# ROMANE MEMENTO: JUSTICE AND JUDGMENT IN AENEID 6

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D. M. Peter H. Solomon quique sui memores alios fecere merendo

In many ways, the sixth book of the Aeneid stands apart from the rest of the poem, outside the primary account of the story of Aeneas.¹ Dramatically, it occupies a pause in the narrative, between Aeneas' arrival in Italy and his arrival in Latium and the site of Rome. Its subject matter has little connection to the plot of the Aeneid, and nothing that is said or done has any direct influence on the second half of the poem. In terms of imagery, Book 6 is marked off as a unit by two sets of gates: the doors of Daedalus on the temple of Apollo at Cumae, containing the blank panel on which the fall of Icarus should have been inscribed, and the Gates of Sleep at the end through which Aeneas passes as a false dream. The disturbing quality of these opening and closing images, indeed, serves in itself to isolate the book as something unclear, perplexing, and mysterious.

But at the same time as Book 6 is set apart from the rest of the *Aeneid*, it is also obvious that it is of immense significance for the interpretation of the poem. It conveys its meaning obliquely; it is, in a sense, an authorial aside, an indirect comment on the significance of the *Aeneid* as a whole. Furthermore, like the prophecy of Jupiter in Book 1 and the Shield in Book 8, it sets the actions of Aeneas in a temporal context which looks ahead to the entire history of the Roman state; like those passages, it alludes specifically to significant events

<sup>1</sup> The following works are cited by the author's name (and date, where necessary to avoid ambiguity) alone: R. G. Austin, P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Sextus (Oxford 1977); R. J. Clark, Catabasis: Vergil and the Wisdom-Tradition (Amsterdam 1979); D. C. Feeney, "History and Revelation in Vergil's Underworld," PCPhS 212 (1986) 1–24; F. Graf, Eleusis und die orphische Dichtung in vorhellenistischer Zeit, RGVV 33 (Berlin 1974); P. Grimal, "Le Livre vi de l'Enéide' et son actualité en 23 av. J.-C.," REA 56 (1954) 40–60; R. Merkelbach, "Aeneas in Cumae," MH 18 (1961) 83–99; E. Norden, "Vergilstudien I," Hermes 28 (1893) 360–406; id., Aeneis Buch VI (Darmstadt 1957<sup>4</sup>); F. Solmsen, "Greek Ideas of the Hereafter in Virgil's Roman Epic," Proc. Amer. Philos. Soc. 112 (1968) 8–14; id., "The World of the Dead in Aeneid 6," CP 67 (1972) 31–41; J. H. Waszink, "Vergil and the Sibyl of Cumae," Mnemosyne ser.4, 1 (1948) 43–58; G. W. Williams, Technique and Ideas in the "Aeneid" (New Haven 1983). This paper was delivered as a lecture at a colloquium on Virgil sponsored by the University of Siena in April 1988, and an earlier version was presented at the University of Virginia in April 1986. I would like to express my gratitude to both institutions for their kindness and hospitality, and particularly to my hosts on those occasions, Professors Mario Geymonat and Jon Mikalson. I am grateful also to the National Endowment for the Humanities for the Fellowship during which the final versions were written. For assistance and criticism of various kinds, I am grateful also to Agnes K. Michels, Michael Putnam, Peter White, Stephen Wortman, and, above all, Susanna Stambler Zetzel.

of Virgil's own day: the closing of the gates of Janus in Book 1, Actium and the triple triumph of Augustus in Book 8, the death of Marcellus in Book 6. Unlike those passages, however, Book 6 performs a much larger and more ambitious function: it places the history of Aeneas and of Rome in a moral, religious, and eschatological framework that invites the reader not merely to recall Rome's history and present, but to reflect on its values.

It is this combination of contemporary relevance, historical understanding, and moral evaluation in Book 6 that is the topic of the present study. Many of the more familiar problems of the book, such as the Gates of Sleep or the Golden Bough, will be addressed here only tangentially, and nothing at all will be said about the role of the underworld narrative in developing the character and psychology of Aeneas himself. The interpretation of Book 6 offered here gives a central place to those larger religious and eschatological questions which have, in fact, been given relatively little attention in recent scholarship.<sup>2</sup> I will argue (to summarize very briefly) that the connection between the Augustan present and the eschatology of the underworld is far more intimate and complex than is generally recognized. But Virgil's primary subject, I will suggest, is not religious, but historical; the underworld is neither allegory nor myth, but provides a framework drawn from the world of mystery cult to confront the problems of justice and morality in Augustan Rome. It should not, however, be thought that Virgil is attempting to provide unambiguous or simple solutions to those problems: as will be seen below, the poet seems to place almost equal weight on the possibility and impossibility of true historical knowledge, on the uses of memory and on its limitations. Paradoxically, the central element in Virgil's construction is a set of references to an event which Virgil himself did not live to see, the Ludi Saeculares of 17 B.C. The remarkable combination of philosophy, religion, myth, and history in the underworld is Virgil's response to the end of one saeculum and the beginning of another.

