

# AENEAS IN THE TROAS AND LATIUM REGIONS

## *Mythology and Archaeology*

“On the Steps of Aeneas: a common cultural heritage between Italy and Turkey” was funded by the European Union in collaboration with the Turkish Ministry of Tourism and Culture.

The project, developed by the Aeneas Route Association, in partnership with the Sapienza University of Rome and the Municipality of Edremit (Türkiye), as part of the Common Cultural Heritage between the European Union and Turkey (IPA-II), constitutes one of the many international collaboration activities promoted and coordinated by the Association.

In the belief that culture plays a fundamental role in promoting dialogue and cooperation, it integrates two main objectives: the dialogue between civil society and institutions and the enhancement of a common European culture. The project activities include the creation of an interactive digital platform called ARISTE (Aeneas Route Information System for Tourism and Education) on the theme of the journey of the Trojan hero.

One of the main components of the project was the International Conference held in Edremit (Turkey) on October 26, 2021, “Aeneas in the Troad and Lazio: mythology and archeology”: the proceedings are published in this volume. The summary of the conference results will be also available in an informative form through the ARISTE platform for dissemination to a larger audience and to schools.



The Conference participants at Troy excavation

ISBN 978-88-31442-14-5



9 788831 442145 >

Mythology and Archaeology

AENEAS IN THE TROAS AND LATIUM REGIONS



This project is funded by the European Union  
“Grant Scheme for Common Cultural Heritage:  
Preservation and Dialogue between Turkey and the UE-II (CCH-II)”  
(TR2016/DG/03/A2-03-EuropeAid/167523/ID/ACT/TR)  
“On the Steps of Aeneas: A Common Cultural Heritage  
Between Italy and Turkey”

# AENEAS IN THE TROAS AND LATIUM REGIONS

## *Mythology and Archaeology*

edited by Sandra Gatti



# Aeneas in the Troas and Latium Regions

*Mythology  
and Archaeology*

edited by  
Sandra Gatti



This project is funded by the European Union

“Grant Scheme for Common Cultural Heritage:  
Preservation and Dialogue between Türkiye and the UE-II (CCH-II)”  
(TR2016/DG/03/A2-03-EuropeAid/167523/ID/ACT/TR)

“On the Steps of Aeneas: A Common Cultural Heritage Between Italy and Türkiye”

## **Aeneas in the Troas and Latium Regions: Mythology and Archaeology**

Proceedings of the International Symposium  
Edremit, 26 October 2021

*Project Coordinator: arch. Giovanni Cafiero*

*Project Assistant: dott.ssa Elisa Falcini*

*dott.ssa Sandra Ottaviani*

*Proceedings Editor: dott.ssa Sandra Gatti*

PONTE  
SISTO

*Published by: Edizioni Ponte Sisto – Roma (Italy)*  
*Roma, June 2022*

ISBN 978-88-31442-14-5

*Following the certification of the Aeneas Route as Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, the Aeneas Route Association promoted the project ‘On the Steps of Aeneas: A Common Cultural Heritage Between Italy and Türkiye’, in partnership with Edremit Municipality and Sapienza University of Rome. This project seeks to promote and further develop common cultural heritage activities jointly implemented by Turkish and EU Institutions. The overall objective of this grant scheme is to further improve civil society dialogue through culture, arts and cultural heritage as well as international cooperation for cultural heritage and to promote cultural values and assets in Türkiye.*

*This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Aeneas’ Route Association and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.*

*No text or visual material contained in this publication can be reproduced, published and disseminated without due permission other than brief excerpts and quotations for promotion purposes as long as including references.*

© All rights of this publication reserved



# INDEX

## **ON THE STEPS OF AENEAS: A COMMON CULTURAL HERITAGE BETWEEN ITALY AND TURKEY**

### **Farewell speeches to the Edremit Symposium, 26 October 2021**

Selman Hasan Arslan - Tamer Acar - Giovanni Cafiero 5

### **Introduction**

Sandra Gatti 13

### **How Troy Became the Mother City of Rome**

Rüstem Aslan 17

### **Prince Aeneas of Dardanos: his position in Trojan mythology and his reflections in Troy in ancient times**

Rehyan Körpe 53

### **Aeneas Diplomacy**

Ridvan Gölcüç 83

### **Literature Research about the ancient city of Antandros**

*An ancient city waiting to be explored: Antandros*

Aytekin Yilmaz 113

### **The mosaic inscription**

Lavinio Del Monaco 130

<b>To deserve one's descendants. Anchises, Aeneas and the future of Rome in Virgil</b>	
Mario Lentano	133
<b>Enea and the Trojan Topography of Lavinium</b>	
Alessandro Maria Jaia	153
<b>The places of Aeneas in Lazio between myth and archaeology</b>	
Sandra Gatti	177
<b>The places of Aeneas in Rome</b>	
Alfonsina Russo	207
<b>The iconography of Aeneas' escape from Troy in the European figurative culture</b>	
Daniele Fortuna	223

Mario Lentano

## TO DESERVE ONE'S DESCENDANTS. ANCHISES, AENEAS AND THE FUTURE OF ROME IN VIRGIL

### Abstract

As soon as he arrives on the coasts of Italy, Aeneas must face an unexpected stage of his long journey: the descent into the kingdom of the dead where he will meet his father Anchises. Here he will be shown the protagonists of the future history of Rome, from his direct descendants to the farthest, Augustus, for the moment, the soul still waiting to incarnate. In the verses in which he recounts this junction of the myth, Virgil thus takes up, on the one hand, the great model of the *Odyssey*, which had in turn seen the protagonist of the poem descend into Hades, on the other hand, a characterizing aspect of Roman culture, the procession of deceased family members accompanying the coffin on the occasion of the aristocratic funerals. The perspective of the Trojan hero, however, is reversed: if Roman nobles are asked above all to resemble their ancestors, Aeneas must rather deserve his descendants.

