TELLING TROY:
THE NARRATIVE FUNCTIONS OF TROY IN ROMAN POETRY

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In memory of my grandmother Annette Dreyfus Benacerraf
who lived her own odyssey from Paris to New York during the Second World War
and who handed down through her stories the lore of past generations.

LA PETITE POLYXÈNE: À quoi ressemble-t-elle, la guerre, maman?
HÉCUBE: À ta tante Hélène.
LA PETITE POLYXÈNE: Elle est bien jolie.

Jean Giraudoux, *La Guerre de Troie n’aura pas lieu*
TELLING TROY: THE NARRATIVE FUNCTIONS OF TROY IN ROMAN POETRY

ABSTRACT

In Roman poetry, telling a Trojan story was a way of talking about Rome. This dissertation combines philological and cultural-historical approaches to write the history of Troy in Roman poetry, tracing its evolution through changing cultural contexts. As the pivot between East and West and between history and myth, Troy’s fall breached temporal, cultural, and geographical boundaries. Troy's interpretive flexibility made it an ideal tool for introducing and exploring complexities in the cultural narratives of Rome, which traced its origin to Troy. The sack of Troy could be seen either as the first step in the teleological advance of Roman Empire or as the first phase in a cycle of destruction that claimed Rome’s mother-city and threatened Rome as well.

A reference to Troy inevitably calls up an alternate map of the world and image of Rome—a parallel set of Trojan and Homeric narratives existing alongside any Roman story. The resulting gap between the Trojan past and Roman present could be stressed, minimized, or elided by poets as they wished, just as they would manage the effect of alluding to another text, which might either support or contradict their own claims. Accordingly, the project links the study of allusion and literary memory with the cultural historian’s interest in the manipulation of cultural memory.

As Rome reaches watershed moments in its history, its poets reinterpret the original watershed moment at Troy to explain, accept, and question the new age at hand. The dissertation's four chapters each focus on a key moment of transformation:
the emergence of Roman power after the Second Punic War, the crisis of the late Republic, the foundation of the Principate, and the reign of Nero. The image of Troy, as it changes over time, serves as a window into how Rome continually re-imagined its past to fit contemporary circumstances.
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INTRODUCTION
LAYERS OF ROME AND TROY

The best-known story of Rome’s foundation is the tale of the she-wolf nursing the twin infants Romulus and Remus, who had been exposed on the banks of the Tiber to die. Succored and strengthened by the she-wolf, the boys soon grew up to become the founders of Rome. Even today, Rome is teeming with reminders of the she-wolf. From the famous statue presiding over the Capitoline, to the modern versions stenciled in silver along the popular Ponte Sisto, she-wolves are around every corner in the form of graffiti, art installations, statues, reliefs, t-shirts, and even advertisements. American artist Kristin Jones’ “Tevereterno” project has stenciled a series of eight-feet tall wolves in different positions along the embankment walls of the Tiber between the Ponte Sisto and the Ponte Mazzini.¹ This stretch of the Tiber is a straight section that matches exactly the proportions of the Circus Maximus. The aim of Jones’ public art is to raise international awareness of urban rivers, and to revitalize the Tiber as one of the centers of the city. The images are rendered from the accumulated soot, ash, and dirt on the darkened travertine walls by power washing around the stencils of the wolves. Jones’s method ingeniously makes literal use of Rome’s long history by reshaping layers of soot into images of the mythical lupa. Eventually, as more dirt accumulates, the lupa series will again fade into the background, but, for now, Jones has created a striking image of Rome’s rebirth carved into the very evidence of its age.

¹ See www.tevereterno.it for more information about the project.
Piazza Tevere, Rome, Italy. Photo by: Mimmo Capone

Jones’s use of existing soot as paint for her wolves allows her art to embody the fusion of growth and decay that characterizes modern-day Rome. Rome is both a thriving city and a landscape of ruins, and these very ruins ensure Rome’s future by continuing to draw successive generations of travelers to the city. The soot that forms Jones’s she-wolves, however, does more than reflect Rome’s blend of modern and ancient cityscapes; it also serves as a reminder that Romulus, Remus, and the *lupa* are only half of Rome’s foundation story. The full myth tells that the founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus was originally set in motion amidst the ash and soot of a ruined Troy. It was Trojan Aeneas who famously led a group of survivors away from burning Troy to found a new city somewhere in the West. Some sources claimed that the city Aeneas founded was Rome itself, but others, like Vergil, call it Lavinium, and so make room for Aeneas’ descendants Romulus and Remus to found the actual city of Rome.
later. Rome’s Trojan origins were constantly recalled in Roman art, statuary, and poetry, especially after Julius Caesar and Augustus made such strong use of it as a claim to ancestral legitimacy and a symbol of continuity and religious renewal. Coins circulated featuring combinations of Venus, Aeneas, Anchises, and the Palladium and *penates* that Aeneas carefully rescued from Troy.² Julius Caesar’s temple to Venus Genetrix in his new forum was a constant reminder of both his and Rome’s ancestral connection to Venus’ son, Aeneas. Julius Caesar’s adoptive son Octavian also traced his ancestry back to Aeneas, and included images of both Aeneas and Romulus at the heart of his new imperial forum and on the façade of his *Ara Pacis*.³

Many of these images of Aeneas are now lost or relegated to museums, but the very ruins that dominate the landscape of modern Rome can serve to those familiar with the literary tradition as reminders of the city’s Trojan prehistory. In Lucan’s *De Bello Civili*, Caesar makes a point of visiting the ruins of Troy, but he steps on Hector’s overgrown tomb and needs a local guide to find the Hercean altar where king Priam was killed (Luc. 9.975-9). Lucan warns that Rome itself is in danger of ending up like the forgotten ruins of its mother-city Troy and demonstrates this danger by emphasizing how Pompey himself, the great hero of the dying Roman republic, lies buried in a makeshift tomb in Egypt. Lucan implies that just as Caesar could not locate Hector’s tomb on his own, no Roman would ever notice Pompey’s resting place without a guide. It is sobering to think how close Lucan’s vision of Rome came to the truth. Not only is Pompey’s tomb largely forgotten, but the massive theater which he built at Rome is also

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² Caesar’s denarius from 46 BC shows Aeneas fleeing Troy with Anchises and the Palladium, and a denarius of Octavian from before 31 BC shows *Venus Genetrix* and the arms of Mars. See Zanker 1988: 35.
almost completely gone. All that remains of Pompey’s theater is the curvature of modern buildings built on its footprint and a small area of ruins, the Largo di Torre Argentina, which houses temples that abutted the back of the theater. In a moment of infamous irony, Caesar himself was assassinated behind the complex of Pompey’s theater, before a colossal statue of his old civil-war enemy, essentially where the ruins of the Largo di Torre Argentina stand. Yet, although tourists flock to the forum and the Coliseum, remarkably few visitors would know where Caesar himself was killed without a guide. It would surely please Lucan to hear that nowadays, the main attraction of the Largo di Torre Argentina is the cat sanctuary that has developed there. Rome of the first century has in fact, as Lucan predicted, turned into ruins reminiscent of Lucan’s Troy. Lucan’s description of Troy, overgrown with rotting forests and covered in brambles (Luc. 9.966-9) echoes his earlier description of how Italian towns fell to ruins in the wake of the civil war:

At nunc semirutis pendent quod moenia tectis
urbibus Italiae lapsisque ingentia muris
saxa iacent nulloque domus custode tenetur
rarus et antiquis habitator in urbibus errat…

But if now in Italian cities the walls hang precariously and the buildings are half-destroyed, and huge stones from the fallen walls lie on the ground, and the homes are protected by no guard, and just a few inhabitants are wandering in ancient cities… (Luc. 1.24-7)

It is hard not to think of these lines as one strolls through the forum or looks down into the Largo di Torre Argentina. Nevertheless, Rome’s ruins are not, like Lucan’s Troy, abandoned and left to disintegrate on their own. Though their original roles are sometimes forgotten, these structures are integrated into and dominate the cityscape of modern Rome, ensuring that the city will always draw prestige and appeal
from the visible remnants of its illustrious past. As Kristin Jones’s power-washed wolves remind us, Rome is a city of layers upon layers; some layers are exposed, some partially exposed, and some, like Pompey’s theater, mostly covered, yet still present in the current street map. What should strike us is not just that Rome is a city of layers among which we find reminders of Troy, but that Rome’s particular ability to sustain so many iterations of its own past seems itself to be an inheritance from Troy. The myth of Troy’s double sack by first Hercules and then the Homeric Greeks specifically tags Troy as a city that supersedes its own prior versions. Rome’s rise out of Troy’s fall repeats this pattern once again as Rome both overwrites and preserves its Trojan past.

Familiarity with the literary tradition and a little imagination can reveal the layers of Roman success and Trojan defeat acted out in Rome’s modern cityscape. This extra dimension that the Trojan story can add to perceptions of Rome was already becoming clear by the third century BC to poets learning how to approach a foundation story that links Rome’s beginnings to the world’s most famous defeat. The particular force that Troy began to have in Roman poetry stemmed from three key aspects of its story: Troy’s link to Rome’s early history, its place at the beginning of poetry, and its ability to generate and sustain competing focalizations. Even Rome’s earliest poets knew the story of Aeneas’ escape from Troy to Italy, and the importance of Trojan myth as Homer’s subject matter meant that Troy’s sack could also be understood as the foundational moment of the entire Greco-Roman poetic tradition.

The bulk of our attention, however, will be focused on the third aspect in our list, namely the narrative complexity attached to the story of Troy and how this complexity could be harnessed in cultural discourse. The sack of Troy occupies a
liminal position between myth and history, the Heroic and Iron Ages, and East and West. Before Troy, we find myth and the narratives of gods and demigods, but the death of Achilles marks the end of the Olympian struggles of divine succession. Zeus neutralizes the last potential threat to his power by choosing to join Thetis to Peleus rather than keep her for himself and risk being dethroned by a more powerful son. After Troy, the struggles of mortal men take precedence.

Troy’s fall was also the pivotal moment that brought about a new geographical order in the Mediterranean by initiating the reversal of Easterner and Westerner. After the destruction of Troy, the former Trojan Easterners moved West to found Rome, leaving the formerly Western Greeks now in the position of Easterners. And there was more at stake in this redefinition of East and West than mere geography. In Greek tragedy, Trojan characters were made to resemble the Persian despots and carried with them the stereotypes of effeminacy and cowardice that the Greeks projected onto all Easterners. When Rome began to come into its own as a major player in the Mediterranean, however, these newly minted Westerners reversed the paradigm by applying to the Greeks themselves the very stereotypes that the Greeks had once applied to the Persians and Trojans. The formerly Western Greeks began to be seen as Eastern semiviri, while the original Eastern semiviri, the Trojans, styled themselves as strong Western warriors.

The story of Troy brought together a cluster of crucial tipping points in time, geography, and culture, and, as a result, it was an event that could be seen always from multiple perspectives. Troy’s interpretive flexibility became a central concern in the

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cultural narratives of Rome, which traced its origin to Troy. The sack of Troy could be seen either as the first step in the teleological advance of Roman Empire or as the first phase in a cycle of destruction that claimed Rome’s mother-city and threatened Rome as well. Uses of Trojan myth in Roman poetry evolved over time, and successive generations of poets capitalized on Troy’s ambivalence in significantly different ways. We will see that the image of Troy, as it changes over time, serves as a window onto how Roman poets and statesmen continually re-imagined the past to reflect contemporary circumstances.

A reference to Troy in Roman poetry automatically calls up an alternate map of the world and image of Rome—a parallel set of Trojan narratives existing alongside any Roman story. The resulting gap between the Trojan past and Roman present could be stressed, minimized, or elided by poets as they wished, just as they would manage the effect of alluding to another text, which might either support or contradict their own claims. Moreover, since Trojan myth was Homer’s subject matter, mention of Troy in a Roman poem also calls to mind a second narrative existing alongside the main subject of the poem: the meta-literary portrayal of the poet’s relationship to Homer. In fact, Troy’s unique place at the beginning of both poetry and history allows Roman poets to blend discussions of poetics seamlessly with the subject matter of the poetry. The influence of Homer’s Trojan stories on Roman poetic narrative can often seem analogous to the influence of Troy on Rome. Accordingly, our investigation of Troy’s

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6 Conte (1986: 38-9) famously described how literary allusion and other rhetorical figures work through the “simultaneous presence of two different realities that try to indicate a single reality.” Conte’s working example is Catullus’ allusion to the opening of the Odyssey in Poem 101. Catullus writes that he has sailed, and the way that he phrases it reminds us that Odysseus too has sailed, creating a gap between Catullus’ immediate meaning and the image that the reader now has in mind.
role in Roman poetry will link the study of allusion and literary memory with a cultural historian’s interest in manipulations of cultural memory. Different uses of the Trojan and Homeric parallel narratives invoked by Troy come to the fore at different junctures at Rome, and our task will be to trace how Roman poets deployed their Trojan foundation myth to aim at different literary, political, and cultural goals over time.

Each chapter of this dissertation will focus on a key moment of transformation: the emergence of Roman power after the Second Punic War, the crisis of the late Republic, the foundation of the Principate, and the reign of Nero. Chapter one begins with an overview of the competing perspectives on Troy in the Greek tradition before showing how Ennius used Rome’s origin in Troy to advance the idea that Rome was destined always to grow from defeat. I challenge recent scholarly attempts to minimize the role of Troy in early Roman poetry and argue that Ennius’ idea of a Roman hydra that gains strength from adversity would have been especially compelling in the wake of the Hannibalic War.

Chapter two focuses on Catullus’ use of Troy as a product of the intellectual transformations of the late Republic. I argue that Catullus sets Troy up as a symbol of narrative ambiguity and the power of competing focalizations. Catullus’ emphasis on the indeterminacy of Trojan myth also has a particular cultural resonance at Rome because it draws attention once again to the fundamental ambivalence of Rome’s beginnings in Troy. Our understanding of Troy’s ambivalences in Catullus will, in the end, provide a new context in which to read Poem 64. Seeing Poem 64 partly as an expression of Catullus’ attitude toward Troy will help make sense of that poem’s
famous narrative paradoxes, including the uneasy juxtaposition of Trojan myth and the poet’s Roman present.

Chapter three looks to the Augustan Age, where interpretations of Rome’s Trojan past reflect also on ‘Trojan’ Augustus himself. Telling Trojan stories became a way of thinking over the causes and the outcome of the civil wars. The worry of whether Rome had escaped a replay of Troy’s fate recurred in the question of whether Augustus could end the cycle of violence. In response, poets redefined the civil wars as a battle between the two sides of Rome’s Trojan inheritance. The resilience of Aeneas, who led his men West and into their future, was pitted against the tragedy of Priam, whose status as an Eastern dynast would always mark him out as foreign at Rome.

Chapter four shows how Nero, the last of the Julio-Claudian rulers, brings the Trojan narrative of Rome to a grim telos as the Great Fire conflates historical Rome and mythical Troy. Nero, the descendant of both Augustus and Antony, deliberately collapses the Augustan lines of demarcation between the proto-Roman Aeneas and the foreign semivir, Paris. In Lucan’s De Bello Civili, the gap between Trojan myth and Roman history completely disappears, leaving the reader unsure of how to tell the difference between the ruins of Troy and the ruins of Italy, the historical end of Pompey and the mythical death of Priam. It becomes especially difficult for Lucan’s reader to distinguish between Caesar, whose ancestor Aeneas once saved the Trojan penates, and Achilles, who slew Hector and whose son killed Priam at the Hercean Altar. Rather than serving as a justification for civil war, Rome’s Trojan origins serve now to emphasize Julius Caesar’s audacity in conquering his own patria while posing as its benefactor.
We will find that as Rome reaches each of these four watershed moments in its history, its poets reinterpret the original watershed moment at Troy to explain, accept, and question the new age at hand. It is not simply Troy’s place at the beginning of Rome’s foundation story that makes it such an appealing tool for poets at Rome. Much of Troy’s narrative power comes from the compression of so many moments of demarcation into the one night of Troy’s sack. That night was the moment of rupture that reversed the geography and power dynamics of the Mediterranean. With Troy in the background, we cannot ignore the questions of what and how much the victorious Romans might share with their conquered Trojan ancestors. These same questions recur in each of the four time-periods that we will examine, and we will see how each poet crafts a different answer to fit his contemporary Roman context.
CHAPTER 1
THE BEGINNING: TROY IN EARLY ROMAN POETRY

History in the ancient Mediterranean was thought by many to have begun at the sack of Troy. Beginning from this event, stories about the past were meant to be more reliable, or truer in some sense than most myth. It is no coincidence, then, that Roman historiographers and epic poets found themselves starting from the sack of Troy not only in their narratives of world history, but also in their narratives of Rome. The foundation dates for Rome set by Timaeus, Fabius Pictor, and Cato seem to have been calculated with respect to the canonical dates for Troy, and those who took on the task of telling Rome’s story never let us forget Rome’s origins at the fall of Troy, the very beginning of reliable history. The poets Horace and Lucretius both peg Troy’s fall as the limit of historical knowledge. Livy began his narrative with the aftermath of Troy’s fall, and both Ennius and Naevius likewise seem to have started their historical epics from Troy’s fall, which also launches Vergil’s Aeneid. The Trojan hero, Aeneas, led the Trojan survivors away from their sacked city and toward Italy, where his descendants would found Rome. Marking out Troy’s fall as a starting point is an effective way to stress how the beginning of Rome’s narrative maps directly onto the beginning of all narratives that could be called historical. If there could be no verifiable

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7 For Eratosthenes, Apollodorus, and Diodorus Siculus, verifiable chronology begins directly after the Trojan War. See Feeney 2007a: 77-120 (esp. 81-86 and 118-20) for the moments of demarcation in the transition of myth to history, including the Trojan War.

8 See Hor. Carm. 4.9.25-8 and Lucr. 5.324-29. Feeney 2007a: 82-4.
history before Rome’s origins, one might hope that there would likewise be no verifiable history after Rome.

History’s beginning, however, is not the moment of clarity that we might at first expect; while history offers the idea of an authentic narrative of the past, that authentic narrative is immediately thrown open to misrepresentation and misinterpretation. Troy’s very promise of historicity, then, brings with it an important corollary: an anxiety about the process of narration. In other words, if we are supposed to able to get a story right, then it is also suddenly possible to get it wrong or even wield various interpretations or distortions of the story to serve contemporaneous ends. This fear of getting Troy wrong was a significant one for the Romans, who claimed historiography’s foundational narrative as their own.

In fact, even the identification of Troy’s sack as the first moment of history is open to debate. Paradoxically, Troy’s position as the hinge between myth and history allows its sack simultaneously to represent not only the first moment of history, but also the last moment of myth, the moment just beyond the reach of any historical narrative. This purely mythical Troy comes with its own set of narrative questions: how can any narrator vouch for a myth’s truth? And how can a myth serve as a reliable underpinning for historical events, like the founding of Rome? Moreover, since Troy’s fall breached temporal, cultural, and geographical boundaries, Trojan myth was particularly double-edged and open to and contradictory interpretations. It is this adaptability that made the Trojan myth so useful in the aetiological discourse of the ancient Mediterranean.

This chapter looks to the Greek tradition, historical sources, and readings of Ennius and his contemporaries to show how the story of Troy was honed over time into
a rhetorical tool for cultural and poetic negotiations. We will begin with an investigation of how the Greek tradition highlighted Troy’s double edge and set the stage for Roman poets to develop this aspect of their Trojan foundation myth. The next step will be to lay out the historical evidence establishing that Rome was already linked to Troy by the late third century BC. Finally, we will be able to see how Ennius learned to manage Troy’s useful yet potentially destructive double edge as he used it to craft the image of a Rome destined from its very beginnings at Troy to grow strong from adversity. A. Erskine (2001) has cautioned us well to beware of overestimating the importance of Troy at Rome before Julius and Augustus Caesar, but we must equally avoid dismissing Troy’s early relevance too much. We will find that the early uses of Trojan myth established the strategy of using Troy’s narrative flexibility to shape interpretations of Roman past and future identity to fit changing political and cultural contexts.

*Troy’s double edge in the Greek tradition*

The story of Troy was being celebrated, narrated, and manipulated long before Rome appeared as a potential superpower in the Mediterranean. An overview of Troy’s ambivalence as harnessed in Greek poetic narrative will give us the necessary background to see how this double edge was later amplified and changed at Rome. It is important to realize, first, that there are multiple levels to this Trojan ambivalence, and these levels work together to make Troy the ultimate tool in cultural and political negotiations. First, Troy itself is a place of confusion in that the Trojans are variously barbarian or Hellenic and at times sympathetic victims, at times impious perjurers. No
one is more pitiable than old king Priam supplicating Achilles at the end of the *Iliad*, but Priam’s ancestor, Laomedon, betrayed a promise to the gods when he refused to pay them for their help building Troy’s famous walls, while Priam’s son betrayed every tenet of guest-friendship when he abducted the wife of his host, Menelaus. Different perspectives will see Priam as a familiar, pitiable old man or as the barbarian son of a perfidious villain and father of another. Priam memorably appears in Homer as a pitiable but venerable king, not so different from Achilles’ own father, Peleus. But, as we will see, early Athenian tragedians tend to portray Priam as a Phrygian dynast modeled on the barbarian excesses of the Persian Xerxes. The characterization shifts once again in later Athenian tragedy during the Peleponnesian Wars, when Troy becomes a land of noble barbarians persecuted by Spartan Menelaus, who outdoes in savagery the very barbarians he fights.

Second, Troy’s ambiguity manifests itself on another level in its role as a moment of transformation or reversal in narrative. As we have seen, Troy was the tipping point that set apart history from myth and the age of heroes from our own age of iron. Troy was also the hinge between East and West and the migration of the Eastern Trojans to the West after the war meant that Troy’s fall effectively reversed the geography of the Mediterranean. More tellingly, we will see how Troy’s fall came to be viewed as a victory that transformed victors into victims. Once the Greek heroes conquered Troy, their newfound pride threatened to transform them into the very violators of treaties they had defeated. Agamemnon returns home in triumph only to be slaughtered in his home like Priam, and Odysseus angers Poseidon, a god whose anger against Troy had just recently helped to defeat the city.
Third, we should realize that the ambiguity we saw as inherent in Troy combines with its role as a catalyst for narrative change to make it a hotspot for narrative deception. Troy presents a series of confusing reversals that balance on a knife-edge and shift to match each narrator’s interpretation, however misleading it may be. It is hard to tell who is victim and who is victor in a Trojan narrative, and equally hard to differentiate between barbarian and Greek, or even heroic and savage, as in the case of Achilles who is godlike in his heroism but animalistic in the savagery he displays along the way. The double edge, then, that I describe as Trojan comes not only from Troy’s ambiguous status in Greek myth, but from its ability to reverse any narrative, and from its role as a figure of potential narrative falsehood.

Stories well known from Homer and Athenian tragedy showcase liars and dissimulators on both sides of the Trojan War and emphasize how Troy’s fate is sealed by a series of misinterpretations and deceits. Among the mortals, Laomedon deceived Poseidon and Apollo, Paris posed as a guest in order to abduct Helen, and Helen herself is an ambiguous figure who seems to play both sides at once, and, in some versions, to have a ghost-like double of herself at Troy. Odysseus feigns madness in his attempt to avoid joining the Greeks before the war, and he is later the mastermind behind the plot for the Trojan Horse, which became the very emblem of deceit. After Vergil’s later narrative, Sinon, the Greek who convinced the Trojans to take the horse within their walls, becomes himself an embodiment of treachery, and we find him in Dante’s eighth circle of hell with falsifiers alongside Ulysses and Diomedes. In some versions of the story, Aeneas himself is a dissimulator who betrays Troy to Greece in return for his own
safety. As for the wives who remain home, Penelope and Clytemnestra are both skilled at deception, although they use their skill for different purposes. Penelope cleverly keeps her suitors at bay by promising to choose a new husband once she has finished the burial shroud, which she weaves during the day but unravels again at night. Clytemnestra lies in wait for her husband Agamemnon, ensnaring him in the very fabrics that she has laid out to welcome him home. Among the gods, we must include Hera who deceives Zeus himself, and, in later versions, Thetis, who tries to conceal Achilles at Scyros, as well as Athena, who deceives Ajax into slaying sheep. These stories about Troy that populate Homer and the Athenian tragedies demonstrate the power that narrators have to spin a story from their point of view or to recount an untrue story persuasively. But even a perfectly honest narrator like Cassandra can find her message misunderstood or ignored at Troy. Agamemnon and the chorus of old men are maddeningly unable to understand Cassandra’s warnings in Aeschylus’ Agamemnon. The miscommunication frustrates the audience, who knows only too well what Agamemnon and the chorus are missing.

Moreover, at Troy, one’s own interpretation of eye-witnessed events often results in unintentional misreadings, as it does for Hector when he overestimates his success in Book 9 of the Iliad, or, more drastically, for Ajax, when he mistakes sheep for men in his grief at losing the contest over Achilles’ arms. There is a similar effect in Iliad 5, when Athena grants to Diomedes the temporary ability to see the gods at work on the battlefield. Her purpose is to allow Diomedes to wound Aphrodite, but the result

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for us is a heightened awareness that the heroes in the epic do not normally see the gods at work as the audience does. Diomedes’ temporary view of the whole picture reminds us of his usual blindness to the divine half that we as audience witness. Vergil will repeat this Homeric move in *Aeneid* 2, when Aphrodite allows Aeneas to see the gods themselves wreaking havoc on Troy. Forcing Aeneas to see the entire situation on both the human and the divine level is the only way, it seems, to prove to him what he is resists seeing, that the fall of his city is fated and irrevocable.

The narrative reversals that we have seen to be part of the Trojan myth dramatize particularly well how our personal perspectives keep us from ever seeing or interpreting all aspects of an event. We remember that Troy can function in tragedy as a treacherous location that imperceptibly turns heroes into their own enemies. The audience wonders why Aeschylus’ Agamemnon cannot see through Clytemnestra’s invitation to *hubris* when she asks him to step on a purple carpet. The answer is that Agamemnon has returned from Troy as a Greek Priam, a victor about to be conquered. What is even more striking than the reversal itself is that Agamemnon cannot be made aware of the transition that has taken place. Even with Cassandra’s warnings, Agamemnon does not perceive that he has been changed by his victory and adopted himself the characteristics of his own victim, Priam.

Agamemnon’s struggle to keep himself separate from the Trojans he has conquered reflects a parallel difficulty in Greek literary and cultural discourse in keeping Greek and Trojan identities distinct. The mobile identity of Homeric heroes allows Troy to play a series of shifting roles in the equally shifting construction of Hellenic and Athenian identity, and we can trace this negotiation through tragedy’s use
of Trojan myths. E. Hall (1991) and Erskine (2001) have outlined the development of the dichotomy between Greek and barbarian during the Persian wars and the consequent retrofitting of Homer’s Trojans as barbarians. By the fourth century, Isocrates can call the \textit{Iliad} a struggle between Greek and barbarian.\textsuperscript{10} Hellenistic scholia are pro-Achaean, and the book divisions decided upon by Hellenistic scholars seem to emphasize Trojan weakness.\textsuperscript{11} Still, as Hall, Erskine, O. Taplin, and even Thucydides have argued, there is little evidence that the Trojans were regarded as barbarians in Homer before the Persian threat.\textsuperscript{12} Not only did the Trojans have the same gods as the Achaean, and a similar government, but the Achaean were also not a unified group themselves. \textit{Hellas} seems to have been a small part of Thessaly in Homer rather than a unified country of the Greeks, who are variously called Argives, Danaans, and Achaean. Dolon is ridiculed not because he was a Trojan, but because he was, like the Greek Thersites, simply unheroic. A reader of Homer pities the Trojans and regrets that the domestic happiness of Hector and Andromache will be cut short. Even Odysseus weeps for the Trojans when he listens to the bard Demodocus tell of their fate, which Odysseus himself engineered.\textsuperscript{13} In archaic vase painting, too, there does not seem to be any difference in costume between Greeks and Trojans. Instead, the battle between Achilles and Hector seems to be a struggle between twin warriors, indistinguishable but for their inscribed names.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{10} Isoc. \textit{Paneg.} 159. See Erskine 2001: 51.
\textsuperscript{11} Hall 1991: 26-8.
\textsuperscript{12} Erskine 2001: 7-8 and 93-127; Hall 1991: 7-9 and 21-40; Taplin 1992: 110-5. See also Thuc. 1.3.
\textsuperscript{13} Hom. \textit{Od.} 8.516-31, on which, see Erskine 2001: 9-10.
\textsuperscript{14} Erskine 2001: 58.
It is in the fifth century, in response to the threat from Persia, that a pan-Hellenic self-consciousness truly began to develop, making being Greek almost as important as being Athenian, Spartan, or Theban. It is also in the fifth century that barbaroi becomes a term used to imply not simply a foreign language, but an un-Greek culture characterized by tyranny, luxury and servile effeminacy. As Hall (1991: 1-2) explains, creating a sharp polarity between barbarian and Greek was an exercise in self-definition by the Greeks “partly as a result of the combined Greek military efforts against the Persians.” This mechanism is similar in many ways to F. Zeitlin’s description of Thebes as a “negative model of Athens’ manifest image of itself.” While Thebes was the anti-Athens of Greece, Persia became the anti-Greece, and Persia’s supposed Eastern decadence implicated all the inhabitants of Asia, including the previously heroic Trojans of Homer.

As the division between Hellenic Europe and Persian Asia gained ground, the Trojans were forced into this new role of the barbarian in tragedy, lyric poetry, and painting. Trojans became the original Asian adversaries of Greece, the forerunners of Persian barbaroi, and the Trojan War became the prelude to the even greater Persian Wars, a role that Troy also plays in Herodotus. Simonides’ Plataia elegy draws a connection between the Persian and the Trojan War. Similarly, Pindar’s hymns for Aiginetan victors make much of the role played by the Aeacid line in the sack of Troy

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15 See also Hall 1991: 8-10 and 57-60. Aeschylus’ Persae, which Hall identifies as the first example of strict distinction between barbarian and Hellene, employs forms of barbaros, –oi ten times. For the Persae as one of the key texts for the study of Orientalism, see Said 1979: 56-7.

and the battle of Salamis. In Homer, Phrygia and Troy seem to have been separate identities, but Aeschylus confuses the two, introducing us to the first “Phrygianized” Trojans. The term “Phrygian” allowed Aeschylus to plug his Trojans into the role of contemporary Phrygians, who were synonymous with Eastern luxury and habrosune. As the sculpture program of the Parthenon implies, the Trojans were to be considered barbarian foes like the centaurs, the Amazons, and the Giants, whose defeats are all commemorated on the temple along with Troy’s. The Stoa Poikile takes the analogy further by depicting the victory over the Trojans alongside the victories over the Amazons as well as the Persians themselves.

The identification of Trojan and Persian lent mythical importance to the Greek victory over the Persian invaders and led in turn to the replaying of Homeric stories from the perspective of Greeks against the barbarians. These Trojan barbarians were characterized by excessive wealth, emotional excess, cruelty, myrrh, gold, wine, frilly Persian dress, eunuchs, tyrants, chariots, and prostration. They were cowardly yet cruel and soft yet dangerous. Perhaps the most troubling part of barbarian society as it was constructed at Athens was the tyrannical government. Although Greek mythical heroes were often kings, they were also usually portrayed in tragedy as democratic rulers. This anachronism allowed Athenians to see the seeds of their own democracy in leaders like

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18 Hall 1991: 39 n. 120.
21 For key terms associated with barbarians, including *ploutos*, *chrusos*, and habro-compounds, see Hall 1991: 99. Symbols associated with barbarians include bows, chariots, strange cries, Ionic forms, epicizing speech, repetition, and foreign-sounding vocabulary or names.
Theseus, who holds an assembly to vote in Aeschylus’ *Supplices*. At the same time, Xerxes in Aeschylus’ *Persae* is *hupeuthunos* (*Pers.* 213), and Hector in Euripides’ *Troades* was to inherit a “godlike tyranny” (*isotheos turranis*, *Tro.* 1168-9).

The move to develop the rhetoric of barbarianism, however, was problematic and hard to sustain. The barbarians of tragedy were meant to display the opposite of Greek ideals of wisdom, democracy, justice, egalitarianism, manliness, and *sophrosune*, but some of these un-Greek barbarians were in mythical terms descendants of Greeks, and some Greek heroes were actually, according to fifth century definitions, barbarians. The Persians themselves were named for Greek Perseus, and Teucer’s name betrays his Trojan ancestry. Crimes like incest, human sacrifice, and murder of the family were supposedly markers of barbarity in the fifth century, but Agamemnon had sacrificed his own daughter, Orestes had murdered his mother, Ino had killed her children, and the Olympian gods themselves were guilty of incest. Hall (1991: 188) shows how Euripides highlights the problem in conflicting passages in his *Medea*. Jason bemoans Medea’s barbarity and claims that no Greek woman would ever kill her own children, but the audience may well remember that less than sixty lines earlier, the example of the Greek Ino was adduced as the paradigm of a mother who kills her own children. One way of addressing this tension was not to admit that Greeks could act like barbarians but rather to caution that one could become un-Greek given too much success or even contact with barbarians. Agamemnon, therefore, becomes a victim of his own success.

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24 See Hall 1991: 175-81 for more on the difficulty of preserving the distinction between Greek and barbarian.
at Troy, and perhaps also of his contact with the Trojans. Agamemnon’s entrance in a chariot, his decision to step onto the purple carpet, and his vulnerability to his wife’s flattery all mark him out as a foreign tyrant like Priam rather than a Greek ruler in a more egalitarian society.\textsuperscript{25}

Yet the beginning of the Peloponnesian War against Sparta in 431 BC changed the picture further. As Spartans replaced the Persians as the enemy of Athens, the story of Troy was once again reworked by the tragedians to fit the changed circumstances. Euripides’ Trojans begin to look rather less barbaric than their conquerors, who paradoxically commit barbarian crimes against the barbarians.\textsuperscript{26} When the Greeks kill her son Astynax in Euripides’ \textit{Troades}, Andromache exclaims: \textit{ὦ βάρβαροι ἐξευρόντες Ἕλληνες κακά} (O Hellenes, ready to invent barbarous crimes, \textit{Tro.} 764). Helen, who was, of course, Spartan, becomes the target of criticism herself when even the Trojan queen Hecuba calls her too extravagant (\textit{Tro.} 997). In Euripides’ \textit{Orestes}, Spartan Helen is surrounded by eunuchs like a Persian dynast, and her Spartan husband Menelaus is criticized for his arrogance and golden ringlets (\textit{Or.} 1532). The paradigm has been reversed, aligning now the mythical Trojans with the Athenians, and painting the Dorian invaders of Troy as the barbarian other. The Trojans become noble barbarians, and the Spartan Atridae become more barbarian than the Trojans. When Euripides’ Andromache laments Troy’s fate and villainizes Sparta as the bane of


\textsuperscript{26} See Erskine 2001: 87; Hall 1991: 210-7; Scodel 1979: 112-4.
mankind, the audience is meant to sympathize and identify with the Trojan rather than the Greek: 27

οὐ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποισιν ἔχθιστοι βροτῶν 445
Σπάρτης ἔνοικοι, δόλαι βουλευτήριαι, ἡμεῖς ἄνακτες, μηχανοφάροι κακῶν,
ἐλικτὰ κούδεν ὕγεις ἀλλὰ πέριξ φρονούντες, ἀδίκως εὐτυχείτ ἀν Ἑλλάδα.

O Spartans, the people most hated by all men, treacherous counselors, masters of deceit, crafty workers of evil— with your twisted, unhealthy, and crooked thoughts, how unjustly you prosper in Hellas. (Eur. Andr. 445-9)

The story of Troy could already, then, at Athens, be viewed from any number of perspectives and used to uphold even contradictory positions of Hellenic identity depending on how Homer was reinterpreted. Even at this early stage, the Trojan narrative is being co-opted to serve political and cultural aims. As we work West toward Rome, it will be important to consider one last aspect of the Trojan story in Greece—its use in stories of Greek colonization. We have seen how the tragedians were able to shape their Trojan stories so that they reflected contemporary concerns, and before the Persian Wars were even a factor, Greek mythological stories from Homer and elsewhere were being reinterpreted by Greek colonists to map their new world. The travels of Hercules or of Odysseus and other heroes returning from Troy were used to justify new territories in the West and to reassure new colonists by reconstructing a “prehistory of the inhabited world.” 28 Hercules had already been to Sicily, the sons of Antenor had gone as far as Kyrene, and Odysseus had visited Circe

27 Hall 1991: 214. See also Griffin (1998: 56-61) for how the historical context of the fifth century shows through in Athenian tragedy.
on the coast of Italy. Each wanderer could be assumed to have left scattered children along the way for later Greeks (or Trojans) to rediscover. As Hall suggests, the Homeric epics fueled and legitimized Greek colonization both by offering a framework to use to understand unexplored territories and by showing the Greeks as successful conquerors of Asia. Local traditions of colonized areas were melded with the stories of legendary Greek and Trojan wanderers, and it was often advantageous for regions to accept the pre-fabricated traditions that offered to them as a way onto the map of the Greek heroic world.

As we will see, although Rome was not a Greek colony, it was still invested with an array of different foundation stories from the Trojan War, which Rome then put to good use. The Romans seem to have taken hold of the stories imposed on them, and used these very Trojan myths to paint the Greeks as the real Easterners. Fifth century Athenian tragedians, as we have seen, created an Eastern barbarian “other” to symbolize an un-Greek irrationality, softness, extravagance, and excessive passion. The Romans, though descendants of Trojan Aeneas, force the Greeks in turn to play the role of the Eastern “other” that they themselves created. This Roman reinterpretation of Troy, however, was as problematic as any of the uses of Troy we have been tracing in Greece, since fitting the Greeks into the barbarian paradigm they had constructed for the Trojans risked backfiring on Rome, a city founded by Trojan survivors. It is clear that Troy was, even before Rome, a locus of narrative instability and reversal in the Greek tradition, and that very instability made it a useful tool in the hands of poets. Troy’s story could be manipulated to serve ideological purposes and yet still turn on a dime to

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undermine those same purposes. Homeric myths were used at Athens for constructing a
Pan-Hellenic consciousness and then fracturing it, and at Rome managing the
polyvalence of Troy would become even more crucial for molding civic identity and for
negotiating Rome’s relationship with Greece.

The origin of Rome’s Trojan origins

Before we continue to investigate the implications of Troy’s range of meanings
at the beginning of Roman poetry, it is necessary first to set out the evidence that Troy’s
fall could be seen by the end of the third century BC as initiating the foundation of
Rome. When addressing the question of when and how Rome adopted its Trojan
foundation story, we must first remember that Aeneas was not the most likely choice
given the multiplicity of stories attached to Rome early on. The origins of Rome’s
competing foundation stories have attracted much study and debate. E. Gruen (1992:
20) has argued that Greek scholars, interested in Rome as it grew to power in Italy,
created foundation myths that fit this emerging power into Hellenic conceptions of the
past. Some of these stories offered by Greek intellectuals eventually caught on,
argues Gruen, and became enmeshed with existing local foundation stories. Erskine
(2001: 150-1) counters that scholars did not independently shape but rather reflected
myths shaped by local traditions. It seems reasonable to suppose that the traffic went
both ways, with myths imposed by scholars being shaped by local myths and the
combination reflecting back on the work of the intellectuals who forged new myths and
catalogued existing ones.

31 See also Bickerman 1952; Cornell 1975 and 1995: 41.
Archaeological finds such as images of the Dioscuri at Lavinium, Nestor’s cup on Ischia, a Corinthian vase from 640 BC bearing the name Kleiklos in an Esquiline cemetery, the figure of a Minotaur from around 600 BC found at Rome, and the Great Altar of Hercules on the Forum Boarium all point to extensive contact with the Greek world. This established Greek influence in the Italian peninsula and in Rome at even the earliest periods, then, problematizes any strict separation between indigenous myths and stories imported from antiquarians. What is clear is that this exchange, however it worked, made available many competing myths to those seeking to fit Rome into the traditional narratives of the Mediterranean. T. P. Wiseman (1995: 160-8) includes in an appendix sixty-one surviving versions of Rome’s foundation, from Lycophron in the second or third centuries BC to John Tzetzes in the twelfth century CE.

Even if we focus only on the foundation stories that originate from western voyages of heroes after the Trojan War, there are several strong contenders for founder heroes, involving both returning Greek heroes and Trojan survivors. In some stories, Odysseus or his children found Rome, whereas Aeneas or his children do so in others. Hesiod’s *Theogony* (1011-16) reports that Circe bore Odysseus two sons, Agrius and Latinus, who would rule over the Tyrrhenians (Tyrsenians), and this story implies that

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33 Wiseman 1989.

already by Hesiod’s time, Circe’s island was located off of the coast of Italy.\textsuperscript{35} There was an especially attractive story that the former enemies Odysseus and Aeneas had banded together to found Rome as a team. But Odysseus and Aeneas were not the only options. There was a host of possible eponymous founders of Rome, who are sometimes supposed to be children of Greeks or Trojans making their way West after Troy’s fall. Rhomanos is attested as a son of Odysseus, while Rhomos variously appears as the son of Aeneas, Ascanius, Zeus, the Trojan Emathion, or even Italus.\textsuperscript{36} We also hear of a woman named Rhome, who was variously the daughter of Herakles’ son Telephus, the daughter of Ascanius, the wife of Latinus, the mother of Romus and Rhomulos, the wife of Aeneas, or a Trojan captive woman who stranded the lost Greeks in Italy by burning their ships.

Wiseman (1995: 52-5) demonstrates brilliantly how these legends could be altered according to the shifting historical contexts. Wiseman’s most expressive example centers on the fourth century Sicilian historian Alcimus, who tells us that Aeneas marries Tyrrhenia and fathers Rhomylos, who, in turn fathers Alba.\textsuperscript{37} Alba, then, gives birth to Rhodius (or Rhomos), who founds Rome. The key here is that in

\textsuperscript{35} See Gruen 1992: 9. Wiseman (1995: 46-50 and 2004: 16-7) recounts additional myths linking Odysseus to Rome. In Eugammon of Cyrene’ \textit{Telegony} from the sixth century, Telegonus, the son of Odysseus and Circe, marries Penelope and fathers Italus and Latinus. Italus then marries Leukaria, and their son is named Rhomos. Other versions tell that the sons of Odysseus and Circe are Rhomos, Anteias, and Ardeias, who each founded their three respective cities. Finally, there is a tradition in which Odysseus’ son from Penelope, Telemachus, marries his father’s mistress Circe, and they have a daughter named Rhome.

\textsuperscript{36} All sorts of concatenations of names can be found in the tradition from the fourth and third centuries, but they are mostly all tabulated by Wiseman (1995) in his appendix. On this particular array of foundation stories, see Cato \textit{Orig.} 1 fr. 6-14, Dion. Hal. \textit{Ant. Rom.} 1.72.1-6, Festus 326-8L, Lycoph. \textit{Alex.} 1232-44, Plut. \textit{Rom.} 2-3, and Serv. Auct. \textit{ad Aen.} 1.273.

\textsuperscript{37} For more on Alcimus, see Gruen 1992: 14-5.
older versions, the eponym for Alba, Leukaria, was identified as the daughter not of Rhomylus but of Latinus.\textsuperscript{38} Alcimus’ fourth century version, then, retains Alba as the mother of Rhome, but diverges from tradition by casting Alba as the daughter of Aeneas’ son Rhomylus instead of the daughter of the Italian Latinus. Alba is still the mother of Rhomos, but now Rhomylus is her father, making her the granddaughter of Aeneas. The implication is that after the Latin League dissolved in 338 BC, there was a move to recast Alba as a link between Troy and Rome, just as Alba Longa itself, the premiere religious center of the Latins, would become known as an intermediary step between Troy and Rome.\textsuperscript{39}

It is difficult to pinpoint a time when Aeneas was first connected to Rome. Some argue that it was fifth century Hellanicus who first brought Aeneas to Rome. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (\textit{Ant. Rom.} 1.72.2) records that the author of the \textit{Priestesses of Argos} told of Aeneas and Odysseus founding Rome, and we know from Stephanus of Byzantium that the fifth-century Hellanicus was the author of a work bearing the same title. Still, Gruen and others have questioned whether Dionysius of Halicarnassus mistakenly ascribed the story to Hellanicus, or whether there was perhaps another treatise on the priestesses of Argos written by a later scholar, since the fifth-century seems to some too early for a Greek writer to take notice of Rome.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{38} Wiseman 1995: 50.
\textsuperscript{39} For Alba as an important religious center of the Latins, see Alföldi 1965: 29-34; Cornell 1975: 15; Feeney 2007b; Gruen 1992: 25; Schröder 1971: 87.
\textsuperscript{40} For Hellanicus, see \textit{FGrH} 1.444, \textit{FGrH} 4. F84 and F31. Among those who doubt the authenticity of this fifth century testimony for the joint foundation of Rome by Aeneas and Odysseus, are: Bremmer and Horsfall 1987: 16-8; Gruen 1992: 17-8 with bibliography on 56 n. 18; Horsfall 1979a: 377-80. For arguments on the different question of when the Troy connection first came to Rome, see Alföldi (1957: 14-9 and 1965: 178-87): sixth century via the Etruscans; Cornell (1977: 82-3): at least by the
A similar debate has arisen surrounding a caption in the *Tabula Iliaca Capitolina*, one of a set of reliefs from the Augustan period showing scenes of the Trojan War. A caption to the tablet’s central panel, which depicts Aeneas leaving Troy with his father and household gods, cites Stesichoros’ *Iliupersis* as the source for Aeneas’ journey West (*εἰς τὴν Ἑσπερίαν*). If we believe the evidence of the *Tabula Iliaca Capitolina*, we would be forced to conclude that Stesichoros wrote even in the sixth century of Aeneas traveling to Hesperia, but the tablet’s claim that it is inspired by Stesichoros has been repeatedly questioned. And, while there are sixth century remains at the cult of Aeneas in Lavinium and evidence that Aeneas’ escape from Troy was a favorite theme in Etruscan art as early as the sixth century, these findings do not constitute evidence that Aeneas was already by that time connected to Rome. What they show is that by the sixth century, Aeneas was a popular figure in the area around Rome and well poised to take on his role as a founder hero.

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41 See *FGrH* 840 F6b for the TIC’s citation of Stesichoros’ *Iliupersis*. For the debate over whether Stesichoros really did tell of Aeneas traveling to *Hesperia*, see: Castagnoli 1982: 7-8; Erskine 2001: 148-9; Gruen 1992: 13-4; Horsfall 1979b and 2008: 587-91; McLeod 1985: 153-65; Perret 1942: 84-9; Sadurska 1964: 24-37. The main objections are that *Hesperia* was not a term in Greek literature before Apollonius of Rhodes and that Dionysius of Halicarnassus does not cite Stesichoros for Aeneas’ travels, even though he clearly knows the poet’s work. It seems likely to Horsfall that the tablets were showpieces for the *nouveau riche*, who, like Petronius’ Trimalchio, valued shows of obscure knowledge, even if incorrect. Finally, if Stesichoros did mention that Aeneas was heading toward the West, it is nevertheless hard to know where exactly he was meant to have ended up in the West.

42 On the remains at Lavinium, see Cornell 1975: 13. For the iconographic tradition of Aeneas in early Italy, see Lowenstam 2008: 125.
What can be said with more certainty, however, is that by the end of the third century BC, most Romans and Greeks agreed that Rome was founded in the aftermath of the Trojan War by Aeneas or, at least, descendants of Aeneas. A bronze as of the third century (ca. 280-6 BC) featuring Rome in a Phrygian cap decidedly shows the myth in action at Rome. It seems to have been the third century Sicilian historian Timaeus who helped to canonize this version of the Aeneas legend, making it the standard story for Roman origins. Timaeus, however, had transferred the foundation date of Rome down to 814/3 BC, effectively moving Rome’s origins from myth into history. This new date had the advantage of synchronizing Rome’s foundation with the foundation of Carthage, the other major power of the West, and the innovation caught on. Diocles of Peparethus in late third century seems to have bridged this new gap between Troy’s fall and Rome’s founding by positing a line of Alban kings between Aeneas and his descendant Romulus that allowed the new date to stand without compromising the Trojan connection. Fabius Pictor, the first Roman historian, followed Diocles’ story, but he moved the foundation date down even later to 748/7 BC, perhaps to distance Rome from its enemy Carthage and to align it instead with the eighth century Greek colonists in Magna Graecia.

By the end of the third century, the association of Troy and Rome was canonical enough to begin to be used in political propaganda. Pausanias reported that Pyrrhus,

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43 Wiseman 1995: 158.
44 Timaeus seems to have visited Lavinium, where he claims to have seen Trojan artifacts. Festus 190 L, Polyb. 12.45.1, and Dion. Hal. Ant. Rom. 1.6.1. See Alföldi 1965: 248; Bremmer and Horsfall 1987: 19; Feeney 2007a: 92-9; Gruen 1992: 20-8 and 37.
who traced his ancestry back to Achilles, cited Trojan legend as he prepared to battle
with Rome. He is supposed to have claimed that he would recreate in Italy the
Achaean sack of Troy. It is better attested that Segesta appealed to Rome during the
First Punic War using their shared ancestry from Aeneas. Similarly, Acarnanians at
war with the Aetolian league in the 230’s justified their appeal for Rome’s help because
their ancestors had not joined the Greek expedition against Troy. Further examples of
the acknowledgement of a Trojan foundation story are Rome’s transfer of the Magna
Mater from Mt. Ida (the birthplace of Aeneas) to the Palatine in 205, the dedication of
on the capitol of a shrine to Venus Erycina in 215, and Flamininus’ dedication at Delphi
from the “sons of Aeneas” after his victory against Philip V in 195.

It is true that even after the story of Aeneas was accepted at Rome and beyond
Greek intellectuals could still revise and debate the foundation stories. Demetrius of
Skepsis, for instance, argues in the second century BC that Aeneas never in fact left the
Troad. Demetrius’ reinterpretation of the Aeneas-legend seems aimed more at

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46 Paus. 1.12.1. See Gruen 1992: 44-5. Perret (1942: 409-34) takes it too far when he
argues that it was Pyrrhus’ propaganda that suggested a Trojan ancestry to Rome.
Momigliano (1945) refutes Perret’s claim. Still, it is certainly true that, as Cornell
(1995: 65) and Hardie (1998: 70) suggest, it would have been appealing for Romans to
think of themselves as Trojans conquering their former conquerors. For Pyrrhus’ coins
featuring Achilles, see BMC, Thessaly, 111 no. 7-8 and 112 no. 9-19. Still, see below
(n. 66) for Erskine’s questioning of this traditional story.
47 Cic. Verr. 2.4.72, 2.5.83, 2.5.125, Diod. Sic. 23.5, Plut. Nic. 1.3, Zonar. 8.9.12. For
Segestan coins featuring Aeneas, see BMC, Sicily: 59.
48 Plut. Flam. 12.6-7. This same dedication claims to free all of Hellas. The irony that
the sons of Aeneas were freeing their ancient enemy Hellas could not, I think, have
gone unnoticed. Another gesture toward Trojan ancestry performed by a Roman
general is C. Livius Salinator’s sacrifice in 190 to Athena at Ilium during the war with
Antiochus III: see Livy 37.37.1-3. For more examples of political uses of Rome’s
Trojan heritage, see Erskine 2001: 168-85.
benefiting Skepsis than at denigrating Rome. In fact, there was a strong tradition among the states of Asia Minor that, even if Aeneas’ sons had left for Italy, Aeneas himself had remained in the Troad, where one could visit his tomb. So, for instance, in addition to Demetrius of Skepsis, we find Agathocles of Cyzicus (FGrH 472 F5), who claims that Aeneas died at Berecynthia. Homer’s lines on Aeneas’ destiny after Troy’s fall were the center of much debate. Homer Il. 20. 302-8 and the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite (196) claim that Aeneas will rule over the Trojans (ἐν Τιτώτσων ἄναξε). One side of the debate claimed that Aeneas could not have left the Troad if he was supposed to have been ruling over Trojans. The other side argued that since Aeneas brought Trojans with him to the West, he and his descendants could indeed be said to rule over Trojans in Italy. An emendation noted by Strabo (13.1.52-3) and imitated by Vergil (Aen. 3.97-8), solves the problem in a very flattering way to Romans by replacing Ττώτσων with πάντσων, and therefore claiming that Homer foresaw the expanse of the Roman Empire. Nevertheless, the debate itself over whether Aeneas really left for the West shows that the Trojan prehistory of Rome was broadly recognized and manipulated by both Romans and those with whom they came into contact by the end of the third century BC, even if polemical denials of Aeneas’ generally accepted role as founder of the Roman race were part of that manipulation.

