dissemination of Herbort's epic, see Dorninger 2002: 146 note 45. Heinrich von Veldeke's "Eneide" and Herbort's "Liet" are linked together by similar features in diverse episodes, like the battle between Camilla and Tarcho (Eneide 8970-90004) and that of Penthesileia and Thelamon (LT 14511-14521).

available in a pseudo-translation by the so-called Pindar Thebanus, the "Ilias Latina."⁸ For the most part, the works of Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis were consulted for information about the Trojan War. Both were regarded as eyewitnesses to the events and therefore considered authentic. A certain Cornelius Nepos (5th century) and L. Septimius are named as translators. Their claims to be eyewitnesses made the works of these two authors a welcome alternative to Homer. Not only poets, but also historians like the 12th century's Otto von Freising referred to them (e.g. "Chronik" I,26). The old French "Roman de Troie" by Benoît de Sainte-Maure was based on both of these Latin sources. This novel of 30 000 verses was written near Tours by a cleric in the circle of King Henry II and Eleanore of Aquitaine.⁹

Herbort refers to these Latin sources for the Trojan War material himself (LT 53,14945), but specifically chooses the *welsche[] buch[]* (LT 65-70) as the basis for his own poem. He received it through the intercession of the Count of Leiningen, through his Landgrave Hermann of Thuringia. The dating of Herbort's novel is determined by the period of Hermann's reign (1190-1271) and the early 90's of the 12th century is the most accepted date. One basis for this is the intention to see the "Liet von Troye" as an extension of Heinrich von Veldeke's "Eneit," to which Herbort also refers (LT 17381).¹⁰ However, Herbort shortens the French original to about half as many verses, thereby keeping his promise to the reader of *brevitas* (LT 96f), at least to some extent. This is especially apparent in the reduction of the descriptions (of battles), the omission of portraits and avoidance of repetition. He has also reordered the episodes. In addition, courtly tendencies are not as prominent in Herbort's work as they are in Benoît's. Approximately one fifth of his verses can be counted as his own. Herbort is aware of his role as a type of protagonist who is

⁸ Regarding Homer and the (skeptical) attitude towards him during the Middle Ages, see Opitz 1998: 18sq., 34., Dunger, p. 20, Dorninger 2002: 138sq note 14, Dunger 1869: 20., also Worstbrock 1964: 249, and for Hugo von Trimberg *ibid*: 250.

⁹ Regarding Benoît and the dating of his novel about 1170 or between 1155-1160 see Bumke 1979: 14, 346 note 211, 413 note 32, Constans 1968 (Benoît, vol. 6): 190, Schöning 1991: 18, Dorninger 2002: 140sq. note 25.

¹⁰ For the scholarly discussion concerning the dating, see Fromm 1993: 246, Steinhoff 1981: 1028, Lengenfelder 1975: 97.

putting the material into German (LT 79f.).¹¹

4) The "Liet von Troye"

Whenever he portrays the war, Herbort mentions his sources again and again. As Benoît does, Herbort begins with the inception of the war and demonstrates the continuation of the events that led to the fall of Troy in a type of chain reaction. Thus the beginning of greater wars is revealed as a tragic linkage of misunderstanding, misconduct, and smaller armed conflicts, and insults that escalate in the end.

King Peleas in Greece, who is *untruwe* (LT 116), is gripped by envy of his nephew Jason. He sends Jason out to win the Golden Fleece, hoping that he will never return. On the journey to Kolchis, Jason and his companions, Hercules among them, make a stop at Ilion (Troy). Since they have not asked permission, they are driven out by King Laomedon, which infuriates Hercules. Therefore, after they have successfully won the Golden Fleece, Hercules returns with an army to Ilion and destroys it, killing King Laomedon. The Greek hero Thelamon kidnaps Hesiona, the sister of the future Trojan King Priam and makes her his concubine, a humiliation Priam cannot forget. After Troy has been rebuilt, a delegation sent under Antenor fails to win Hesiona back and, to make matters worse, Antenor is shamed further by his treatment in Greece. This moves Priam to revenge. With the aid of Paris, he has Helen kidnapped, which, in turn, leads to the well-known Trojan War. Although it ends successfully for the Greeks, the victory is not all it appears to be, for the victors meet with disaster while still in Troy or upon their return home.