**Keywords:** Virgil, Aeneas, afterlife, aristocratic funerals.

### 1. From one afterlife to another

For the ancients, the afterlife is not located in an unreachable elsewhere: on the contrary, the kingdom of the dead is connected through a series of accesses and passages to the space of the living, and these latter, at least in some exceptional cases, have the possibility of descending in it and to establish contact with the bloodless figures who inhabit it and even with the dark divinities who govern it<sup>1</sup>. This is the case, among the characters

---

<sup>1</sup> Here I resume some considerations that I have developed more fully in BETTINI, LENTANO 2013, 76-80 and in LENTANO 2020, 150-161, where you can also find a selection of the previous bibliography. I also recommend two recent volumes on the representation of the afterlife in ancient cultures, such as FABIANO 2019 and DANESI, SANTUCCI, TORINO 2020.



of the myth, of the cantor Orpheus in the story made famous by Virgil, who wants him to descend into Hades to bring back his beloved Eurydice, who died prematurely, and above all that of heroes like Heracles, whose famous efforts also include the challenge of snatching the three-headed dog Cerberus from the afterlife, or like the Athenian king Theseus, who accompanies the inseparable Pirithous in a crazy attempt to kidnap Persephone, wife of Pluto and queen of the underworld, of which his friend fell in love, or like Pollux, who «shared his brother's death» and for this reason «often / took his place in Hell»<sup>2</sup>. There were also decidedly darker figures such as that of Sisyphus, of whom it was said that he had managed to return from the afterlife, albeit for a short time, making fun of Death itself, even if his arrogance had been punished with the famous torture of the boulder that pushed laboriously up to the top of a hill rolled back downstream in an endless cycle<sup>3</sup>.

In addition to these people, Odysseus had also landed in the world of the dead, in a highly suggestive page of the poem of which he is the protagonist. When his ship goes as far as to the land of the Cimmerians, at the extreme limit of the Ocean, oppressed by an eternal shadow and constantly adorned by the fog, the hero first digs a pit, then, following the instructions previously received by Circe, let the blood of the sacrificed animals drip into the bowels of the earth, so that the souls of the dead drink the vital humour that restores them, even if for a moment, a shred of lost humanity: in the story that Odysseus tells of it at the court of Alcinous,

The spirits came  
up out of Erebus and gathered round.  
Teenagers, girls and boys, the old who suffered  
for many years, and fresh young brides whom labor  
destroyed in youth; and many men cut down  
in battle by bronze spears, still dressed in armor

<sup>2</sup> All these cases are remembered by Aeneas in conversation with the Cumaean Sibyl (in particular, we have cited Virgil, *Aeneid*, 6, 121-122, here and always in this contribution in the translation of Shadi Bartsch), in a passage that also has a clear metaliterary value: the poet is signalling to his user which is the tradition in which the protagonist of his masterpiece is inserted.

<sup>3</sup> On the myth of Sisyphus, cf. lastly CAMEROTTO 2018. On the tradition of punishments for the great cursed cf. PETTENÒ 2004.

stained with their blood. From every side they crowded  
around the pit, with eerie cries. Pale fear  
took hold of me<sup>4</sup>.

The purpose of Odysseus, as we know, is to question the Theban soothsayer Tiresias, the only one who, due to a singular divine privilege, keeps his own sense intact even among the dead and therefore the only one who can give the hero information on his arrival in Ithaca and above all on the events that will follow it. It will be from him that Odysseus will learn, among other things, of the new journey that will lead him to the ends of the world, where a community who has never known the sea will interpret the oar that the hero carries on his shoulder as a winnowing fan, before the second and final return home: a journey that Homer has never told and about which, precisely for this reason, the poets of the following millennia fantasized, from Dante to Tennyson to Pascoli. After having met Tiresias, moreover, Odysseus talks with other characters – Achilles, Ajax, Agamemnon – and in particular with his mother Anticlea, who the hero left alive at the moment of his departure and of which only now he learns of the disappearance, linked to the consumption of an unbearable wait over time: she herself will tell her son about her own death, in addition to providing him with a series of information relating to Penelope, Telemachus and the old Laertes<sup>5</sup>.

It is probably on the basis of this prestigious literary model that Virgil decided to include in the long journey that leads Aeneas from the Troad to the mouth of the Tiber a stage in the world of the dead, which I would like to deal with briefly in the following pages. As it is well known, the story of this experience – which in all probability represents a Virgilian innovation in the long history of the myth of Aeneas – occupies almost the entire sixth book of the *Aeneid*: a book that represents at the same time an absolute apex of literary creativity and an all-out reflection on the nature of the soul and on the order of the universe, as such, an unavoidable

<sup>4</sup> Homer, *Odyssey*, 11, 36-43 (translation of Emily Wilson): αἱ δ' ἀγέροντο / ψυχὰι ὑπὲξ Ἑρέβους νεκύων κατατεθνηώτων. / Νύμφαι τ' ἡίθεοί τε πολύτλητοί τε γέροντες / παρθενικαί τ' ἀταλαὶ νεοπενθέα θυμὸν ἔχουσαι, / πολλοὶ δ' οὐτάμενοι χαλκίῃ ῥοσιν ἐγχέειν, / ἄνδρες ἀρηϊφάτοι βεβροτωμένα τεύχε' ἔχοντες: / οἱ πολλοὶ περὶ βόθρον ἐφοίτων ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος / θεσπεσίῃ ἰαχῇ: ἐμὲ δὲ χλωρὸν δέος ἦρει.

<sup>5</sup> Homer, *Odyssey*, 11, 139-224.



test bed for Virgilian interpreters of all time. Not surprisingly, in introducing this section of the poem, Servius's great late-antique commentary notes that if «the entire Virgilian work is full of knowledge», this characteristic in the sixth book «is expressed at its highest degree»<sup>6</sup>. Above all, while Homer does not present a real description of Hades except for short lines, since Odysseus limits himself to recalling its shadows and making them emerge to the surface through the offering of blood, in Virgil, on the contrary, Aeneas descends in the first person into the subterranean realm and passes through it for a long time. This forces the Latin poet to elaborate a topography of the underworld that his predecessor did not need, an architecture of the world of the dead made up of rivers and swamps, walls and towers, shadows and trees, but also of a sound landscape populated by tears and cries, laments, shouts or prayers, both destined to be deeply imprinted in the imagination of Western culture<sup>7</sup>.