With so many possible stories offering founder heroes, and given the lingering doubts concerning Aeneas even after he became Rome’s canonical founder hero, we are

49 Strabo 13.1.53.
left wondering why the story of Aeneas became the preferred version of Rome’s origins in Timaeus and Fabius Pictor. Why did a Sicilian historian choose it, and why would Roman historians cling to it? Aeneas was a tricky character to set up as a founder figure, given that he had survived the destruction of his homeland, and had even come under suspicion of bargaining with the Greeks for his life since he resented Priam’s treatment of him. Nevertheless, Aeneas had, at the same time, a particular reputation for pietas, which might have appealed to the Romans, especially given the popularity of images of Aeneas saving his father from burning Troy. Gruen and Erskine have worked to explain the choice to accept Aeneas, and, although they come to different conclusions, they both focus on the usefulness of being able to plug into the pan-Hellenic narrative of the Trojan War as descendants from a respected race of heroes that is also not entirely Greek. Thus, the story of descent from a Trojan survivor would allow a Roman to share Greece’s mythical narrative while not claiming Greek ancestry like many of the other cities of the Western Mediterranean. Rome’s growing importance on the Italian peninsula during the fourth and third centuries BC only made the Trojan foundation story more attractive. Gruen has suggested that as Rome expanded to encompass the Italian League in the fourth century and entered into diplomatic relations with Greek cities such as Naples, it may have been useful to be able to present a shared Hellenic past. Similarly, as the Latin League dissolved in 338, Rome was in need of ways to show its supremacy in Latium. If Aeneas, the famed

51 On Aeneas as proditor, see above n. 9.
52 Among sixth century vase paintings showing Aeneas’ departure with Anchises, there are seventy pieces, of which twenty-one are Etruscan. Fifteen more vases show the hero Aeneas in other situations. See Galinsky 1969: 12-140; Gruen 1992: 21-2.
survivor of Troy could be linked to Rome while also honoring Latium’s sacred sites like Alba Longa and Lavinium, then Rome could set itself up as Latium’s “cultural curator” of sorts. ⁵⁴

Perhaps the most significant advantage to choosing a Trojan founder rather than a Greek hero on his nostos was simply that Priam’s Troy no longer existed. Troy, was, therefore, much more available for manipulation as a symbol at Rome. ⁵⁵ In other words, Troy’s availability as a narratological tool made it especially attractive to include in a foundation story. Not only was Troy the hinge of the whole of Mediterranean geography, history, and time, but its very destruction made it that much more malleable in the hand of Roman poets and politicians who could reconstruct it as they wished. The story of Aeneas allowed Rome to match its own foundation moment with the moment that intellectuals and poets regarded as the beginning of the recorded history of mankind, the fall of Troy. The inversion of East and West following Troy’s fall allowed Rome to lay claim to the event that had shaped the universe as it was known.

Still, despite Troy’s malleability and universalizing power, Rome was left with an uncomfortable link to a city that was famously (and justly) sacked at its very height of glory and wealth. One of the great consequences of the Trojan foundation story was that it raised the possibility of a replay of Troy at Rome. This anxiety was fertile ground for Roman poets, whose use of Troy in their narratives often showcases the strain of negotiating a foundation story that takes place during a city’s destruction. The melding of Rome’s beginning with Troy’s ending created a double-edged moment that

could be viewed quite differently depending on each narrator’s point of view. Everything was at stake in which perspective one chose to adopt in telling the story and how one viewed the layering of Roman and Trojan history. A Roman story could always shade into a Trojan story and vice versa because the two histories were irrevocably connected, and since the Trojan story ended in disaster, there was a lot at stake in keeping Roman stories Roman. So although the Trojan story might be helpful as a tool for Rome jockeying for position among the conflicting cultural narratives in the Mediterranean, the unavoidable clash between the competing interpretations of Troy also fostered a dangerously dynamic conception of Roman identity: a Roman might see the events of Troy from his current, Roman, point of view, but he might equally focalize the narration from the point of view of his former Trojan self. Moreover, the first poets of Rome were not themselves entirely Roman; they were *semigraeci*, as Suetonius put it. Livius Andronicus was a Greek and was presumably a prisoner of war before being manumitted and enrolled as a Roman citizen. Ennius was from the Messapian town of Rudiae and famously had three hearts: Greek, Oscan, and Roman.57

We saw earlier how a Greek poet at Athens could interpret the story of Troy in several competing ways at different times—as the Homeric battle between two well-matched heroic armies, as the precursor to Greek resistance against the Eastern opulence of Xerxes, and, during the conflict with Sparta, as proof of the barbaric tendencies of the Spartans whose atrocities at Troy make us pity the barbarian Andromache herself. To a poet working at Rome, these competing Greek perspectives

56 Suet. *Gram.* 1.2. Feeney (2005: 236-7) offers a useful look at what we know about the rise of literature at Rome in the third century BC. See also Dench 2005: 49.
on Troy were just the tip of the iceberg. There would have been at least three additional points of view from which to read the story of Troy at Rome: the perspective of the defeated Trojans; the perspective of newly Westernized and successful Trojans, the Romans; and finally, the perspective of a *semigraecus* working in the limbo between the older Greek culture and the rising Roman one. In the Greek tradition, we saw how Troy’s mobility allowed it to serve as an “other” that could variously be distanced from Hellenic identity or linked closely to it, depending on the cultural narrative in play. At Rome, Troy would have even more power in this role since it was in fact both an Eastern “other” and a true version of Rome itself. The shifting relationship between Roman narrator and Trojan narratee allowed poets to use Trojan stories to make implicit claims about Rome. At times, the contemporary narrator at Rome and his Trojan subject can seem purposefully blended to reflect Rome’s heroic prehistory in Homeric myth. At other times, a Roman narrator can seem to distance his Trojan subject as a way of rejecting less appealing parts of the connection to Homer’s fallen Troy. Often, however, we find that Troy is so unconvincingly distanced as to point out the futility of trying to deny any of the many implications of Rome’s Trojan ancestry, regardless of whether they were positive or negative.

*Troy in early Latin literature*

As we move to considering how and why the Trojan foundation story is deployed in early Latin poetry, we face the significant obstacle that these early texts are fragmentary, and many of the existing fragments have been preserved out of context by commentators on later texts. Erskine has, therefore, argued that the use of Troy by the
Julian family has skewed our conception of the importance of Troy for Rome’s self-image before Julius Caesar and his temple to Venus Genetrix. A third century Roman, argues Erskine, would not have seen the connection between the new shrine to Venus Erycina on the Capitoline and Rome’s Trojan ancestry. Similarly, the importation of the Magna Mater would not automatically have been viewed against the background of Rome’s Trojan foundation story as it later was in Augustan Rome. Erskine does not deny Roman knowledge of its Trojan connection, but he argues that it was not as important as the story of Romulus and Remus in the self-image of the Roman Republic. It seems to Erskine that, before the Julians came to power, Rome’s Trojan origins were only stressed in discourse with Greek states.

It is certainly true that the importance of Troy under Augustus has influenced the evidence available to modern scholars, and much of what we know of early Latin literature comes from commentaries on Vergil, whose Trojan subject matter would be more likely to bring to mind Trojan-themed *comparanda*. A large portion of the extant fragments of Cato’s *Origines*, for instance, are Trojan-themed, but it is also true that many of these Trojan-themed fragments have been preserved through Servius’ commentary on the *Aeneid*. Without the *Aeneid*’s emphasis on Troy, then, Cato’s writing might seem far less preoccupied with Troy than it does now. Still, while we should, as Erskine suggests, be careful not to overplay Troy’s role in Roman self-identity before Caesar, we should not react by underplaying it, either. Whatever arguments one can make about the percentage of Cato’s *Origines* that would have been

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centered on Troy, one fact is certain: we know that Cato marked out Troy’s fall as the beginning of Roman history, just as clearly as Livy and Jerome do later.

An example that Erskine uses to show how Troy took a back seat to the story of Romulus is his calculation that the Republican poet Catullus wrote only one poem that explicitly mentions Troy but referred to Romulus four times.60 As we will see in Chapter Two, however, Troy was in fact of crucial importance throughout the Catullan corpus, and the understanding that we are building in this chapter of Troy’s role as a cluster of tipping points will help us see later how Catullus represents Troy as a series of pivotal moments that straddle and confuse beginnings and endings. For Catullus, Troy is the pivot point between life and death in poems 68 and 101, the pivot between the Heroic and Iron Ages in Poem 64, and the pivot between male and female for Attis, who castrates himself on Mt. Ida in Poem 63.61 Catullus’ anxieties over how Troy redefines mortality, time, and gender can hardly be separated from the role that Troy’s fall played as re-negotiator of East and West and simultaneous beginning and end of Roman and Trojan culture.

61 For more on the role of Troy in Poem 64 and in the rest of the Catullan corpus, see Chapter 2. Erskine (2001: 32-3) also argues that Cicero does not seem to take into account Rome’s link to Troy. Cicero’s use of Trojan horse imagery from both the Trojan and Greek perspectives suggests to Erskine that he was interested in the Trojan legend not as it relates to Rome but only as a recognizable Homeric trope. In the Pro Murena, Cicero presents himself as a Trojan protecting Troy from Catiline, who plays the role of the Trojan Horse. Later, in the Philippics, he portrays himself as the Trojan Horse, ambushing Antony at Rome. I would argue, however, that part of Cicero’s point must be that, with Antony in power, Rome has ceased to be recognizable as Rome. Cicero could once protect Rome from inroads by Catiline and the conspirators, but the situation has so far reversed itself that he must ambush as an invading force the city that he once saved.
Once Rome’s Trojan origins were accepted in the political discourse, that connection would remain at some level active and available to poets and their audiences at Rome. The Trojan story would always have the potential to carry an extra resonance in Roman poetry, even if Erskine is right to suspect that Troy was not as important as the story of Romulus to internal constructions of Roman identity during the Republic. After all, both Naevius and Ennius consider Romulus the grandson of Aeneas, and clearly view Romulus’ foundation of Rome as a direct consequence of Aeneas’ migration from Troy. It may well be true that the story of Aeneas was primarily used in the second and third centuries BC in relation to Greek states, but it is also true that this discourse includes early Latin poetry, particularly since the first poets at Rome were *semigraeci*, who would have spoken Greek as well as if not better than Latin. Naevius began his historical epic on the Punic War with the story of Aeneas leaving Troy to found Rome.\footnote{M. Barchiesi 1962: 349-58: it is unclear whether Dido featured in Naevius as she does in Vergil, but it is certainly possible. For more on the question, see Heinze 1994 (orig. 1903): 95 n. 1; Wigodsky 1972: 29-34.} Ennius, too, features Aeneas as founder-hero in the beginning of Rome’s first hexameter epic, the *Annales*. Although these writers wrote from a partially Greek perspective, and may, as Erskine suggests, have privileged the Trojan myth for that reason, their work cemented not only Aeneas’ role at Rome but also an explicit connection between Rome’s rise and Troy’s fall. Naevius’ melancholy lines on the night of Troy’s fall seem like an odd choice to begin the story of Rome’s victory in the Punic Wars.\footnote{These lines serve as introduction for Putnam's (2007) argument that Troy functions in Latin literature as a place of sorrow and as a symbol of loss. Although Troy can certainly serve as a symbol of sorrow and loss, I hope to show that Troy can have a multitude of conflicting meanings and roles that change over time at Rome.}
Naevius, however, seems to understand that the tragedy of Troy’s fall was necessary to set in motion the rise of Rome, just as Venus’ lament for her son’s fate is a necessary lead in to Jupiter’s reassuring prophecy of Rome’s success.

The earliest Latin texts are also adaptations of Greek narratives of Troy, and there are a staggering number of Trojan-themed tragedies attested, including multiple versions of plays concerning the Trojan Horse and the night of Troy’s fall. Six out of nine attested tragedies of Livius Andronicus revolve around Troy, as well as five out of seven by Naevius, and half of tragic titles reported for Pacuvius and Ennius. Only Accius seems more evenly distributed in his subject matter with just under forty percent of his tragedies concerning Troy. By comparison, based on what we can tell from attested titles, slightly less than one third of the plays by Aeschylus and Euripides took place during or around the fall of Troy and only slightly more of the plays by Sophocles. Even allowing for the possibility that Troy’s importance under Augustus skewed the proportion of attested tragedies, it is clear that Troy was a favored topic for the stage at Rome and most likely even more so than at Athens. The foundational work of Latin literature itself, Livius Andronicus’ *Odusia*, seems to have been a relatively faithful translation of Homer’s original tale of *nostos*. The Roman context, however, must have given a completely new resonance to this famous story of a hero’s journey.

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West after Troy. Perhaps the idea of Ulysses’ journey West was appealing because it set Rome’s foundation myth in a tradition of Greek expeditions to and colonization of the West. Or perhaps the idea of finally appropriating into the Latin the story of the man whose ingenuity conquered Troy was appealing for a Roman audience. We can be sure, however, that Livius’ translation was a crucial step for a culture working to gain a foothold in the sweeping narrative dynamics of the Trojan myth. Once Livius’ successors Naevius and Ennius put forward Aeneas as the father of Rome in their foundational poems, this Trojan lineage would necessarily have become an easily accessible part of Rome’s self-image, at least for any future poet or reader of poems.

The remaining portion of this chapter focuses in large part on Ennius and attempts to show that Ennius treated the Trojan myth as though it would be meaningful for his Roman audience and that this treatment set the stage for the evolving uses of Troy’s double edge in subsequent poetry at Rome. Ennius was the first to write at Rome in hexameters, and it is in his narrative of Rome’s battles with Pyrrhus that we find one of the earliest expressions of the problem of Troy at Rome and a useful example of how Troy’s difficult relationship to Rome could be manipulated successfully even in the second century BC. It is generally believed that Pyrrhus, a Molossian king who claimed descent from Achilles, presented his attack on Rome as a second Trojan War, featuring the Romans in their ancestral role as Trojans, and him as the new Achilles.65 Erskine has recently questioned whether Pyrrhus did use such propaganda, and he is right to point out that Pausanius is our only source and that the line of Molossian kings was as much Trojan as Aeacid because the Trojan captive

65 Paus. 1.12.1.
Andromache bore children to Neoptolemus. Still, it seems that the parallel between Pyrrhus’ attack on Rome and Achilles’ attack on Troy was attractive to Pausanius, and seemingly even to Ennius, who specifically introduces Pyrrhus as an Aeacid and as a Greek king of illustrious descent (… *repertus homo, Graio patre, Graius homo, rex / nomine Burrus uti memorant a stripe supremo, Ann. 165-6 Sk.*). As S. Jahn remarks, repeatedly attaching the explicit label *Graius* to Pyrrhus is a way for Ennius to emphasize the king’s Achillean ancestry and to activate the idea of a second Trojan War being played out between the descendants of Aeneas and Achilles.

In Ennius’ narrative, Pyrrhus decides to invade Italy after misinterpreting an ambiguous oracle from Apollo: *Aio te Aeacida Romanos vincere posse* (*Ann. 167 Sk.*). Of the prophecies’ two meanings, Pyrrhus hears only one: “I say that you, the Aeacid, can vanquish the Romans.” In truth, however, the grammar of the indirect statement makes it impossible to tell whether the oracle is prophesying that Pyrrhus can subdue Rome or vice versa. This is oracular ambiguity at its simplest. But, the ambivalence of the oracle, however, also works on a deeper level if we take into account Rome’s past at Troy. On the one hand, the most famous Aeacid, Achilles, was able to defeat the Trojans, who would become Romans. On the other hand, the Romans would now in turn be able to drive away the descendant of Achilles, the Aeacid Pyrrhus. Both meanings of the oracle, therefore, are true at different times. An Aeacid hero was able to win against Troy, but another Aeacid hero will be beaten back by Trojan Rome.

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68 Dench (2005: 58) notes how the prophecy fits Ennius’ presentation of the Pyrrhic War as a reversal of Homer’s Troy.
Our second reading of the ambiguous oracle cuts to the center of the anxiety over Rome’s Trojan foundation story—an anxiety over whether the Romans have been strengthened or weakened by their Trojan inheritance. The ambivalence depends on Rome’s double identity as Eastern victim and Western victor. While the myth of Rome’s Trojan origins supports the interpretation of the prophecy favoring the descendant of Achilles, Roman history proves to support the opposite reading— that the Romans would drive off Pyrrhus. The correct reading of the prophecy’s two options, then, splits across the boundary between myth and history at Troy and pivots with the redefinition of East and West set off by Aeneas’ migration. It is also possible that Ennius takes into account the problem of Pyrrhus’ Trojan connections through Neoptolemus’ son with Andromache. An awareness of Pyrrhus’ own double ancestry of Trojan and Greek heroes further complicates the ambivalence at work here as Pyrrhus mimics his Greek ancestor Achilles’ siege on his Trojan ancestor Andromache’s homeland.

Ennius’ moves in this one prophecy inaugurate the uses of Troy that we will be looking at in the course of this dissertation. Referring to Trojan myth allows a Roman poet to call up a comparison between his contemporary Rome and its mother city. This implied comparison can be crafted at different moments to highlight how far Rome has come from its beginnings at Troy or how closely linked the two cities remain. Trojan myth emerges as a parallel narrative running alongside any Roman story, and we will repeatedly find poets expressing their attitude toward Rome by manipulating the gap between the Trojan and Roman parallel narratives.
Cycles of Roman growth and Trojan defeat

Ennius’ strategy in managing Rome’s parallel Trojan narrative seems to be to turn the Trojan foundation story’s liabilities into Rome’s assets. Troy’s destruction and the ensuing migration West become in Ennius’ hands a way of showcasing Rome’s ability to grow from defeat and its talent at blending newcomers in seamlessly. Still, these attempts to turn Troy’s defects into Rome’s strengths are not categorically successful, and the places where Ennius fails to tame Troy’s double edge completely will be equally important to future poets.

We must begin by remembering the reversal of victor and victim that occurs after Troy’s defeat. Aeschylus’ Oresteia showed how Agamemnon, who was but lately victor over the Trojans, suddenly found himself victim to his wife’s treachery, and this same reversal also marks the early Latin tradition. We find, for instance, the following fragment, presumed to be from Accius’ Clytemnestra: …ut quae tum absentem rebus dubiis coniugem/ tetinerit, nunc prodat ultorem (…she held him as her husband then, when he was away and the outcome uncertain, but now she betrays the avenger).⁶⁹ These lines imply that it was her husband’s final success in punishing Troy that allowed Clytemnestra to avenge the very avenger himself. Clytemnestra was able to act the dutiful wife while the outcome of the Trojan War was still in doubt, but once her husband successfully avenged Troy’s theft of Helen, she turned on him in his victory to punish him for his wrongs to his own family.

The widespread reversals of fate associated with Troy gain particular force at Rome, where they offer a positive way to spin Troy’s fate. We saw how Naevius

⁶⁹ Accius 235-6 in Warmington 1967.
stresses the tragedy of Troy’s fall and the despair of Aeneas’ mother Venus as a prelude for Rome’s rise and Jupiter’s prophetic assurance of Rome’s power. Ennius even more pointedly relies on Troy’s ability to reverse victor and victim to portray a Rome as a city that grows from destruction and turns the tables on any successful opponent. The idea of a Rome galvanized by destruction recurs as a constant trope in subsequent Latin literature. Horace’s Hannibal, a treacherously successful enemy of Rome, complains:

\textit{non hydra secto corpore firmior/ vinci dolentem crevit in Herculem} (no stronger did the hydra, as its body was cut, grow back against Hercules, who refused to be beaten, \textit{Carm.} 4.4.53-65). Silius Italicus sums up the paradox when he explains how Rome conquered the world by its own defeats (\textit{ipsis devincat cladibus orbem, Pun.} 5.676).

When Ovid recounts the lifecycle of the phoenix who rises out of his father’s ash, it is possible to see an allusion here as well to Rome’s mythical powers of regeneration. Like Rome, the Phoenix’s cradle is also its father’s sepulcher: \textit{fertque pius cunasque suas patriumque sepulcrum} (Ov. \textit{Met.} 15.405). Again and again, we read that Trojan Rome would never allow itself to be captive even when it was captured, and, even when it was on fire, it refused to burn. Trojan Rome, as Juno complains in Vergil’s \textit{Aeneid}, only grows stronger when it is burned.\textsuperscript{70}

\begin{quote}
“\textit{heu stirpem inuisam et fatis contraria nostris fata Phrygum! num Sigeis occumbere campis, num capti potuere capi? num incensa cremuit Troia uiros?”}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
“Ah, hated race and Phrygian fates opposed to my own! Could they not have fallen on the Sigean fields? Were they not able, when captured, to be captured? Did Troy, when burned, burn up her men?” \textit{(Aen.} 7.293-6)\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{70} Macrob. \textit{Sat.} 6.1.68 quotes Ennius as Vergil’s model. For more instances of Rome rising from ashes, see Manil. 1.511-12, Ov. \textit{Fast.} 1.523-6, and Prop. 4.1.54.
Juno’s words are, however, a quotation of Ennius’ original line on Trojan Rome’s indestructible nature: *quae neque Dardanis campis potuere perire / nec quom capta capi nec quom combusta cremari* ([Pergama], which was neither able to perish on Dardanian fields nor be captive when captured, nor become ashes when burned, *Ann.* 344 Sk.). These Ennian lines on captured Troy’s supernatural resilience suggest that the idea of a Rome reborn stronger from defeat is connected to Rome’s origins in Troy, the world’s most famous defeat. Moreover, when this theme of growth from destruction is sounded again in Ennius’ telling of the Pyrrhic war, we can see how Ennius sets Pyrrhus up as yet another failed sacker of Troy. As Pyrrhus explains, he was bested by his own victory at Rome, and he was conquered by the very Romans he thought he was conquering: *hos ego vi pugna vici victusque sum ab isdem* (*Ann.* 180 Sk.). 71 Pyrrhus may well be attempting to replay the sack of Troy on Italian soil, but just as the Trojans only ever grew stronger from their defeat, Troy’s Roman descendants similarly turn the tables on the Aeacid Pyrrhus in his new Trojan War. In the hands of Ennius, the sack of Troy is not a burden to be explained away by Romans hoping not to be as weak, but rather proof that Rome will never submit, even if it seems to be bested.

Livy also seems to have read Ennius’ Pyrrhic War narrative as a lesson about the ability of Trojan Rome to reverse its enemies’ victories. It is worth taking a moment to see how Livy’s narrative of the Gallic Sack in *Ab Urbe Condita* 5 uses and retroactively strengthens this already potent theme in Ennius’ narrative. In Livy’s Book 5, the Gauls have successfully besieged Rome and are in the process of accepting gold as ransom before they raise the siege. As the Romans weigh out their gold, the tribune objects that

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71 Plut. *Pyrrh.* 19.5 reports that Pyrrhus’ men characterized Rome as a Lernean Hydra, which only came back stronger when its heads were severed.
the Gauls have brought unfair weights. In response, the Gallic chief Brennus simply adds the weight of his sword to the scales and utters the infamous quip: *vae victis*. Just at this seemingly hopeless juncture, the Roman dictator Camillus arrives and nullifies the agreement:

Suos in acervum conicere sarcinas et arma aptare **ferroque non auro** recuperare patriam iubet, in conspectu habentes fana deum et coniuges et liberos et solum patriae deforme belli malis et omnia quae defendi repetique et ulcisci fas sit... Iam verterat fortuna, iam deorum opes humanaque consilia rem Romanam adiuabant.

He orders his own men to throw their packs in a heap and ready their weapons and regain their fatherland with iron and not with gold, having before them the homes of their gods, their wives and children and the soil of their fatherland marked by the evils of war and everything that was their right to defend, regain, and avenge...Now fortune had turned, and now the might of the gods and human judgment were helping the Roman state. (Livy AUC 5.49)

As many have noted, this famous scene echoes quite closely a speech given by Pyrrhus in Ennius’ *Annales*.²² Pyrrhus uses the same phrase, “*ferro non auro*”, in his response to Rome’s request to pay ransom for prisoners:

Nec mi aurum posco nec mi pretium dederitis nec cauponantes bellum sed belligerantes **ferro non auro** vitam cernamus utrique; vosne velit an me regnare era, quidve ferat Fors, virtute experiamur. Et hoc simul accipe dictum: quorum virtuti belli fortuna pepercit, corundem libertati me parcere certum est. Dono ducite, doque volentibus cum magnis dis.

I do not demand gold for myself, nor should you pay a price to me. For we, not selling war but waging it, ought to decide our fate by iron not by gold. Let us test out with courage whether Fortune, whatever she may bring, wishes you or me to rule. And hear this statement now: Those men whose virtue the fortune of war has spared, to the freedom of those very men I have decided to be kind. Lead them—I give them over—and I give them with the great gods willing it. *(Ann. 183-9 Sk.)*

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²² Ogilvie (1965: 738) notes the echo of Ennius’ Pyrrhus in Livy’s Camillus episode.
Ennius’ Pyrrhus claims that he wishes fortune to decide the outcome of the war and that he prefers to decide the matter with iron rather than with gold. This magnanimity in returning hostages is a fine sentiment for a descendant of Achilles to express, and it serves as yet another link between Pyrrhus and the Trojan War he seeks to replicate. Yet, when Livy has the Roman hero Camillus speak the same expression “by iron and not by gold” and places emphasis also on allowing fortune rather than bartering to decide battle, he pushes us to reread the original Ennian lines. In retrospect, now, we see those original Ennian lines spoken by Pyrrhus as yet another warning that no one can afford the consequences of a victory against the Romans, and no one, not even a descendant of Achilles should count Rome out too quickly.

In Livy’s narrative Camillus is himself made to preempt the words of Rome’s future enemy, Pyrrhus—saying himself the defiant words that Rome’s famous enemy will later speak. Even though Livy is referring back to the earlier Ennian text, the character of Camillus is in fact earlier in time than Pyrrhus, and so rather than imitating Pyrrhus’ famous refusal to barter war, Livy’s Camillus says it first and, therefore, recasts Pyrrhus’ words as an imitation of Camillus. This echo of Ennius’ Pyrrhus works in two directions. First, it reminds Livy’s readers that no one ever triumphs over Rome but to their own detriment and assures readers that fortune will once again redeem the

73 Duckett (1915: 44) and Münzer (R.E. 7, 324-327, s.v. Furius Camillus) argued that because Ennius put these words in the mouth of Pyrrhus, he could not have been aware of a version of the Camillus episode in which the Roman leader speaks them. Momigliano (1942: 113), however, does not rule out the possibility that Ennius is alluding to a phrase that was already known as part of the Camillus episode. If Livy did not model Camillus’ speech after this moment in Ennius and was instead reporting a version of the Camillus story known to Ennius, then we can see even more clearly how Ennius highlights Rome’s regenerative ability. By using a phrase that Camillus used as he turned the tables on the Gauls, Ennius’ Pyrrhus is unwittingly reminding his audience of the reversal about to occur as the Romans drive him from Italy.
Romans from its apparent conquerors. Second, for a reader now looking back to
Ennius, the reassignment of Pyrrhus’ words strengthens Ennius’ suggestion that Rome
only gains power from its defeats— because it shows how readily Rome can wield in
return the words of any enemy who temporarily prevails.

Livy seems to agree with Ennius that any conquerors of Rome will soon find
themselves vanquished, just as the Greek conquerors of Troy doomed themselves by
their victory, which gave rise to Rome. One wonders, finally, whether Ennius’ positive
spin on Rome’s Trojan prehistory— and his choice to connect Rome’s resilience against
Pyrrhus with Troy’s earlier regeneration— is in part a reaction to his contemporary
context in the wake of the Hannibalic War. From the Pyrrhic War through the
Hannibalic War, Rome suffered a string of serious defeats, and it is possible that
Rome’s ability to recover from such setbacks suggested to Ennius the positive reading
of Troy that we have been exploring. We can easily imagine that in Ennius’ day, at a
time when Romans were searching for ways to reinterpret and rewrite their own defeats,
it would be appealing to read back into Rome’s very foundation story a blueprint for
distilling success out of failure.74

This idea of a Roman hydra always avenging its supposed conquerors is a
deliberately positive way of spinning the implications of Troy’s fall. Yet, the positive
spin that Ennius works to put on Troy’s hardships cannot completely distract from the
opposite reading of Rome’s Trojan origins. If on the one hand Rome learned from its

74 Wigodsky (1972: 70-1 and 147 n. D) also raises the possibility that Ennius’ praise of
Trojan regeneration was inspired by Rome’s resilience during the Hannibalic War. In
particular, Wigodsky recalls the suggestion of Kiessling and Heinze (1955: 409-10) that
the complaints of Horace’s Hannibal (Carm. 4.4.53) about Rome’s Hydra-like re-
growth might be modeled on a similar passage in Ennius.
mother-city Troy to turn destruction into a prelude for eventual victory, it is also possible on the other hand to see each victory at Rome as a prelude for eventual destruction. In this interpretation, the birth of Rome out of Troy’s ashes dooms Rome to a cycle of violence that forever replays its Trojan past or puts it in the position of Achaean victors who turn their own victories into defeat. Each of Rome’s successes, then, only sets up a new opportunity to ruin itself yet again, just as Paris’ self-indulgence and overconfidence ruined Troy at the very height of its glory. It is true that this point of view is not actually so different from stressing Rome’s propensity to turn defeat into success; it simply reverses the focus by dwelling on the recurring moments of defeat rather than the moments of success that follow and by imagining a cycle that spirals downward rather than upward.  

Ennius seems to embed this link between Rome’s Trojan origin and its cycles of growth and destruction directly into his narrative of the rape of Ilia. Aeneas’ daughter Ilia recounts a dream in Ennius’ first book in which a handsome stranger drags her away through a mysterious landscape: *Nam me visus homo pulcer per amoena salicta / et ripas raptare locosque novos* (Ann. 38-9 Sk.). The *homo pulcer* is certainly meant to be Mars, and the use of the verb *raptare* hints at the rape itself, which will result in Ilia’s pregnancy and the birth of the twins Romulus and Remus.  

In the dream, Mars soon disappears, leaving Ilia alone, lost, and unsteady. It is then that her father, Aeneas, addresses her: *o gnata, tibi sunt ante gerendae / aerumnae, post ex fluvio fortuna*

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75 The distinction I draw is similar to the distinction in Quint (1993) between repetition as reversal in Vergil’s *Aeneid* and repetition without progress in Lucan’s *De Bello Civili*.

76 For this sense of the word, see *OLD* s.v. *raptare*, #4 and Skutsch 1985: 198.
resistet (O daughter, first you must bear hardships, but, afterward, from out of a river, your fortune will rise again, Ann. 44-5 Sk.).

Aeneas’ promise that the fortunes of Ilia will rise again after a period of hardship mirrors the promise given to Trojan Rome as a whole by Jupiter in Naevius’ text. As Ilia is about to be thrown into the river, she despairs and prays to her grandmother Venus for help (te saneneta precor, Venus, te genetrix patris nostri, ut me de caelo visas, cognata, parumper, Ann. 58 Sk). It is likely that this prayer prompts Venus to respond with an echo of Aeneas’ words from the dream: Ilia, dia nepos, quas aerumnas tetulisti (Ann. 60 Sk.) We may suppose that Venus went on, as Aeneas did, to promise Ilia once again that her fortunes would rise again with her sons. The use of Ilia’s name here in Venus’ direct address strengthens the analogy that we can draw between her and the city of Troy (Ilium) itself. Like both her father and her father’s city, Ilia will find herself in danger, but that very danger allows her to bear a son who will not only found Rome but also join the gods in the heavens (Ann. 54 and 110 Sk.).

Still, the picture is not as entirely positive as it may seem, since the strife that occurs between the twins Romulus and Remus is not, so far as we can tell from fragments 1.xlvii-l, omitted from Ennius’ text. So the question remains as to whether the resilience of Ilia’s fortunes in the face of adversity is the boon we are promised or prelude to an even greater disaster. Later poets will capitalize on the double narratives of rise and fall that Troy’s fate predicts for Rome, invoking both the Ennian idea of a Rome fated always to rise from destruction, but simultaneously drawing attention to the corollary idea of a Rome fated to rise not from but toward destruction.
Ennius’ tragedy recounting the sack of Troy itself hints at this darker aspect of Rome’s Trojan ancestry in Andromache’s lament for fatherland and her father, Priam.

O pater, o patria, o Priami domus,
saeptum altisono cardine templum,
vidi ego te, adstante ope barbarica,
tectis caelatis laqueatis
auro ebore instructam regifice.

O Father, o fatherland: o house of Priam,
Temple closed tight with a deep-creaking hinge,
I have seen you with barbaric throng standing by,
fitted out regally with gold and ivory
and ceilings engraved and paneled. (Enn. Andr. 87-91, Jocelyn)

As Andromache mourns, she remembers the wealth that once distinguished her homeland and her father’s great hall. It once seemed impossible to Andromache that so flourishing a kingdom could ever fall, but it is now crumbling before her eyes. Yet, the audience at Rome is aware that it was just such extraordinary wealth and the pride that came with it that doomed Troy and turned it into a cautionary tale for the sudden reversals of fortune that await even the most prosperous people and nations. So even if Rome learned from its Trojan past to gain strength from its own setbacks, it is also in danger of repeating that very Trojan past if it gains too much strength, or, rather, strength of the wrong kind.

The question of whether Rome could be successful without veering toward Trojan excesses can be more pointedly framed in terms of the redefinition of East and West that occurs the night of Troy’s fall. Can Rome remain a Western power in its success, or might it begin to look once again like the Eastern dynasty it once was, a kingdom weakened from the inside by its own wealth? Ennius’ Andromache once again demonstrates rather strikingly this concern over the power of wealth and luxury to
destabilize and reverse cultural identities. Even as Andromache mourns her fatherland and father, she seems simultaneously to want to distance herself from the regal trappings she catalogues. D. Fowler’s (1990) analysis showed quite masterfully the problem of focalization at work when Trojan Andromache laments the loss of her father’s great hall with its *ope barbarica.* It might seem natural for a Western audience to see Eastern splendor as barbarian, but not so natural for Priam’s daughter to refer to her own father’s resources as *ops barbarica.* When the Western point of view of the actor so clearly shows through his Trojan character, we experience a metatheatrical moment that highlights the artificiality of the theatrical process.

Yet there is an even more troubling problem. Just as it is odd for Andromache to distance herself from the very father she mourns, it is also paradoxical for Romans to see Troy’s splendor as barbaric. Nevertheless, Priam’s great hall used to boast beautifully lacquered ceilings, golden ornamentation, and all the regal finery that would label it as foreign and Eastern. Troy’s enormous success and the resulting material wealth mark it out rather problematically as both Rome’s mother-city and the prime example of un-Roman decadence. The very night that Troy falls, the redefinition of East and West, success and failure, and Trojan and Roman begins, and while we have seen

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77 See the excellent discussion of the problem in Fowler 1990: 50-1. Fowler pinpointed the problem of focalization in Ennius’ original lines. Austin (1964) and (Jocelyn 1967) work to explain away the problem with parallels from Aesch. *Pers.* 254, Plaut. *Mil.* 211 (*poetae barbaro* for Naevius), and Cic. *Orat.* 160. Still, I agree with Fowler that the parallels adduced do not mitigate the incongruity of the moment where Andromache calls her father’s wealth “barbarian.” Vergil’s use of *barbarico* and *barbarica* at *Aen.* 2.504 and 8.685-8 must engage with the problems of focalization in the original Ennian passage. Fowler (51) concludes that Vergil’s use of *barbarus* and *superbus* for the Trojans may be a “sarcastic assumption of the Greek point of view.” I would add also that Vergil is drawing attention to the shifting conceptions that Romans had of their Trojan ancestors.
how these redefinitions and reversals can be used to help Rome to overcome the negative implications of Troy’s collapse, they also create an unavoidable paradox within Roman identity. The difficulty of navigating this paradox at Rome is neatly expressed in Andromache’s characterization of her own father’s wealth as foreign excess. The emphasis on wealth is on one level a way to express the magnitude of Andromache’s loss, but her startling use of the word *barbarica* reminds the audience that it was precisely this brand of un-Roman extravagance that led to Troy’s fall.

Just as Ennius’ Trojan-themed treatment of the Pyrrhic Wars established the enduring trope of Rome’s supernatural resilience, his depiction of Andromache similarly opens a path for future poets confronting Rome’s Trojan link to the dangers of Eastern opulence. Vergil in particular echoes these Ennian lines in the *Aeneid*, and it seems that he does so as a way of highlighting the difficulty of pinning down Roman identity and the effects of Rome’s success. Aeneas interrupts his narration of Troy’s final night with the lament: *o patria, o divum domus Ilium et incluta bello/ moenia Dardanidum* (o fatherland, o Ilium, home of the gods and Dardanus’ walls famed in war, *Aen. 2.241*). The echo of Ennius’s Andromache here primes the reader to recognize another allusion to the Ennian lament in Aeneas’ narration of Priam’s death:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{…vidi ipse furentem} \\
\text{caede Neoptoleum gemosque in limine Atridas,} \\
\text{vidi Hecubam centumque nurus Priamumque per aras} \\
\text{sanguine foedantem quos ipse sacraverat ignis.} \\
\text{quinquaginta illi thalami, spes tanta nepotum,} \\
\text{barbarico postes auro spoliisque superbi} \\
\text{procubuere…}
\end{align*}
\]

I myself saw Neoptolemus raging with slaughter and the twin sons of Atreus in the doorway, and I saw Hecuba and the hundred daughters and Priam amid the

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78 See Austin 1964 at *Aen. 2.241* and 2.499.
altars defiling with his blood the fires which he himself had consecrated, and those fifty chambers, such a great promise of grandchildren, and the doors proud with the spoils and barbaric gold fall… (Aen. 2.504-510)

Just as in the Ennian model, we have here a Trojan, though he will soon be Roman, lamenting the loss of his fatherland’s barbarico auro. It is possible to follow N. Horsfall (2008) in understanding barbarico auro as booty taken by Trojans from other barbarians; nevertheless, the reminiscence of Ennius’ original line makes the point that the reversal of East and West set in motion by the fall of Troy has already begun at that moment when Aeneas describes his ruined homeland as though he were already a Westerner. The tension in both Ennius’ original lines and Vergil’s echo points out rather uncomfortably that a Roman’s instinct is to view his own homeland as an example of the corrupting effect of Eastern decadence. While Rome, as we saw, prides itself in being able to grow from hardship and bounce back stronger from disaster, these lines on Troy’s fall emphasize the flip-side of the equation, that the success and plenty that unnerves Rome’s opponents in the East was once the undoing of Troy.

Later, in Aeneid 8.685, during the narration of the civil-war battle of Actium as depicted on the shield of Aeneas, Vergil again refers to this same Ennian speech and complicates the picture further. On Aeneas’ shield, Antony’s army at Actium, which famously enlisted Eastern military aid, is shown complete with its barbarica ope. Once again, Vergil capitalizes on the oddity of using the adjective barbarica in Ennius’ original lines. The use of this same phrase, barbarica ope, functions as an extradiegetic hint to the reader to look out for a replay of Andromache’s problems of focalization in the narrator’s description of the battle of Actium. If Antony’s forces are armed with barbarica ope, does that excuse Octavian’s civil-war victory because Antony had
ceased to be Roman, or does the echo of Andromache’s confusion only emphasize the artificiality of the rhetoric that painted Antony as foreign? The term “barbarica”, then, becomes especially problematic here because it redefines as a foreign conquest what is really a civil war between two Romans while also drawing attention to that redefinition. Vergil’s allusion to Ennius helps to show how the narrator’s assimilation of Antony with his Eastern allies mirrors Andromache’s portrayal of her own father as “other”. The word barbarica does not straightforwardly paint Antony as a non-Roman barbarian; the word also alludes to Priam’s death and therefore marks Antony out as a Trojan figure, one whose wealth and extravagance makes him uncomfortably Eastern, but inherently Roman just the same. When we remember that the description of Antony and his “barbarian” Eastern allies is meant to be engraved onto Aeneas’ shield, we find yet another layer of confusion. The dizzying result of Vergil’s adaptation of Ennius is that on the shield of an Eastern hero from Troy we find the story of how his Western descendants at Rome conquered Eastern troops that were, in fact, also Roman and Trojan.

Yet, although Ennius’ Andromache draws attention to the paradox of Rome’s role as foe of its own Phrygian heritage, this tricky ethnic mobility could also be seen as a great strength, which helps Romans to naturalize themselves to new settings and to position others usefully in relation to Rome. There seems especially to have been little

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79 Quint (1993: 23-31) shows well how the portrayal of Antony as a barbarian in the shield ecphrasis attempts to set up a binary opposition of Eastern and Western between two Romans and thus recast civil war as foreign conquest. Hardie (1986: 102-3) points out how casting the battle of Actium as a war between East and West turns the Roman civil war into a universal conflict approaching the level of the Gigantomachy.

80 Gurval (1998: 235-44) similarly reads the phrase barbarico auro as a way of linking both Antony and Augustus to the Trojan Aeneas.
difficulty in thrusting the Greeks into the role of dangerously wealthy Easterners that
the Trojans used to hold, especially because Rome’s Trojan foundation story allowed it
both to share in the most famous Mediterranean myth while also distancing itself from
Greece. Early Latin poets seem to have embraced the parts of Troy’s weakness that
they could spin positively for Rome, but those Trojan traits that could not be redefined
as beneficial for Rome were promptly thrust onto the Greek East. Troy’s fall brought
about the great *translatio imperii* that not only turned Eastern Trojans into Western
Romans but also flipped the Greeks into their own conception of an Eastern barbarian.\(^8^1\)
When Plautus’ Greek characters wish to accuse one another of dissolute behavior, they
use the verb *pergraecari* (to act like a Greek).\(^8^2\) Even Plautus’ Greeks, then, understand
that to “act like a Greek” at Rome carries the same negative connotations as the
*habrosune* of the Trojans once did in Athenian tragedy.

This reversal is reflected once again in the words of Ennius’ Andromache, not as
they appear in the tragedy by Ennius, but as they appear in a mock dirge in Plautus’
*Bacchides* 925-78. The wily slave, Chrysalus, is plotting to con his old master into
parting with 400 sesterces, but before he springs into action, he indulges in a long
soliloquy comparing himself to the Greek victors over Troy and his old master to Priam.

**CHRYSALUS**

\[\text{Atridae duo fratres cluent fecisse facinus maxumum, quom Priami patriam Pergamum divina moenitum manu armis, equis, exercitu atque eximiis bellatoribus mille cum numero navium decumo anno post subegerunt.}\]

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\(^8^1\) On *translatio imperii*, see Feeney 2007a: 82 and the helpful bibliography at 229 n. 118 and 236 n. 68. See also Habinek (2002: 54) on how Ovid moves his *Metamorphoses* from East to West, matching both Trojan Rome’s move West and epic’s transference to Rome. Momigliano (1987) details the way in which the succession of empires constitutes universal history.

\(^8^2\) Moore 1998: 55.
non pedibus termento fuit praeut ego erum expugnabo meum sine classe sineque exercitu et tanto numero militem. 930
nunc prius quam huc senex venit, libet lamentari dum exeat.
o Troia, o patria, o Pergamum, o Priame peristi senex,
qui misere male mulcabere quadringentis Philippis aureis.

The two brothers, the sons of Atreus, are reputed to have done the mightiest deed, when they subjugated Priam’s homeland, Pergamum, a city fortified by divine hand—this they did after ten years, with the help of weapons, horses, an army, and outstanding fighters, and with a thousand ships. This was nothing compared to how I will assail my master without a fleet, without an army, and without so many soldiers. Now, before the old man comes, I would like sing a lament while he emerges. O Troy, o fatherland, o Pergamum, o ancient Priam, you have perished, you who will be miserably and badly beaten out of four hundred gold coins. (Plaut. Bacch. 925-33)

Chrysalus extends his analogy further by comparing the wooden tablet he will use to deceive his master to the Trojan Horse and the letters of the message on the tablet to the Greek soldiers lying in wait within the horse. He claims that his previous lies to the old man are the equivalent of stealing the Palladium and slaying Troilus, and he explains that he will now kill the old Priam by causing his master to lose all four hundred sesterces.83

The Trojan metaphor at work here is actually another of the examples that Erskine adduces to show that the Romans could not at the time have identified strongly

83 Jocelyn (1969) offers a thorough treatment of the debate surrounding the monody’s authenticity. Jocelyn concludes that only lines 953-961 are truly necessary to the text, and would strike at least lines 931-52 and 962-977. Even if much of the soliloquy’s repetitive text ought to be excised, as Jocelyn suggests, the core idea of the Trojan comparison is certainly genuine. Jocelyn believes that the allusion to Ennius is an actor’s interpolation because he finds the switch in perspective too abrupt when Chrysalus alternately pities his Priam using Ennius’ famous lines and plots gleefully to bring him down (Jocelyn, 145). Yet, it does not seem entirely out of place for the conniving Chrysalus to indulge himself in a mock tragic dirge for his soon to be destroyed enemy, and I do not find the switch in perspective reason enough to excise the line. Either way, it seems clear that the actor playing Chrysalus made use of the Ennian allusion on stage, whether or not Plautus specifically intended it.
with the story of Troy. Erskine argues that the portrayal of a duped old man as Priam would be too uncomfortable for a Roman audience if their Trojan foundation story were already an important part of Roman identity. But there is no need to assume that Rome’s link to Troy would cause embarrassment to an audience watching this scene. On the contrary, identification with Troy only enhances the comedy of the scene, which hinges on the ridiculous inappropriateness of comparing the duped Greek senex and his wily slave to Homeric heroes. Shoehorning Ennius’ tragic lines into such an incompatible scenario is simply part of Chrysalus’ comically overblown rhetoric as he attempts to make his master into a Priam and himself into an Agamemnon. But the audience can clearly see that the rich old man losing a few hundred sesterces is no Priam, just as the slave joining forces with courtesans is no Agamemnon. Instead, Chrysalus appears as a rather ridiculous Graeculus assigning grandiose roles in a comic replay of the Trojan War. The inept comparison that Chrysalus draws between himself and the famous heroes of the past only drives home the point that the Greeks, once powerful enough to subdue Troy, were now relegated to playing the fool on a Roman stage.

One benefit of characterizing Greeks as Easterners was to strengthen Rome’s identification with its Western home in Italy. The more power Rome gained in Italy, the more there would be at stake in showing that the Trojan émigrés had been naturalized into the best incarnation of Italian identity. The identification of Rome with Italy would grow so strong that the Romans could begin to lay claim to the epithet Saturnian, the very epithet of the goddess, Saturnian Juno, who had once blocked their

path to Italy. Still, this annexation of the Italian identity was not without its hurdles. An important implication of the term Saturnian is the idea of a rustic golden age of agricultural plenty in which the modifier “golden” is metaphorical rather than literal.\(^{85}\) If we think of Troy as connected with the influx of foreign wealth from the East, then Saturnian Italy designates not only a pre-Trojan Italy but also a specifically anti-Trojan Italy before wealth gained such importance. A conflict emerges between a vision of Romans as inhabitants of Saturnian Italy who gained their strength from remaining so long uncorrupted by the simpering ways of the Greeks they mocked in comedies and the acknowledgement that the Romans were supposed themselves to have once been Eastern intruders into Italy, despite Saturnian Juno’s deep reservations.\(^{86}\) The challenge was to find ways of sanctioning Rome’s claim to Italy that made use of rather than conflicted with Rome’s Trojan ancestry.

In the fragments of Naevius and Ennius, we can already see hints of a tug of war over who can rightly claim the title “Saturnian” in Italy. This sometimes uneasy blend of Trojan and Saturnian reflects already in these early poets the tensions that led to the historical reality of the Social War as well as to Vergil’s later characterization of the

\(^{85}\) On gap between metaphorical and literal golden ages on the Capitoline, see Feeney 2007a: 134-6 and 163-6. On the Saturnian age as an agricultural golden age, see Varro *Rust.* 3.5, who says that farmers, who are pious and useful, are the only relics of the Saturnian age. See also Verg. *G.* 2.513-40, but Vergil also implies that the Saturnian Age was specifically an age without farming, before Jupiter brought about the need for labor (*G.* 1.118-46). On these contradictions in Vergil’s portrayal of primitivism, see Feeney 2007a: 114-5; Thomas 1988: 189-90 and 244-63. Whether the Saturnian Age is an age of rustic farmers or natural plenty, it is an idealized state that exists before the discovery of gold and the ensuing corruption.

\(^{86}\) Cato’s disdain for what he saw as the influence of wealth from the East is legendary: Polyb. 31.25. For the importance at Rome of a myth of purity from Greek influence, see, for example, Dench 2005: 61-9; Gruen 1992: 52-83; Wallace-Hadrill 2008: 24.
initial melding of Trojan and Latin as an anticipation of the Social War. As early as Livius Andronicus, Juno was referred to as Saturn’s daughter. Ennius likewise calls Juno by the name Saturnia: optima caelicolum, Saturnia, magna dearum (Ann. 445 Sk.). Yet, it is not only Juno who is designated as Saturnian. The inhabitants of Italy are in Naevius the Saturnium populum, and the land of Italy itself is in Ennius the Saturnia terra. The connection between Italy, Italians and Saturn is due to the supposed exile of Saturn by his son Jupiter, and the refuge he took in Latium. As Ennius famously puts it, Latium offered to Saturn a locum quo lateret. The ubiquity of the Saturnian epithet in early Latin poetry would pose less of a problem were it not for notices in Servius that Ennius narrated Juno’s pacification and change of heart as she began to favor the Romans she used to hate. Although we do not have Ennius’ exact text for this moment, we can imagine that he would have made much of the conflict between the goddess Saturnia and the new inhabitants of the Saturnian land.

One fragment of Naevius offers the tantalizing possibility that the two epithets might have been juxtaposed to make just this point. The fragment as we have it exclaims, Quianam saturnium populum pepulisti (why have you defeated the Saturnian

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87 The relationship of Trojans to early Latins in Vergil is in part a replay of Saturn’s arrival in Italy and in part a replay of Jupiter’s displacement of his father, Saturn. In the Aeneid, the Trojans (ab Jove, 7.219) displace the Latins, the Saturni gentem, just as Jupiter himself had replaced Saturn. At the same time, they are, like Saturn, finding refuge in Italy. See O’Hara 2007: 100-1; Thomas 1982b: 93-107 and 2004; Zetzel 1997: 190-1. Saturn himself can be seen as both a culture hero introducing civilization to Italy and a wild influence that predates true civilization: Wiseman 2004: 32-3.
88 sancta puer Saturni...regina: fr. 16 in Warmington 1967.
89 See Skutsch (1985: 205) for Saturnia in Ennius.
90 Enn. Euhemerus and Ov. Fast. 1.233-40
91 Ann. 291 Sk. and Serv. ad Aen. 1.281.
people)?

It is not a stretch to imagine that the incredulous question could be addressed to Juno herself as a way of pointing out the futility of the Saturnian goddess’ determination to obstruct the people who would later make strong the Saturnian land. As E. Courtney (2003: 3) explains in his commentary on the passage: “this would be plausible as an expostulation with a hostile deity… One might even guess that a fine point would be provided if that deity were Saturnia Juno.”

The play with the epithet Saturnian, then, seems both to emphasize the successful naturalization of Romans in Italy while also highlighting the difficulty of that very task. Once again, one of the challenges of positing a Trojan founder at Rome becomes a way of showcasing Roman ingenuity. That the Trojans who so angered Saturnian Juno could ever become Saturnian themselves serves as an endorsement of their particular talents at redefining themselves and their past to fit their environment. Not only was Rome forced from its Trojan beginnings to learn to thrive off defeat, but it also developed a particular political genius for absorbing and assimilating different and even clashing nationalities. Inherent in the myth of translatio imperii from Troy to Rome was the potential problem that the Romans were exiles in their own land, but, as early as Ennius, Rome’s clever management of its own position of outsider in Italy could be seen as yet another asset. The first men of Rome were Trojan exiles who settled at Latium, and the first Roman women were abducted from the neighboring peoples like the Sabines, with whom Rome would eventually negotiate a treaty and join

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92 Festus 340, 25. This is the only extant fragment of Naevius’ Satura.
93 Courtney further suggests that the fragment belongs in a fabula praetexta and that the “satura” transmitted as title was a mistake resulting from a scribe’s eye skipping forward to Satur-nium.
populations. These legends recounted by Ennius emphasize Rome’s ability to blend in and absorb others, and this emphasis is clearly rooted in the reality of the Republic, which made steps to incorporate the Italian League by 338 and, eventually, after the Social Wars of the 90’s, began to integrate “new men” from Italy into the elite at Rome.\textsuperscript{95} There were no original Romans, and Roman identity rested on citizenship rather than birth location. About his own Roman citizenship, Ennius wrote: nos sumus Romani qui fuimus ante Rudini (I, who was once Rudian, am now Roman, Ann. 525 Sk.). This line perfectly exemplifies the growth of Rome through conquest, annexation, and even the freeing of its slaves, who were granted citizenship unlike those at Athens.

An awareness of Rome’s necessary talent at turning themselves and others into Romans is continually expressed in subsequent Latin literature. Propertius 4.2 features Vertumnus, a god who has himself turned from Etruscan to Roman, and his very name exemplifies his translation to Rome. Like the ex-Rudinus Ennius and Propertius’ Vertumnus, all Romani had been something else before. But, once they became Roman and had naturalized themselves at Rome, the new identity was hard to shake. Livy’s speech of Camillus after the Gallic sack demonstrates the point that even though there were no original Romans, the physical city of Rome had become the permanent home of the exiles it welcomed.\textsuperscript{96} Camillus is speaking out against a motion to move the city of Rome to Veii after the Gallic sack. Even though Livy has explained to his reader that Numa invented many of Rome’s religious rites as a way to pacify the warlike early population, Camillus claims that Rome cannot be moved for its religious rites are tied to

\textsuperscript{95} Wallace-Hadrill 2008: 449.
\textsuperscript{96} Livy 5.50-5.
its very soil. Like Romans themselves, Rome’s religious rites have, over the course of Livy’s first five books, been naturalized into the landscape.

