

THE GENEALOGY OF LATINUS IN VERGIL'S AENEID

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In *Aeneid* 7.45–49, Vergil introduces Latinus as an aged monarch ruling over a peaceful kingdom. This placid picture is enhanced by Latinus' descent from Faunus his father, Picus his grandfather, and Saturn his great-grandfather, three mythological figures associated with the Italian countryside:

... Rex arva Latinus et urbes
iam senior longa placidas in pace regebat.
hunc Fauno et nympha genitum Laurente Marica
accipimus; Fauno Picus pater, isque parentem
te, Saturne, refert, tu sanguinis ultimus auctor.¹

The only female mentioned in this account is Marica, the mate of Faunus and the mother of Latinus.

This genealogy is augmented in the description of the effigies of the kings and heroes of Latium in the palace of Picus (7.170–91), where Latinus receives his Trojan guests. That depiction concludes with an account of the statue of Picus, and the revelation that Circe, his *coniunx*, turned him into a woodpecker:

Ipse Quirinali lituo parvaeque sedebat
succinctus trabea, laevaeque ancile gerebat
Picus, equum domitor; quem capta cupidine coniunx
aurea percussum virga versumque venenis
fecit avem Circe, sparsitque coloribus alas. (7.187–91)

Servius (ad 7.190) did not believe that Circe was Picus' actual *coniunx*, and explained the epithet this way: "Coniunx' vero non quae erat sed quae esse cupiebat..."² C. J. Fordyce objects, "While there are places [in the *Aeneid*] where *coniunx* means 'intended bride' (cf. iii. 330f., ix. 138), there is none where it means 'intending bride'."³

Fordyce also points out that the horses which Latinus gives Aeneas (7.274–85) are selected from the three hundred descendants of a mare covertly bred with the divine stock of her father the Sun, and this makes the herd seem

¹ For a recent study of the aspects of the myths of Faunus, Picus and Saturn, see V. J. Rosivach, "Latinus' genealogy and the Palace of Picus (*Aeneid* 7.45–9, 170–91)," *CQ* n.s. 30 (1980) 140–52.

² In *The Aeneid of Vergil, Books 7–12* (Glasgow 1973), R. D. Williams expresses similar reservations: "189 coniunx: his would-be bride, cf. 2.344" (181). J. Conington is not certain that Circe was not Picus' *coniunx* in the *Aeneid*: see Conington-Nettleship 21 ad 189.

³ 103 ad 189ff. in *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Libri vii–viii*, commentary by C.J. Fordyce, ed. by J. D. Christie (Oxford 1977).

very much like a family heirloom passed down to Latinus from Circe.⁴ Fordyce and other commentators have apparently not noticed a fact which supports this argument: these horses of Circe in the family of Latinus are another link between her and Picus, *equum domitor* (7.189). It is plausible to assume that the marvelous line of steeds first came as a love gift, perhaps a wedding gift, from Circe to Picus the tamer of horses. Acceptance of such a gift would imply acceptance of the love which prompted it.

The only evidence against taking Circe as the *coniunx* of Picus in the *Aeneid* lies outside the poem. Servius (ad 7.190) knows a different story in which Picus is married to Pomona, and thus spurns the advances of Circe, who transforms him into a woodpecker through jealousy. Ovid tells a similar tale with a different wife, the nymph Canens (*Met.* 14.312ff.). Clearly there was no canonical version, and it is not methodologically sound to deny that *coniunx* in *Aeneid* 7.189 means "wife" on the basis of later accounts which disagree among themselves. Unless we have a reason in Vergil's text to assume that *coniunx* must be understood in a qualified sense, we have no need to qualify it.⁵ Hence the Roscher articles on both Circe and Picus take Circe to be the wife of Picus in the *Aeneid*, and in this conclusion they (and Fordyce) are, in my view, correct.⁶

Picus is the last in this list of effigies, and Faunus is conspicuous by his absence. In consequence, Fordyce inferred that Vergil is now giving a version of Latinus' paternity —distinct from that of 7.47 ff.—in which Picus and Circe,

⁴ Fordyce (above, note 3) 103 ad 189ff.

