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FACTA IMPIA (VIRGIL, *AENEID* 4.596–9)*

Dawn. Aeneas has just left. As soon as Dido notices that the Trojan fleet is sailing far away from Carthage she is overcome by despair and launches into an enraged monologue (*Aeneid* 4.590–629), which climaxes in her curse against Aeneas and all of his descendants (607–29). In the first part of the monologue (590–606) Dido reproaches herself for how she has dealt with Aeneas:

> 'pro Iuppiter! ibit
> hic', ait 'et nostris inluserit advena regnis?
> non arma expedient totaque ex urbe sequentur,
> deripientque rates alii navalibus? ite,
> ferte citi flammas, date tela, impellite remos!
> quid loquor? aut ubi sum? quae mentem insania mutat?
> infelix Dido, nunc te facta impia tangunt?
> tum decuit, cum sceptra dabas. en dextra fidesque,
> quem secum patrios aiunt portare penatis,
> quem subiisse umeris confectum aetate parentem!
> non potui abreptum divellere corpus et undis
> spargere? non socios, non ipsum absumere ferro
> Ascanium patriisque epulandum ponere mensis?
> verum anceps pugnae fuerat fortuna.—fuisset:
> quem metui moritura? faces in castra tulissem
> implessemque foros flammis natumque patremque
> cum genere exstinxem, memet super ipsa dedissem.'

My purpose is to clarify a remarkable misunderstanding of Virgil's text which has found its way into commentary after commentary. Whose *facta impia* is Dido mentioning at 4.596? Most scholars believe that Dido is referring to impious actions she has committed herself; I believe, on the contrary, that she must be alluding here to Aeneas' own 'impious deeds'. Even those who have accepted the latter interpretation have failed to explain the intricacies of this passage, and it is thus useful to begin by reviewing all the available evidence.

Let us begin with the most authoritative Virgilian commentators. R. G. Austin (Oxford, 1955), pp. 174f.:

> 'poor luckless Dido, and is it now that your godless deeds come home to you?' [. . .] By *facta impia* she means her lack of *pietas* to Sycheaus, and perhaps also her failure in her duty to her own people; it is nonsense to refer the words to Aeneas, as some editors do.

R. D. Williams (London, 1972), vol. I, pp. 384f.:

> The slow spondees and Dido's own use of the epithet *infelix* (used of her often in the narrative) convey the moment of realisation and self-reproach for her *facta impia* in breaking her oath to Sychaeus, and perhaps also, as Austin suggests, in failing in her duties to her people. Some have argued that the reference is to the *facta impia* of Aeneas against her, but this is inappropriate to the context and the meaning of *tangunt*.

A close analysis of the passage at hand shows very clearly indeed that it is

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impossible to refer *facta impia* to Dido herself, whether it be her breaching the promise made to Sychaeus or her supposed shortcomings as a queen. Dido, frenzied with rage, orders invisible hearers to attack the departing Trojans (592–4); afterwards she regains her self-composure and realizes that what she has just ordered cannot happen; it is by now too late to use violence against Aeneas and his fellow Trojans: 'is it only now that Aeneas' impious deeds touch you [i.e. 'hit', 'upset', causing her violent reaction expressed at 592–4]? They should have touched you when you were handing your kingdom over to him.' Dido, betrayed, could have killed Aeneas and the Trojans, and served Ascanius at his father's table: the outcome of the fight between the two peoples would have been uncertain, but she would have had nothing to lose (600–6). All the questions at 595f. refer to the orders given at 592–4: the *facta impia* (596) *tangunt* Dido in that they inspire her to attack Aeneas and the Trojans as she has already desired to do in the preceding lines. At 597 *tum decuit* implies *te factis impiis tangi*: '*at that time* you should have been upset by Aeneas' impious deeds'; and, naturally, we are led to understand that 'therefore at that time you should have attacked Aeneas with violence' (as Dido fantasizes again at 600–6).