Ovid’s *Met.* 15.560-4 tells the remarkable story of Romulus’ spear, which, when struck into the dirt on the Palatine, grew into a tree rooted into the hill. Romulus’ spear, a dead piece of wood, was simultaneously brought back to life and naturalized on the Palatine, just as the Trojans wanderers would be reborn as Romans and naturalized in Italy. The spear, then, embodies Rome’s ability to revive after destruction and to naturalize alien components. The analogy continues as Ovid notes that Romulus’ spear could also be said to be returning home, since it had once been part of a tree on the Palatine. Similarly, Vergil had innovated an Italian connection for the Trojans’ ancestor Dardanus so that Aeneas could from a certain point of view also be seen as coming home.\(^97\) Ovid does not, however, allow this hopeful thought about Rome’s invincibility to stand completely unquestioned, because he has placed it just after Pythagoras explains the necessary rise and fall of nations (*Met.* 15.420-55). Troy serves as one of Pythagoras’ examples of a great city that was eventually to fall as all must at some point do. We are told that the fall of Troy will pave the way for Rome’s supremacy, but Ovid’s reader is left wondering whether Rome, this city that grows stronger from destruction, can really be an exception to the rule and escape the fate that awaits all great cities.

We have seen now Roman poetry began early on to reinterpret the story of Troy to its own advantage by forcing Greeks into their own stereotypes of Easterners and strengthening the new conception of victorious Trojan Westerners at Rome. But

\(^97\) Cairns 1989: ch. 5; Zetzel 1997: 190.
although Troy’s mobility was useful in achieving this revision, that same mobility always ensured that the revision was open to yet further modifications and reversals that threatened to toss the Romans back into the role of Eastern captives. Perhaps the most significant problem for accepting the Trojan foundation story at Rome, however, stems from Troy’s double role as the beginning of both history and poetry. Because history and poetry are coextensive at Troy, it is often hard to separate out cultural historical concerns from poetic ones. The result is that the role of Troy in negotiating Rome’s self-image often dovetails with its role in the development of Roman poetry.

We have seen already how Ennius and Plautus could use Troy’s double-edge both to show Rome’s strengths and to highlight the weaknesses of Greeks or Molossians. This ability to co-opt the mythical Greek victories against Troy can also be observed in the parallel story of poets at Rome confronting Greece’s established poetic success at telling these Trojan stories. We see Livius Andronicus using a native Latin meter, the Saturnian, to translate Homer’s *Odyssey* into Latin, and his address to the Latin *Camena* instead of the Greek Muses is similarly an attempt to make even a translation of the Greek poem somehow native to Italy. By contrast, Ennius wrote his *Annales* in Homeric hexameters, addressed the *Musae*, and claimed to be a reincarnation of Homer himself. Ennius’ fragments show that he presented himself as a civilizing force at Rome, correcting the rough attempts by his predecessors and introducing Rome to a form of poetic expression polished enough to match its burgeoning success. About Naevius, he writes: *scripsere alii rem / vorsibus quos olim Faunei vatesque canebat* (others have written of this in verses, which the Fauns and seers used to sing once upon a time, *Ann.* 206-7 Sk.). About his own efforts, he boasts:
Ennius’ confident assertions confront head on the question of whether Roman poets can ever compete with Homer, but an even bigger concern will arise later when poets begin to ask what is at stake if they were in fact to live up to the Greek standard.

We have observed how Ennius takes control of the Trojan myth to claim that Rome grows from its own failures. But we also saw the flipside of that argument: once Rome has reversed its underdog status, its very success may lead back to same failures it has overcome and to a replay of Troy’s fall. This dilemma inherent in Rome’s continued military and political success can also be framed as a poetic concern. The concern that we will face in later chapters is whether Rome’s poetic successes might simultaneously testify to Roman cultural success while also revealing a gradual loss of Roman identity.

After all, the father of hexameter epic at Rome, who worked to free the Romans from the difficult aspects of their Trojan past, was not just a *semigraecus* who spoke Greek as well as Latin but claimed to be a literal reincarnation of the Greek Homer himself. Even as they use the geographic and cultural reversals of the story of Troy to strengthen Roman identity as a Western power and to foist distasteful Trojan shortcomings onto the new Easterners, poets at Rome cannot ignore that all Trojan narratives derive from Homer and serve as a reminder of Greece’s cultural supremacy. Rome’s link to Troy, then, always has the potential to dilute the very expressions of cultural purity and strength that it helps to establish; while a link to Troy offers a way for Romans to claim non-Greek descent, it also ensures that poetry describing Rome’s origins will always be
recognizably Greek because it will be based on Homer’s Trojan myths and the poetic techniques developed to narrate those myths.

Conclusion

From Homer on, Troy has always been a bundle of narrative problems and competing focalizations. The subject matter itself of the Trojan War turns on examples of misdirection and faulty interpretation by both Greeks and Trojans. Both sides perpetrate and fall for intentionally misleading narratives, and the fall of Troy itself is due to the Trojans’ failure to see through the sham of the gift horse. But more significantly, we have seen how Troy’s fall was a cosmic peripeteia that brought about a new world order in the Mediterranean by sparking the reversal of Easterner and Westerner as well as the transition from the mythic Heroic to the historical Iron Age.\footnote{Feeney 2007a: 82-3, and 108; Heinze 1994 (orig.1903): 254-5; Porter 2004: 326-7.} When Troy falls, it is destroyed, but its destruction allows for the founding of Rome and effectively reverses the map of the Mediterranean. The former Easterners move West to Italy, leaving the formerly Western Greeks in the position of Easterners. Jerome’s Chronicle devotes a double-page spread to the words Troia Capta, showing quite strikingly the importance of that one night as both the beginning of Rome and also as the hinge between myth and relatable history. These competing perspectives on Troy only multiply at Rome by the second century, when Troy’s fall came to be linked to the beginnings of Rome.

Although there were many advantages in claiming a lineage from the premiere non-Greek Homeric heroes, the multiplicity of interpretations allowed by the story of
Troy could still be hard to control. We have traced in this chapter some of the different approaches developed early on to distill positive messages out of Rome’s Trojan myths. Yet, Troy’s inherent double-edge ensures that these same approaches also laid the groundwork for the veritable industry that would later grow around using Trojan myths to frame oblique criticisms of contemporary Rome. Ennius uses Rome’s Trojan inheritance to characterize Rome as a state whose birth out of destruction has given it both the ability to grow stronger from adversity and the flexibility to redefine cultural identities to fit changing circumstances. But this characterization of Rome is an emphatically positive reading of the Trojan foundation story, and it cannot fully eclipse the fear that Rome might instead be doomed to repeat the catastrophic end of its mother-city. Positioning Rome in terms of its Eastern, Trojan inheritance was a negotiation that could be slanted, on the one hand, to minimize the fear that Romans might repeat their Trojan past as passive, effeminate victims or, on the other hand, to cast any cultural and military accomplishment as a move closer to the success and luxury that ultimately corrupted Rome’s predecessor Troy and led to its notorious downfall. Moreover, Troy’s ambivalence made it possible for poets to endorse one image of Rome’s relationship with its Homeric predecessors while simultaneously drawing attention to the complications of their own characterization.

Already, then, we can see the seeds of the role that Troy will play in later Roman poetic narrative as a rhetorical tool that allows poets to discuss the bundle of problems linked to Rome’s poetic and cultural inheritances. Troy’s particular relevance at Rome combined with the multi-valence of the Trojan story made the myth a key tool for poets hashing out contradictory views on Roman identity and the relationship of
Rome and its poetry to the Homeric literary and mythical past. As early as the second century BC, speaking about Troy in poetry was a way of both manipulating Roman cultural identity and pointing out those manipulations at work. In subsequent chapters, we will see how Troy’s role as a rhetorical tool evolves to match different contexts as Roman poets continually redefine the original watershed moment at Troy to serve the ends and reflect the tenor of each succeeding moment of inflection at Rome.
Chapter 2

The Catullan Moment: Troy as Narrative Experiment

It may not seem at first glance that Troy plays a large role in the work of Catullus, a poet best known for his playful yet poignant expressions of love for his puella. Catullus occupies a space of great importance as our most complete representative of the emergence of an Alexandrian poetic aesthetic at Rome that favored shorter, intricately worked poems and turned away from the grandiosity of traditional epic. Still, although Catullus does avoid overtly treating Homeric themes, recent scholarship has emphasized that many of Catullus’ most beloved and studied poems either take place at Troy or center on Trojan myth. Poem 101 mourns the death of Catullus’ brother and specifically names Troy as the place where he died. Poem 68 not only refers again to the death of Catullus’ brother at Troy but also retells the myth of Protesilaus, who was the first Greek soldier to die at Troy. Poem 63 narrates the journey of the Greek youth Attis to the Trojan Mount Ida, where he castrates himself in a frenzy inspired by the Magna Mater, and the song of the Parcae in Poem 64 emphasizes the devastation that Achilles would soon wreak at Troy. As J. Ready has shown, even the wedding song of Poem 61 is framed by similes that follow the Trojan cycle from beginning to end. The song begins with a simile comparing the bride Junia to Venus as she appeared to the Phrygian Paris (61.16–19) and concludes in ring composition with a simile comparing the bride now to Penelope, and her son to

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Telemachus (61.221-23).\textsuperscript{100} While the centrality of Trojan myth to Catullus’ poems is increasingly acknowledged, it will be important to investigate how Catullus’ use of Troy fits in as part of a continuing story of Rome’s cultural relationship to its mother city and poetic relationship to Homer’s original subject matter. In Catullus’ poems, the Trojan landscape is more than simply a backdrop; we will see that Troy begins to function in Catullus as a self-referential symbol of narrative ambiguity and of the difficulty of interpreting any story, including the account of Rome’s foundation out of Troy.

In Chapter 1 we considered Troy’s ability to confuse geographical, cultural, and temporal boundaries, and here we will see Troy begin to confuse not only the boundaries of time and geography, but also those between life and death, masculine and feminine, known and unknown, home and away, and love and love’s consequences. The Trojan double edge, which we identified in the first chapter, takes on new significance in Catullus’ hands. The Trojan myth’s remarkable openness to not only different but opposing narrations, allows Catullus to use the story as a test-case for concerns about the power of focalization over any narrative. We have so far seen how easily Troy could be interpreted in a variety of ways, but, in this chapter, we will see how well Troy could be used to discuss and draw attention to these different ways of narrating. A more narratological focus will help us to see how the different meanings of the Trojan story can be played against each other to create tension between Catullus and his own narrative voice. We will investigate the emphasis on Troy’s reversals in Poems 63, 68, and 101, before seeing how these reversals inherent in Catullus’ Trojan

\textsuperscript{100} Ready 2004.
landscape find expression in the narrative paradoxes of his Poem 64 and come to a climax in that poem’s description of the simultaneously heroic and savage exploits of Achilles at Troy. As we will see, Catullus opens the way for later poets to capitalize on Troy’s narrative difficulty by showing (intentionally) how their narrators (unintentionally) misread and misrepresent Trojan stories. In other words, the extradiegetic author undercuts his speaking voice to point out his misreadings and misrepresentations. The gap between the point of view of the author and of his narrative voice is precisely what generates the confusions and multiple perspectives that crowd the Trojan narrative in Catullus 64, and later in Propertius’ Roman-themed poems, and in the Aeneid.

This chapter will begin with a short look at Hellenistic uses of Trojan myth before closing in on the role of Troy in the Catullan corpus as the ultimate problem of focalization. An awareness of narrative manipulation is not surprising to find in Catullus, since narratological experimentation is a hallmark of the Hellenistic writers whose poetic values Catullus followed. Even the choice of Troy as the subject matter through which to explore questions of narration is in line with Hellenistic models such as Theocritus and Callimachus. In Hellenistic poetry, telling Trojan myths from different perspectives had become a way of validating newer genres while preserving ties to traditional epic, and in the Catullan moment at Rome, Troy’s role as fulcrum between opposing meanings becomes its most defining quality and an example of the mobility of all narratives.

It will be important to keep in mind that, because of Rome’s relationship to Troy, drawing attention to the malleability of Trojan myth had more serious
implications for Catullus than for his Hellenistic models. Showing the impossibility of 
arriving at any secure reading of the Trojan myth necessarily meant showing how 
vulnerable Rome’s foundation myth could be to opposing readings. In the political 
climate of the 50’s BC, when Caesar linked himself with Aeneas and Pompey claimed 
to be a new Agamemnon, Trojan myth could be used, even in the hands of Catullus, to 
debate how and from what perspective Rome’s cultural narratives should be told. 
Turning Rome’s foundation myth, Troy, into a symbol of the power of focalization is, 
then, also a way of asking how such a fungible narrative can reliably shore up any 
Roman cultural narrative. This uncertainty about the reliability and authority of any 
interpretation of the Trojan story is key at a time when those looking back to Troy as a 
useful vantage point were not just poets and allied states but also individual Roman 
statesmen. When heroes from the Trojan cycle become roles for individual statesmen to 
play against each other, being aware of the power that perspective can have over two 
different narrations of the same story becomes crucial for those learning to sift through 
Troy’s uses as propaganda not just for Rome in relation to other cities but for different 
leaders within Rome itself.

_Hellenistic background_

In the previous chapter, we traced the shifting attitudes toward Trojan myth in 
Greek poetry from Homer through Euripides. This quick tour of the Greek archaic and 
classical tradition served as crucial background information for our investigation of 
Rome’s very first poets. It is, however, important to realize that around the same time 
as those first poets were writing at Rome in the third and second centuries BC,
Hellenistic poets at Alexandria were experimenting with a set of novel ways of telling stories and writing poetry. Hellenistic poetry is marked by an increased emphasis on everyday life, a taste for aetiological stories explaining the origins of particular rites or settlements, a increased self-consciousness regarding allusion to earlier poetry and mythological traditions, and a preference for shorter but more narratologically complex treatments of epic material. The literary tastes of the Hellenistic period played an increasingly important role in Roman poetry and served as the model for Catullus and many of the fellow poets mentioned in Catullus’ work. These mid first century Roman poets, whom Cicero famously referred to as *neoteroi* (*Att. 7.2.1*), particularly took to heart the ideals outlined in the prologue to Callimachus’ *Aetia*, a programmatic statement professing a hatred of the cyclic epics and praising the slender (*leptaleos*) and small (*oligos*) work of art.

Before we move on to look specifically at Catullus, it is worth pausing briefly to outline how Catullus’ Hellenistic models fit Trojan myth into their new literary aesthetic. Much research has been done on the transformation of Homeric subject matter in the Hellenistic period, with special emphasis on both Callimachus’ attitude

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101 Fantuzzi and Hunter (2005) is a treasure trove for those seeking recent work on Hellenistic literature. P. M. Fraser (1972: ch. 10), Hunter (2003), and Whitmarsh (2004: 122-138) are useful in describing the relationship of the library at Alexandria to the changes in Hellenistic literary aesthetic. Sistákou (2008) is particularly useful on Trojan themes in Hellenistic literature. On the Hellenistic interest in generic experimentation (W. Kroll’s *Kreuzung der Gattungen*), see Fantuzzi 2000; Harder, Regtuit, and Wakker 1998; Morrison 2007: 4-21. For the influence of Hellenistic literature on Roman poetry, see Hunter (2006), and Zetzel (1983b), and, for a focus on Catullus, see Harder 2005; Harrison 2005; Thomas 1982a; Zetzel 1983a. Cameron (1995) offers a masterful revaluation and overview of Callimachean aesthetics.
toward epic narrative and Apollonius’ innovations in epic technique. It seems that retelling the epic stories of Troy did not force Hellenistic poets into Homeric imitation, but became instead a way for these innovative poets to articulate and justify their turn away from traditional narratives of the epic cycle. E. Sistákou (2008: 16-7) offers a compelling analysis of the role of the Trojan myth in Hellenistic poetry, arguing that Troy’s role as epic subject matter par excellence allowed poets of this new literary culture of Alexandria to use Trojan myth to “express their thinking on the thematics and narrative techniques of epic poetry.” R. Hunter (2006: 3-6) explains very well that a key concern of Alexandrian poetry was how to blend the old Hellenic tradition with the new atmosphere of the Ptolemaic world following on the death of Alexander. While creating new ways of narrating and treating myth, Hellenistic poets nevertheless presented these innovations as continuations of a long tradition of Greek poetry. Narrating the myths of Troy, the premiere subject matter of both epic and tragedy, then, seem to have served as a crucial way to link poetic experiments back to the established literary past.

What we encounter in the poetry of Theocritus, Callimachus, and their contemporaries is a tendency to place Homeric characters in un-epic settings. Telling de-heroized versions of the familiar epic stories was a way of simultaneously marking out new genres while still linking these innovative narratives to a shared Hellenic tradition. Theocritus’ Cyclops, for instance, was memorably recast as a spurned lover in an idyllic pastoral setting, and references to the Trojan myth appear as a feature of

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low-class, colloquial speech in *Idyll* 15. In this urban mime, it is a festival day for Adonis, and in the crush of the crowd on the streets of Alexandria, Praxinoa and Gorgo ask an old woman coming in the opposite direction whether it is even possible to maneuver through the bustle toward Ptolemy’s palace. The old woman responds:

ἐς Τροίαν πειρώμενοι ἤνθων Ἀχαιοῖ, / κάλλισται παιδῶν· πείρᾳ θὴν πάντα τέλειται (by trying, the Achaeans got into Troy, my pretties; everything can be accomplished by trying, 61-2). This reference to Troy comes where we might least expect it, amidst a thronging city crowd so dense and uncouth that Praxinoa complains, “they are shoving like pigs (ὦθεὔνθ’ ὦσπερ ὢς, 72)” The use of Troy’s fall as part of a common proverb shows how Trojan myth can fit seamlessly into the every day speech heard on city streets. For Theocritus, it seems that referring to Troy in poetry no longer requires a traditionally epic or tragic style of narration.103

Poets including Callimachus, Lycophron, Nicander, Philitas, and Euphorion also reframed traditional mythological subjects in yet another Alexandrian innovation, an epic sub-genre now referred to as the *epyllion*.104 In these miniature epics, poets presented subject matter from the epic cycles in a much shorter form and preferred complex narratological structures.105 Lycophron’s *Alexandra*, for example, tells the

103 Sistákou 2008: 37 and 51-2.
104 See Sistákou (2008: 121-35) for the designation “para-Trojan epyllia”. For more on the concept of the epyllion, see Fantuzzi and Hunter 2005: 191-3; Morrison 2007: 6-7; Perrotta 1923.
105 Morrison (2007: 7-9) describes the Hellenistic phenomenon of “‘skewed’ narratives” or “unusual narrative emphasis”, in which the narrative’s main action is downplayed while peripheral details become instead the focus of the narrative. Morrison rightly emphasizes that this attraction to “skewed” narratives is an exaggeration but not necessarily a departure from archaic models, such as Pind. *Pyth.* 4. Still this twisted narrative, which is familiar from archaic lyric, is a departure from Homeric narrative, where chronology and spatial coherence are respected. Even when Homer’s main
story of Troy’s fall and the travels following its fall in under 1,500 lines, and these
myths are told as part of a prophecy reported to have been given by Cassandra before
Troy ever fell. The *Alexandra* also presented its narrative as an explanation of the
current world order and emphasized (1126-1450) how the Greek victory over Troy led
to a redefinition of East and West and the threat of vengeance against the Greek
conquerors. Some argue that the passages of the *Alexandra* that treat Rome’s new
supremacy (1226-80) are later interpolations, but the bulk of the poem does seem to be
a genuine composition by Lycophron in the mid third century BC. Yet, even if the
poem is a pseudepigraphic work falsely attributed to Lycophron, it is clearly written in
imitation of a Hellenistic *epyllion*. In these *epyllia*, the traditional Trojan myths were
told from a new perspective that played to the themes that we now recognize as
typically Alexandrian. Well-known myths were recast as love stories, as glimpses into
the everyday life of mythical figures, and as aetiologies for rituals, buildings, and
colonies.

The *Cypria* eclipsed the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as the preferred source for Trojan
material, and this choice to privilege the prequel to the Trojan War reflects the
Hellenistic obsession with aetiology and the first causes of the foundational myths of
the Mediterranean. Callimachus tells the story of the Greek forces held up by
unfavorable conditions at Aulis, but his angle into the story and his professed reason for
retelling it was to explain the presence of a statue of Athena at Teuthis in Arcadia (fr.

narrative is interrupted by flashbacks or recollections, the events proceed in a linear way
within each inserted tale. On Homeric epic’s “full presentation”, see Morrison 2007: 9.
Erskine (2001: 155-6) and S. West (1984) suggest that Lycophron is author of the
bulk of the *Alexandra*, even if some passages are later interpolations. For a second
For the *Cypria*’s popularity in Alexandria, see Sistákou 2007 and 2008: 62-72.
In this episode, then, the mustering of the Greek troops serves not as the main event but rather as the background against which to tell the tale of Athena intervening in a quarrel between the Arcadian king Teuthis and Agamemnon. Pausanias (8.28.4-6) later tells this story in full, but such a fight between an Arcadian Teuthis and Agamemnon is nowhere attested in the Homeric or cyclic tradition. Callimachus either invented a new story or revived an unpopular one to explain the aetiology of the statue of Athena and his choice to subordinate the well-known story of the delay at Aulis to this previously unknown tale shows how he subordinated the traditional Trojan narrative to his aetiological theme.

In general, Hellenistic literary tastes seem to have tended more toward teaching the first beginnings of myths than narrating the myths themselves. The most well-known epic of the Hellenistic period, Apollonius’ *Argonautica*, is yet another type of *aetia*, as it tells the story of the generation of heroes who fathered the heroes of the Trojan War. The voyage of the Argo is in many ways the prelude to Homer’s Trojan War, since, as Apollonius’ touching goodbye scene reminds us, the Argonaut Peleus was the father of Achilles. Moreover, Jason’s path-breaking expedition East through the Dardanelles set the stage for Paris’ later journey West and the dreadful consequences of that voyage. Apollonius’ epic, then, approaches Homeric themes

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108 Sistákou (2008: 76-7) is a helpful discussion of this fragment and, more generally, of Callimachus’ view of Trojan myth “through the prism of aetiology”.
109 It has become commonplace to describe a turn in Hellenistic literature away from Homeric epic and toward Hesiodic models, which focus on teaching aetiologies: Fantuzzi and Hunter 2005: 51-60; Reinsch-Werner 1976: 308-11; Sistákou 2008: 72-81. Still, it is important to keep in mind the cautionary words of Cameron 1995: 362-86; Morrison 2007: 10-11.
110 Sistákou 2008: 88-93.
111 Hdt. 1.1-5
from an aetiological slant that allows the poet to allude to Homeric material without repetition and perhaps more importantly, allows the poet to position his later epic as a necessary prelude to its own Homeric models.\textsuperscript{112}

Roman poets in the first century BC noticed and emulated the way in which the Hellenistic poets had opened out the Trojan myth, mixing colloquial touches with learned allusions. Unfortunately, very little besides Catullus’ poems remains from those he mentions as his contemporaries. We hear of poets such as C. Licinius Calvus, C. Helvius Cinna, P. Valerius Cato, M. Furius Bibaculus, and Q. Cornificius, but we have only scraps of their work.\textsuperscript{113} Laevius is another poet whose work only exists in fragments, and he is somewhat earlier than Catullus and his network, but we can already see the influence of Hellenistic poetics at Rome, and the following fragment shows the importance of Trojan myth to this shift in literary aesthetic. Laevius’ Hector adopts a rather unexpected tone when he speaks in iambic dimeters to a head-wreath woven by Andromache:

\begin{quote}
\textit{te Andromacha per ludum manu}
\textit{lascivola ac tenellula}
\textit{capiti meo, trepidans libens,}
\textit{insolita plexit munera.}
\end{quote}

Andromache in merriment, bashful and happy, with a playful and delicate little hand wove you for my head, an unaccustomed gift. (fr. 4 Courtney)\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{112} This move picks up on Homer’s own reference back to Argo as a predecessor as a famous subject for song: Od. 12.70.

\textsuperscript{113} For the debate over the self-presentation of the neoterics as a school, see Hinds 1998: 74-83. For the hypothesis that Parthenius was the conduit of Alexandrianism into Rome, see Clausen 1964b. Lightfoot (1999), however, shows the weaknesses of Clausen’s hypothesis in her edition of Parthenius and offers a good introduction on the neoterics.

\textsuperscript{114} Courtney 2003: 122.
The wreath is *insolita* because Hector’s head usually bears a helmet. On the one hand, the idea of Hector addressing himself to a wreath woven by his wife and employing doubly diminutive vocabulary like *tenellulus* is itself *insolita* because it is not what a reader of Homer might expect. On the other hand, this Hector is also familiar; Laevius has taken the glimpse of Hector’s domestic life that Homer offers in *Iliad 6* and extended it out to fit the Alexandrian focus on the everyday, non-heroic experiences of epic heroes.

In the Catullan moment of the middle 50’s B.C. at Rome, we see the uses of Trojan myth shifting once again. Trojan myth becomes more than a tool for recasting epic tales into complex or unexpected narratives in the Alexandrian style. Troy begins to function as a symbol for these experiments in narrative complexity and as the chief example of the fruitful ambiguity of all myths. In Chapter 1, we followed how Rome’s early poets used Troy’s mobility and double edge to enhance the positive associations of Rome’s Trojan prehistory and enact a reversal of Trojan/Roman victim and Greek victor. Rather than using Troy’s double edge to support any one narrative about Rome’s strength, however, Catullus draws attention directly to that double edge, emphasizing the contrasting interpretations that Trojan myth can support simultaneously. Catullus never forgets the twin importance of Troy as the foundational narrative of Rome and of Greek poetry, and the result is that Catullus’ interest in Trojan myth brings together Troy’s key role in the evolution of the Mediterranean and its importance for storytellers of the Mediterranean. We will see that Catullus appreciates the historical importance of Troy in shaping the cultural geography of the Mediterranean but pays equal attention to the role of Trojan myth in shaping and
exercising the narrative techniques of the poets in the Mediterranean. Catullus’ interest in Troy extends beyond its role in the story of Rome’s origin and encompasses also its role in the origin of storytelling and narrative. Trojan myth serves in Catullus as the prime example of the power of focalization to color all narratives, even those meant to guarantee Rome’s rise.

_Troy as fulcrum in Catullus 63, 68, and 101_

Variations of the word _Troia_ appear only eight times over the course of Catullus’ 113 poems, and these occurrences are concentrated in only three of these poems: 64, 65, and 68. One might, then, be tempted to dismiss the importance of Homer’s subject matter to Catullus, a lyric poet with a professed interest in the charming, little _nugae_ of love affairs and leisure time. Yet, even though the word _Troia_ does not appear more often, the specter of the Trojan myth nevertheless hovers over Catullus’ _corpus_ and plays an undeniably major role both in Catullus’ most obviously artful poems and in his seemingly personal poems. J. Zetzel (1982: 664-7) first argued that the role of Troy in Catullus deserves close attention. To Zetzel, Catullus seems to paint Troy as the “destruction of heroism” and of “domestic and married life.”

This negative view of Troy is certainly present in Catullus’ poems, but it is not the whole story. I argue in this chapter that Troy symbolizes not simply loss and destruction but more specifically the fulcrum upon which heroic tips into bestial and love becomes loss. The Trojan landscape becomes a narrative device that brings

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115 Erskine (2001: 34) uses the paucity of Catullus’ mentions of Troy to bolster his argument that Troy was less important than Romulus to Roman self-conception before Augustus.
opposites in contact with each other, showing how closely linked heroism and savagery
must necessarily be and drawing attention to the sorrow that comes as the flipside of
passionate love. Troy is simultaneously the high point and destruction of heroism, just
as it is simultaneously the backdrop for the first real romances and the consequences of
such passion. Again and again in Catullus’ poetry, Troy serves to blur the lines
between bestial and heroic, masculine and feminine, East and West, life and death, nota
and ignota, and national and personal in poem 68, where Troy is the sepulcrum of both
Catullus’ brother and the entirety of Europe and Asia.

We will first map out how Troy works as a fulcrum in the poems concerning
Attis and Catullus’ brother before moving to Troy’s role in the famous narrative
complications of Poem 64. We will be able, then, to ask what is at stake for Catullus in
emphasizing how the Trojan narrative pivots so easily between opposing extremes. The
ease with which Troy, the beginning of both heroic myth and Roman history, shifts to
fit entirely opposing readings, highlights the dependence of every story, even the stories
most important to Rome, on the power of focalization. Troy’s mobility becomes in
Catullus’ hands a tool not only to debate shifting cultural narratives in the
Mediterranean but also to highlight the mobility of the subject position in any narrative.

It may seem surprising to start our investigation of Troy in Catullus by looking
at the tale of Attis in Poem 63, where the city of Troy is never mentioned.
Nevertheless, the Trojan landscape’s role as fulcrum between two supposed opposites
plays a central role in Catullus’ Poem 63, which narrates an irreversible moment of
rupture and estrangement that takes place in the Troad. In the midst of religious fervor
inspired by the goddess Cybele, the Greek ephebe, Attis, travels to Phrygia where he
castrates himself and, in a moment of clarity, tells how he regrets his deed. Throughout the narration of Attis’ devotion to Cybele and his regret over his act of self-castration, the adjective Phrygius recurs as a refrain and Cybele is explicitly tied to the landscape of the Troad as mistress of Mount Dindymus and Ida. Of course, the adjective Phrygian is not the same as Trojan, because it is a much wider designation that refers to the rural and wild space in the Troad rather than to the city of Troy as delineated by its famous walls. Still, our analysis of Attis’ journey to the Troad will introduce key ideas that will recur throughout Catullus’ more explicitly Trojan-themed poems. The Troad is presented in Poem 63 as a landscape that meets visitors with a sense of displacement and alienation. Just as importantly, Poem 63 introduces how Catullus uses a personal voice to reflect on the feeling of displacement that the Troad engenders. While many of us associate Troy with an urban setting because so much of the Iliad takes place, by necessity, behind the walls of Troy, it is also true that many Trojan stories feature the wider landscape of Phrygia and Mt. Ida, which was the birthplace of Aeneas and the site of Paris’ fateful judgment. The tension that Poem 63 establishes between rural Phrygia and the urban life that Attis knew before his journey picks up on a dichotomy already established in Trojan myth between the nature of Phrygia and the culture of the city of Troy itself.\footnote{Hymn to Aph. 66-80 describes how Venus visited Anchises on Mt. Ida, the \textit{μητέρα θηρῶν}.

Attis’ moment of transition from male to female and from member of a community to outsider in a foreign land is emphatically centered in the Troad and occurs subsequent to his journey East from Greece to Troy. At the same time, while Attis finds himself alienated from his former life and body, this realization quickly
fades as he rejoins his community of *comites* worshipping in their new mistress’s native land. For Attis, his voyage to the Troad confuses not only the boundary between male and female but also his ability to differentiate between homeland and no-man’s land. Phrygia fosters at one moment a sense of belonging for Attis but at the next moment, a sense of alienation instead. This oscillation highlights the distance between *terra nota* and *ignota* while simultaneously drawing attention to the fuzziness of such seemingly straightforward distinctions. As we will see, this double-role of the Trojan landscape as both homeland and place of exile recurs with added importance in the poems 68 and 101, which narrate the death of Catullus’ brother in the *terra ignota* of the Troad.

Attis reverses the journey of Odysseus when he travels by ship from Greece to Troy and realizes that rather than coming home to his mistress Cybele, he has exiled himself forever from his own home and homeland in Greece. Poem 63 opens with Attis being carried over the seas in a similar journey East: *Super alta vectus Attis celeri rate maria.* Attis, under the influence of Cybele, undertakes his journey so that he can begin a new life in a new home with the goddess. When Attis lands in Phrygia, he is only more eager to reach the grove of the goddess, and he urges others to follow him:

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canere haec suis adorta est tremebunda *comitibus.*  
“agite ite ad alta, Gallae, Cybeles nemora *simul,*  
*simul* ite, Dindymenae dominae vaga pecora,  
aliena quae petentes velut *exules* loca  
sectam meam exsecutae duce me mihi *comites*  
rapidum salum tulistis truculentaque pelagi,  
et corpus evirastis Veneris nimio odio,  
hilarate erae citatis erroribus animum.  
mora tarda mente cedat: *simul* ite, sequimini  
Phrygiam ad domum Cybebes, Phrygia ad nemora deae”
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Trembling, s/he began to sing thus to her comrades. “Come on, Gallae, and go together to Cybele’s high forests, go together, wandering herd of the mistress of Dindymus, you who followed my path as my comrades, with me as leader, seeking foreign lands as
exiles, you who have borne the rapid ocean and the sea’s truculence and have 
unmanned your bodies out of sheer hatred for Venus, cheer your mistress with swift 
wanderings. Let slow delay quit your mind: Go together, follow to the Phrygian house 
of Cybele, to the Phrygian forests of the goddess. (Catull. 63.11-20)

When he addresses his followers as *exules* who followed him to seek a new 
home, the term “exile” sounds like a positive one, describing a necessary rupture with a 
previous life to allow for a new existence together as *comites* of Attis and as part of the 
goddess’ *cohors*. In seventeen lines (11-27), the word *comites* appears three times, and 
the adverb *simul* is repeated three times as well. There are few singular verbs in this 
section, but nearly every verb is plural, emphasizing the solidarity of the group of newly 
arrived Gallae (*agite, ite, sequimini*). Foregrounding this simultaneous group-activity is 
a way of emphasizing Attis’ feeling that he has not so much left a community behind as 
found a new and better family in Cybele’s home.

This initial sense of community, however, only heightens the poignancy of the 
moment when Attis wakes up alone to realize and regret his permanent isolation from 
his former life. Looking out over the ocean that he has just crossed, he mourns:

“patria o mei creatrix, patria o mea genetrix, 
ego quam miser relinquens, dominos ut erifugae 
 famuli solent, ad Idae tetuli nemora pedem, 
 ut aput nivem et ferarum gelida stabula forem 
et earum omnia adirem furibunda latibula, 
 ubinam aut quibus locis te positam, patria, reor?  

…
egone a mea remota haec ferar in nemora domo? 
patria, bonis, amicis, genitoribus abero? 
abero foro, palaestra, stadio et gyminasiis?  

…
egogymnasi fui flos, ego eram decus olei: 
mihi ianuae frequentes, mihi limina tepida, 
mihi floridis corollis redimita domus erat…”

Fatherland, my creator, fatherland that bore me, leaving you like runaway slaves leave 
their masters, wretched me, I have come to the woods of Ida to live among snow and
the frozen lairs of wild beasts and to visit in my madness all of their dens. Where or in what region do I think that you are, my fatherland?…Shall I be borne far off from my home into these woods? Shall I be absent from my fatherland, my belongings, my friends, and my parents? Shall I be away from the market, the wrestling-place, the stadium and the gymnasium?...I was the flower of the gymnasium, I was the pride of the wrestling-place: My doorways were crowded and my thresholds were warm, and my house was garlanded with flowery wreaths…

(Catull. 64.50-66)

The focus has shifted, now, from inclusion to an emphasis on separation and distance.

Attis at once realizes his mistake, which has isolated him forever from not only from his former male self but also from his patria. In this moment of clarity, Attis realizes that the *domum Cybebes* (20), which he was originally so anxious to reach, is no replacement for his own *domus* (66) in Greece. Attis’ self-imposed exile has forced him to trade his home’s *limina tepida* (65), crowded with suitors, for the *gelida stabula* (53) on Mt. Ida, and his actions have ensured that his alienation is permanent. In the Troad, Attis can no longer recognize himself, and his sense of belonging alternates between two different communities, depending on his mental state.

As Attis once again falls under the spell of Cybele and rejoins his companions in the wilderness, Catullus’ narrator closes the poem with a prayer to Cybele to stay far away from his own *domus*. It may well strike Catullus’ readers Cybele has quite literally already infiltrated Catullus’ *domus*, which the poet, though Transpadane, explicitly names as Rome in Poem 68. The cult of the Magna Mater was appropriated to Rome in 205/4 BC in answer to a Sibylline oracle promising that a foe on Italian soil could be repulsed if the Romans brought the Idaean Great Mother to

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Roman ambassadors, hoping to repulse Hannibal, traveled to Pessinus in Phrygia and there received from King Attalus of Pergamum the sacred stone symbolizing the Magna Mater’s divinity. This stone was transported by ship from Asia Minor to Italy, and Claudia Quinta was said to have pulled it into the center of Rome and thus proved her chastity as a proper Roman matron. The annual *Ludi Megalenses* were first held in 204 BC to commemorate the transfer of the Magna Mater onto Italian soil, and in 203 BC the oracle was vindicated when Hannibal left Italy and returned to defend Carthage.

As Wiseman (2004: 177), explains, however, the Magna Mater was not exactly as foreign an import as she might at first seem:

“The Mother herself was a good example of the way Roman culture still looked both ways. She brought with her an exotic cult of noisy processions and garishly dressed eunuch priests…But she was also a sort of ancestress. She was called the *Idaean* Mother after Mount Ida, the place where Aeneas was born and where he gathered the Trojan survivors before setting out to the West.”

Attis’ sea-voyage from West to East reverses the journey that his mistress Cybele will make from East to West, bringing with her ecstatic rituals that seem to signal at once a foreign threat to Rome’s Western identity and the rightful homecoming of Troy’s guardian Magna Mater to the center of Trojan Rome.

Catullus’ choice to tell this story of displacement through the eyes of Attis, is certainly an instance of a Roman poet using a Greek character to act out fears of cultural alienation. But it is true, too, that choosing Attis, the devotee of Cybele, recalls Rome’s own struggle to construct and maintain a Western identity while also claiming links to the history and cultic practices of the East. As Wiseman has pointed out, Romulus’

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own mother was traditionally named Rhea Silvia, and Rhea was an alternate name for the Magna Mater, and yet even when the Magna Mater’s advent to Rome was celebrated at the *ludi Megalenses*, much of the more ecstatic features of her cultic worship were censored to fit in more seamlessly with traditional Roman religious practice. Wiseman draws attention to the ambivalence in Roman attitudes toward Cybele, pointing out how Attis’ brand of worship, with its effeminate trappings and orgiastic mysteries, was rejected by the Roman public cult during the Republic but nevertheless thrived in and around Rome.\(^{119}\) Catullus’ Attis, a Greek, takes on these aspects of Magna Mater worship, which, though central to the cult as traditionally observed, were excised from public observance at Rome. Still, the Trojan setting of Attis’ original feminization reminds us of Rome’s ancestral link to the frenzies of Phrygia—frenzies which Romans of Catullus’ day would rather have considered un-Roman or even Hellenizing. Although Attis is Greek, it is his journey to Troy that unmans him, and it is this traditionally Phrygian aspect of the Magna Mater’s rites that the Roman public observance attempted to stifle.

Even though Catullus begs Cybele to keep her frenzy far from his own life, the poet is nevertheless touched by his own version of Attis’ Trojan alienation when he makes a similarly pivotal journey away from home. Much has been done to compare Attis and Catullus as feminine passive victim of his romance with Lesbia, but I would add that another link between Attis and Catullus can be found in their journeys to Troy and the contradictory mix of belonging and alienation that the Trojan landscape offers.

each of them.\textsuperscript{120} Attis’ poem begins as he is carried (\textit{vectus}, 63.1) by ship toward Troy, and the word \textit{vectus} recurs in the first line of Poem 101 to describe Catullus’ own journey over the sea to Troy when his brother has died there. Just as Attis’ Poem 63 did not specifically mention Troy, Poem 101, which famously narrates Catullus’ visit to his brother’s grave at Troy, does not ever mention Troy once by name. Still, Catullus seems to assume that readers will remember Troy from Poem 68 as his brother’s final resting place without any more explicit prompting than the poem’s opening allusion to Homer’s \textit{Odyssey}.\textsuperscript{121}

\begin{quote}
Multas per gentes et multa per aequora vectus
advenio has miseras, frater, ad inferias,
ut te postremo donarem munere mortis
et mutam nequiquam alloquerer cinerem,
quandoquidem fortuna mihi tete abstulit ipsum,
heu miser indigne frater adempite mihi.
\end{quote}

Carried through many countries and over many seas, brother, I have come to these sorrowful rites to present you with the last offering of death and to speak, though in vain, to your mute ashes, because fortune has stolen yourself away from me— alas, my wretched brother, stolen so cruelly from me. (\textit{Catull.} 101. 1-6)

As G. B. Conte memorably pointed out, the first line of 101 echoes the beginning of the \textit{Odyssey}, where Odysseus is said similarly to have wandered through many peoples and seas on his journey.\textsuperscript{122} This reminiscence of Homer has the effect of implicitly drawing a comparison between Catullus’ journey East to mourn his brother at Troy and Odysseus’ epic voyage West from Troy to his home in Ithaca. Against this implied Homeric background, Catullus’ travels begin to look like a confused reversal of

\textsuperscript{120} Forsyth 1976; Quinn 1972: 250-1; Skinner 1993.
\textsuperscript{121} See Fitzgerald (1995: 188-9) and Zetzel (1982: 664-6) on Catullus’ personal relationship with Troy, a place of national importance for Rome.
the Odyssean model. \textsuperscript{123} While Odysseus began as a foreigner at Troy and fought his way West to be reunited with his loved ones in his homeland, Catullus left his homeland in Italy to head East toward Troy, where he could only offer funeral sacrifices to his lost brother. Odysseus in the nekúia had spoken to shades from the Underworld (\textit{Od.} 11), but Catullus can only speak in vain to mute ashes (Catull. 101.4). \textsuperscript{124}

The motivation of Attis’ journey to Troy is quite different from Catullus’, because while Catullus traveled to this foreign land to say his final goodbye to his dead brother, Attis is on an ecstatic hunt for a new homeland in the wilderness of Mt. Ida. The journey of each, however, can be viewed from a competing perspective. Attis, as he realizes to his horror, is more alone than ever with his comites in this foreign land, and Catullus’ journey away from Rome and through so many peoples and over so many seas is much more of a homecoming than it originally seems, especially since the gentes and aequora are no longer unknown terrain as they were to Odysseus, but all part of a unifying Roman empire. \textsuperscript{125} Poem 63 and 101 center on the reversal of familiar and foreign, and the Trojan landscape comes to symbolizes the paradox of how one’s belonging to a community is felt most acutely when separated from that community. Attis’ journey to Troy cuts him off from his life at home irrevocably, as does the journey of Catullus’ brother to Troy in a reversal of Odysseus’ journey home from Troy. At the same time, Attis is emphatically part of a community as a devotee of Cybele, and Catullus’ brother is figuratively at the heart of Rome—at Troy.

\textsuperscript{123} Conte 1986: 32-4; Fitzgerald 1995: 188.
\textsuperscript{124} Feldherr 2000: 214-5.
\textsuperscript{125} Catullus in fact played an active part in that imperial development when he served in Bithynia for a year as part of the entourage of Memmius, and his visit to Troy was presumably made while he was already in the East on Roman business with the Roman praetor.
Poem 68, which also mourns Catullus’ brother, emphasizes even further the damage that a visit to the Troad can wreak on one’s internal compass and sense of belonging. As Dench (2005: 337) has written, Poem 68 “twists around the concept of nostoi, homecoming after the Trojan War” and confuses the “concept of home.” In Poem 68, Catullus weaves his laments for his brother into the narration of another Trojan tragedy, the story of Protesilaus. Before the Trojan War forced Protesilaus to leave, the newly married Greek youth was just beginning a life of domestic bliss. But, his and Laodamia’s domus had been “begun in vain” (domum inceptam frustra, 68.74-5) because the proper sacrifices were not carried out. Protesilaus was the first Greek soldier to disembark at Troy, but he was also the first to die, and, consequently, the first to be assured never to get home. Just as Catullus mourns the loss of his own domus (94), which he claims has been buried with his dead brother, Laodamia was forced to mourn the destruction of her household while her husband lies buried in Troy’s alien land. When Catullus recounts the death of Protesilaus at Troy, he seems to blend the Greek soldier’s death with his brother’s fate at Troy and once again regrets his brother’s far-away grave.

Troia (nefas) commune sepulcrum Asiae Europaeque, 90
Troia virum et virtutum omnium acerba cinis,
quaeetiam nostro letum miserabile fratri 95
attulit. ei misero frater adempte mihi,
ei misero fratri iucundum lumen ademptum,
tecum una totast nostra sepulta domus,
omnia tecum una perierunt gaudia nostra,
quae tuus in vita dulcis alebat amor.
quem nunc tam longe non inter nota sepulcra
nec prope cognatos compositum cineres,
sed Troia obscena, Troia infelice sepultum
detinet extremo terra aliena solo.
Troy (horror!), the common grave of Europe and Asia—Troy, the bitter tomb of
men and manly deeds—who also brought pitiable death to my brother. My
brother, alas, stolen away from me in my misery—dear light stolen from your
unhappy brother, my whole house is buried together with you, and together with
you have perished all of my joys, which your sweet love nurtured while you
were alive. You, whom a foreign land now holds in a remote place so far away,
not among known graves, and not laid to rest near kindred ashes, but buried at
hateful Troy, wretched Troy. (Catull. 68.89-100)

Catullus’ address to his brother emphasizes again and again the foreignness of
his Trojan gravesite, which is far away (longe), distant (extremo), alien (aliena), and
neither among familiar graves (non inter nota sepulcra) nor near kinsmen (nec prope
cognatos compositum cineres). This repeated stress on Troy’s lack of connection to
Rome attempts to drive home the point that Rome is as culturally and genealogically
distant as it is geographically distant from Troy. But, it cannot be denied, especially as
Caesar strengthened his ties to Venus and Trojan Aeneas, that Rome in fact traced its
own origins back to that very commune sepulcrum Asiae Europaeque (68.89). The
alienation that Catullus experiences at Troy, which is the motherland of Rome, only
emphasizes the feelings of rupture and isolation evoked by Poems 68 and 101. The
poet, standing in Troy, a landscape that had already for generations been closely linked
to Rome, has lost the capacity to recognize his own native land.

Although it may seem at first that Catullus is a stranger in the terra aliena
(68.100) of Troy as he visits his brother buried far away non inter nota sepulcra
(68.97), these two Roman brothers ought in fact to be far more at home at Troy than
Odysseus, since Troy was the homeland of Rome’s founder figure, Aeneas. So, instead
of simply retracing Odysseus’ journey from strange Troy back home, Catullus and his
brother travelled a perversely deconstructed version of that journey where homeland is
in fact *aliena terra* and *aliena terra* is the unrecognized homeland.\textsuperscript{126} In Catullus’ Roman Odyssey, Troy simultaneously plays the role of the alien land to be escaped and the homeland to be sought, even more strongly than it did for Attis, the Greek ephebe.

*Reappearances of Catullus’ brother*

Troy played a similar double role for Aeneas. Aeneas’ first *patria* was Troy, but the estrangement of that Trojan *patria* was necessary for Rome’s foundation and eventual success. Vergil and Ovid both allude to Catullus’ concern for his brother’s death in an alien land, and examining their echoes of Poems 68 and 101 will help us fill out our understanding of what is at stake for Catullus in emphasizing the specifically Trojan location of his brother’s tomb. We will uncover a complex web of allusions that tie Catullus’ brother to a group of famous Trojan heroes whose early deaths served as sacrifices to ensure the success of Rome’s foundation in Italy. Euryalus, Palinurus, and Remus all lost their lives during the escape from Troy and subsequent foundation of Rome, and the stories of each of these men are told in Vergil and Ovid using language reminiscent of Catullus’ brother. These allusions suggest that Vergil and Ovid may have read Catullus’ poems for his dead brother at Troy as a metaphor for the repeated need to reinforce Rome by sacrificing integral parts of its community. Catullus’ grief in Poems 68 and 101 is told in elegiac mode as a personal expression of sadness, and it is hard to tell how much Catullus intended for Troy’s national importance to Rome to color our interpretation of these poems. But, as Catullus repeatedly emphasizes the unfamiliarity of Troy’s landscape, readers might well react by remembering instead just

\textsuperscript{126} Fitzgerald (1995: 188) calls the voyage a “tragic parody of Odyssean homecoming.”
how familiar Troy once was for Rome’s progenitors and how the estrangement of Troy was a sad but necessary component of Rome’s foundation and eventual success.

Vergil points to Catullus’ paradoxical characterization of the Trojan landscape as alien repeatedly over the course of the Aeneid, a poem set at a time in which the aliena terra for the proto-Romans is not Troy but rather Italy itself. Dido pleads with Aeneas not to leave her, and as part of her strategy, she reminds Aeneas that he is not even returning home to Troy but rather seeking a foreign land in Italy:

*quid, si non arua aliena domosque
ignotas pateres, et Troia antiqua maneret,
Troia per undosum peteretur classibus aequor*

Even if you were not seeking foreign fields and unknown homes, and ancient Troy remained, would you sail to Troy through such a tempestuous waters? (Verg. Aen. 4.311-3)

M. C. J. Putnam has identified a link between Dido’s words here and the Trojan no-man’s land in Catullus 68, arguing that Dido’s Catullan echo works to emphasize Aeneas’ dislocation by reminding him simultaneously of the foreignness not only of his future Italian home but also of his former Trojan home, which is now nothing more than a gravesite. At the same time, however, Dido’s words unwittingly work against her because the echo of Catullus is misapplied just enough to show how completely Rome has grown into a homeland for Aeneas’ descendants. Dido does not realize that her application of the adjective aliena to Italy undermines her very point by reminding the reader that the Trojan survivors will find themselves so at home in Italy that a Roman poet will one day view Troy itself as aliena. Aeneas is fated to go to

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\(^{127}\) See also Ov. Met. 13.525-6, where Hecuba weeps that Polyxena will lie on foreign sands (peregrinae...harenae) instead of in an ancestral tomb (monumentis...avitis) because it is not Troy itself, but on the opposite shore.

\(^{128}\) Putnam 2007: 201.
Italy, and Dido’s protests only underline the necessity of the Trojans’ mission to found a new city in Latium.

The confusion between past and future homelands recurs again in Vergil’s narration of the story of the Trojan duo Nisus and Euryalus. The mother of Euryalus mourns the death of her son far from home, and, as R. Thomas notes, her words remind us once again of Catullus’ brother who died too early in a terra aliena. But Vergil’s story, happening as it does before Aeneas’ men have settled in Italy, necessarily reverses Catullus’ attitude toward Troy. Indeed, Italy is the foreign land for Euryalus’ mother, who still considers Troy her homeland. When she catches sight of her son’s severed head, she mourns not only for his death, but also for his death in a land so far from home.

heu, terra ignota canibus data praeda Latinis
alitibusque iaces! nec te tua funere mater
produxi pressive oculos aut vulnera lavi,
veste tegens tibi quam noctes festina diesque
urgebam, et tela curas solabar anilis.
quo sequar? aut quae nunc artus avulsae membra
et funus lacerum tellus habet? hoc mihi de te,
nate, refers? hoc sum terraque marique secuta?

“Alas, you lie in an unkown land, left as prey for the Latin dogs and birds! Nor have I, your mother, led you to burial or closed your eyes or bathed your wounds, covering you with the robe which I was working on for you so hurriedly day and night, soothing with the loom the cares of an old woman. Where shall I follow? Or what land now holds your torn limbs and mangled corpse? Is this all you bring back to me of yourself, my son? Was it this that I followed by land and sea?”

(Verg. Aen. 9.485-93)

Like Catullus, who traveled in Poem 101 through many peoples and over many seas, Euryalus’ mother followed her son over land and sea (terraque marique secuta). Her

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complaint that her son lies dead in a terra ignota combines Catullus’ phrases terra aliena and non inter nota sepulcra, both of which describe the location of his brother’s tomb at Troy. Euryalus’ mother, then, once again reverses the Catullan narrator’s conception of Italian homeland and Trojan no-man’s land, but this reversal gains even more force because the reader is aware that Euryalus’ daring expedition is in part responsible for the ensuing geographic reversals that make the Italian West into a home for the formerly Eastern Trojans. In other words, while Euryalus’ mother mourns his death in an alien land, it is the death of a hero like Euryalus that has the power to transform an alien land into a homeland.

The power of Euryalus’ death is further characterized by Vergil’s choice to paint him also as a Remus figure. Before the Latin Volcens slays Euryalus, he exclaims: tu tamen interea calido mihi sanguine poenas / persolues amborum (you, meanwhile, will pay me recompense for both with your hot blood, Aen. 9.422-3). Volcens’ threat against Euryalus is famously modeled on an earlier threat familiar from Ennius’ telling of the moment when Romulus killed his twin brother Remus. Macrobius and Servius Auctus report that Ennius’ original line read: nam mi calido dabis sanguine poenas (for you will pay me recompense with your hot blood, Ann. 95 Sk.).\textsuperscript{130} The assumption is that Ennius had Romulus punish his twin with death for somehow mocking the newly founded city of Rome as it was being built.

