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Aeneas as Political Commentaries on
Augustus

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Poetic Portraits of Aeneas as Political Commentaries on Augustus

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Many ancient authors believed that Vergil's Aeneas was the epitome of a good man. One such author, Tiberius Claudius Donatus, wrote a commentary, published in the fourth century CE, which includes about one hundred pages of paraphrase per book of the *Aeneid*. Writing in order "to help his son read the *Aeneid*" (Starr 26), the very first thing Donatus sets about explaining is the kind of work that Vergil wrote: *Primum igitur et ante omnia sciendum est quod materiae genus Maro noster adgressus sit; hoc enim nisi inter initia fuerit cognitum, vehementer errabitur. et certe laudativum est...* ("First therefore also before everything it must be known what kind of material our Maro undertook; for unless this is understood amongst the beginnings, it will vehemently be in error. And certainly it is laudatory...," Donatus 1.2.7-10).¹ Not wanting his son to be confused, at the outset he wants to make sure that he knows that the main genre of the *Aeneid* is praise, and as a result of this "Vergil's basic goal is to praise Aeneas and, therefore, Augustus" (Starr 29). Donatus was not the only ancient commentator to think this. Another commentary, written by Servius around the same time as Donatus, states *intentio Vergilii haec est: Homerum imitari et Augustum laudare a parentibus* ("This is Vergil's intention: to imitate Homer and to praise Augustus by means of his parents," Servius *praef.*83-4). Through the works of these two commentators, at least one ancient opinion of Aeneas is revealed. As late as the 4th century BCE, one of the stronger images of Aeneas was that of a man to be praised.

This characterization of Aeneas is one that Augustus hoped to use in his favor. Augustus' family, the Julian Clan, worked very hard to ensure that they would be regarded as descendants of Rome's founders. A statue of Aeneas, along with Romulus and Mars, appeared in the *forum Augusti*, and the Julian clan claimed to have gotten their name from Aeneas' son Iulus (Ascanius). In addition to the fact that Aeneas as the founder of the city bears many parallels to

¹ All translations are my own unless otherwise stated

Augustus as he rebuilds Rome, both literally, through his governmental reform, and figuratively, through his building program, it is easy to see Aeneas as a reflection of Augustus. Vergil characterizes Aeneas as the ideal Roman, exhibiting all of the traits all good Romans were supposed to have. Aided by Donatus and the ancients who thought like him, Aeneas also becomes someone who deserves compassion, since he is mistreated by the gods and the women in his life. This creates an overall image, in regards to both Aeneas and Augustus, of a good man who experiences bad things but never does any himself.

Vergil was not the only author to recount the deeds of Aeneas in the form of epic poetry. Ovid also includes his own version of the Aeneas story in lines 13.623-14.582 of his *Metamorphoses*. The fact that this work was published after the *Aeneid* and contains references to Vergil's poetry makes it clear that Ovid was writing in response to Vergil. Each of these authors was received differently by Augustus. Vergil was praised by the emperor, who received many early drafts of the poem. It was no secret that Ovid and Augustus had a rocky relationship. Ovid was banished from Rome for a song and an error in the same year that he published the *Metamorphoses*, supposedly because his works violated Augustus' moral reforms. He was very unhappy about this, writing many letters to Augustus from exile. One, *Tristia* 2, contains some very interesting insights into what Ovid thought of Augustus' treatment of Vergil:

et tamen ille tuae felix Aeneidos auctor
 contulit in Tyrios arma virumque toros,
 nec legitur pars ulla magis de corpore toto,
 quam non legitimo foedere iunctus amor (*Tristia* 2.533-6)

“And nevertheless that lucky author of your Aeneid
 Conveyed the arms and his man into Tyrian beds,
 Nor is any part from the whole text read more
 Than the love joined by an illegitimate bond”

While this letter seems to be criticizing Vergil for delving in to the genre of amatory poetry with the Dido episode, it is the last two lines that are the most interesting. According to Ovid, the most popular part of the *Aeneid* is the section that can be read as promoting morals contrary to Augustan moral reforms. The aim of these reforms was “the repression of those forms of non-marital sexual relations considered unacceptable by Roman society, particularly adultery” (McGinn 340) so as to promote marriage and childbearing. Sergio Casali states that “By characterizing the love of Aeneas and Dido as *non legitimo foedere iunctus*, Ovid turns against Aeneas (and Vergil and Augustus) the essential point around which the ‘Augustan’ reading of *Aen.* 4 revolves: the marriage of Dido and Aeneas was not a true one... [and] precisely for this reason Aeneas (and Augustus) have committed a scandalous point fault” (Casali 155). And Ovid, by stating *nec legitur pars ulla magis de corpore toto/quam non legitimo foedere iunctus amor* (Tristia 2.535-6), points out that the Dido episode of the *Aeneid* is one of the most popular parts of the epic, revealing how Vergil’s hero is blatantly violating these moral reforms. This poem, therefore, serves to highlight Ovid’s political standing and relationship with Augustus: he is angry that he was punished for something that Augustus overlooked in Vergil’s poetry. Therefore, by severely abbreviating important passages from the *Aeneid*, Ovid emphasizes the bad aspects of Aeneas’ character in order to paint a negative picture not only of Aeneas, but also of Augustus himself.

I will track how Ovid twists Vergil’s characterization of Aeneas is through looking at each author’s use of deception. In ancient Rome, being known for deception was not a good thing, and is most commonly attributed to Greeks, as is seen in Vergil’s characterizations of Ulysses and Sinon. Therefore, how each author uses the language of deception within their respective works can give insight into how they felt about Aeneas. Each authors’ use of the verbs

decipio, *fallo*, and *ludo* as well as the noun *fraus* will be examined. In order to narrow the scope of what is to be examined, only the language of deception used in the stories of the women in Aeneas' life, Dido, Creusa, and Lavinia can be considered.

Aeneas and Dido: Who is to blame?

The first and seemingly most important woman in Aeneas' life is Dido, the queen of Carthage. The diction of deception is present, although rare, in book four of the *Aeneid*, which tells of Dido and Aeneas' love affair. At first it is not Aeneas who has deceived Dido, but her first love Sychaeus: *postquam primus amor deceptam morte fefellit* ("after my first love cheated me having been deceived by his death," *Aen.* 4.17). At lines 84-5 is the first instance of Dido being the one to deceive someone, although in this case she is trying to deceive herself: *aut gremio Ascanium genitoris imagine capta/detinet, infandum si fallere possit amorem* ("Or she having seized him holds Ascanius in her lap, the image of his father/ as if she was able to deceive the unspeakable love," *Aen.* 4.84-5). Finally, *fallo* is used when Dido realizes that Aeneas has tricked her into believing that he would stay: *At regina dolos (quis fallere possit amantem?)/praesensit* ("but the queen sensed the trick beforehand, for who is able to deceive a lover?" *Aen.* 4.296-7). Finally, in the end it is Dido who does the deceiving, for she tricks her sister, Anna, into helping her build her funeral pyre, under the pretense of a sacrifice. Anna, when she realizes what Dido's true intentions were, exclaims "*me fraude petebas?*" ("Were you seeking me deceitfully?" *Aen.* 4.675). Vergil uses deception with Dido ambiguously: she is not only deceived, but a deceiver, making her equally to blame for the disastrous end to her story. Because Dido is both the deceiver and the deceived, this implies that Aeneas is also both deceiver and deceived, placing blame on neither of them. Because of this ambiguity, Aeneas' relationship with Dido does not reflect badly upon Aeneas and through him Augustus.