How could Dido say at 595–7: 'Am I now crazy? It is too late to impart such orders. Only now do *your own* impious deeds [i.e. breaching the promise made to Sychaeus] touch you? [i.e. inspire the violent reaction of 592–4]. It is at that time that your loyalty to Sychaeus should have inspired you to kill Aeneas, when you were handing your kingdom over to him.' This line of thought is absurd, because her breaking the promise to Sychaeus cannot in any way push her to kill Aeneas and the Trojans. Moreover, Dido's monologue does not mention any remorse for this broken promise. It is clear that the orders given at 592–4 are inspired not by the broken promise, but by Dido's violent rage at Aeneas' departure, which she naturally considers a betrayal. Dido has already called Aeneas *impius* at 4.496, and at 597–9 she will heap scornful remarks on the hero's supposed *pietas* (I will come back to this later on).

The *facta impia* mentioned at 4.596 must therefore be Aeneas'. It would indeed be difficult to realize how scholars such as Austin and Williams could misunderstand the text to such an extent if we did not look at earlier phases in the interpretation of this passage. True, older commentaries, like those by Wunderlich and Wagner,[1] had actually assigned the *facta impia* to Aeneas, but they had failed to explain a crucial issue: what are these *facta impia*, and how could Dido have known them? The problem, to my knowledge, was first confronted by A. Forbiger (Leipzig, 1852^3 [1837^1]), ad loc.: 'Heyn. autem de ipsius Didonis factis impiis in Sychaeum maritum cogitat, coll. v. 552 [he refers to the second explanation considerered by Heyne], quum eo tempore quod Dido sceptrum Aeneae dederit, hic nondum impii quidquam in eam commisisset, ut ea iam tum eius impietate tangi potuerat'; cf. P. H. Peerlkamp (Leiden, 1843), ad loc.: 'Sed ante quam Aeneas a Iove Africam relinquere iuberetur, apud Didonem locus suspicioni esse non poterat.' After James Henry, *Aeneidea* (Dublin,

[1] See Chr. G. Heyne and G. P. E. Wagner (Leipzig and London, 1832^4 [= Hildesheim, 1968]), ad loc., vol. II, pp. 693f. According to Heyne, the *facta impia* are Dido's, but they would refer to her plan to kill Aeneas, as she says at 4.592–4: 'exhorruerat illa modo ac damnaverat v. 595 atrocitatem consilii de persequendo et perdendo hospite; silet, et mox: quasi vero nunc demum nefas ac scelus exhorrescendum mihi sit! tum debebam exhorrescere, cum, defuncti mariti memoria animo expulsa, in thalami ac regni societatem perfidum hospitem recipiebam'. This is clearly impossible. Another explanation which Heyne takes into account is to refer *nunc te facta impia tangunt* to Aeneas' perfidy, and *tum decuit, cum sceptra dabas* 'ad ipsius Didonis fidem marito datam et nunc laesam'. It is a very unlikely combination, *pace* C. Buscaroli, *Il libro di Didone* (Rome/Milan, 1932), p. 414.

1878), vol. II, pp. 812f., the difficulty will remain firmly entrenched in all the interpretations of this passage:

> Aeneas' sole act of *impietas* [. . .] being his present desertion of Dido, by which it was impossible she could have been affected at the time she admitted him to have a share in her sceptre (*tum decuit* [scil. *factis impiis tangi*] *cum sceptra dabas*), it follows that *facta impia* means, not, as seems to have been taken for granted by the commentators, the *impietas* of Aeneas ('perfidia Aeneae', Wunderlich, Peerlkamp, Voss, Forbiger, Thiel, Wagner, *Virg. Br. En.*) or the *impietas* of the Trojans ('Perfidia, qua scilicet omne genus Troianum infame fuit', Wagner, *Praet.*), but that of Dido herself, scil. in the violation of her vow to Sychaeus.

When she was marrying Aeneas (*cum sceptra dabas*: but *sceptra dabas* may refer to Dido's decision to welcome the Trojans as equals in her kingdom, cf. 1.572f.) Dido could not have known anything about Aeneas' inclination to break his word and to abandon women: 'Dido had no reason to think Aeneas treacherous when she offered him a share in the crown: he had treated no one else with the same perfidy' (J. Conington [London, 1884⁴], ad loc.). T. E. Page (London, 1894), ad loc., and A. S. Pease (Cambridge, MA, 1935), ad loc. offer similar remarks.