In the following chapter we will explore more fully the multitude of ways to interpret and spin Romulus’ murder of Remus, but it is worth pausing here to note how Vergil’s web of allusions connecting the death of Catullus’ brother at Troy, Euryalus’

\footnote{130 Macrobr. Sat. vi.1.15.}
death in Italy, and Remus’ death at Rome draws a tight connection between Rome’s Trojan origins and its foundation story of fratricide. The death of Remus at the hands of his brother fits into a pattern of Roman foundational sacrifices that can be traced back to Troy’s fall, which first paved the way for Rome. In Vergil’s narration, the Trojan Euryalus’ death was also among those sacrifices needed to secure Rome’s place in Italy.

One might argue that, while Euryalus is clearly linked to Romulus through the Ennian intertext, the speech of Euryalus’ mother is not clearly meant to refer back to Catullus’ regret over his brother’s foreign tomb. Catullus’ journey over Eastern lands and seas to weep at the tomb of his Roman brother who died young in Troy’s alien land is, however, neatly inverted by Euryalus’ mother’s wish that she had not journeyed over Western lands and seas only to weep when her Trojan son died young in Latium’s alien land, far away from his ancestral tomb. This inversion, coupled with the verbal echoes of terra ignota and terraque marique secuta that reach back to Catullus 68 and 101, suggests a reading of Catullus’ brother’s death as a personalized, elegiac expression of the series of Trojan and early Roman victims whose sacrifices underlie Rome’s foundation. Like Catullus’ brother, these victims making way for Rome were not outsiders or enemies but rather family members or at least members of Rome’s community. Euryalus, as a Trojan killed by Latins, was both a proto-Roman and the victim of proto-Romans. Since the Latins were eventually to join with the Trojans to form the Roman race, the initial battle between Latins and Trojans has been read as a proleptic civil war between the twin Eastern and Western halves of Roman identity. The murder of Remus by his twin brother Romulus during Rome’s foundation once again reflects this ongoing conflict between Rome’s twin halves.
Reading Catullus’ Poems 101 and 68 as an expression of the sacrificial doublets underlying Rome’s success is even more explicitly suggested in Ovid’s *Fasti*, where Romulus’ mourning for his brother Remus’ death takes the form of Catullus’ lament for his brother’s death at Troy. Although Ovid’s Romulus in *Fasti* 4 speaks his traditional, remorseless quip, *(sic…meos muros transeat hostis, 4.848)*, we later see that he has been covering up his inner grief at his brother’s death. Romulus finally reveals his feelings at his brother’s funeral, and he uses Catullus’ words:

\[
\text{dat tamen exsequias nec iam suspendere fletum sustinet, et pietas dissimulata patet;}
\text{osculaque applicuit posito supra feretro atque ai t “invito frater adempte, vale!”}
\]

Yet, he granted funeral honors and nor could he now keep from crying, and the loyalty that he had hidden was now clear to see; and he pressed final kisses on the bier when they had put it down, and he said: “O, brother, snatched from your unwilling brother, farewell! (Ov. Fast. 4.849-52)

As S. Hinds has pointed out, Romulus’ words here blend Catull. 68’s refrain (*miser frater adempte mihi, 68.20 and 92*) with the final words of Catull. 101 (*frater, ave atque vale*).131 The use of Catullan language here works to bring out a sense of lyrical emotion that Ovid’s readers might not have initially associated with the fratricidal Romulus. The disconnect between these echoes of Catullus’ lament for his brother and Romulus’ usual resolve helps to make Ovid’s lines into a behind-the-scenes look at the personal sacrifices and emotional control needed to lead a state. It is not that Romulus lacks sensitivity but rather that he is determined at all cost to ensure that his personal feelings of loss do not endanger the stability of Rome. It is certainly also possible that we are meant to read Romulus’ Catullan lament as a show of crocodile tears, especially

since Quirinus himself is telling this portion of his own tale in the *Fasti.*\(^{132}\) Yet, whatever role we assign to Romulus’ Catullan echoes in the *Fasti,* it is clear that the allusion also works retroactively to affect not simply our reading of the *Fasti* but also our rereading of the Catullan original as well. Ovid’s choice to infuse the story of Remus’ death with Catullus’ grief reflects back to portray Catullus’ lost brother as a symbol of the personal sacrifice required by Rome.

We should not, however, lose sight of Troy’s importance here. For it is the location of the death of Catullus’ brother at Troy that makes possible this growing web of associations between Remus, Catullus’ brother, and Rome’s own twin, Troy. Remus, the weaker twin, ceded to his more powerful twin Romulus just as Troy’s demise allowed for the emergence of a stronger city, Rome. The combination of Catullus’ laments for his brother’s Trojan tomb and Romulus’ reaction to the loss of his brother during Rome’s foundation reminds us that Remus, like Troy, can be interpreted as a necessary foundational sacrifice for Rome.\(^{133}\) Catullus’ brother functions as an embodiment of the figures, such as Remus and Troy, whose demise allowed for the creation and assumption of Roman identity.

Using the death of an individual to replay the loss of Troy is not, in fact, uncommon in Roman poetry. In particular, we might think back to the deaths of Palinurus and Deiphobus as recalled in *Aeneid* 6, where Vergil implies that their deaths too were necessary sacrifices for the future of Rome.\(^{134}\) Vergil’s description of Deiphobus’ mutilated and barely recognizable face makes clear that he is a stand-in for

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the sacked city of Troy in which he died. In a striking metaphor, Deiphobus’ temples are literally “despoiled (populata)” of their ears as a city might be despoiled of its turrets. As Aeneas speaks to the shade of Deiphobus, he lingers and the Sibyl chides him for wasting the night in weeping. Deiphobus’ response then effectively ends their conversation: discedam, explebo numerum reddarque tenebris. / i decus, i, nostrum; melioribus utere fatis (I will go, and I will fill out the number of shades and return to the shadows. Go, glory of our homeland, go, and find better fortunes, Aen. 6.546-7).

This talk of completing a quota of the dead suggests that Deiphobus is not only a metaphor for the spoiled city of Troy but also a substitute for Aeneas in the Underworld. Because Deiphobus had died and willingly returned himself to the shadows of the Underworld, Aeneas could continue on his voyage to found a more successful city to replace Troy.¹³⁵

Palinurus, as Aeneas’ helmsman, also acts in his death as a substitute for Aeneas, who will take up his position at the helm only after his substitute Palinurus has been killed. It is clear that as much as the deaths of Deiphobus and Palinurus replay how Troy’s fall made way for Rome, they also foreshadow how Remus’ death will allow for Romulus’ uncontested power. About Palinurus, Aeneas’ helmsman, P. Hardie (1993: 33) explains, “Palinurus himself functions as a kind of twin of Aeneas; his death is a substitute for the latter’s death and precondition for his fated success (as the success of Romulus arose out of the death of his twin).”¹³⁶ Phoebus had warned that one man would be sacrificed in place of many men as the Trojans reached Italy (unus erit tantum amissum quem gurgite quaeres; / unum pro multis dabitur caput, Aen. 5.814-5). Once

¹³⁵ For more on Deiphobus, see Bleisch 1999.
¹³⁶ See also Nicoll 1988.
it becomes clear that the helmsman Palinurus has fulfilled this role, Aeneas can take control of his own ship, steering it himself to harbor in Italy. Palinurus’ death is, then, a sacrifice for the successful arrival of Aeneas and the rest of the Trojans in Italy, and, in death, Palinurus acts as a surrogate for Aeneas, ensuring that the hero can continue leading the Trojans to their new home in Italy. Once again, we hear a lament that a Trojan man lies dead in the unknown, foreign land of Italy (\textit{ignota harena}, \textit{Aen}. 5.871), and once again, we understand that it is the deaths of these sacrificial figures that allowed the transformation of what was originally an unknown land into a homeland for the rest of the Trojan survivors.

The process of transforming a land from \textit{ignota} into \textit{nota}, as we have seen, requires loss, and, at Rome, these losses include not only Troy, but also sacrificial figures such as Hector, Priam, Anchises, Creusa, Palinurus, Deiphobus, Nisus and Euryalus, and Remus. Following references to Catullus’ brother out into the poetry of Vergil and Ovid has shown that these later poets saw a link between Catullus’ laments for his brother on Troy’s foreign shores and the foundational sacrifices of Aeneas’ men and Remus in the foreign lands of Italy and recently founded Rome.

Vergil and Ovid’s understanding of Catullus’ brother actually picks up on an indication in Catullus’ text itself that presents the brother as a prototype for Trojan sacrifices. As we remember that Neptune prophesied the necessary sacrifice of one Trojan to ensure the safe arrival of the rest of Aeneas’ band, we are reminded also of another piece of Catullus 68, the story of Protesilaus. Already in the first century CE Pausanias knew that there had been an oracle stipulating that although the Greeks would ultimately sack Troy, the first Greek man to disembark at Troy would die. The same
oracle had likely appeared already in Euripides’ version of the story of Protesilaus.\textsuperscript{137} This man who first dared to disembark and therefore sacrifice his life to ensure the victory of Greece over Troy was Protesilaus.\textsuperscript{138} It is, we must remember, against the background of this story in Poem 68 that Catullus grieves for his brother’s Trojan funeral. Since the sacrifice of Protesilaus was necessary to fulfill the oracle promising Greece’s success, Catullus’ choice to embed his address to his dead brother into the tale of Protesilaus lends support to our interpretation of the brother as a symbol for foundational sacrifices at Rome.

Rome was mythically composed of men and women who had been exiled or taken from their previous homelands, and continued to grow in historical time from conquest and absorption. Catullus’ loss of his brother at Troy can, then, be said to mirror not simply the sacrifice of Troy for the foundation of Rome but also the rupture with the past that every Roman ancestral line would have to make before adopting Rome as a new homeland. It is well known that Catullus was a Transpadane who specifically emphasized how uncomfortable he was in imagining anywhere but Rome as his home. Though raised in Verona, Catullus calls Rome his \textit{domus} and his \textit{sedes}.\textsuperscript{139} He professes his preference for Rome over the provinces and prizes Rome’s urban charm while shrinking from any vestige of rustic manners from the country. Catullus would have been keenly aware of Rome’s power to graft an opportunistic new identity onto any cultural background.

\textsuperscript{137} For the prophecy, see Nauck \textit{TGF} (1964: 563), where it is suggested that Paus. 4.2.5 is modeled on Euripides’ \textit{Protesilaus}. The story appears also in Hyg. \textit{Fab.} 103. For more information, see Davies 1989: 47; Lyne 1998: 201-2.


Romans turned the *terra ignota* of Italy into a homeland only at the expense of alienating their Trojan homeland, and Rome’s growth from its constant absorption of new communities ensured that similar personal sacrifices would always be necessary among Romans. Catullus’ Troy represents the bridge between life and death, East and West, and *nota* and *ignota*, and we have seen that Catullus’ successors also saw in his portrayal of Troy the simultaneous representation of Rome’s greatest strengths and weaknesses. Catullus’ treatment of Troy, then, avoids presenting its landscape as a decidedly positive or negative place or its fall as the result of either heroism or savagery. Instead, Troy in Catullus is in essence a landscape that can sustain competing narratives and perspectives, and Troy’s relationship to Rome ensures that Catullus’ insistence on Troy’s narrative flexibility also amounts to his questioning any fixed interpretation of Rome’s cultural narratives.

*Private suffering at Troy*

In Poem 63, Catullus summed up Troy’s ability to confuse boundaries in the arresting physical image of Attis’ castration. In Poem 101, Troy’s role as fulcrum between opposites reappears in the poem’s final phrase. The phrase *ave atque vale* enacts quite vividly the gap between life and death, which ensures that although one can touch the very ashes of a dead loved one, there can be no actual contact.\(^{140}\) This paradox compressed in Catullus’ *ave atque vale* to his brother also applies more generally to the theme of Troy, which, as we have seen, functioned as a universal tipping point between beginnings and endings. As we conclude our overview of how

\(^{140}\) Fitzgerald 1995: 188.
Catullus plays up Troy’s flexibility, we must pause to appreciate one more ambiguity that links Catullus’ Trojan stories in Poems 63, 68, and 101. Troy, in Catullus, is often a place of private suffering.\textsuperscript{141} Attis’ monologue speaks of his personal sorrow for leaving behind his previous life as flower of the gymnasium. Catullus does curse Troy as the common sepulcher of Europe and Asia: \textit{Troia (nefas) commune sepulcrum Asiae Europaeque,/ Troia virum et virtutum omnium acerba cinis...} (Troy—horror!—the common grave of Europe and Asia, Troy, the bitter tomb of men and manly deeds, Catull. 68.89-90). But, in the following couplet, he immediately moves from this global point of view to an intensely personal expression of grief for his brother:

\begin{quote}
quia etiam nostro letum miserabile fratri attulit. ei miser frater adempte mihi,
ei miser fratri iucundum lumen ademptum,
tecum una totast nostra sepulta domus,
omnia tecum una perierunt gaudia nostra,
quae tuus in vita dulcis alebat amor.
\end{quote}

[Troy], you who also brought pitiable death to my brother. My brother, alas, stolen away from me in my misery—dear light stolen from your unhappy brother, my whole house is buried together with you, and together with you have perished all of my joys, which your sweet love nurtured while you were alive. (Catull. 68.91-96)

The death of Catullus’ brother at Troy is a personal loss for Catullus and his family, and even the death of Protesilaus that frames his lament is told from the point of view of Laodamia’s shattered domestic life rather than from the nationalistic point of view of his role in securing Greece’s victory. The death of Catullus’ brother, however, in that global burial ground of Troy does allow Catullus to show how neatly Troy bridges the divide between personal and national suffering. We have seen Vergil and Ovid both read back into Catullus’ private mourning for his brother a generalized

\textsuperscript{141} Putnam 2007: 198-9.
comment on the sacrifices underlying Roman national identity, but Catullus does not, in fact, write explicitly about Rome’s relationship to Troy.

Part of Catullus’ genius in his treatment of Troy is how he is able to frame his Trojan-themed narratives as experiences of personal loss without denying the universal importance of Troy’s story in the Mediterranean world. In the Hellenistic poetry that served as a model for Catullus, the epic pedigree of Troy’s story had made it an attractive theme for experiments in poetic genre, and a poet’s approach to Trojan myth continued in Roman elegy to play a key role signaling generic affiliation. The elegists’ trick was to refuse to tell Homer’s Trojan stories, while still drafting the very same heroes into an elegiac world where love replaces war, where, as Propertius says, battles are fought on a bed rather than a battlefield (*nos contra angusto versamus proelia lecto*, Prop. 2.1.45). We can take Horace’s treatment of Achilles as an example: Achilles appears as a cross-dressed boy in *Carm. 1.8*, a lover in *Carm. 2.4*, and as a poet in *Epod. 13* and *14*. In *Carm. 4.6*, Horace even seems to claim martial power over Achilles, when he stresses that the god (Apollo) who inspires his lyric poetry is the very same god who conquered Achilles.¹⁴²

There is even more at stake, however, in a lyric or elegiac poet’s approach to the story of Troy than an attempt at generic delineation. The approach of non-epic genres to Troy becomes also a way of discussing what perspective we should use to tell the story of Troy. The story of Troy is both world-historical and individual, because, while the *Iliad* is the story of the war between east and west, it is also the personal story of Achilles. We have seen how Catullus, an important precursor to Roman elegy,

¹⁴² Hor. *Carm. 1.6, 1.7, 2.1, and 2.12; Ov. *Am. 1.1, 2.1, and 3.12; Prop. 2.1;* Verg. *Ecl. 6* are other typical examples of *recusatio*. 
vacillates between these two extremes. On the one hand, he calls Troy the communal
grave of Europe and Asia and emphasizes its universal effect. On the other hand,
Catullus works to turn Troy into a landscape of subjective and personal meaning, where
he mourns the death of his brother, and where Attis mourns his lost self in soliloquy.
Catullus’ depiction of suffering at Troy makes Troy into a place that bridges public and
private experience and that can even transform personal sacrifice into public benefit.
This effort toward the personalization of Rome’s national Trojan heritage is specifically
effective in the first century BC, when Troy was coming into its own as a tool of
political propaganda, first for Julius Caesar and, later, for his adopted son Augustus, as
we can see from Augustus’ self-presentation, his forum, and the Aeneid. In a historical
context which was now more than ever placing Troy front and center as a claim to
political authority, there is even more at stake than a generic battle between epic and
elegy in this trend to represent Troy’s fall as an event that could be viewed from a
subjective, personal perspective as well as from a nationalistic perspective.

*Competing perspectives on Troy in Catullus 64: Which ship sacked Troy?*

We can now turn to Catullus 64, Catullus’ notoriously complex epyllion, which
tells the interconnected stories of the Argo’s sailing, the wedding of Peleus and Thetis,
and the birth of Achilles, the destroyer of Troy. In this section, we will confront the
narratological complexities of Poem 64 and, at the same time, show how these
confusions can be read as meditations on Troy’s goldmine of paradoxical and
conflicting interpretations. We will start by looking ahead to the later Roman poets
whose references back to the epyllion help us see how it twists around the Trojan War
and the breaches of natural order that paved the way for that war. Later poets seem to take for granted a causal link between the Argo’s initial transgression as first ship and the fateful sailing of Paris’ ship; Ovid, Seneca, Statius, and Valerius Flaccus all characterize Paris’ ship as a second Argo. Once we have traced the *topos* of blaming the Argo for Troy’s eventual fall, we will be able to return to Catullus to see that it was Poem 64 that inaugurated this Herodotean view of the Argo as true beginning of the Trojan War. In particular, Statius’ *Achilleid* will serve as a guide for us here. Statius’ allusions to Poem 64 highlight how Catullus originally worked to portray the Argo as the beginning of the chain of sea voyages between East and West that led to the Trojan War.

Identifying Catullus’ link between the Argo and the Trojan War will lead us toward a new interpretation of Poem 64 as an aetiology of the Trojan War. This approach will also help make sense of Poem 64’s concluding portrait of Achilles by locating Troy as the center of the poem’s pervasive narrative anxiety. Poem 64’s notorious narrative problems can, as a whole, be read as a reflection of its Trojan subject matter. The competing perspectives of Catullus’ poem draw attention to the subjective lenses that we use to understand such cultural watershed events as Troy’s fall. As we have seen, the story of Troy could be read at Rome through several different lenses—from Homer’s Hellenizing point of view, from a Trojan point of view, from the point of view of newly Western Romans, and from both a national and an intensely personal point of view. These competing levels of focalization allow Catullus to use the story of Troy to reflect on the most troubling hermeneutic questions: how are
we to interpret events we have witnessed? How are we to then narrate these events? How are we to interpret the narrations that we hear from others?

We can begin by seeing how Statius models his portrayal of Paris’ ship, which began the Trojan War, on Catullus’ portrayal of the Argo, the first ship. The connections that we uncover between these two sea voyages will be useful in highlighting the importance of Troy in Catullus 64. It will come as no surprise that Catullus’ epyllion had a substantial influence on Statius’ unfinished epic, the *Achilleid*. Several times, Statius lifts entire lines from Catullus 64. We might compare, for instance, *inrita ventosae rapiebant verba procellae* (*Achil.* 1.960) with *irrita ventosae linquens promissa procellae* (Catull. 64.59), where the same windy storm seems to take away both Deidamia’s empty words in Statius and Theseus’ empty promises in Catullus. The focus of our discussion here, however, will be on the opening of the *Achilleid*, when Thetis watches Paris’ ship return to Troy, bringing with it Helen and the Trojan War. It is at this moment that Statius’ Thetis experiences a striking *déjà vu*, replaying the moment when she first saw a ship make this journey East—when the Argo

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143 Studies of Catullus 64 and Statius’ *Achilleid* have found many correspondences between the two texts. See especially Hinds 1998: 125-8; Lauletta 1993; Rosati 1992. *Achil.* 1.84-9 draws on Catull. 64.343-9 and 357-60; *Achil.* 1.960 is closely modeled on Catull. 64.59; and *Achil.* 2.110-16 goes back to Catull. 64.340-1. There can be no doubt that Statius knew and studied Catullus’ epyllion. Hinds (1998: 127) points out another allusion to Catull. 64 when Statius’ Achilles begins to sing of *immania laudum semina* (*Achil.* 1.188-94). Among these stories of old-time heroes, Achilles is said to sing specifically about his mother’s marriage couch (*maternos toros*). Given the importance of Thetis’ marriage couch in poem 64, Hinds sees the phrase *maternos toros* as an allusion to Catullus epyllion. Statius’ Achilles, then, can be seen as singing Poem 64 itself, one of the “source-texts for his own life.”
We will see that her reaction to Paris’ ship in the \textit{Achilleid} recalls and revises the Catullan Thetis’ reaction to the Argo in Poem 64.

\begin{quote}
Solverat Oebalio classem de litore pastor  
Dardanus incautas blande populatus Amyclas  
plenaque materni referens praesagia somni  
culpatum relegebat iter, qua condita ponto  
fluctibus invisis iam Nereis imperat Helle,  
cum Thetis Idaeos—heu numquam vana parentum  
auguria!—expavit vitreo sub gurgite remos.  
nec mora et undosis turba comitante sororum  
prosiluit thalamis: fervent coeuntia Phrixi  
litora et angustum dominas non explicat aequor.  
illa ubi discusso primum subit aera ponto,  
'Me petit haec, mihi classis' ait 'funesta minatur.  
agnosco monitus et Protea vera locutum.'
\end{quote}

The Dardan shepherd had set sail from the Oebalian shore, having suavely plundered unprotected Amyclae, and, fully carrying out the presage of his mother’s dream, he was retracing the guilty way, where Helle (now a Nereid), sunk beneath the sea, rules over the detested waves. Then Thetis— alas, a parent’s auguries are never vain!— started with fear beneath the glassy sea at the Idaean oars. And, without delay, she leaped from her watery chambers, accompanied by a bevy of her sisters: The tightening shores of Phrixus teem, and the narrow water cannot hold its mistresses. When she first emerged into the air, when the seawater had been parted, she said: “This ship is after me. It’s me that it threatens, and I recognize Proteus’ truthful warning.”  
\textit{(Achil. 1.20-32)}

Here in the \textit{Achilleid}, Paris' ship is said to be retracing the “guilty way” \textit{(culpatum relegebat iter)}. Literally, this “guilty way” is Paris’ outward journey from Troy to Greece. But the phrase \textit{culpatum iter} seems more generally sinister. It brings to mind both the role of the first ship in ending the Golden Age and the Herodotean crime-driven crossings of \textit{all} early ships traveling the guilty way between East and West—this list of ships, of course, includes the Argo, which carried away

\footnote{R. G. Coleman (1977) points out that Vergil’s metonymic use of Thetis for ocean at \textit{Ecl. 4.32 (temptare Thetim ratibus)} helps to link the two great expeditions to Colchis and to Troy. Coleman explains the link well: “For Thetis became the wife of the Argonaut Peleus to whom she bore Achilles, the Greek champion of Troy.”}
Medea as well as Paris’ ship, which Herodotus suggests acted in retribution for Medea (Hdt. 1-2).

The verb *relegebat*, which literally means “re-collecting” or even “citing”, particularly primes the reader for an allusion to an earlier ship. The participle *referens* (1.22) and Thetis’ claim that she “recognizes” (*agnosco*, 1.32) Paris’ ship should be recognized themselves as typical Alexandrian footnotes, flagging for the reader an allusion to an earlier text. Finally, the reference to Helle in the phrase *iam Nereis… Helle* may be more than a poetic flourish, as it effectively brings to mind the back-story of the Golden Fleece, the object of the Argo’s mission.

At this point, it will be helpful also to have before us a section of Catullus 64:

> illa rudem cursu prima imbuit Amphitriten;
> quae simul ac rostro ventosum proscidit aequor
> tortaque remigio spumis incanduit unda,
> emersere freti candenti e gurgite vultus
> aequoreae monstrum Nereides admirantes.
> illa, atque <haud> alia, viderunt luce marinas
> mortales oculis nudato corpore nymphas
> nutricum tenus exstantes e gurgite cano.
> tum Thetidis Peleus incensus fertur amore,
> tum Thetis humanos non despexit hymanaeos,
> tum Thetidi pater ipse iugandum Pelea sensit.

145 *OLD* s.v. #3: “to read over or out what has been read before (what has been written).” See also *TLL* s.v. for examples of *relego* meaning “to cite”.


147 Helle and her brother Phrixus escaped their murderous stepmother Ino by riding a golden ram. While Helle fell off into the ocean, thereby giving her name to the Hellespont, Phrixus arrived safely to Colchis, where he gave the Golden Fleece as a present to King Aeetes in return for his hospitality. For *testimonia*, see “Phrixus” in *Brill’s New Pauly*, vol. 11. The story is told in Val. Fl. *Argon.* 1.277-93, and Phrixus serves as an important model for Jason throughout Valerius’ epic. Ovid tells the story as well in *Fast.* 3.851-76.
That ship first acquainted untried Amphitrite with sailing; as soon as she ploughed the windy seas with her prow, and the wave stirred up by the oars grew white with foam, then the watery Nereids lifted their faces out of the white flood of the sea, wondering at the apparition. On that day, and on no other, did mortals see with their eyes the sea nymphs standing out of the white flood, with their bodies naked down to their breasts. Then Peleus is said to have burned with love for Thetis. Then Thetis did not disdain a mortal wedding. Then the father himself judged that Peleus ought to be joined with Thetis.

(Catull. 64.11-21)

Here, when the Argo appears in Catullus 64, the Nereids famously *emersere...e gurgite*, and they are seen *exstantes e gurgite cano* in wonder as the first ship goes by (Catull. 64.18). In our parallel scene at the opening of the *Achilleid*, however, the sailing of Paris’ ship finds Thetis no longer part of a group of Nereids. Instead, she is described as alone, frightened, and hidden under water: *expavit vitreo sub gurgite remos* (*Achil*. 1.26). In Statius, the physical *ex* of the Catullus (*exstantes*, 64.18) has changed into the verbal prefix intensifying Thetis’ fear (*expavit*, *Achil*. 1.26). It seems Thetis has learned that ships crossing over her only bring pain.

The *Achilleid’s* echoes of the Argo only grow stronger when Thetis begins to voice her fears. Thetis starts to fret “as soon as she has emerged into the air, when the seawater had been parted” (*Illa ubi discusso primum subit aera ponto*, *Achil*. 1.30). The phrase *ubi primum* recalls the opening of Catullus 64, where Catullus stresses the primacy of the Argo’s sea voyage and the exposure of the sea nymphs. It was then, says Catullus, that the first ship sailed, and it was “on that day and no other” that the Nereids *first* emerged *e gurgite*, and showed themselves to men (Catull. 64.16). Furthermore, Statius’ phrase *discusso ponto* (*Achil*. 1.30) has been difficult to translate, but, if we accept Dilke’s translation, “when the waters had been parted,” we can see yet
another echo of Catullus 64. In Poem 64, Thetis first emerged into the air after the waters had been parted, not by her, but by the Argo, the first ship.

Thetis’ first words in the Achilleid seem too to make better sense in the context of Catullus’ opening than in Statius’. Thetis begins, “me petit haec—this ship is after me” (Achil. 1.31). Her complaint is not strictly true about Paris’ ship, but it is perfectly true for Catullus’ depiction of the Argo’s voyage, which first sparks Peleus’ love for her:148

O dolor, o seri materno in corde timores!
non potui infelix, cum primum gurgite nostro
Rhoeteae cecidere trabes, attollere magnum
aequor et incesti praedonis vela profunda
tempestate sequi cunctasque inferre sorores?

Oh sorrow, oh fears coming too late to a mother’s heart! Was I, unlucky woman, not able, when first on our flood the Rhoetean planks fell, to raise up a mighty sea and to pursue with a deep storm the sails of the adulterous robber and to set all of my sisters on him? (Achil. 1.42-6)

Thetis laments that her maternal fears are too late because she missed her chance to sink Paris’ ship on its way out from Troy to Greece, before Helen was abducted. D. Feeney (2004: 86) describes well how Thetis’ lament over her belated fears “self-referentially alludes to her own sense of belatedness as a character.” As Feeney points out, when Statius’ Thetis asks for help from secundi Iovis, the epithet secundi should remind the reader that this Thetis is following belatedly in the footsteps of both Thetis in Book 1 of the Iliad and Thetis’ imitator Venus in Aeneid 1.

Indeed, the sense of belatedness reaches even further back past the events described in the Iliad. The postponement of Rhoeteae...trabes in line 44 is artful,

148 Although, as Mendelsohn (1990) has pointed out, it does make good sense to have Thetis identify herself with the fate of her son.
because it allows a first-time reader to think for a moment that Thetis is actually referring to the real first ship whose sailing she should regret, the Argo. The train of thought in the first two lines is that Thetis belatedly fears something that she should have realized when the ship first sailed on the ocean. It is only when we get to _Rhoeteae_ that we know for sure which ship she means. In fact, given Catullus’ stress on the Argo’s primacy as well as the tendency in Roman literature to blame all ills on the sailing of the first ship, it would seem most natural for the phrase _cum primum gurgite nostro_ to refer to the Argo rather than to the outward leg of Paris’ journey. Even though Thetis is referring to Paris’ ship, then, the resonance of the Argo remains and emphasizes even more the belatedness of Thetis’ fears for her son. Though late, Thetis now realizes the fear that she should have felt in her _materno corde_ when the Argo first sailed on her ocean and exposed her to the vulnerability of having a mortal son. In fact, if she had kept her distance from the Argo, Thetis would not now have reason to fear Paris’ ship, because her son would not be mortal.

As it turns out, however, a reader who saw echoes of the Argo’s journey here is not entirely mistaken, because Thetis soon reveals that she has indeed been thinking of the Argo all along. When Thetis begs Neptune to wreck Paris’ ship, she berates him for allowing ships to sail the sea in the first place.

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149 For negative portraits of the first ship in Latin literature, see Feeney 2007: 118-22; Horden and Purcell 2000; Konstan 1977: ch. 3; Nisbet and Hubbard 1970: on _Carm._ 1.3.12. Some key passages can be found at Enn. _Med._ fr.1, Verg. _G._ 1.134, Hor. _Carm._ 1.3, Prop. 1.17.13, Tib. 1.3.37, Ov. _Am._ 2.11.1, Luc. 3.193 and 6.401, Sen. _Med._ 301 and 595, Stat. _Silv._ 3.2.61, and Val. Fl. _Argon._ 1.648. See Desbordes (1979: 71) for a discussion of the many sea-voyages that are lamented using the famous construction, “utinam ne’.”
aspicis in quales miser patefeceris usus
aequor? eunt tutis terrarum crimina velis,
ex quo iura freti maiestatemque repostam
rupit Iasionia puppis Pagasea rapina.

Do you see the sorts of uses to which you have opened the pitiable ocean? The
criimes of the earth travel with safe sails, ever since the Pagasean ship ruptured
the laws and the remote majesty of the sea with Jason’s plunder.

(Achil. 1.62-5)

We can tell from Neptune’s response that both characters are thinking specifically of
Catullus’ version of the Argo’s journey. Neptune responds: *Pelea iam desiste queri
thalamosque minores* (now leave off complaining about Peleus and your lesser
marriage, *Achil. 1.90*). This retort only makes sense in the context of Catullus 64,
where Peleus and Thetis actually meet on the Argo’s maiden voyage. With the
Catullan innovation in mind, Thetis’ complaint about the first ship becomes more than a
rhetorical *topos*—it is a direct dig at her ill-fated marriage to a mortal man.

Statius’ Thetis, then, causes us to re-read the Catullan scene of wonder by
suggesting that she ought to have feared Peleus and the Argo as much as she now fears
Paris and his ship. The blending of these two sea voyages works to set up Catullus’
great *epyllion* as a prelude to the *Achilleid* because it implies that the sailing of the Argo
in Poem 64 paved the way for the Trojan War. Statius’ work to uncover the role of

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150 Mendelsohn (1990) argues that Neptune’s remark makes sense because he is
responding not to Thetis’ actual compliant but to the complaint that he expects to hear.
Heslin (2005: 111-2) however, points out that because Peleus was in fact an Argonaut,
Thetis’ complaint against the Argo might be construed as a criticism of her husband. I
add that in Catullus’ version, it is specifically the sailing of the Argo that leads to her
marriage. For more on Catullus’ mythological innovation, see Bramble 1970: 34-5;
Cairns 1984: 100; Clare 1996: 64 and 84 n. 17; Curran 1969: 183; Feeney 2007: 124
and 268 n. 93; Fordyce 1961: 280-1 on 64.19; Friedrich 1908: 318; Konstan 1993: 66;
Paris’ ship behind Catullus’ Argo is complemented by a series of other texts that seem invested in linking the two sea voyages and pinning down a genealogy of ships leading from the Argo to the Trojan War. In Valerius Flaccus’ *Argonautica*, Jupiter explains how the Argo’s sailing will set in motion his plans for the universe.\(^\text{151}\)

 accelerat sed summa dies Asiamque labantem
linquimus et poscunt iam me sua tempora Grai.
inde meae quercus tripodesque animaeque parentum
hanc pelago misere manum. via facta per undas
perque hiemes, Bellona, tibi. Nec vellera tantum
indignanda manent propiorque ex virgine rapta
ille dolor, sed – nulla magis sententia menti
fixa meae – veniet Phrygia iam pastor ab Ida,
qui gemitus irasque pares et mutua Grais
dona ferat. Quae classe dehine effusa procorum
bella, quot ad Troiae flentes hiberna Mycenas,
quot proceres natosque deum, quae robora cernes
oppetere et magnis Asiam concedere fatis!
Hinc Danaum de fine sedet gentesque fovebo,
mox alias…

But her last day is swift advancing and I leave Asia ready to fall and now the Greeks demand of me their time as leaders. Therefore my oaks and the tripods and the spirits of their ancestors have sent forth this band onto the sea. A path has been made through the waves and storms for you, Bellona. Nor will the fleece alone remain a reason for resentment and that even keener injury of a ravished maiden, but —no decision is fixed more firmly in my mind— soon there will come a Phrygian shepherd from Ida, who will bear lamentations and equal anger in return to the Greeks. Thereupon what wars will you see when the fleet of suitors is unleashed, how many times will you see Mycenae mourn its winter camps before Troy, how many princes and sons of gods and what strength will you see perish, and you will see Asia yield to the great fates! Afterwards, it has been decided on an end for the Danai and soon I will favor other nations…

(Val. Fl. *Argon.* 1.542-56)

The first ship will lead to a series of wars that effectively end the peace that characterized his father Saturn’s age. The peace of the Saturnian Age may seem desirable to some, but to the Jupiter of Valerius Flaccus, it was simply idleness and

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\(^{151}\) A helpful discussion of this passage can be found in Barnes 1981.
sloth: *patrii neque enim probat otia regni* (Argon. 1.500). It is for the war goddess Bellona that the paths are being opened across the sea, because, once the Argo sails, the back and forth of wars between East and West can begin. At first, Asia is doomed: *accelerat sed summa dies Asiamque labantem / linquimus* (Argon. 1.541-2).152 Paris’ theft of Helen is in retaliation for Jason’s theft of Medea, but the Greek response leads to Troy’s fall. Troy’s fall, in turn, however, leads the way to the super-power of Rome, which Valerius will later call a “better Troy” (*Troiae melioris honores*, Argon. 2.571-3).

In Ovid’s *Heroides* 16 and 17, both Paris and Helen locate themselves in this genealogy of ships crossing East and West. Like Statius and Valerius Flaccus, Ovid has noted and capitalized on Catullus’ stress on the Argo as the prototype for Paris’ ship.153 Paris gives a strangely detailed description in *Her*. 16.107-14 of how his ship was built from logs felled on Mt. Ida, and this drawn out shipbuilding sequence calls to mind the Argo’s construction as detailed in the opening of Euripides’ and Ennius’ *Medea*, as well as Catullus 64. Echoes of Catullus 64 are especially conspicuous once we realize that these verses form a group of “golden lines” unusual in Ovid. As E. J. Kenney notes, this “concentration of patterned lines” is a neoteric mannerism, and adduces Catull. 64.63-7 and 311-19 as parallels.154 Ovid writes: *fundatura citas flectuntur robora naves, / textur et costis panda carina suis* (the wood is bent as a foundation for the swift ships, and the curved keel is woven with its sides, *Her*. 16.111-12). This technical description echoes Catullus’ description of the Argo’s construction: *pinea coniungens*

152 The phrase *summa dies* recurs in treatments of Troy: Verg. *Aen*. 2.324, Luc. 7.195
153 Ovid’s Paris also follows Herodotus in using the abduction of Medea as a precedent for how a foreigner can abduct a woman without fear of war: Ov. *Her*. 16.47-8.
inflexae texta carinae (joining the pine framework to the bent keel, Catull. 64.10).\footnote{Kenney 1996: 98. For more on the verb \textit{texere} in ship-building contexts, see Michalopoulos (2006), who adduces the example of Paris’ ship in Ennius’ \textit{Alexander: iamque mari magno classis cita / texitur}.
} Of course, it is likely that two passages on ship-building would share vocabulary, but the decision to dwell on the ship’s construction in the first place coupled with the Alexandrian flavor of the lines points toward a more meaningful connection to Catullus 64. It seems that Ovid links his description of Paris’ ship with Catullus’ Argo as a way to have Paris unwittingly paint his ship as an Argo-like beginning of evil. In fact, earlier on in \textit{Her.} 16, Paris had referred to his ship as Phereclean, a designation which, unfortunately for Paris, calls to mind the Homeric passage where Phereclus’ ships are blamed as \textit{archekakous} (\textit{Her.} 16.22 and Hom. \textit{Il.} 5.63-4)\footnote{Kenney (1996: 86 on \textit{Her.} 16.22) offers this Homeric parallel and further notes “as the building of the Argo was identified as the starting-point of Medea’s tragic history (Eur. \textit{Med.} 1-6, Enn. \textit{Med.} 208-16 J.), so the launching of Paris’ fleet marks the point of no return for Troy.” Michalopoulos (2006: 166 on \textit{Her.} 16.112) also notes the connection and reminds us how the felling of trees for Paris’ ships is marked out as the beginning of evils in Eur. \textit{Hel.} 229-38. For more comparisons between the Paris/Helen and Jason/Medea stories, see Hunter 1989: 167 on Val. Fl. \textit{Argon.} 3.641-2, 176 on 3.739, and 183 on 3.793.}.\footnote{Lucan also links Paris’ ship and the Argo in his Thessalian excursus. Luc. 6.351 (\textit{prima Rhoeteta litora pina quae tetigit}) refers to Paris’ ship and looks forward to the later reference to the Argo at Luc. 6.400: \textit{prima fretum scindens Pagaseo litore pinus}.} These gestures toward earlier treatments of ships as “first-causes of evil” help Ovid to heighten the irony in Paris’ reassurances that there will be no serious consequences if Helen elopes with him. These reassurances are, of course, another Trojan lie.\footnote{\textit{Helen replies to Paris’ letter in \textit{Her.} 17, and her reply, too, brings to mind the connection between ships and the evils they unleash. Helen uses a proverbial Latin phrase to describe how useless an endeavor it is to deny her attraction to Paris: \textit{quid bibulum curvo proscindere litus aratro / spemque sequi coner quam locus ipse negat}?}
(why should I attempt to furrow the watery shore with a curved plough and follow a hope that the place itself denies, *Her.* 17.139-40)? In the context of Paris’ boundary-breaking ships, however, her analogy seems particularly apt. Transferring the land-based idea of ploughing to the sea would be both useless and transgressive, just as when the Argo first ploughed the ocean (*proscidit*, Catull. 64.12). Helen subconsciously seems to fear that Paris’ sea voyage back to Troy with her would be somehow unnatural. What Helen fears will happen, though, has become a reality for Penelope and Oenone in *Her.* 1.5-6 and 5.40-2. When Penelope and Oenone think back on Paris’ ship, they both signal their regret with a variation of the Nurse’s regret over the Argo in the opening of Ennius’ *Medea.*

In Seneca’s *Troades*, Paris’ ship is similarly painted as an *archekakon* that was unleashed by the original *archekakon*, the Argo. The chorus explains that Mt. Ida provided wood for Paris’ ship and then was stripped of its wood again for the funeral pyres during the ten years of war.

Non rude vulgus lacrimisque novum lugere iubes: hoc continuis egimus annis, ex quo tetigit Phrygius Graias hospes Amyclas secuitque fretum pinus matri sacra Cybebae. decies niuibus canuit Ide, decies nostris nudata rogis…

It is no inexperienced crowd, new to tears, that you order to mourn: We have been mourning continuously since the time when the Phrygian guest arrived at Greek Amyclae, and the ship of pine sacred to Mother Cybele cut through the sea. Ten times did Ida grow white with snows, and ten times was it stripped for our funeral pyres…

(Sen. *Tro.* 67-74)

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Seneca is clever to highlight how the very forests responsible for the war have paid a one-for-one penalty for each Trojan life lost. Paris’ ships were nothing more than oversized coffins, just like the Trojan horse, which must also have been built out of Ida’s wood. Seneca’s emphasis on the act of cutting down trees, together with his effort to pinpoint the beginning of evils for Troy, will naturally recall another well-practiced lament, the opening of the Medea, which traced the beginning of evils back to the axe used to cut down the trees for the Argo. The chorus believes that the moment ex quo all of Troy’s troubles began was the sailing of Paris’ ship. The audience familiar with Ennus’ or Euripides’ Medea, however, knows very well that Troy’s fate was set in motion far before Paris’ ship was ever built, back when the Argo first sailed. The sailing of the Argo is, once again, identified as a moment of breach that made possible the next moment of breach, the sailing of Paris’ ship, which subsequently led to the Trojan War and the need for so many caskets.

We can now return to Catullus 64 better equipped to see how the poem’s narrative inconsistencies reflect on the story of Troy. The Trojan perspective, suggested by Statius, Seneca, Ovid, and Valerius Flaccus, is useful for us, because it supports a new reading of Catullus’ two major mythological innovations in Poem 64: casting the Argo as the first ship, and setting the meeting of Peleus and Thetis on the Argo’s maiden voyage. These two innovations allow Catullus to combine in one version several traditional aitia of the Trojan War: the first ship, the birth of Achilles, and the marriage of Peleus and Thetis. The first ship made possible the abduction of Helen and the mobilization of the Greek fleet. The birth of Achilles, as the Song of the Parcae reminds us, lends the brutality and heroism that made the Trojan War such a watershed
event in mythical history.\footnote{159} That wood from Mt. Pelion was used to make both the
Argo and Achilles’ famous spear further cements the seemingly causal connection
between the voyage of the Argonauts, the marriage of Pelus and Thetis, and the fall of Troy.\footnote{160} Finally, the marriage of Peleus and Thetis was traditionally the occasion at
which Eris first instigated the strife between the three goddesses who came to Paris to be judged. Catullus’ narrative of the marriage cuts off tellingly at this moment when
Eris traditionally interrupted the feast.\footnote{161} The \textit{Cypria} (fr. 1) also connects that Trojan
War to the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, because the union of Thetis to a mortal man
produced Achilles and forced Zeus to turn his affections to Nemesis, with whom he
conceived Helen. Jupiter’s choice to marry Thetis to a mortal, then, occasions the birth
of both Helen and of Achilles. As M. Skinner (1984: 136-40) has argued, the reference
to \textit{Rhamnusia Virgo} in the moralizing epilogue of Poem 64 recalls this myth of Helen’s
birth from Nemesis and further implicates the marriage of Peleus and Thetis in the
beginnings of the Trojan War.

\footnote{159} The little \textit{Iliad} in the song of the Parcae fortuitously makes sense out of Statius’ last
line in the \textit{Achilleid} as we have it. At the end of the \textit{Achilleid}’s second book, when
Achilles has told as much as he can remember about his childhood, he stops, saying \textit{scit cetera mater} (2.167). His statement is true, since his mother not only remembers his
early childhood but has also already in the poem reminisced about it: Heslin 2005: 63.
Yet, Thetis also knows not only the “rest” of the story of his childhood but also the
“rest” to come in the future. Statius has alluded again and again to Catull. 64, and it is
possible that here once more we are meant to think back to the prophecy of the Parcae,
who tell the story of Troy. From before Achilles’ birth, Thetis has known that he was
fated to go to Troy and to die there. Just as well as Thetis knows the childhood of
Achilles, which she has witnessed, she also knows the rest of Achilles’ story, which she
has yet to witness (see also Hom. \textit{Il.} 1.365). The line \textit{scit cetera mater} is, then, an eerily
appropriate end to the \textit{Achilleid} because it encapsulates everything from Achilles’ birth
to his death.

\footnote{160} Sistákou 2008: 92.

\footnote{161} Dilke 2005: 145 on \textit{Achil}. 2.56; O’Hara 2007: 48; Skinner 1984: esp. 136-40;
Townend 1983.
Seeing Catullus 64 as, at least in part, a meditation on Troy suggests a new approach to the poem’s narratological quirks. We will need first to review the famous narrative problems of Poem 64 before we can move on to see how the poem’s contradictions, inversions, shifting perspectives, and strange conclusion all reflect the difficulty of pinning down any aspect of a pivotal event like the Trojan War. A reader immediately notices Catullus’ obsession in Poem 64 with inversion. In the first twenty lines, the inversion of natural order caused by the sailing of the first ship is reflected in the poem’s metaphors, vocabulary, and syntax. Suddenly everything is topsy-turvy: the trees are personified as swimmers, the men are called trees (robora), and it is the ship that “wets” the sea (illa…imbuit Amphitriten).\(^{162}\) Moreover, the mermaids wonder at the monstrum of the ship, in a sentence that can be tempting to mistranslate because our natural instinct is to see the wild Nereids as monstra.\(^{163}\) Even the poem’s use of intertext reflects the trend of inversion; Catullus’ apostrophe to the Argonauts that opens poem 64 (22-4) is modeled on the farewell to the heroes that closed Apollonius’ Argonautica (4.1773-5). As Zetzel put it so well, “it seems to have been a convention of Alexandrian and Neoteric poetry to reverse beginnings and ends.”\(^{164}\)

The inversions, however, are more than stylistic flourishes; they are also a reflection of Poem 64’s overarching concern with the difficulties of narration and interpretation. J. Gaisser, J. O’Hara, and others have shown that Catullus uses deliberate inconsistencies in Poem 64 to subvert the authority of the narrative voice.\(^{165}\) Readers ask many questions: If we’re meant to believe in the Argo as the first ship,

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\(^{162}\) Curran 1969: 175-6.


\(^{164}\) Zetzel 1983a: 261.

what business does Theseus’ earlier ship have in the poem? And why is the union of Peleus and Thetis portrayed as a completely joyous occasion when tradition tells us that the unhappy couple divorced soon after the wedding? At the same time, in the ekphrasis, why does our narrator focus on Ariadne’s abandonment by Theseus rather than her imminent rescue by Dionysus, with whom she is supposed to have lived forever in a hieros gamos? It seems that the narrator of Poem 64 finds himself in the course of the poem confronted by a series of turning points, which he can only ever see from one point of view, without considering the flipside. The obvious flaws in the narrator’s one-sided perspective only highlight each event’s complexity and double-edged nature. Catullus’ narrator has gone against tradition to portray the sailing of the Argo as a moment to celebrate rather than to regret. At the same time, Ariadne’s wish

166 For the tradition of an unhappy marriage between Peleus and Thetis, see for example, Apol. Argon. 4.852-81, Hom. Il. 18.434, Ov. Met. 11.229, Val. Fl. Argon. 1.130-3, and LIMC VII.1 s.v. Peleus, 265-7. For discussion of this tradition, see Armstrong 2006: 219; Curran 1969: 182-3; Feeney 2007: 122-3; Heslin 2005: 170-3 and 262; O’Hara 2007: 47-54; Syndikus 1990: 2:113. There is evidence of a more cordial relationship between Peleus and Thetis at Pind. Pyth. 3 and 8.87, Isthm. 8.25, and Nem. 3.35 and 4.26. Still, Pindar does stress the sadness that their son’s early death will bring to the couple. Many modern critics have argued that the reader is meant to read the wedding of Peleus and Thetis as an unhappy occasion, despite the narrator’s best efforts to portray it as a happy moment: see Bramble 1970; Clare 1996; Godwin 1996: 133-6; Hunter 1991; Kinsey 1965; Konstan 1977: 81; Morwood 1999; O’Hara 2007: 48-9; Oliensis 2009: 46.

167 A good overview of the problem can be found in Gaisser 1995: 606-8 as well as in Dyer 1994: 228 and 248-52. Among those who read the story of Ariadne as at least partially happy are Godwin 1996: 133-36; Jenkyns 1982: 92 and 139; Kinsey 1965: 911-21; Putnam 1961: 187-8; Waltz 1945: 108; Williams 1968: 228; Quinn 1972: 263. As Feldherr (2007: 101) puts it, Ariadne is “simply looking the wrong way and therefore doesn’t notice that her narrative is not a tragedy of abandonment but a triumphal tale of apotheosis to be realized at the arrival of the approaching Dionysus.” I fully agree with Feldherr, who sees Ariadne’s misinterpretation of her own story as a way of showing how much is at stake in the “partial perspective of interpreters like Ariadne.” For the problem of how to relate the ekphrasis to the frame story, see the overview in Warden (1998: 397-8).
that Theseus’ ship had never touched her shores mistakenly employs the *utinam ne* that
we expected in the earlier description of the Argo. I say mistakenly, here, because if
Ariadne would simply turn around, she would see that Theseus’ sea voyage has turned
out to be a blessing, because it has united her with her divine husband, Bacchus.

Ovid later plays with Ariadne’s inability to look the right way in Catullus 64
when he has his version of Ariadne at *Fast.* 3.459-516 still unable to learn the lesson of
which direction to look.\(^\text{168}\) Since Ariadne is already married to Bacchus when she
appears in the *Fasti,* she must by now understand her foolishness when she wept for
Theseus while Bacchus was all the while in the wings. But in the *Fasti,* she repeats her
mistake, weeping for Bacchus, whom she thinks has abandoned her, without realizing
until the end of the episode that Bacchus has all the while been following behind her.
Like Ovid’s Ariadne, Catullus’ narrator in Poem 64 can only look in one direction,
without taking stock of the whole picture. The depiction of Bacchus’ retinue in Poem 64
may seem horrifying initially, and it is often argued that Bacchus’ arrival cannot be
interpreted as a rescue because it is too “raucous”, “noisy”, and “turbulent”.\(^\text{169}\) But

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516. Ovid’s different versions of Ariadne have complex intertextual relationships with
each other as well as with Catullus’ Ariadne and Vergil’s Dido. For discussion of these
networks, see Barchiesi 2001: 18-25; Conte 1986: 61-3; Hinds 1998: 3-4; Murgatroyd

\(^{169}\) See, for instance, O’Connell (1977: 749, n. 5): “But Catullus emphasizes not
Dionysus’ love for Ariadne (indeed his arrival is made to seem raucous and threatening)
but her desertion by Theseus.” Similarly, Konstan (1977: 61): “Catullus’ picture of the
arrival of Dionysus on Dia clearly emphasizes the orgiastic and the barbarian, that is to
say non-Roman, character of Dionysian cult. The scene is one of frenzied noise and
motion, reproduced in Catullus’ verse through intensive alliteration, onomatopoetic
effects, and various rhetorical devices.” Finally, as Deroux (1986: 257) puts it:
“contrary to what the legend repeatedly teaches us, the arrival of the god, her deliverer,
is no longer of any comfort to her…To the poet’s mind, the noisy, turbulent, frightening
these characterizations should give us pause. The most frightening elements of the
description, it seems, are aural and, therefore, not actually present on the tapestry but
imported by our rather biased narrator.\textsuperscript{170} It is the narrator’s choice to focus on
Theseus’ departing ship rather than Bacchus’ arrival when he describes the tapestry,
which shows not simply Ariadne’s abandonment but also the moment of her rescue.
And it is his choice to imagine the sounds of the pictured procession as strident and
terrifying rather than musical and joyful.