Aeneas' love affair with Dido is the first Vergilian episode that Ovid chooses to abbreviate severely. What took Vergil 705 lines to cover, Ovid breezes by in four:

excipit Aenean illic animoque domoque
 non bene discidium Phrygii latura mariti
 Sidonis; inque pyra sacri sub imagine facta
 incubuit ferro deceptaque decipit omnes. (*Met.* 14.78-81)

“She welcomed him there to both her spirit and her home
 About to endure not well the departure of her Phrygian husband
 The woman of Sidon, and on a pyre having been made in the image of a sacrifice
 She fell on his sword and having been deceived she deceived all”

Very few authors have offered insight into why Ovid would shorten this episode so much. Some, like Stephen Hinds, believe that Ovid did this because he wished to bring into the foreground the episodes he found most fitting for his work, that is Vergilian stories of metamorphosis (Hinds 105). Others, like Richard Tarrant, believe that “radically abbreviating a story can show deference to an earlier version by implying that it has left nothing more to be said” (Tarrant 26). Beyond this, some authors think that there is no need to elaborate the story of Dido because her characteristics have been transferred to some other character within the *Metamorphoses*. In her novel *Epic Succession and Dissension: Ovid, Metamorphoses 13.623-14.582, and the Reinvention of the Aeneid*, Sophia Papaioannou describes how Dido's traits have been transferred onto Circe in the Circe-Canens-Picus episode (Papaioannou 117-126). In a similar vein, R.A. Smith believes that going into the details of Dido's story is unnecessary because her story has already been covered in that of Medea in *Metamorphoses* 7. He points out that Medea's self address when she realizes her feelings for Jason closely resemble Vergil's diction when describing Dido's reasoning for excusing her affair with Aeneas. In book 7, Medea states “*coniugiumque putas speciosaque nomina culpae/Imponis, Medea, tuae?*” (“Do you think it a marriage, and place these good sounding/Names on your crime,” Medea?, *Met.* 7.69-70). Vergil

echoes this language when he states that Dido *coniugium* vocat, hoc praetexit nomine culpam (“She calls it a marriage, she covers her crime with this name,” *Aen.* 4.172).² With these women as her substitutes, Ovid would have been rather repetitive if he had told the story of Dido again in detail. For all of these reasons, there has been little discussion about why Ovid would shorten this episode so much.

I suggest that Ovid is shortening this episode in order to promote his anti-Augustan ideas. This can be seen by examining diction in this section. Ovid borrowed many words from the *Aeneid* in his reworking of the Dido story. In line 79, Aeneas is not mentioned by name, but is referred to as *Phrygii mariti*. Although this may seem like a simple enough epithet, *Phrygius* is most often used by Trojan enemies in contempt. The only other time this combination of words occurs is when Juno, known adversary of Aeneas and his destiny, is scheming with Venus to make Dido fall in love with Aeneas. She says *liceat Phrygio servire marito* (“let her serve a Phrygian husband,” *Aen.* 4.103).³ It makes sense that Juno would call Aeneas by a contemptuous name, as she is vehemently opposed to him for the majority of the epic. But it is hardly respectful for Ovid to call Aeneas by this name, unless he is expressing negative feelings toward Aeneas and his treatment of women. By echoing Juno’s statement, Ovid recalls the fact that Dido did not enter this relationship with Aeneas willingly. Ovid’s diction also serves to remind the reader that this episode will not end happily: “the phrase *non bene...latura* recalls *moritura* which is repeatedly referred to Dido” (Casali 2006). This reworking of the epithet *moritura* into a phrase that underemphasizes the results is an example of the rhetorical device *litotes*. Ovid’s euphemism

² Smith page 101: “In the passage from *Metamorphoses* 7, one can see that Medea’s self address ‘*coniugiumque putas speciosaque nomina culpae/inponis, Medea, tuae?*’ (69f.) is intertextualized closely with the portrayal of Dido in *Aeneid* 4, for these words recall Vergil’s description ‘*coniugium vocat, hoc praetexit nomine culpam*’ (*Aen.* 4.172)”

³ Casali (2006) page 155: “Even the expression *Phrygius maritus* to indicate Aeneas is taken directly from the fourth book of the *Aeneid*. But who uses it? Who utters the phrase? It is Juno’s: *liceat Phrygio servire marito...* (*Aen.* 4.103). ‘A venomous line, for *Phrygius* is often a term of contempt used by the enemies of Troy and *servire* implies the abjectness of Dido’s love’ (Austin ad loc.)” (Casali 155)

does not conceal the fact that Aeneas' affair with Dido will end badly, but instead brings this into sharper focus. In using the rhetorical device *litotes*, Ovid is using understatement in order to emphasize the implications of this episode.

Non bene latura is not the only instance of *litotes* in this passage. In fact, the abbreviation of the Dido episode into four lines itself is an example of this rhetorical device. *Litotes* is defined as understatement in order to emphasize the truth. Cutting down the Dido episode from 705 lines to four is extreme understatement. Ovid does this to force the audience to recall many bad aspects about the Dido/Aeneas relationship that Vergil covers with his ambiguity. The first of these is the fact that Aeneas' relationship with and abandonment of Dido is one of his most impious acts. For a man whose most famous trait is his piety, Aeneas is expected to remain loyal to his loved ones. Therefore, abandoning Dido is not something that he should do. The second thing that this use of *litotes* reminds the audience of is that Dido is indeed not about to endure well Aeneas' departure. Instead of covering up the disastrous consequences of this relationship, this four line summary of Dido and Aeneas' affair brings them into sharper focus. Therefore, like the diction, the abbreviation in this passage creates a negative image of Aeneas.

Where Vergil was ambiguous about who was at fault for the disastrous ending of the *Aeneid*, Ovid's diction of deception points the finger solely at Aeneas: "*decepta* in line 81 confirms Dido's view of her desertion from *Heroides* 7, thereby unambiguously assigning responsibility to Aeneas, and affirming Dido's sense of her treatment at *Aen.* 4.330: *non equidem omnino capta ac deserta viderer* [so that truly I not seem entirely captured and deserted]" (Thomas 302). Ovid points out here that Aeneas is the bad guy, who deserted someone who considered him her husband. Also, by calling Dido *decepta*, Ovid also seems to be reminding the audience of exactly how Dido fell in love with Aeneas: Cupid disguised himself as Aeneas' son

and while sitting in her lap filled Dido with desire for Aeneas. His word choice is again used to remind the audience that Dido is a victim: the love that will destroy her is not her fault. She is the victim not only of Aeneas, but also of the gods.⁴ Instead of maintaining ambiguity, Ovid suggests that Aeneas is at fault, revealing the negative undertones of this episode in the *Aeneid*.

Ovid's use of the word *decepta* is also interesting when viewed in relation to the rest of the text of the *Metamorphoses*. One of the main themes of the *Metamorphoses* is sexual violence, as 52 out of the 250 tales in the poem contain some sort of rape. Ovid's diction for rape was varied: while most of the verbs used to mean rape come from *rapio*, others are sometimes used. *Decipio* is often used when a god uses metamorphosis in order to trick a woman into sleeping with him. While deception is used in this manner many times throughout the *Met.*, it occurs most commonly in Arachne's tapestry from book six.⁵ By using this same verb when describing Dido, it seems as if Ovid is including her amongst the long list of rape victims in the *Met.* This not only casts Dido and Aeneas' relationship in a dark light, but also reminds the audience of another tale of rape that Ovid neglects to include: "according to a note reported by Servius, however, the relationship between Aeneas and Anius's daughter was yet again different: Aeneas raped her in secret, and fathered a child by her, whose name is lost in the manuscript tradition" (Casali 2007, 201). This suggests that Ovid is recasting Aeneas as a serial rapist with a tendency to abandon his victims. Thus, the Augustan hero Aeneas is recast as a Phrygian man

⁴ This creates an interesting parallel to Medea in Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*. In both of these works, these women are forced by a divine hand to fall madly in love with a man who will later abandon them.