What we have just mentioned remains a significant difference, but all in all just a literary one. More interesting is that the sixth book is also the most explicitly political one of the entire *Aeneid*, the one that announces the future greatness of Rome and identifies in the age of Augustus the ultimate horizon and the point of arrival of his entire historical parable. And it is precisely this latter aspect that marks the point of greatest separation between the Virgilian poem and its Greek model, mirroring a more general distance between two very different cultures such as the one reflected in the Homeric poems and the Roman one of the late Republican age: if, in fact, the protagonist of the *Odyssey* derives from the contact with the world of the dead, whether it is the soothsayer Tiresias or the mother Anticlea, a series of information that exclusively concerns his personal story, the dangers he will have to guard himself against in the palace of Ithaca and the final outcome of his existential adventure, in Virgil Aeneas certainly receives news from

---

<sup>6</sup> Servius, *Commentary on Virgil's Aeneid*, 6, *Preface*: *Totus quidem Vergilius scientia plenus est, in qua hic liber possidet principatum*. Among the moderns, the classic and still in many ways precious commentary on the sixth book of NORDEN 1927<sup>3</sup> has now been joined by the monumental two-volume work of HORSEFALL 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Within the vast bibliography on the relationship between Odysseus' and Aeneas' catabasis, I limit myself here to pointing out the classic work of SOLMSEN 1972 and the more recent HERRERO DE JAUREGUI 2015, open to investigate the *Aeneid*'s relationship with the tradition of "catabatic" literature as a whole.

Anchises of the wars and difficulties that still await him in Italy, but what opens up before him is above all the luminous perspective of a collective history, which involves an entire community and far transcends his individual fortunes. That story passes through Aeneas, but at the same time it goes beyond him, because it concerns the future of Rome and therefore the destiny of the whole world. The difference between the cultural horizon of the Greek Homer and that of the Roman Virgil could hardly stand out with greater clarity<sup>8</sup>.

## 2. A history lesson in the Elysian Fields

Of Aeneas' long journey, described by Virgil with extraordinary inventive power, we can here examine only the final segment, the one that leads the Trojan hero to meet his father Anchises, according to the instructions that the latter had given him in a dream<sup>9</sup>.

Finally reached the light-flooded meadows of the Elysian Fields, where those who have led a pure and honest life enjoy eternal bliss – priests, poets, warriors who offered their youth for their homeland, inventors of arts useful to humanity and so on –, Aeneas catches sights of the old Trojan in the distance while,

Deep in that lush valley, Father Anchises  
made a careful count of gathered souls  
as they waited for the light above. He happened  
to be tallying his family, his dear  
grandsons' fates and fortunes, natures and great deeds<sup>10</sup>.

With these words begins the famous section relating to the parade of heroes, the protagonists of Roman history to come who await the moment to rise to the light near the flows of Lethe<sup>11</sup>. In fact, it is his

---

<sup>8</sup> On the difference between Virgilian Aeneas and Homeric heroes PADUANO 2020<sup>3</sup> wrote enlightening pages.

<sup>9</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, 5, 722-742.

<sup>10</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, 6, 679-683: *At pater Anchises penitus convalle virenti / inclusas animas superumque ad lumen ituras / lustrabat studio recolens omnemque suorum / forte recensebat numerum carosve nepotes / fataque fortunasque virum moresque manusque.*

<sup>11</sup> The bibliography on this page of the *Aeneid* is naturally immense, due to the numerous

offspring that his father is contemplating and that will shortly be shown to Aeneas himself: souls whose time will come after many centuries, but who are already there, actors waiting to enter the scene to recite a script already written for them *ab aeterno*. Passing under the eyes of the two spectators is the Dardanian offspring, therefore the direct descendants of Anchises himself, the pure Trojan blood of which Aeneas is the bearer, and together with it the *Itala de gente nepotes*, the descendants of the Italic peoples, that is, those who will be born once that the survivors of the great war, finally settled in Italy, will mix their blood with that of the peoples of Latium:

«Come», he said, «I'll reveal the future glory  
of our Trojan lineage, and the Italians  
who wait for us, splendid souls who'll take our name.  
I'll teach you your destiny»<sup>12</sup>.

After this brief introduction, the actual parade begins: a dizzying perspective on a millennium of history, which from the remote regions of the myth reaches in uninterrupted continuity up to the contemporary events of Virgil. To Aeneas are shown in the first place the kings of Alba Longa, from the "posthumous" Silvius, son of the hero's Italic wife and destined to be born after the death of his father, up to Numitor and the usurper Amulius, then the founders of the city, from the small villages of Latium to Rome itself, voted to dominate over all lands. Later on, with a chronological leap, Anchises mentions the «Romans of Aeneas», his lineage in the strictest sense: Caesar, to whom only a quick mention is dedicated here, then Augustus, celebrated as the man who will bring back the golden age, but also as the conqueror of the eastern lands, already trembling at the prospect of future defeat. Then we go back and the inspection resumes with the kings of Rome, from Numa to Tarquinius,

---

problems it poses under the most diverse profiles; here I limit myself to pointing out the two opposite readings given by FEENEY 1986 and WEST 1993; more in the two overall monographs on Aeneas mentioned above, note 1.