⁵ It is significant that G. Wissowa, the author of the article on Canens in W. H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* 1.1 (Leipzig 1884–86, repr. Hildesheim 1965) col. 851.4–15, sees Circe as the wife of Picus in the *Aeneid*, and thinks it possible that Canens was a poetic creation of Ovid.

In Book 7 of the *Argonautica*, Valerius Flaccus, obviously drawing on *Aeneid* 7.189–91, makes Circe the wife of Picus: "Ausonii coniunx ego regia Pici" (232), as does Plutarch, reporting on Roman traditions in *Quaest. Rom.* 21: ...τὸν Πίκον λέγουσιν ὑπὸ φαρμάκων τῆς γυναικὸς μεταβαλεῖν τὴν φύσιν...γενόμενον δρυοκολάπτην... So there is certainly support outside of the *Aeneid* for the marriage of Picus and Circe, but the decisive factor for determining the nature of their relationship in Vergil's poem is that if all outside testimonia on the matter had been lost, scholars would unanimously conclude on the basis of *coniunx* in the *Aeneid* 7.189 that for Vergil, Picus and Circe were husband and wife.

The interpretation I adopt raises the question why, if Circe were the wife of Picus, she should have, *capta cupidine* (189), changed him into a woodpecker. If Picus was unfaithful, or merely desired by another, (and, as we have seen, his legends connect him with several females), jealous passion might well have prompted his sorceress wife to transform him into a bird to keep him from her rival. There is in this an ominous note consistent with Circe's portrayal in the *Aeneid*: ultimately Circe alienates and bestializes everyone she encounters, even those she loves.

⁶ "Kirke," 2.1 (1890–94), coll. 1193–1204, esp. 1202.21–26 (Seeliger); "Picus," 3.2 (1902–9), coll. 2494–96, esp. 2496.7–12 (Carter).

not Faunus and Marica, are the parents of Latinus.⁷ This is difficult to accept. Not only is Faunus given as the father of Latinus in 7.47ff, a scant 123 lines before the description of the palace of Picus begins, but in 7.81ff., Latinus goes to consult the oracle of Faunus in the groves of Albunea: Faunus is there twice referred to as Latinus' father (*Fauni, / fatidici genitoris*: 81–82; *patris Fauni*: 102), and in his oracular response Faunus calls Latinus his offspring: *O mea progenies* (97). After this consistent emphasis on Faunus as the father of Latinus in the first part of Book 7, it is unlikely that Vergil, either as a matter of artistic strategy or as the result of a mere lapse, would have discarded this paternity in favor of another in the space of a few dozen lines.

Faunus, the father of the reigning king of Latium, is mentioned in our first view of Latinus but omitted in the description of Picus' palace for the same reason that Circe is not mentioned in the first genealogy of Latinus but disclosed to be the wife of Picus, and hence, presumably, the grandmother of Latinus, in the description of the *regia Pici*: Vergil's shifting artistic purposes. Book 7 opens with the Trojans sailing past Circe's island as they approach Latium (10–24). Circe and her realm are here portrayed as far more grim than in the *Odyssey*, and the Trojans avoid her through Neptune's good will.⁸ In the subsequent introduction to Latinus and his kingdom, the poet wishes to stress the peaceful state of the folk to whom the Trojan refugees have come, so that the war in which they will all be caught up through the agency of Juno might seem all the more tragic. In this context, the mention of Circe, the dire grandmother of Latinus, would strike a discordant note.⁹ But when the Trojan ambassadors go to the *regia Pici* to seek an audience with Latinus, the description of the effigies of the Latin kings and heroes, with its emphasis on wars, wounds and *spolia*, discloses the military violence in the Latin past and foreshadows the war to come. The time is ripe for Vergil to unveil the potential for human evil even in rustic Latium.¹⁰ Therefore the disclosures about Circe, the baleful wife of Picus, who transformed him into the woodpecker, the bird of

⁷ Fordyce (above, note 3) 103 ad 189ff.

