

VERGIL'S SOPHOCLEAN THEBANS

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Abstract: This article explores Vergil's allusions in the *Aeneid* to Sophocles's Theban plays, *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone*. The allusions are put in the context of (a) analogies between civil strife in Roman history and familial strife in Theban myth, and (b) Vergil's recall of Greek tragedy. Dido, Aeneas, and Turnus all find counterparts in Sophocles's Theban plays. At times Dido resembles the Antigone in the play of that name; at others the Oedipus of *Oedipus the King*. Aeneas twice in *Aeneid* 7 and 8 resembles the Oedipus of the *Coloneus*; finally Turnus resembles Antigone in several moments of *Aeneid* 12. The allusions to the *Antigone* are reinforced by similarities with Accius's *Antigona*. The Sophoclean intertextuality intersects with several themes in Vergil, including the limits of human knowledge, the connection between death and marriage, and the recrudescence tendency towards civil war. Vergil's aetiological framework becomes crossed with a poetics of civil war and intrafamilial strife as these are transmitted down through the generations.



THEBAN MYTH AND ROMAN HISTORY

LATIN POETS OFTEN DRAW ON STORIES OF THEBAN CIVIL STRIFE TO REFLECT on civil war in Roman history, or on its close relative, war with a neighbor who will soon be absorbed by Rome.¹ When a character in Ennius's *Sabinae* asks:

cum spolia generis detraxeritis, quam, <patres,>

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1. On Theban myth in early Roman history see Scapini 2017; on Theban myth in Roman Republican monuments, see Rebeggiani, forthcoming a. On the permeable distinction between civil war and war with *externi*, with particular reference to the shield of Aeneas, see Toll 1997, esp. 48–50.

inscriptionem dabitis? (fr. 1 R²)

when you have dragged spoils from your sons-in-law, < fathers,> what inscription will you set up?

we hear an echo of Jocasta's words to Polynices in Euripides's *Phoenissae*:

φέρ', ἦν ἔληις γῆν τήνδ', ὁ μὴ τύχοι ποτέ,
 πρὸς θεῶν, τροπαῖα πῶς ἄρα στήσεις Διί,
 πῶς δ' αὖ κατάρξῃ θυμάτων, ἐλών πάτραν,
 καὶ σκῦλα γράψεις πῶς ἐπ'Ινάχου ροαῖς;
 Θήβας πυρώσας τάσδε Πολυνείκης θεοῖς
 ἀσπίδας ἔθηκε;

Suppose you conquer this land—may it not happen!—tell me, by the gods, how will you set up a trophy to Zeus? How will you begin the sacrifice after your country's conquest or inscribe the spoils at the streams of Inachus: “Polyneices after giving Thebes to the flames dedicated these shields to the gods”? (Eur. *Phoen.* 571–576, text Diggle, translation E. P. Coleridge.)²

Some two centuries and several civil wars later, Ovid would interweave Vergil's *Aeneid* and Attic tragedy (Sophocles's *Oedipus Tyrannus* and Euripides's *Bacchae*) in his Theban history that has undertones of civil war.³ One of the sown men advises Cadmus not to involve himself in their civil war (*ne te ciuibibus insere bellis*, 3.117; see Hardie 1990, esp. 225); two mythical generations later, the Theban royal house will destroy itself in a gruesome replay of Euripides's *Bacchae*; and later still, Themis will foresee the internecine strife of Eteocles and Polynices (9.403–407). Building on Vergil and Ovid, Lucan would weave references to the Theban civil war into his historical epic about the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, which range from the explicit to the allusive: amid a catalogue of prodigies after Caesar's invasion of Italy, the Vestals' sacred fire splits into two flames, imitating the funeral pyre of Eteocles and Polynices (*Thebanos imitata rogos*, 1.552), divided even in death, while Caesar's prohibition of the burial of Pompey and its aftermath allude in detail to Sophocles's *Antigone*.⁴ In

2. For discussion and bibliography see Ginsberg 2015, 228 and Goldberg and Manuwald 2018, 208.

3. See Hardie 1990 for the Vergilian intertextuality; on Eur. *Bacch.* in *Met.* 3 see Keith 2002; on Soph. OT see Gildenhard and Zissos 2000.

4. On 1.449–452 see Ambühl 2005 and Roche 2009, 331; see also 4.449–451. On allusion to Soph. *Ant.* see Ambühl 2015, 269–72.

Statius's *Thebaid*, the often latent civil war dynamics of Vergil's *Aeneid* explode into a fratricidal civil war, as Oedipus replays Vergil's Juno in stirring up the Furies.⁵ Statius channels Seneca's Oedipus (Boyle 2011, xc-xciii; Braund 2016, 84–86), but also Euripides's *Phoenissae* and Sophocles's Theban plays (Heslin 2008).

Vergil's *Aeneid* would seem to be the missing link between the archaic and “silver” Latin poets who in various proportions combine Theban myth and the Roman civil wars. In 1990 Philip Hardie remarked that “the question of how much the *Aeneid* may owe to epic and tragic versions of the Theban story is one that requires further research” (1990, 230). A full study answering this call would need to consider the fragments and testimonies of the Theban epics as well as of Greek and Roman tragedies on Theban myth from the time of Cadmus to the time of the epigonoi. Some work has been done on this or is forthcoming.⁶ To a lesser *explicit* extent than Homer (see Tsagalis 2014 and Davies 2015, esp. 13–17, 21, 32–40), Vergil has Theban myth within his horizons as the background to the generation that fought at Troy. The shadow of Tydeus is present in Diomedes's patronymic; Aeneas comes face to face with several of Polynices's allies in the Underworld—Tydeus, Parthenopaeus and Adrastus (6.479–480)—before he sees heroes of the Trojan War; and the tragic heroines Eriphyle and Evadne, the wives of two other of the Seven against Thebes, are to be found with Dido in the *Lugentes Campi* (“Fields of Mourning,” 6.445–447).⁷ Dido in her madness is compared to Pentheus as he sees two suns and two cities of Thebes (4.469–470). Aside from these nods to the poetic hinterland, Vergil's main mode of engagement with Theban myth is indirect and intertextual. In the catalogue of sinners condemned to Tartarus, there are listed those who had enmity with their brothers during their lifetime (*hic quibus inuisi fratres, dum uita manebat*, 6.608), and those who beat a parent (*pulsatusue parens*, 6.609). While the crimes have contemporary civil-war resonances as well as mythical ones (see Horsfall 2013, 422–23), Servius includes Eteocles and Polynices among those who hated their brothers, and Oedipus as an example of a parricide. It has even been surmised that Vergil's “unHomeric” Mezentius, *contemptor diuum* (“spurner of the gods,” 7.648), may look to a Greek epic Capaneus, arch-hybrist and theomach, on the grounds that

5. See Henderson 1991, and also Ganiban 2007 and McNelis 2007.

6. See La Penna 2002a and 2000b. Mac Góráin 2013 reads allusion to early Theban myth dramatized in Euripides's *Bacchae* in the context of the echoes of civil war in the *Aeneid*. Giusti 2018 considers Thebes in her study of Carthage and civil war in the *Aeneid*. See Rebeggiani forthcoming b on allusion to Aeschylus's *Septem* and Euripides's *Phoenissae* in the *Aeneid*.