<sup>12</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, 6, 756-759: *Nunc age, Dardaniam prolem quae deinde sequatur / gloria, qui maneant Itala de gente nepotes, / inlustris animas nostrumque in nomen ituras, / expediam dictis et te tua fata docebo*. For the distinction introduced here by Anchises between the two different branches of ancestry and its possible meaning for the purposes of the interpretation of the *Aeneid*, I refer to the considerations of BETTINI 2009.

then with Brutus the first consul and the leaders who made the empire great, from the Decii to Camillus, from the conquerors of Greece to the Scipiones, lightnings of war and terror of Carthage, from Cato to the Gracchi to the Fabii to still others, not without an allusion to the bloody rivalry between Caesar and Pompey, whose names are not mentioned.

The overwhelming list is finally closed, with an abrupt *décalage*, by the painful evocation of Marcellus, grandson, son-in-law and heir-apparent of Augustus, who disappeared *ante diem* just as Virgil was composing the *Aeneid* and for this reason evoked in heartfelt tones by Anchises as a promise too soon frustrated by death.

It is therefore a real lesson in Roman history oriented to the future that is taught to Aeneas: not surprisingly, Anchises uses an expression like *docebo*, properly «I will teach you», while his son is asked to take on the complementary role of pupil and to «learn» from him, *discere*<sup>13</sup>. Together with the *virī*, moreover, the old Trojan promises to illustrate to his exceptional listener also the *mores*, the customs of Rome, what we could define its culture, the peculiar traits that characterize and define its identity<sup>14</sup>. Aeneas must be aware of these aspects too, so that he can adequately carry out the task that awaits him: messenger and prophet of a future to come, Anchises illustrates to his son a complex of models and values that do not yet exist anywhere, just as the Romans called to incarnate them do not yet exist, but at the same time are prefigured in Aeneas himself, who already realizes in himself, as is required of every ancestor, the paradigms of behaviour that his father places before him.

Finally, Anchises's speech culminates in the famous (and notorious) verses which oppose the excellence of the Greeks in the field of art, speech and

---

<sup>13</sup> *Docebo* appears in verse 759, cited above, note 12, while *discere* is used in verses 752-755, in which Anchises guides his son to a hill so that he can embrace the *longus ordo* of his descendants with an overall look and recognize (but the verb used is precisely *discere*) their outward features. Already in the previous book, moreover, on the occasion of the dream apparition in which he pressed Aeneas to join him in the kingdom of the dead, Anchises concluded his appeal with the words *Tum genus omne tuum et quae dentur moenia disces* (5, 737), as well as at the end of the sixth the last instructions on the future awaiting Aeneas in Italy are expressed by Virgil again in the form of *docere* (6, 891-892: *Laurentisque docet populos urbemque Latini / et quo quemque modo fugiatque feratque laborem*).

<sup>14</sup> As can be seen from 6, 679-683, quoted above, note 10.

selfless research to the world domination as a specific task of the Romans, as their particular vocation:

Others, I believe, will beat out bronze that seems  
to breathe and chisel living faces out of marble.  
They'll excel in pleading lawsuits, and they'll trace  
the heavens' paths and chart the rising stars.  
You, Roman, remember your own arts: to rule  
the world with law, impose your ways on peace,  
grant the conquered clemency, and crush the proud in war<sup>15</sup>.

The imperial destiny of Rome is thus announced by an authoritative speaker, in a particularly solemn context and with an oracular tone that inscribes that destiny in the drawings of fate, moreover already anticipated by Jupiter when, faced with the protests of Venus for the storm that once more was keeping her son away from the coasts of Italy, he reassured the goddess by promising to the descendants of Aeneas an empire without limits of space or time<sup>16</sup>. With the consequence, among other things, that anyone who opposes those designs is not simply an opponent to be defeated, but a proud one to be crushed, or even more an impious one, someone whose actions are placed in direct contrast with the will of the gods.

But the parade of souls that Anchises illustrates to his son also presents other reasons of interest, which lead us to the heart of our discourse. That impressive spectacle, as has long been observed, could not fail to evoke something that was very familiar to the contemporary readers of Virgil: the solemn procession that took place in Rome on the occasion of the funeral of the great aristocratic families<sup>17</sup>. It is known that on that occasion

---

<sup>15</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, 6, 847-853: *Excudent alii spirantia mollius aera / (credo equidem), vivos ducent de marmore vultus, / orabunt causas melius, caelique meatus / describent radio et surgentia sidera dicent: / tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento / (hae tibi erunt artes), pacique imponere morem, / parcere subiectis et debellare superbos.*

<sup>16</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, 1, 261-277. It is interesting that, also in this case, the illustration of the future destinies of Rome takes place in the context of an interaction with a father (Venus is presented as the daughter of Jupiter in the verses preceding those just mentioned, cf. 1, 256).

<sup>17</sup> The largest study on this peculiar Roman *mos* remains that of FLOWER 1996; for its influence on Virgil cf. among others the pages of BURKE 1979, then BETTINI 1986, 153-160. Finally, I am pleased to mention one of the latest works by a distinguished Virgilian scholar such as Nicholas Horsfall (HORSFALL 2015).

the so-called *imagines maiorum*, the wax masks which reproduced the features of the ancestors and which were normally kept in the atrium of the noble residences, were removed from the display cases that contained them and worn by figures who reproduced the physical appearance of the ancestors themselves and carried the clothes and *insignia* of the magistrates that they had covered in life; the procession then accompanied the coffin on its way through the public places of the city to the Forum, where the discourse of praise for the deceased was held, forming a *tableau vivant* whose extraordinary visual impact is not difficult to imagine<sup>18</sup>.

Over a century before Virgil, that impressive spectacle had produced a very strong impression on the Greek historian Polybius, who arrived in Rome as a hostage in the aftermath of the Third Macedonian War and here quickly entered into collaborative relationships or real friendship with some exponents of prominent elite: it is to him that we owe the most ancient and intelligent description of the singular funeral rite, in the framework of that real anthropological report represented by the sixth book of the *Histories*. In this context, Polybius was particularly attentive to investigating the mechanisms of construction and reproduction of Roman civic ethics, in which he rightly identified one of the keys to Rome's success. It is from this perspective, therefore, that the historian looks at the aristocratic funerals and it is for this reason that it is not only the performance of the rite that arouses his interest, but above all the reactions it aroused in younger observers: the most important aspect of the whole in fact, Polybius points out, it is precisely the fact that the latter «are encouraged to endure anything for the good of the state, to achieve the glory that accompanies men of valour»<sup>19</sup>. For Polybius, in other words, that show was able to trigger an active process of emulation in those who watched it, to solicit a series of behaviours aimed at equalling the challenges of the ancestors, to standardize their actions to the exemplary paradigm of a past which was proposed again and again – also thanks to a representation such as that of the funeral – as a perpetually valid model.