⁸ For more on the differences in Circe's depiction in Homer and Vergil, see C. P. Segal, "Circean Temptations: Homer, Vergil and Ovid," *TAPA* 99 (1968) 419–42.

⁹ For another view (not incompatible with that advanced here) of Vergil's purposes in suppressing the mention of Circe and Latinus' descent from Sol at the beginning of Book 7, see G. K. Galinsky, "Aeneas' Invocation of Sol (*Aeneid*, xii, 176)" *AJP* 90 (1969) 456–57.

¹⁰ Rosivach (above, note 1) argues that Vergil changes his initial depiction of a peaceful Latium to that of a martial state with a warlike past because (151) "The Trojans have come to Latium and in their way they taint the Latin Golden Age themselves long before Juno interferes." But surely Vergil does not mean us to understand that the Trojans alter the facts of Latin history by the mere act of setting foot on Italian soil. The poet is able to change the emphasis in his description of Latium from peace to war because both peace and war are elements of the pre-Trojan experience of the Latin people. For a still more "revisionist" view of the Latin past in which Vergil advances the case that evil in Latium did not begin with the coming of the Trojans, see Evander's account of Italian history in *Aeneid* 8.314–36.

Mars, suggesting as they do the dehumanizing epiphany of war in a peaceful land, are here as appropriate as they would have been out of place in 7.47ff. But if the mention of Circe is suitable in this passage, the mention of Faunus would not be. As V. J. Rosivach explains it, "Significantly Faunus has been dropped from this second list of Latinus' ancestors. In the context of war and victory, there is no place for a frivolous Panlike nature spirit."¹¹

Nonetheless, it is important to realize that Vergil has not changed his version of Latinus' ancestry in the space of 150 lines. He merely highlights different parts of it in different places, as his artistic purposes require.

But does Vergil consistently maintain this genealogy throughout the poem? Many scholars believe that a phrase in Book 12 implies a lineage different from that in Book 7. As Latinus arrives in a headdress with twelve glittering rays to conclude the *foedus* with Aeneas, Vergil calls his crown *Solis avi specimen* (12.164). *Avi* is generally translated here with its most common significance, "grandfather," giving for the phrase the meaning "an emblem of his grandfather the Sun." There are two accounts outside of Vergil in which Latinus is the grandson of the sun god. In *Theogony* 1011–13, an early interpolation,¹² we are told that Circe, the daughter of Helios, bore two sons, Agrius and Latinus, to Odysseus:

Κίρκη δ', Ἡελίου θυγάτηρ Ὑπεριονίδαι,
γείναιτ' Ὀδυσσεύος ταλασίφρονος ἐν φιλότῳ
Ἀγρίον ἥδ' Ἰατῖνον ἀμύμονά τε κρατερὸν τε.

In another version, reported by Callias of Syracuse, Circe bore Latinus to Telemachus.¹³ If *Aeneid* 12.164 implies either of these genealogies for Latinus, then it is clearly incompatible with the account of his paternity in 7.47–49.

Many editors assume that *Solis avi specimen* indicates that Vergil is indeed here following the genealogy of *Theogony* 1011–13 for Latinus, and that this passage is therefore inconsistent with Latinus' family tree in Book 7: thus, e.g., T. E. Page, H. Nettleship and R. D. Williams.¹⁴ Other scholars too accept the inconsistency. F. I. Zeitlin regards the apparent discrepancy as one of a number of inconsistencies in the poem, and G. K. Galinsky argues that Vergil changes genealogies in Book 12 to assimilate the Odyssean legends concerning Italy and the origins of Rome to his own reworking of the tradition.¹⁵ In his gloss on 7.47, Servius also suggested that in 12.164 Vergil was alluding to the Hesiodic

¹¹ Rosivach (above, note 1) 150 note 51. Obviously, if Rosivach means to imply that Vergil has changed Latinus' genealogy by failing to mention Faunus in his description of the palace of Picus, I disagree with him.