Such an objection is far from absurd. The context of the monologue makes it impossible to refer *facta impia* to Dido, and yet if we want to assign them to Aeneas we must face the question of how Dido could have foreseen that the Trojan hero would eventually betray her. Since most scholars believe that Dido could not have foreseen such an outcome, they attribute the *facta impia* to her. Those who claim that the *facta impia* belong to Aeneas fail either to face or to answer this question satisfactorily. One answer to the question has been that Dido could have considered the fact that the Trojans were the descendants of Laomedon, the perjurer.[2] This answer, much as it faces the problem we are discussing, is definitely wrong: Dido does think that *something* should have forewarned her about Aeneas' trustworthiness, but it should have been something much more tangible than his genealogical association with Laomedon. We now begin to realize what lies behind the interpretative embarrassment this passage has caused: Dido should have realized that Aeneas himself, *pius Aeneas*, was actually not as *pius* as he appeared to be, and this implication cannot but disturb the readers of the poem, for whom the only 'impious' act Aeneas performs is to abandon Dido (indeed 'impious' only in Dido's eyes, since Aeneas is justified by his divine mission). Gruen realizes that it is logically impossible to assign *facta impia* to Dido, and also that *tum decuit, cum sceptra dabas* poses difficult problems, but even so he cannot bring himself to believe that Dido could have *actually* known that Aeneas was not as reliable as he appeared to be: '[. . .] the *facta impia* need only refer to something which *Dido can tell herself, however irrationally, however mistakenly*, should have touched her then. And this, of course, is quite different from the assumption that they must be something she *could actually* have been touched by'.[3] Gruen believes that at 4.596 Dido is irrationally reaching the conclusion that she could have realized earlier that Aeneas would abandon her, even if nothing could actually support her conviction. Monti carefully examines the issue, rightly assigns the *facta impia* to Aeneas, but, independently from Gruen's article, still does not deem it necessary to explain *why* Dido should have thought Aeneas capable of betrayal and

[2] Cf. e.g. T. Ladewig, C. Schaper, and P. Deuticke (Dublin and Zürich, 1912[13]), ad loc.: 'Freilich hatte sich Dido damals noch nicht über Aeneas zu beklagen, aber er gehört zum Volke des Laomedon (s. 542) und Dido hatte darum Anlass genug zur Vorsicht und zum Mistrauen.'

[3] P. Gruen, '*Facta impia* and Dido's soliloquy (*Aeneid* 4.590–629)', *CB* 56 (1980), 65–9, see p. 67 (emphasis in original).

deception.[4] On what basis, then, should Dido have thought that welcoming and trusting Aeneas was dangerous?

At 4.596–9 Dido reproaches herself because she should have realized from the beginning that Aeneas was in fact a sly traitor. How could she have reached such a conclusion? Dido gives a full answer herself: *en dextra fidesque, quem secum patrios aiunt portare penatis, / quem subiisse umeris confectum aetate parentem* (4.597–9). Dido refers here to the fall of Troy and Aeneas' escape to safety during the city's fateful last night. Commentators remark the sarcastic tone of *aiunt* (see esp. Austin, ad loc.: 'it implies that Aeneas' *pietas* was all a traveller's tale'),[5] but they do not grasp the implications of the passage. What Dido is actually saying is that Aeneas' retelling of his behaviour during the fall of Troy is false. But if he has not acted in the way he relates in Book 2, what did he actually do? This is precisely what should have caused Dido to doubt Aeneas' loyalty from the very beginning.

Aeneas' escape from Troy was a much debated issue in antiquity. There existed two versions of the story: one assigned Aeneas' ability to save himself to his *pietas*, which would have earned him the Acheans' respect (cf. e.g. Lycophr. *Alex.* 1261ff.); the other maintained that he had saved himself through treason.[6] If, as Dido now believes, Aeneas has not been saved by his *pietas*, that is in the irreproachable manner he has

[4] R. C. Monti, *The Dido Episode and the Aeneid* (Leiden, 1981), pp. 62–8, see esp. p. 64. *Facta impia* are correctly referred to Aeneas also by S. Farron, '*Pius Aeneas* in *Aeneid* 4.393–6', in C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and History*, VI (Bruxelles, 1992), pp. 260–76, at 271; and A. Traina, *Enc. Virg.* s.v. 'pietas' (excellent), p. 94.

[5] Cf. Pease, ad loc.: '*aiunt*: half-incredulous of what she has heard and making no allusion to Aeneas' having told her this (2.717–23; 2.747–8)'; Williams, ad loc.: 'the sarcastic use of the vague *aiunt* to introduce the traditional qualities of Aeneas (guardian of his country's gods and rescuer of his father) gives a cold sense of distance as she ignores the fact that he had told her things himself (2.707, 717)'.