5) The portrayal of Achilles and his passions

i) Achilles the Fighter

One of the most important warriors on the Greek side is Achilles, the son of King Peleus and the Sea-nymph Thetis. Almost invincible, he becomes one of the most important heroes in the battle for the besieged Troy. Herbort gives us the first description of Achilles with his

¹¹ For Herbort's method of composition see Fischer 1883: 87, 98, 101, Menhardt 1929: 173-200, Hahn 1996: 102-111. Concerning the descriptions of persons, see in particular Masse 2004.

characterization and description of the heroes fighting on both the Trojan and Greek sides. In contrast to Benoît, Herbort boasts of Achilles' incomparable physical power and his anger in battle, that nothing can resist and no one can quell:

There was no one like Achilles. He was such a bold hero. The crown would probably fit him well. Strong, courageous, splendid, completely one who made much effort. Possessions meant little to him. A happy appearance, strong, solid, limbs well-connected to each other. His weapons, with which he had done such wondrous deeds had been forged by Vulcan the Smith. If he became angry, he fumed like a ferocious bear, then no one could quiet his anger. (LT 2977-2992)¹²

The narrator, who in the course of the plot also sketches a rough biography of Achilles,¹³ repeatedly emphasizes the hero's bravery and militant power. It is on the march toward Troy that Achilles provides the first proof of this boldness and in a certain sense, also of his anger that knows no mercy. On the way the Greeks seize the city Tenedon in Trojan territory and indiscriminately kill all the inhabitants, even women and children (LT 3688ff, 3694f., 3893-3928). Achilles is sent out with 3000 others to seize booty and get provisions for the army. Wherever they go, he and his troops leave behind plundered people and burned land, so that the whole country glows with fire (3903ff.). This makes it clear that war knows no or little mercy. In his anger, Achilles becomes a true "terminator" (LT 4575f.).¹⁴ The heroic super-elevation of Achilles that one finds in Homer, is reduced, however, in the medieval stories. In Herbort's work, Hector proves to be an equal match in battle to Achilles and throws him out of the saddle. Moreover, in their later conflicts, it is

¹² *Anchilles gliche(n) nie gwan/ Er was ein also bederbe man/ Im gezeme wol die kronel/ Starg kvne schone/ Gar ein zerere/ Im was daz gut vmmere/ Harte liep die geste/ Grozze lide feste/ Vzzer mazze wol gelidet/ Im hette sin waffen gesmidet/ Volka der getruwe smit/ Da beginc er wu(n)ders gnuc mit/ Swen(n)e im sin zorn ane quam/ Als ein grimer ber er bram/ So enkonde sine(n) willen/ Niema(n) gestillen.*

¹³ See his education by the centaur Chiron LT 6287-7823.

¹⁴ Lengenfelder suggests Achilles' negative assessment and description starting with Hector's death, Lengenfelder 1975: 83. Nevertheless the description of Achilles' mercilessness seems to contradict this argument.

often unclear who will win the upper hand and survive.¹⁵

In fact, Achilles proves himself to be weak and malleable by becoming easily angered. Agamemnon exploits this when he consciously reminds Achilles of Patroclus' death, in order to spur Achilles on to his full fighting strength for the battle with the Trojans.¹⁶ In this he is successful. In the ensuing conflict, Achilles fights alone against a large number of Trojans and wins:

Achilles went in alone among them to hit, sometimes against a leg, sometimes against a foot, against a knee. His arm never rested before he had hacked everything to bits wherever his hand led the sword (LT 6754-760).¹⁷

Time and again it is his anger over the death of Patroclus that leads Achilles to aggression and thereby to success in battle.¹⁸ His aggression and speed in battle are also reflected by Herbot's descriptive techniques. He often uses asyndeta and employs isocolon and anaphora to emphasize the explosiveness and tempo of the battles in which Achilles fights. At the same time, the horror and pitilessness of war is clear. In the following description, one can imagine the different directions of slash and stab. They come from top to bottom, from back to front, from below to above:

Achilles no longer held back. He struck there and here, through the leg, through the knee, through the belly to the gut, through the hand into the arm, through the mouth and deep into it, through the teeth to the cheek, a blow to the head, to the nose up to the end of the nose-guard, through the palate to the tongue and then further into the lung and further down all the way to the saddle. (LT 8888-8898)¹⁹

¹⁵ See LT 6309—6355. also the fight between the two over the horses, LT 7771-7832. Regarding Hector's equality in battle and reputation, see also Lengenfelder 1975: 84.

¹⁶ LT 6625-6631.