#### I. Tartarus

Midway through their trip through the underworld, the Sibyl and Aeneas arrive at a fork in the road (6.540). Aeneas sees to his left a great fortification surrounded by a moat of fire, with the fury Tisiphone at the gates; he hears the sound of groans, whips, and chains, and he asks the Sibyl for an explanation

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> It is in fact worth noting that of three major recent discussions of the Aeneid, Wendell Clausen, Virgil's "Aeneid" and the Tradition of Hellenistic Poetry (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1987), Philip Hardie, Virgil's "Aeneid": Cosmos and Imperium (Oxford 1986), R. O. A. M. Lyne, Further Voices in Vergil's "Aeneid" (Oxford 1987), only Hardie pays any attention to Book 6, and he discusses little beyond the Lucretian echoes and the final scenes of the book. Feeney in his discussion of the Parade of Heroes similarly dismisses (p. 16) the earlier parts of the book; the recent discussions of the Gates of Sleep by R. J. Tarrant, "Aeneas and the Gates of Sleep," CP 77 (1982) 51–55, and H. C. Gotoff, "The Difficulty of the Ascent from Avernus," CP 80 (1985) 35–40, also ignore everything in Book 6 which precedes Anchises' account of metempsychosis. The third recent discussion of the Gates of Sleep, Williams 46–58, does take the context seriously, and I am greatly indebted to his analysis. The manipulation of religious and philosophical materials investigated here is parallel, I would suggest, to the manipulations of poetic material analyzed by Clausen; as Nicholas Horsfall has demonstrated, it is equally valid for historical materials: see his important recent article, "Camilla o i limiti dell'invenzione," Athenaeum 66 (1988) 31–51.

(548–61). She accordingly recounts what she had seen long before, when Hecate had given her a tour of the underworld at the time she was placed in charge of Avernus. The description of Tartarus has been largely neglected, but it in fact deserves close analysis.<sup>3</sup> Not only is Tartarus the only section described by the Sibyl rather than seen by Aeneas,<sup>4</sup> but it is in a number of ways the very center of the entire journey. It falls on one side of the fork in the road which marks the primary division of the underworld;<sup>5</sup> it comes in time exactly half-way through the journey, when the sun is at its height in the world above (6.535–36); and it is by line-count the center of Virgil's account of the underworld.<sup>6</sup> Central elements of descriptions, it is clear, are crucial in Virgil, and the present case is no exception.<sup>7</sup> And, of course, nowhere in Book 6 are justice and punishment more important.<sup>8</sup>

One of the most striking features of the Virgilian Tartarus is its blending of two different, and generally separate, types of description. Two sections consist primarily of punishments of individual criminals, sometimes mentioning the crime and normally naming the criminal (6.580–607, 616–20); two others list the crimes which merit punishment but do not name either the criminal or the punishment itself. The first of these types is mythological, and it includes some of the most famous punishments of Tartarus: Ixion's wheel, Sisyphus' rock, Tityos and his vulture, Tantalus' feast. Its ultimate model is the description of Tityos, Tantalus, and Sisyphus in the Odyssean *Nekuia*, but it is in any case a traditional element in mythological accounts of the afterlife. The second

<sup>3</sup> Solmsen (1972) 36 n. 27, rightly criticizes Otis for his dismissal of Tartarus and Elysium.

<sup>4</sup> The Sibyl has, if anyone does in the Aeneid, the status of an independent and relatively objective observer; and in this case her information comes from Hecate herself. Most of the underworld is described from Aeneas' point of view: the characters whom he meets are those significant to his own life; when he appears, Greeks run away (489–93); and even in Elysium it is the heroes of Troy, not of Greece, whom Aeneas sees (648–50). It would obviously have done little for the narrative as a whole had Virgil made Aeneas see people of no interest to himself or the plot, but it is striking that Tartarus is the only part of the underworld where such relevance is not displayed (except in the Roman elements to be discussed below). It seems to me not impossible that one meaning of Anchises' notoriously difficult statement "quisque suos patimur manes" (743) is not only that the punishment fits the crime, but that the underworld that any person sees or experiences is a function of his or her own preconceptions and beliefs, not of any objective reality.

On the importance of the fork see Solmsen (1972) 33-34, 36.

<sup>6</sup> The midpoint between the entrance to the underworld (268) and the exit (898)

is\_line 583, in the description of the punishment of the Aloidae.