<sup>18</sup> Among the numerous studies on the subject, I refer to BLASI 2010 and BETTINI 2015, as well as to some pages of great significance by PUCCI 2014, 366-369.

<sup>19</sup> Polybius, *Histories*, 6, 54, 3: τὸ δὲ μέγιστον, οἱ νέοι παρορμῶνται πρὸς τὸ πᾶν ὑπομένειν ὑπὲρ τῶν κοινῶν πραγμάτων χάριν τοῦ τυχεῖν τῆς συνακολουθούσης τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς τῶν ἀνδρῶν εὐκλείας.



About a century later, very similar considerations are advanced by the historian Sallust in the opening pages of the *Jugurthine War*:

I have often heard that in the past Q. Maximus, P. Scipio, and other eminent men of our state, used to say that their soul was most irresistibly fired to accomplish acts of manly virtues when they gazed upon the wax images of their ancestors. To be sure, it was not the wax or the image that had such power in itself but the memory of things done that nourished the flame in the breast of extraordinary men, and that flame did not die down until their manly virtue had equalled that fame and glory<sup>20</sup>.

Among other things, it is worth noting that if Polybius speaks generically of young generations encouraged to consecrate themselves to the service of the State, Sallust, as a good Roman, underlines how this solicitation acted primarily and with particular force on the members of the same family the images belonged to, members on whom the obligation to resemble fathers weighed as an expectation shared both by the directly interested and by the civic community as a whole<sup>21</sup>.

To these testimonies on the impact exerted by images on Roman culture, we can finally add those, particularly illuminating, relating to the story of the cesaricide Brutus<sup>22</sup>. The ancient sources are in fact unanimous in believing that Brutus' adhesion to the conspiracy of the Ides of March was

---

<sup>20</sup> Sallust, *The Jugurthine War*, 4, 5-6 (translation of W. W. Batstone): *Nam saepe ego audiui Q. Maximum, P. Scipionem, alios praeterea civitatis nostrae praeclaros viros solitos ita dicere, quom maiorum imagines intuerentur, vehementissime sibi animum ad virtutem adendi. Scilicet non ceram illam neque figuram tantam vim in sese habere, sed memoria rerum gestarum eam flammam egregiis viris in pectore crescere neque prius sedari quam virtus eorum famam atque gloriam adaequaverit.*

<sup>21</sup> Much has been written on the modeling role of ancestors in recent years, also due to the flourishing of studies on the theme of family memory and its transmission; here I limit myself to referring to the beautiful work of BAROIN 2010. Instructive on this aspect of Roman culture, even if without a specific reference to the *imagines*, the observations of Cicero, *For Rabirius* 2: *hoc generi hominum prope natura datum ut, si qua in familia laus aliqua forte floruerit, hanc fere qui sint eius stirpis, quod sermone hominum ac memoria patrum virtutes celebrantur, cupidissime persequantur, si quidem non modo in gloria rei militaris Paulum Scipio et Maximus filii, sed etiam in devotione vitae et in ipso genere mortis imitatus est P. Decium filius.*

<sup>22</sup> In this regard, for a broader discussion, I refer to LENTANO 2008, where the previously cited passages by Polybius and Sallust are also discussed.

propitiated in a decisive way precisely by the public statue and at the same time by the wax mask of the most prestigious of his ancestors, the legendary Lucius Iunius, sort of father of the aristocratic republic as an implacable adversary of the Tarquinii and consul in the year of the debut of the new-born regime: the first of those images made a fine show of itself on the Capitolium, side by side with the statues of the ancient kings, while the second one was the object of daily visual interaction for Brutus, as it was kept, together with the other ancestral masks, in the private residence of the Iunii<sup>23</sup>. In this context we do not have the opportunity to dwell on the well-known story of the graffiti affixed during the night, which in the weeks preceding the conspiracy made their appearance in large numbers both on the seat reserved for Brutus as praetor in office and on the simulacrum of the ancient founder of the republic, graffiti in which anonymous hands expressed the hope that the remote descendant would show himself to the height of his glorious ancestor and above all that he would reproduce the heroic gesture for which the latter had entered the legend, the driving out of the tyrant: a story to which all ancient sources give great prominence and which had also struck the imagination of William Shakespeare, who does not fail to recognize it due importance in his admirable *Julius Caesar*<sup>24</sup>.

On the other hand, a page of great interest from the *Philippics* cannot be left out in which Cicero, committed to defending himself from the accusation of being a sort of occult instigator of the anti-Caesarian conspiracy, a bad teacher who had armed the hand of the conspirators while remaining prudently in the shadow, explains how the images of his ancestors, capable of exerting a much more effective push on Brutus than that which Cicero himself could have given, had carried out the task of real *auctores ad liberandam patriam* for the cesaricide:

For if advisers were wanted for the liberation of the country when those men were actors, should I incite the Brutuses, of whom the one saw every day the bust of Lucius Brutus, the other that of Ahala also? Should these men then, with such a lineage as this, seek

<sup>23</sup> The existence of this effigy is attested by various sources, in particular Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 33, 9; Plutarch, *Brutus*, 1, 1; Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 43, 45, 3-4.

<sup>24</sup> W. Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, respectively I, II, 313-317 and I, III, 142-146. It is presumed that the English playwright derived his information from Plutarch's biography of Brutus.

counsel from strangers rather than from their own kin, and abroad rather than at home? Again: Caius Cassius, a man born of a family that could not endure, I do not say sovereignty, but even the superior power of any man, wanted me, I suppose, as an adviser<sup>25</sup>.