¹⁷ *Achilles ginc da houwe(n)/ Vnder in allen eine/ Wilen gein dem beine/ Wile(n) gein fvzze gein dem knie/ Sin arm der gelac nie/ E er allez daz zv sluc/ Swar im die han daz swert truc.*

¹⁸ LT 10014ff.

¹⁹ *Achilles langer niht enhilt/ Er sluc da vn(d) hie/ Durch daz bein durch daz knie/ Durch den buch in de(n) darm/ Durch die hant in den arm/ Durch den mv(n)t vn(d) darinne/ Durch die zene vnz an daz kinne/ Vf daz houbet eine(n)*

Achilles allows himself to be governed by his anger (over Patroclus' death), but the anger also causes difficulties in his peace negotiations with the Trojans. Achilles is a member of a delegation. During the conversations with Hector, he is so angered that Hector has caused the death of his friend that the two almost come to blows. This can only be prevented by Priam and Agamemnon. Finally, both heroes see the inappropriateness of their actions and are ashamed of it (LT 8177-8292); they can still learn from their mistakes. However, Achilles is not the only person led to aggression in battle by anger, by the thirst for revenge. Other heroes on both sides experience such passions. For example, Hector, enraged over the death of his half-brother Margarito, lunges into battle (LT 10090-97). Achilles' fighting advantage over Hector is clear in the last man-to-man battle with Hector, in which Hector is killed, but Achilles is also wounded (LT 10337-134280).²⁰ The aggression of these two men is compared to that of beasts fighting each other - of a lion and a bear. Without Achilles, the victory over Troy would not have been possible, and the other Greek heroes are well aware of this. (LT 12277-12300). By giving way to his anger, however, he exceeds permissible knightly behavior. For example, Achilles wants to heap upon the dead Troilus the further humiliation of being dragged (LT 13215ff), and when the noble Menon tries to prevent this, Achilles chops him up into a hundred pieces (LT 13280ff.). Like many other epic heroes, Achilles possesses high-quality, costly armor and weapons, which give him an advantage over many others, so that not only his heart, but also his appearance makes him a warrior who is to be reckoned with (LT 7395ff.).

ii) Achilles as a Lover

One year after Hector's death, Achilles is struck by another passion. He observes the Trojans mourning Hector and among these mourners he sees Polyxena, the daughter of Priam and sister of Hector. If before, it was his aggression, anger and impulse that led him into battle, now it is the power of love, the encounter with a woman, that has shaken him to the core. In Homer's epic, it is not Polyxena, but Briseis, who is the

slac/ Zv der nase vnz an den tac/ Durch den gume(n) vnz an die zu(n)ge(n)/ Vn(d) vurbaz in die lunge(n)/ Vn(d) vurbaz vnz an den satelboge(n)!!

²⁰ Concerning Achilles' superiority in battle to Hector versus Hector's moral superiority (humilitas versus superbia), see Lengenfelder 1975: 84sq.

cause of a withdrawal from the fight. But above all, it is Achilles' love for his comrades-in-arms and his friend Patroclus that makes an impression. Benoît also makes reference to these homoerotic components. There are indications of this in his novel in the scenes of mourning and in Achilles' lament over his dead friend. These are also taken up by Herbort (LT 6073-6104). However in the medieval novels, as also in Dares' work, Patroclus must take a back seat to the love of a woman.

When Achilles sees the beautiful Polyxena, it is love at first sight (LT 3277f.). The sight of her and love for her initiate a complete change in Achilles' behavior. In the light of her radiance his power dissolves:

The same young woman took from him his most precious qualities: strength and dependability. The heart of a (fighting) man did not help him when he encountered her, so it seemed to him that her figure glowed like the sun. Any virtues that he had developed were completely gone. Up until this point in time he had been a man. But then his masculine courage (manly essence) disappeared. The love for Polyxena brought him to a state of weakness and he was completely changed within. (LT 11160-11175)²¹

He himself feels this complete change through love, which as it seems to him, takes himself away, and gives him to another (LT 11198-202). For this love he would give even the wisdom of Solomon, the strength of Samson and the handsome features of Absalom.