⁵ *Maeonis elusam designat imagine tauri/Europam* (The Maeonian woman depicts Europa deceived by the image/of a bull, *Met.* 6.103-4); *[Iuppiter] aureus ut Danaen, Asopida luserit ignis* (Jupiter as gold deceived Danae, as a flame deceived the Daughter of Asopus, *Met.* 6.113); *[Neptunus ut] aries Bisaltida fallis* (Neptune, as a ram, you deceive the daughter of Bisaltes, *Met.* 6.117); *ut pastor Macareida luserit Issen* (Phoebus as a shepherd deceived Isse daughter of Macareus, *Met.* 6.124); *Liber ut Erigonen falsa deceperit uva* (Liber as a false grape deceived Erigone, *Met.* 6.125)

who has a steamy affair with a woman, possibly raping her, and then abandons her, the complete opposite of the pious picture that Vergil paints.

Ovid's diction also reminds the audience that Aeneas' deception has negative consequences not only for his image, but also for Rome herself. Once Dido realizes that nothing will dissuade Aeneas from leaving, she contrives a plot to prepare for her suicide under the cover of a sacrifice. She accomplishes this mostly through her sister Anna. But it is not only Anna whom Dido deceives in her suicide plot: her entire household is involved in the preparations for her 'sacrifice'. In this way, it is as Ovid says, Dido *decepit omnes*. But her deception goes even deeper: she never revealed the true depth of her crazy love for Aeneas and in this manner tricked him into believing that she would be able to handle his departure. Therefore, Ovid's *decepit omnes* serves as a reminder of Dido's deathbed curse against Aeneas and his ancestors at the end of book 4 of the *Aeneid*:

tum vos, o Tyrii, stirpem et genus omne futurum
 exercete odiis, cinerique haec mittite nostro
 munera. nullus amor populis nec foedera sunt.
 exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor
 qui face Dardanios ferroque sequere colonos,
 nunc, olim, quocumque dabunt se tempore vires.
 litora litoribus contraria, fluctibus undas
 imprecor, arma armis: pugnent ipsique nepotesque. (*Aen.* 4.622-9)

“Then you, Oh Tyrians, keep that stock and the whole future race
 Busy with hatred, and send these gifts with our
 Ashes. May there be neither love nor treaties with those people.
 May some avenger rise from our bones
 Who will follow the Dardanian colonists with fire and sword,
 Now, or once upon a time, at whatever time the force will give itself.
 I pray that the shores be hostile to the shores, the waves to the
 Waves, weapons to weapons: Let them and their descendants fight.”

It is with these words that Dido curses the Romans to fight eternally with the Carthaginians. The tenses of Ovid's verbs indicate that it is Aeneas who is to blame for this curse: he deceived Dido

(*decepta*) and therefore it is his fault that she curses (*decepit*) his legacy. Through this, Aeneas' actions become the start of the Punic wars, which would end up being some of the most costly the Romans ever fought. In this way, this deception language again harkens back to the language of rape, though rather indirectly, since the Punic Wars can be seen as the future, metaphorical rape of Rome by Hannibal. Dido is very impressive in that she manages to not only hurt Aeneas, but also his descendants and the empire he will create.

Ovid also discusses the relationship of Dido and Aeneas, this time from Dido's perspective, in *Heroides* 7. Throughout this poem, Ovid again utilizes the language of deception in order to show how Dido feels about how Aeneas treated her. Forms of *decipio* are used twice within the 200 lines of the poem: first, at line 71, where, in the context of asking Aeneas what he would see if he were about to die, she assumes that he would see "the image of your wife having been deceived will stand before your eyes, sad and flowing with blood with her hair loose" (*coniugis ante oculos deceptae stabit imago/tristis et effusis sanguinolenta comis, Her. 7.71*); and next, when asking for forgiveness from her dead husband for her unfaithfulness, she says "the worthy founder deceived [me]" (*decepit idoneus auctor, Her. 7.109*). In both of cases, Aeneas is the one deceiving, and Dido is the one being deceived. Ovid also uses *fallo* in order to show Dido's feelings. Dido states that Aeneas is going off to find "another Dido, whom you will deceive again" (*altera Dido/quamque iterum fallas, Her. 7.20*). Line 37 includes two references to the deceptive nature of Aeneas' relationship with Dido: "I am deceived, and this same image is thrown at me in falsehood: that man disagrees with the nature of his mother" (*Fallo et ista mihi falso iactatur imago: matris ab ingenio dissidet ille suae, Her. 7.37-8*). *Fallo* and its noun form, *fraus*, also occur in the section where Dido is asking Aeneas to think back on his life as if he were dying. She says "first the perjuries of your false tongue rush at you/and Phrygian Dido

having been compelled by deceit to die” (*protinus occurrent falsae periuria linguae/et Phrygia Dido fraude coacta mori, Her. 7.69-70*). Finally, Dido accuses Aeneas of lying about his entire background, saying “For your false tongue did not begin from us” (*neque enim tua fallere lingua/incipit a nobis, Her. 7.83-4*). By constantly having Dido repeat that she feels deceived, not only is Ovid showing exactly how much hatred Dido has for Aeneas, but he is also highlighting the impiety of Aeneas’ actions toward Dido. Dido is always the deceived one, and therefore Aeneas is always a liar. Thus, Ovid casts Dido purely as a victim.

Dido’s statement that she was not the only woman Aeneas deceived prompts one to reexamine Aeneas’ relationships with the other women with whom he was romantically involved in the *Aeneid*. As a prince in Troy, Aeneas was married to Creusa, one of Priam and Hecuba’s daughters and the mother of Ascanius. He seems to have cared for her, as he shows concern for her wellbeing. When he realizes that there is no way to save Troy, Aeneas is immediately concerned not only for his son and father, but also his wife (*subiit...Iuli, 2.560-3*). Aeneas then rushes home to get his family to safety before the whole city is destroyed. However, despite his concern for her safety, she is forgotten in his haste to get out of the city. In Aeneas’ words:

hic mihi nescio quod trepido male numen amicum
 confusam eripuit mentem. namque avia cursu
 dum sequor et nota excedo regione viarum,
 heu misero coniunx fatone erepta Creusa
 substitit, erravitne via seu lapsa resedit,
 incertum; nec post oculis est reddita nostris
 nec prius amissam respexi animumue reflexi
 quam tumulum antiquae Cereris sedemque sacratam
 venimus: hic demum collectis omnibus una
 defuit, et comites natumque virumque fefellit. (*Aen. 4. 735-45*)

“Here some unknown unfriendly divinity ripped my confused
 Mind from me trembling. For in fact while I follow pathless
 Roads in my running, and I depart from the known area of the roads,
 Alas, torn away by sad fate my wife Creusa
 Stopped, whether she wandered from the road or sat down tired,

It is uncertain; and never was she returned to our eyes.
 Nor did I look back at her having been lost or turn my mind back
 Before we came to the mound of old Ceres and her sacred
 Seat; after everyone had been gathered together here at last
 One was absent, and she deceived her companions, both her son and her
 husband.”