7. See Horsfall 2013 *ad loc.* for the relevance of these figures from Theban myth.

Statius's Capaneus is indebted to Mezentius (see Davies 2015, 72). We are on less speculative ground when pursuing allusion to surviving texts, and so I propose to examine and interpret here Vergil's engagement with Sophocles's Theban plays, and where the evidence allows, with a Roman version of one of these plays, namely, Accius's *Antigona*.⁸ Unfortunately Julius Caesar's tragedy *Oedipus* is beyond consideration, since his adopted son Augustus suppressed its publication (Suet. *Iul.* 56). We may make what we will of that filial act of literary parricide, but it is easy to surmise how the Oedipus myth might have aroused Julius Caesar's attention: on the night before he crossed the Rubicon to make war on his homeland and his son-in-law, he dreamed of having sex with his mother, which was interpreted by the seers as a sign that he would rule the world.⁹ Then again, as Sophocles's Jocasta reassured Oedipus, many men have in their dreams lain with their mothers (OT 980–982).

VERGIL AND SOPHOCLES

Zooming out for a moment from the specific study of Theban myth in the *Aeneid*, we may note that critics since antiquity have certainly been alert to tragedy and the tragic in Vergil's poems.¹⁰ Modern scholars have led the enquiry in various interpretive directions, to the point that recent analyses are increasingly hybrid in their approach; but all studies of this subject are concerned to varying degrees with the interactions between epic and tragic, including the ways in which Homeric epic is already tragic to begin with.¹¹ La Cerdá was particularly interested in imitations of the tragic poets, and interpreted them with reference to Aristotle's emphasis on *pathē*, and with a view to the overlap between epic and tragic modes.¹² Heinze and his epigonoi enriched our understanding of Vergil's use of Aristotelian structural patterns such as *peripeteia*, but also of character and affect.¹³ Fenik, König, Stabryła and others have detected further material, often with strict philological criteria as to what counts as an allusion, whether verbal, thematic or structural (Fenik 1960; König 1970). In a series of penetrating

8. On Vergil's use of Accius, see Stabryła 1970; Zorzetti 1990; Scafoglio 2007; for Sophocles see n. 15, below.

9. Suet. *Iul.* 7; Plut. *Caes.* 32; Dio 37.52 and 41.24; cf. Artem. *Onir* 1.79.

10. For recent surveys see Panoussi 2009, 5 and Ambühl 2015, 24–27.

11. On the tragic qualities of Homer see Pl. *Resp.* 10.607a; Aristot. *Poet.* 1448b34–1449a1; Rutherford 1982; and Kircher 2018. On ancient scholiasts' appreciation of the tragic qualities of Homer's poetry, see Richardson 1980, esp. 270. Makrinos 2013 discusses Eustathius's use of Sophocles to elucidate Homeric epic.

12. See, e.g., La Cerdá's comments on the death of Turnus, with Laird 2003, 30–31.

13. Heinze 1993 [1902]; Włosok 1976; see Albrecht 1970; and Kircher 2018, 189–214 on the un-Aristotelian character of Vergil's tragic manner.

studies, Conte has interpreted tragic allusion in terms of genre and the meaning of literary form.¹⁴ Hardie interpreted tragedy in Vergil in terms of political and anthropological readings of Greek and Roman tragedy (Hardie 1991 and 1997). Schiesaro has probed the recesses of Dido's psyche, reading tragic models as her intertextual unconscious (Schiesaro 2008). More recently, Panoussi has turned to the ritual dimensions of tragedy as expressed in epic, focusing on women's activities and heroic values, and arguing that tragic allusion destabilizes the epic's ideological core (Panoussi 2002, 2009).

Sophocles has a privileged status in these studies, even though allusions to Sophocles or Aeschylus are far outnumbered by those to Euripides (a preponderance that cannot be explained entirely on the grounds of survival).¹⁵ Conington cites Sophoclean parallels, some situational and some verbal (not necessarily allusions!) over a hundred times in his commentary on the *Aeneid* alone, and observes that Sophocles's "inversions of language are very like Virgil's."¹⁶ Conte (2007) develops this insight with reference to the rhetorical figure of enallage, which defamiliarizes the idiom, drawing attention to the materiality of the language itself and to its layers of meaning. Michael Silk discerns "semantic diversion" in Sophocles and Vergil (and Yeats), "a sudden adjustment of reference, which was always possible (is seen to be so in retrospect), but which was not apparent, and which seems to displace what *was* apparent" (2009, 142). Others have posited a spiritual or moral kinship between Vergil and Sophocles that transcends the verbal, which may be located in their shared mysterious view of the divine and of the workings of causation; *dis aliter uisum* ("the gods decreed otherwise," 2.428), as La Penna emphasizes it.¹⁷ Arguably the two different levels of moral kinship and linguistic influence are related: doubleness and ambiguity in language are ideal tools to express themes such as epistemological uncertainty, revelation, and intrafamilial strife or civil war, which are the ultimate in moral inversion.

14. Conte 1986, 1999, and 2007; see also Galinsky 2003.

15. On Sophocles in Vergil see König 1970, 204–25; Lefèvre 1978; Martina 1988; Holford-Strevens 1999, 232–35; La Penna 1980; 2005, 166–68; Panoussi 2001; 2009, 177–82; Finglass 2007.

16. On *Aen.* 6.229. Cf. also Knight 1966, 43 "[Sophocles] may even have helped Vergil to use words with attention to their ambiguities, and their etymological meanings, and make them mean more than words are ordinarily intended, especially by Greeks, to mean."

17. Martina 1988, 915; Knight 1966, 170, 251–52; Holford-Strevens 1999, 234; La Penna 2005, 167.

A study of Sophocles's Theban plays in Vergil has much to offer on the matter of civil strife, but of course it will also bring other themes to light. Previous scholars have posited correspondences between the *Aeneid* and these plays that I shall note as they arise, but I am not aware of any synoptic study. In fact it makes sense to examine all of the echoes as a nexus on the grounds that even though the three Theban plays were not a connected trilogy, they nonetheless form a coherent unit. In particular, the *Oedipus at Colonus* (OC) splices the *Oedipus Tyrannus* (OT) with the *Antigone*, albeit not seamlessly, by revisiting the issue of Oedipus's guilt and responsibility from the OT, and looking forward to various aspects of the *Antigone*, most centrally, the outcome of the Theban civil war, Antigone's decision to bury Polynices, and its aftermath.¹⁸ Accordingly, echoes of these three plays across the *Aeneid* are patterned, and more than the sum of their parts: indeed they open up a broader dialogue between the two texts about roles and themes, as intertext yields to analogy. As we shall see, Vergil has redistributed fragments of Sophocles's Theban plays across the *Aeneid*, splitting and combining different motifs and figures. One might be tempted to use Knauer's terms *dédoubllement* and *Kontamination* to describe the intertextual phenomenology,¹⁹ but from an interpretive point of view, the language of psychoanalytic criticism, as used recently by Schiesaro, Oliensis, and McAuley,²⁰ seems more productive and appealing, and not simply because Freud and Oedipus have long been bedfellows.