[6] The first reference to Aeneas' betrayal is to be found in Menecrates of Xanthos (*FGrHist* 769 F 3 = Dion. Hal. 1.48.3), who explicitly maintains that Aeneas, because of Alexander's feelings of hostility towards him, handed Troy over to the Greeks. For this reason the Greeks allowed Aeneas to save his family, and he became one of them. This hostile account of Aeneas' escape, which is based on Iliadic references to the hostility between Aeneas and the Priamidae (13.461, 20.178–86), is elaborated as anti-Roman propaganda at the time of the conflict between Rome and Pyrrhus (E. Gabba, 'Sulla valorizzazione politica della leggenda delle origini troiane di Roma fra III e II secolo a.C.', in M. Sordi [ed.], *I canali della propaganda nel mondo antico* [Milan, 1976], pp. 84–101, at 92 = *Aspetti culturali dell'imperialismo romano* [Florence, 1993], pp. 101f., persuasively dates Menecrates between the third and second century B.C.), i.e. in a moment when Roman propaganda was trying to emphasize and put to political use the mythological foundation of Rome by Aeneas. Pro-Roman writers will react to this account by displacing the charges of treason on Antenor (cf. L. Braccesi, *La leggenda di Antenore da Troia a Padova* [Padua, 1984], pp. 123–46). Sisenna (fr. 1 P.) and Alexander of Ephesus (ap. *Origo gentis Romanae* 9.2) contrast Antenor's betrayal with Aeneas' pietas. A Lutatius (Quintus Lutatius Catulus according to Gabba, pp. 93f. = 102f.; Lutatius Daphnis according to Braccesi, pp. 127f.) also maintains that Aeneas was the traitor: *at vero Lutatius non modo Antenorem, sed etiam ipsum Aeneam proditorem patriam fuisse tradit* (ap. *Origo gentis Romanae* 9.2). Horace, *Carm. saec.* 37–44, rather explicitly denies this tradition:. . . *per ardentem sine fraude Troiam / castus Aeneas patriae superstes/ liberum munivit iter* (41–3; Serv. *Aen.* 1.242 cites *ardentem sine fraude Troiam*, and adds: *nemo . . . excusat nisi rem plenam suspicionis*; on the problems posed by this passage, see recently L. Braccesi, *Grecità di frontiera* [Padua, 1994], pp. 147–62; and W. Lapini, *RCCM* 38 [1996], 156–69). The motif of Aeneas as a traitor will subsequently be found in Dares Phrygius (37–44) and Dictys Cretensis (4.4, 4.22, 5.12, 5.16f.). On the legend of Aeneas' escape from Troy, and especially on his betrayal, there are several works; in addition to Gabba and Braccesi, quoted above, see esp. V. Ussani Jr, 'Enea traditore', *SIFC* 22 (1947), 108–23 = Id., *Memoria Classica* (Rome, 1996), pp. 153–67; G. K. Galinsky, *Aeneas, Sicily and Rome* (Princeton, 1969), pp. 3–61, esp. 46–51.

himself depicted in Book 2, this implies that he has been able to escape unscathed from Troy because of *facta impia*, i.e. through deceit and betrayal.[7]

The trust that Dido immediately accords Aeneas upon his arrival at Carthage is not at all to be taken for granted. We should remember that Dido has been inspired to act in a friendly manner by Jupiter (1.303f.). When Aeneas reaches Carthage, the city dear to his arch-enemy Juno, which version of his escape from Troy has preceded him there? The 'positive' version according to which Aeneas saved himself thanks to his *pietas*,[8] or the 'negative' one which claimed that Aeneas had in the end sided with the Greeks and was able to leave Troy simply because he was a traitor? Dido realizes only too late that she should not have believed the overly positive accounts of Aeneas' escape from Troy, and she should therefore have treated him for what he was—an impious traitor—whose ships should immediately have been burned. The burning of the fleet is exactly what would have happened had Dido not come to the Trojans' rescue. At 1.525 Ilioneus entreats Dido thus: *prohibe infandos a navibus ignis*. Why should the Carthaginians burn the Trojan ships, 'an action that contravenes the traditional code of behaviour to strangers (and shipwrecked at that)'?[9] Might it be because what they knew about those strangers led them to believe that they would not behave properly? Perhaps the Carthaginians themselves had already been 'touched' by the fame of the *facta impia* committed by Aeneas and his fellows. The tradition of Aeneas' betrayal develops as an anti-Roman ideological stance, and it is thus entirely appropriate (from a 'synchronic' point of view) that it should have circulated at Carthage from the very beginning of the city's history. When Ilioneus says *parce pio generi* (1.526), it is as if he were trying to counter from the outset negative rumours which the Carthaginians might already have heard about their guests. The most important detail the survivors stress when they talk to Dido is indeed their *pietas*: it is *not* by turning into traitors that they have been able to escape the slaughter at Troy. Aeneas' *facta impia* against Dido are also reflected in Ilioneus' words: Dido believes him when he states that Aeneas' fellows are a *pium genus*, but she will be proved wrong.