Aeneas, the man whom his men had described as marked by his piety, forgets about his wife.

Although he claims that the gods distracted him (*hic...mentem*, 4.735-6), in light of Ovid’s condemnation of his treatment of Dido, this statement is turned from an innocent explanation into an excuse to leave his wife behind. If Aeneas had thought to look over his shoulder more often, maybe his wife would not have gotten lost. In fact, it seems as if he was planning on this, since in his plans for escape Creusa is always told to follow from behind:

longe servet vestigia coniunx (*Aen.* 4.711)
 “...let our wife watch our footprints from far off”

pone subit coniunx (*Aen.* 4.725)
 “...my wife comes behind”

Why would Aeneas place his wife far behind him, where it would be harder for him to keep an eye on her, and where she is more likely to get lost, if he loved her as much as he claimed?

In view of the Ovid’s characterization of Aeneas as a philanderer, it can be suggested that Aeneas does this to make it easier for him to find other lovers, since he can feel no guilt for betraying his wife if she is dead. In fact, according to Roman law, death was one of the only ways of ending a marriage while keeping reputations in check (Buckland 117). And even more, although it was his plan to place her at the rear of those escaping Troy, “Aeneas insinuates that the responsibility [for her death] is Creusa’s, probably in a[n]...attempt to justify himself” (Grillo 53), since she chose to sit down or wander off (*substitit, erravit*, 4.739). Another interesting diction choice here is *fefellit*, yet again another term of deception. With this word, Aeneas is adding more blame to Creusa. It is not his fault she got left behind, it is hers because

she deceived everyone into thinking that she was following close behind. Thus, Aeneas tries to cover up his fault in losing his wife by blaming her, rather than his lapse in piety toward her.

This strange event is explained by Creusa herself when her shade appears to Aeneas and she cites the will of the gods. Once he realizes that his wife is missing, Aeneas immediately goes off to find her. He is not even able to find her body; instead, her ghost appears to him, telling him *...non haec sine numine divum/veniunt; nec te comitem hinc portare Creusam/fas, aut ille sinit superi regnator Olympi* (“...these things did not come without the/divine will of the gods, nor is it permitted for you to carry Creusa/from here as a companion, nor does the ruler of supreme Olympus allow it,” *Aen.* 2.777-9). This statement is reminiscent of Aeneas’ earlier statement that some unkind god took away his mind and he subsequently forgot he had a wife to take care of as well. This adheres to Vergil’s characterization of Aeneas as never being able to do wrong, as even his victims do not blame him for their downfall. Creusa next basically orders Aeneas to forget about her, stating that a queenly bride is waiting for him (*regia coniunx/parta tibi*, *Aen.* 2.783-4), giving Aeneas his out. Although he seems to be distraught at her loss, as he tries in vain to embrace her ghost, he soon forgets about her completely. Throughout the rest of the epic, she is only mentioned once more, and not even by Aeneas (*Aen.* 9.297). In comparison, Dido is mentioned by name four more times after her death (*Aen.* 5.571, 6.450-76, 9.266, 11.74).

Ovid picks up on this fact, not in the *Metamorphoses*, where Creusa is conspicuously missing, but again in *Heroides* 7. In her suicide letter to Aeneas, Dido states *si quaeras ubi sit formosi mater Iuli—/occidit a duro sola relictam viro* (“If you ask where the mother of beautiful Iulus is—She died alone, having been abandoned by her hard husband,” *Her.* 7.84). Grillo states that, in the *Aeneid*, “Dido, poisoned by Cupid, does not question his narration” (Grillo 54), and this is true, since she never questions his devotion to her even though he abandoned his last wife

and told her about it. However, Ovid does pick up on this, and through Dido's accusatory statement, Creusa too is placed amongst the ever-growing group of women left behind so Aeneas can 'pursue his destiny.' This, then, suggests why Creusa is missing from the *Metamorphoses*: Aeneas did not think her worth remembering, so she is left out, forgotten in lieu of the woman Aeneas found more important, Dido.

There is one other woman in the *Aeneid* who is very important to Aeneas: Lavinia, his Italian bride. For a character that plays such a big role in Aeneas' fate, she appears very rarely in the text. Lavinia's importance has been stressed since the very first lines of the poem, as her name will be given to Aeneas' first city in Italy. As Dorothea Clinton Woodworth points out, "Lavinia, the titular heroine, the prize for which Aeneas and Turnus do battle, has been popularly criticized as a weak and shadowy character" (Woodworth 176). The first time she is mentioned, it is by Aeneas' dead wife, Creusa (*Aen.* 2.783). The next two references happen in book 6: the Sybil alludes to her when she talks about the coming war (*Aen.* 6.93-5), and Anchises mentions her as the father of his children, the first time she is mentioned by name (*Aen.* 6.763-4). The first time Lavinia is seen, she is helping her father perform sacrifices, and in the process she receives divine portent (*Aen.* 8.72). From the beginning, then, Lavinia is characterized as silent and passive. This trend continues throughout the entire last half of the epic, as her former fiancé and new fiancé fight for her hand in marriage. Lavinia is not even present for the majority of the war for her hand, as her mother hides her in the woods to prevent the marriage with Aeneas from happening. She finally reappears in book 11 as a part of a procession to the temple of Pallas, and it is only with Turnus' dying words, *tua est Lavinia coniunx* (Lavinia is your wife, *Aen.* 12. 937), that Aeneas is finally allowed to fulfill his destiny and marry Lavinia. Lavinia never says a word herself: her only voluntary action is a blush. As Woodworth points out, "the picture shows us the

dutiful daughter, piously helping carry out the family's religious ritual. She does nothing, says nothing; she is the passive recipient" (Woodworth 179) of every action done in her name. What is interesting in all these mentions of Lavinia is that Aeneas is only the speaker once, proving that "just as surely as Turnus is in love with her, Aeneas is not. He accepts her as part of his destiny" (Woodworth 187). Lavinia, although she does nothing important, is the sole motivator of the war between Turnus' people and the Latins. Because she has no say in her marriage, she too becomes a victim of Aeneas, as he does not love her but must marry her in order to fulfill his destiny. Throughout the entire second half of the epic, "she is a passive instrument of destiny in the hands of father or husband" (Woodworth 194). As Dido was deceived by Aeneas (and Juno and Venus), so too will Lavinia be tricked into a relationship with Aeneas, forced to marry a man who does not love her. It is with this that she becomes the final victim of Aeneas.

Ovid seems to allude to this, too, in the *Metamorphoses*. Like all of Aeneas' other women, she is not even mentioned by name:

Faunigenaeque domo potitur nataque Latini,
non sine Marte tamen. bellum cum gente feroci
suscipitur, pactaque furit pro coniuge Turnus.