ANTIGONE

Quae quibus anteferam? We may as well begin with Dido, Vergil's most overtly tragic character.²¹ It is typical of Vergil's allusive method that he combines in Dido a multiplicity of literary models, and it is left to the reader to decide which models matter most as the story proceeds. Necessarily, then, any instance of allusive analysis will privilege some models over others. If I focus here on Sophocles's Theban plays, it is not to deny the importance of other models such as Euripides's *Phaedra*, *Medea*, or *Alcestis*, who come to the fore in our interpretation of Dido at certain points in her story. As

18. Seidensticker 1972; Schütrumpf 1989, 144 and 154; Van Nortwick 1998; Giordano 2004 and 2009; Markantonatos 2007, 195–230; Hesk 2012, 185–89.

19. Knauer's terms for "splitting" and "combining"; see Knauer 1964.

20. Oliensis 2001 and 2009; Schiesaro 2008; McAuley 2016.

21. Studies of her tragic qualities include: Heinze 1993, 115–44; Pease 1935, 8–11; Włosok 1976; Muecke 1983; Moles 1987; Harrison 1989; Horsfall 1995, 133–34; Fernandelli 2002–2003; Clausen 2003, 75–113; Krummen 2004; Schiesaro 2008; Panoussi 2009.

Richard Jenkyns opined, “in a sense the formidable literary weight that [Dido] has to carry is part of her tragic burden; and she collapses beneath it” (1985, 63). Whether or not this is a fair assessment of how Dido (or indeed Vergil in general) should be read, we might still be predisposed to read Vergil’s Dido against Theban myth since Thebes and Carthage were both Sidonian colonies (Hardie 1990, 228–29; Giusti 2018, 97, 140–47). Her book opens with echoes of the prologue of Sophocles’s *Antigone*, the dialogue form as such being characteristic of Sophocles, and a complement to the “Euripidean prologue” with which Venus in buskins kick-starts Dido’s tragedy.²² The conjunction of *unanimam ... sororem* (4.8), “sister, sharer of her heart” and *Anna soror* (4.9), “Anna, my sister,” echoes Sophocles’ ὦ κοινὸν αὐτάδελφον Ἰσμήνης κάρα, “My own sister Ismene, linked to myself” (*Ant.* 1).²³ Both pairs of sisters speak at dawn about their current situation in light of previous intrafamilial strife, and both are concerned with the issue of keeping faith with the dead.²⁴

In the middle of the book, as Dido feels abandoned even by the gods, she echoes Accius’s *Antigona* (noticed already by Macrobius), who seems in turn to hark back to Sophocles’s *Antigone*.²⁵ Anna’s words to the dying Dido, *comitemne sororem / spreuisti moriens? eadem me ad fata uocasses*, “Did you scorn in death your sister’s company? You should have summoned me to share your fate” (4.677–678) echo Ismene’s wish to share a common death with her sister, μήτοι, κασιγνήτη, μ’ ἀτιμάσῃς τὸ μὴ οὐ / θανεῖν τε σὺν σοὶ, “Sister, do not so dishonor me as not to let me die with you” (*Ant.* 544–45). La Cerdà compared Anna’s words *extinxisti te meque soror*, “You

22. S. Harrison 2007, 209–10; on the “Euripidean prologue” see E. L. Harrison 1972–1973.

23. Vergil quotations are taken from Mynors 1972. Translations of Vergil and Sophocles are taken from Fairclough-Goold 1999 and 2000 and Lloyd-Jones 1994a and 1994b respectively, sometimes adapted.

24. Compare Dido’s *sparso fraterna caede penatis*, “the spattering of our home with a brother’s blood” (21) with Ismene’s δυοῖν ἀδελφοῖν ἐστερήθημεν δύο, / μιᾶς θανόντοιν ἡμέρᾳ διπλῇ χερί, “since we two were robbed of two brothers, who perished on one day, each at the other’s hand” (*Ant.* 13–14). In more limited respects, Dido and Anna might also remind us of Sophocles’s *Electra* and *Chrysanthemis*.

25. Compare Dido’s *iam iam nec maxima Juno / nec Saturnius haec oculis pater aspicit aequis*, “Now neither mighty Juno nor the Saturnian sire looks on these things with righteous eyes” (4.371–72) with Accius, *Antigona* 142 R² *iam iam neque dī regunt / néque profecto deū suprenus réx <iam> curat hóminibus*, “Now nor do the gods hold sway, nor does the supreme ruler of the gods care for mortals,” which seems modelled on lines from Antigone’s *kommos*: Τί χρή με τὴν δύστηνον ἐξ θεοὺς ἔτι / βλέπειν; “Why must I still look to the gods, unhappy one” (Soph. *Ant.* 922–23). See already Macrobius, *Sat.* 6.1.59, and Stabryla 1970, 66–67.

have destroyed yourself and me together, sister” (4.682) with Haemon’s words to Creon, “Ηδ’ οὖν θανεῖται καὶ θανοῦσ’ ὀλεῖ τίνα, “Then she will die, and by her death she will destroy another” (*Ant.* 751), but in substance they are an amplification of Ismene’s words to Antigone, spoken before Antigone dies: Καὶ τίς βίος μοι σοῦ λελειμμένη φίλος; “And what desire for life will be mine if you leave me?” (*Ant.* 548). Heinze speculates that Vergil may have borrowed the idea for Dido’s epitaphic self-assessment *uixi et quem dederat cursum Fortuna peregi, / et nunc magna mei sub terras ibit imago*, “My life is done, and I have finished the course that Fortune gave; and now in majesty my shade shall pass beneath the earth” (4.653–654) “from its opposite,” the speech in which Antigone examines her life and the circumstances that have led to her death.²⁶

There are other thematic links between Dido and Antigone. Both ‘liminal’ characters are frustrated by death as regards motherhood.²⁷ Both death scenes contain erotic touches. Antigone’s death is figured as a marriage to Acheron (816); she addresses her tomb as a bridal chamber (891); and there are sexual undertones in the way in which Haemon joins Antigone in death, including his blood spurting over her white cheeks (1220–1225, 1234–1241).²⁸ Dido, for her part, gives instructions to place the marriage bed on what will become her funeral pyre (*lectumque iugalem / quo perii*, “and the bridal bed that was my undoing,” 4.496); her very last narrated act is to kiss the bed (*os impressa toro*, 4.659; cf. Servius *ad loc.*, *quasi amatrix*, “like a lover”); and in a Freudian vein it has been argued that Aeneas’s sword, the instrument with which Dido stabs herself, stands for Aeneas’s penis.²⁹

In terms of a broader analogy, the structural conflict that at first subordinates Antigone to Creon’s male civic authority is replayed as Dido loses out to Rome’s imperial destiny, but not without a strong sense of sympathy for Dido, or of personal cost to Aeneas and considerable damage

26. Heinze 1993, 103 n. 42, with ref. to Soph. *Ant.* 896 and 916ff.

27. Compare Antigone’s declaration of frustrated motherhood in her last speech (916ff.) καὶ νῦν ἄγει με διὰ χερῶν οὕτω λαβὼν / ἀλεκτρὸν, ἀνυμέναιον, οὔτε του γάμου / μέρος λαχοῦσαν οὕτε παιδείου τροφῆς ..., “And now he leads me thus by the hands, without marriage, without bridal, having no share in wedlock or in the rearing of children,” with Dido’s similar complaint (4.327–328) *saltem si qua mihi de te suscepta fuisset / ante fugam suboles ...*, “At least, if before your flight a child of yours had been born to me....” See McAuley 2016, 58–61 on Dido’s thwarted motherhood.