¹² See U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, "Lese Früchte," *Hermes* 34 (1899) 611.

¹³ Festus 269; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 1.72.5. See also C. J. Classen, "Zur Herkunft der Saga von Romulus und Remus," *Historia* 12 (1963) 447–57.

¹⁴ T. E. Page, *The Aeneid of Vergil, Books 7–12* (London 1900, repr. 1967) 427 ad 164; Conington-Nettleship 420 ad 163, 164; Williams (above, note 2) 448 ad 162–64.

¹⁵ F. I. Zeitlin, "An Analysis of *Aeneid* xii, 176–211. The Differences between the Oaths of Aeneas and Latinus," *AJP* 86 (1965) 337–62; Galinsky (above, note 9) 456ff.

genealogy, but in doing so he pointed out a difficulty with this assumption curiously neglected in modern discussions:

Sane Hesiodus Latinum Circes et Ulixes filium dicit, quod et Vergilius tangit dicendo <xii.164> Solis avi specimen. sed ...temporum ratio non procedit...

Servius was more specific about this chronological problem with the Hesiodic genealogy in the context of Vergil's poem in his comment on 12.164: "sed de Ulixē, ut etiam supra <vii.47> diximus, temporum nos ratio credere non sinit."

The problem is indeed Ulysses. Aeneas and Ulysses were contemporaries, still in their fighting primes when Aeneas came to Latium. Latinus, however, was a *senior* (7.46). If Ulysses was his father, then the son was older than his sire. The case for Telemachus is even worse. This, I think, is the strongest argument against taking 12.164 as referring to a Hesiodic genealogy for Latinus. The fact that such a lineage would be inconsistent with that in 7.47ff. is not in itself conclusive. That there are indisputable inconsistencies in the *Aeneid* was already well known to Servius (ad 12.164): "Sane sciendum Vergilium in varietate historiae sua etiam dicta variare."

But those who believe in a reference to a Hesiodic genealogy in 12.164 must contend not simply with the problem of inconsistency with a passage five books earlier, but also with the difficulty of a patent absurdity in the text before them. If the reader notices, as Servius did (and as I did before reading his gloss), the illogicality involved in interpreting *Solis avi specimen* to imply that Latinus was the offspring of Circe and Ulysses, he will be tempted to incredulity, or even laughter, at the solemn conclusion of the epic, a distraction which Vergil could not have intended. So the fact that a Hesiodic genealogy for Latinus in 12.164 would be both inconsistent with the family tree given in Book 7 and intrinsically absurd besides gives us a compelling reason to look for an explanation of 12.164 which does not involve Ulysses or Telemachus.

C. G. Heyne did not believe that Vergil was contradicting his earlier genealogy for Latinus with an implied Hesiodic version in 12.164. Heyne speculated that to make Sol an *avus* of Latinus, Vergil may have drawn upon earlier traditions in which either Faunus or Picus was the child of Circe.¹⁶ In this case Sol would be the great-grandfather or great-great-grandfather of Latinus, while *avus* most commonly means "grandfather," as noted above. But Heyne shows the way out of the difficulty: "...avum simpliciter de uno ex progenitoribus accipere licet..."¹⁷ *Avus* can certainly mean "ancestor" or

¹⁶ Heyne-Wagner 733–34 ad 161ff.

¹⁷ Heyne-Wagner 734 ad 161ff. Servius (ad *Aeneid* 12.164) reports that some in antiquity identified Marica, the mother of Latinus, with Circe. This is an apparent attempt to preserve for *avi* in 12.164 its most frequent meaning of "grandfather" while avoiding the logical difficulties of making Latinus the son of Ulysses or Telemachus. Nettleship calls the identification "an easy gloss" (Conington-Nettleship 420 ad 162, 163; see also Heyne-Wagner 733–34 ad 161ff.: "Quod Maricam eandem ac Circen fuisse Servius contendit, grammaticum acumen sapit"). Too easy. It is hard to believe that in the *Aeneid* Vergil conflates the minor Italian nature goddess and the legendary witch, especially since Circe is repre-