"And he acquired the home and daughter of Latinus Faunborn,
Nevertheless not without war; a war with the ferocious race
Is undertaken, and Turnus rages on account of his promised wife" (*Met.* 449-51)

Throughout this entire section, Lavinia is always presented in the passive. Again, Ovid's diction in this section is very interesting. With the use of the verb *potior*, Aeneas not only acquires Lavinia, but he also becomes master over her and takes possession of her, two other definitions of that verb. Thus, not only is Lavinia a victim because she is handed over to Aeneas, but also because she is taken by force of arms. This yet again hints at Aeneas as the rapist, since *potior*, to overpower, is another verb commonly used to depict rape in Latin vocabulary. Another

interesting word in this section is *pacta*, as it recalls ghost Creusa's words to Aeneas. However, there is a very large difference between these two uses. Creusa states *regia coniunx/parta tibi* (A regal wife is promised for you, *Aen.* 2.83-4), indicating that Aeneas is Lavinia's true husband, and that it is right that he marry her. However, Ovid states *pactaque furit pro coniuge Turnus* (Turnus rages on account of his wife having been promised, *Met.* 14.51). By transferring the promise of marriage from Aeneas to Turnus, Ovid is yet again reinforcing the image of Aeneas of a philanderer: he takes a woman promised to another. Aeneas comes in, takes the woman promised to another man, and overpowers her. Thus, he is not only unfaithful but also the cause of unfaithfulness in others.⁶

If the purpose of the *Aeneid* was to praise Aeneas and through him Augustus, then this representation of Aeneas is problematic in many ways. Because Augustus had worked so hard to draw ties between himself and Aeneas, Ovid's characterization of Aeneas challenges the image of the emperor. Through the use of the language of deception, Dido becomes the victim of an Aeneas who has a nasty habit of meeting a woman, taking her as his lover, and then abandoning her. And it is because of this lecherous behavior that Dido curses Rome to suffer the Punic Wars. Ovid also paints Aeneas' other two romantic interests, Creusa and Lavinia, as Aeneas' victims, emphasizing the image of Aeneas as an unfaithful man, and suggesting that he is also a rapist of the women in his life. Because Augustus is associated with Aeneas, these negative characteristics are then reflected back upon him. Ovid was a victim of Augustus' moral reforms, therefore he

⁶ It is important to note here that while what these women experienced seems terrible from today's standards, it is what was customary in the ancient world. However, as Amy Richlin argues in her paper "Reading Ovid's Rapes" from the book *Pornography and Representation in Ancient Greece and Rome*, Ovid seems to empathize more than most authors with the plight of women, which is why so much contempt for their treatment can be found in the *Metamorphoses*.

paints Aeneas, ancestor of the emperor, as a philanderer, and Vergil, the poet most associated with the imperial house, as a writer who threatened public morality more than himself.

Broken Promises: Anchises, Turnus, and the end of the *Aeneid*

This same trend of abbreviation continues into Ovid's treatment of Aeneas' journey into the underworld. In book 6 of the *Aeneid*, Vergil relates how Aeneas travels through the underworld in order to talk to the shade of his father in Elysium. On his way to the Islands of the blessed, Aeneas encounters the shades of some of those he has lost on his journey so far, including Palinurus, Dido, and Deiphobus. He reaches his father at line 679, where Anchises begins to describe how souls are cleansed for rebirth in Elysium. Amongst the souls to be reborn are many of the most important men in Roman history, including the Alban kings, Romulus, the Julii, men in the Republic, and Marcellus. Anchises reveals that all of these men will be Aeneas' descendants, once he founds a Trojan city in Italy. On account of these revelations, "Aeneas no longer blunders or hangs back. He willingly pursues his fated mission" (Bacon 79). Soon after this that Aeneas leaves the underworld, rejoins his men, and finally reaches the part of Italy where he is destined to found his city. This whole episode lasts over 200 lines. This meeting with Anchises in the underworld provides impetus Aeneas needs to pursue his fate, making this episode a very important one to the plot of the *Aeneid* as a whole.

While learning of the great things that his descendants will accomplish, Aeneas also gets some very important advice from his father:

tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
(hae tibi erunt artes), pacique imponere morem,
parcere subiectis et debellare superbos. (*Aen.* 6.851-3)

"Roman, remember to rule your people with power
(these skills will be yours), and to set down a custom for peace,
to spare those having been conquered, and to subdue the proud."

With these words of advice, “Anchises carefully spells out to his son the ethics of forbearance, of the restrained use of power, especially against the haughty in defeat, that should set a pattern for Roman martial behavior to come” (Putnam 20). Thus, the reader should take these words as advice not only to Aeneas, but also to every Roman leader after him, especially those who hold power in Rome. Because of the emphasis that Vergil places on these behaviors, it is clear that they are very important not only in the *Aeneid*, but also in Roman life in general.

The importance of this advice becomes even more evident when Aeneas lands on the shores of Italy and, with the help of Juno, immediately begins a war with the Rutulians. Turnus, the leader of the Rutulians, is angry because his promised bride, Lavinia, has been given to Aeneas in his stead. Vergil’s diction makes it obvious that this fight with Turnus is one instance where Aeneas is supposed to follow his father’s advice. By echoing Anchises’ words in book 6, Vergil sets up Turnus as *superbus*:

proxima quaeque metit gladio latumque per agmen
ardens limitem agit ferro, te, Turne, superbum
caede nova quaerens. (*Aen.* 10.513-5)

“He cut down each thing near him with his sword and burning a path through
The wide battle line he bears with his sword against you, haughty Turnus,
Seeking new bloodshed”

Through the use of the adjective *superbus*, Turnus is immediately identified with the *superbos* of Anchises advice, and “hence [is] an exemplum of the prideful, who...should be beaten down but spared” (Putnam 20). With this diction, the audience knows that Aeneas should be following his father’s advice. Vergil emphasizes this again with Turnus’ last words:

Ille humilis supplex oculos dextramque precantem
protendens 'Equidem merui nec deprecor' inquit;
'Utere sorte tua. Miseri te si qua parentis
tangere cura potest, oro (fuit et tibi talis
Anchises genitor) Dauni miserere senectae
et me, seu corpus spoliatum lumine mavis,

redde meis. Vicisti et victum tendere palmas
 Ausonii videre; tua est Lavinia coniunx,
 ulterius ne tende odiis.' (*Aen.* 12.930-8)

“That humble man, suppliant, stretching forth his eyes and
 Praying right hands: ‘Truly I deserved this and I do not seek to avoid it’ he says
 ‘Take advantage of your chance. If any care of a parent is
 Able to touch you (and Anchises was such a father to you)
 Pity the old age of Daunus and return me to my own people
 Or if you prefer return my body when it has been deprived of
 life. You have won and the Ausonians see that
 I having been conquered stretch out my palms. Lavinia is your spouse,
 Strain no further into hatreds.’”

At this point, Turnus has been defeated completely. Vergil’s diction suggests this, since Turnus is described as humble (*humilis*), a suppliant (*supplex*), and begging for his life (*oro...meis*).

Through this language, Vergil wants the reader, and Aeneas, to view Aeneas as one of the subjected Anchises spoke to Aeneas about. In fact, “Vergil has carefully had Turnus...remind Aeneas of ‘Anchises his begetter’ (*Anchises genitor* 394)” (Putnam 98), and through this remind him of the advice his father gave him in the underworld. Therefore, Turnus should be seen as one of those enemies that should be subdued but spared.

At this point, the reader expects Aeneas to follow his father’s advice, since Vergil has been setting up an appropriate situation for this to happen. However, before Aeneas is about to spare his enemy, he notices the sword-belt of Pallas, whom Turnus had killed. Aeneas is immediately filled with rage:

...furiis accensus et ira
 terribilis: 'Tunc hinc spoliis indute meorum
 eripiare mihi? Pallas te hoc vulnere, Pallas
 immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit.'
 Hoc dicens ferrum adverso sub pectore condit
 fervidus; ast illi solvuntur frigore membra
 vitaeque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras.