28. See further Seaford 1987 on the tragic wedding, including brides of death.

29. Gillis 1983, 49–51; further arguments along these lines about Dido’s death-scene are in Moortor 1990 and McAuley 2016, 58–61. Weber (1990, 213–14) argues that Dido’s palace is assimilated to a house of the death, and that the phrase “*membra ... stratis ... reponunt* [4.391–92] is as appropriate to laying out for burial (cf. 6.220) as it is to putting to bed.”

to his political progress. Unlike Antigone, Dido is sovereign in her own realm, but her political vision is at variance with the *Aeneid*'s ideological center of gravity.

This thread of intertextuality certainly adds depth and nuance to the characterization of Dido, but what does it contribute to Vergil's poetics of civil war, which is concentrated in books 7–12 of the *Aeneid*?³⁰ One way of answering this question is to think, with Elena Giusti, of analogies as well as polarities among Romans, Trojans, and Carthaginians, which effectively narrow the gap between Punic and civil wars.³¹ Another way would be to think of how Dido's curse programs not only the Punic wars and the rise of her avenger Hannibal, but also the war that Aeneas must fight in Italy (4.615), in which there are echoes of the Roman civil wars.³² Dido promises Aeneas that after her death she will shadow him everywhere, *omnibus umbra locis adero*, “everywhere my shade shall haunt you” (4.386), and she keeps her promise in the sense that gifts from her crop up eerily at significant moments: when the corpse of Pallas is draped in a piece of Dido's handiwork (11.72–75), it is difficult not to recall Dido's curse upon Aeneas, especially *uideatque indigna suorum / funera*, “let him see his friends cruelly slaughtered” (4.617–618).³³ More than this, Dido's intertextual ghosts also haunt the second half of the *Aeneid*. When Juno tells Allecto that she can set brother against brother (*tu potes unanimos armare in proelia fratres*, “You can arm for strife brothers of one soul,” 7.335), we hear an echo of Dido's Antigonean address to her sister Anna (4.8, *unanimam ... sororem*, “sister ... sharing my soul”).³⁴ When Juno promises to rouse Acheron (*flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo*, “If Heaven I cannot bend, then I will arouse Acheron,” 7.312) we may overhear Antigone's very famous lament on her marriage to Acheron (Ἀχέροντι νυμφεύσω, “I shall become a bride of Acheron,” 816), despite the differences in purpose and context of the two lines. At this point, Juno the goddess of marriage, who presided over the “marriage” of Dido and Aeneas,³⁵ is stirring up hell for her own nefarious

30. Scholars have often detected reflexes of the civil war in the narrative of *Aeneid* 7–12, signalled by Juno's words to Allecto at 7.335. See, e.g., Bannon 1997, 148; Pogorzelski 2009; Marincola 2010; Stover 2011; Barchiesi 2015, 60–65.

31. Giusti 2018, esp. chaps. 1, 2, and 4.

32. See Giusti 2018, 223, with reference to Dido's words *pugnent ipsi[que nepotesque]*, “let them fight, and with them their descendants” (4.629).

33. For another example see 9.266, where *dat* would seem to imply the continuing presence of Dido through her gifts.

34. This is only the second occurrence of the adjective in the epic.

35. Cf. 4.164, *Pronuba Iuno*; cf. 4.126, and Dido's sacrifices to Juno as goddess of marriage at 4.59, *Iunoni ante omnis, cui uincla iugalia curae*, “and most of all to Juno,

purposes. The echo seems confirmed when only a few lines later Juno ensures that the link in Ἀχέροντι νυμφεύσω between death and marriage will carry over from Dido's book into the second half of the *Aeneid*: son-in-law will fight father-in-law, Lavinia will be dowered in blood, and Bellona will be her bridesmaid.³⁶ But it doesn't stop there: many warriors, Trojan and Italian, will have their death scenes graced with amatory notes. As J. D. Reed writes, "Each time Virgil lingers visually over the body of a fallen warrior (as opposed to the many brief "obituaries" that follow warriors' deaths in the latter books of the poem) he invokes the *sermo amatorius*, the conventional language of love" (2007, 16). Reed rightly connects this motif with allusion to the death of Adonis, but one might also see it as a legacy of the tragic wedding, notably that of Antigone. Oliver Lyne entertained a correspondence between the "feminine imagery" applied to the corpse of Pallas at 11.68ff. and Antigone's lament that she would be the bride of death, Ἀχέροντι νυμφεύσω (816),³⁷ and we could see Antigone as background for the same phenomenon in the case of other characters in the *Aeneid* who die before their time. Dido's Antigonean dimension also lives on through Turnus, who is both a doublet of Dido and central to Vergil's "civil war." His Antigonean moments cluster in book 12. Latinus expresses concern for him as Ismene (or Creon?) had spoken to Antigone in Accius's play.³⁸ Later,

who looks after the bonds of marriage." Philip Hardie reminds me that Juno bribes Aeolus to release the "gigantomachic" winds with the promise of marriage.

36. 7.317–319, *hac gener atque socer coeant mercede suorum: / sanguine Troiano et Rutulo dotabere, uirgo, / et Bellona manet te pronuba*, "At such price of their people's lives may father and son-in-law by united! Blood of Trojan and Rutulian shall be your dower, maiden, and Bellona awaits you as your bridal matron!"

37. Lyne 1989, 158: "When, however, Vergil comes to the lamentation scene in book 11, Pallas's reflective epilogue, he particularizes, pulling off what I think is a spectacular coup. Sophocles had given concrete and grimly vivid form to the idea of 'death instead of wedding': Antigone lamented that she would be the *bride of Death*. At 11.68 ff. Vergil indulges a pattern of feminine imagery to suggest for his hero the same tragic role. [Ant. 816]. With his characteristically ambivalent perception, Vergil presents his hero Pallas similarly: as the Vergilian Antigone, married to Death—and by Death deflowered." See also 158, n. 37.