There has been much debate about how to link the ekphrasis of Ariadne with the
frame story of Peleus and Thetis. It is possible to see the two stories as foils for each
other, with the unhappy tale of Ariadne contrasting with the happy union of Thetis. It is
equally possible that the sad tale of Ariadne is meant to draw attention to the negative
undertones of the seemingly happy wedding of Peleus and Thetis. Finally, some would
argue that it is in fact the deceptively negative portrayal Ariadne’s story that clues the
reader into the deceptively positive portrayal of Thetis’ disastrous wedding. Valerius
Flaccus seems to agree that the negative overtones of Ariadne’s story in Poem 64
should undermine the narrator’s seemingly happy portrayal of Peleus and Thetis. In
Valerius’ \textit{Argonautica}, Thetis herself is painted on the Argo as a dolphin carries her off
to her wedding with Peleus. The painted Thetis expresses sorrow over her marriage to

\begin{quote}
arrival of a lover spurred on, it would seem, by nothing other than physical desire can
do little to compensate Ariadne for her ill-fortune.”
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{170} Critics have noted the overwhelming aural quality of Bacchus’ advance, which
draws attention to the impossibility of depicting sound in pictures: Armstrong 2006:
add that the emphasis on sound also allows Catullus’ narrator to mislead readers by
importing his own faulty interpretation on the static and mute tapestry. See also
Schmale (2004: 146), who argues that Catullus’ choice at different times either to
emphasize or ignore the constraints of the tapestry’s visual representation allows him to
mislead the reader.
the mortal Peleus because her son Achilles will not be greater than Jupiter himself:

\[...ipsa sedet deiecta in lumina palla / nec love maiorem nasci suspirat Achillen\] (she herself sits with her veil hanging down over her eyes and sighs that Achilles will not be born greater than Jupiter, Val. Fl. Argon. 1.132-3). While Catullus’ Thetis does not seem to regret her marriage to the mortal Peleus, then, Valerius Flaccus shows her keenly aware of the consequences. In Catullus, the only unhappy relationship seemed to have been the one of Ariadne and Theseus depicted on the coverlet. Here in Valerius’ Argonautica, we see an unhappy Thetis depicted in a painting instead. The implication seems to be that Catullus’ narrator ought to have looked at Thetis’ story through the negative lenses he used to see Ariadne’s.\(^{171}\)

For our purposes, the most important connection between Catullus’ frame story and ekphrasis is that they are both snap-shots of a tipping point in time, which can be seen from multiple perspectives. The sailing of the first ship is both a beginning and an ending, a blend that we saw in the phrase, \[illa atque haud alia viderunt luce marinas / mortales oculis nudato corpore Nymphas\] (Catull. 64.16-7). The day the Argo first sailed was the first and the last time that men saw sea-nymphs. It was, on a universal level, the beginning and the end of an age. Ariadne’s abandonment is a similar moment played out on the personal level of one woman’s experience. Theseus’ departure is simultaneously the ending of one relationship and the beginning of another, perhaps better, one. The narrator of Poem 64 falls short because he is unable to see more than

\(^{171}\) This description of the painted Thetis also corrects Catullus’ redesigned chronology. Since Thetis is depicted as mourning her marriage to Peleus on the Argo itself as it is being built, Catullus’ choice to have Peleus and Thetis first meet on the Argo is refuted as chronologically impossible.
one interpretation of these inherently double-edged moments in which beginning is inseparable from ending.\textsuperscript{172}

We are now able to turn our attention back to Troy, because these confusing double-edged moments that fill Poem 64 come to a climax when the Parcae sing of Achilles at Troy and catalogue his horrifying feats at lines 348-70. The figure of Achilles himself encapsulates the problems of perspective that we have been tracing in the poem so far. Achilles’ own heroism is inseparable from his brutality, and his nature is simultaneously bestial and divine since he is both the son of a goddess and the pupil of a centaur.\textsuperscript{173} Catullus’ Parcae lay out the problem quite clearly when they sing that the very witnesses and proof of Achilles’ heroism will be the rivers of blood he spills, weeping mothers, and human sacrifice over his tomb.\textsuperscript{174} Achilles will make mothers

\textsuperscript{172} Feeney (2007: 119) and Fitzgerald (1995: 150) both note how the sailing of the Argo, as it is described in Poem 64, is a double-edged moment in which beginnings and endings are inseparable. Feeney (2007: 119) explains: “Men had never seen sea-nymphs before, says Catullus, and the instant they did, it was the last instant.” O’Connell (1977: 755) sees Poem 64’s contradictions as a meditation on the difficulty of imposing “simple, straightforward judgments” on complex events. For more on Poem 64 as a poem of paradox, see Feeney 2007: 119; Feldherr 2007: 100; Jenkyns 1982: 92; Konstan 1977: 107.

\textsuperscript{173} For Achilles’ liminal position as \textit{semifer, semivir, and semideus}, see R. G. Coleman 1977: 141 on \textit{Verg. Ecl.} 4.36; Feeney 1991: 159; Heslin 2005: 157-191; King 1987: 13-28. Mendelsohn (1990: 303) notes how Chiron’s cave, which is \textit{pars exhausta manu, partem sua ruperat aetas} (Stat. \textit{Achil.} 1.108), reflects Chiron’s “bipartite physiognomy” and his pupil’s “divided nature.” Ovid had similarly described Thetis’ grotto as \textit{ambiguum} because one could not tell whether it had been carved out by nature or by art (\textit{Met.} 11.236). Achilles also seems to inherit the double-sided nature of his enemy Apollo, who is famously both deadly and creative. The similarities between Achilles and his killer, Apollo, further highlight the contradictions within the hero, since he can be seen as a doppelgänger of his own destroyer. Feeney (2004: 88-89) notes the power of Statius’ simile at \textit{Achil.} 1.159-66, which compares Achilles to Apollo. For more on the connection of Achilles and Apollo, see Burkert 1985: 147 and 1975: 19; Lowenstam 2008: 145-6.

beat their breasts at their sons’ funerals; he will choke the Hellespont with heaps of slain men; he will warm with blood the waters surrounding Troy; and his tomb will be honored with the blood of a maiden, Polyxena. Still, our narrator has difficulty seeing both sides of the coin, and he rejoices, calling the troubling prophecy a happy omen for the new couple: talia praefantes quondam felicia Pelei /carmina diuino cecinerunt pectore Parcae (such songs foretelling happiness to Peleus did the Parcae once sing from their divine hearts, Catull. 64.382-3). We as readers are, of course, less sure how we are meant to react to this Achilles, who is heroic and godlike, but at the same time bestial and utterly immersed in iron-age violence.

Later, the apparition of Achilles in Seneca’s Troades helps draw our attention to the paradox in Catullus’ choice of a wedding song that narrates death. We are told in the Troades (168-202) that Achilles’ shade has burst forth to demand that the Trojan maiden Polyxena be sacrificed over his tomb. Achilles is said to appear just as he did cum inter acies Marte violento furens /corporibus amnes clusit et quaerens iter /tardus cruento Xanthus erravit vado (when raging in violent battle he blocked the rivers with bodies and the Xanthus, slowed and seeking a way out, wandered in a bloody stream, Sen. Tro. 185). As he makes his demand for Polyxena’s sacrifice, a hymenaeum chorus (Sen. Tro 202) is sung by the Tritons. In Catullus’ song of the Parcae, mention of Polyxena’s sacrifice is likewise preceded by a description of Achilles choking the Hellespont with corpses and warming Troy’s rivers with blood. But in Seneca’s version, the hymenaeum chorus of the Tritons does not simply tell of the human sacrifice of Polyxena, it actually accompanies this perversion of a wedding. Seneca’s

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choice to combine an allusion to Catullus’ Song of the Parcae with this twisted wedding song for Polyxena and Achilles seems designed to question the Catullan narrator’s interpretation of the earlier prophecy at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis.

The confusing and divided picture of Achilles that results from the conflict between Catullus the poet and his narrator in Poem 64 is particularly important since it is a perfect microcosm of Catullus’ Troy. Like Achilles, Troy straddles the Heroic and Iron Ages, standing for both the climax and the death of heroism and the end of Troy as well as the beginning of Rome.\textsuperscript{175} When Zetzel notes the importance of Troy in Catullus as a place associated with loss and death, he describes Troy in Catullus as “less the scene of epic heroism than of the destruction of heroism.”\textsuperscript{176} It is certainly true that Catullus paints Troy as the death of the Heroic Age, especially when he laments for his brother in Poem 68 (\textit{Troia—nefas—commune sepulcrum Asiae Europaeque / Troia virum et virtutum omnium acerba cinis}, 68.89-90). Yet Troy is also, in Catullus, the climax of heroism. Catullus’ Troy is deeply troubling, and perhaps the most troubling part of the picture is Troy’s double role as both the death \textit{and} the apex of the Heroic Age.\textsuperscript{177} The Trojan War necessarily embodies the same uneasy mix of heroism and brutality that we see in Achilles, because heroism entails crime.

The Heroic Age as a concept was especially problematic and hard to place in any narrative for that same reason. Heroes cannot exist in a Golden Age, because there

\textsuperscript{176} Zetzel 1982: 666.  
\textsuperscript{177} Feldherr (2007: 101) notes that the song of the Parcae “raises the question of whether the Trojan War should be seen as glorious or destructive.” Catullus leaves the reader with the inevitable answer that the Trojan War could hardly be glorious unless it were destructive. For O'Connell (1977: 755), the Trojan War is a cosmic example of a “moral tangle” mixing \textit{fas} and \textit{nefas}. At Troy, as in Catull. 64 as a whole, it is impossible to disentangle opposites or beginnings and endings.
can be no heroism without violence. The idea of a Heroic Age, then, necessarily carries within it the seeds of the Iron Age. In Hesiod’s myth of the ages of man, the Heroic Age appears as an anomalous upswing in a narrative of decline toward the Iron Age. Later, Vergil confronts this same problem in reverse when he rewinds time in *Eclogue* 4 and portrays the Heroic Age as an anomalous dip in the progress backwards to a new Golden Age.\(^\text{178}\) Both forwards and backwards, however, the link between the Heroic and Iron Ages is always the Trojan War, where heroism seems to reach both its peak and its breaking point. Our narrator in Catullus 64 acknowledges only one side of the story of Troy (the climax of heroism), but he inadvertently draws attention to what he is missing (the beginning of the Iron Age). The narrator had been thrilled to hear the prophecy of blood spilled by and for Achilles. But, less than 50 lines later, spilling blood onto the earth is what ushers in a cycle of Iron-Age crimes: *sed postquam tellus scelerest imbuta nefando* (64.397).

Our narrator’s failure to keep up his one-sided view of Achilles and Troy only emphasizes how difficult it is to separate out the competing beginnings and endings clustered around the Trojan War. This difficulty was not a trivial one at Rome, since Rome’s rise out of Troy’s fall meant that for Romans, even more than for the rest of us, beginnings always threatened to shade into endings and endings into beginnings. And, as we well know, the Trojan War straddles not just temporal boundaries but also geographical and cultural ones, since Troy’s fall was the pivotal moment that turned the defeated Eastern Trojans into victorious Western Romans. This is a shift that Statius will later confront as a poet retelling in Latin the story of the Greek hero who routed

\(^{178}\) As R. G. Coleman (1977: 141 at Ecl. 4.36) explains: “the innocence of the Golden Age was incompatible with heroic action.”
Rome’s ancestors. But both Statius and Catullus seem aware that, while the Romans would like to portray themselves as the new “Westerners,” this shifted balance is precarious at best, and open to interpretation. The perplexing close of Catullus 64 underlines how easily this redefinition of East and West could shift back. Catullus’ list of supposedly modern-day crimes could just as easily have been plucked from Greek tragedy.179

sed postquam tellus scelere est imbuta nefando
iustitiamque omnes cupida de mente fugarunt,
perfudere manus fraterno sanguine fratres,
destitit extinctos gnatus lugere parentes,
optauit genitor primaeui funera nati,
liber ut innuptae poteretur flore nouercae,
ignaro mater substernens se impia nato
impia non uerita est diuos scelerare penates.
onnia fanda nefanda malo permixta fure
iustificam nobis mentem auertere deorum.

But after the earth was first acquainted (literally, wetted) with horrible crime and all men chased justice away from their greedy minds, brothers wetted their hands with brotherly blood, a son was left to mourn for his dead parents, a father wished for the death of his youthful son so that he might be free to enjoy the flower of a young stepmother, a wicked mother lying wickedly with her unknowing son did not fear to pollute her household gods. All right and wrong, mingled in wicked madness, turned away from us the just mind of the gods.

(Catull. 64.397-406)

We are left uncertain whether the brothers first mentioned are Romulus and Remus engaged in ultimately productive violence, or rather Polyneices and Eteocles, whose violence leads to a mutual dead-end. The confusion makes us wonder: Is the distinction

179 The question of whose crimes these are has troubled many critics. See Feldherr (2007: 100) and Konstan (1977: 82-4). While Friedrich (1908: 322) argued that the crimes were based on Greek myths like that of Theseus and Jocasta, Herrmann (1967) proposed that the targets were contemporary Romans such as L. Gellius Poplicola. Kinsey (1965: 928-9) suggests that the targets may have been suggested both by Greek myth and contemporary Romans such as Catiline and Oppianicus.
between the two sets of brothers as clear-cut as it seems, or is it again only a matter of perspective, open to opposing interpretations?

The competing perspectives of Catullus 64, then, reflect the paradoxical figure of Achilles and the Trojan War that he represents. The Trojan War’s role as a cluster of tipping points allows it to serve as Catullus’ best and final example of how any narrative is open to not only different but even opposing interpretations. The sailing of the first ship was a double-edged moment of rupture for mankind, while the abandonment of Ariadne was a moment of rupture on a very individual and personal level. The Trojan War, however, will be both. It will change the temporal, geographical, and cultural structure of the world, but it will also be the location for the very personal mixture of joy and sorrow for each of the individual heroes, mothers, wives, and even gods and goddesses. We should by now no longer be surprised to see a Roman poet using Troy to showcase the power of subjective interpretation. Still, Catullus’ virtuosity is astonishing as he constructs his Callimachean version of Troy, complete with aetiologies, learned references, and complicated hermeneutics. Though Catullus 64 opens almost as a retelling of the Medea story, it surprises the reader by retelling the marriage of Peleus and Thetis instead; this second story, however, is itself in some ways another feint. Poem 64 is also a story of Troy, that temporal, geographical, and cultural fulcrum to which we have seen Catullus returning to in Poems 63, 68 and 101. As Statius helps illustrate, Catullus’ references to the *Argo* in 64 are just as much references to the later voyage of Paris, and it is this poetic move that Statius acknowledges and reverses in the *Achilleid* when his depiction of Paris’ ship directs us back again to its predecessor in nautical transgression, the *Argo*. 
Finally, it is also this link between Catullus’ Argo and Paris’ journey back East that Horace’s first book of Odes picks up on and transforms into a metaphor for the dangers and attraction of Hellenizing poetry. We ended our first chapter on early Roman poetry with a look at the growing problem of how to maintain an image of a Western, Roman culture while relying on the poetic traditions of the Greek East. The double-edged ending of Catullus 64 once again reminds us of this particular challenge, as Catullus seems to warn against diluting traditional virtues, all the while using literary conventions familiar from Greek poetry. Catullus 64’s transgressive sea voyages later become metaphors themselves for the dangerous pull of Hellenizing poetry. In Horace’s Ode 1.3, Horace structures his warning to Vergil not to embark on his epic project in the as a pessimistic propempticon before a dangerous sea voyage East. This poem warning Vergil against his new endeavor sounds at first like a generic statement that means to pit epic against pastoral, but the generic debate in 1.3 can be opened up into a larger discussion of Trojan subject matter and Greek learning that plugs directly into cultural concerns we have seen Catullus beginning to raise in Poem 64. Horace, here, denounces the first ship as a terrible transgression and specifically corrects the mistake of Catullus 64’s naïve narrator, who misapplied the adjective monstrum to describe the Argo rather than the Nereids who emerged in the Argo’s path. Horace correctly identifies the monsters this time, exclaiming: quem mortis timuit gradum/ qui siccis oculis monstra natantia,/ qui vidit mare turbidum et…(what form of death did he fear, whoever looked with dry eyes on the swimming monsters and the swollen sea…,Carm. 1.3.17-9). Horace rejects the sense of wonderment that suffuses the description of the very first ship, the Argo, in the beginning of Catullus 64.
Horace’s poem makes clear that Vergil’s expedition into Greek epic poetry to tell the story of Troy is not simply a retelling of Troy, but a re-playing of the fateful journey’s East made by Jason and by Paris when he returned to Troy with Helen. In Horace’s metaphor, Vergil also intends, like Paris and Jason, to bear back with him a Greek hostage—not Helen or the Golden Fleece, but rather Greek epic herself. Further complicating this metaphor is the message of Horace’s Ode 1.15, which centers on Nereus’ prophecy warning Paris not to bring Helen to Troy:

Pastor cum traheret per freta navibus
Idaeis Helenen perfidus hospitam,
ingratæ celeris obruit otiō
ventos ut caneret fera
Nereus fata. “mala ducis avi domum
quam multo repetet Graecia milite
coniurata tuas rumpere nuptias
et regnum Priami vetus.
heu heu, quantus equis, quantus adest viris
sudor, quanta moves funera Dardanae
genti. iam galeam Pallas et aegida
currusque et rabiem parat.”

When the faithless shepherd was carrying his hostess Helen over the sea in Ida’s ships, Nereus stopped the swift winds with a thankless calm so that he might chant the fierce oracles of the future. “It is under an evil omen that you lead home the woman whom Greece will reclaim with many a soldier having joined in an oath to destroy your marriage and Priam’s ancient kingdom. Alas, alas, how much sweat is there for horses and for men, how many deaths you bring to the Trojan race. Already Pallas prepares her helmet, shield, chariot, and rage.”

(Hor. Carm. 1.15.1-12)

Nereus’ warning to Paris as he crosses back to Troy makes an interesting sequel to Horace’s warning to Vergil on his metaphorical voyage East. It is easy to wonder whether longing for a Greek muse is just as dangerous for a Roman as abducting Helen was for a Trojan.
The combination of *Odes* 1.3 and 1.15, then, works to imply in retrospect that Vergil rewriting the story of Troy is dangerously close to retracing Paris’ fateful sea journey that led to Troy’s fall. Moreover, delving too deeply into Greek learning is not simply a metaphorical poetic danger of wrestling with Homer. It matches up with a concrete and palpable anxiety at Rome, over how not to replay Troy’s past at Rome. As A. Feldherr has well explained, Greek learning offered simultaneously a membership into an elite Roman society and also a threat to that society.\(^{180}\) It was Horace who most famously expressed the paradoxical power of Greece over the more powerful Rome in his line, *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit* (*Epist.* 2.1.156). The ambivalence over the desire for Greek learning and culture reflects the contemporary first century feeling that while Greek learning makes Rome more sophisticated it is also somehow effeminizing. As Sallust complained in his introduction to the *Bellum Catilinae* (11), exposure to spoils of the wealthy East threatened an idealized Roman way of life and caused the veterans of Sulla’s army to covet a softer way of life:

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huc accedebat quod L. Sulla exercitum quem in Asia ductaverat, quo sibi fidum faceret, contra morem maiorum luxuriose nimisque liberaliter habuerat. Loca amoena, voluptaria facile in otio ferocis militum animos molliverant. Ibi primum insuevit exercitus populi Romani amare, potare, signa tabulas pictas vasa caelata mirari, ea privatim et publice rapere, delubra spoliare, sacra profanaque omnia polluere.
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In addition, so that he might make firm the loyalty of the army that he had led into Asia, he had treated them indulgently and with too much freedom, against the custom of the ancestors. In leisure, the lovely and voluptuous settings had easily softened the bold spirits of the soldiers. There an army of Roman people first grew accustomed to love, to drink, to wonder at statues, paintings, and embossed vases, to snatch them up in private and in public, to plunder shrines, and to pollute everything both sacred and profane. (Sall. *Cat.* 11.5-6)

The worries of Horace and Catullus over reaching for a Greek muse in poetry, then, mirror the contemporary concern outside of literature over reaching for Greek material objects. Just as Vergil’s reach for a Homeric epic muse threatens to end in shipwreck as it replays Paris’ journey, Eastern finery threaten to reverse the *translatio imperii* that made the Trojans into Romans.

**Conclusion:**

As we have seen in the last section of this chapter, there was a busy debate over which sea-voyage could actually bear the blame for sparking the Trojan War and the fall of Troy. From different perspectives, the instigation of the Trojan War can move backward and forward in time. The debate poses the troubling question of how any narrative can be told accurately and fully if the aetiology of the Trojan War cannot even be pinpointed. As we have seen again and again in our investigation of Catullus and later interpretations of Catullus, it was Troy’s ability to generate so many contradictory readings that made it such an attractive topic for a poet such as Catullus, who was obsessed with problems of narration. Troy worked in Catullus’ poetry as a place that destabilized and sometimes erased the distinctions between even the most disparate concepts.

For Catullus, the Trojan landscape somehow straddles not only the geographical and temporal distinctions familiar from Chapter One between East and West and the Heroic and Iron Age. The list grows to include the distinctions between male and female, public and private, home and away, and life and death. But it is not any one

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aspect of Troy’s multivalence that seems to attract Catullus over another. It is instead
the grouping together of so many manifestations of Troy’s ability to act as a knife’s-
edge that captured Catullus’ imagination and laid the groundwork for the many
allusions to Catullus that recur in the Trojan narratives of later Roman poets.

Yet Catullus’ use of Rome’s foundation myth to interrogate the reliability of
narratives in general also meant that the poet implicitly questions the stability of any
one-sided interpretation of Rome’s beginnings in Troy. Catullus, is, therefore,
implicitly complicating the Ennian tactic of taming Troy’s double edge. Rather than
choosing one line on Rome’s Trojan past, Catullus emphasizes every one of Troy’s
ambivalences, bringing out and questioning the extreme flexibility of any Trojan
narrative, and, inevitably, of Rome’s own foundation stories. This change in attitude
toward Troy will evolve further in the Augustan Age, where using the ambivalence of
the Trojan past to debate Rome’s future becomes a key part of reacting to Augustus
himself.
Chapter 3
The Memory of Troy in Augustan Poetry

Part One: Writing Augustus’ Troy

Like his adoptive father, Julius Caesar, Octavian took pains to present himself as a descendant of Trojan Aeneas. The forum of Julius Caesar had centered around a temple to Venus, the mother of Aeneas, grandmother of Aeneas’ son Iulus, and, therefore, the genetrix of the entire Julian line. Octavian, having adopted the title Augustus, designed his new imperial forum to commemorate the Trojan lineage that he and Rome shared. At the focal point of Augustus’ forum was the Temple of Mars Ultor, designed to lead every visitor through a tour of Rome’s great heroes. Statuary of successful generals and statesmen lined the porticos and exedras of the temple. The statuary led back in time to picture Romulus, the son of Mars, and the rest of Rome’s Alban kings, before finally featuring Trojan Aeneas and his mother Venus, the original progenitor of both the Roman race and Augustus himself, the leader of Rome. The forum’s design established a powerful parallelism between Augustus and the city of Rome, since both the princeps and his city could be traced back to the same hero, Aeneas, and it necessarily emphasized that the origin of both Rome and its leading citizen lay in Troy, the sacked city from which Aeneas escaped.\(^{182}\)

In the previous chapter, we saw how Catullus’ choice to feature Troy in the intricate narrative games of his longer poems helped to make Troy into a symbol of narrative complexity and the power of competing focalizations. We saw also that playing up the ambivalences and double-edged moments of Trojan stories implicated not only Troy’s role in literary history as Homer’s original subject matter but also Troy’s role in Rome’s cultural memory as the mother-city of Aeneas and his men. Questioning the reliability of any one version of Troy’s narrative also undermines any stable reading of Rome’s link to Troy. In the Augustan Age, the ambivalence of Rome’s Trojan past gained more traction by directly implicating the “Trojan” Augustus himself. In particular, remembering Trojan stories became a way of reflecting on the causes and outcome of the recent civil wars that put Augustus in power. As Octavian and Antony waged the third civil war marking the end of the Republic, poets connected Rome’s recurring need to start over after civil war with the city’s original rebirth after the sack of Troy.

Perhaps the most well known connection between Troy’s fall and Rome’s civil wars is Vergil’s modeling of Priam’s death in Aeneid 2 after Pompey’s death. As Servius first remarked, the image of Priam’s headless trunk lying nameless on the shore of Troy calls up the memory of Pompey’s similar fate on the shores of Egypt. Lucan’s description of Pompey’s headless body left unburied and unremembered certainly recalls Vergil’s Priam, and J. Moles (1982) and L. Morgan (2000) have argued that the descriptions of the two deaths both take as their model Asinius Pollio’s account of
Pompey’s demise. Morgan (2000: 69) concludes his important article with the convincing thought that Vergil links Pompey and Priam as a way of painting both the fall of Troy and the civil wars as “sacrificial precondition” and a “necessary prerequisite” for the rise of an Augustan Rome. Morgan suggests that this link between Troy and the civil is meant to support an “(ultimately) triumphant narrative of Augustan success.” This reading is very attractive, because the story of Rome’s rise out of Troy’s fall might well seem parallel to the rise of Augustus’ new golden age out of the ruins of the civil wars at Rome. Still, seeing the recent civil war as a replay of Troy’s fall is not an obviously comforting thought, and although poets under Augustus seem uniformly to link Troy and Rome’s civil wars, they differ greatly in how they use that connection, and, often, it seems that a single poet’s point of view on the issue can shift over the course of his career as well.

This chapter investigates how Roman poets recast the relationship of Troy and Rome in response to the recovery from civil war and the establishment of the Principate. D. Quint (1993: ch. 1) has demonstrated the Aeneid’s struggle to break through a circular narrative that replays Troy and to construct instead a teleological narrative fitting for an epic poem. Quint’s argument is convincing in many ways, but C. Kraus’ (1994) work on Livy has shown that this need to escape repetition of the past is not unique to epic form. Even as a historian, Livy too must find a way to release his Rome from Troy. We will see that Vergil’s Aeneas struggles to escape replaying his past not simply because it is the norm for epic poetry to fight narrative circularity but

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also because Aeneas’ Trojan identity carries with it, in any genre, the danger of inescapable repetition. The struggle to break free from past narratives can be characterized not just as an epic problem, but also as a particularly Trojan one, and, as we will see, an Augustan preoccupation.

As Augustus began to strengthen his new regime while also styling it as a continuation of the past Republic, negotiating the relationship of past, present, and future became a chief concern for poets at the beginning of the Principate. For a poet of the Augustan age, Rome’s parallel Trojan narrative threatened more than ever not just to exist alongside Roman stories but also to take them over. Troy opens up an alternate world-view that reminds readers that Romans were once Trojan Easterners who fell to an army of Western Greeks, and this reminder of Rome’s origins at Troy could also serve as a warning for the near future. At the same time, this slippage between Trojan past and Roman present offered an effective way of positioning the turmoil of the civil wars and the rise of Augustus as a return to Rome’s roots. Reconfiguring the memory of Troy offered a multitude of ways both to tie the changes of the first century to the past and to integrate the recent civil wars into Rome’s narrative. Choosing how to manage the gap between Rome’s present and its Trojan past—whether to emphasize or elide that gap—gave Augustan poets a subtle yet instantly recognizable way of expressing their views on contemporary Rome. Crucially, poets could not separate these political and cultural uses of Troy at Rome during the Augustan Age from Troy’s literary role as the premiere subject of poetry. A guiding theme in this chapter will be to trace how Troy’s double role in history and poetry allowed poets to use literary memory to reflect changes in cultural memory—to use the textual phenomenon of
allusion to mirror the pull between past and future that features so largely in Augustan memories of Troy.

We will start, in the first part of this chapter, by reviewing the several different ways in which Rome’s trouble with civil war could be seen as an inheritance from Troy. Then, we will be able to turn our attention to how poets redefined the Trojan past in answer to the fear that there could be no secure end to Rome’s cycle of violence. Troy’s tendency to destabilize temporal and geographical boundaries offered Roman poets a way to cast civil wars as victories against foreign influences from both the East and their own past. Poets emphasized a split in Rome’s Trojan past between Aeneas, who led his men West out of Troy and into the future, and Priam, who was so locked in the past that, even though he was king of Troy, he would always remain a foreigner at Rome. Augustus had relied on Antony’s image as a foreign dynast to help characterize the civil war as a defense against the encroaching East. The poets, however, show how defeating Antony could be seen as a victory not only against outsiders but also against Rome’s own past at Troy.

At the same time, as we will see in the second part of this chapter, Augustan poets continually point out the artificiality and unreliability of their own ways of reimagining the Trojan past to fit the Roman present. Ovid in particular pushes these confusions to their limit by presenting Rome’s empire as the grand telos of the universal narrative of the Metamorphoses, a poem that repeatedly insists on the instability and changeable nature of power. We will end by revisiting how Augustan redefinitions of the Trojan past play out on a metapoetic level as Rome’s potential to escape the shadow
of its Trojan predecessor is paralleled by the potential of Roman poetry to escape the shadow of Homer’s treatment of Troy.

_Troy as a symbol for civil war_

It may seem perfectly natural to a classicist brought up on Vergil to associate Rome’s Trojan origins with the civil wars of the Republic. In his _Georgics_ (1.498-502), Vergil blames an ancestral Trojan curse for the cycle of civil violence at Rome, and the end of the _Aeneid_ is commonly understood as a proleptic civil or social war between the native Italians and the Trojans who would soon become Italians. Yet, it is worth stepping back to consider how and why Troy worked as such a compelling symbol of Rome’s struggle with civil war. We will start with some of the more evident reasons for the connection between Troy and civil war: the ready analogy that Troy offered for Rome’s recovery from the ruins of the Republic and the causal link between Trojan perjuries which cursed descendants of Troy to cycles of violence. We must also take into account, however, the way in which Troy’s fall confuses the geographical and temporal distinctions that separate Rome both from its Eastern foes and from its own past in vanquished Troy. Augustan poets used these confusions to show how loose the distinction was at Rome between foreign and civil war and how a civil war, which might seem undesirable, is sometimes a productive way of ending one chapter and beginning another.

The most readily apparent reason for the association of Troy and the Republic’s internal violence was the perfect analogy that Trojan myth offered for the contemporary circumstances of the first century BC. It was easy to draw on Rome’s initial rise out of
Troy as a parallel for the re-foundations of Rome after civil war. At the same time, the question of whether Rome could itself escape a replay of Troy’s faterecurred in the worry over whether Augustus could securely conclude the cycle of violence at Rome. Was Rome doomed to replay its own defeat even in the absence of a powerful foreign enemy, or were these re-foundings after civil war a necessary step for the development of Augustan empire, just as the fall of Troy paved the way for Aeneas’ journey West? Poets strengthened these analogies further by emphasizing a direct causal relationship between the fall of Troy and Rome’s history of civil wars. We can first look to Horace, who emphasizes the recurring nature of Rome’s internal strife, beginning his *Epode* 16 with the famous statement: *Altera iam teritur bellis civilibus aetas, / suis et ipsa Roma viribus ruit* (another generation is now being worn down with civil wars, and Rome herself rushes to ruin by her own power, 1-2). In *Epode* 7, when Horace berates his countrymen for rushing off once again to civil war, he offers only one possible explanation for their actions. Horace traces the origin of Rome’s ancestral curse as far back as the foundational moment of fratricide when Romulus killed Remus.

\begin{quote}
\textit{sic est: acerba fata Romanos agunt}
\textit{scelusque fraternae necis,}
\textit{ut inmerentis fluxit in terram Remi}
\textit{sacer nepotibus cruor.}
\end{quote}

So it is: bitter fates drive on the Romans and the crime of a brother’s slaughter, since the blood of blameless Remus flowed onto the ground as a curse on posterity. (Hor. *Epod.* 7.17-20)

The explanation of this ancestral curse in Vergil’s *Georgics*, however, locates the original moment even further back in time. The murder of Remus was not the

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184 Erskine 2001: 15.
origin of Rome’s future fraternal violence but rather the result itself of an earlier
moment of deception in Rome’s Trojan past.

So Philippi saw for a second time Roman armies battle with matching weapons;
nor was it intolerable to the gods that Emathia and the wide Balkan fields should
grow rich twice with our blood… Ancestral and native gods, and Romulus and
mother Vesta, you who guard Tuscan Tiber and the Roman Palatine, at least do
not keep this young man from rescuing a ruined generation. Long enough now
have we paid with our blood for the perjuries of Laomedon at Troy.

(Verg. G. 1.489-502)

Vergil stretches the geographical truth a bit in order to claim that Philippi had twice
seen Roman battle lines set up against each other, and the detail that each side bore
“equally-matched weapons” only emphasizes the contradiction of civil war, in which
the two sides are indistinguishable. 185 Vergil’s stress on the repetitive nature of the civil
wars leads up to his plea for the gods not to stand in Octavian’s way as he sets out to
rescue Rome from beginning the cycle once again, and Vergil justifies his prayer by
arguing that Rome has already been sufficiently punished for Laomedon’s perjuries at
Troy. This passage explicitly traces the cycle of Roman self-destruction back to the
Trojan king’s refusal to reward the gods for their help in building Troy’s walls.

185 Lucan, Manilius, and Ovid understood these lines as referring to the battles of
Philippi in 42 BC and Pharsalus in 48 BC. Philippi and Pharsalus seem to have been
close enough to each other to give rise to this poetic invention of two major civil war
battles fought on the same field.
Vergil’s vision of the civil wars as the result of a Trojan curse, however, leads to a potential paradox. The authority of the iuvenis, Octavian, whom Vergil calls upon to end the cycle of Trojan inspired civil-violence comes both from his family’s unbroken Trojan lineage and his victory in civil war. In other words, Octavian garners praise for putting an end to the very cycles that led to his rise to power. Vergil’s prayer asks, then, not just for the end of the cycles of civil war but specifically for an end that justifies the wars as a necessary step toward the rise of Augustus.

We might wonder, however, why the cycle of destruction that Laomedon supposedly initiated for Troy and its Roman descendants came to be labeled as specifically civil violence, directed internally against the self. It is clear that Rome’s birth out of the ashes of Troy threatens to tie the city forever to bloodshed, since Rome’s very beginnings were already violent endings, but these recurring cycles of violence are not obviously doomed to be fraternal. After all, Troy did not fall, as Thebes had done once, in civil war; instead, it was vanquished by the Greek army. It is true that the contemporary circumstances of the repeated civil wars at the end of the Republic might have suggested this myth of an ancestral curse dooming Rome to pay through civil war for its ancestor’s perjury. One might also read the act of pulling the Trojan horse into the Troy and inviting in the hidden Greek soldiers as a kind of self-destruction, a symbol of how a city’s pride can serve as its own undoing.

Still another way of looking at the causal connection between Troy’s fall and civil war is to focus on the consequences of Aeneas’ journey West. The fall of Troy effectively reversed East and West when the defeated Easterners, the Trojans, journeyed to found a new city further West than the Greeks, who had played the role of
Westerners in the Trojan War. Remembering that the Roman Westerners had once been paragons of the East gives a palimpsestic feel to the geography of the Mediterranean. When the Western Romans later engaged and conquered Eastern powers, they were in some senses fighting against a version of their old Trojan selves. This paradox is most obvious when Pompey stages in 55 BC an *Agamemnon* that puts on stage his own spoils from Eastern campaigns in the role of Troy’s riches.

*What Aeneas remembers*

How to remember Troy, and which parts of Rome’s Trojan heritage should be remembered, was a crucial question both for Augustan poets and for Augustus himself. Since a Roman’s memory of the recent civil wars was tied in part to the way he conceived of Troy, there was much at stake in teaching how best to think about the Trojan past. Aeneas in Vergil’s *Aeneid* seems at times to shade into an Antony figure when he considers remaining in Dido’s Eastern court or trying to recreate Troy. Yet, his sense of duty and fate forces him to leave Dido’s luxurious palace and seek out his future at Rome. As Quint and others have argued, Trojan survivors in the *Aeneid* spend the epic learning that they cannot simply set up a new Troy as an empty echo of the razed city. Each city that Aeneas founds as a new Troy fails, and Aeneas must eventually forget Troy enough to found an entirely new city, blending Trojan survivors and Italian natives.

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But learning not to want to imitate Troy is only half the battle. The horror of the civil wars comes in large part from Rome’s unconscious and seemingly inevitable repetition of Trojan patterns. Yet if the Romans must forget about Troy to make room for the new city of Rome, there is still the danger that they will repeat Trojan mistakes not out of a desire to replicate Troy, but rather out of ignorance. The memory of Troy, then, is paradoxically both harmful and helpful as it seems both to bind Rome to it in a self-fulfilling prophecy, but also to warn Rome away from repeating the same mistakes. It is important, too, to keep in mind how this literary play with how a foundational narrative must simultaneously be forgotten and remembered reflects the difficulty surrounding issues of memory in Augustus’ Rome, where Augustus paradoxically appealed to a collective nostalgia for the glorious Roman past in order to justify his changes to its core structure.

In *Aeneid* 4, as Aeneas forces himself to resist the appeal of Dido’s court, which so resembles Priam’s palace at Troy, the decision inaugurates a crucial shift in Aeneas’ memory of the Trojan past. It will be worth taking time to consider how Vergil signals this important moment in Book 4, and we will find that Vergil’s well-known use of poetic memory (allusion) in the Dido story draws attention to Aeneas’ evolving understanding of how to construct a cultural memory for his new city. Dido uses allusion to try to paint Aeneas as a Theseus-like hero who forgets even his most sacred vows, like so many heroes before him. But Dido’s failed attempts only work to highlight how Aeneas has removed himself from the cycle of heroes who are forgetful of their duties. Aeneas’ decision to leave Dido stems not from forgetfulness but rather from his attempt to be mindful of the collective Roman future of his men.
Dido’s rhetoric as she reviles Aeneas draws strength from her sustained allusion to Catullus 64’s Ariadne, another mythic heroine who sacrifices everything only to be abandoned by her forgetful lover. And the laments of Ariadne, herself, gain extra poignancy from Catullus’ constant reminders in Poem 64 of the story of Medea, yet another woman forgotten by the very foreigner she betrayed her family to help. Dido, then, becomes more than a single woman betrayed by a faithless man—she is the latest incarnation of an age-old cycle of heroes who forget about the women who gave up everything to help them.

It is well known that Dido in Aeneid 4 is another Ariadne, and, by extension, another Medea of sorts. Our focus on Aeneas’ memory of the past, however, will bring out a new twist in this familiar story: Dido may want us to see her as another Ariadne and Aeneas as another forgetful Theseus, but Vergil allows us to see how Dido’s echoes of Ariadne are misleading. Dido’s juxtaposition of Aeneas and Theseus in fact shows the differences instead of the similarities between the two heroes. While Theseus leaves Ariadne because he is forgetful of his love for her, Aeneas leaves Carthage precisely because he is not forgetful of his duties to found Rome. It is not enough to say, however, that Dido’s recourse to poetic memory to vilify Aeneas for his broken promises has failed. We will also see how Dido’s failure to understand Aeneas’ reason for leaving is useful for the reader of the Aeneid because it draws attention to an important shift in Aeneas’ conception of memory. To Aeneas, memory is becoming something that has less to do with the individual than with the community and, oddly enough, less to do with the past than with the future. Vergil’s use of poetic memory in
the form of allusion, then, allows him to comment on the political and cultural roles of memory at Rome.

We can start by looking more closely at Dido’s attempt to slot herself in as another Ariadne and Aeneas as another Theseus. When she learns that Aeneas is set on leaving her without delay, Dido laments, *felix, heu! Nimium felix, si litora tantum / numquam Dardaniae tetigissent nostra carinae!* (I would have been happy, alas, too happy, if only the Trojan ships had never touched our shores, *Aen.* 4.657-8). This counterfactual wish mimics Ariadne’s regret that foreign ships had touched her shores in Catullus 64:

> Iuppiter omnipotens, utinam ne tempore primo  
> Cnosia Cecropiae tetigissent litora puppes,  
> indomito nec dira ferens stipendia tauro  
> perfidus intortum religasset navita funem...  
>  
> All-powerful Jupiter, would that the Attic ships had never touched Crete’s shores and that the faithless sailor bearing the harsh tribute to the savage bull had never fastened his ship’s cable in Crete. (Catull. 64.171-4)

And this wish (*utinam ne*) that foreign ships had never arrived is also familiar from Euripides’ *Medea* as well as from Ennius’ *Medea*, where the nurse begins the play with her wish that the Argo had never even been built; and from Apollonius Rhodius, where Medea herself speaks the famous counterfactual.¹⁸⁷

Yet Dido does not simply rely on the traditional wish that foreign ships had never touched her shores to make the connection. In her denunciation of Aeneas, she deploys the word *perfide* in the same position in the hexameter as Ariadne did in Catullus 64.¹⁸⁸ Dido questions the departing Aeneas: *dissimulare etiam sperasti,*

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perfide, tantum / posse nefas tacitusque mea decedere terra (faithless one, did you really hope to be able to hide such a crime and to abandon my land in silence, Aen. 4.305-6)? The question echoes Ariadne’s similar challenge to her absent lover, Theseus:

sicine me patriis avectam, perfide, ab aris,
perfide, deserto liquisti in litore, Theseu?
sicine discedens neglecto numine divum
immemor ah devota domum periuria portas?

Faithless one, have you left me thus carried away from my home, faithless Theseus, on a deserted shore? Leaving me like this, with the will of the gods forgotten, ah forgetful one, do you thus carry home accursed perjuries? (Catull. 64.132-5)

The repetition of perfide at the beginning of the second line in Catullus does not immediately appear in Vergil’s version, but, as J. Wills (1997: 26-7) has pointed out, a few lines later, we get perfide once again, and it is, as expected, placed at the opening of the line this time to match the second perfide from Ariadne’s lament.

nec tibi diva parens generis nec Dardanus auctor,
perfide, sed duris genuit te cautibus horrens
Caucasus Hycanaeque admorunt ubera tigres.

Faithless one, neither was a goddess your parent nor was Dardanus the author of your race. (Aen. 4.365-7)

If we look back for a moment at the two lines that follow that original repetition of perfide in Catullus 64, we find two more key words that appear again and again in Ariadne’s speeches: immemor and periuria.

sicine discedens neglecto numine divum
immemor ah devota domum periuria portas?

Abandoning me, with the will of the gods forgotten, ah forgetful one, do you thus carry home accursed perjuries? (Catull. 64.134-5)
This is neither the first nor the last time that Ariadne will accuse Theseus of being forgetful. Ten lines earlier in her lament, she accused the hero of leaving her with an *immemori...pectore* and fifty lines before that, the narrator already calls Theseus an *immemor iuvenes* as he strikes the waters of the sea with his oars, propelling his ship away from Ariadne as she looks on from the beach. Finally, after Theseus has abandoned Ariadne, he is still forgetful, especially when, with his *oblito...pectore*, he fails to remember the promise he made to his father to change the color of his ship’s sails, and, so, leads his father to suicide. Men, according to Ariadne, say whatever they need to say to satisfy their desires, and they don’t fear to perjure themselves or bother to remember what they have said.

> Sed simul ac cupidae mentis satiata libidost, 
dicta nihil meminere, nihil periuria curant.

But as soon as the desire of their lustful mind is satisfied, they neither remember what was said nor care about their perjuries. (Catull. 64.147-8)

This *periuria* typical of heroic men reappears in Dido’s complaints against Aeneas, whom she sees as showing his Trojan ancestry in the shameless way that he goes back on his promises. She says to herself, *perdita, necdum / Laomedontae sentis periuria gentis* (lost one, do you not yet perceive the perjuries of the Trojan race, *Aen*. 4.541-2)?

Again and again, Dido’s words echo Ariadne’s and try to slot the Trojan ships of Aeneas into the growing list of ships whose sailing we are meant to regret: the Argo, Theseus’ ship, and even Paris’ ship, which began the Trojan War. Dido never uses the key word *immemor* herself; instead, she allows her constant references to Ariadne implicitly to accuse Aeneas of Theseus’ most central fault: forgetfulness. And everyone

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around Dido seems to use that one key word *memor* that she omits but alludes to constantly. Aeneas himself picks up on Dido’s implied criticism of his memory when he assures the queen repeatedly that he will not forget her: *nec me meminisse pigebit Elissae, / dum memor ipse mei, dum spiritus hos regit artus* (nor will it shame me to remember Elissa, while I have memory of myself, and while breath rules these limbs, *Aen. 4.336-7*).

Aeneas’ protests remind us that remembering duty (not forgetting it) is, in fact, the reason that he leaves Dido. Unlike Theseus who left Ariadne because he was forgetful of his love for her, Aeneas is leaving precisely because he is no longer forgetful of his duty to fate. In the world of the *Aeneid*, personal, erotic love is so far from the appropriate subject for memory that it can actually be blamed for causing forgetfulness. It is in *Aeneid* 4 that we encounter Jupiter’s opinion of memory among lovers, and it is diametrically opposed to Ariadne’s opinion in Catullus 64. To Ariadne, the faithless lover Theseus is *immemor* but to Jupiter in *Aeneid* 4 it is the faithful lover Aeneas who seems *immemor*, and abandoning Dido is the only way for Aeneas to stop being forgetful.

*Fama* is the first to accuse the lovers of forgetfulness. Dido and Aeneas are *regnorum immemores turpique cupidine captos* (forgetful of their kingdoms and captured by disgraceful passion, *Aen. 4.193-4*). Mercury, too, when he is sent down to remind Aeneas of his duty, reproaches Aeneas for being forgetful while he is in love:

…*tu nunc Karthaginis altae
fundamenta locas pulchramque uxorius urbem
exstruis? heu, regni rerumque oblite tuarum!*
…are you now laying the foundations of high Carthage and are you, in your wife’s service, building up a beautiful city? Alas, you are forgetful of your kingdom and your fates!  

(Aen. 4.265-7)

Jupiter himself expresses this same sentiment:

audiit Omnipotens, oculosque ad moenia torsit regia et oblitos famae melioris amantis. 
tum sic Mercurium adloquitur ac talia mandat: “vade age, nate, voca Zephyros et labere pennis Dardanumque ducem, Tyria Karthagine qui nunc exspectat fatisque datas non respicit urbes, adloquere et celeris defer mea dicta per auras.”

Jupiter heard him, and turned his eyes toward the regal walls and lovers forgetful of their better fame. Then he speaks thus to Mercury and gives these orders: “Go on, son, call the Zephyrs and glide on your wings and speak to the Trojan leader who now awaits Tyrian cities in Carthage and does not look to the cities given to him by the fates, and carry down my words through the swift breezes.”  

(Aen. 4.220-26)

So, not only is Aeneas not _inmemor_ like Theseus, but the subject of which he should be mindful has changed as well. Theseus was forgetful of his love for Ariadne when he left her in Catullus 64, but Aeneas is mindful of his civic duty rather than his love for Dido.  

Aeneas has begun to subscribe to a form of memory that focuses on national rather than personal concerns. And perhaps more importantly, Aeneas’ new form of memory looks to the future as much as to the past. This change in the directionality of memory is apparent in the idea that what Aeneas remembers as he leaves Carthage is the prophesied rise of the Rome yet to come. The word _respicit_ in Jupiter’s speech helpfully encapsulates for us the type of bi-directional memory that Aeneas needs to develop as he makes his way from Troy to Italy. _Respicit_ has the double meaning of

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190 Commentators since Servius have offered this interpretation of the Dido episode as a dramatization of the victory of civic responsibility over private loves. For more on Aeneas’ need to replace personal love with patriotism, see Williams 1968: 383-6. For the conflict between Dido’s emphasis on the individual “at the expense of the supra-personal historical elements” in motion in the _Aeneid_, see Feeney 1998: 117-19.
looking back on the past, and also providing for the future. Aeneas’ love for Dido threatens to take away his mindfulness of both his Trojan past and his Roman future.

It is no accident that the means by which Vergil highlights this change in Aeneas’ conception of cultural memory is Dido’s use of poetic memory. It is the recollection of Catullus’ earlier poem that generates the clash between Dido’s mistaken view of Aeneas as forgetful of his past attachments and our understanding of him as mindful of the future. As A. Barchiesi (1993) has explained, much of the appeal of literary allusions exists in the way they reverse the temporal relationship between the poet who is alluded to and poet who does the alluding. In other words, the later poet writes after the original poet whom he cites, and so this later poet writes his poetry in reaction to or on the basis of the earlier poem. But we as readers recognizing an allusion must necessarily reverse this process because we travel backwards in time, being reminded in the later poem of the earlier one. The bidirectionality of poetic memory, then, makes it the perfect tool to reflect the reversals of past and future that can complicate cultural memory as well. In this narrative of Rome’s foundation, it is especially important to recognize that memory, like allusion, ensures continuity because it works both backwards and forwards in time: When we remember the story of the settlement of Italy by Aeneas and his fellow Trojans, we are not only reminding ourselves of the past but also projecting that past into the future by reminding ourselves of the type of future we want to head toward. Moreover, just as an allusion in a later text can retroactively change our understanding of the original poem alluded to, shifting political and cultural circumstances can reach back to redefine what we remember from our foundation stories and how we interpret those memories. Cultural memory and
poetic memory of Rome’s foundational moments after the fall of Troy, then, works similarly backwards and forwards, stretching out alternately to define the future based on the past or to redefine the past based on future or present circumstances.

The focus on the change in both the subject matter and the directionality of Aeneas’ memory (from the past to the future and from his erotic desires to the collective destiny of his followers) seems keyed to match the manipulations of memory that recent scholarship has shown to be of such importance in Augustus’ Rome. Scholars have grown increasingly attuned to how Augustus justified his changes to the Republican system by styling them as restorations of older practices. The most striking example of Augustus’ technique of rewriting the past to match the future is his Forum’s sculptural program of famous Romans, which securely locates Augustus and his adoptive father in a continuous line of Roman heroes reaching all the way back to Troy and Aeneas. Even as Augustus breaks with tradition in becoming a one-man center of authority at Rome, he also characterizes himself as the continuation of the Republican tradition of heroic statesmen.

Especially because so much was at stake under Augustus in how Romans recollected the past civil wars, memory of Troy became less a way of commemorating the past as a tool for shaping the future. After Actium, Octavian was able to use the propaganda machine he had built against Antony to equate his victory in civil war with victory in foreign war. Augustus had painted Antony as an Eastern despot, debauched, and enslaved by Cleopatra, who might even have convinced him to move Rome’s

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capital once again into the East.\textsuperscript{192} The Battle of Actium could, then, be viewed as a second Salamis, where another threat from the East was averted—the threat that Rome might fall under the spell of a new Paris.\textsuperscript{193} Augustus’ paradoxical use of memory to justify the civil wars can be summed up in his need to downplay the reasons behind Caesar’s assassination while still using that assassination itself to justify his authority as avenger of his father’s death.\textsuperscript{194} In the hands of Augustus, it seems that memory could be modified, emended, and excised without being considered misleading as long as it guided in the right direction for the future. Personal recollections yielded to a revised collective memory, which could be re-engineered to provide continuity into the future.

When Dido fails to fit Aeneas into the genealogy of forgetful wanderers, she unwittingly highlights how Aeneas has extracted himself from that cycle. Aeneas separates himself from his romantic entanglement not because he forgets the past but rather because he remembers the future. When Aeneas promises to remember Dido even as he leaves her, he also admits that he would rather not follow his fate to found a new city in Italy.

\begin{flushright}
\text{\ldots nec me meminisse pigebit Elissae}
\text{dum memor ipse mei, dum spiritus hos regit artus.}
\text{pro re pauc\ae\ loquar. neque ego hanc abscondere furto speravi (ne finge) fugam, nec coniugis umquam praetendi taedas aut haec in foedera veni.}
\text{me si fata meis paterentur ducere vitam}
\text{auspiciis et sponte mea componere curas,}
\text{urbem Troianam primum dulcisque meorum reliquias colerem, Priami tecta alta manerent,}
\end{flushright}

\textsuperscript{192} Dio Cass. 48.30 and 50.5. Antony presented himself as a “new Dionysus” and opened himself up to Octavian’s propaganda calling him un-Roman. Beacham (2005: 156-7) and Zanker (1988: 52, 57-65 and 348) describe how Antony was betrayed by his own image as an eastern dynast and his association with Egyptian Cleopatra.


\textsuperscript{194} Quint 1993: ch. 2, esp. 61 and 76.
et recidiva manu posuissem Pergama victis.

sed nunc Italian magnam Gryneus Apollo,
Italiam Lyciae iussere capessere sortes;
hic amor, haec patria est...

...Nor will it be bitter for me to remember Elissa as long as I have memory of myself, as long as breath rules these limbs. I will speak a few words about the situation. I did not hope (do not think it) to conceal my flight in secrecy, nor did I ever hold out the torches of a bridegroom or enter into those pacts. If the fates were allowing me to lead my life according to my own wishes and to arrange my cares the way I wanted to, I would tend the city of Troy and the sweet remains of my people, and Priam’s high house would remain, and I would have set up with my own hand a revived Troy for the conquered. But now Grynean Apollo has ordered me to pursue great Italy—Italy and the oracles of Apollo; this is my love, this is my homeland.  

(Aen. 4.335-47)

Aeneas would prefer, if he were able, to set a new Troy and to build again Priam’s high house. Yet just as Aeneas understands that cannot live his life as a Priam himself in Dido’s gilded palace, he also understands that there can be no recidiva...Pergama. 

Any personal amor of his will be redirected to his new duty as leader of the former Trojans, and his patria is no longer Troy but Italy. The first phrase of line 347, hic amor, haec patria est, links Aeneas’ realization that he must give up his attachment to Dido with his understanding that he must also give up much of his attachment to Troy. The shift from focusing on past Troy to looking ahead to Latium also requires Aeneas to replace any personal desires with the collective mission of the Trojan exiles.

Homer’s Odyssey 10 recounts how Odysseus’ men convince him to leave Circe after a year and continue toward his home in Ithaca by pleading with him to remember (μιμνήσκεο) the land he left—his native land and his wife and son that we know he left there. 

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196 Clausen 2002: 82.
δαμόνι', ἣδη νῦν μμήσκεο πατρίδος αἰής,
εἰ τοι θεοφατόν ἐστι σαωθήναι καὶ ἰκέσθαι
οἶχον ἐὕκτίμενον καὶ σήν ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν.