He would be ready to give every service, follow any command of his lady.²² Then, with horror he remembers that he has killed Hector, Polyxena's brother. The sharp divisions between friend and foe have suddenly shifted, even disappeared. With the signals *wibe tore*, *Samson* and *Salomo*, Achilles gives signals in Herbort's work that we do not find in Benoît's. Benoît's Achilles senses that this love for a woman of the enemy could lead to his downfall.²³ He sees the problems of war. In

²¹ *Die selbe maget im nam/ Das beste daz er hetel/ Sterke vnd stetel/ Im half ma(n)nes herze niet/ Sint er dar ane geriet/ Daz in des duchtel/ Das ir varwe luchte/ Gliche wol der sv(n)nen/ Im was gar entru(n)ne(n)/ Der tuge(n)de der er ie gwan/ Vnz dar was er gewese(n) ein man/ Do zv ginc im der manheit/ Er bleip in einer cranheit/ Durch polixene(n) mi(n)ne/ Vzze(n) vn(d) inne(n)/ Was er aller vurkart.*

²² For Achilles' great love monologue see LT 11175-11250.

²³ Benoît: Roman de Troie 20691-20813. To Herbort compare LT 11181-11232.

contrast, Herbort's Achilles sees himself as a fool, as a slave of his love or of the beloved, completely at her mercy and who has made him throw all caution to the wind. He would give up everything for his *minne*, the whole world and its riches. Only now does he understand the men who have had similar feelings and whom he has taunted. He sees himself among the ranks of the famous slaves of women, like Samson or Solomon, indirectly hinting at his downfall. Samson lost his life when Delilah betrayed him; Solomon turned from God because of his love of women.²⁴ Nevertheless there is an important difference between Delilah and Solomon's women on the one hand and Polyxena on the other. Polyxena is a truly loving woman, who is being used as bait for Achilles without her knowledge. He becomes the victim of his own incautiousness.

Achilles has a serious problem: just as he fought with complete passion, so he loves. He wants to marry Polyxena (LT 11299) and with the help of a messenger, he appeals to Queen Hecuba, her mother, while simultaneously sending gifts to his beloved. King Priam turns out to be a pragmatic fellow and permits the marriage on one condition: Achilles is to negotiate a peace settlement and make the Greeks withdraw. Achilles declares himself ready to do this, calls the Greek princes together and suggests a peace agreement (LT11489-11526). In the arguments he presents to them, Achilles appears more a wise hero than a passionate one. In his presentation against the Trojan War, the guilt of both parties and the senselessness of the war is apparent; it can be understood as a *bellum iniustum* in the Augustinian sense. For this war was not waged as a defensive war, but only added to injustice. This was the result of the kidnapping of King Priam's sister Hesione by the Greeks, revenged by the kidnapping of Helen by the Trojans. Moreover, Achilles appeals to the regard for the free will of man: not only had the Greeks caused the Trojans a great deal of sorrow already, but Helen's wish to remain in Troy should also be respected. Her wish calls the reason for going to war

²⁴ See the corresponding passages about Samson and Solomon in the Book of Judges 16 and I Kings 11. Concerning the topos *minne*-slave, see Maurer 1998: 235 ff. and its representation in art, Ott 1987: 107-125. Rüdiger Schnell emphasizes a distinction between slave of love (Minne-) and slave of woman (Frauensklave), whereas Irene Erfen regards this as problematic and sees a strict distinction not always possible, see Schnell 1985: 476sq., 490sq, Erfen 2001: 755, Dorninger 2002: 376 note 2. In Herbort's work the distinction between these two seems vague. Lengenfelder 1975: 88sq. interprets this kind of *minne* by which Achilles is touched as negative. He is represented as far from the ideal of *Minne*.

into question for him and for many others. In the battles that followed, Achilles is consistent in not interfering - to the detriment of the Greeks.²⁵ When asked for his help in battle, however, he does not act in a wise manner. He is not even polite, but behaves like a stubborn child; he doesn't look at the questioner and doesn't say a word (LT 11932-34). Only Diomedes is able to account for his strange behavior, since he is also affected by it. He recognizes in Achilles the symptoms of love-sickness, which is described several times by Herbot in a manner similar to Ovid's:

*He is pale and wan and looks very bad. How well I can recognize it in his eyes and his cheeks. The lord is caught and completely without courage on account of a woman or a girl (LT 12198-204)*²⁶

With this, he hits Achilles' sore spot. Achilles can hardly keep his anger (*zorn*) (ZT 12222) about this revelation in check, and it almost causes a duel with Diomedes. In the subsequent battles the Greeks are vanquished by the Trojans. This results in an inner conflict between the power of *Minne* and Achilles' anger, but at first love prevails (LT 12819-12875). In a later battle against the Trojans, a reversal for the Greeks threatens to end in catastrophe. Only now does Achilles act. His anger and his eagerness for war now overcome any love.