<sup>7</sup>On the importance of centers see most recently R. Thomas, "Virgil's Ecphrastic Centerpieces," *HSCP* 87 (1983) 175–84. The exact center of the book as a whole is Aeneas' encounter with Dido.

8 Note that the word *poena* occurs eight times in the description of Tartarus.

9 On similar mixtures before Virgil see below, p. 268.

10 For analysis of Virgil's account of Tartarus, see Norden (1957) 274-77, 278-

11 It should be noted that it is not possible to determine what is "normal" in the underworld. The *Nekuia* has no Tartarus proper, but includes the three punishments mentioned above (*Od.* 11.576–600); that this whole passage (11.565–627) may be an interpolation is irrelevant to its use by Virgil (see Solmsen [1968] 9, with bibliography in note 7). Lucretius includes in his psychological allegorization of the underworld Tityos, Tantalus, Sisyphus, and the Danaids, and certain figures

type is normally found in texts stemming from an Orphic-Pythagorean milieu, describing the kinds of behavior on this earth which merit various types of treatment in the underworld. 12 The longest such account is found in the "Orphic Catabasis" of P. Bologna 4, which includes among the damned those guilty of incest, of fratricide, of lending (or renting) one's wife or son to another man, of hoarding, and of betraying a friend for money. 13 An earlier version, remarkably similar to Virgil's in many respects, is found in Aristophanes' Frogs, in the description of those to be found in the mud and sewage appropriate to criminals (147-50).14

The two types of model used by Virgil in his description of Tartarus are not unique to this passage; in fact, the combination of the two is part of a pervasive interpretative difficulty in the entire underworld. It has long been recognized that the organization of the Virgilian underworld is problematic.<sup>15</sup> In the opening

seem generally to be the objects of Epicurean analysis, notably Tityos, Tantalus, Ixion, and Sisyphus; for instances, see Heinze and Bailey on Lucretius 3.978-1010, and for Lucretian influence on Virgil see Agnes K. Michels, "Lucretius and the Sixth Book of the Aeneid," AJP 65 (1944) 141–44. A conspectus of the Greek sources for the criminals in Tartarus is given by L. Radermacher, "Motiv und Personlichkeit II: Die Busser Vergils," RhM 63 (1908) 531–34.

<sup>12</sup> See A. Dieterich, *Nekuia* (Leipzig 1913<sup>2</sup>) 163-95, and Norden (1893) 392-93. On "Orphic-Pythagorean" texts, see the following paragraphs.

13 A definitive text of P. Bon. 4 is given by H. Lloyd-Jones and P. J. Parsons, "Iterum de 'Catabasi Orphica'," Kyklos: Festschrift R. Keydell (Berlin 1978) 88–100, with earlier bibliography. On the relationship of the papyrus to the Aeneid, see particularly M. Treu, "Die neue 'Orphische' Unterweltbeschreibung und Vergil," *Hermes* 82 (1954) 24-51; A. Setaioli, "Nuove osservazioni sulla 'Descrizione dell'oltretomba' nel papiro di Bologna," *SIFC* 42 (1970) 179-224, esp. 220-24; id., Alcuni aspetti del vi libro dell'Eneide (Bologna 1970) 83-124; and Solmsen (1972) 32-33. Line 103 of the papyrus (following the numeration of Lloyd-Jones and Parsons) has the closest parallel with Virgil (noted by Treu 25-26): αὶ δὲ βίον σ[οφί]ησιν ἐκόσμεον is remarkably close to Aen. 6.663, "qui uitam excoluere per artes." It is generally agreed that the papyrus and Virgil share a common source, but the structure and purpose of the Bologna papyrus deserve further investigation. Although both Setaioli and Lloyd-Jones and Parsons consider the poem to be of imperial date (the papyrus itself was written in the third century A.D.), there are obvious Hellenistic elements, e.g. line 106, ἔργα βροτω[ν γ] ένεσίν τε θεων, which alludes to both major works of Hesiod, possibly adding references to other didactic poems; see Treu 33 and Setaioli, 'Nuove osservazioni," 214–16.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Graf 146: "Der Frevlerkatalog in den "Fröschen" klingt erstaunlich an der Katalog der anonymen Sünde im Tartaros Vergils an." Other texts also have correspondences with Virgil's descriptions of Tartarus and/or Elysium; thus Plato, Phaedo 113D-114C, Pindar, Threnos 7 (fr. 129 Snell), and several passages of

Aristophanes, Frogs. See Graf 79-94 for a careful analysis.