Leader, remember now your fatherland, if it is fated for you to arrive safely at your well-built house and at your fatherland. (Hom. Od. 10.469-74)

In the similar situation of Aeneid 4, Aeneas is asked by the gods to leave Dido not because he remembers his previous home, wife and son, but because he must remember the land he has yet to get to—his future homeland, future wife and not just his son, but the city that his descendents will soon found at Rome.

Aeneas evolves from a man who carried his father to safety on his shoulders into a national hero who shoulders a shield depicting Rome’s national history. From the perspective of Aeneas, of course, the shield depicts Rome’s future rather than its history, and so the image dramatizes Aeneas’ change in focus from carrying his personal past to supporting the future of the community as a whole.197 As Conte (1986: 180-1) argues, the subjective aspect of Aeneas’ character occasionally shows through behind his commitment to his fated role as epic hero. Conte further suggests that if we were to map these competing parts of Aeneas’ character temporally, we would see that his personal, subjective longings are directed to his own past, while his function as protagonist in an epic directs him forward into the future.

Since Aeneas is the mythical ancestor of Rome, this shift in his conception of memory becomes key to the emergence of Roman identity as told in the Aeneid.

Aeneas’ redirected memory reflects the progress that he and his men make toward

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197 Lyne (1987: 188-9) focuses on the tension between Aeneas’ personal story of familial loss at Troy’s sack and the national story of Troy and Rome. Lyne notes that it is the promise of a Trojan future that motivates Aeneas to preserve himself rather than the wishes of his wife Creusa.
breaking out of the Trojan past into a Roman future. In leaving Dido, Aeneas inverts the trope of the self-centered, forgetful hero as he works toward inaugurating a new set of civic-minded men who will value the collective memory of Rome over their own personal memories and commemorate the past always with an eye toward securing the future.

*The broader picture: Augustus’ Troy*

We are beginning to see how the memory of Trojan myth could be constructed to respond to the cycle of wars between Roman citizens as well as between Roman allies. Allowing collective interests to shape individual memory would be an especially important skill for the new citizens, especially Italian citizens, who found themselves a part of Rome after the Social War. The Trojan myth offers not only a touchstone for understanding the immediate past but also a way for members of different communities to accept a shared past that they can also remember. The memory of Troy could also be engineered to offer an answer to the troubling question of whether Augustus could safely keep the civil wars in the past. We can remember that Troy emerged as a powerful symbol of Rome’s civil wars not only because the fraudulence of Laomedon bound all Trojan descendants to cyclical replays of its destruction but also because Troy’s destruction could be seen as a necessary condition for the success of its descendants at Rome. Just as Octavian was emerging as the successful founder of a new order of stability and peace, it would have been especially appealing to reinterpret Rome’s history of violence as an interconnected series of self-sacrifices. If the civil wars were a necessary evil to bring Augustus to power, Troy’s fall might similarly be
read as a sacrifice to ensure Rome’s future prosperity just as Remus’ murder, according
to Propertius, ensured the strength of his brother’s walls.¹⁹⁸

The temple of Mars Ultor celebrating the victories of Augustus featured an
image of Aeneas fleeing Troy as well as Romulus bearing the *spolia opima*.¹⁹⁹ These
three figures were each city founders, but, especially in the wake of the *Aeneid*, it would
have been clear that they had all re-founded Rome with an act of civil violence.
Rome’s development out of Troy was, from the very beginning, a constant source of
conflict, and with the example of Aeneas’ war against the Latins in mind, we can see
how that conflict could be seen as inherently civil or self-directed. Not only did Aeneas
fight with his future countrymen before settling at Lavinium, but Romulus fought with
his brother, the first Romans abducted their wives and fought against their own fathers-
in-law, and when Rome supposedly destroyed Alba Longa, it was razing its founder
Romulus’ own city. The legends seem to dictate that for any growth to occur at Rome,
something must be destroyed.²⁰⁰ And, it seems that the entity needing to be destroyed
was often itself a part of Rome or an earlier version of Rome, like Troy and Alba. So,
Rome grew not only from conflict but specifically from civil conflict, which allowed
the city to be periodically re-founded and re-unified into a stronger whole.²⁰¹ Vergil’s
choice of the verb *condit* for Aeneas’ action of burying his sword in Turnus implies that

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¹⁹⁸ Prop. 3.9.50: *caeso moenia firma Remo*
²⁰⁰ The list of sacrifices made for Rome is a long one, but we can note especially: Troy, Creusa, Dido, Palinurus, Anchises, Deiphobus, Nisus and Euryalus, Lausus, Pallas, Turnus, Remus, Alba Longa, and Veii. See Clausen 1964a: 139-47; Galinsky 1996: 247; Hardie 1986: 348; Rossi 2010: 149. Morgan (2000: 69) argues that Vergil presents Troy’s fall as “a kind of sacrificial precondition for the rise of Rome and a very Augustan Rome at that.”
²⁰¹ Rossi 2003: 194.
Aeneas’ murderous action is also a foundational moment. Aeneas founds Lavinium with the blood of his alter ego, just as Romulus will later found Rome with the blood of his brother Romulus.

To support this reading of civil war as necessary violence, Augustan poets began to emphasize a split in Rome’s Trojan inheritance between Aeneas, who led his men West out of Troy and into the future, and Priam, who, though king of Troy, was so locked in the past that he would always seem foreign at Rome. Augustus’ Trojan connection is explicitly tied to Aeneas, who inaugurated Western move and not with Priam, the Eastern dynast. Horace’s later poems demonstrate the poet’s understanding of how carefully Augustus must choose which aspects of his and Rome’s shared Trojan past to stress and which to portray as regressive and un-Roman. Juno’s speech in Horace Odes 3.3 perfectly demonstrates the danger of replaying the Trojan narrative in terms of repeated civil wars. Before Juno agrees to deify Romulus, the descendant of her old enemy Aeneas, Juno makes sure that no Roman will ever attempt to rebuild Troy.

...'Ilion, Ilion
fatalis incestusque iudex
et mulier peregrina vertit

in pulverem, ex quo destituit deos
mercede pacta Laomedon, mihi
castaeque damnatum Minervae
cum populo et duce fraudulento.

iam nec Lacaenae splendet adulterae
famosus hospes nec Priami domus
periura pugnaces Achivos
Hectoreis opibus refringit,

nostrisque ductum seditionibus
bellum resedit: protinus et gravis
“The fateful and impure judge and the foreign woman turned Ilium to dust – Ilium, made over to me and chaste Minerva with its people and deceitful leader ever since Laomedon disappointed the gods in their promised pay. Now the infamous guest no longer gleams for his Spartan mistress, nor with Hector’s help does the perjured house of Priam check the fighting Achaeans, and the war, prolonged by our quarrels, has settled: now I will restore to Mars my fierce anger and my hated grandson, whom the Trojan priestess bore…But I speak the fates to the warlike Quirites only on this condition: Let them not wish, too loyal and confident, to rebuild the homes of ancestral Troy. Were Troy to be reborn, it would be under a mournful omen and its fate would be repeated with a dire disaster.”

(Hor. *Carm. 3.3.18-33 and 57-62*)

Juno warns the Romans not to look back to try to recreate Troy, but all the while, she obsessively harps on the Trojan past. Horace seems embarrassed by his character Juno’s inability to move on from Troy, even as she pushes the Romans to do so. He cuts her off abruptly, as if he were fighting to set back on track a poem that has swerved back into the past.

*(Non hoc iocosae conveniet lyrae; Quo, Musa, tendis? Desine pervicax referre sermones deorum et magna modis tenuare parvis.)*

This will not fit the joking lyre; at what, Muse, are you aiming? Leave off stubbornly reporting the discourse of the gods and lessening great matters with little measures. 

*(Carm. 3.3.69-72)*
Nisbet and Rudd (2004) suggest that 3.3 was written in response to some who might have been “canvassing proposals” to redevelop Troy as Suetonius reported was Julius Caesar’s plan (Suet. Iul. 79.2). Another possibility that Nisbet and Rudd report is that Troy in Ode 3.3 may function as a symbol of the Republic, especially of the materialism of the Republic and the civil wars that seemed to go hand in hand with so much extravagance. In this reading, Antony would be a new Paris, the fatalis incestusque iudex of line 19 and Cleopatra would be a new Helen, the mulier peregrina of line 20.202 Juno’s specific warning to avoid the influence of too much gold (49-52) would also make better sense in the context of a metaphor comparing how both Troy and the Roman Republic collapsed under the weight of their material splendor. Feeney (1984: 355-8) has argued that Juno’s stipulation of the end of Priam’s Troy in both Horace Odes 3.3 and Vergil’s Aeneid suggests that she made a similar request in Ennius’ Annales 1. Feeney agrees with Fraenkel (1957: 267) that Ode 3.3 cannot have simply been a reaction to a contemporary plan to revive Troy. Instead, Feeney argues convincingly that Horace’s Juno reflects a much more general fear of inheriting Troy’s vulnerability and corruption.203 Outgrowing Priam’s Troy promises to help Rome outgrow the less desirable aspects of its Trojan origins while still embracing the ingenuity, resilience, and future-directed focus of Trojan Aeneas.

Accordingly, Horace describes Aeneas in his Carmen Saeculare as a leader about to give his men more than they left behind:

203 Feeney 1984: 360. See also Thomas 1982b: 98. On Troia recidiva, see n. 195 above.
Roma si vestrum est opus Iliaeque
litus Etruscum tenuere turmae,
iussa pars mutare lares et urbem
sospite cursu,

cui per ardentem sine fraude Troiam
castus Aeneas patriae superstes
liberum muni vit iter, daturus
plura relictis…

If Rome is your work and if from Ilium the bands reached the Etruscan shore, those ordered to change their household gods and city in a favorable journey, those for whom pure Aeneas, survivor of his homeland, paved an open way without harm through burning Troy, about to give more than had been left behind. (Hor. Carm. saec. 37-44)

The future participle *daturus* is a perfect modifier for Aeneas, who from the fall of Troy on was devoted to paving the way for the future. The qualifying phrase *sine fraude* in line 41 may be directed at alternate versions of the Aeneas legend in which the hero was allowed to leave Troy only because he helped the Greek forces, but it also echoes the fraudulence of Laomedon who first initiated Troy’s troubles by deceiving the gods. Aeneas is specifically leading a group of Trojan survivors who are free from the stain of Troy’s ruling house. King Priam, and his father Laomedon, are left securely in the past (*relictis*), and *castus* Aeneas, and his descendant Augustus, look ahead to ensure Rome’s continuing success in the future. Splitting Rome’s Trojan inheritance into two strands, then, allows poets to equate Augustus with the forward-looking and resilient strand of Westernized Trojans while equating Antony instead with a regression back into the eastern wealth and decadence of Trojan Priam. Augustus had relied on Antony’s image as a foreign dynast to characterize the civil war as a defense against the encroaching East, but the poets take this further by also showing how defeating Antony was a victory against both foreign influences and Rome’s own Trojan past.
As Augustus rose to power, his ancestral connection to Troy was propaganda to be both stressed and overcome. Augustus certainly advertised aspects of the Trojan genealogy that he shared with Rome through their common ancestor, Aeneas.

Augustus’ grandsons participated in the recently revived *lusus Troiae*, and, as we have seen, Aeneas and Venus loom large in Augustan coinage and monuments.\(^{204}\) In the first century BC, Trojan genealogies grew so popular that Varro wrote the treatise *de Familis Trojanis* detailing how the most important families could be traced back to Troy like the Julians. The Cluentii, Sergii, Memmii, Mamilii, Aemilii, Iunii, Caecilii and Atii are just a few of the fifty *gentes* that would have featured in Varro’s work.\(^{205}\)

Originally, the Caecilii had traced their ancestry to a son of Vulcan, named Caeculus, but they soon abandoned Caeculus for the more fashionable Trojan Caecus, a comrade of Aeneas.\(^{206}\) The Memmii, too, who had once celebrated their link to a legendary king of Athens now connected themselves to the Trojan Mnesthus. The Atii, the family of Augustus’ mother, also claimed descent from Troy, and Vergil pays special attention to Ascanius’ special comrade Atys when he describes the foundation of the *lusus Troiae*.\(^{207}\)

At the same time, despite Troy’s rising popularity, celebrating Eastern connections could backfire at Rome as it had for Antony. Augustus had to strike a delicate balance that allowed him both to celebrate his Trojan ancestry and to denigrate Antony’s Eastern opulence. Octavian set himself up as the guardian who would keep

\(^{204}\) For the *lusus Troiae*, see Erskine 2001: 19-23; Weinstock 1971: 88-9. See also Dio Cass. 43.23.6, Suet. *Aug*. 43.2 and *Iul*. 39.2.

\(^{205}\) Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.85.3


Antony from reversing the work that Caesar’s ancestor Aeneas had done to help Rome naturalize itself as a Western power. By emphasizing his Trojan ancestor Aeneas’ role in Westernizing Rome and rebuilding it after the disaster of Troy, Octavian ensured that his own Eastern roots could only serve to help him. Antony’s Eastern associations, by contrast, represented regression and threatened to make Rome un-Roman. Antony himself, it was said, wished to be buried not at Rome but at Alexandria.\(^ {208}\)

Augustus’ monuments and actions drew connections between contemporary Romans and a shifting cohort of heroes, gods, and historical figures from Rome’s past. Augustan poets did not miss their chance both to build on and to question Augustus’ carefully calculated web of associations, especially those concerning Trojan heroes.\(^ {209}\)

Vergil begins the second half of his *Georgics* by promising to build a poetic temple celebrating the success of Octavian against each of his enemies.

\[
\text{in foribus pugnam ex auro solidoque elephanto} \\
\text{Gangaridum faciam victorisque arma Quirini,} \\
\text{atque hic undantem bello magnumque fluentem} \\
\text{Nilum ac nauali surgentis aere columnas.} \\
\text{addam urbes Asiae domitas pulsumque Niphaten} \quad 30 \\
\text{fidentemque fuga Parthum uersisque sagittis;} \\
\text{et duo rapta manu diuerso ex hoste tropaea bisque triumphatas utroque ab litore gentis.} \\
\text{stabunt et Parii lapides, spirantia signa,} \\
\text{Assaraci proles demissaeque ab Ioue gentis} \quad 35 \\
\text{nomina, Trosque parens et Troiae Cynthius auctor.}
\]

On the temple doors, I will make in gold and solid ivory the battle of the Ganges’ forces and the arms of victorious Romans, and the Nile, flowing large and surging with war and the columns rising with naval bronze. I will add the conquered cities of Asia and beaten Niphates and the Parthian trusting in flight and the arrows that he shoots from behind him; and the two trophies taken by force from remote enemies and the peoples, twice triumphed over, from either

\(^{208}\) Zanker 1988: 57.  
shore. Parian marbles will stand, breathing statues, the descendants of Assaracus, and the names of Jupiter’s race, and the ancestor Tros, and Apollo, the architect of Troy. 

(Verg. G. 3.26-36)

Pictured in gold on Vergil’s temple will be Rome’s victories against Asia’s forces both in Parthia and near the Nile in the naval battle of Actium. Vergil does not specifically mention Antony here or give any hint that one of these victories to be commemorated was against an army of fellow Romans. The emphasis is instead on the Eastern component of Antony’s army, and Antony himself seems to have fully morphed from a Roman general into an Eastern dynast.

This interpretation of Actium as a battle between the Quirites and Asian forces was expressed not only in Vergil’s poetic temple but also in Augustus’ actual building projects, including the temple of Mars Ultor, which memorialized simultaneously the civil war and the Parthian conquests. Both were revenge missions, for Octavian had set out in the civil war to avenge his adoptive father’s murder and in the foreign war with the Parthians to avenge the defeat of Crassus and retrieve the standards taken from him. Commemorating victories in both civil and foreign wars in one temple seems to be another attempt to erase the distinctions between the two. Still, even as Vergil details in the Georgics his proposed poetic project celebrating Octavian, we find that the characterization of Antony’s forces as Eastern foes is followed closely by an emphatic stress on Rome’s own Eastern origins at Troy. Also pictured on Vergil’s poetic temple would be the lineage of Trojan Assaracus, the ancestor Tros himself, and Apollo as patron of Troy: stabunt.../ Assaraci proles demissaeque ab Ioue gentis/ nomina, Trosque parens et Troiae Cynthius auctor (G. 3.35-6). While Augustus used Antony’s

Eastern associations to paint the civil war as a war against foreign influence at Rome, it is impossible to ignore how violence against Eastern forces at Rome is also a type of civil violence against a past version of Rome.

In the Aeneid, the redefinition of East and West and past and future after Troy’s fall confuses Aeneas’ identity so much that when he arrives in Latium he fights a war against a foreign city that turns out to be a civil war against men who represent pieces of both his Roman future and his Trojan past. The battle is not just a proleptic civil war between future Romans and the original Latin race but it is also a replay of the Trojan War, with the Trojans now playing the role of the successful besiegers against a new Troy. Aeneas famously kills a version of his old Trojan self when he mimics the Greek Achilles and thrusts his sword into his enemy Turnus, the bulwark of the besieged Latins.²¹¹ It is not, then, only Aeneas’ identity as a future Italian that makes his battle with Turnus seem in retrospect like a civil war. Vergil goes out of his way to present Latium as a new Troy, and the result is that the Trojan Aeneas is besieging a new incarnation of his sacked homeland.

Many studies focusing on the war between the Latins and the Trojans have usefully emphasized how this miniature replay of the Trojan War helps Aeneas to transform from a Trojan victim into a Western victor.²¹² For this redefinition to take place, however, Aeneas must be victorious in a metaphorical civil war between his past

²¹¹ Perhaps the most memorable of Vergil’s signals to his reader that Turnus is in essence a doppelganger of his killer Aeneas is the famous echo in Turnus’ death of the reader’s first introduction to Aeneas. In Book 1 Aeneas first appears amidst a storm at sea, and his limbs grow slack with cold (solvuntur frigore membra, 1.91). In the last lines of the poem, as Turnus’ limbs now slacken with cold as he dies, the repetition of the phrase from book one (solvuntur frigore membra 12.951) betrays the link between the dying Latin hero and the Trojan who killed him in order to found a new Latin race. ²¹² Especially Anderson 1957 and Quint 1993: 79.
and future selves. Quint’s terminology of good and bad repetition is a useful way of looking at Vergil’s take on the relationship between civil war and Rome’s Trojan identity. Bad repetition is a holding pattern that forces us to relive a destructive past. Good repetition of the story of Troy at Rome is repetition with a difference, in which Rome revisits its Trojan past to overcome it and face the future stronger. Vergil’s narration of the war in Latium suggests that it could be seen as an example of good repetition that effects a useful reversal. The Sibyl had warned that there would be an alius Achilles born at Latium, and, for a time, it seems that Turnus is that new Achilles once again battling the weak Trojans. But just as the Latin Numanus Remulus completes his tirade against Trojan effeminacy (Aen. 9.598-620), he is killed by Ascanius. And when Aeneas appears shining in divinely forged armor, the reader begins to see that he may be the new Achilles after all. Turnus and Aeneas fight back and forth over who will be forced to act the role of Troy in this replay of the Trojan War, and Aeneas, in the end, paints Turnus into the role of his former defeated self.

We cannot escape the uncomfortable truth that the Trojans are engaged here in a civil

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war with their future countrymen and setting the stage for future civil wars at Rome.

But it is also true that the Trojans, now the victorious invading army rather than the inhabitants of the sacked city, are successfully reversing the pattern of defeat that has followed them since the Trojan War. The conclusion of the *Aeneid* confronts the reader with the question of how to interpret Aeneas’ battle against his past at Troy. Is the death of Turnus at Aeneas’ hands a forerunner of the civil violence that will plague Rome or a necessary purgation of past weakness? If Turnus plays the role of the former Aeneas at Troy, then Aeneas’ ferocity toward Turnus could be interpreted as a form of self-destruction, yet we can also see that this self-destruction was necessary for the Trojan Aeneas to emerge as an Italian leader.

Well before Vergil’s narration of Aeneas’ new Trojan War in Italy, a Roman historical figure, Pompey, had staged a new Trojan War at Rome, unwittingly drawing a connection between his recent victories abroad and his future in civil war. During Pompey the Great’s victory games of 55 BC, the tragedy of the fall of Troy was staged in Pompey’s theater and Rome’s spoils from the Eastern campaigns were displayed on stage to represent the Greek spoils from Troy. Pompey’s choice of theme seems to have been meant to emphasize his status as a Roman Agamemnon and conqueror of Asia. Yet Pompey’s choice to liken his Eastern conquest to Agamemnon’s victory over Rome’s ancestors illustrates the difficulty of separating Trojan Rome from the very regions that it would conquer. The paradox of a Roman descendant of Troy celebrating


his victory over Asia Minor cannot have been completely lost on Pompey’s audience. At the same time, it may also have seemed natural to Pompey’s audience that Rome had overcome its Trojan past enough to set itself up as the new Western aggressor toward the opulent East. In other words, while we might see Pompey as a Trojan dramatizing his attack on his own ancestors, we can also see him as a Roman Agamemnon engaging in repetition-as-reversal and dramatizing the process on stage.

As Turnus dies in Vergil’s *Aeneid*, the reader hesitates over whether to rejoice that Aeneas has overcome his former weakness or worry that he has once again tied the beginnings of Rome to bloodshed. The tension that Vergil establishes between these two interpretations reads as a reflection of a contemporary uncertainty. As Augustus secured his power, there must have also been a suspicion that these civil wars simply were simply on pause for the moment, about to return with even more horrifying violence as power became consolidated in the hands of one family; nevertheless, the optimistic point of view was also readily available, that the civil wars that led to Augustus’ rule were necessary purgations along the lines of Troy, Turnus, and Remus.\(^{219}\) Aeneas had killed his alter ego Turnus just as Romulus had killed his own weaker brother and Augustus had just now defeated Antony, who, though a Roman, threatened to turn Rome back into its former Trojan self.\(^{220}\)

Ovid presents us with one of the more complex and inventive ways of re-interpreting the Trojan curse of self-destruction as a useful model for the sacrifices that strengthen Rome. In Book 13 of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, we find Aeneas making his

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\(^{219}\) See Morgan 2000: 69.

\(^{220}\) The link between Vergil killing Turnus as an act of vengeance and Octavian killing Caesar’s assassins is discussed in Clausen 2002: 108-9; Fowler 2000: 216; Galinsky 1996: 211.
way from Troy to Latium, and his journey takes him to Delos, where King Anius welcomes him and the rest of the Trojan survivors. At this point, Anius presents Aeneas with a gift—a cup adorned with a *longo...argumento*. The narration of this long story pictured on the cup unfolds slowly and Ovid only gradually fills in information about the events and characters that make up the tale. The first piece of information that we learn about the story is that it takes place at Thebes: *urbs erat, et septem posses ostendere portas: / hae pro nomine erant, et quae foret illa, docebant* (there was a city and you could make out seven gates: these stood instead of a name, and they told what city it was, 13.685-6). The next details tell us that the scene is one of mourning as women beat their chests and pyres burn.

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ante urbem exequiae tumulique ignesque rogique
effusaeque comas et apertae pectora matres
significant luctum; nymphae quoque flere videntur…
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Before the city there are funeral rites and sepulchers and fires and pyres, and women with their hair let down and naked breasts make known their grief. Nymphs also seem to weep… *(Met. 13.687-89)*

A reader at this point might naturally suspect that the scene pictured is part of the aftermath of Thebes’ most famous disaster, the civil war between Eteocles and Polyneices. As this suspicion arises, the reader must also wonder whether a cup bearing an image of civil war would be an appropriate gift for Aeneas as he leaves for his new city in Latium. Aeneas’ descendant Romulus will indeed commit fratricide as he founds Rome, and it is disconcerting for a reader to suspect that the iconic fratricide at Thebes is pictured on Anius’ parting gift to Aeneas.

Just at this juncture, however, it becomes clear that the tale is not one of civil war.
Look, in the center of Thebes he represents the daughters of Orion, here, as they deal unwomanly wounds to their bared throats, there, as they fell with their weapons pierced through their brave chests for the good of the people and as they were carried through the city in beautiful funereal celebration and cremated before the crowd. Then, so that their line should not perish, from the maidens’ ashes spring up twin youths, whom fame has named the Coronae, and they carry out the procession for their mothers’ ash. (Met. 13.692-99)

Instead, the mourning at Thebes is for the brave daughters of Orion who have just sacrificed themselves for the sake of Thebes: pro populo. This story of sacrifice for the greater good seems to be a much more appropriate theme to adorn a gift for Rome’s founder figure. In fact, it is a popular refrain in narratives of Rome’s early history to stress how the deaths of Roman women such as Lucretia, Horatia, and Verginia were necessary to preserve Roman virtue and strength. The language of Ovid’s passage reminds us, too, that we have already seen the first of these sacrificial Roman women die just two hundred lines earlier in Metamorphoses 13. The daughters of Orion wound their own throats with “un-womanly” courage: hac non femineum iugulo dare vulnus aperto (13.693). The phrase reminds the reader of the earlier passage in Met. 13.451-9, where the Trojan Polyxena also shows unwomanly courage (plusquam femina virgo) as she bares her chest and orders Neoptolemus to kill her without delay: “nulla mora est; at tu iugulo vel pectore telum / conde meo” iugulumque simul pectusque rexit (“There is no delay; but you—bury your sword deep in my throat or breast,” and at the same time she uncovered her throat and breast, 13.458-9).
Polyxena, with her manly courage and willingness to die rather than live as a slave, is already at this juncture of Troy’s fall the first Roman woman. Not only are the Trojan men leaving their Eastern effeminacy behind as they follow Aeneas, but, after the fall of Troy, even the Trojan women are showing more courage than their male Greek captors. It is perhaps comforting to be reminded of the galvanizing effect of Troy’s fall in Anius’ gift to Aeneas as he leaves to found Rome. Just as the Theban Coronidae will spring up out of the ashes of Orion’s daughters pictured on the cup, Rome will rise victorious out of the ashes of Troy. Still, the reader’s initial suspicion that the cup depicted a scene of civil war is not entirely misguided since the suicide that the daughters commit is undeniably an act of internal violence. The key point is that what may have at first seemed like a retelling of the civil war between the Theban brothers Eteocles and Polynoeices turns out to be a scene of productive sacrifice for the community. The gradual unveiling of the story of the Coronidae as told on the cup forces Ovid’s reader to reinterpret what seems at first like fruitless civil violence as a necessary purgation of the community. This gift to Aeneas as he leaves Apollo’s oracle to find his new city carries within it an undeniably Roman story of reinterpreting destruction as a useful step forward.
Chapter 3

Part Two: Misreading Augustus’ Troy

The problem with trusting Aeneas

Relying on different strands of Trojan myth to help recast civil war as a beneficial purgation or even a foreign conquest does carry the risk, however, of confusing matters too much and making it hard to develop any stable reading of Rome’s Trojan inheritance. Augustan poets, as we have seen, worked on one level to characterize Aeneas as the first true Roman, whose memory of his Trojan past was keyed to his future aspirations for Rome and whose actions help justify those of Augustus. Aeneas represented a Trojan link that was different enough from Priam and Paris to avoid the risk of repeating Troy’s excesses and their consequences. At the same time, however, these same poets also bent over backwards to ensure that readers could identify the reconstructions of Rome’s Trojan past and think them over for themselves.

Vergil devotes much of Aeneid 1 and 2 to showing how poorly Aeneas is able to interpret images of Troy’s fall. With so much riding on Aeneas’ ability to lead the Trojans to their future success as Romans, it is disconcerting to see how confusing Aeneas seems to find his own narrative. Even as Vergil offers a vision of Aeneas as an early Augustus carrying with him the best of Troy’s attributes and leaving behind the worst, he also makes sure to leave room for conflicting interpretations of Rome’s link to
Troy’s fall. When Aeneas arrives at Carthage in Book 1, he enters the temple of Juno and is immediately struck by a series of images of the Trojan War. The deaths of Troilus and Hector are pictured, as well as the night-raid of Diomedes and Ulysses, Priam offering gold for the return of Hector’s body, and the Trojan women supplicating Athena to no avail. Aeneas should realize that in a temple to Juno, the archenemy of Troy, such scenes of Trojan misfortune are likely to be celebrations of the Greek victory. But Aeneas instead sees the images as proof that the Carthaginians pity and respect the Trojans for their suffering. Aeneas has let his own memory of the events focalize his interpretation of the pictures at Carthage without remembering to put himself in the position of the Carthaginians who painted the murals in the first place. The only reason that Aeneas does not immediately feel the consequences of his misinterpretation is that his mother Venus has prepared Dido to receive the Trojans hospitably.

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221 In the vast literature on the murals at Carthage, I have found the following discussions particularly useful: Austin 1964: at Aen. 1.461; Barchiesi 1994: 115-22 and 2005: 277; Boyd 1995: 76-84; Clay 1988; Conte 1986: 154; Fowler 1990 and 1991: 31-3; Horsfall 1973; Johnson 1976: 99-105; Leach 1988: 311-19; Lowenstam 1993; Lyne 1987: 209-10; O’Hara 1990: 35-9; Otis 1964: 238; Putnam 1998; Segal 1981; S. C. Smith 1999: 232-41; Thomas 1983; R. D. Williams 1960. See also Clausen (2002: 33), who argues that Aeneas is not misreading the murals because, even if Juno is against Troy, there is no indication that Dido herself shares Juno’s hatred. To Clausen, Aeneas is appropriately comforted to see these murals as proof of a civilized world, where there is appreciation for heroic deeds and suffering. Knauer (1964: 349-50) and Putnam (1998: 257-8) see the murals at Carthage as foreshadowing the war to come in Latium, which will be a second Trojan War. On focalization more generally, see de Jong 1989: 102-18; Genette 1980: 189. In Petronius’ Troiae Halosis, when Encolpius views scenes from Aen. 2 in the picture gallery, he takes the Vergilian problems of focalization to the extreme. Encolpius imports his own perspective on to the paintings so strongly that he actually begins to see himself as another Aeneas. So while Aeneas allowed his focalization to influence his view of the murals far too much, Encolpius allows the paintings he views to influence his view of himself far too much. Zeitlin (1971) is a classic treatment of the murals in Petronius.
Still, the reader, here, is meant to see even further significance in these Trojan scenes than Aeneas could possibly be expected to see. Vergil’s Roman readers knew that these murals painted in the heart of Carthage depicted the first steps in the foundation of Rome, the power that would eventually destroy Carthage. So while these scenes may have been meant to celebrate Juno’s victory over Troy, Aeneas is some sense right to feel comforted by them, even if for the wrong reasons. Although he cannot recognize the murals as such, they tell the story of Rome’s foundation, and their placement in the heart of Juno’s Carthage reminds us that Rome will grow into a world empire, conquering even Carthage. When Aeneas looks down marveling at the construction of the great city Carthage, it is hard not to think of Scipio looking down over the destruction of this very same city. Aeneas is standing on the same hill with a view (Aen. 1.419-20) that Scipio will later stand on (App. B Civ. 8.1.130). The idea of Aeneas as a proto-Scipio gazing down at Carthage shows the clashing perspectives that Vergil crowds into one moment; Troy’s walls seemed invincible, but they fell nonetheless, and Carthage will be a new Troy, even if Aeneas does not recognize it as such. Scipio, however, once he looks out at Carthage’s destruction, is able to see the echo of Troy. More importantly, he is able to shift his perspective enough to see Carthage not simply as a replay of Troy but also as proleptic for Rome, which is, like both Troy and Carthage, doomed to fall some day. This realization moved him to tears as he watched Carthage burn, and Polybius tells us that Scipio quoted the Homeric lines in which Hector foresees the end of Troy: ἔσσεται ἤμαρ ὅτ’ ἂν ποτ’ ὀλὼλη Ἰλως ἴρη / καὶ Πρίαμος καὶ λαὸς ἐὕμελιῶ Πηράμοιο (there will be a day when sacred Troy

will fall and Priam and Priam’s people, *Il. 4.164-5 and 6.448-9*). Aeneas, as he stands over Carthage, does not see that his interactions with Dido will imperil his Roman descendants by setting in motion the Punic Wars, but Scipio seems to appreciate that even winning the Punic Wars could be dangerous for Rome, simply because it assures Rome’s uncontested dominance in the Western Mediterranean. While Aeneas’ first view of Carthage from the promontory set in motion the events that led to Scipio’s final view of Carthage, there is the possibility that the process will reverse itself. Scipio’s destruction of Carthage was indeed linked in Roman thought to a decline in morals and values.

Sallust explains the problem memorably:

*Sed ubi…Carthago, aemula imperi Romani, ab stirpe interiit, cuncta maria terraeque patebant, saevire fortuna ac miscere omnia coepit. Qui labores, pericula, dubias atque asperas res facile toleraverant, iis otium divitiaeque optanda alias, oneri miseriaeque fuere. Igitur primo imperi, deinde pecuniae cupidio crevit.*

But when Carthage, the rival of Roman power, was utterly destroyed and when all seas and lands lay open for Rome, then Fortune began to rage and confound everything. Those very same men who had so easily tolerated labor, danger, doubt, and hardship now found that leisure and wealth, at other times so desirable, were a burden and a curse. So greedy lust began to grow, at first for power, and then for money.  

(Sall. *Cat.* 10)

This worry that the victory over Carthage was, in fact, the beginning of the end for Rome is exactly what Vergil plays to when he alternately aligns and distances Rome, Troy, and Carthage. Scenes of Troy’s destruction decorate the temple at Carthage, and the use of the phrase *urbs antiqua ruit* for Troy’s fall in Book 2 brings to mind the

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224 Feeney 2009.
introduction of Carthage in Book 1: *urbs antiqua fuit*. When Vergil’s reader first reaches the phrase *urbs antiqua fuit* at the end of the proem, he might naturally assume that the city in question would be Troy. Instead, Vergil begins with Carthage, and the reader must readjust his expectations. But, once we reach the narrative of Troy’s sack and the familiar-sounding phrase *urbs antiqua ruit*, we realize that Carthage was always a stand-in for and mirror of Troy.225

Servius (*ad Aen* 1.726) tells us that Vergil’s description of Dido’s banquet hall was modeled on the famous speech given by Ennius’ Andromache after Troy has fallen:

> O pater, o patria, o Priami domus,  
> saeptum altisono cardine templum,  
> vidi ego te, adstante ope barbarica,  
> tectis caelatis laqueatis  
> auro ebore instructam regifice.

O Father, o fatherland: o house of Priam,  
Temple closed tight with a deep-creaking hinge,  
I have seen you with barbaric throng standing by,  
fitted out regally with gold and ivory  
and ceilings engraved and paneled.  

*(Enn. *Andr.* 87-91, Jocelyn)*226

In Vergil, the golden-fretted roof (*laquearibus aureis*, 1.726) of Dido’s sumptuous banquet hall, then, recalls Priam’s luxuriant palace before Troy fell. When Aeneas looks out over Carthage in Book 1, he may also be remembering his (chronologically earlier) view from Priam’s roof of Troy burning on its final night (*Aen.* 2.458-633).227

For Aeneas, the effect would be of a contrast between the burning and ruined city of

225 Barchiesi 1998; Feeney 2007: 54; Fenik 1959; Fowler 1990: 50. For Carthage as an *altera Roma*, as Thebes was for Athens, see Feeney 2007: 235 n.62; Hardie 1990; Zeitlin 1986.

226 For more on this passage, see Ch. 1, p. 52.

227 Servius *ad Aen*. 2.313 and 2.486 tells us that Vergil modeled part of his description of the fall of Troy on Ennius’ description of Alba’s fall. As Kraus (1994) has shown, Alba was yet another destroyed twin of Rome, and, like Troy, Alba seems to have functioned as a mother city for Rome that had to be abandoned in the end.
Troy and this burgeoning and promising new city being built at Carthage. The reader, however, thinks of the burning and ruined city that Carthage will soon be, and sees instead similarities to Troy and its golden-fretted ceilings that would soon fall in. The flashbacks of Troy at Carthage grow more insistent later when Vergil’s description of the death of Dido both echoes the fall of Troy and foreshadows even more directly the fall of Carthage, which itself was seen in contemporary works as a metaphorical playing out of Rome’s eventual destruction. So just as Aeneas cannot properly focalize his view of the painting of Troy at Carthage, we as readers cannot be sure that we are properly focalizing our reading of Dido’s death and the eventual destruction of Carthage, which seems both to confirm Rome’s supremacy in the Mediterranean and to act as a reminder of Rome’s past and future downfalls: the wailing at Carthage after Dido’s death reaches backward to echo the ruin of Troy and forward to foreshadow Rome’s eventual return to its origins in a burning city.

Hannibal, in Silius Italicus’ Punic, does everything he can to make the death of Dido into the beginning and the ending of Rome— the moment that both sends Aeneas off to found Rome and dooms his Roman descendants. Hannibal swears an oath in front of a statue of Dido to chase Rome over land and sea until he can roll back time to replay their fate at Troy: Rhoeteaque fata revolvam (Pun. 1.115). Hannibal himself is faced in Silius’ epic with a set of murals at Liternum, but they are not depictions of Troy’s fall. They are instead celebrations of Rome’s conquests over Carthage (Pun. 6.653-716). Hannibal is, as Fowler has noted, an anti-Aeneas here, since he is a Carthaginian viewing scenes of Carthaginian defeat on Italian soil rather than a Trojan

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228 Rossi (2003: 189-90) describes how Dido’s death foreshadows the sack of Carthage.
leader viewing scenes of Troy’s fall on Carthaginian soil. Hannibal is not, like Aeneas, moved to pity, but he is incensed and spurred to action, imagining a rival gallery back at Carthage, detailing his own victory over the Romans. Yet, this portrait gallery that Hannibal imagines for himself seems as dangerously misconceived as Aeneas’ interpretation of the murals in Juno’s temple.

Hannibal imagines that he would have pictured the Younger Scipio carrying his wounded father on his shoulder out of battle (...fugiat consul manante cruore/ Scipio et ad socios nati cervice vehatur, Pun. 709-10). Certainly, the image of a consul needing to be carried out of battle would seem like a dismal moment for Rome. Yet, from another perspective, the image of the son carrying his father to safety is just the sort of piety and bravery that a Roman would have wanted to celebrate. To see the perspective that Hannibal is missing, the reader of the Punica can easily think back to Book 4, where Scipio’s rescue is actually narrated. As the younger Scipio shoulders his father, a crowd gathers to view this spectacular act of traditional Roman piety. Aeneas himself famously carried his crippled father out of burning Troy, and one of the most recognizable and popular images of Aeneas is his exit from Troy carrying his father on his shoulder. As the younger Scipio imitates the hero Aeneas, even the gods are moved, and, at that moment, Jupiter announces that this Scipio will eventually take Carthage.

Fowler (1996: 63-8) has described the “play of focalizations” (67) at work in these murals, which could be viewed from multiple perspectives by the characters in the murals (either protagonist or internal audience depicted in the mural), the artists, the receiving Roman audience at Liternum, the Carthaginian viewers at Liternum, Silius as narrator/author, the contemporary Roman audience of the Punica, and ourselves as modern readers. Sil. Pun. 4.459-79. Pun. 2.436 achieves a similar effect by having Hannibal choose Regulus as an example of Roman weakness, when he served, at Rome, as one of the prime exempla for Roman virtus in the face of misfortune and hardship.
From this point of view, then, this image that Hannibal wishes he could paint at Carthage is a celebration not of Rome’s defeat, as Hannibal thinks, but of the virtue of the future conqueror of Carthage and of the Roman descendants of Trojan Aeneas. Hannibal’s misinterpretation of his imaginary murals at Carthage could be seen as the reverse of Aeneas’ misinterpretation of the actual murals he sees at Carthage in *Aeneid* 1. Aeneas thinks that he sees a celebration of Troy when he is actually gazing at a celebration of its sack. Hannibal thinks that he would be commissioning a painting celebrating Rome’s sack, but he would instead be further glorifying Rome’s proud origins and successes.

At the same time, a reader comforted by Hannibal’s apparent miscalculation might have nagging worries that Hannibal did not get it so wrong after all. The double-edge inherent in Rome’s Trojan foundation story makes it possible to interpret Hannibal’s recreation of Aeneas’ escape in opposing ways. On the one hand, Hannibal’s narrow perspective has led him to design a set of murals that can easily be turned against him to undermine his message. On the other hand, we as readers find it once again hard to tell whether we are also victims of our too narrow focalizations. Although Scipio’s rescue of his father is a reminder of a proud moment in Rome’s foundation story, it is also a replay of Troy and a reminder that Rome was born from the burning rubble of its mother city. Even though Hannibal does not conquer Rome, his promise to make Rome relive its Trojan past is still valid. Hannibal may not have realized quite how his promise would come true, but it is in his defeat that he truly threatens to doom Rome to repeating its Eastern past. The risk, as we have seen, was that without a great rival like Carthage, the Romans might gradually be softened by
their leisure and success back into the Phrygian *semiviri* they once were under Aeneas.

The difficulty of pinning down any one narrative of Troy is again demonstrated in *Aeneid* 2, when Aeneas actually recounts the story of Troy’s fall. As readers, we must decide how to interpret this narrative within a narrative, and how to disentangle the different levels of narration in this inset story. It is hard to tell where Aeneas is during his narration, which skips from door-way to door-way at a manic speed. His narration is also compromised because he tells of events that he could not possibly have seen. Some of what Aeneas narrates, he slept through, and some of what he narrates, he supposedly saw from afar on Priam’s palace roof. From the roof, he could not have seen how Priam armed himself within the palace, a moment which he takes time to describe because it heightens the dramatic suspense and sense of *pathos* leading up to Priam’s eventual death. As Aeneas tells his eyewitness account to Dido, he embellishes just as a poet would, to play to his audience’s emotions.

Aeneas’ narration of the story seems further skewed by his constant (and perhaps over-eager) insistence that he survived unwillingly that night. Vergil has an important responsibility to find a way to extricate Aeneas from his burning *patria* without allowing him to seem either cowardly or even guilty of treason. At first, even though he has been told by Hector himself to escape Troy, Aeneas throws himself into the battle with no thought for his own life. He fights heroically until Venus must

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233 Heinze (1994, orig. 1903: 4) on the problem of the sack of Troy as told by the father of the Romans. Horsfall (1986: 372-90) treats the evidence of Aeneas’ possible treason. Aeneas has been said to appear disgruntled at Hom. *Il.* 13.461 and 20.178. See also Dion. Hal. 1.48.3.
finally come to take him back to his family and the *penates* that he must save. Even then, Aeneas hesitates and wishes to rejoin the fight. He is only convinced to leave Troy when an omen appears that he cannot ignore—the innocuous flames that suddenly light up on the head of his son Ascanius. Aeneas’ prolonged refusal to leave Troy until the last minute, however, seems overdone. It seems unlikely that he would disobey the orders of Hector’s ghost, and even more unlikely that he would consider going against even Venus’ orders and reassurances. Vergil, then, accomplishes his duty to find a way to have Aeneas leave Troy without being a coward, but he allows the strain of doing so to show through in Aeneas’ narration. The reader wonders whether Aeneas, aware of his self-image in front of the Carthaginian audience, perhaps protests too much.

It is when Vergil’s influence seeps through into his character’s narration that we see complex commentary on Rome as well as Troy. As the character Aeneas tells his story to Dido, he has no idea that the poet putting words in his mouth is telling not just a story of Troy but a simultaneous commentary on Rome. In the muddle of confusion during the sack of Troy in *Aeneid* 2, Aeneas and his Trojan countrymen deceive the Greeks by stealing their armor. Identity is muddled as other Trojans mistake Aeneas and his followers for Greeks, because they have switched armor. This swapping of armor is both a good military tactic within the story and a poetic move that allows Vergil to show the geographic reversal that the fall of Troy set in motion. From the moment of Troy’s fall, the entire Mediterranean became embroiled in this one foundation story, which sent out so many heroes who could be used as founder figures. The Trojan heroes move West, making the old Greek heroes suddenly Eastern in comparison. Vergil’s use of Homer’s simile of a man coming unexpectedly upon a
snake shows the imminent reversal of Greek and Trojan. In Homer’s *Il.* 3.33, Paris coming upon Menelaus is likened to a man affrighted at the sight of a snake. In *Aeneid* 2, the Greek Androgeos approaches what he thinks is another cohort of Greeks, and when he realizes that they are actually Trojans in Greek armor, he too is likened to the man surprised by a snake. B. Knox (1950: 392-400) has written brilliantly on the complexity of the serpent imagery in *Aeneid* 2, and he points out that a snake itself is a double edged symbol, often meaning death, violence, and deception, but also serving as a symbol of rebirth as a snake sloughs off its old skin. As Pyrrhus approaches Priam, he is described as resplendent like a snake who has just shed its skin. He symbolizes in some ways, then, both the violence and treachery of the snake, but also his position as a new, reborn Achilles. What Aeneas may not realize as he likens Pyrrhus to this reborn snake is that the death of Priam also marks the coming rebirth of Troy at Rome. Already, Homer’s snake metaphor has been reversed, with the Trojans playing the role that Menelaus once played. And, as Knox points out, after Priam dies, fire itself is no longer harmful to the Trojans. When Ascanius’ temples erupt in flames, the flames are innocuous and they are guarantees of Rome’s eventual greatness. Soon, Rome will complete the reversal that Priam’s death has begun and conquer its former conquerors, the Greeks.

Echoes of Ennius’ description of the sack of Alba Longa, however, suggest that the reversal perhaps goes to far. Servius tells us that the description of the clangor filling Troy in *Aeneid* 2 has been taken from Ennius’ lines on Alba (*de Albano excidio* 

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234 See also Lyne 1987: 211.
Wigodsky interprets these echoes as a way of lightening the gloom of Troy’s sack, because it looks forward to the moment when Rome will be strong enough to be the aggressor during a city sack.\textsuperscript{237} A. Rossi (2003: 42-3), however, has been right to disagree. She reminds us that Alba was another of Rome’s mother cities, and a link in the chain connecting Rome to Troy. Livy himself labeled the war against Alba as \textit{civili simillimam bello} (AUC 1.23.1), and Alba was revered as an ancient religious center at Latium to be celebrated with annual rituals.\textsuperscript{238} Rome’s razing of Alba would not have been an easy story to tell while avoiding the obvious conclusion that Rome’s strength was once again threatening to turn against itself. Rossi (2003: 179-83) has shown how Vergil’s \textit{Aen.} 2 is modeled on the \textit{topos} of the \textit{urbs capta}, which allows it to connect not only with Alba but also with Rome captured by the Gauls, the Trojan camp at Latium in the latter half of the \textit{Aeneid}, and the city of the Latins. She argues that even though Troy did not fall to siege, the anachronistic language of siege warfare in Vergil’s account sets Troy up as the paradigm of a city under siege. Troy’s transformation into a poetic \textit{topos} presents the problem that Rome can forever be identified with any \textit{urbs capta}.

Much of what Aeneas’ narrative signifies for us as readers, then, is due to Vergil’s intervention in his character’s story as he manipulates imagery, alludes to Homer and Ennius, and uses anachronistic language to show what Aeneas could not possibly know, that Rome will rise to avenge the sack of Troy, but that it will also

\textsuperscript{236} Serv. \textit{ad Aen.} 2.313 and 2.486. See also Austin 1964: on \textit{Aen.} 2.313; Kenney 1979: 112-14; Norden 1915: 154-8; Rossi 2003: 23 and 42-3; Wigodsky 1972: 70.
\textsuperscript{237} Wigodsky 1972: 70.
\textsuperscript{238} For Alba as an important religious center of the Latins, see Alföldi 1965: 29-34; Cornell 1975: 15; Feeney 2007b; Gruen 1992: 25; Schröder 1971: 87. See also Casali 2007: 108-10.
replay Troy’s sack as its own aggressor. Vergil’s interventions help us see that Aeneas is unreliable as a narrator because he cannot or chooses not to see the wider significance of the events that he witnessed at Troy. He does not yet understand, as we should, that any story of Troy alludes also to a Roman story, and that any Roman story can be made by the right narrator to resemble the story of Troy.

We can recognize the flexibility of perspective that we have seen at work in Vergil’s depictions of Troy still turning up in our modern confusion over how to interpret the friezes on Augustus’ *Ara Pacis*. The trouble that scholars have had in identifying the figures of the young princes on the monument is symptomatic of the blurred boundary between Roman conceptions of their Trojan ancestors and of their foreign enemies from the East. The façade of Augustus’ altar features two panels: one scene of Romulus and Remus beside the she-wolf, and one scene of Aeneas conducting a sacrifice at the site of future Rome. The friezes winding around the monument portray the entire imperial entourage in procession. In the procession are two young boys in barbarian dress. It has been traditional to identify these two children as Augustus’ grandsons, Gaius and Lucius.\(^{239}\) The oldest child Gaius is depicted hanging on to the toga of his father Agrippa, clearly demonstrating that he is in line for succession. Both children, however, are sculpted in homage to the past, wearing Trojan dress and hairstyles. It is thought that Gaius’ recent participation in the *lusus Troiae* might have inspired the Trojan costume, especially since the event was Gaius’ first official public appearance.\(^{240}\)

\(^{240}\) Zanker 1988: 217.
If we accept this identification, although, as we will see, some have questioned it, then Augustus’ monument to peace makes an elegant loop between past and future, emphasizing the continuity between Rome’s progenitor, Trojan Aeneas, and his descendants Gaius and Lucius, the future leaders of Rome. As viewers walked around the altar in a circle to view the friezes, they would begin and end at the front with the panel of Aeneas presiding over a sacrifice, and the iconography of Gaius and Lucius as Trojan princes would make the effect of beginning and ending with Aeneas even more powerful. Augustus and his family were meant to be a return to old Roman piety, and reconnecting with Rome’s earliest roots meant recalling Rome’s Trojan origin in pious Aeneas.

At the same time, however, C. B. Rose (1990) has argued that the two oddly dressed children are not Gaius and Lucius, but rather two foreign children from the outer reaches of the Empire in the East and in the West. Gaius has been identified instead as a slightly older child in Roman dress as a *camillus*. Part of Rose’s argument is that it would be awkward for Augustus to show his grandson and adopted son Gaius directly behind his biological father Agrippa. The boy that Rose identifies as Gaius is, then, separated from both Augustus and Agrippa so as not to stress the issue of paternity. Still, Rose explains how Gaius and Augustus are symbolically brought together on the front panel: Ascanius helps his father Aeneas with a sacrifice just as Gaius follows Augustus as a *camillus* about to help in the ritual. The two barbarian boys, then, would not be Roman princes celebrating their Trojan ancestry in a *lusus Troiae*, but rather pledges from far Eastern and Western parts of the Empire to celebrate the reach of Augustus’ conquests. Whichever identification is correct, the debate is
instructive for us, as it shows just how tricky the Trojan cultural narrative can be at Rome, where scholars continue to disagree over whether images on a public monument represent Augustus’ heirs and or barbarians conquered by Augustus.\textsuperscript{241} 

\textit{Misinterpreting prophecies at Troy}

Propertius, too, seems on one level to support an Augustan reading of Troy’s fall as a sacrifice necessary for ensuring Rome’s future success. After all, Propertius tells of how Rome’s walls were strengthened by the blood of Remus, another sacrifice necessary to ensure the secure foundation of Rome, and Poem 4.1, the inaugural poem of the Roman-themed fourth book, reports that Cassandra prophesied Rome’s rise out of Troy: \textit{Troia cades et Troica Roma resurges}. Still, this positive outlook in Book 4 does not mesh well with earlier prophecies of Trojan Rome’s doom in Propertius’ Book 3. Poem 3.13 also features Cassandra, and the prophecy that she inspires Propertius to give in that earlier poem flatly contradicts her optimistic words in 4.1. Propertius’ reader is left to weigh the two perspectives and make the decision for himself of which version of Cassandra to believe. Propertius uses the famously misinterpreted figure of Cassandra as a way of reflecting the uncertainty over how to interpret Rome’s relationship to its roots in doomed Troy.

\textsuperscript{241} Erskine (2001: 258) notes a similar paradox on a third century CE shield found at Dura-Europos. The shield shows the Trojan horse and the murder of Priam, but the Greek soldiers murdering Priam are dressed as Roman legionaries. Since Dura-Europas would have been an important defensive position against the Parthians and Sassanids, it is possible the Parthians (as Easterners) have been coded here as Trojans while the Romans are the conquering Greeks. One wonders whether the role of Troy at Rome was simply not charged enough by the third century CE for the shield to seem paradoxical. Or, perhaps the shield is a testament to the power of Rome that it had finally outgrown the threat of their Trojan past, securing their role as ruler of empire rather than Trojan underdog.
In the more obviously optimistic Poem 4.1, Propertius opens his Roman-themed book with a celebration of Rome’s greatness. Still, the contrast in the poem’s opening lines between the gleaming gold of Augustan Rome and the modest huts of the ancient Palatine strikes an ominous note, similar to the uneasiness of Tibullus (2.5) and Vergil’s contrast between the rustic stones of Evander’s Palatine and the gold of Augustus’. If the gods were happy with their humble offerings, as Propertius says, then we wonder whether they are unhappy with these extravagant temples, or whether they prefer them. Gold and marble are indications of Rome’s prosperity and even its military prowess, but Propertius’ contrasts with early Rome activate the contemporary worry that such extravagance corrodes the virtue and ancestral values that have for so long defined Rome. So far, this questioning is standard fare for an Augustan poet living in and assessing Rome’s new Golden Age.242

As Propertius approaches the subject of Troy, however, the complexities of the poem only multiply. Propertius exclaims heu quali vecta est Dardana puppis ave (ah, with what such omen did the Trojan ship set sail, 4.1.40) and describes how Venus herself carried the “victorious arms of a Troy reborn”: arma resurgentis portans victricia Troiae (4.1.47). The Trojan Horse, he explains, did no harm because the Penates were saved and Rome has been blessed with the heroism of men such as Decius, Brutus the consul, and Caesar. Then, starting in line 49, Cassandra makes her appearance, and she sets the stage for a rather odd, conditional prophecy of Rome’s success.