There is another aspect of Ilioneus' speech which Dido will find—or will believe she finds—contrary to the truth. Ilioneus' words at 1.527f. *non nos aut ferro Libycos populare penatis / uenimus aut raptas ad litora uertere praedas*, resonate with tragic irony given the Roman expeditions of 204 and 146 B.C.,[10] but will also be belied by the simile at 4.402–7: from her palace Dido watches the Trojans as they flee from Carthage: *ac uelut ingentem formicae farris aceruum/ cum populant, hiemis memores, tectoque reponunt; / it nigrum campis agmen,*[11] *praedamque per herbas / conuectant calle*

[7] The expression *facta impia* is used by Catullus (23.10 and esp. 30.4), as well as by Lucretius (1.83: the sacrifice of Iphigenia is an instance of the *scelerosa atque impia facta* caused by religion). It is intriguing to see in Aeneas' *facta impia* an echo of the *scelerosa atque impia facta* which at Lucr. 1.83 mark the beginning of the Trojan war: the war begins with the *impia facta* of the Greek leader Agamemnon, and ends with the *facta impia* of the Trojan traitor, Aeneas.

[8] All these accounts are already too embarrassing for Virgil, or, better still, for Aeneas: in *Aen.* 2 the Greeks do not let Aeneas leave thanks to his *pietas*, or—as we read in Livy 1.1.1–3—thanks to an old relationship of hospitality and because he and Antenor had argued that Helen should be returned to the Greeks. In *Aen.* 2 Aeneas leaves against his will, and only because of divine orders.

[9] Austin (Oxford, 1971), ad loc., p. 172.

[10] Cf. N. Horsfall, 'Dido in the light of history', *PVS* 13 (1973–4), 1–13, at 4 = S. J. Harrison (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Vergil's Aeneid* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 127–44, at 132.

[11] Serv. ad loc.: *'it nigrum campis agmen' . . . hemistichium Ennii de elephantis dictum* [Enn. *Ann* 502 Sk.], *quo ante Accius usus est de Indis*. See O. Skutsch (Oxford, 1985), ad loc.: 'Elephants were

angusto . . .'. The language of the simile suggests that Dido perceives the departure of the Trojans as an aggressive act akin to the sacking of a city. This instance of 'narrative through imagery' (to adopt Lyne's term)[12] cannot be taken to mean that the Trojans actually sacked Carthage, but does add an ominous note to the diligent, ant-wise order they display while departing ('here the point is numbers, division of labour, and assiduity'[13]). Dido, *capta ac deserta* as she is, views Aeneas' desertion of her as a violent and criminal act, and the Trojans as sackers and looters—precisely what Ilioneus had promised the *pium genus* of Trojan survivors could never be: consider the association of *populare* and *praeda* in two successive lines, which is found only in these two Virgilian passages.[14]