38. Compare Latinus's "*o praestans animi iuuenis, quantum ipse feroci / uirtute exsuperas, tanto me impensius aequum est / consulere atque omnis metuentem expendere casus...*" ("O youth of matchless spirit, the more you excel in proud valour, the more carefully it is right that I ponder and in fear weigh every chance," 12.19–21) with Acc. *Ant.* fr. 136–37 R², *quánto magis te isti modi esse intélego, / tánto, Antígona, mágis me par est tibi consulere et párcere*, "the more I understand you to be of that mindset, Antigona, the more right it is that I take thought and make allowances for you" (recorded by Macrobius as one of Vergil's sources, *Sat.* 6.2.17), which appears to echo Ismene's words at Soph. *Ant.* 82 Οἵμοι ταλαίνης, ώς ὑπερδέδοικά σου, "Alas, how

Turnus wonders like Antigone whether it is such a terrible thing to die.³⁹ And later still he insists on being allowed to carry through his madness even unto death.⁴⁰ Two of these utterances are addressed to Turnus's sister Juturna, who in some ways takes over the role of Ismene, which Anna had played opposite Dido. Taken together, these three moments underscore his stubbornness and ennable his heroic attitude to death, despite his having shirked single combat hitherto. At the same time, there is a sense of intertextual determinism about the way in which Sophocles's Antigone percolates through Dido to Turnus into the war that prefigures the civil wars of later Roman history. Dido's specter crosses over from myth into Vergil's historical civil wars when Cleopatra, depicted as about to die on the shield of Aeneas, herself echoes Dido in her final moments.⁴¹

LOOSE ENDS

At various points Dido seems to echo other characters from Sophocles's Theban plays. Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar, but it is worth probing whether these lend themselves to interpretation. When Dido welcomes Aeneas with the words *non ignara mali miseris succurrerre disco*, “not ignorant of ill, I learn to aid distress” (1.630), her words resemble those of Theseus receiving the suppliant Oedipus at Colonus,⁴² which fits well with Dido's later claim that Aeneas was an indigent when she rescued him and his comrades (4.373–375). Unfortunately she is in the wrong poem for this kind act to earn her any real advantage, and had it not been for Fate, Aeneas might have chosen to stay. This same line of Dido's also seems to replay Eurydice's

I fear for you, poor creature!” See Strabryla 1970, 68; Wigodsky 1972, 89 and Tarrant 2012, 92.

39. Compare *Aen.* 12.646, *usque adeone mori miserum est?*, “Is it so terrible to die?” with Soph. *Ant.* 465–66, Οὐτως ἔμοιγε τοῦδε τοῦ μόρου τυχεῖν / παρ' οὐδὲν ἄλγος, “So it is in no way painful for me to meet with this death.” Tarrant (2012, 253) cites this echo, “given the other links between *T.* and Sophocles' *Antigone*.” Conington *ad loc.* cites *Ant.* 75 as a parallel for “sympathy of this kind between the living and the dead.”

40. Compare esp. his *hunc, oro, sine me furere ante furorem*, “Let me first, I beg you, give vent to this madness” (12.680) with Antigone's Ἄλλ' ἔσται με καὶ τὴν ἐξ ἔμοι δυσβουλίαν / παθεῖν τὸ δεινὸν τοῦτο, “Let me and my rashness suffer this awful thing” (*Ant.* 95–96), with Tarrant 2012, 262.

41. With 4.644, *pallida morte futura* cf. 8.709, *pallentem morte futura*.

42. OC 562–564, ὃς οἶδα καύτός ως ἐπαιδένθην ξένος, / ὡσπερ σύ, χώς τις πλεῖστ' ἀνήρ ἐπὶ ξένης / ηθλησα κινδυνεύματ' ἐν τῷμῷ κάρῃ, “I have not forgotten that I myself was brought up in exile, as you were, and in my exile I struggled against such dangers to my life as no other man has met with.” For other parallels beyond Theseus's words see Holford-Strevens 1999, 233.

encouragement to the messenger at *Antigone* 1191 to speak freely.⁴³ The echo bodes ill as the queen will hear in response about her son's suicide, and will respond with her own. Consistent with this foreshadowing, it has been suggested that Dido's silence with Anna at 4.456, *nec ipsi effata sorori*, "nor did she speak even to her sister," is ominous when read against the background of the presuicidal silences of Jocasta at OT 1074 and Eurydice at *Antigone* 1251, especially if we consider that Dido does not begin to plan her own death until some twenty lines later at 4.475, *decreuitque mori*, "and she resolved to die."⁴⁴

OEDIPUS

Beyond these scattered verbal parallels, it should perhaps not surprise us, at least on the grounds of a doubly determined family resemblance with *Antigone*, that there are similarities between Dido and the Oedipus of OT. Not all of these can be anchored in verbal parallels, but then again it has been argued that "Specific borrowing, indeed, is less important than overall resemblance."⁴⁵ The crux of the correspondence is that both Dido and Oedipus are involved in a marriage that turns on a misunderstanding, or a misunderstanding that turns on a marriage. In terms of the theory expounded in Aristotle's *Poetics*, especially the discussion of *hamartia* in ch. 13, and of characters' knowledge of their actions in ch. 14, both tragedies are founded on a failure to perceive—Oedipus's failure to perceive that he killed his father and married his mother, and Dido's refusal to acknowledge that

43. κακῶν γὰρ οὐκ ἀπειρος οὖσ' ἀκούσομαι, "For you will have a listener not without experience of disaster."

44. See Conington on 4.456; but Martina 1988, 920 in relation to the same echoes points out that silence is common in Greek tragedy, especially Aeschylus. For echoes of Jocasta's suicide in Dido's see Clausen 2003, 102–4. The section that concludes here has not exhausted all of the loose ends, scattered echoes or possible echoes of the Theban plays in the *Aeneid*, which Conington and Martina 1988 mention. "Naturally, in the end my reading is my reading, based on the stories I want to tell"; Fowler 2000, 13.

45. Holford-Strevens 1999, 234. One example, which I shall not discuss further, is noted by Lyne 1987, 194 n. 62: "Dido's love-wound, her 'tacitum vulnus', is converted remorselessly and seemingly inevitably into the frightful 'vulnus stridens' of her suicide; the fire of her passion is similarly actualized.... Cf. Oedipus' 'blindness' in the OT. The idea of blindness is tossed to and fro in the Oedipus-Teiresias scene (371, 389, 412f., 454), establishing itself as a motif and raising the question: who is blind, and in what way? ... The play demonstrates that Oedipus is the blind one, mentally blind (venially so, nevertheless blind), and his blindness and the motif culminate in the terrible scenes of his physical blinding (1313ff.)" (with further references).

what she called a *coniugium* was not a real marriage.⁴⁶ The chorus of the *OT* might have called it a marriage that was not a marriage (ἄγαμον γάμον, 1214). After the parody of a wedding in the cave, Dido no longer conceals her previously clandestine relationship with Aeneas; she calls it a marriage, and by means of this name, covers up her guilt: *coniugium uocat, hoc praetexit nomine culpam* (4.172). The line and its context have often been scrutinized to identify Dido's *culpa*, and to establish how the *culpa* relates to Aristotle's *hamartia*,⁴⁷ a concept that is itself indebted to Sophoclean tragedy including the *OT*.⁴⁸ The Sophoclean legacy is a reminder that Dido, like Oedipus, has a complex mixture of internal and external factors affecting her decision making. When Oedipus utters an imprecation on the killer of Laius at *OT* 132–141 and 246–251 (which are bracketed in many editions⁴⁹), the audience cannot but think ahead to the consequences of Oedipus's quest and to his self-blinding. Similarly, Dido issues a self-imprecation at 4.24–27 that Jupiter should thrust her down to Hades with his thunderbolt if she should ever fail to keep faith with her vow of *pudor*. As Pease comments, "Dido's protestations are sincere, but she does not realize the extent to which her infatuation for Aeneas has already made them impossible" (1935, 106). Dido follows up her self-imprecation by reiterating a vow of fidelity to her dead husband Sychaeus.