“...having been enflamed by furies and terrible with
 Anger (he said): “After having been clothed in the spoils

Of one of my men would you be rescued from me? Pallas sacrifices you
 With this wound, Pallas exacts this punishment from your defiled blood.”
 Saying this, burning, he plants the iron under the facing
 Breast; but the limbs of that man are loosened by a chill
 And his angry life flies under the shadows with a groan.” (*Aen.* 12.946-52)

With this reminder of his fighting companion, whom he loved like a son, Aeneas goes into a blind rage, forgetting everything that he has been taught up to this point, and kills his enemy. Vergil, instead of showing Aeneas as a true Roman and sparing his enemies, “...shows his hero going directly against his own father’s command to spare the humbled and instead manifesting the very human, if disconcerting, response to the sight of the killer of his protégé now at his mercy” (Putnam 104). With this reaction, Aeneas completely disregards his father. These final lines leave readers wondering how this ending is supposed to fit in with the Augustan themes throughout the poem.

In order to maintain Aeneas’ good image, ancient commentators did not blame Aeneas for his actions. For Servius, who always believed the best of Aeneas, “every intention (*omnis intentio*) redounds to Aeneas’ glory; so what is important is apparently motive in each case. But if that is so, Aeneas would have been quite as *pious* if he had first intended to avenge Pallas and then after all spared Turnus out of clemency. Then, however, Servius says that Aeneas bears the mark of *pietas* both because he *considers* sparing Turnus, and then because he actually kills him (*eo quod eum interimit*)” (Burnell 188). As before with Dido, Servius follows through on his belief that the sole purpose of the *Aeneid* is to praise Aeneas, turning one of his most controversial actions into an act of piety no matter what angle it is looked at.

In contrast to ancient opinions, modern scholars are split in their beliefs concerning the ending of the *Aeneid*. There are some who see it as a bad thing, “...who see in Aeneas’ final outbursts an indication that he has at last succumbed to the violence against which he has

struggled for so long” (Nortwick 210). Other scholars are of the opinion that “Aeneas’ final victory [is] a confirmation of his assumption of the mantle of Augustan hero: he transcends the self-centered heroism of a Turnus or a Camilla and makes *furor* serve a higher destiny” (Nortwick 210). Karl Galinsky excuses Aeneas’ actions because “the Roman reader would not have been concerned about [Aeneas’] capital punishment in the final scene of the epic. It is not about the moral ambiguity, but the humanization of this ineluctable scene that is one of Vergil’s hallmarks here as elsewhere in the epic” (Galinsky 1998 324). In a similar vein, Agatha Thornton, using Anchises’ advice as a framework, states that “Turnus who is full of *furor* and *violentia* is incapable of lasting peace. He did not spare the body of slain Pallas. He is not fit to become a member of the Rome that is to lead to a higher humanity. That is why he must die at the hands of Aeneas” (Thornton 84). For each of these scholars, Turnus is the one at fault for his own death, not Aeneas.

Aeneas’ visit to his father in the underworld is another one of the episodes of the *Aeneid* that Ovid chooses to abbreviate severely. This scene takes up over 200 lines of book 6. Yet Ovid chooses to summarize it in four lines, preferring to place emphasis on the Sybil, who represents a tale of metamorphosis. While this could again be explained by saying that Ovid did not want to reiterate the things that readers already knew from Vergil, in light of the insights found within the Dido episode of the same length, it is clear that Ovid is doing more than just summarizing. Ovid abbreviates this episode in four lines:

paruit Aeneas et formidabilis Orci
 vidit opes atavosque suos umbramque senilem
 magnanimi Anchisae; didicit quoque iura locorum,
 quaeque novis essent adeunda pericula bellis.

“Aeneas obeyed and he saw the might of the
 Formidable underworld and his own ancestors and the old shade

of great-minded Anchises; Indeed he learned the laws of the places,
And which dangers must be approached with new wars.” (*Met.* 14.116-9)

Even less has been written about Ovid’s treatment of this episode than has been written about the Dido episode. The authors who do discuss it emphasize the large amount of plot that has been cut out in this rendition. Papaioannou states that “on the surface it appears that Ovid could hardly care less about Aeneas’ Underworld tour, the lengthy, spirited, and metaphysical sermons of Anchises, the parade of the ‘future’ great men of Rome, or even the description of the two gates of sleep through which Aeneas made his exit from Orcus” (Papaioannou 46-7). With this statement, Papaioannou suggests that the most important events from Vergil’s account are of little concern to Ovid, and this is why this episode is so short.

Once again Ovid’s word choice in this episode emphasizes Aeneas’ bad traits. Despite the fact that Aeneas is the subject of most of the verbs, he passively exists within the passage, not really doing anything exciting. By removing most of the events that happened in Vergil’s underworld (i.e. the meetings with Dido, Palinurus, and other shades), Ovid paints an underwhelming picture of Aeneas as the hero. In fact, Aeneas gets none of his usual epithets in this section, as Ovid grants them to Anchises instead. Anchises is described as *magnanimus*, “[an] epithet [that] belongs to high epic style (based on the Homeric epithet *μεγάθυμος* or *μεγάλας φρένας* ...and in the *Aeneid* (12x)⁷ is used most often of Aeneas, but never of Anchises. Ovid makes a similar surprising use of a Vergilian epithet at 13.640 *pius Anchises* and 644” (Myers 81). This use of a heroic epithet to describe Anchises suggests that he is to be read as the hero of this section, not Aeneas. This idea is also supported by the fact that Ovid only uses *magnanimus* in the *Metamorphoses* when talking about heroes: *magnanimus Phaethon* (*Met*

⁷ I don’t know where Myers found 12 uses all pertaining to Aeneas. My search revealed 5, including when I searched for *magnus animum* (great in respect to his spirit): *magnanimum Aenean* (1.260), *magnanime Aenea* (5.17), *magnanimusque Anchisiades* (5.407), *magnanimum Aenean* (9.204), *hostem magnanimum* (10.771).

2.111), *magnanimus heros* (*Theseus*) (12.230), and *magnanimo...Achilli* (13.398). Thus, even in Ovid *magnanimus* is used solely when describing heroes. By describing Anchises, and not Aeneas, as great minded, Ovid is therefore suggesting that he is the hero of this part of Aeneas' journey.

There are also many plot points conspicuously missing from this interpretation. The parade of heroes, Aeneas' progeny, is summarized by the phrase *vidit...atavosque suos*. This is made even more interesting by the fact that *atavus* actually means ancestors, not descendants, suggesting that Aeneas is looking toward the past and not the future. This would also mean that the members of the Julian clan who were included in Vergil's underworld would be left out. Due to these revisions, "there is no sense at all of the manifest destiny of Aeneas himself, of his descendants (among which Augustus counted himself), or of the future Roman race. Instead, Ovid's Aeneas is made to seem a mere refugee, driven to Italy by the winds of chance rather than divine providence: a provocative retelling of Augustus' favorite foundation myth" (Lively 136-7). In fact, Rome is not mentioned anywhere in this version of Aeneas' journey. Thus, by reducing the parade of heroes to three words, Ovid erases the familial relationship with Aeneas that Augustus had been cultivating for years. Through his vocabulary choices, Ovid negates not only Aeneas' legacy but also Augustus' divine ancestry.