As one can see, Cicero's speech is carried out in the plural, because next to Marcus Brutus the name of Decimus is also mentioned, one of the supporting actors of the conspiracy, the man who on the morning of the Ides of March 44 had taken on the dirty work to persuade a reluctant Caesar to go to the Senate, where his assassins awaited him. There is no doubt, however, that in the specific case of the first Brutus the network of images became even more dense, as the effigies of the paternal branch, which dated back to the founder of the republic, were joined by those of the maternal branch, the *gens Servilia*: the latter in fact included in its family tree another implacable opponent of tyranny, albeit less blazoned, that Gaius Servilius Ahala who in 439 BCE, according to the annalistic tradition, had killed the rich knight Spurius Melius precisely with the accusation of aspiring to kingdom<sup>26</sup>. On the other hand, things were not different with regard to the second leader of the conspiracy, Gaius Cassius Longinus: about him, Cicero remembers how he, in turn, came from a family that celebrated among its ancestors a father who had sentenced his son to death, Spurius Cassius, despite the three consulates he covered, also in this case because of his tyrannical ambitions<sup>27</sup>.

Both conspirators therefore did not need a stranger to ask for advice, and even the stature of a Cicero: to carry out this task, evidently considered crucial in determining choices even of vital importance such as adherence to a disruptive and risky political project, the respective deceased ancestors were enough, whose images were there to repeat, as a silent but uninterrupted and extremely effective warning, which actions were required of those who wanted to be worthy descendants.

<sup>25</sup> Cicero, *Philippics*, 2, 26 (translation of W. C. A. Ker): *etenim si auctores ad liberandam patriam desiderarentur illis actoribus, Brutos ego impellerem, quorum uterque L. Bruti imaginem cotidie videret, alter etiam Ahalae? Hi igitur his maioribus ab alienis potius consilium peterent quam a suis et foris potius quam domo? Quid? C. Cassius in ea familia natus quae non modo dominatum, sed ne potentiam quidem cuiusquam ferre potuit, me auctorem, credo, desideravit.*

<sup>26</sup> The episode is told, among others, by Livy, *History of Rome*, 4, 13-16.

<sup>27</sup> Also for this story I refer to the canonical version of Livy, *History of Rome*, 2, 41.

### 3. At the service of the future

This substantial Roman reflection on the power of the *imagines maiorum*, both in their daily presence within the aristocratic residences and when they invaded the urban space on the occasion of aristocratic, constitutes the keystone to understand not only the overall setting that Virgil intended to give in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, but also the reaction that the parade of heroes arouses – or is expected to arouse – in its privileged spectator: that of feeding Aeneas the thirst for glory and of cancelling in advance any uncertainty regarding the difficult trials that still await him in Italy. Not surprisingly, after pointing out to him the image of Augustus and the other great protagonists of future history, Anchises urges his son with a question that certainly is rhetorical in the intentions of the one who asks it:

Will we hesitate to put our courage  
to the test? Does fear keep us from our home  
in Italy?<sup>28</sup>

Then, when the review is finally completed, it is Anchises again who comments with his son on what they both saw «and fired his spirit with a love of future glory»<sup>29</sup>. In the latter context, moreover, Virgil's use of a term such as fire is significant: the emotional response that the old Trojan intends to provoke in Aeneas is therefore the same that the sight of the images of the ancestors induced in the descendants of the great aristocratic families, that of inflaming the soul of those who look at them and to push them to face any risk in order to obtain a reputation worthy of their ancestors.

It is no chance, therefore, that Sallust too, as we have seen, used the same metaphor, expressed in that case by the verb *adcondere* (set on fire) and taken up by the noun *flamma* (flame), pertaining to the same semantic field. Anchises believes that after having reviewed the future heroes of Rome, Aeneas is now ready to bear the dangers that await him once he

---

<sup>28</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, 6, 806-807: *et dubitamus adhuc virtute extendere vires, / aut metus Ausonia prohibet consistere terra?* Servius's comment paraphrases: *cum tibi sit tanta ex Romanis et praecipue ex Augusto praeparata posteritas, dubitas virtutem factis extendere, id est gloriam?* (the paraphrase shows that Servius was reading a different text here, in which the second hemistich of v. 806 bore *virtutem extendere factis*, but the overall meaning of Anchises's question does not change).

<sup>29</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, 6, 889: *incenditque animum famae venientis amore*.

arrives in Latium and of these dangers in fact only at that moment does he inform his son, above all by hurrying up in just three verses what Virgil will tell in the next six songs of the poem<sup>30</sup>.

It is understood that between the procession that took place in Rome on the occasion of the aristocratic funeral and the parade of which Aeneas is a spectator in the kingdom of the dead, there are some important differences: starting from the fact that in that procession usually only the eminent members of the family to which the deceased belonged paraded, or at most of those to which he was related through marriages and adoptions, and not those of an entire people, as happens instead in the page of the *Aeneid*<sup>31</sup>. Yet, in the passage from the republic to the empire, with the ascent of Augustus to the top of the institutional system, this rule had perhaps already begun to be aware of some exceptions. Some scholars, in particular, went so far as to hypothesize that Virgil had conceived his procession of heroes under the suggestion of a real circumstance, the solemn funeral of the aforementioned Marcus Claudius Marcellus, who died early in 23 BCE, of which the poet had been perhaps an eyewitness and that in fact the *Aeneid* recalls in the same context of the sixth book, evoking the immense competition of crowd that had characterized them. It is in fact possible that already on that occasion, as it will happen in subsequent years for other exponents of the imperial *domus*, the funeral rite saw not only the wax masks of the Claudii, the birth family of the young and unfortunate prince, but also those of the *gens Iulia*, to whom his wife belonged, and together with them those of the great protagonists of the history of Rome<sup>32</sup>. In any case, this solution was adopted for the funeral of Augustus himself: according to the detailed account of Cassius Dio, on the occasion of the solemn ceremony in his honour, three different images of the prince were carried in procession, including a wax statue in triumphant dress;

Behind these came the images of his ancestors and of his deceased relatives (except that of Caesar, because he had been numbered

---

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Virgil, *Aeneid*, 6, 890-892.