"forefather," and besides, as H. Nettleship points out in connection with Heyne's idea, Vergil was more than once casual about his use of words, including *avus*, which denote male forebears.¹⁸

This is a start, but we can be still more exact. Since Vergil calls Circe the *coniunx* (however understood) of Picus in 7.189, she is quite unlikely to be his mother. The logical alternative is that Faunus, the father of Latinus, is the son of Picus and Circe, as I suggested above. Therefore Sol is the *avus*, in this case the great-grandfather, of Latinus. Nettleship considered this a plausible rival to the standard Hesiodic explanation of *Solis avi specimen*, and T. L. Papillon and A. E. Haigh offered a cursory (and subsequently ignored) interpretation of *avi* and the genealogy question along these lines in their edition of Vergil.¹⁹ Heyne himself seems to incline towards this explanation in his note on the passage by reminding us of Circe's love for Picus in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 14.320ff., and in his fifth excursus to *Aeneid* 7 he states that Vergil in 7.189ff. and Ovid in *Metamorphoses* 14 are following the same myth of Picus and Circe.²⁰ Consistent with this belief is Heyne's conviction that *coniunx* in 7.189 means *amans*, not "wife."²¹ But Ovid depicts Picus as utterly rejecting Circe for Canens, while in Vergil, Picus must be Circe's lover if Faunus is to have the two for parents. If Vergil differs from Ovid in making Picus and Circe lovers who engender Faunus, we have all the more reason to conclude that *coniunx* in *Aeneid* 7.189 is to be taken literally, and that Vergil has also diverged from Ovid in making Circe the wife of Picus. So in the end, the various passages in the *Aeneid* on the genealogy of Latinus complement one another in a precise and reasonable way: *Solis avi specimen* in 12.164 must mean that Latinus descended from Circe, and *coniunx* in 7.189 shows by what route, the union of Circe and Picus, whom we know from 7.48 to be the grandfather of Latinus.

According to the foregoing argument, *Solis avi specimen*, "an emblem of his ancestor the Sun," does not connote Latinus' birth from the mating of Circe with either Ulysses or Telemachus. I have tried to show that this is the correct

sented at the beginning of Book 7 as ensconced in *propria persona* within her palace at Circei (10–20). It seems that some in antiquity attempted to eliminate the awkwardness of the identification by explaining Marica as the deity into whom Circe was transformed at her death: "Nam et Romulus post mortem Quirinus factus est...et Circe Marica..." (Lactant., *Div. Inst.* 1.21.23). But clearly this will not explain Vergil's genealogy of Latinus, for Circe is still alive in the *Aeneid*. We cannot reconcile Vergil's accounts of Latinus' parentage by identifying Circe and Marica.

¹⁸ Conington-Nettleship 420 ad 163, 164: "But Virg. is sometimes vague in these matters: comp. 10.76. 619, 9.4, where Pilumnus is variously called 'avus,' 'quartus pater,' and 'parens' of Turnus." As an example of *avus* meaning "ancestor" or "forefather," the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* cites *Mantua, dives avis* in *Aeneid* 10.201.

¹⁹ Conington-Nettleship 420 ad 163, 164; T. L. Papillon and A. E. Haigh, eds., *P. Vergili Maronis Opera*, vol. 2 (Oxford 1892), 367 ad 161–64.

²⁰ Heyne-Wagner 734 ad 161ff., and 157: "Eandem Fabulam attigit Virgilius lib. vii, 189 sq."

²¹ Heyne-Wagner 30 ad 187–91.

view, not simply an alternative interpretation of problematic evidence. I conclude that there are no inconsistencies in Latinus' genealogy as it is presented in the *Aeneid*: his great-grandfather Saturn was the father of his grandfather Picus and his great-grandfather Sol was the father of his grandmother Circe; the son of Picus and his *coniunx* Circe was Faunus, who sired Latinus on the nymph Marica.