"...

ille meos, primus qui me sibi iunxit, amores
abstulit; ille habeat secum seruetque sepulcro." (4.28–29)

"... He who first linked me to himself has taken away my heart; may he keep it with him, and guard it in the grave!"

Commentators have noted as a parallel the passage in which Oedipus consoles himself that he did not kill his father by asserting that Polybus took the oracles (about Oedipus killing his father) with him to his grave (Conington *ad loc.*).

46. Aristotle specifies Oedipus's ignorance in ch. 14; for this view of the tragedy of Dido see e.g. Quinn 1963, 34; Muecke 1983, 146; Wlosok 1999 [1976] 160–68. G. Williams (1968, 378–84) argues that Dido was within her rights to view it as a marriage.

47. Dido's earlier line, *huic uni forsan potui succumbere culpae* (4.19) is also relevant. See Rudd 1976; Moles 1984 and 1987; Harrison 1989, 11–15; Horsfall 1995, 126–28; Wlosok 1999, 168; Casali 2018.

48. On this view, see Schüttrumpf 1989, esp. 154.

49. See Finglass 2018 *ad loc.* for a full discussion.

Τὰ δ' οὖν παρόντα συλλαβών θεσπίσματα
κεῖται παρ' Ἀιδη Πόλυβος ἄξι' οὐδενός. (971–972)

But still, Polybus lies in Hades, and with him have gone the oracles that were with us, now worth nothing.

Oedipus does not know it yet, but Polybus was his *adoptive* father. Similarly Dido will experience revelations in the course of *Aeneid* 4, but her story is interlaced with dramatic irony of a Sophoclean kind (see Muecke 1983). Antonie Wlosok's careful analysis of Dido's tragedy in Aristotelian terms locates Dido's *peripeteia* or reversal of fortunes in two stages: an external *peripeteia* occurs when she realizes that Aeneas is leaving, and an internal one occurs when it dawns on her that she had been mistaken as to the nature of her union with Aeneas.⁵⁰ This is broadly consistent with Aristotle's commendation in *Poetics* ch. 9 that the best form of *anagnórisis* or recognition coincides with the *peripeteia*, as in the case of [Sophocles's] *Oedipus*.

Readers attuned to Oedipal narrative dynamics might have expected Aeneas to fall into the role of Oedipus, and the analogy between the two figures has certainly been pursued.⁵¹ After all, it is Aeneas whom Apollo's oracle commands to seek out his ancient mother as he seeks a new home after the fall of Troy.⁵² Arguably, owing to Trojan ancestor Dardanus's Italian origins, as Aeneas wars with the Latins for the hand of Lavinia, he is engaged in a symbolic act of killing the father to marry the mother.⁵³ And later in Carthage, the encounter between Aeneas and his mother, who is disguised as a Spartan huntress, is an incestuous replay of “the primal scene of Aeneas's conception” in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*.⁵⁴ But ultimately the protected status of Aeneas's *pietas* (at least towards his father) shields him from the role of Oedipus. The closest he comes to killing the father is when he is compared in a simile to Aegaeon doing battle against Jupiter's thunderbolts (10.565–568). The role of Oedipus devolves to Dido, who ends

50. Wlosok 1999 [1976], esp. 163–73; cf. Pöschl 1962, 61 on “tragic reversal” in the stories of Dido and Oedipus.

51. Gioseffi 2014; but Staley (2014, 115–16) contrasts Seneca's Oedipus with Aeneas.

52. 3.96, *antiquam exquirite matrem*.

53. I owe this point to Mairéad McAuley.

54. See Reckford 1995; Olson 2011; Gladhill 2012, 167 “incestuality”; and McAuley 2016, 61–62. For this and other “incestuous” dynamics in play, including that idea that Aeneas is in a relationship with a figurative mother and sister in Dido, see Hardie 2006.

up cursing the Trojans, her would-be kinsfolk, as Oedipus had cursed his own sons. She goes on to commit suicide. Between them, these two moves, through the Punic Wars, lead to the destruction of her own city and her own people.⁵⁵

Aeneas does eventually step into the role of Sophocles's Oedipus, but it is in his later instantiation from the *OC* rather than the *OT*. Upon his arrival at Colonus, Oedipus learns from the response of a local passerby that he is in the grove of the Eumenides. He marks the response as the “watchword of [his] destiny” (ξνμφορᾶς ξύνθημ’ ἔμῆς, 46). He goes on to explain that the oracle of Apollo predicted that he would reach the grove of the Dread Goddesses as his final resting place, after all his life’s sufferings (88–89), bringing benefit to those who received him and destruction to those who had driven him away (92–93); and that signs would confirm this, either an earthquake or a thunderbolt or Zeus’s lightning (94–95). This addition to the oracle represents a revision of what Oedipus had said to Jocasta at *OT* 771–833.⁵⁶ Oedipus sanctifies the moment with prayers to the Dread Goddesses, and Ismene will later perform rituals on his behalf to atone for his having trespassed unawares on the sacred grove.

Aeneas seems to have two “Colonus” epiphanies. The first of these is near the start of book 7, and I am not aware that it has been pointed out before. As the Trojans bite into the flatbreads that formed the basis of their modest meal, Ascanius quips that they are eating their tables, “*heus etiam mensas consumimus!*” (“Oh look, we are eating our tables too!” 7.112–116). Aeneas marks the moment as the fulfilment of an oracle that he received, he says, from his father, that when hunger should force them to eat their tables, they would have reached their final resting place, and that there they should found their city (124–129). Aeneas recognizes Italy as the resting place, and this last hunger as the end to their sufferings [or exile]: *ea uox audit a laborum / prima tulit finem [...] fames ... supra ... exitiis [or exiliis]⁵⁷ positura modum*, “That cry, when heard, first brought an end of toil [...] that last hunger that is to set an end to our deadly woes [or exile]” (117–118,

55. As presaged by Anna’s words, echoing Ismene, at 4.682, *extincti te meque soror*, and by the simile at 4.669–672, which shows the fall of Carthage or Tyre. See Giusti 2018, ch. 4.