<sup>31</sup> Noted by BETTINI 1986, p. 157.

<sup>32</sup> I refer to the influential contribution of SKARD 1965, in particular p. 64. The reference to the funeral ceremony for Marcellus appears in 6, 872-874; it should be remembered, moreover, that Marcellus, although belonging by birth to the *gens Claudia*, was buried in the mausoleum of Augustus.

among the demigods), and those of other Romans who had been prominent in any way, beginnings with Romulus himself<sup>33</sup>.

The reason that justifies a similar choice is not specified by the historian, but it is not difficult to imagine: what the script of the funeral intended to suggest was that the entire historical event of Rome, from the origins of the city, was summarized in the figure of the *princeps*, or, better still, that Augustus, as father of the country – a title that had been officially conferred on him since 2 BCE –, he had become a sort of meta-parent of the entire civic body, a collective ancestor with whom every citizen could and should feel related<sup>34</sup>.

At the opposite side of history with respect to Augustus, Aeneas is in turn a special ancestor, with a double status. In fact, the Trojan hero is at the same time the ancestor of the family that was directly descended from him, the *gens Iulia*, and that of the Romans as a whole: *pater Aeneas, Romanae stirpis origo*, as Virgil defines it in another context<sup>35</sup>. This is why when Anchises invites his son to look at the great of future history he points to them as «this *gens*... your Romans»; and it is no coincidence that he uses a term such as *gens*, to indicate how the Romans as a whole are the family of Aeneas, those same Romans who could define themselves as *Aeneadae*, sons of Aeneas<sup>36</sup>. They are all of them who form the lineage of the Trojan hero, and therefore it is all of them that the latter must look to. A similar double genealogical value of Aeneas, moreover, met very well Virgil's intentions: already Suetonius, in a passage of the biography he had dedicated to the poet, noted how the narrative plan he had chosen for the *Aeneid* allowed him to treat at the same time the origin of Rome and that of Augustus. The family dimension and the collective horizon

<sup>33</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 56, 34, 2 (translation of E. Cary): καὶ μετὰ ταύτας αἱ τε τῶν προπατόρων αὐτοῦ καὶ αἱ τῶν ἄλλων συγγενῶν τῶν τεθνηκότων, πλὴν τῆς τοῦ Καίσαρος ὅτι ἐς τοὺς ἥρωας ἐσεγγράφητο, αἱ τε τῶν ἄλλων Ῥωμαίων τῶν καὶ καθ' ὅτιοῦν πρωτεύσαντων, ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ Ῥωμύλου ἀρξάμεναι, ἐφέροντο. On the passage, I refer to the interesting observations of RICHARD 1966.

<sup>34</sup> On the great men of the Roman past as collective ancestors we should read the fine work by MENCACCI 2001, which presents, among other things (on p. 433), a significant reference to the funeral of Augustus.

<sup>35</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, 12, 166.

<sup>36</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, 6, 788-789: *Huc geminas nunc flecte acies, hanc aspice gentem / Romanosque tuos.*



could thus combine without frictions, avoiding at the Virgilian epic the risk of getting stuck in a purely familial celebration and giving it the “national” breath that was inherent in the statute of that literary genre<sup>37</sup>.

It is understood, however, that in the case of Aeneas what «fired his spirit», what pushed the exercise of virtue and the search for glory, is not the vision of his *ancestors*, as happens on the occasion of an elite funeral or when one admires the images exhibited in a private residence, but that of his *descendants*: from the hero's exceptional point of view, the usual chronological perspective is therefore overturned, as it is oriented to the future rather than the past. Yet, even in this reversed temporal dislocation – *hindsight as foresight*, according to the famous expression of Wystan Hugh Auden –, the effect produced by viewing one's own *lignée* is completely analogous to what Polybius, Sallust or Cicero perceived in the spectators placed in front of the images of their families<sup>38</sup>.

As a rule, the Roman fathers admonished their children to prove themselves worthy of the ancestors from whom they descended; only Aeneas found himself in the situation of someone who is urged by his father to deserve his descendants. Now the second part of the *Aeneid* can finally begin<sup>39</sup>.

Mario Lentano

Professor of Latin Language and Literature

Università di Siena

mario.lentano@unisi.it

---

<sup>37</sup> As is known, the biography has been transmitted through the reworking made of it in the mid-fourth century CE by Aelius Donatus, so that the Suetonian matrix of the information preserved by the subsequent grammarian is always a matter of opinion; in our case, however, it is probable that the observation we refer to in the text (21, 27-28 BRUGNOLI-STOK: *Novissime Aeneidem inchoavit, argumentum [...] in quo, quod maxime studebat, Romanae simul urbis et Augusti origo contineretur*) remounted to Suetonius, who devotes particular attention to the relations between writers and political power also in *De vita Caesarum*.

<sup>38</sup> I refer to the opening lines of *Secondary epic*, written in 1959: «No, Virgil, no: / not even the first of the Romans can learn / his Roman history in the future tense. / Not even to serve your political turn; / hindsight as foresight makes no sense». Cfr. KIRCHWEY 2010, 475-476.

<sup>39</sup> I intend to express my gratitude to the promoters of the conference on the occasion of which it was presented, and in particular to Dr. Sandra Gatti for the impeccable organization and generously-given care in the creation of the volume that collects the proceedings.