Another important piece of missing information in these four lines is Anchises' advice to Aeneas. Unlike the parade of heroes, which at least got a three word mention, this advice is entirely omitted. I believe that Ovid neglects to put this information in because he believes that if Aeneas is not going to follow his father's advice, there is no reason to include it. Ovid again describes the death of Turnus very briefly, giving the event only two words, *Turnusque cadit* (and Turnus fell, *Met.* 14.573). With these words, it seems as if Aeneas has been taken out of the

downfall of Turnus. Yet the shortness of this statement serves as another *litotes*: by failing to mention Aeneas' role in Turnus' death, Ovid is forcing the audience to recall it for themselves. The audience thus remembers that Turnus did not only fall, he was killed by a man who is supposed to spare his enemies.

Turnus' death is expected to be the end of Aeneas' tale, since this is the point where Vergil's narrative ends. However, Ovid follows the death of Turnus with his description of the fall of Ardea: *Turnusque cadit, cadit Ardea, Turno/sospite dicta potens. Quem postquam barbarus ensis/abstulit et tepida latuerunt tecta favilla* ("...And Turnus fell, Ardea fell, having been said/Powerful with Turnus safe. Whom after the barbarian sword/Had killed and the houses warm with ash had fallen," *Met.* 14.573-5). With these lines, Ovid ends his retelling of the *Aeneid* with not only the death of an enemy, but also the destruction of the enemy's city. While "Aeneas' agency in Turnus' death is conspicuously omitted... in the following line his *barbarus ignis* is damagingly implicated in Ardea's destruction" (Myers 17), seemingly ending Aeneas' tale with him destroying a city instead of founding one. In fact, "the continuation of the '*Aeneid*' narrative with Aeneas' destruction of an Italian city may...call into question his Vergilian civilizing mission (*Aen.* 1.5)" (Myers 17). This mission is also important when regarding Aeneas as a parallel for Augustus. Now, instead of aligning himself with someone who builds cities, Augustus is compared with a man who destroys cities.

Thus these severely truncated and edited accounts of the visit to the underworld and death of Turnus are used to show exactly how unaffected Aeneas was by the advice of his father. Although it is assumed that Aeneas will be pious and follow his father's advice, Aeneas contradicts him when he kills Turnus. Ovid picks up on this when he abbreviates these episodes. By leaving out Anchises' advice, Ovid is suggesting that it is really unnecessary to include it,

since Aeneas disregards it anyway. And then Aeneas is made the perpetrator of not only the death of Turnus, but also the destruction of an entire city, overturning the image of Aeneas as the founder of Rome. Because Augustus has cultivated himself as the descendant of Aeneas, this image of Aeneas as a destroyer is then placed upon Augustus, questioning of the morals of those who do what is necessary to be raised to quasi-divine power

Apotheosis and the end of the *Metamorphoses*

Ovid goes beyond the scope of the *Aeneid* in order to show Aeneas' eventual apotheosis. At both the beginning and end of the *Aeneid*, Jupiter promises that Aeneas will become a god once he has fulfilled his divine destiny to found Rome. The first time, he is reassuring Venus, who has come to him distraught that Juno has yet again found some means of preventing Aeneas from reaching Italy. To assuage her fears, Jupiter states:

'Parce metu, Cytherea: manent immota tuorum
fata tibi; cernes urbem et promissa Lavini
moenia, sublimemque feres ad sidera caeli
magnanimum Aenean; neque me sententia vertit.

“Spare your fear, Cytherea: the fates of your people remain unchanged
For you; you will see the city and promised walls
Of Lavinium, and you will bring great minded Aeneas to the constellations
Of the sky on high; and an opinion has not changed me. (*Aen.* 1.257-60)

With this statement, Vergil establishes at the very beginning of his work that Aeneas' deeds will be so grand that there is already a spot waiting for him in heaven. Jupiter repeats this same sentiment to Juno toward the end of book 12, right before Aeneas is about to defeat Turnus. This time he is speaking to Juno, who has been siding with the Rutulians from the beginning of the war. When she asks if there is anything she can do to prevent Turnus' death, Jupiter replies:

Indigetem Aenean scis ipsa et scire fateris
deberi caelo fatisque ad sidera tolli.

“You yourself know and you admit that you know that Aeneas Indiges

is owed to the sky and is being lifted to the stars by the fates.” (12.794-5).

Here, through the words of Jupiter, Vergil is reminding the audience that Aeneas has been fated to be turned into a god since the beginning of his journey. Shortly after this statement, Aeneas kills Turnus and the poem ends. Thus, instead of ending his work with the promised apotheosis of Aeneas, Vergil ends his poem with his hero in a rage, having disregarded the advice his father gave him.

Ovid, in the *Metamorphoses*, provides the apotheosis missing from Vergil. According to Ovid, this is how Aeneas’ deification happened:

Fatus erat: gaudet gratesque agit illa parenti,
perque leves auras iunctis invecta columbis
litus adit Laurens, ubi tectus harundine serpit
in freta flumineis vicina Numicius undis.
Hunc iubet Aeneae, quaecumque obnoxia morti,
abluere et tacito deferre sub aequora cursu;
corniger exsequitur Veneris mandata suisque,
quidquid in Aenea fuerat mortale, repurgat
et respergit aquis: pars optima restitit illi.
Lustratum genetrix divino corpus odore
unxit et ambrosia cum dulci nectare mixta
contigit os fecitque deum, quem turba Quirini
nuncupat Indigetem temploque arisque recepit. (*Met.* 14.596-608)

“He spoke: She rejoiced and gave thanks to her parent,
And having been carried through the light breezes by the joined doves
She came to the Laurentine shore, where Numicius having been covered
By the reed crawls in the nearby seas with the river’s waves.
She ordered him to wash away from Aeneas whatever things punishable
By death and to carry them off with a quiet course under the sea;
The horned one carried out the orders of Venus and
Whatever mortal thing was in Aeneas, he cleansed off and besprinkled
With his own waters; the best part remained for him.
His mother anointed his body having been purified with a divine
Smell and she touched his mouth with ambrosia having been mixed with
Sweet nectar and she made him a god, whom the crowd of Quirinus
Called Indignes and received in their temple and at their altars.”

This episode is much longer than almost any other Aeneas episode in the *Metamorphoses*, since in this story an actual metamorphosis is happening. It is clear that Ovid is writing in response to Jupiter's two prophecies about Aeneas' deification in the *Aeneid*, since Ovid recalls how Aeneas was given the name Indiges (*nuncupat Indigetem*, 14.608), recalling *Indigetem Aenean* from Jupiter's prophecy in book 12.

Viewed in light of the characterization of Aeneas from the earlier analysis of Ovid, this whole apotheosis becomes even more interesting. Aeneas the philanderer, possible rapist, oath-breaker, and city destroyer has been made a god, venerated by all of Rome. These bad traits do not disappear in his apotheosis: Venus asks the river Numicius to wash away *quaecumque obnoxia morti* ("whatever punishable by death," 14.588). The diction here is ambiguous. *Obnoxius* primarily means "subject to," and in this instance would refer to the mortal parts of Aeneas. However, *obnoxius* can also mean guilty of or liable to, thus suggesting that by wiping away his mortality, Numicius is also erasing every crime Aeneas committed that would have resulted in capital punishment. As becomes clear from the rest of the *Metamorphoses*, the types of crimes that Aeneas committed (i.e. rape, murder) are not punishable by death. Multiple gods get away with these crimes and others with no punishment at all, thus it can be assumed that these deeds would not have been looked down upon in heaven. In fact, Aeneas seems to be going to join a crowd very similar to him.