56. See Linforth 1951, esp. 88–97 on the role of oracles in the *OC*; at 390, Ismene will report that the Delphic oracle has said that Thebes will wish to reclaim Oedipus for the sake of the city’s safety; this new development gives Oedipus a chance to avenge himself on Thebes if he so wishes.

57. A small minority of editors print the variant *exiliis* of the *recentiores*, which would strengthen the link with the exiled Oedipus at Colonus. R. D. Williams 1961 argues in favor of *exiliis*.

128–129); cf. OC 88–89, ταύτην ἔλεξε παῦλαν ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῷ / ἔλθόντι χώραν τερμίαν, “that should be my respite after long years, when I came to the land that was my final bourne.” As Oedipus had done, Aeneas sanctifies the moment with prayers and adds libations. Jupiter thunders on high in validation (7.141–142). As Oedipus’s explanation of oracle about Colonus being his final resting-place had been an expansion of the oracle given in the *OT*, so too Aeneas’s supposed recollection of his father’s prophecy is in fact an encouragingly felicitous revision of the dire prophecy of Celaeno at *Aen.* 3.252–257.⁵⁸

Aeneas’s second “Colonus moment” has long been identified in Vergilian scholarship.⁵⁹ As Venus affords Aeneas a sight of the shield in the sky amid thunder and lightning, the other Trojans are confused and perturbed, but Aeneas recognizes the importance of the moment.

obstipuere animis alii, sed Troius heros	8.530
agnouit sonitum et diuae promissa parentis.	
tum memorat: ‘ne uero, hospes, ne quaere profecto	
quem casum portenta ferant: ego poscor Olympo...	

The rest stood aghast; but the Trojan hero knew the sound and the promise of his goddess mother. Then he cries: “Ask not, my friend, ask not, I pray, what fortune the portents bode; It is I who am summoned by Heaven...”

There is a clear echo of the situation towards the end of the *OC* as Oedipus’s life draws to a close. As Barchiesi describes it, “Standing opposite on the stage are a terrified chorus that does not know how to interpret the heavenly sign and a knowing protagonist who recognizes the prodigy as the fulfillment of a prearranged signal. This agreement sanctions the bond between man and god: of Oedipus it is said ἐκ θεοῦ καλούμενος (OC 1629), and Aeneas says of himself: *ego poscor Olympo* (8.533)” (2015, 57).

The two echoes suggest a connection between Aeneas in Italy and Oedipus at Colonus. How should these be interpreted? Figuring Italy as Colonus is itself significant. Cicero’s Quintus declared himself moved by the Sophoclean memories and sense of place evoked by Colonus as he passed through there (Cic. *Fin.* 5.3). And Vergil had previously drawn on

58. On the scene in book 7 and the inconsistency with book 3, see O’Hara 2007, 82; Seider 2013, 28–31, 40–46; and Rogerson 2017, 172–83.

59. See Conington on *Aen.* 8.533 and 534; Knight 1966, 170; Barchiesi 1984, 77–78 and 2015, 57; Martina 1988, 918; La Penna 2005, 167; Conte 2009, 249.

Sophocles's Ode in praise of Athens in the *laudes Italiae* of his *Georgics*. The two passages correspond in form, tone, and in points of detail.⁶⁰ Against this background, it is entirely appropriate that in books 7 and 8 Aeneas is on the cusp of founding a city in the land that Vergil will later extol. And in general, it is appropriate for Vergil to elaborate scenes of contact with the divine in Sophoclean colors (La Penna 2005, 167 on book 8). But what of Aeneas as Oedipus, which is at best a mixed inheritance? To recall the echo in book 7 as the table-eating prophecy is fulfilled, it is as though Vergil has converted a destructive pattern of intergenerational strife and failed *pietas* (Laius, Oedipus, Antigone, Eteocles and Polynices, but also Creon and Haemon) into a harmonious one: Aeneas galvanizes his troops by drawing on a prophecy delivered, he says, by his father, and now confirmed by a chance joke made by his son; the image of intergenerational harmony could hardly be clearer.⁶¹ As for Pallanteum, as Aeneas receives the shield from his divine mother, he is being confirmed in the role of Achilles, which might seem to guarantee him victory over Turnus; and so on the one hand it makes sense for him to be simultaneously anointed as a redeemed version of Oedipus who has talismanic power to reward his hosts and ruin his enemies. The Dread Goddesses who are tutelary deities of the grove and upon whom Oedipus calls as guarantors of his curse (1391) will find a resonance later in the *Aeneid* as Jupiter deploys a Dira to hamstring Turnus and ensure Aeneas's victory in the final duel.⁶² On the other hand, the intertextual critic is compelled to investigate where in the *Aeneid* the insistent negative energy of Oedipus's curses on his sons has condensed. Following on from the Sophoclean echo in *ego poscor Olympo*, Aeneas continues:

hoc signum cecinit missuram diua creatrix, si bellum ingrueret, Volcanaque arma per auras laturam auxilio. heu quantae miseris caedes Laurentibus instant! quas poenas mihi, Turne, dabis! quam multa sub undas scuta uirum galeasque et fortia corpora uolues, Thybri pater! poscant acies et foedera rumpant.'	8.535
	8.540

This sign the goddess who bore me foretold she would send if war was at hand, and to aid me would bring through the air arms wrought by

60. G. 2.136–76; see Mynors 1990, 119 and Erren 2003, 356.

61. Rogerson 2017, 174 elucidates the unity across generations in the scene.

62. Hardie 1991, esp. 39–40, has read this scene against the Eumenides of Aeschylus's *Oresteia*.

Vulcan ... Alas, what carnage awaits the hapless Laurentines! What a price, Turnus, will you pay me! How many shields and helmets and bodies of the brave will you, father Tiber, sweep beneath your waves! Let them call for battle and break their covenants!"

Aeneas vows slaughter to the Laurentians, and to Turnus in particular. It is difficult not to see this as corresponding to Oedipus's vitriolic curse on his sons (*OC* 1370–1382), with Oedipus backsliding to type. Figuratively and by means of allusion, Aeneas slides into the role of Oedipus, and there is a hint that runs counter to the surface message of the *Aeneid* that his actions will propagate the intergenerational strife that plagued the Labdacids in Greek tragedy. The reader may, then, be predisposed to view the shield with Theban eyes, to see double: both that version that Vergil's Vulcan has told and the story that has been repressed: a fratricidal relationship between Romulus and Remus;⁶³ the war with Titus Tatius (mentioned at 8.638) as a kind of civil war (cf. Ennius's *Sabinae*, above); the war between Antony and Octavian as a civil war rather than an external war with Cleopatra, a foreign enemy.⁶⁴ Sophoclean intertextuality achieves what Cynthia Bannon has argued is suggested by the shadow of Thebes that hangs over an idyllic picture of prelapsarian Rome in the finale to book 2 of the *Georgics*:

hanc olim ueteres uitam coluere Sabini,
hanc Remus et frater; sic fortis Etruria creuit
scilicet et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma,
septemque una sibi muro circumdedit arces. (*G.* 2.533–536)
[...]