242 See Feeney (2007a: 134-6) for a concise explanation of the dilemma presented by rhetoric of a new Golden Age. Real gold may be used to mark a new Golden Age, but it also calls attention to the distance from the original Golden Age, which never knew actual gold. See also A. T. Zanker 2010.
felix terra tuos cepit, Iule, deos. 48
si modo Avernalis tremulae cortina Sibyllae 49
dixit Aventino rura piando Remo, 50
aut si Pergameae sero rata carmina vatis 51
longaevum ad Priami lata fuere caput, 52
dicam: ‘Troia, cades, et Troica Roma, resurges;’ 87
et maris et terrae candida regna canam. 88
“vertite equum, Danai: male vincitis. Ilia tellus 53
vivet, et huic cineri Iuppiter arma dabit.” 54

Happy the land that received your gods, Iulus. If the tripod of the trembling Sibyl near Avernus did say that the fields were to be sanctified by Remus of the Aventine, or if the late-fulfilled songs of the Trojan prophetess were brought to old Priam, I will say: “Troy, you will fall, and Trojan Rome, you will rise again,” and I will sing the shining rule of land and sea. “Turn back the horse, Greeks: your victory is harmful to you. The Trojan land shall live, and to this ash Jupiter will grant arms.”243 (Prop. 4.1.48-54)

One perplexing textual problem is where to place and how to print lines 87-88, which appear in many texts as: *dicam Troia cades et Troica Roma resurges/ et maris et terrae [longa sepulcra] cano* (I will declare, Troy will fall and a Trojan Rome will rise again, and I am telling of the [vast tomb] of land and sea). *Sepulcra*, however, does not seem to match the sense of the couplet at all, even though Troy had previously been called a global *sepulcra* by Catullus. For *longa sepulcra*, A. E. Housman posited *regna superba*, which would match the similar claim in Lycophron’s *Alexandra* that Rome will rise again and hold the σκῆπτρα and μοναρχίαν on land and sea (Lycoph. Alex. 1230). C. Murgia (1989: 258) agrees that *regna* must be right but prefers a less troubling adjective than *superba*, and Heyworth (2007b) likewise prints *candida regna*. Whichever reading we choose, however, the combination in the *apparatus criticus* of *regna superba* and *longa sepulcra* is itself an artful expression of how Troy’s ashes

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243 I have used the Latin text from Heyworth 2007b.
were simultaneously the catalyst for Rome’s teleological growth and the reminder of its possible end.

It is also hard to tell whether this version of Cassandra’s prophecy about the Trojan Horse is meant to have been spoken by Cassandra herself or by Propertius imitating Cassandra. The punctuation of Heyworth (2007b), which I have used above, implies that the prophecy is in Propertius’ own voice, but other editors have kept the prophecy in Cassandra’s voice by printing a comma after line 48 instead of a full stop. With the comma replacing the full stop, the sentence reads: “Happy the land that received you gods, Iulus, if the tripod of the Sibyl said that the fields were to be sanctified or if Cassandra made the prophecy to Priam: I will say Troy will rise again…”

Nevertheless, what we can say for certain is that this prophecy about the Trojan Horse hurting the Greeks is a backward version of Cassandra’s traditional prophecy. Traditionally, Cassandra’s prophecy at Troy was directed to the Trojans and foretold destruction, begging for the Trojan horse to be kept out of the city. Cassandra is supposed to be speaking to Priam, but here in 4.1 she addresses the Greeks. She is supposed to be warning of the destruction of Troy if the horse is brought in, but here she warns the Greeks of retaliation fated if the horse enters Troy. This strange departure from tradition has been explained as an allusion to Lycophron’s Alexandra, in which Cassandra does at one point prophecy the rebirth of Troy at Rome and the dominion of

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244 Butler and Barber (1933) print a full stop before si modo, but they suggest on p. 326 that si modo be translated as “Happy indeed, if…” Therefore, the lines about the Trojan Horse remain spoken by Cassandra instead of Propertius imitating Cassandra.
this new Troy on land and at sea. Such an allusion is quite possible, but, even in Lycophron, Cassandra does not cast the Trojan horse as a misfortune for Greece or warn of retaliation as she does here.

What Cassandra’s prophecy here in Prop. 4.1 most calls to mind is Sinon’s lie to the Trojans. Sinon had supposedly fabricated an oracle designed to convince the Trojans to take the horse inside the city. He explained that if the Trojans were to take the horse into their city-walls, they would one day conquer Greece. It was for this reason, claimed Sinon, that the Greeks made the horse too big to go through the gates of Troy. Sinon’s lie spurred the Trojans to break down part of their own wall so that they could bring the Trojan horse into the city.

Why do Poem 4.1’s oracles inspired by Cassandra sound like Sinon’s fabrications? Perhaps the implicit reference to Sinon’s lie is meant to undercut Cassandra’s optimistic prophecy just as the implicit reference to Romulus’ crime destabilized the optimistic reading of the first protasis. At the same time, we cannot forget that Sinon’s lie did, in the end, turn out to be truer than Cassandra’s traditional warnings to the Trojans about the horse. Although Troy fell, it was not completely eradicated, and its descendants did grow to conquer Greece in turn. As Propertius reminds us, already quite soon after the sack of Troy, Greece finds itself drowning, weighed down by the booty taken from Troy (et natat exuvii Graecia pressa suis, 4.1B.116). The revised prophecy of Propertius’ Cassandra in 4.1, then, may be interpreted as emphasizing how Sinon’s very lie turned against him, just as the trick of the Trojan horse turns back against the Greeks. The wood of Mt. Ida was used to build

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246 For Sinon’s lie, see Barchiesi 1998: 136.
the Trojan horse that destroyed Troy, but it was also the wood of Mt. Ida that built the ships that carried the Trojan survivors to their new and better fates in Italy. The success of the Romans seems to have reversed everything about the Trojan War, including the prophecies of Sinon and Cassandra. Every piece of the Trojan War is subject to reversal and redefinition, including victim and victor and truth and falsehood.

These promises in Prop. 4.1 of Trojan Rome’s future success are also subject to questioning, though, because they draw a direct connection back to the pessimistic prophecies of Propertius and Cassandra in Propertius’ earlier Poem 3.13. In that earlier poem, it is exactly the success and superbia of Rome that caused Propertius to worry that Rome might grow too proud and repeat the mistakes of its mother-city, Troy. In 3.13, Propertius aligns himself with a version of Cassandra, who looks this time much more like her traditional self, foreboding doom and gloom for Troy.

proloquar (atque utinam patriae sim falsus haruspex!):
frangitur ipsa suis Roma superba bonis.
certa loquor, sed nulla fides; nempe Ilia quondam
verax Pergamei Maenas habenda mali;
sola Parim Phrygiae fatum componere, sola
fallacem Troiae serpere dixit equum.
ille furator patriae fuit utilis, ille parenti:
experta est veros irrita lingua deos.

“[I shall speak out (and I wish that to my fatherland I were not a truthful seer!)] Proud Rome itself is being broken by her own successes. I speak true, but I am not believed; and to be sure the Trojan Maenad (Cassandra) ought back then to have been considered truthful over the disaster of Pergamum: She alone said that Paris was arranging the ashes of Phrygia, and she alone said that the horse was creeping toward Troy as a trick. That prophetic frenzy was useful to her fatherland and to her father: Her useless tongue proved that the gods are truthful.”

(Prop. 3.13.59-66)

Propertius wishes in vain to be taken by his patria as a verus haruspex, but, even when he speaks warnings that are certa, he is not believed. The reader is likely already to
have thought of the parallel to Cassandra’s ignored prophecies, which would have saved her own patria. Propertius makes his allusion explicit when he refers to the Trojan maenas who should also have been taken seriously when she prophesied truthfully about the danger of Paris and the wooden horse.

The last couplet is somewhat perplexing, because one wonders how exactly Cassandra’s prophetic frenzy could be both utilis and irrita. Postgate (1913) suggested that Cassandra’s prophecies would have been of use to Priam and Troy, but her unheeded tongue proved that Apollo spoke true when he said that she would never be believed. This reading is certainly clever and no doubt present on one level, but it is not the whole story, especially since fuit is not obviously equivalent to prodesse potuit, as Postgate suggests.

To preserve the paradox that Cassandra’s prophecies were actually useful even though they were unheeded, we might say that the usefulness of Cassandra’s unheeded prophecy was to prove once and for all that the gods are truthful and that prophets should be heeded. In that case, Cassandra’s usefulness is in her power as an exemplum that shows the dangers of ignoring true prophets such as Propertius. Cassandra’s patria should profit from her fate and listen to Propertius, as he wishes his patria would do. This repetition of patria emphasizes the link between Troy and Rome, and Propertius seems to warn his readers that they are inheriting the faults of their mother country and replaying Troy’s destruction.

At the same time, however, a reader looking back from 4.1 can also see how emphasizing Troy’s role as Rome’s original patria undermines the threat of the

247 Heyworth (2007a: 356-9) on this crux.
consequences that follow from ignoring prophets. The very existence of Rome proves that ignoring Cassandra did not utterly doom Troy. We can see, now, how Cassandra’s prophecy is not even utilis anymore as an exemplum for Propertius to use to back up the importance of his ignored prophecies. For, if Cassandra had been right about the Trojan horse and the utter destruction of her patria, Propertius would not have cause to worry about whether his patria, Rome, was now sinking under its own successes. Propertius has his narrator adduce the example of Cassandra’s true but ignored prophecy to back up his own, but, in an elegant twist, his prophecy actually proves Cassandra’s original prophecy wrong. If the Trojans had heeded her warning and not brought the horse through the walls, Rome may never have been built. Indeed, from this rather perverse perspective of Roman Empire, Cassandra’s prophecy was useful precisely because it was irrita. Because Cassandra’s prophecy was not believed, the Greeks were able to sack Troy and, therefore, set off Troy’s metamorphosis into Rome.\textsuperscript{248}

A reader looking back can see Propertius 3.13 as a perfect prelude to 4.1, where Troy becomes once again a place of confusion and reversal—a narrative Bermuda triangle in which the false oracle of Sinon is true while the true prophecy of Cassandra is false. One could attempt to explain the discrepancy between the two Propertian versions of Cassandra by relying on the different contexts and aims of Books 3 and 4 of the corpus. Yet, while Propertius’ Book 4 is clearly more concerned with celebrating Rome, we cannot ignore how the poem looks back on and interacts with the poems of

\textsuperscript{248} Later, Ovid will cap his Metamorphoses with the story of Troy’s metamorphosis into Rome, and he too will express his delight that the Greeks only aided the Trojans by defeating them: utiliter Phrygibus vicisse Pelasgos, Ov. Met. 15.452. Gossage (1955) compiles a list of similar statements explaining Rome’s conquest of Greece as a revenge for Troy’s sack: Lycoph. Alex. 1226; Hor. Carm. 3.3; 4.6.21-4; 4.15; Carm. saec. 40; Verg. Aen. 1.283-5 and 6.836-40; Prop. 4.1.39; Ov. Fast. 1.523-4; Stat. Silv. 1.2.188-93.
Books 1-3. The contrasting portrayals of Cassandra allow Propertius to raise questions about the glorification of Rome in 4 and to undercut the prophecies of doom in Book 3.

On the one hand, after the warning in 3.13, Propertius’ confidence in Rome’s power in 4.1 seems reckless, as it promises just the sort of success that Propertius fears in Book 3 will turn Rome back into Troy. It is true that winning the Trojan War was, in the end, unadvisable for Greece, who soon found herself drowning under the weight of her own success. But as the earlier poem 3.13 warns, Rome is now in turn in danger of being broken by her own victories: frangitur ipsa suis Roma superba bonis (Prop. 3.13.63). On the other hand, a reader looking back from 4.1 may choose to read the warnings in 3.13 about contemporary Rome as unfounded hysteria, like the misleadingly gloomy warnings of the traditional Cassandra who thought Troy was ruined forever.

Moreover, there is enough lexical ambiguity in 3.13 to suggest that Propertius’ narrator may be misinterpreting the traditional Cassandra’s warnings, which need not be so different from his new version of Cassandra’s prophecy in 4.1. On a first reading, Cassandra’s prophecy that Parim Phrygiae fatum componere seems to predict Troy’s final doom as does her warning that the Trojan horse is fallacem. The choice of the phrase componere fatum seems to look toward a Troy in ashes, since componere was the appropriate verb for collecting or arranging ashes of the dead and fatum was a common word for death or disaster. But, as we learn in Prop. 4.1.54, it is specifically Trojan ash that will give rise to the Roman Empire when Jupiter gives weapons to huic

249 For a similar thought, see Ov. Met. 14.474, where Diomedes exclaims that the catastrophic nostoi of the Greeks would make even Priam pity them: Graecia tum potuit Priamo quoque flenda videri.
Once we are reminded of the illustrious future of Trojan ash, we realize that the phrase *componere fatum* itself could also be read as a positive statement that Paris will “construct Troy’s destiny.” Similarly, to say that the Trojan horse was *fallax* would in no way contradict Cassandra’s words in 4.1 when she warns the Greeks that the horse is not what it seems. The Greeks constructed the horse to be *fallax* for the Trojans, but the end result is in fact *fallax* even toward the Greeks. As Cassandra of Prop. 4.1 points out, the Trojan Horse will eventually turn back on the Greeks who engineered it, and it will unleash a host of Trojan Roman soldiers seeking revenge. This re-interpretation may seem strained, but it is nonetheless allowed for in the diction that Propertius has chosen for the prophecy of doom.

The two Propertian Cassandras are made to pull against each other as the reader progresses in the text and sifts through the contradicting views on Rome’s successes and future. The earlier prophecy in 3.13 reaches forward to make us question the later version in 4.1, and the later prophecy reaches backward, forcing us to re-evaluate the earlier version in 3.13. Troy in Propertius is emphatically a place where false prophecies are also true and where victory is also defeat. These contradictions inherent in the story of Troy allow Propertius to give his two versions of Cassandra equal traction in the fight, and the legendary problems that Cassandra had in making herself understood make her the perfect figure for Propertius to revise, re-interpret, question, and contradict.

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250 For more instances of Rome rising from ashes, see Enn. *Ann.* 344 Sk., Manil. 1.511-12, Ov. *Fast.* 1.523-6, and Verg. *Aen.* 7.293-6

251 Ovid follows Propertius’ lead at *Met.* 12.608-9, when Achilles, the victor, is suddenly the victim of the supposedly cowardly Paris: …*ille igitur tantorum victor, Achille,/ victus es a timido Graiae raptore maritae!*
Metamorphoses of Troy and Homer:

As Ovid closes out our investigation of Troy in the Augustan period, we confront yet another formulation of the anxiety over how to gain control over the cycles of violence that have followed Rome since its beginnings in Troy. If Augustus has succeeded in steering Rome away from repeating the less desirable Trojan patterns, who will make sure that Rome stays on course after Augustus is no longer at the helm? The evolution of Troy into Rome is presented as the final and arguably the most important of the transformations narrated by Ovid in his Metamorphoses. The narrative of the Metamorphoses moves from the beginning of the universe chronologically toward its telos in the metamorphosis of Troy into Rome. By Book 12, Ovid has taken up the story of the Trojan War, a theme that he remains focused on as it leads him into Aeneas’ journey, and Rome’s history up through the rise of Augustus.

We encounter the now familiar prophecy that it was useful (utiliter) to the Trojans to have been beaten by the Greeks. Pythagoras recounts his memory of how the Trojan seer Helenus reassured Aeneas when Troy was falling:

“nate dea, si nota satis praesagia nostrae mentis habes, non tota cadet te sospite Troia! flamma tibi ferrumque dabunt iter: ibis et una Pergama rapta feres, donec Troiaeque tibique externum patria contingat amicius arvum, urbem et iam cerno Phrygios debere nepotes, quanta nec est nec erit nec visa prioribusannis. hanc alii proceres per saecula longa potentem, sed dominam rerum de sanguine natus Iuli efficiet, quo cum tellus erit usa, fruentur aetheriae sedes, caelumque erit exitus illi.”

haec Helenum ceccinisse penatigero Aeneae mente memor refero cognataque moenia laetor crescere et utiliter Phrygibus vicisse Pelasgos.
“Son of the goddess, if you hold well in mind my prophetic visions, with you alive Troy will not fall in its entirety! Fire and sword will give way for you: you will go and you will rescue and carry Pergama with you, until a foreign land shall be granted, kinder to Troy and to you than your own fatherland. And even now I see a city destined for Phrygian grandsons, a city such as none other is or will be or was in past years. Other leaders through the long generations will make the city powerful, but one born from the blood of Iulus will make her mistress of the world. When earth will have used him fully, the heavenly regions will enjoy him, and he will depart for heaven.” I remember that Helenus sang these things to Aeneas as he carried with him his household gods, and I am happy to see that my kindred walls are rising and that the Greek victory was beneficial to the Phrygians. (Ov. Met. 15.439-52)

Aeneas can neither save Troy nor rebuild it exactly, but he can nevertheless retain a version of Pergama and found a Trojan city that will rise to rule the world more powerfully than ever before or since.

It is true, however, that the very reason that Pythagoras is able to recount Helenus’ words to Aeneas is that, as he claims, he has been reincarnated. As Pythagoras stresses repeatedly in his extended argument against animal sacrifice, everything in the world is mutable and constantly changing (cuncta fluunt, omnisque vagans formatur imago, Met. 15.178-85.) Humans, animals, elements, ages, and even cities are eternally mutable. In fact, the reason that Pythagoras reports Helenus’ prophecy at this point in his speech is to support his observation that nations rise and fall in power:

…sic tempora verti cernimus atque illas adsumere robora gentes, concidere has; sic magna fuit censuque virisque perque decem potuit tantum dare sanguinis annos, nunc humilis veteres tantummodo Troia ruinas et pro divitiis tumulos ostendit avorum.  

So we see times changing and some peoples growing stronger while others sink down; thus Troy was great in wealth and men and was able for ten years to give so much blood, but now she is humbled and nothing remains but ancient ruins. Instead of riches she now displays ancestral tombs. (Ov. Met. 15.420-25)
Although the prophecy of Helenus specifically points out that a descendant of Aeneas will lead Rome to its unparalleled empire over the world, the context of the prophecy in the midst of a proof of the mutability of nations is somewhat unsettling.\footnote{Feeney 1999.} The reader wonders, as the *Metamorphoses* builds up to its concluding praise of Augustus and Rome, whether Rome is the exception to Pythagoras’ rule of change and flux. Ovid ends the narrative of the poem with a prayer to all of the gods associated with Rome’s rise to delay the time when Augustus will leave his post as ruler of the world (*Met.* 15.861-70). The question of what will happen to the world when that postponed day of Augustus’ death and deification finally comes is left as open in Ovid’s poem as it must have seemed to Ovid and his contemporaries outside of the world of the poem.\footnote{Barchiesi 1997a: 210-13 and Barchiesi 1997b; Feeney 1999; Feldherr 2010: 63-83; Hardie 1997.}

Despite these uncertainties over Rome’s ability to outstrip its past at Troy, however, Ovid does make a sure statement about the related problem of Roman poetry’s ability to outstrip its Homeric past. Hardie (1993: 98-9) has described how anxiety over imperial succession at Rome is parallel to anxiety over poetic succession. As Aeneas, Augustus, and his descendants rule over Trojan Rome, Ennius, Vergil, and his successors fight to keep control of the Trojan myth as told by Homer. The *Aeneid*’s story of how Rome rose to be greater than Troy maps on to Vergil’s potential to be considered greater than Homer: *cedite Romani scriptores, cedite Grai, nescio quid maius nascitur Iliade* (Prop. 2.34.65).\footnote{Wigodsky (1972: 74) suggests that Hector and Anchises’ education of Aeneas may be modeled on Homer’s appearance to Ennius. Hector and Anchises transmit the “Trojan mission” to Aeneas just as Homer transmits his poetic mission to Ennius.} In Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, the question of
Augustus’ succession is left open, but Ovid firmly establishes Roman poetry as a triumphant successor to the Greek tradition. Ovid invests his treatment of Homeric subject matter with a metapoetic valence meant to link Rome’s struggle to overcome its Trojan past with Roman poetry’s struggle to overcome its Homeric past.

In particular, Ovid’s narration of the death of Achilles sets in motion a metaphor of poetic fame that recurs in the conclusion of the *Metamorphoses*. These two uses of the trope of poetic immortality seem designed to demonstrate how Ovid’s poetry secures a poetic afterlife not only his for subjects but also for himself. Ovid’s poem immortalizes the poet as hero just as Homer’s poem immortalized the hero Achilles himself. Achilles is a crucial figure for poets not only because of his key role in Homer’s *Iliad*, but also because Achilles is so aware of the power of poetic song to immortalize a hero. Achilles himself sings the *kleos* of earlier heroes, and he resigns himself to his early death in order to ensure his own place in song.

Iam timor ille Phrygum, decus et tutela Pelasgi nominis, Aeacides, caput insuperabile bello, arserat: armarat deus idem idemque cremarat; iam cinis est, et de tam magno restat Achille nescio quid parvum, quod non bene conpleat urnam, at vivit totum quae gloria conpleat orbem. haec illi mensura viro respondet, et hac est par sibi Pelides nec inania Tartara sentit. ipse etiam, ut, cuius fuerit, cognoscere posses, bella movet clipeus, deque armis arma feruntur.

Now that terror of the Phrygians, the glory and guardian of the Pelasgian name, Aeacides, the chief invincible in war, was burned: The same god armed him and consumed him as well; for now he is ash, and some small bit remains of such a great man as Achilles—some small bit which does not even fill an urn very well. Yet, his glory lives, which fills the whole world. This answers the measure of the man, and in this the son of Peleus is still himself and does not feel empty Tartarus. His very shield, even, so that you might know to whom it belonged, still wages war, and arms are taken up for his arms. (Ovid *Met.* 12.612-21)
The lack of an obvious metamorphosis at the moment of Achilles’ death may be surprising to Ovid’s reader. Each of the deaths surrounding Achilles’—of Cycnus, Caeneus, Aesacus, and Memnon all end in a metamorphosis, and their transformations are each specifically into a species of bird. Ovid’s fixation on birds in this section creates a frame within which to read the death of Achilles who does not explicitly transform into anything, much less a bird. Still, especially when set against the avian theme in the surrounding deaths, the description of Achilles’ glory filling the world after his death seems designed to activate the metaphor of a poetic flight, familiar from Enn. Varia 18, Hor. Carm. 1.1 and 2.20, Thgn. 237-254, Verg. G. 3.8-9, the story of Daedalus’ flight in Ov. Met. 8.183-235, and Ovid’s own conclusion to his epic (Met. 15.875-9).\(^{255}\) As Theognis explained to Kyrnos:

\[\text{Σοὶ μὲν ἐγὼ πτέρ' ἔδωκα, σὺν οἷς' ἐπ' ἀπείρονα πόντον πωτήσῃ, κατὰ γὴν πᾶσαν άειρόμενος ὑπόδειως' θυίνης δὲ καὶ εἰλαπτίνησι παρέσσῃ ἐν πάσαις πολλῶν κείμενος ἐν στόμασιν, καὶ σὲ σὺν αὐλίσκοισι λιγυρθόγγοις νέοι ἀνδρεῖς εὐκόσως ἐρατοὶ καλὰ τε καὶ λιγέα άισονται. καὶ όταν ἀνοφερῆς ὑπὸ κεύθεσι γαίης βῆς πολυκωκύτους εἰς Αἴδαο δόμους, οὐδέποτε' οὐδὲ θανὼν ἀπολεῖς κλέος, ὅταν δὲνοφερῆς ὑπὸ κεύθεσι γαίης ώθησιν αὐλίσκοισι σὺν αὐλίσκοισι λιγυρθόγγοις νέοι ἀνδρεῖς ἀφθιτοῦ πολλῶν πόντον ἐπ' ἀτρύγετον, Κύρνε, καθ' Ἑλλάδα γῆν στρωφόμενος, ἡδ' ἀνὰ νῆσους ἰχθυόεντα περῶν πόντον ἐπ' ἀτρύγετον.}\\]

To you I have given wings, on which you may fly aloft over the boundless sea and over the whole earth easily. At feasts and at dinners, you will be present upon the mouths of many. And you the attractive young men will sing harmoniously with clear-sounding pipes—beautifully and clearly. And when under the hollows of the misty earth you go to the lament-filled home of Hades, not even then, dead, will you lose your glory. But you, undying and with an

\[^{255}\text{Hardie (2002: 87-97) and Papaioannou (2007: 149) discuss this link between the cenotaph and conceptions of poetic immortality. Feldherr (2010: 110-22) offers useful readings of the connection between Ovid’s concluding poetic flight and Daedalus’ flight.}\]
imperishable name, will be a care to men, Kyrnos, roaming across the Greek land, and over the islands, passing over the restless sea full of fish.

(Thgn. 237-254)

Achilles’ transformation at his death is metaphorical rather than literal; he is not a bird, but, like Theognis’ Kyrnos, his poet has gifted him with a set of wings and he can never fully die now that he has been immortalized in poetry. As S. Pappaioannou (2007: 148-9) argues, the contrast between Achilles’ small pile of ashes and his everlasting name showcases the prestige of the Homeric narrator. Pappaioannou observes that the discrepancy between the small pile of ashes and the great name of Achilles draws attention to the subjectivity of epic narrative in general. In her words, “the evaluation of an epic hero’s performance, his ‘glory’, is the manipulation of different famae, in their turn no less subjective, unreliable and of unverifiable credibility.”

Achilles’ fame is entirely dependent on the epic narrator, since there is nothing else left of him but his poetic fama.

As Horace Odes 4.9 teaches, it is because the Trojan narrative is the starting point of poetry that it is also necessarily the beginning of knowable history. There may have been earlier Troys, Helens and Hectors, according to Horace, but we cannot have any knowledge of their existence because they were not immortalized in poetry. Troy is the starting point of history precisely because it is the starting point of poetry. Thus, the poet makes history by documenting it and allowing the fame of deeds to fill the world as Achilles’ reputation did after his death.

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If we look now to Ovid’s concluding claim that his poem makes him just as immortal as heroes like Achilles we can see how that claim draws attention to a reversal taking place in Rome’s poetry as its empire grows.

Iamque opus exegi, quod nec Iovis ira nec ignis nec poterit ferrum nec edax abolere vetustas. cum volet, illa dies, quae nil nisi corporis huius ius habet, incerti spatiun mihi finiat aevi: parte tamen meliore mi super alta perennis astra ferar, nomenque erit indelebile nostrum, quaque patet domitis Romana potentia terris, ore legar populi, perque omnia saecula fama, siquid habent veri vatum praesagia, vivam.  

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And now I have accomplished my work, which neither the wrath of Jove nor fire nor sword nor biting age shall be able to undo. When it will, let that day, which has no power except over this mortal body, make an end to the length of my uncertain years: however, in my better part I shall be borne immortal over the high stars, and my name will be undying. Wherever Roman control extends over the conquered world, I will be spoken of on the lips of men, and, through all generations, if the prophecies of bards have any truth, I will live in fame.  

(Ov. Met. 15.871-879)

Just like Achilles, a better part of Ovid will last forever and his fame will have no limits in space or time as long as Rome’s dominion continues. The connection between these two key instances of poetic transformation in the Metamorphoses emphasizes the difference between Homer’s poetic power and Ovid’s. Whereas Homer’s poetry kept Achilles alive, Ovid reiterates the claims of Ennius, Vergil, and Horace that they too will be kept alive as heroes of their own poetry as long as Rome is mistress of the world. Moreover, Ovid’s focus on the transformation of Troy into Rome at the end of his epic brings out the full implications of these claims linking the poet’s immortality to Rome’s. As Troy grew into Rome and, especially in the Augustan Age, came to rule the Mediterranean, it needed no poet to give it an everlasting place in history but instead was able to offer its poets immortality. Rome has so far eclipsed any previous notion of
fame that it makes its poets into heroes instead of the reverse. Rome’s escape from the shadow of Priam’s Troy, then, helps to ensure that its poets can likewise escape the shadow of Homer and appear not only as architects of immortality but as immortals themselves.

*Conclusion:*

As Octavian, the descendant of Aeneas, rose to power as the Republic collapsed, telling Trojan stories offered an indirect way to discuss the civil wars and provide powerful political justifications to the combatants. The flexibility of Trojan myth allowed for several different ways of spinning the connection between Rome’s recurring civil wars and its relationship to Troy, and both ruler and poets sought ways to redefine the Trojan foundation story to reflect on the Principate’s foundation in civil war. Just as Caesar and Pompey had done in the prior generation, both Octavian and Antony modeled themselves as types of Trojan heroes. Octavian aligned himself with the figure of Aeneas, whose primary mission was to help the Trojans move on from their sacked city while Antony appeared as a new Priam or Paris figure as he attempted once again to extend Rome’s control over the Eastern kingdoms where Troy once excelled. The defeat of Antony placed a new emphasis on the split between Aeneas and Priam as models of Trojan identity. Aeneas and Augustus emerged as leaders focused on redefining the past to prepare for the future while Priam became a symbol of regression that continually repeats the past.

For Augustus, Aeneas’ story was one of sacrifice as key portions of the Trojan and Roman identity needed to be abandoned or forcefully removed, but there was
nevertheless a nostalgia that accompanied images of Priam and Pompey left nameless on the shores as Aeneas and Caesar carried on in to the future. Being the wrong kind of Trojan, however, was undeniably, to be un-Roman, and so Priam, though a symbol of Troy himself, was a foreigner at Rome. The flexibility of the Trojan myth allowed for civil war to be cast as both a foreign war and a battle against regression into Rome’s former Eastern self. Yet even as poets helped Augustus to claim for himself Aeneas’ brand of Trojan adaptability while identifying the less desirable aspects of Rome’s decadent Trojan heritage with his opponent Antony, the same poets also drew attention to the artificiality of that narrative.

Ennius laid the seeds for a positive reading of Trojan origin as a lesson in how to grow from defeat, but the worry remained that Rome would one day grow so successful that it would replay the collapse and corruption of Troy after all. Under Augustus, poets needed to learn to manage the multitude of ways to interpret the parallelism between Troy’s fall and the fall of the Republic. As we have seen, poets aimed to separate out different positive and negative readings of the connection of Troy and Rome’s civil wars, but they simultaneously worked to show how these strands can never permanently be separated from another. Although we have seen how the Principate’s rise out the ruins of the Republic helped to support a reassuring view of the ability of both Rome and Rome’s poetry to outstrip their Homeric past, this triumphant reinterpretation of the historic and poetic past would hold only temporarily. Augustus’ distinction between productive, Roman self-sacrifice and Trojan self-destruction will be lost on Nero, who seems no longer able to differentiate between Trojan myth and Roman present.
CHAPTER 4

NERO’S CONFUSION: CONFLATING TROJAN MYTH AND ROMAN HISTORY

When we meet Troy in early Roman poetry, we find it presented by Ennius as a guarantee of Rome’s ability to rise from the ashes and gain strength from its struggles in historical time against Hannibal and Pyrrhus. Toward the end of the Republic, however, the poetic uses of Troy grow more obviously ambivalent. As we saw in Chapter Two, Catullus’ games of perspective emphasize how the Trojan myth can be read both as a positive and a negative story for Rome, depending on one’s point of view and designs. Taking control of the many competing perspectives on Trojan myth at Rome becomes a priority for Augustus and poets under him, who developed a newly selective use of the Trojan narrative to justify, enable, and sometimes question, the Roman future that Augustus wished to build. By and large, Augustus was successful in associating certain figures in the Trojan myth with positive, Roman attributes and distancing Rome from those Easternized failures that would eat away at the core of Romanness – Priam and the sons of Priam. Thus, for at least two hundred years, Roman leaders and writers were using Troy as a sophisticated lens and even a tool of policy to shape Roman attitudes and actions for the benefit of Rome.

In this concluding chapter, we will see how the use of Troy at Rome comes to a spectacular, yet tragic telos under the reign of Nero. The long tradition of manipulating Trojan myth for political and cultural ends at Rome rests finally in the hands of the overly theatrical Nero, whose treatment of the myth seems geared more than anything to
help him secure a path toward his own mythologization. The historians’ depiction of Nero emphasizes his obsession with writing, singing, and acting out the Fall of Troy. Nero reportedly wrote his own *Troica* and it is the *Iliou Persis* section of this poem which he supposedly sang as Rome burned, perhaps by his own order. Nero may not have realized his singular role in Rome’s Trojan narratives, but he was to be the last of the Julio-Claudian emperors, and the last of a series of leaders of Rome who traced their ancestry back to Trojan Aeneas, the original leader of the Trojan survivors as they left their homeland for Italy. His demise and his legacy ended not only the Julio-Claudian dynasty but also the grand, forward-looking narrative that Augustan poets had worked so hard to make out of Rome’s rise from Troy’s ashes.

While Nero, like Augustus, emphasizes his family’s descent from the very Trojans who founded Rome, he also consistently misunderstands the progress made by Augustan poets in revising Rome’s Trojan myth. In the first part of this chapter, I outline how Nero’s use of Trojan myth reflects his tragically misjudged priorities as emperor of Rome. I argue that while Augustan ideology reached back to shape Trojan myth to fit contemporary circumstances and his plans for Rome’s future, Nero reverses the direction of the process. Nero designs his present to fit the Trojan past without also remembering to revise the past to fit the present and plan for the future. This confusion of directionality between Rome’s past and present is also part of Nero’s larger problem with distinguishing myth from history and theater from reality. When Nero molds the historical present based on the mythical past rather than revising myth to fit contemporary circumstances, he also allows myth to take over reality, and when he sings his own *Sack of Troy* while Rome is burning, he similarly blurs the line between
theatrical and real-life tragedy. We will see that Nero, a would-be actor and poet, attempts to play as many roles from Trojan myth as he can at Rome, seemingly relishing his power not just to re-tell Homeric myth but to re-enact it using Rome as a stand-in for Troy.

It must be said at this point that I cannot claim here to characterize the choices and behavior of the historical Nero. For our picture of Nero, we rely mainly on the narratives of Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio, but the figure that emerges from those historiographical sources often seems too horrifying to be believed.\textsuperscript{257} Did Nero, for instance, actually beat his pregnant wife to death, order his mother’s death, burn down his own city, and refuse to address his soldiers because he did not want to strain his singing voice? It is hard to say, but what we do know is that many of the troubling tales about Nero were commonly referred to even while he was alive.\textsuperscript{258} I have, then, focused not on what we can prove about Nero’s behavior, but rather on what the historiographical tradition, as early as the second century CE, presented as the legendary Nero. Even if Nero was not exactly as he is depicted in the tradition, we are justified in studying how the legendary Nero’s use of Troy at Rome demonstrated and played into his disordered priorities for Rome and his misunderstanding of the relationship between Rome’s mythical past in the defeated Trojan East and its historical present as a Western victor. It is even possible that the historiographers emphasized or

\textsuperscript{257} Dio Cass. 61-63; Suet. \textit{Ner.}; Tac. \textit{Ann.} 13-16. For a thorough treatment of our possible sources for information about Nero, see Champlin 2003: 38-52.

\textsuperscript{258} Historiographers preserved several supposedly contemporary verses accusing Nero of arson, incest, killing his mother, and turning Rome into his personal house: see Suet. \textit{Ner.} 39 with Courtney 1993: 479. Tacitus tells us that a member of Nero’s own Praetorian Guard accused the emperor of arson: see Tac. \textit{Ann.} 15.67.3 with Champlin 2003: 185-6.
embellished Nero’s trouble controlling the relationship between Rome and its Trojan myth as a way of fixing him even more securely as a foreign tyrant terrorizing Rome rather than a benevolent successor to Augustus. When I speak of Nero, then, I am referring to the legendary Nero as characterized by the historiographical sources and the poetry of the first and second centuries.

In the second part of the chapter we will focus specifically on how the poets Seneca and Lucan play into the Neronian period’s misuse of Trojan myth. Lucan and Seneca seem to highlight more than ever the confusion over whether to characterize the heroes of Trojan myth as soft foreigners or as worthy progenitors of Rome. Their use of Troy emphasizes how little remains of the careful delineation crafted by Augustan ideology to separate out the Trojan heroes worth appropriating and those foreign *semiviri* whose loss allowed Roman strength to emerge. To Lucan and Seneca, the Trojan myth does not signify a heroic ten-year defense against a Greek foe who would eventually pay the price; instead, it is a byword for internal dissolution, imperial decay, and loss of national identity.

*Nero’s Trojan role-playing*

Before looking specifically at Nero’s use of Trojan myth, we must begin by reminding ourselves of one of Nero’s most notorious traits—his obsession with retelling, and acting out the stories of mythic heroes. At the beginning of Nero’s reign, the artistically inclined young prince seemed as though he would follow Augustus’ lead in creating a Golden Age of Roman peace, literary production, and cultural
In fact, Nero’s patronage and love of art did encourage a revival of Roman poetry, and we date to the Neronian Age the works of Lucan, Seneca, Petronius, and the epigrammatist Lucilius. It is well known, too, that Nero himself was a poet and singer. We know in particular that Nero wrote a *Troica*, which included a description of the sack of Troy. But, it seems that Nero’s passion for poetry and drama went too far and impeded his ability to rule effectively. The story that Nero allegedly sang from his *Troica* during Rome’s Great Fire of 64 CE seems designed to highlight the trouble the emperor had in even acknowledging a difference between art and life. Nero’s obsession with all types of theater and spectacle inspired him to train very seriously as a citharode, singer, actor, dancer, and charioteer and to perform publicly. Such public performances by a Roman emperor seem to have been met with hostility among the upper orders, even if the masses may have enjoyed them. Pliny the Younger referred to Nero with distaste as the *imperator scaenicus* (“actor-emperor”). Nero progressed from performing at private events, to appearing onstage in Naples in 64 CE, at Rome during the second Neronia in 65 CE, and in the next few years during an unprecedented tour through Greece to become *periodonikes*, victor in each of the Greek games. Nero is universally derided in the historiographical sources for prioritizing acting and singing

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over imperial responsibilities and for his refusal to engage with reality. Both Dio and
Suetonius claim that in Nero’s last days, when his authority and position were clearly
threatened, Nero refused to address his troops because he wanted to preserve his singing
voice.\(^{262}\)

Even when offstage, Nero is said to have been unable to stop role-playing. We
hear that after his performances during his tour of the Greek games, Nero made a show
of his fear that he would not be judged the victor. Of course, his victory was a foregone
conclusion, especially since he had forced the games to be held closer together than
usual so that he could win each of them during his tour and return as *periodonikes*. It is
not clear whether Nero simply acted unsure of the outcome, or whether he himself
began to believe his own fiction that he was actually competing for the prize. What is
clear is that the legendary Nero respected no hard and fast division between reality and
role-play.

We can also see Nero’s theatrical flair guiding his art-direction of very real
depth-scenes, both those of others during the famously gruesome Roman spectacles and
his own demise.\(^{263}\) As Nero, in flight, prepared his own makeshift tomb, he is said to
order a trench to be dug to his proportions and decorated the area carefully with bits of
marble.\(^{264}\) He orders water and wood to be brought in preparation for attending to his
body. He takes a final drink of water from a pond and mourns for the days when he
used to drink only water that was first boiled and then cooled in snow. As he dies, he

\(^{262}\) Dio Cass. 63.26.1-2; Suet. *Ner.* 25.3 and 41.1-2. See also Champlin 2003: 81.
\(^{263}\) K. M. Coleman (1990: esp. 68-9) has described the striking blend of myth and reality
in the spectacle of Roman executions staged as imitations of well-known myths. A
condemned man forced to play the part of Icarus is said to have splattered Nero himself
with blood as he reenacted the young boy’s fall to his death.
\(^{264}\) Dio Cass. 63.29.2; Suet. *Ner.* 49.1.
utters his famous last words: *Qualis artifex pereo?* As E. Champlin (2003: 49-51) has observed, the meaning of this remark is not so much “what an artist dies in me” but rather “what an artisan I am in my death.” Whatever the historical Nero did during his last hours, the legendary Nero is depicted as self-consciously adapting his own death into tragic theater, both in adorning the humble setting as best he can and in scripting his final words to draw attention to his effort.

When Nero actually did appear onstage in public, he sometimes confused myth, fantasy, and reality even further by wearing a mask of his own face, or, if he played a woman, wearing a mask with features of his late wife Poppea Sabina.265 By performing as Orestes or Oedipus using a mask of his own face, Nero drew an obvious parallel between the familiar stories of Greek tragedy and his own actions as his mother’s killer and, allegedly, her lover.266 So not only did Nero publicly admit his role in his mother’s death in his letter to the Senate, but he also gloried onstage in his role as a modern day Orestes, capable of living out in real life one of the most famous Greek myths. Nero’s audience, used to finding contemporary resonance in theatrical performances, easily caught on to Nero’s use of Greek myth to frame his real-life actions. Suetonius offers a list of popular quips about Nero, including the following graffito, which replaces parts of Nero’s official name with the names of mythical mother-slayers: Νέρων Ὄρεστης Ἀλκμέων μητροκτόνος, νεώψηφον: Νέρων ἰδίων μητέρα ἀπέκτεινε (*Ner.* 39.2).

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265 Dio Cass. 63.9.5; Suet. *Ner.* 21.3, with Slater 1996.

266 Champlin 2003: 96. Furthermore, as Bartsch (1994: 46-50) and Slater (1996: 38-9) have emphasized, the choice to appear onstage wearing the mask of the late Poppea Sabina would have been more jarring for a Roman audience than we might at first suspect. The Roman custom of honoring the dead with ancestor masks and wax *imagines* would add an additional layer of confusion to Nero’s role-playing, which not only confused myth and reality but also funereal and theatrical representation. For the use of *imagines* in Roman funerary culture, see Flower 1996.
It is Nero’s theatricality and fixation on living out the stories of myth in real life that we see reflected in his attitude toward Rome’s Trojan myth. The episode that first comes to mind when we think of Nero’s take on Troy is the Great Fire of Rome in 64 CE. Each of our main primary sources report the rumor that Nero sang the *Troiae halosis* from his *Troica* as he watched Rome being ravaged by fire. Although modern opinions vary, there is little disagreement in our sources as to whether Nero actually ordered the fire to be set. Suetonius and Dio both blame Nero for the fire, accusing him of wanting to burn Rome to make room for a grander palace. Tacitus (*Ann.* 15.38) also reports the accusation, but he does not definitively accept the rumors as true. Despite Tacitus’ hesitation, it was clearly an established part of Nero’s legend by his time that the emperor may have set fire to his own city and then capitalized on the backdrop of burning Rome to perform his version of Troy’s sack.

To the Nero that we have seen recalled in our sources, obsessed with role-playing and reenacting myth, the chance to perform in his own version of the mythical sack of Troy amidst the real conflagration of the new Troy might be justification enough for burning down the city of Rome. Nero clearly appreciated the conceit that his experience watching Rome burn, as Roman emperor and descendant of Aeneas, was akin to Priam’s watching Troy fall. He had allegedly said that he envied Priam for being able to experience the simultaneous end of both his reign and his city (Dio Cass.

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At the same time, even as Nero played the role of the doomed Priam, he also saw himself as another of the heroes who had re-founded Rome after its near destruction: Camillus had led the rebuilding of Rome after the Gallic Sack of 390 BC, and Augustus had reinstated Rome’s government after the disasters of the civil wars. Similarly, Nero seemed to have seen himself as a glorious rebuilding of Rome after his fire, which reenacted these previous disasters. According to Tacitus, it had not gone unnoticed that the fire of 64 CE occurred on July 19th, which was the anniversary of the Gallic Sack of July 19th 390 BC.269

Champlin (2003: 194) writes: “As so often, to explain and justify the present,…Nero reached back to stories from the past.” This is a true statement, but it is not the whole story, especially given the legend that Nero himself set the fire of 64. Instead of seeking to explain the present through allusion to the past, Nero creates the present in imitation of the past.270 Nero seems to have wanted to make a place for himself in Rome’s mythical history by recreating the original founding of Rome after the sack of Troy. He does not take advantage of an existing crisis to emerge as Rome’s savior, but he recreates the previous disasters and models his behavior, even before the fire breaks out, on heroic Romans of the past. Before the fire, Nero had planned to leave Rome to visit Alexandria, but he canceled his journey after he visited the Temple of Vesta and experienced there a premonition that Rome was in grave danger. This sequence of events matches the tale recounted about the pontifex maximus Caecilius

269 Tac. Ann. 15.41.2. Koestermann 1968: 245-6. Champlin (2003: 193-200) discusses the parallels between the fire of 64 and the sack of Troy as well as between the rebuilding of Rome after the fire and the city’s later rebuilding after the Gallic Sack.
270 For useful discussions of different ways of relating present and past, whether aetiological or teleological, see Harder (2003) and Nelis (2005).
Metellus, who saved the *sacra* when the Temple of Vesta burned during the fire of 241 BC. Metellus had planned to leave Rome for Tusculum, but he was stopped by a similar premonition and returned to the temple just in time.\(^{271}\)

Nero is clearly a “close reader of the past”, as Champlin (2003: 190) suggests, but while he mimics the past, he does not, as Augustus had, successfully reshape it to fit his present circumstances. As a result, Nero is bound to repeat Rome’s mythical past at Troy instead of using it as a tool to support his political actions and goals. In trying to emulate Augustus and pull into play the story of Troy, Nero is ruled by the story rather than deploying it selectively to achieve his aims as Augustus did during and after the civil war. He is reinventing the historical present on the basis of the mythical past without following Augustus in using the mythical past to justify the decisions of the present.

This important shift in emphasis starts to destabilize the Augustan parallel between Rome’s brilliant rise from Troy’s ruins and Rome’s growth after the bloodletting of the civil wars. We are no longer looking to the past for ways to explain and justify our progress as we move forward; we are now looking to the past simply to replay it—repeating the Trojan cycle of destruction without the benefit of an Augustan idea of a necessary evil to make room for the empire’s future successes. After the fire, explains Tacitus, Nero wanted the glory of being the “founder of a new city (*condendae urbis novae*...*gloriam, Ann. 15.40.2*).” Feeney (2007a: 106) points out that the phrase can be read as critical of Nero, since Camillus and Augustus were emphatically not founders of a “new city”; instead, they were cherished as “new founders” of the city.

Tacitus’ transferred epithet may not seem crucial at first glance, but it concisely signals Nero’s misunderstanding of how to use myth at Rome. The essential feature of the re-founding by Camillus according to Livy’s account was that Rome was still Rome and had not moved to Veii or given up its national identity. Camillus was re-founding and helping to restore and reshape the same city that Romulus had first founded; he was not fleeing and founding a new city from scratch as Aeneas had after the fall of Troy. Aeneas’ flight from burning Troy was necessary for Rome’s development, but it was not to be repeated. Camillus and Augustus used Rome’s origins in the sack of Troy as an analogy for Rome’s ability to rebuild after disaster; instead, our legendary Nero literally replays Troy at Rome by choosing to burn the city and build a new one.

It is part of the historiographical tradition that Nero intended for this new city to be named after himself—Neropolis.272 The suggestion of this name in the sources suggests Nero’s megalomania but, more importantly for us, it is testament also to his notorious philhellenism, which would clearly impact his attitude toward Trojan myth.273 Neropolis sounds like a Greek city, more like Neapolis than Rome. It was at Naples (Neapolis) that Nero had felt comfortable enough to make his public stage debut, and Nero’s love of Greek games and theater impelled him to begin his own Greek games at Rome and to adopt an obviously Hellenizing lifestyle. On his return from his grand tour of Greece, Nero entered Rome in an impressive celebration that blended the Roman triumph with the Greek tradition of eiselasis, the re-entry into his hometown of a victor.

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272 Suet. Ner. 55; Tac. Ann. 15.40.2. See also Griffin 1984: 131. Denis Feeney points out to me that the name, Neropolis, would also be a translilngual pun because “Rome” in Greek means “Strength”, and “Nero” in Sabine was supposed to mean “strong” (Suet. Tib. 1.2; Hor. Carm. 4.4.28-9). Nero’s new city, then, would still mean “Strongville”. 273 Champlin 2003: 173-4; Griffin 1984: 208-220; Sanford 1937; Schumann 1930; Woodman 1998.
in the games.\textsuperscript{274} Using the very chariot that Augustus had used in his triumph after Actium, Nero wore a Greek \textit{chlamys}, entered in the Greek custom through a dismantled part of the city walls, and bore \textit{tituli} listing artistic rather than military victories.

Despite Nero’s use of his great-great-grandfather Augustus’ chariot, his hybrid triumph actually recalls more the Hellenizing tendencies of his great-grandfather, Antony— the losing party at Actium. The resulting image is one of Nero riding on Augustus’ chariot dressed in the way Augustus’ rival might have been had he triumphed instead.

How did Nero’s paradoxical blend of Antony and Augustus affect his treatment of Trojan myth at Rome? Although we know relatively little about Nero’s \textit{Troica}, we are fortunate that a crucial description of its plot is preserved in Servius:

\begin{quote}
hic Paris secundum Troica Neronis fortissimus fuit, adeo ut in Troiae agonali certamine superaret omnes, ipsum etiam Hectorem. qui cum iratus in eum stringeret gladium, dixit se esse germanum: quod adlatis crepundiis probavit qui habitu rustici adhuc latebat.

According to the \textit{Troica} of Nero, this Paris was very strong, such that he defeated everyone in the contest of the Agonalia at Troy, even Hector himself. When Hector was angered and drew his sword against him, Paris said that he was his brother: he proved his claim by bringing forth his childhood rattle, which was hidden until then in his rustic garb. (Serv. \textit{ad Aen.} 5.370)
\end{quote}

It seems that Nero made Paris the hero of his \textit{Troica}, and told the story of the recognition of the shepherd Paris as a prince of Troy. Nero’s version of Paris is very different from the usual picture of a cowardly \textit{semivir} who seduces women but cannot fight his own battles. Instead, Nero’s Paris appears as the bravest of heroes, and, surprisingly, he bests even Hector. Nero’s choice to embrace even this most detested Trojan hero is a clear challenge to Augustan ideology, which had emphasized the un-Roman weakness of Paris as a way of distancing Rome from fallen Troy.

\textsuperscript{274} Champlin 2003: 229-34; Griffin 1984: 163.
In the previous chapter, we saw that Augustan poets had made a distinction between two parts of Rome’s Trojan inheritance; on the one hand there were the Eastern, effeminate inhabitants of Priam’s rich palace, and on the other hand there was the strong figure of Aeneas, always moving West. By the end of the *Aeneid*, during the battles in Latium, Aeneas is the city-sacker himself rather than the defender of the besieged city. When Turnus calls his Trojan besiegers by the old slur *semiviri* (Verg. *Aen.* 12.99), Vergil’s readers can see how far Aeneas and his men have evolved from their Trojan roots. Back when Aeneas lived with Dido in her gilded palace so reminiscent of Priam’s Troy, it was understandable that Iarbas would call him “that Paris with his band of half-men” (*ille Paris cum semiviro comitatu*, *Aen.* 4.215). But in *Aeneid* 12, the term rings hollow, now that Aeneas is besieging a city himself and pursuing Lavinia out of a sense of duty rather than simple passion. Aeneas is a new kind of Trojan who can no longer be grouped in with the effeminate Easterners, of which Paris is the prime example.

Emphasizing this split in the two kinds of Trojan heroes allowed Roman poets and statesmen to look back to Troy as proof of Rome’s resilience and heroic lineage while also separating Rome from its origins in a sacked, Eastern city. It also, as we have seen, allowed Augustus to create a parallel distinction between himself as the descendant of Aeneas and Antony as another Paris, the soft Easterner who endangered his homeland by carousing with a foreign woman. Yet, when Nero presents Paris, the prime example of Eastern cowardice, as the brave hero of his *Troica*, he challenges any division between the two halves of Rome’s Trojan inheritance. And this rehabilitation of Paris similarly blurs the divide between Augustus and Antony, at least as we have
seen it framed in Augustan propaganda. Nero’s emulation of both Antony and Augustus, then, blends not only the two civil war rivals into one paradoxical figure but also reunites the two halves of Rome’s Trojan inheritance that Augustus had worked so hard to separate.