*And when Achilles recognized it, a great anger seized him. Therefore his benevolent mood caused by [his] love disappeared. His anger was so rapid that it overcame him and pushed back the love as if it were nothing. Indeed, he valued any love very little. Anger was in him. As he fumed in anger, he threw on his hauberk, tied on his helmet, on to the horse, the spear in his hand, and at his side shield and spear. See how eager the lion is that seeks [prey] because he is hungry (LT 12996-13013).*²⁷

²⁵ Lengenfelder regards Achilles' reaction as close to treason in refusing to fight against the Trojans, Lengenfelder 1975: 90.

²⁶ *Er ist bleich v(n) missenuare/ V(n) vil vbel getan/ Wie wol ichz ersehe(n) han/ An ouge(n) v(n) an wange(n)/ Der herre ist gefange(n)/ V(n) gar verzaget/ Vm ein wip oder vm ein maget.*

²⁷ *V(n) als er [Achill] ez rechte gesach/ Vil zorne im wart/ Des verging im der zart/ Den er vo(n) mi(n)nen hete/ Sin zorn wart also drete/ Daz in der zorn*

But this breach with love has dire consequences for Achilles. In the battle against Troilus, he receives a serious wound that forces him to leave the battle (LT 13062-64). Although judged by the Trojan royal couple as *vnstet/* inconstant (LT13088), he now receives word of Polyxena's love (LT13100-110). Achilles' reentry into the battle, which causes a bitter loss for the Trojans with the death of Troilus, enrages Queen Hecuba. She wants to kill him by devious means, since she judges him to have betrayed them and wants to repay him in kind. Hecuba calls Achilles to the house of prayer near the gravestone of Troilus and Hector under the pretext of giving him Polyxena as his wife in order to save country and family. Achilles falls for it. Since he loves Polyxena, he forgets caution, *as so happens to many whom love has blinded* (LT 13558f.)²⁸ Twenty armed men under the leadership of Paris (obliged to do so because of a hasty promise) wait for him and his comrades and kill them (LT 13563-136720). Thus his love for Polyxena turns into a trap for Achilles. A beautiful gravestone for Achilles with the picture of Polyxena tells the reason for his death (LT 13748-790). His son Pyrrus avenges his death (LT13861) after the fall of Troy by killing the innocent Polyxena on his father's grave (LT 16412-482).

6) Epilogue

Herbort describes the hero Achilles as a man, but also as a great warrior and hero who is led by his passion for war and battle. This was also sparked by revenge for the death of his friends. Only his love for Polyxena seems to be able to tame this passion for a short time. Achilles' character is not portrayed as a superman. Led by his passions, passions which could have been expressed in socially acceptable ways, he nevertheless sometimes behaves in an unknighly manner, as a child or

vberwant/ V(n) die mine verswant/ Als ez ein niht were/ Im was ioch v(n)mere/ V(m)me deheine mi(n)ne/ Der zorn was im inne/ Do er vo(n) dem zorne enbran/ Do schut er sine(n) halsberc an/ Sine(n) helm er vf bant/ Vf daz ros sper an die hant/ Zv site(n) schilt v(n) swert/ Seht wie der lewe gert/ Der schaffe als er hungerec ist. For military activity as remedy for a lovesick person as Ovid recommends, see Lengenfelder 1975: 89. However, the situation in the "Liet" appears different. Achilles did not fight because he had given his word and not due to lovesickness.

²⁸ *Als manige(m) geschiet/ Der durch mi(n)ne wirt betroge(n).*

by throwing all caution to the wind.²⁹ On the one hand, he is an almost invincible hero, but he also shows weakness even in battle and is thereby portrayed as humanly fallible. His death comes by betrayal, when he is led into a trap.