Long ago the old Sabines lived this life, as did Remus and his brother. Thus Etruria grew mighty, Rome became glorious in its deeds and as one city girded its seven citadels with a wall.

[...]

When Rome builds her own walls, *circumdedit*, there is no cause for the fratricide, no trouble in the fraternal relationship. Similarly, the name "Remus" without "Romulus" but with "frater" points to the

63. Does *Romulidis* at 8.638 remind the reader that Remus did not live long enough to have children?

64. While the shield does avoid extended treatment of the civil war, Vulcan does mention Catiline (8.668) and Cato Uticensis, the opponent of Caesar (8.670). In the parade of heroes, Anchises frames the civil war of Caesar and Pompey in terms of intrafamilial strife, with *socer ... gener* (6.830–831).

time when both brothers and their fraternal *pietas* were alive. As if in contradiction, the seven citadels suggest another city with seven gates, Thebes, that was destroyed by fraternal discord. The image of walls activates a memory of fratricide constructing the reader's experience of early Rome as a transition from fraternal harmony to divisive rivalry and fratricide.⁶⁵

Two final points may be made in support of this “Thebanizing” reading of the scene in book 8. Kenneth Reckford, author of the most detailed exposition of Aeneas’s “Oedipal moment” as he meets his disguised mother in book 1, has suggested that there is a second “seduction” of Aeneas by Venus as she presents him with the shield; Reckford builds on the work of Michael Putnam:

When she saw Aeneas she first “offered herself of her own accord” (*se ... obtulit ultro* [8.611]), a phrase Virgil uses elsewhere only of erotic availability. Then, after a brief speech, “the goddess of Cythera sought the embraces of her son.” [*dixit, et amplexus nati Cytherea petivit*, 8.615]⁶⁶

This whiff of incestuous eros, even though it comes from the mother rather than from the son, is appropriate of an Aeneas who is sliding into an Oedipal role as he takes receipt of the shield, *rerumque ignarus*, whose images he will so poorly understand even as he takes pleasure in them.⁶⁷ Secondly, La Penna has detected an echo of Accius’s *Eriphyle* in Aeneas’s famous hesitation before he kills Turnus at 12.939–941 (La Penna 2002a, 2002b, 2005, 168). This play is concerned with the aftermath of the Theban war. Amphiaraus, one of the Seven against Thebes, could foretell the future and was reluctant to support the Argive mission against Eteocles, since he knew it would fail. Polynices (or Adrastus) bribed Eriphyle, wife of Amphiaraus, with the necklace of Harmonia to persuade her husband to join the alliance. He reluctantly did so, but not before enjoining upon their son Alcmaeon to take revenge on Eriphyle. As Alcmaeon is about to kill Eriphyle, he hesitates, as Orestes had done before killing his mother; but

65. Bannon 1997, 167. On hints at the killing of Remus in the *Georgics* as symbolizing civil war see Morgan 1999, 116–23, who argues that the civil war ultimately had “constructive potential.”

66. Reckford 1995, 30, quoting Putnam 1985, 16.

67. 8.730, *rerumque ignarus imagine gaudet*, “and though he knows not the events, he rejoices in their representation.”

then he catches sight of the necklace of Harmonia, the sign of Eriphyle's guilt.⁶⁸ If La Penna is right that this line forms part of the background to Aeneas's hesitation before killing Turnus, then this would suggest that the *Aeneid*'s civil war incorporates not only tragic material about the Theban civil war itself, but that it also countenances its aftermath and continuation into the next generation. When will this end?

CONCLUSIONS

It is common to interpret Vergil's poetry with close reference to its literary sources, and to read Vergil's characters with a view to an "interplay of sameness and difference" (Reed 2007, 15) between them and their models. Within this framework, we have seen that allusion to Sophocles's Theban plays adds additional depth and nuance to characters in the *Aeneid*, particularly Dido and Aeneas; and more could be done to examine the interaction of different models for the same character (e.g., how does Dido's "Antigone stratum" play off her "Medea stratum" or her "Alcestis stratum"). We have also seen that some of the echoes of Sophocles's Theban plays intersect with Vergil's poetics of civil war and allusions to Roman history. This is perhaps not surprising in view of Vergil's inheritance: at least as early as the fragment of Ennius's *Sabinae*, with which this paper began, there has been a tradition of Roman historical sources creating analogies between Theban internecine strife and Roman history. Beyond but adjacent to the use of Theban myth, ancient prose and poetic sources on the civil war often emphasize the theme of intrafamilial strife, including conflict between brothers, which dates back to the fratricide of Remus by Romulus.⁶⁹ Even though Vergil does not pit brothers against each other, as Juno's words to Allecto, *tu potes unanimos armare in proelia fratres* (7.335) had suggested he might, nonetheless, the presence of Sophocles's Theban plays in the intertextual fabric of a mythical tale that reflects on the Roman civil wars makes it difficult not to think of fratricide where it is close to hand, particularly since Vergil had mentioned it in the *Georgics* (*gaudent perfusi sanguine fratres*, "brothers rejoice in the spilling of blood," 2.510). In other words, intertextuality suggests ulterior meanings that the surface of the text does not express. In line with this, one may see Aeneas's killing of Turnus as a prefiguration of Romulus's killing of his twin Remus, to the extent that Aeneas and Turnus have both become versions of Pallas and doublets of each other.⁷⁰ When *unanimi* occurs for the

68. Accius, *Eriphyle* fr. 302 R2.

69. See Bannon 1997, esp. 149–73; Horsfall 2000 on 7.335; 2013, 422–23; Lowrie 2016.

70. See Hardie 1993, 19–34; Thomas 1998; Tarrant 2012, 13–16.

third and last time in the epic, it is in Tolumnius's exhortation to the Latins to maintain a united front,⁷¹ but it is hardly accidental that when he hurls his spear immediately afterwards, he lays low one of a band of nine *brothers* from Evander's community. As with the Sabines and the Romans, these different neighboring communities who are now at war are soon to coalesce into one people. Of course, as the vanquisher of his brother-in-law's military and marital alliance, Augustus himself is deeply implicated in the fratricidal dynamics that are hinted at in the *Aeneid* by means of Sophoclean allusion. Augustus's participation in the civil war suggests a deeper legacy of Vergil's allusion to Sophocles's Theban plays. The *Aeneid*'s etiological framework traces a direct line of descent from Aeneas to Augustus, but this is crossed with the parallel pattern of intergenerational strife that dominates the Labdacid saga. There are many mechanisms by which the trouble descends from one generation to the next—curses, Erinyes, inherited patterns of behavior, divine vendetta⁷²—but it is difficult to escape the reminder that Augustus too had Oedipus in his DNA, however hard he tried to repress the fact.

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71. 12.264, *uos unanimi densete cateruas*, "with one accord close up your ranks."

72. For these patterns in Greek tragedy see Sewell-Rutter 2007 and Gagné 2013, 344–93.

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