As A. J. Woodman (1998: 184) has explained, Nero lived as a perplexing mixture of the civil war rivals, Augustus and Antony. In fact, Nero was a blood relation of both Augustus and Antony; Augustus was Nero’s great-great-grandfather (the grandfather of Nero’s grandmother, Agrippina Maior), and Antony was Nero’s great-grandfather (the father of Nero’s father, Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus). Nero’s behavior reflected the paradox of his ancestry. Although he was following in Augustus’ footsteps as part of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, Nero lived what could only be termed an “Antonian lifestyle”, and he seemed to want to turn Rome into an Alexandria, just as Antony allegedly intended to do.275 Nero’s extravagant banquets seem designed to seem as un-Roman and as Hellenized as possible. The famous banquet of Tigellinus, for instance, featured a floating dining room on enormous rafts rowed by pathics, enough torches and lanterns to prolong the day far into night, a collection of exotic animals, women in various states of undress, and, finally, a wedding with Nero as the bride. The focus on extravagant pleasures and the striking reversals of land and sea, night and day, native and exotic, and male and female fit the topos of banquets put on by wealthy Romans in imitation of Eastern tyrants.276 Reversals that seem to go against nature were a common component of these un-Roman parties, which we see cited as

276 See Nisbet and Hubbard (1978) on Hor. Carm. 2.18.21. See also Tac. Ann 15.36-7 with Champlin 2003: 153-77.
proof of how the effeminacy and luxury of the East was corrupting traditional Roman *mores*. The banquet of Tigellinus occurred directly after Nero called off his journey to Alexandria and directly before the fire of 64 broke out. Woodman argues convincingly, then, that this notoriously extravagant and foreign-flavored event was a way for Nero to create an Alexandria within Rome for a night. Nero so alienates himself from Rome and Rome from itself that he has no trouble sacking his own city in the great fire.²⁷⁷ Nero emerges in the narrative of Tacitus, at least, as a truly foreign aggressor, an enemy sacker of Rome.²⁷⁸

The most pressing problem presented by the story of Nero’s arson at Rome, then, is the contradictory image of the heir to the Julian dynasty sacking the center of his own empire. Nero simultaneously plays the mythical roles of defeated Trojan and victorious Greek; at the same time, he plays the similarly contradictory historical roles of a new Augustus rebuilding Rome and a new Antony, turning Rome into Alexandria. So long as Nero is assured a role in the mythical history that he recreates in his contemporary Rome, his new sack of Troy, it seems less important to him whether he is a new Priam, a new Agamemnon, a new Paris, a new Aeneas, a new Augustus, a new Antony, or any combination of these roles. Nero’s obsession with replaying myth on stage makes him equally happy to play a host of conflicting roles, without attempting to craft a coherent message in his staging of myth. Nero’s complete lack of distinction between victim, victor, Roman Westerner, and Foreign Easterner, wrecks havoc with the Augustan poets’ division (whether undermined or not) between the likes of Aeneas,

the Trojan ancestor of Augustus, and Paris, a Trojan *semivir* and model for Antony. Ultimately, Nero’s confusion has tragic consequences for Rome, as he appears more interested in acting out his mythological link to Troy than in governing, even to the extreme of burning Rome itself as he loses the ability to distinguish Rome from Troy, past from present, and myth and reality.

*A crisis of identity in Neronian poetry*

As we turn to Neronian poetry, we will see how Nero’s Hellenizing behavior and theatricality helped poets to refute the familiar view that Rome had securely left behind the weakness of its Eastern mother-city. In each of the preceding chapters, we have seen how skillfully poets at each stage of Roman literary history made use of the parallel Trojan narrative existing alongside Roman stories. In other words, poets and statesmen made claims about Rome’s success by showing how far Rome had come from its doomed Trojan mother-city and by also showing, at times, where Rome’s story threatened to come close once again to that Trojan cycle of disaster. Yet the success of this tactic and the ability of poets to make meaning out of manipulating the gap between Trojan myth and Roman history rely on that gap being there to manipulate in the first place. To make productive use of the shifting relationship of Rome to its Trojan past, there has to be a separation between the two narratives, no matter how close they might come. In the age of Nero, however, this gap threatens to disappear and Troy’s fall is actually replayed at Rome as Nero’s fire almost literally conflates Roman historical present and Trojan myth. Luxury, effeminacy, and weakness had long been aspects of Trojan myth that Roman poets had struggled to reject, but even these least desirable
Trojan traits were reappearing in Nero’s Rome. Both Seneca and Lucan signal the narrowing of the gap between Trojan past and Roman present and highlight the resulting confusion over how to define Roman cultural identity and what should be marked out as foreign at Rome.

In Seneca’s tragedies, we already sense a sharp shift from Augustan attitudes toward Troy. There is much controversy surrounding the dating of each of Seneca’s tragedies.²⁷⁹ It is perfectly plausible that Seneca wrote some of his plays while tutor to Nero, but it is impossible to prove, and some scholars tend to think that Seneca wrote most of his dramatic output before being called back in 49 CE from exile in Corsica to manage Nero’s education. Yet even if the Agamemnon and the Troades were composed before Seneca returned to Rome, the Trojan-themed plays took on a new meaning in the context of Nero’s reign and helped to frame the problem of how to distinguish between Roman, Trojan, and Greek under Nero.

Troy’s fall is for Seneca emphatically not the first step in the fated rise of Rome; it is instead an example of the changeable nature of fortune, which can precisely not be counted on to rise steadily in any direction without reversing itself. In Seneca’s Agamemnon and Troades, the fate of Troy serves as a warning of just how quickly reversals of fortune can occur. Seneca’s Agamemnon replicates many of the same concerns as the Greek version by Aeschylus, especially the emphasis on how the Greek victors seem to turn gradually into their Trojan victims. Clytemnestra notes the irony

²⁷⁹ Tarrant (1976: 6-7) explains that there is no consensus or even prevailing opinion for the dating of Seneca’s plays. Keulen (2001: 8-9) lays out the history of the problem, and he proposes a date between 51 and 54, as does Herzog (1928: 93). Also useful on the dating of Seneca’s plays are, Boyle 2006: 189-90; Fantham 1982: 9-14; Fitch 1981; Nisbet 1990.
that Agamemnon outdoes even his enemy Paris in his theft of Briseis from his ally Achilles, and Aegisthus remarks that Agamemnon’s victory over Troy will turn him from a good rex into a despotic tyrannus. Storm-tossed Agamemnon is said to return to Mycenae “like a vanquished man, even though he was a victor” (remeatque victo similis, exigas trahens / lacerasque victor classe de tanta rates, Sen. Ag. 412-3). The play on words between victo and victor clearly sets out the transformation that Clytemnestra’s crime will complete when she turns the victorious Agamemnon into a new Priam, murdered in his own palace. Cassandra continues the word play as she predicts that the same day will end both her own and Agamemnon’s life. Both captive and captor (victamque victricemque, 754) will die, and the polysyndeton of –que further emphasizes the parallelism between victor and vanquished, who have now become equals. The sequence of antilabai between Agamemnon and a witty Cassandra drives home her point as only Seneca can:

\{AG.\} festus dies est. \{CA.\} Festus et Troiae fuit.
\{AG.\} Veneremur aras. \{CA.\} Cecdit ante aras pater.
\{AG.\} Iovem precemur pariter. \{CA.\} Herceum Iovem?
\{AG.\} Credis videre te Ilium? \{CA.\} Et Priamum simul.
\{AG.\} Hic Troia non est. \{CA.\} Ubi Helena est, Troiam puto.

...
\{AG.\} Nullum est periclum tibimet. \{CA.\} At magnum tibi.
\{AG.\} Victor timere quid potest? \{CA.\} Quod non timet.

\{AG.\} It is a festive day. \{CA.\} It was a festive day at Troy, too.
\{AG.\} Let us worship at the altar. \{CA.\} My father died at an altar.
\{AG.\} Let is pray together to Jove. \{CA.\} To Hercaean Jove?
\{AG.\} Do you think that you are looking on Ilium? \{CA.\} Yes, and Priam, too.
\{AG.\} This is not Troy. \{CA.\} Wherever a Helen is, I think a Troy is.

...
\{AG.\} There is no danger for you. \{CA.\} But there is great danger for you.
\{AG.\} What can a victor possibly fear? \{CA.\} What he doesn’t fear.

(Sen. Ag. 792-9)
This idea of Agamemnon replaying Troy’s fall as a new Priam in Mycenae is familiar from Aeschylus, but in front of a Neronian audience, the traditional blending of Agamemnon and Priam would grow more troubling. The lesson of fortune’s reversals, which Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* had acted out, becomes an explicit moralizing statement in Seneca and a recurring hint to Seneca’s audience not to glory too much in Rome’s success: *quidquid in altum Fortuna tulit, / ruitura levat. Modicis rebus / longius aevum est* (whatever Fortune raises on high, it she lifts it only to throw it down. In moderation there is a longer life, *Ag*. 101-3). From the very beginning, Seneca’s chorus warned that fickle fortune will never allow a victor to remain victorious for long: *O regnorum magnis fallax / Fortuna bonis, in praecipiti / dubioque locas nimis excelsos* (O Fortune, fickle in the great gifts you give to kings, you place the too exalted on a dangerous and unpredictable precipice, *Ag*. 57-9). Storm waves, says the chorus, are not as variable as the fortunes of kings, and victory is only another step toward defeat. As Hecuba explains in the opening lines of the *Troades*: *Quicumque regno fidit et magna potens / dominatur aula nec leues metuit deos / animumque rebus credulum laetis dedit, / me uideat et te, Troia* (whoever trusts in kingship and rules in his palace and does not fear fickle gods and gives himself credulously to good fortune, let him look at me and you, Troy, Sen. *Tro*. 1-4). Though these moralizing statements are couched in a tragedy about mythical Greeks and Trojans, it seems clear that they are meant for Seneca’s contemporary Rome, and perhaps specifically for Nero. If the

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280 Such reversals of fortune are a constant theme in Seneca’s *Troades*, as well: *Tro*. 1-27, 264-6, 309, 993-6. Boyle (2006: 200-205) shows how the concentric structure of the *Troades*, and the frequency of allusion in Seneca, reflects the cyclic nature of history. Lawall (1982) argues that the destruction of Troy in the *Troades* is meant to mirror the dissolution that Seneca notes in his own society.
warnings about the mutability of fortune turned out to be true for the Greeks who had conquered Troy, then they should apply also to Seneca’s audience, the Romans who had conquered Greece in turn.

In Aeschylus’ time, Athens was entering an age of unprecedented prosperity and power, but, by the first century CE, the tables had turned, and Greece had in fact been conquered by the Roman descendants of Troy. Greece had become the new Eastern power conquered by the West, and the Greeks now symbolized the very same effeminate, extravagant, and cowardly Eastern stereotype that had once been used to characterize Trojans and Persians at Athens. As Seneca’s Cassandra puts it, Priam’s death actually doomed Mycenae: *traxisti iacens, / parens, Mycenas, terga dat victor tuus* (as you lay there, father, you doomed Mycenae and your conqueror is yielding, Ag. 870-1). Seneca capitalizes on his audience’s unique problem of perspective: Romans watching a Trojan play can simultaneously identify with both the Trojan victims and the Greek victors. At Rome, then, a play illustrating how the Greek West defeated the Trojan East to their own detriment no longer seems so much like a heartening promise of Roman success—it is now also a warning for the Roman victors in turn not to let their pride and extravagance cause their own undoing.

The reversal of fortune in the story of Agamemnon would have been particularly resonant at Rome after Pompey the Great, who had actively portrayed himself as an Agamemnon after his Eastern conquests, came to be seen as a new Priam and as the last bastion of the Roman Republic. Vergil showed just how fully Pompey’s

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281 See above, Ch. 1: 6.
282 See above Ch. 3:138-9 for Pompey as a new Priam and 3:170-1 for Pompey’s choice to portray himself as a new Agamemnon. Plut. *Pomp.* 67.3 and Cicero *Att.* 7.3.5, where
Agamemnon had become Priam when he modeled his description of the headless Priam on accounts of Pompey’s beheading.\textsuperscript{283} It is Pompey lying headless on the shores of Egypt that comes to mind when Seneca has Cassandra describe how Agamemnon lies dying in the very clothes he stole from Priam (Ag. 880). This image of the once proud Agamemnon trussed up in death as the ruined King Priam poses important questions: is it possible to keep separate the identities of Eastern victim and Western victor? Will a successful Rome start to shade into a new Persian or Trojan kingdom, where despots rule over emasculated followers? These are questions of real substance at Rome already in the late Republic, but even more so in the Neronian period, when Nero was doing his best to stage Troy’s fall at Rome.

When Seneca’s Cassandra exclaims that she sees Troy again at Mycenae, Agamemnon misunderstands her and tries to correct her confusion. We, too, would be misunderstanding Cassandra if we think that her new Troy is only reappearing in Mycenae; Rome is also shading back into Troy. Still, if Seneca’s warnings were meant for Nero, the young emperor did not take his tutor’s warnings in the right way. As we have seen, Nero clearly did not attempt to avoid replaying Priam’s fate. Rather, he relished the opportunity to cast himself in a replay of Troy’s sack, in which he could play all the roles from the aggressor Agamemnon to the defeated Priam, from ruler of Rome to its ultimate sacker, from descendant of Aeneas to successor of Turnus.

Participating in the burning of a Roman Troy offered a way for Nero to inscribe himself, for better or for worse, into the shared mythical narrative of the Mediterranean. In the end, it is true that insinuating himself into Homer’s most famous story did successfully assure Nero a place in poetry. Nero’s shadow stretches backwards to influence the way we read even Vergil’s description of Troy burning. Troy’s fall in *Aeneid* 2 seems, in retrospect, not only to make room for Rome’s rise but also to foreshadow the final result at Rome of the unrestrained passions of Aeneas’ last descendant.

Following Seneca’s lead, Lucan devotes much of his *De Bello Civili* to the problem of how to disentangle the Roman present from its mythical Trojan past. To Lucan, as it was to Seneca, the fall of Troy is not a symbol of Rome’s resilience; it is instead proof that Rome’s success will serve as its own undoing. It is often said that Lucan seems bent on reversing Vergil’s narrative of Rome’s rise out of the fall of Troy. Lucan’s Pompey strikes us as an anti-Aeneas who flees from Rome back to the enfeebling East, reversing Aeneas’ Western journey and un-founding Rome in the process. 284 The climax of Pompey’s journey back East is his death on the shores of Egypt at the hands of Ptolemy’s agents, a scene that is famous for reactivating and recasting Vergil’s link between the dead King Priam and the historical Pompey. 285 As we look more closely at Lucan’s narration of Pompey’s death, we will find Lucan calling attention to how difficult it has become to keep separate the layers of Trojan myth and Roman legend and history. In particular, Lucan’s treatment of Pompey’s

murder emphasizes the most dangerous result of Nero’s attempts to blur the lines between Rome and mythical Troy—the inability to distinguish between what should be called Roman and what should be marked out as foreign. That Rome’s Trojan past intrudes into Lucan’s narrative and complicates distinctions of Roman and foreign is perfectly appropriate to his subject of civil war, which already implies confusion over friend and foe. Yet it is also a reaction to his contemporary experience of watching Nero erase the divisions that Augustus had worked to set up in Trojan myth between Aeneas, whose resilience helped the Trojan survivors arrive at Rome, and the Trojans that should be recognized as un-Roman *semiviri*.

When Pompey is killed at Mons Casius, Lucan laments the death of Pompey in a foreign land. At the same time, it is also true that by the end of Lucan’s *Pharsalia*, there is no such thing as land that is not foreign to Rome, even Rome itself. As Lucan remarks (7.399-407), the battle of Pharsalus made future civil wars impossible because in killing so many Romans, it elided any distinction between true Romans and foreigners at Rome. Pompey’s death in Egypt is to be mourned not only because Pompey lies dead in a foreign land, but also because it is a reminder that there will soon be little distinction between Rome and a foreign land such as Egypt. Even in Lucan’s day, the Hellenizing pursuits and Antonian lifestyle of Nero, threaten to erase the distinctions between Rome and Alexandria; Egypt and Greece itself will soon seem as Roman as Rome.\(^{286}\)

Lucan lays the groundwork early on for the importance of distinguishing foreign hands from Roman ones in Pompey’s death. In Book 3, Phocaeans from Massilia

\(^{286}\) McCloskey and Phinney (1968: 80-87) stress the resemblance between Nero and Lucan’s Ptolemy. See also Woodman 1998.
explain that they wish to remain neutral in Rome’s civil wars because to intercede in Rome’s civil wars would be as sacrilegious as interceding in wars among the gods. If Jupiter were fighting with the giants once more, it would be impious for men to intervene. They would wait and know of the outcome by listening for Jupiter’s thundering. Similarly, the Phocaeans argue, they should wait on the sidelines while the higher power that is Rome sorts itself out.

Et nunc, ignoto si quos petis orbe triumphos, 310
accipe devotas externa in proelia dextras.
At, si funestas acies, si dira paratis
proelia discordes, lacrimas civilibus armis
secretumque damus. Tractentur volnera nulla
sacra manu. Si caelicolis furo arma dedisset, 315
aut si terrigenae temptarent astra gigantes,
non tamen auderet pietas humana vel armis
vel votis prodesse Iovi, sortisque deorum
ignarum mortale genus per fulmina tantum
sciret adhuc caelo solum regnare tonantem.
Adde, quod innumerae concurrunt undique gentes,
nec sic horret iners scelerum contagia mundus,
ut gladiis egeant civilia bella coactus.
Sit mens ista quidem cunctis, ut vestra recusent
Fata, nec haec alius committat proelia miles. 325

And now, too, if you seek any triumphs in an unknown realm, accept our devoted right hands in external wars. But, if divided you are preparing accursed battle lines and harsh wars, then we give our tears to your civil wars and we give also our distance. Sacred wounds should not be caused by any mortal hand. If frenzy had given arms to the heaven dwellers, or if the earth born giants had attacked the stars, human piety would, nevertheless, not dare to help Jupiter with either arms or prayers, and the human race, ignorant of the fate of the gods would know only from thunderbolts that the Thunderer still ruled the sky alone. Add to this that innumerable peoples are coming together from everywhere, and nor is the world so slow, nor does it shrink so much from the stain of crimes that civil wars need forced recruits. Would that this frame of mind were common to all people so that all should refuse your fate and no foreign soldier would join this battle.

(Luc. 3.310-25)

If we fast-forward now to Book 8, when Pompey flees to Egypt after his loss at Pharsalus, we catch the Egyptian court plotting his murder. When a Macedonian Greek
named Achillas is chosen for the crime (*sceleri delectus*), Lucan launches into a characteristic apostrophe:

… O superi, Nilusne et barbara Memphis
Et Pelusiaci tam mollis turba Canopi
Hos animos? Sic fata premunt civilia mundum?
Sic Romana iacent? Ullusne in cladibus istis
Est locus Aegypto Phariusque admittitur ensis?
Hanc certe servate fidem, civilia bell:a:
Cognatas praestate manus externaque monstra
Pellite. Si meruit tam claro nomine Magnus
Caesaris esse nefas, tanti, Ptolemaee, ruinam
Nominis haud metuis caeloque tonante profanas
Inseruisse manus, inpure ac semivir, audes?

O gods, do the Nile and barbaric Memphis and the soft crowd of Egyptian Canopus have these aspirations? Do civil fates press on the world thus? Has Rome fallen thus? Is there space for Egypt and is the Pharian sword allowed to take part? Keep this faith, at least, civil war: Offer kindred hands and keep foreign monsters far away. If Magnus with his famous name deserved to become Caesar’s guilt, do you, Ptolemy, not fear the ruin of such a great name and do you, befouled and half a man, dare to thrust in your profane hands when heaven is thundering?  

(Luc. 8.542-52)

Lucan’s reproach against Ptolemy, then, uses the comparison set up by the Phocaeans in Book 3 between Rome in civil war and gigantomachy in the heavens. The Phocaeans warned that the *sacra volnera* of the gods (and by analogy of the Romans) should be disturbed by *nulla manu*. But the Egyptians dare to *profanas inseruisse manus* even while the skies are thundering (*caelo tonante*). Civil war, argued the Phocaeans, ought to remain within the state and ought never to involve a foreign soldier (*alius miles*). At Egypt, however, Lucan wishes in vain that civil war could in fact remain between *cognata manus* and drive off *externa monstra*. Lucan’s references back to the Phocaeans’ refusal to engage in Rome’s civil war works to emphasize the sacrilegious audacity of the *Pharius ensis*, which is eager to participate. As we understand it, then, the sacrilege is specifically that foreign hands and swords dare to
intervene in what should be a war between Romans. Moreover, according to Lucan, these intruding, foreign hands belong to impure Egyptian *semiviri* who have no business associating with Romans.\(^\text{287}\)

This picture grows more complicated when we are introduced to Achillas’ accomplice, the Roman soldier Septimius. This Septimius deserted the Roman army to follow Ptolemy, and Lucan bemoans how Fortune has distributed swords (*disponis gladios*) all over so that there should be nowhere free from Rome’s *facinus civile* (8.600-604). Lucan’s outrage over the *Pharius ensis* gives way now to his outrage that a *Romanus ensis* would commit such a crime and that Septimius, who had once served under Pompey, would turn his *gladius* against his former general: *Romanus regi sic paruit ensis, / Pellaeusque puer gladio tibi colla recidit, / Magne, tuo* (a Roman sword thus obeyed the king, and the Macedonian boy beheaded you with your own sword, Magnus, 8.606-7). Nationalities continue to blur if we note that the adjective *Pellaeus* here flags Ptolemy himself as Macedonian rather than strictly Egyptian. When the murder finally occurs, we see *enses* in the plural (Egyptian, Roman, and perhaps also Macedonian) coming together toward Pompey at the same time: *Tum stringere ferrum / regia monstra parant. ut vidit comminus en ses, / involvit voltus* (then the king’s monsters prepare to draw the sword. When Pompey saw the blades coming close, he covered his face, 8.613-4). Pompey is, then, about to be killed both by an intruding foreign hand and by a distinctly Roman one. This scenario would match the report from Caesar (*B Civ*. 3.104) that Pompey was killed by Achillas and Septimius.\(^\text{288}\) Lucan does

\(^{287}\) Later, Pompey’s sons wish they could avenge their father “with the blood of the *semivir* king (*sanguine semiviri...tyranni* Luc. 9.152).

\(^{288}\) See also App. *B Civ*. 2.12.85.
not, however, actually narrate the very moment of the sword thrusts. Pompey closes his eyes as the swords approach, and the next sentence begins, *sed postquam mucrone latus funestus Achillas / perfodit, nullo gemitu consensit ad ictum* (but after murderous Achillas pierced his side with the sword point, Pompey did not acknowledge the blow with any cry, 8.619). Suddenly, Pompey has already been slain, and it was Achillas the Egyptian who seems to have dealt the fatal blow, not the Roman Septimius who was also reaching out his sword. As Pompey lies dying, the confusion over external and internal crime only worsens. Thinking to himself, *quacumque feriris, / crede manum soceri* (with whatever hand you are struck, believe it to be the hand of your father-in-law, 8.628-9), Pompey lets us know that whatever hand happens to be slaying him, he sees the hand of Caesar behind it.

Lucan’s emphasis on the ethnicity of the *enses* may remind the reader of Dido’s very pointed phrase *ensem...Dardanium* as she prepares for her suicide in Verg. *Aen.* 4. Although she is killing herself, Dido is at pains to make clear that Aeneas’ Trojan sword is the real instrument of her death. Ovid’s two epitaphs for Dido at *Heroides* 7.195-6 and *Fasti* 3.549-50 reinforce this point: *Praebuit Aeneas et causam mortis et ensem; / ipsa sua Dido concidit usa manu* (Aeneas provided both the cause of my death and the sword; Dido killed herself with her own hand). Dido’s Ovidian epitaph explains that although she is killing herself by her own hand, she is using the Trojan sword. In the context of our discussion of Lucan’s Pompey, Dido’s death becomes yet another instance of a sword strike that is motivated both internally and externally. R. G. Austin

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289 Feeney (1991: 277) notes Lucan’s refusal to narrate the moment of Pompey’s death. See also Henderson (1987) for Lucan’s general difficulty in narrating the crucial events of his civil war narrative.
(1955 on *Aen.* 4.662) remarks: “in the nineteen lines that Dido has spoken just before her death, she has used this synonym for ‘Trojan’ three times; and *ensem Dardanium* in 646 f. reflects her thoughts. She has not used it before in the book, except to deny that King Dardanus could ever have founded Aeneas’ line. Yet she dwells on it strangely at the end.” The unusual stress on the sword’s Dardanian nationality clothes as an external attack what is in fact Dido’s own suicide.

Still Dido is right that her internal civil war has an external effect, since her strike against herself is simultaneously a strike against Rome: Dido’s dying curse sets in motion the later Carthaginian Wars. As Austin notes, the laments after Dido’s death (4.665-72) reach both forwards and backwards, replaying Rome’s past and foretelling its future. So Dido’s apparent act of internal violence is not only motivated externally, but also has far-reaching external effects. With a similar emphasis on the nationality of the *ensis* that killed Pompey, Lucan has engineered for Pompey’s murder to seesaw back and forth, alternately looking like a crime of foreign involvement in Rome’s civil wars and looking like the act of Roman against Roman. And Pompey too, like Dido, will have his revenge when Caesar is struck down behind Pompey’s own theater before a colossal statue of Pompey himself.

Pompey’s murder, which was first characterized as Achillas’, became instead Septimius’. When readers suppose that the crime therefore becomes a double one, by two swords, one external and one internal, they are again mistaken. Once the act has

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290 Austin 1955 on line 4.669. Similarly, Feeney (1991, 131) shows how the explanations of Juno’s animosity in *Aeneid* 1 stretch “back into the past as well as forward into the future.” She is angry both because Troy was the site where, once upon a time, Jupiter found Ganymede and because Rome will one day grow strong enough to defeat her beloved Carthage.
occurred, it is unambiguously marked as Achillas’ crime. Still, Lucan reverses our impression yet again, when he reveals that even a foreign hand is still in some senses Caesar’s own. Pompey’s son also seems confused as to who has attacked his father: a foreign *semivir* or a Roman family member. He begins by lamenting: ...*non Caesaris armis / occubuit dignoque perit auctore ruinae* (he did not die by Caesar’s arms, and he was not killed by a man worthy to cause his ruin, 9.120). But his story soon changes: 

*Vidi ego magnanimi lacerantes pectora patris, / nec credens Pharium tantum potuisse tyrannum / litore Niliaco socerum iam stare putavi* (I myself saw them cutting the breast of our noble father, and nor did I believe that the Pharian tyrant had such power, but I thought that the father-in-law stood on the Nile’s shore, 9.133-5). Pompey’s wife expresses a similar sentiment, also blaming the seemingly foreign act on Pompey’s fellow Roman and kinsman Caesar:

…“o coniunx, ego te scelerata peremi: letiferae tibi causa morae fuit auxia Lesbos, et prior in Nili peruenit litora Caesar. nam cui ius alii sceleris? sed, quisquis, in istud a superis inmisse caput, uel Caesaris irae uel tibi prospeciens, nescis, crudelis, ubi ipsa uiscera sint Magni…”

“O husband, I wickedly killed you: the cause of your fatal delay was the detour to Lesbos, and Caesar arrived at the shores of the Nile before you; For who else commanded this crime? But,, whoever has been sent against that life by the gods above, whether serving the anger of Caesar or your own, you do not know, cruel man, where the very entrails of Magnus are to be found.” (Luc. 8.638-45) 

Her word *quisquis* at line 642 is an apt one, given the confusion we have seen over who actually delivers Pompey’s deathblow, and whether the enormity of the crime lies in its foreign or in its civil nature.
Lucan brings to bear all of his poetic resources to ensure that we see the specter of Caesar acting behind Ptolemy’s henchman, Achillas. After Pompey’s head has been severed, Lucan exclaims:

…o summi fata pudoris!
inpius ut Magnum nosset puer, illa uerenda
regibus hirta coma et generosa fronte decora
caesaries comprensa manu est, Pharioque ueruto
dum uiiuunt uoltus atque os in murmura pulsant
singultus animae, dum lumina nuda rigescunt,
suffixum caput est…

…O what a shameful fate! That the wicked boy might recognize Magnus, those shaggy locks that kings feared and his hair, a fitting ornament for his noble brow were grasped by the hand, and while his visage seemed still living and the rattling of breath forced out sounds from his mouth, while his vacant eyes grew stiff, the head was stuck upon an Egyptian javelin. (Luc. 8.678-84)

There is a surprising emphasis in this lament on Pompey’s hair, and the mention of *caesaries* following so closely on *coma* seems like an unnecessary repetition. The repetition, here, of words for hair is more than a stylistic affectation; it is inconceivable that Lucan would use the term *caesaries* at this crucial moment of Pompey’s death without activating the obvious pun recalling Caesar’s name. The repetition of words for hair makes the choice to write *caesaries* seem even more pointed because the reader knows that the word is an addition, which is not required to make sense of Lucan’s thought. Even in the absence of any specific mention of Caesar, then, the reader is reminded once again of the presence of Pompey’s kinsman Caesar lurking in the background while Pompey’s head is mounted onto the Egyptian pike.
This blending of domestic and foreign is powerful in a poem on civil war, where the dividing line between countrymen and enemies is naturally blurred.\(^{291}\) The confusion of external and internal is also particularly powerful at Rome, a city whose foundation stories draw on immigrants, exiles, and refugees. Livy tells us how Romulus and Remus, the descendants of Trojan refugees, were meant to have founded Rome by opening an asylum for exiles and outlaws from neighboring states. Rome’s mottled ethnic history guaranteed that there was no such thing as an indigenous Roman.\(^{292}\) Yet, here, Lucan’s confusion of friend and foe is an even more pointed activation of Rome’s Trojan roots. Lucan takes complete advantage of the uncanny historical accident that the Macedonian who helped to kill Pompey was named Achillas.

Since Servius, it has been widely accepted that Vergil’s description of Priam’s trunk lying headless on Troy’s shores takes its cue from Pompey’s beheading on the shores of Egypt.\(^{293}\) Pompey, the defeated champion of the Roman Republic, does lend himself quite easily to comparison with Priam, the last defender of Troy. After all, Troy’s sack is a natural analogy for the fall of the Roman Republic, and one that we have seen Augustan poets manage very carefully. The analogy is strengthened when we consider that Achilles’ son, Neoptolemos, slays Priam and a foreigner named Achillas slays Pompey—on the orders of the “new Ptolemy” himself.\(^{294}\) Finally, Priam’s sons


\(^{292}\) Livy 1.8. Wiseman (2004: 13-47) tells the stories of the many exiles who supposedly found their home in Latium. See also Dench 2005: 61.


\(^{294}\) Bowie (1990: 478), writing on the *Aeneid*, suggests that Vergil chose to call Pyrrhus by the name Neoptolemus as he slays Priam in part to strengthen the analogy between Priam and Pompey, who was killed by order of a Ptolemy. Hardie (1993: 38) writes:
are famously slaughtered before his eyes, but in a pointed inversion of Priam’s story, Pompey is slaughtered before the eyes of his wife and son (Luc. 8.634-5). The layering of Trojan myth over Roman history confuses the nationalities of the key players in the event. The victim, Pompey, emerges as both Trojan and Roman (and Greek, if we remember that he presented himself as a Roman Agamemnon at the head of a Greek army). The assassins, Septimius and Achillas, waver between looking Egyptian, Roman, and Macedonian. In the end, there are at least four correct answers to the question of who or what kills Pompey: *a Pellaeus puer, Romanus ensis, Pharius ensis,* or *manus soceri.*

The question remains, however, that if Achillas is an Achilles figure murdering another Priam, how are we as readers meant to interpret Lucan’s glimpses of Caesar behind Achillas? If we read Caesar as the real Achilles to Pompey’s Priam, then Lucan is showing yet another way in which this war is *plus quam civile.* Caesar, the supposed descendant of Aeneas, is replaying the murder of the Trojan king Priam from the enemy’s point of view. If we ask ourselves what Caesar was actually doing in Lucan’s poem during Pompey’s death, we come to the conclusion that his visit to Troy at 9.950-99 must be close to simultaneous with the murder, as both occur in the aftermath of the battle of Pharsalus. Caesar stops to see the site of Troy while he is chasing Pompey

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“In the *Bellum Civile,* the Achillean role is played by Caesar; Achillas is thus a more appropriate murderer than he can know.”

295 References to Pompey leading an army of conquered foreigners include: Luc. 2.632-44; 3.169-297; 7.269-94; 7.360-64.

after the battle; meanwhile, Pompey flees and attempts to take shelter from Caesar in Egypt, where he is killed.

Caesar’s visit to Troy further confuses the question of who plays what role in this renewed fall of Troy, where Rome is nearly destroyed by civil war. During his visit, Caesar associates himself quite strongly with Troy, reminding us that he is the descendant of Aeneas about to rule a Romana Pergama.

“di cinerum, Phrygias colitis quicumque ruinas, Aeneaeque mei, quos nunc Lavinia sedes servat et Alba, lares, et quorum lucet in aris ignis adhuc Phrygius, nullique aspecta virorum Pallas, in abstruso pignus memorabile templo, gentis luleae vestris clarissimus aris dat pia tura nepos et vos in sede priore rite uocat. date felices in cetera cursus, restituum populos; grata vice moenia reddent Ausonidae Phrygibus, Romanaque Pergama surgent.”

“Gods of the dead, whoever you are who inhabit Troy, and the household gods of my Aeneas, who now are kept safe at Lavinium and Alba, on whose altars Phrygian fire still shines, and Pallas, seen by no male eye, a well-known pledge in the secret temple, the most famous grandson of the Julian race gives devoted incense and calls you piously in your previous home. Grant happy paths in the future and I will restore your people; in turn, the Italian people will give back walls to Troy and a Roman Pergamum will rise.” (Luc. 9.990-999)

Even as he proclaims his Trojan ancestry and promises to rebuild a Trojan Rome, Caesar is unable to make out even the most basic landmarks within the overgrown ruins of Troy.

iam silvae steriles et putres robore trunci Assaraci pressere domos et templae deorum iam lassa radice tenent, ac tota teguntur Pergama dumetis: etiam periere ruinae. Aspicit Hesiones scopulos silvaque latentis Anchisae thalamos; quo iudex sederit antro, unde puer raptus caelo, quo vertice Nais luxerit Oenone: nullum est sine nomine saxum. Insicius in sicco serpentem pulvere rivum
transierat, qui Xanthus erat. Securus in alto
gramine ponebat gressus: Phryx incola manes
Hectoreos calcare vetat. Discussa iacebant
saxa nec ullius faciem servantia sacri:
“Herceas” monstrator ait “non respicis aras?”

Now barren forests and the decaying tree trunks overwhelm the house of
Assaracus and they hold the temples of the gods with their weary roots, and all
of Pergamum is covered with thorns: even the ruins are ruined. He sees the
cliffs of Hesione and, hidden in the woods, the wedding chamber of Anchises;
he sees the cave in which Paris sat as judge, the place where the boy Ganymede
was snatched up to heaven, the peak where the Naiad Oenone mourned: there is
no stone without a name. Without knowing it, he had crossed over a stream
snaking through the dry dust, the stream that had once been the Xanthus.
Carelessly, he was treading through the high grass: a Phrygian inhabitant
stopped him from trampling Hector’s resting place. Scattered stones lay there,
without the appearance of anything sacred: The guide said, “Do you have no
care for the Hercean altar?”

(Luc. 9.966-80)

Caesar relies on the guide to point out every landmark and relies on the guide to keep
him from walking over the remains of Hector. While we as readers recognize that
Pompey is assassinated in a replay of Priam’s death, Caesar cannot even recognize the
remains of Troy’s Hercean altar, where the original Priam was killed by Neoptolemus.
Furthermore, as many have noted, this very act of visiting Troy as a tourist is in part
modeled on another famous visit to Troy, when Alexander the Great supposedly paid
his respects to his ancestor Achilles.\(^{297}\) Lucan’s Caesar, then, identifies himself with his
Trojan ancestors while also modeling himself on the descendant of Troy’s enemy
Achilles. It is no coincidence that Lucan synchronizes this visit to Troy, which so well
dramatizes Caesar’s split personality between Aeneas, Achilles, and Alexander, with
Pompey’s murder by a simultaneously Caesarian, Achillean, and Macedonian hand.

\(^{297}\) For Alexander’s visit to Troy, see Arr. \textit{Anab.} 1.11.7-8; Diod. Sic.17.17.3; Plut. \textit{Alex.}
15.4. Rossi (2001) demonstrated the complexity of the connection between Caesar and
Alexander in this scene. See also Ahl 1976: 220-5; Quint 1993: 7; Zwierlein 1986: 466-7. It is true that Alexander also claimed Trojan heritage through Andromache, whom
Neoptolemus captured, but Alexander is said to have emulated Achilles and not Hector.
Lucan presents the ruins of Troy as both the future and the past of Rome, and Caesar’s visit serves as a reminder of his double role as Trojan and sacker of Rome.

Another of the models for Caesar’s tour of Troy is the Vergilian scene in which Evander shows Aeneas the ruins of Saturn’s fortress on the Palatine:

haec duo praeterea disiectis oppida muris,  
reliquias ueterumque uides monimenta uirorum.  
hanc Ianus pater, hanc Saturnus condidit arcem;  
Ianiculum huic, illi fuerat Saturnia nomen.

Moreover, you can see in these two towns, with their walls torn down, the relics and monuments of ancient men. Father Janus built this fort, and Saturn built that one; this one was called Janiculum, and that one was called Saturnia.  

(Aen. 8.355-58)

The reader of Vergil’s Aeneid, however, knows well that these ruins of Saturn’s palace and the overgrown thickets around it will be replaced in time with a sparkling gold Capitol. As Vergil explains, Aeneas sees the future site of the Capitol, aurea nunc, olim siluestribus horrida dumis (golden now, but back then it bristled with wooded brambles, Aen. 8.348).

When Lucan describes Caesar’s tour of Troy, there is no such hope for the future as we find in Aeneid 8. In fact, the site of Troy, where even the ruins are ruined and overgrown, recalls more than anything Lucan’s first description of Italy laid waste by civil war:

At nunc semirutis pendent quod moenia tectis  
urbibus Italiae lapsisque ingentia muris  
saxa iacent nulloque domus custode tenetur  
rarus et antiquis habitator in urbis errat,  
horrida quod dumis multosque inarata per annos  
Hesperia est desuntque manus poscentibus aruis,  
non tu, Pyrrhe ferox, nec tantis cladibus auctor  
Poenus erit: nulli penitus descendere ferro  
contigit; alta sedent ciulis uolnera dextrae.
But if now in Italian cities the walls hang precariously and the buildings are half-destroyed, and huge stones from the fallen walls lie on the ground and the homes are protected by no guard and just a few inhabitants are wandering in ancient cities— if Italy is bristling with thorns, left untilled over many years, and hands are absent from the fields that call for them, it is not you, savage Pyrrhus, who is responsible for such disaster, nor the Carthaginian: it is not possible for any sword to penetrate so deeply; the wounds of civil warfare are deeply lodged.

(Luc. 1.24-32)

Moreover, Lucan’s flashback in Book 2 to the earlier civil war between Marius and Sulla (Luc. 2.98-220) recalls Vergil’s sack of Troy in Aeneid 2. The implication is clear; even though Vergil promises that Aeneas’ descendants will build a golden, Roman capitol in this overgrown and abandoned part of Italy, Lucan reminds us that this Roman capitol will in time come crashing down just like Aeneas’ original patria, Troy. Rome will, cautions Lucan, turn out to be a second Troy, and Aeneas’ own descendant will be the one to turn the Italian landscape back again into the pastureland dotted with abandoned fortresses that Aeneas first saw on Evander’s tour. This double role of Trojan and sacker of Troy is familiar to us already because it is the one that Nero plays as he pretends to be Priam watching Roman Troy burn from the fires that he himself ordered to be set.

We saw Aeneas himself placed in a similarly paradoxical position in the Aeneid when he competed with Turnus for the title of alius Achilles. Sometimes it is Turnus who is the alius Achilles attacking the Trojans once again. Sometimes it is Aeneas, who

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300 alius Latio iam partus Achilles (Verg. Aen. 6.89). See above: Ch. 3:168-70 and bibliography at n. 216.
shines in his divinely forged armor like another Achilles about to storm another walled city. Vergil already has engaged the problem of how to turn a Trojan hero into his own oppressor. On Aeneas’ divinely forged shield, there is another dramatization of the shift from Eastern Trojan to Western Roman (Aen. 8.671-728.).\footnote{Quint 1993: 21-36. For more on the shield of Aeneas, see Hardie (1986: 97-110 and 346-75) and Zetzel (1997) 200-1.} Aeneas, the Eastern war hero from Troy, carries on his shield a depiction of his Roman ancestors conquering Eastern nations. On closer inspection, however, we realize that this depiction of Rome conquering East is actually a story of civil war.\footnote{Quint 1993: 21-36.} The barbarian hordes are coming out in support of Antony, a Roman who is transformed by Vergil’s narrator into an Eastern despot reliant on a treacherous woman. Vergil and Lucan seem to agree here that Rome’s position as a secondary city founded after Troy and without any native inhabitants gives it a malleable identity that can float as far West or East as needed to tell any particular narrative.

In both Vergil and Lucan, Rome’s Trojan ancestry makes it difficult to separate out foreign and civil wars at Rome. The difference is that Vergil’s narrator makes it possible for a reader to use this confusion to absolve Rome, casting Antony’s army as un-Roman, and therefore excusing Augustus’ civil crimes.\footnote{I would never deny to Vergil his fair share of ambiguity. I simply mean to say that the passage at least offers this positive reading, whether or not it authorizes it fully. Horace describes Actium in similar terms in Épode 9.} In Aeneid 7-12, Aeneas works to distance himself from his Trojan semivir status by playing Achilles’ role, and this transformation is, for better or for worse, a necessary one.\footnote{Barchiesi 1984: 111-22; R. G. Coleman 1977: 141 on Ecl. 4.36; van Nortwick 1980; Quint 1993: 78-83.} Lucan, however, emphasizes this nexus of confusion between internal and external, Eastern and Western,
and masculine and feminine as a way to point out Rome’s complete crisis of identity.

What some would like to blame on foreign, Eastern, effeminate hands actually rebounds quite powerfully back onto Caesar, the descendant of the original foreign *semiviri*, the Trojans.  

**Conclusion**

Lucan makes it clear that history is somehow repeating itself, but we are no longer sure who is playing what role and who is Roman. We remember that the shade of Hector once appeared to Aeneas as Troy was burning and implored Aeneas to lead the Trojans out of the ruins of Troy to found a new community in the West. Now Lucan forces us to realize that the descendant of Aeneas is so estranged from his roots that he cannot even make out Hector’s grave any longer. Meanwhile, as Caesar is touring Troy, his great rival, Pompey, is likened to Priam as he lies headless and unburied on the shore—murdered by the henchmen of another Neoptolemos (a new Ptolemy). Is Caesar playing the role of Achilles as he tramples Hector and fights against the new Priam? If Pompey is meant to be a new Priam, does that make him the last bastion of

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305 Statius’ *Achilleid* is a particularly useful text for discussions of the term *semivir*. Achilles himself is a *semivir* in several senses in Statius’ epic: he is half man and half god as well as half boy and half girl. Still, Ulysses refers to the Trojans as *semiviri* (*Ach*. 2.78-9) when he speaks to Achilles, who has just thrown off his girly costume. Dilke (2005: 147 on *Ach*. 2.78) offers for comparison Vergil’s famous use of *semivir* against Aeneas (*Aen*. 4.215 and 12.99). See also Heslin 2005: 176. It strikes me that there are two very different answers to the question that Ulysses asks Achilles at *Ach*. 2.78-80: *nos Phryga semivirum portus et litora circum / Argolica incesta volitantem puppe feremus? / Usque adeo nusquam arma et equi, fretaque invia Grais?* (Shall we bear a Phrygian *semivir* flitting around Argive harbors and shores with his vile boat? Is it to the point that our arms and horses are no more, and is the sea blocked off to Greeks?) The answer within the poem is, of course, no, since Achilles is heading to Troy to help lead the Greeks to victory. For Statius’ Roman readers, however, the answer would have been a resounding ‘yes’.
the Roman Republic or a weak old man who relied on troops of barbarians against Caesar’s Roman legions?

It is impossible to answer these questions, and that is part of the point; we should indeed be confused over who plays what role in a civil war. Yet, while Augustan propaganda worked to minimize confusion by making it clear that his opponent, Antony, was the Eastern foe while he was the Western protector of Rome, Nero glories in his paradoxical role as descendant of both Antony and Augustus. Nero’s blending and misuse of incompatible mythical and historical roles from the past is mirrored in Lucan’s constant use of allusion to superimpose historical Roman episodes onto clashing mythical (often Trojan) paradigms. Nero’s desire to set himself up as all of the players in the Trojan myth at once seriously undermines any coherent narrative. He is Priam, whose city is burned and Agamemnon who burns the city. He is Aeneas, and a descendant of the hero, but he is also Turnus, especially when we remember that before Nero fled he was preparing to dance the role of Turnus on stage. Suetonius (Ner. 47.2) reports that when Nero finally fled, a clever guard pointed out how his theatrical fantasies had finally converged on real life by quoting Turnus’ question: “is it such a wretched thing to die (Verg. Aen. 12.646-9)?”

Nero’s treatment of Trojan myth seems geared more than anything to help him find a way to inscribe himself into myth, both as a mythical hero and also as a poet, a creator of myth. We know that Nero wrote about Troy in his Troica, and we also know that part of that poem was a description of the sack of Troy, which was memorably described already in Vergil’s Aeneid 2. Nero is praised by the author of the Einsiedeln

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Eclogues as better than Vergil and Homer, but it is hard to believe that this can be so
based on his poetry, no matter what his aspirations.\textsuperscript{307} There is a way, however, in
which those praises are truer than their author might have realized. While most aspiring
poets and artists could only compete with Vergil and Homer through their poetry
reimagining the sack of Troy and the Trojan myths, Nero could also, as emperor of
Rome, act it out in reality—besting both Vergil and Homer, who merely told the story
of Troy in poetry. Nero can compose not just mythical poetry but also historical reality
in its image.

\textsuperscript{307} Einsiedeln Eclogues 1.38-49.
EPILOGUE:

In the *Ars Amatoria*, Ovid explains that Calypso’s attraction to Ulysses grew out of his ability to tell stories well. Specifically, says Ovid, Ulysses’ narrative sophistication shows through in his ability to tell the same story of the sack of Troy over and over again in a multitude of different ways: *ille referre aliter saepe solebat idem* (often, that man would tell the same story in other ways, Ov. *Ars am.* 2.128). This skill of retelling the same Trojan stories differently is one that Ovid himself had honed, often returning to Trojan myth in genres as diverse as epic, love-elegy, aetiological elegy, and didactic poetry. And it is no accident that Ovid selected Ulysses’ telling of Troy’s sack as his example of a narrative that can be told in endless variations by a good storyteller. We have seen how Troy, as the supreme watershed moment at Rome, can take on different focalizations, overtones, and uses with each new watershed moment in Rome’s history and cultural development.

At the beginning of our narrative, we saw Ennius working to show the positive side of Rome’s origin in the destruction of Troy. Although the negative overtones of foundation in a city-sack were always available, Ennius inaugurated a tradition of powerful agricultural metaphors, linking Rome’s inherent ability to grow stronger in the face of defeat to its Trojan prehistory. This positive interpretation of Trojan Rome as an invincible hydra may have been suggested to Ennius by the recent history of Rome’s near defeats at the hands of Pyrrhus and Hannibal. In the second chapter, we saw that

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308 Murgatroyd 2005: 236.
Catullus restored much of the duality of Trojan myth at Rome. Troy itself becomes, in Catullus, a symbol of how vulnerable narratives can be to opposing focalizations. Yet, when Catullus uses Troy to question the reliability of all narratives, he is also implicitly challenging the stability of any one perspective on Rome’s beginnings in Troy.

We moved in the third chapter to see how the rise of Augustus, a descendant of Aeneas himself, changed the uses of Trojan myth at Rome. We found Augustus revising Trojan myth to help justify the recent civil wars that put him in power. Poets under Augustus, and Augustus’ own iconographical program, suggested that the sack of Troy and the subsequent emergence of a more powerful Rome could be read as parallel to the violence of the civil wars and the more powerful empire that grew up out of that turmoil. The difficulty that faced Augustan poets in this use of Trojan myth was the continuing potential for the parallel to be read negatively as suggesting that Rome was somehow fated always to grow not just from defeat but toward defeat. Perhaps as a way to counter this fear that Rome would simply cycle back again to replay Troy’s fate, Augustan propaganda engineers a split between two halves of Rome’s Trojan inheritance; there are parts of Trojan myth that ought to be emulated and un-Roman parts which have successfully been purged by both the fall of Troy and now Augustus’ victory in the civil wars. One the one had, we find Aeneas, the ancestor of Augustus, who transformed himself and the survivors of Troy into Romans. On the other hand, we find Paris and even the pitiable Priam, portrayed as Easterners, who, despite being Trojan, should clearly be recognized as foreign at Rome. Of course, Augustus aligned himself with his forward-thinking ancestor, Aeneas, and went out of his way to link his rival Antony with the figure of Paris, who, like Antony, endangered his city by falling
for a foreign woman. We saw how some Augustan poets pushed back against this
dichotomy, but the split between Aeneas and the Trojans who did not survive
their city’s sack was now part of the dominant interpretation of Trojan myth.

Under Nero, however, the Augustan Age’s careful distinctions between which
mythical Trojans to emulate become blurred and confused. The legendary Nero, an
artifex and a poet himself, follows Augustan poets in relating Trojan myth to his
contemporary Rome, but, in a typically Neronian blunder, he reverses the direction of
the comparison. It is no longer Trojan myth that is being historicized to fit Rome’s
present historical realities. It is Rome’s historical present that is being mythologized to
fit Trojan myth, without thought for the terrifying consequences to the city and the
empire. This Neronian obsession with replaying myth in historical Rome becomes, as
we have seen, a way for Lucan to refute the Augustan narrative of Rome’s teleological
advance out of Troy’s fall and into Roman empire.

We know that Vergil modeled the mythical king Priam’s death on reports of
Pompey’s actual death, and Vergil has purposefully forged this link between two great
men whose sacrifice was required for the growth of Rome. Vergil has adapted his
narration of myth to fit, explain, and justify the events of Rome’s recent history. Lucan,
however, has reversed the process and chosen to embrace Vergil’s link between Priam
and Pompey from the other direction. Instead of reinterpreting myth to explain his
historical narrative, Lucan revises the historical events so that they will better echo
Trojan myth, just as we have seen Nero himself doing at Rome. Lucan chooses to
model his narration of Pompey’s death, a historical event, on the mythical Priam’s
death, and to cement the link between Pompey’s death and the sack of Troy, he invents the fictional event of Caesar’s visit to Troy.\footnote{Ambühl (2010: 35) points out how Lucan reverses Vergil’s reinterpretation of myth “in light of history.”}

Lucan’s reversal of his model, Vergil, mirrors Nero’s reversal of the propagandistic work that Augustus and his poets did with the Trojan myth. As we have seen repeatedly, Troy’s position at the beginning of poetry, history, and specifically Roman history allows it to straddle political, cultural, and poetic concerns. It is impossible to tell the story of Troy at Rome without keeping in mind the natural link that Trojan myth creates between Roman statesmen as they revise Rome’s Trojan foundation myth to serve their own ends and Roman poets, who return always to Troy, not simply because it is Rome’s mother city but also because it is Homer’s subject matter. Nero, however, takes the analogy too far as he seems to approach his role as a successor to Augustus essentially as though he were a poet, wanting to create his own version of Augustus’ use of Troy. While leaders by nature wish to out-do their predecessors, Nero’s approach to besting Augustus seems completely based on the art of the matter, and without regard for the actual consequences to Rome as a political and real entity. The legendary Nero used his political power to be an epic poet – to Rome’s tragic misfortune – rather than to lead like Augustus – a political master deploying legend in the service of the state.

We have seen how Lucan and Seneca highlight the crisis of identity in an age that can no longer distinguish between Trojan myth and contemporary Roman history or even between positive and negative interpretations of Rome’s Trojan origins. In fact, by Nero’s time, it is almost unimportant at Rome whether its foundation on the ashes of
Troy is read as a positive or negative sign for its future. We began by seeing how Ennius worked to paint Rome’s origins in the sacked city of Troy as a guarantee of Rome’s strength in the face of adversity. Galvanized by its birth in the fires of Troy, Rome emerged as a power that could never be conquered because it only grew from defeat. Yet, as the Republic devolved into a series of civil wars, this Ennian formulation also threatened to turn on itself. If Rome grows from adversity, but there is no power of the likes of Carthage left to pose a challenge, then Rome is in a way destined for civil war. Whether Troy’s curse doomed Rome to a cycle of civil violence or whether the fall of Troy forged a Rome that would gain strength from defeat, when there was no external power left to pose a challenge, then Rome necessarily faced civil war. Under Nero and beyond, Troy emerges as a symbol of Rome’s paradoxical tendency to grow from defeat while also self-destructing.
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