As a matter of fact the readers of the Aeneid have already had an opportunity to face a 'Carthaginian' account of the Trojan war, the one depicted on the walls of Juno's temple. Aeneas reads in the panels sympathy and compassion for the Trojans, and is therefore moved to tears. But his interpretation and his reaction are entirely misguided, since on the walls of a temple devoted to the arch-enemy of the Trojans their plight must have been represented with glee, and the Trojans and Aeneas themselves portrayed in a negative light. 'Aeneas must think that the pictures radiate sympathy and esteem for the gallant and pathetic defeated. We realize that they were erected in triumph over the defeated, and in celebration of the victors. For this is the temple of Juno, one of the arch-enemies of Troy'.[15] Aeneas recognizes himself in the picture: 1.488 *se quoque principibus permixtum agnovit Achivis*. '*Principibus permixtum*, προμάχοις μιχθέντα. When Poseidon rescues Aeneas from Achilles he tells him to keep in the background during Achilles' lifetime, but afterwards μετὰ πρώτοισι μάχεσθαι *Il.* 20.338'.[16] This is a possible interpretation of the painting, and we may indeed believe that Aeneas is thus interpreting it. But just as his overall interpretation

used by Pyrrhus, Hannibal and Antiochus, and the placing of the fragment is therefore uncertain. Hannibal's approach to Italy through the plains of Gaul or his movements in the Po valley before he lost many of the beasts in crossing the Apennines seem likely settings.' I think that if we reflect on the context of the Ennian quotation in Vergil, we may add further evidence to the hypothesis that Ennius' elephants belong to Hannibal. Any reader cannot help noticing the humour of the transference of the same phrase from enormous elephants to small ants. In Vergil's text the ants stand for the Trojan army fleeing from Troy, an action fated to provoke Dido's anger and her subsequent curse, in which she will unequivocally refer to Hannibal's revenge: *exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor, / qui face Dardanios ferroque sequare colonos* (4.625f.). I think that the 'humour' of the transference would be even more effective (and much more bitter) if Ennian elephants were exactly Hannibal's elephants.

[12] See R. O. A. M. Lyne, *Words and the Poet* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 63–99.

[13] Conington, ad loc., p. 291.

[14] See J. N. Grant, 'Dido Melissa', *Phoenix* 23 (1969), 380–91, esp. 384–6; and M. C. J. Putnam, *Virgil's Aeneid. Interpretation and Influence* (Chapel Hill and London, 1995), pp. 66–8. The imagery of the sacking army looks ahead to the Trojans' descendants: cf. R. G. M. Nisbet, '*Aeneas Imperator*: Roman generalship in an epic context', *PVS* 18 (1978–80), 50–61, at 53 = Harrison (n. 10), pp. 378–89, at 382: 'There could be no better description of the legalized destructiveness of the Roman army with its requisitioning of corn (*frumentum imperatum*), organized supply-columns, and discipline on the march'. Interesting remarks on the simile at 4.402–7 and its gloomy tone are also in W. W. Briggs, *Narrative and Similes from the Georgics in the Aeneid* (Leiden, 1980), pp. 53–5.

[15] R. O. A. M. Lyne, *Further Voices in Vergil's Aeneid* (Oxford, 1987), p. 210. The right interpretation of the paintings in Juno's temple is given by Horsfall (n. 10), pp. 7f. = 136f.; see also, for a different perspective, D. P. Fowler, 'Narrate and describe: the problem of ekphrasis', *JRS* 81 (1991), 25–35, at 31–3; A. Barchiesi, 'Rappresentazioni del dolore e interpretazione nell'*Eneide*', *AuA* 40 (1994), 109–24, at 114–24.

[16] Conington, ad loc., p. 57

of the temple decoration is wrong, his interpretation of the role he is given in it may equally be wrong. Perhaps in the temple of Aeneas' worst enemy his actions in the final stages of Troy's fall have not been represented in the flattering light in which Aeneas—and the vast majority of readers—take it. A vast majority, but not all of them: according to Servius Virgil *aut latenter proditionem tangit* [. . .]; *aut virtutem eius vult ostendere*.[17] This, however, is not an *aut* . . . *aut* situation, and in any case it is not 'Virgil' who is hinting at the betrayal. If this 'ambiguous' reading of 1.488 is correct, it would have been the Carthaginian painters of the temple who chose a version of the story according to which Aeneas 'mixes with the Achaean princes'. A similar anti-Roman account can be found in Menecrates of Xanthos, according to whom Aeneas did in the end betray Priamus and 'became one of the Achaeans', εἷς Ἀχαιῶν ἐγεγόνει (at 10.238f., the closest parallel for this use of *permixtus*, an Arcadian knight is *permixtus* to his Etruscan ally).[18]