While this is a condemning statement to both Aeneas and the gods, thus far it has no affect on Augustus. In fact, it seems to be in praise of him, since his ancestor has been made into a god, giving him a divine lineage. But then, at the very end of his poem, Ovid states that the same thing will happen to Augustus at his death:

tarda sit illa dies et nostro serior aevo,
qua caput Augustum, quem temperat, orbe relicto

accedat caelo faveatque precantibus absens!

“Let that day be slow and later than our lifetime,
In which that Augustan head, which he governs, with the earth left behind
Goes to the sky and being absent support our prayers!” (15.868-70)

With this statement, Ovid predicts the apotheosis of Augustus. This too is meant to be seen as an honor. However, Ovid has spent his entire work showing stories of the gods as rapists and worse. With this prophecy then, Ovid is predicting that Augustus is about to go join this crowd of shady characters. And with the parallels between Aeneas and Augustus, this becomes even more problematic. Ovid has characterized Aeneas as a bad man, and therefore Augustus is as bad as Aeneas, and these two men are the ones the Romans worship for the safety and wellbeing of the city.

Ovid makes no mention of erasing any of Augustus' deeds *obnoxia morti* in his description of his apotheosis. However, his mention of any capital crimes in Aeneas' deification brings to mind these same deeds Augustus may have committed, since the two are meant to be seen as parallels of each other. In ancient Roman law,

Wrongful acts were divided according to the nature of the remedy to which they gave rise. A crime generated a *poena*, or penalty, which inured for the benefit of the community rather than that of the victim. The penalty might be capital, which meant that it affected the status of the wrongdoer; primarily this meant death, but over time an alternative emerged in the shape of exile...The acts penalized under this head included both crimes against the state (treason and sedition) and common law crimes that primarily affected only the injured party, such as murder, forgery, corruption, kidnapping and adultery. (Bauman 2)

Because Aeneas' wife was dead when he had affairs with other women, his sexual acts with women who are not his wife cannot be deemed punishable by death. Nor can the fact that he killed Turnus, because Turnus was the enemy of the state. So while these acts can be seen as morally wrong, Aeneas would not be liable under Roman law. The same cannot be said for Augustus. Many of the actions that Augustus took to secure his power as a *triumvir* and *princeps*,

as described in Suetonius' *de vita Caesarum*, fall into the category of capital crimes. He used any means to attain the consulship, even if this meant leading forces against the city⁸. Suetonius recalls that Augustus also fought two civil wars as vengeance for the death of his uncle, Julius Caesar⁹. These acts can be read as crimes against the state since Augustus started a war with Roman citizens for personal reasons. Suetonius also attributes many suspicious deaths to Augustus, including the consuls Hirtius and Pansa¹⁰, Marcus Antony¹¹, Pinarius¹², and Quintus Gallius¹³. Because Suetonius suggests that Augustus is responsible for these deaths, he would be subject to death under Roman law. Through Suetonius, it becomes clear that Augustus is guilty of civil crimes, murder, and adultery. Because of the nature of these crimes, they would not be washed away at death like Aeneas', nor does Ovid suggest that there is a chance they will be. Augustus was also guilty of misconduct in his married life, sometimes in direct violation of the very moral reforms he instituted. One example of this is his marriage to Livia: after divorcing his

⁸ *Consulatum vicesimo aetatis anno invasit admotis hostiter ad urbem legionibus* ("He usurped the consulship in the twentieth year of his age, leading his legions against the city as if it were that of an enemy," Rolfe 2.26.1)

⁹ *Omnium bellorum initium et causam hinc sumpsit: nihil convenientius ducens quam necem avunculi vindicare tuerique acta* ("The initial reason for all these wars was this: since he considered nothing more incumbent on him than to avenge his uncle's death and maintain the validity of his enactments," Rolfe 2.10.1)

¹⁰ *Hoc bello cum Hirtius in acie, Pansa paulo post ex vulnere perissent, rumor increbruit ambos opera eius occisos...Pansae quidem adeo suspecta mors fuit, ut Glyco medicus custoditus sit, quasi venenum vulnere indidisset. Adici t his Aquilius Niger alterum e consulibus Hirtium in pugnae tumultu ab ipso interemptum* ("As Hirtius lost his life in battle during this war, and Pansa shortly afterwards from a wound, the rumor spread that he had caused the death of both...The circumstances of Pansa's death in particular were so suspicious that the physician Glyco was imprisoned on the charge of having applied poison to his wound," Rolfe 2.11.1)

¹¹ *Et Antonium quidem seras condiciones pacis temptantem ad mortem adegit viditque mortuum* ("Although Antony tried to make terms at the eleventh hour, Augustus forced him to commit suicide, and viewed his corpse," Rolfe 2.17.4)

¹² *Nam et Pinarium equitem R., cum contionante se admissa turba paganorum apud milites subscribere quaedam animadvertisset, curiosum ac speculatorem ratus coram confodi imperavit* ("For example, when he was addressing the soldiers and a throng of civilians had been admitted to the assembly, noticing that Pinarius, a Roman knight, was taking notes, he ordered that he be stabbed on the spot, thinking him an eavesdropper and a spy," Rolfe 2.27.3)

¹³ *Et Quintum Gallium praetorem, in officio salutationis tabellas duplices veste tectas tenentem, suspicatus gladium occultare, nec quicquam statim, ne aliud inveniretur, ausus inquirere, paulo post per centuriones et milites raptum e tribunal servile in modum torsit ac fatentem nihil iussit occidi, prius oculis eius sua manu effossis* ("Again, when Quintus Gallius, a praetor, held some folded tablets under his robe as he was paying his respects, Augustus, suspecting that he had a sword concealed there, did not dare to make a search on the spot for fear it should turn out to be something else; but a little later he had Gallius hustled from the tribunal by some centurions and soldiers, tortured him as if he were a slave, and though he made no confession, ordered his execution, first tearing out the man's eyes," Rolfe 2.27.4)

first wife on the day their daughter was born, Augustus took Livia from her husband and married her, although she was pregnant with the other man's child.¹⁴ Although this marriage would not have been punishable by death, it shows that Augustus too was a philanderer, the very thing his moral reforms aimed to reduce. This would have been especially irksome to Ovid, who was supposedly banished for not adhering to these moral reforms. Therefore, by mentioning Aeneas' *obnoxia* deeds, Ovid recalls the fact that Augustus supposedly did some awful things in order to become powerful in Rome.

Conclusion

By severely abbreviating important passages from the *Aeneid*, Ovid draws attention to the unpleasant aspects of Aeneas' character, and shows how these reflect badly upon Augustus. In his four lines on the Dido episode, Ovid highlights Aeneas' "love them then leave them" attitude, painting the picture of him as not only a philanderer, but also possibly a rapist. In addition to this, the same short treatment of Aeneas' visit to the underworld to visit his father and the death of Turnus serve to emphasize the fact that Aeneas not only broke his promise to his father, but also is responsible for more destruction than building. This creates a negative image of Aeneas, giving an anti-Augustan tone to the last books of the *Metamorphoses* as well as highlighting those same negative themes in the *Aeneid*. It also becomes a direct attack against Augustus himself: because Aeneas is a philanderer, rapist, oath-breaker, and destroyer of cities, Augustus becomes these things as well, and with his apotheosis will go up to join the gods who love to do these same things.

¹⁴ The full account of the story is told by Cassius Dio (48.44)

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