## Bibliography

- BAROIN 2010: C. BAROIN, "Remembering one's ancestor, following in their footsteps, being like them. The role and forms of family memory in the building of identity", in V. DASEN, Th. SPÄTH (eds.), *Children, memory, and family identity in Roman culture*, Oxford-New York 2010, 19-48.
- BETTINI 1986: M. BETTINI, *Antropologia e cultura romana. Parentela, tempo, immagini dell'anima*, Roma 1986.
- BETTINI 2009: M. BETTINI, "Un'identità «troppo compiuta». Filiazione, stirpe e razza nell'Eneide di Virgilio", in M. BETTINI, *Affari di famiglia. La parentela nella letteratura e nella cultura antica*, Bologna 2009, 273-301.
- BETTINI 2015: M. BETTINI, "La morte e il suo doppio. Il funerale gentilizio romano fra *imagines*, *ridiculum* e *honor*", in M. BETTINI, *Dèi e uomini nella Città. Antropologia, religione e cultura nella Roma antica*, Roma 2015, 77-97.
- BETTINI, LENTANO 2013: M. BETTINI, M. LENTANO, *Il mito di Enea. Immagini e racconti dalla Grecia a oggi*, Torino 2013.
- BLASI 2010: M. BLASI, "La «memoria mascherata». I MIMHTAÍ e la rappresentazione del defunto ai funerali gentilizi romani", *Scienze dell'antichità*, 16, 2010, 181-194.
- BRUGNOLI, STOCK 1997: G. BRUGNOLI, F. STOK (a cura di), *Vitae Vergilianae antiquae*, Roma 1997.
- BURKE 1979: P.F. Jr. BURKE, "Roman rites for the dead and *Aeneid* 6", *Classical Journal*, 74, 1979, 220-228.
- CAMEROTTO 2018: A. CAMEROTTO, *Sisifo. I grandi peccatori*, Milano 2018.
- DANESE, SANTUCCI, TORINO 2020: R. M. DANESE, A. SANTUCCI, A. TORINO (a cura di), *Acheruntica. La discesa agli Inferi dall'antichità classica alla cultura contemporanea*, Urbino 2020.

- FABIANO 2019: D. FABIANO, *Senza paradiso. Miti e credenze sull'aldilà greco*, Bologna 2019.
- FEENEY 1986: D. C. FEENEY, "History and revelation in Vergil's underworld", in *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, n.s. 32, 1986, 1-24 (now in Ph. R. HARDIE (ed.), *Virgil. Critical assessments of classical authors*, vol. IV, London-New York 1999, 221-243).
- FLOWER 1996: H. I. FLOWER, *Ancestor masks and aristocratic power in Roman culture*, Oxford 1996.
- HERRERO DE JÁUREGUI 2015: M. HERRERO DE JÁUREGUI, "Traditions of catabatic experience in *Aeneid* 6", *Les études classiques*, 83, 2015, 329-349.
- HORSFALL 2013: N. HORSFALL, *Virgil, «Aeneid» 6. A commentary*, 2 voll., Berlin 2013.
- HORSFALL 2015: N. HORSFALL, "Exempla in Vergil's underworld", *Wiener Studien*, 128, 2015, 63-67 (now in N. HORSFALL, *Fifty years at Sibyl's heels. Selected papers on Virgil and Rome*, Oxford 2020, 473-476).
- KIRCHWEY 2010: K. KIRCHWEY, "Vergil's *Aeneid* and contemporary poetry", in J. FARRELL, M. C. J. PUTNAM (eds.), *A companion to Vergil's «Aeneid» and its tradition*, Chichester-Malden (Mass.) 2010, 465-481.
- LENTANO 2008: M. LENTANO, "Bruto o il potere delle immagini", *Latomus*, 67, 2008, 881-899 (now, under the title *Convitati di cera*, in M. LENTANO, "Signa culturae". *Saggi di antropologia e letteratura latina*, Bologna 2009, 131-156).
- LENTANO 2020: M. LENTANO, *Enea. L'ultimo dei Troiani, il primo dei Romani*, Roma 2020.
- MENCACCI 2001: F. MENCACCI, "Genealogia metaforica e maiores collettivi (prospettive antropologiche sulla costruzione dei *virii illustres*)", in M. COUDRY, Th. SPÄTH (éds.), *L'invention des grands hommes de la Rome antique. Die Konstruktion der grossen Männer Altroms. Actes du Colloque du Collegium Beatus Rhenanus, Augst 16-18 septembre 1999*, Paris 2001, 421-437.
- NORDEN 1927<sup>3</sup>: E. NORDEN, *P. Vergilius Maro. Aeneis Buch VI*, Leipzig 1927<sup>3</sup> (or. ed. 1903).

- PADUANO 2020<sup>3</sup>: G. PADUANO, *La nascita dell'eroe. Achille, Odisseo, Enea: le origini della cultura occidentale*, Milano 2020<sup>3</sup> (or. ed. 2008).
- PETTENÒ 2004: E. PETTENÒ, «Cruciamenta Acherunti». I dannati nell'Ade romano: una proposta interpretativa, Roma 2004.
- PUCCI 2014: G. PUCCI, "Immagine", in M. BETTINI, W. M. SHORT (a cura di), *Con i Romani. Un'antropologia della cultura antica*, Bologna 2014, 353-376.
- RICHARD 1966: J.-C. RICHARD, "Énée, Romulus, César et les funérailles impériales (Dion Cassius, 56, 34, 2; Tacite, *Annales*, 4, 9, 3)", *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, 78, 1966, 67-78.
- SKARD 1965: E. SKARD, "Die Heldenschau in Vergils *Aeneis*", *Symbolae Osloenses*, 40, 1965, 53-65.
- SOLMSEN 1972: F. SOLMSEN, "The world of the dead in book 6 of the *Aeneid*", *Classical Philology*, 67, 1972, 31-41.
- WEST 1993: D. WEST, "The pageant of the heroes as panegyric (Virgil, *Aen.* 6.760-886)", in H. D. JOCELYN, H. HURT (eds.), *Tria lustra. Essays and notes presented to John Pinsent founder and editor of Liverpool classical monthly by some of its contributors on the occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> issue*, Liverpool 1993, 283-296.