The account of Aeneas' flight which circulated at Carthage when he arrived there was most probably the 'negative' one,[19] the one that Dido should have believed. But the queen, thus predisposed by Jupiter (1.303f.), immediately trusts Aeneas and his fellow Trojans without reservations, believes entirely his account of their escape from Troy, and is even moved by it.[20] Only after she has personally experienced how disloyal Aeneas can be does she understand the truth: the *other* accounts of the escape were

[17] References to Aeneas' betrayal in Virgilian *scholia* can be found esp. in Serv. *Aen.* 1.242, 1.488, 1.647, 2.17, 2.35, 2.298. An allusion to the betrayal at 1.488 is detected by F. Ahl, 'Homer, Vergil, and complex narrative structures in Latin epic: an essay', *ICS* 14 (1989), 1–31, at 26–9 (curiously, Ahl does not mention Servius). In *nunc te facta impia tangunt* I cannot help the temptation to hear an echo of 1.462 *sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt* (only in these two places does *tangunt* appear in all of Virgil): Aeneas was wrong, then, when he believed that the Carthaginians were compassionately 'touched' by the fate of Troy; it is only Dido who will be 'touched' by them compassionately, but she will also be forced to change her mind and will align herself with the painters of the temple decoration, who were 'touched' by Aeneas' plight only in a 'negative' sense.

[18] We might even doubt that Aeneas actually misinteprets the meaning of the temple decoration. In his account in Book 2 he will take pains, however implicitly, to explain to Dido the possible origin of the rumour of a 'Greek Aeneas'. In the fateful last night of Troy he and some fellow soldiers happened to put on the armours of some slaughtered Greek soldiers (2.387–401), and they subsequently found themselves 'mixed up' with the Greeks, *immixti Danais* (2.396). See the interesting remarks by Ahl (n. 17), pp. 26–9.

[19] Turnus appears to be aware of this account, since he calls Aeneas *desertorem Asiae* (12.15), 'a reference to the legend that Aeneas had acted in a cowardly fashion in leaving Troy' (Williams, ad loc.).

[20] Even in this account of the story there are details that should have warned Dido on how Aeneas dealt with the women who were an 'obstacle' to the accomplishment of his mission (or, from another point of view, of his interests). Ovid's Dido picks up *Aen.* 4.597–9 and focuses on the fate of Creusa, whom Aeneas left behind (cf. *Her.* 7.79–86): his behaviour can thus be considered one of the *facta impia*. Moreover, Dido's inclusive remark at *Her.* 7.81 (*omnia mentiris*) could also conceal a reference to the more serious charge of *proditio Troiae*. Ovid alludes to alternative accounts about Aeneas' departure from Troy and to his betrayal at *Met.* 13.623–7: cf. S. Casali, 'Altre voci nell'*Eneide* di Ovidio', *MD* 35 (1995), 59–76, at 59–62. The echo of *Aen.* 2.790f. *lacrimantem et multa uolentem / dicere deseruit* (cf. *Georg.* 4.500f.: an intertext which is very mournful, but surely also very 'effective' from Aeneas' point of view, because it establishes a connection between the moving story of Orpheus and Eurydice on the one hand, and Aeneas and Creusa on the other) at 4.390f. *multa metu cunctantem et multa uolentem / dicere* seems to point out the connection between Creusa's and Dido's fate. That *deseruit* is referred to Creusa by Aeneas as he talks to Dido can only sound in retrospect as bitterly ironic to the deserted queen of Carthage.

true, those in which Aeneas betrayed his own homeland. Aeneas' *facta impia* at Troy were the natural premise for his *facta impia* at Carthage.

Such is Dido's point of view: others may continue to give credit to Aeneas. But Virgil's allusion to Aeneas' betrayal is far from irrelevant; at the very least it is embarrassing for the 'official' voice of the poem to make room for this anti-Roman tradition, and this embarrassment explains why Dido does not refer to the *proditio Troiae* explicitly, but rather in a way which can *predictably* be misunderstood. Accordingly, the reference to Aeneas as 'mixed with the Greeks' at 1.488 is ambiguous enough to allow for a double reading: the interpretative quandary highlights the implicit ideological 'risk', and signals the fact that we are entering a minefield. The space given to such antagonistic versions within the Augustan texture of the Aeneid belies, to a certain extent, the propagandist stance of the poet. Readers are warned that Virgil offers an ideologically charged selection of events and points of view, all the while covering up alternative traditions which could prove embarrassing, if not altogether destructive, for the propagandist intent of the poem. As he presents Dido charging Aeneas as a liar, Virgil is also allowing for a reader who might charge him with covering up the whole truth, since allowing for the possibility that Aeneas is lying actually proves that Virgil is hiding something. Virgil, as befits a propagandist poet, hides the embarrassing traditions concerning Aeneas, but he then openly breaks with the ground rules of the game by exposing to the readers the very process of ideological selection which, if it is to succeed, must be kept rigorously hidden from sight. Aeneas gives a certain version of his flight from Troy because this is the version Virgil *must* give, but Virgil shows the reader what he is up by insinuating that the discarded versions of the same event may well retain for others—e.g. for Dido—their validity.[21]