Like Achilles, the other protagonists in the "Liet von Troye" are shown as defined by human feelings or rather, passions. Hecuba's trick had led to Achilles' death. But her trick in turn came from the desire for revenge, since she could not get over the deaths of her sons Hector and Troilus. She legitimizes her behavior by citing Achilles' breaking his pledge not to enter the battle, but to try to make peace. Anger, sadness, revenge often define the characters. Thus the war also becomes a place of revenge, where the blood of a victim spurs another on to revenge. No one appears to remain free of blame and negative behavior. Even the Trojan women are portrayed not only in their righteous mourning over their dead, but also in spiteful, negative gossip (LT 12790-808). Even positive feelings seem to have negative results - for example, the honest message of love from Polyxena (LT13100-110) results in Achilles' rash actions. Within the chain of passion and blame in which human life is enmeshed, Herbort presents the fall of Troy as something that can only have occurred through *untruwe* and *vurretenisse* (LT 1787f.) The point of origin for the process of disaster is the *untruwe* of King Peleas in Greece (LT 116), which finally culminates in the conquest of Troy, but does not bring happiness to the victors. Murder and death are soon to be found in their camp. However, even the betrayers Antenor and Aeneas quarrel and separate. Achilles' fate, in which *untruwe* (betrayal, breaking his word) and deception are mirrored, demonstrates essential elements of Herbort's concept of the depiction of the fall of Troy. Moreover, Herbort is clear about the influences to which the Trojans and Greeks were subject. Their gods, their religion, is clearly assigned the role of the opponent of God, for example, when Herbort identifies Apollo (to whom the Greeks appeal) with Satan (LT 3462).³⁰ The unfolding of the fall of Troy, as well as the fate of the individuals, thereby falls into a role of opposition to God. This opposition allows us to integrate it into the concept of *civitas Dei* and *civitas terrena*, that Augustine had outlined in his "City of God" and which had been revived in the 12th century by

²⁹ Legenfelder 1975: 88 f., 91 f. regards Achilles in Herbort's description as an Anti-hero. He does not behave or succeed as a courtly knight but instead is drawn by Herbort as a exponent of vices - as a counterpart to Hector.

³⁰ For the presentation of religious cult in the "Liet of Troie" compare Dorninger 2002:140sq note 25.

Otto of Freising.³¹ The destruction of Troy becomes a deterrent *exemplum* within the *civitas terrena*, demonstrating what wrong actions and passions lead to in the long run, even destroying the lives of the victors. King Peleas' behavior, his envy and desire to destroy his successful nephew Jason, appear to refer to the motif of the snake and its role in the Fall of Adam.³² For here we also find the motif of jealousy that can destroy a person's life and has resulted in unspeakable sorrow during the course of history. Within the *civitas terrena*, however, the epic portrays a world without forgiveness and mercy and therefore doomed.

The safe distance of the time in which the events of the epic play out is sometimes breached and approaches the present time of the reader. For example, Cassandra prophesies the life of Jesus and the events of the Last Judgment; for this she is counted as a Sibyl (LT 1697ff, 3271).³³ Other references, such as those to the *artes liberales* (LT 7663-7676), bring the events into the present and destroy the illusion that such things could only have happened in antiquity, in a non-Christian world. The vehemence with which Herbort again and again portrays the horrors of war, deceit and *untruwe*, as the results of passion, appears to transmit a message for his day. It is possible that Herbort was writing at a time marred by armed conflict. Since the death of Emperor Henry VI in 1197, the Empire had been plagued by conflict between the Staufers and the Guelfs. The landgrave himself contributed to this by siding with the party that was most advantageous for him at the moment, but he was unable to protect the principality of Thuringia from war's great destruction.³⁴ *Untruwe* and deceit were the order of the day in the Empire and could have had a destabilizing effect leading to its downfall. Central questions of the *civitas terrena* could be discovered in their own time and the fall of Troy could serve as a cautionary example for a Christian Empire.

³¹ Regarding the *civitas terrena* compare Augustinus, De civ. dei XV,2sq. or XIX,17,26. For the concept of *civitas terrena*, Augustinus and Herbort, see Dorninger 2002: 148 note 46, Lengenfelder 1975: 94sq.

³² Concerning the snake's motivation, see Genesis 3. Envy as motivation, or as similarly related to it - hostility, hatred, and jealousy - is given in numerous literary works, e.g. in "Wiener Genesis" (1060-1080), "Anegenge (12th century).

³³ For Cassandra and her equivalence or identification with the Sibyl of Marpepos, see Dorninger 2002: 157sq. note 63.

³⁴ See Lemmer 1981: 14 ff., 121, Bumke 1979: 160-168. Grundmann describes the political situation in the Empire. He describes Hermann of Thuringia as "bestechlich", corrupt, id. 1973: 17-26.

Inexorably, Herbort depicts the destruction of Troy, driven by human passions and feelings. Only once does it come to a halt, and for a brief moment in the midst of war, peace and reconciliation between Greeks and Trojans seems possible: this is the moment when Achilles abandons himself to another passion, to love, which can bridge the gap between friend and foe.

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