We are now in a position to proceed one step further and try to understand why Dido's allusions to the *proditio Troiae* are even more upsetting than they might first appear to be. As I have just argued, those who so desire may continue to give credit to Aeneas. To Aeneas, but not to Virgil, since the authorial voice, the only one which could vouch for narrative truth, never tells us what *really* happened in the last night of Troy.[22] The narrator's voice never guarantees that Aeneas is telling the truth. Indeed, in the only other instance in which the poem refers to Anchises' rescue (not the Penates'),

[21] Virgil achieves a similar effect when he makes Juno refer to Aeneas as the aggressor at 10.66 *hostem regi se inferre Latino* and 10.78 *arua aliena iugo premere atque auertere praedas*: 'Aeneas is guilty of neither of these charges in the Aeneid, having been granted land and gifts by Latinus (cf. 7.259ff.), though in other accounts of Aeneas' arrival in Italy the Trojans do seize land and plunder Latium' (S. J. Harrison [Oxford, 1991], ad loc.; cf. Cato, *Orig.* 1 fr. 10 Jordan, Livy 1.1.5, Dion. Hal. 1.57.1). Also in this case the reference to a covered up alternative tradition prompts the reader to reflect on the tendentious process of ideological selection inherent in a propagandist poem. Juno also refers to a formal engagement between Turnus and Lavinia at 10.79 *gremiis abducere pactas* (cf. Amata at 7.363–66, Allecto at 7.423–24), a version coincident with that of Livy 1.2.1, but apparently untrue in the Aeneid: '*pactas* is tendentious . . . note the careful language of the poet at 7.54–8' (Harrison ad loc.). Nevertheless, the language of Virgil at 7.54–8 is carefully elusive, and suggests that the propagandist poet may be no less tendentious than the envious goddess.

[22] Homeric specialists are less chary than their Virgilian counterparts, and do not hesitate to question the truth of Odysseus' account: cf. recently S. Richardson, 'Truth in the tales of the *Odyssey*', *Mnemosyne* 49 (1996), 393–402 (with bibliography: esp. p. 396, n. 5): 'We must accept that, because Homer does not himself cover this period in Odysseus' life, we cannot know for certain what is fictional fact and what is the hero's fabrication' (p. 396). The insinuation that Odysseus' tale is a fabrication is already known in ancient times: cf. e.g. Dio Chrys. 11.34;

it is Aeneas who is talking, this time to the Cumaean Sibyl (6.110f.).[23] Those who so desire may continue to believe Aeneas. Others, however, may prefer to believe Dido: therein lies the upsetting greatness of the *Aeneid*.

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Lycophr. *Alex.* 764; Lucian. *V.H.* 1.3; Juv. 15.13–26 (with E. Courtney [London, 1980] on 15.16). It might be useful to recall that Aeneas' speech at Dido's court echoes that of a well-known liar to the Phaeacians.

[23] It is perhaps worth noticing a fact that, in the light of the interpretation I have outlined, might be significant: these two lines, if we consider Aeneas' own narrative in *Aen.* 2, sound at least exaggerated: '. . . Aeneas declares that he carried his father out of Troy "per . . . mille sequentia tela" (6.110), whereas the narrative does not show that a single shot was aimed at them (2.721–44). V. Henselmanns (*Die Widersprüche in Vergils Aeneis* [Aschaffenburg, 1913]) considers this to be an insoluble contradiction (p. 127); yet Aeneas is trying to persuade the Sibyl and therefore stresses his love for his father' (G. Highet, *The Speeches in Vergil's Aeneid* [Princeton, 1972], p. 289).