15 The following paragraphs are not intended as more than a cursory discussion of a large and complicated problem. The main terms of the issue were set by Norden (1893) and, with some modifications, (1957) 3-48. He viewed the structure of the underworld as a problem in sources, acknowledging popular and theological strands in the theoretical construction of the underworld (aside from the Homeric model), but tried to show that they were internally consistent and that they had previously been linked by Plato, particularly in Rep. 10.614-15, into a coherent system which Virgil followed. Such internal contradictions as remained he saw as the inevitable result of trying to give epic shape to a theological eschatology which had listed only classes of souls, not specific individuals ([1957] 14-15); on that aspect of the book, see further below. Even Norden,

sections. Aeneas encounters the shades of people whom he knew in their lifetimes and sees many similar shades of others. In these cases, there is no suggestion either that these shades will ever be anything other than what they are when Aeneas meets them, or that their place in the underworld is the result of anything other than the time or manner of their deaths. Minos is the supervisor of the area immediately after the crossing of Acheron, and he directs the shades to their allotted places: for the untimely dead, those killed in battle or dead for love or from suicide, and so on. 16 As he goes on, Aeneas hears of Tartarus and sees Elysium, which are again permanent abodes for the shades, but their location is in this instance determined by the moral character and activities pertaining to their previous existences. Finally Aeneas encounters Anchises, who not only tells him of a system of purification of souls from the inevitable contamination that comes from human flesh—a system which has apparently nothing to do either with the organization of the earlier part of the underworld or with the punishments in Tartarus—but also explains the process of metempsychosis by which most souls after purification are returned to the earth in new bodies. Again, of course, nothing in the previous sections of the underworld either anticipates this or is consistent with it.

The Virgilian underworld, therefore, embodies radically different and mutually incompatible accounts of the afterlife and the nature of the soul, and it is hard to see how they can be reconciled. At a minimum one may see two different types of eschatology here: on the one hand, there is the idea of an afterlife in which the shade permanently keeps the appearance and character of its previous human existence, and on the other hand there is an account according to which the soul is separate from the body, passes through a period of purification or punishment corresponding to its previous moral character—unless its previous life has been either so good or so bad as to exempt it from the cycle—and is then returned to the earth. The first of these corresponds to the nature of the Homeric underworld of the *Nekuia*, the second to what may be called Orphic-Pythagorean eschatology, such as is found in or implied by such earlier texts as Pindar *Olympian* 2, Aristophanes' *Frogs*, various Platonic myths, Empedocles, and the Gold Leaves found in graves in Crete and southern Italy.<sup>17</sup>

however, was forced to admit that the appearance of Romans in their future rather than their past shapes was a "phantastische Erfindung" ([1957] 46). Norden's explanation in terms of sources was rejected by F. Norwood, "The Tripartite Eschatology of Aeneid 6," CP 49 (1954) 15-26, and by Brooks Otis, "Three Problems in Aeneid 6," TAPA 90 (1957) 165-70 and Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry (Oxford 1963) 281-307, in favor of seeing a psychological or philosophical development within the character of Aeneas; for criticisms of their approach—and of tri-partite eschatology as a whole—see the excellent discussion, to which I owe much, of Solmsen (1972).

<sup>16</sup> On these categories see Norden (1893) 372-89.

17 On the mutual interdependence (and virtual indistinguishability) of the terms "Orphic" and "Pythagorean", particularly in the context of eschatology, see W. Burkert, Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism, trans. E. L. Minar Jr. (Cambridge, Mass. 1972) 125-32 and Graf 91-94; on the importance of such models for the Aeneid see (in addition to Norden [1957] passim) R. J. Quiter, Aeneas und die Sibylle: Die rituellen Motive im sechsten Buch der Aeneis, Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 162 (Königstein/Ts. 1984) 103-11. These beliefs were apparently widespread, in one form or another; they are clearly connected to those of the Orpheotelestai alluded to by Plato, Phaedo 69c and Rep. 364E, and of the owners of the Gold Leaves. On the latter, see the edition and full

Virgil was not the first person to link the Homeric underworld to more sophisticated forms of eschatology; the fifth-century painting of the Nekuia by Polygnotus in the Leschê of the Cnidians at Delphi superimposed some elements of the mystery cult of his native Thasos on the mythology of Homer, 18 and some of the Platonic myths include Homeric coloring within the Orphic-Pythagorean framework. What Virgil does, however, is far more thoroughgoing than any of the available precedents: his underworld has two schemes which interpenetrate one another. The Homeric *Nekuia* provides a narrative framework, as Knauer has shown in convincing detail, for the entire underworld: not only the encounters with the shades of Palinurus, Dido, and Deiphobus, modelled on Odysseus' meetings with Elpenor, Ajax, and Agamemnon, but even the description of Tartarus, the meeting with Anchises, the prophecies of the future and, less clearly, the philosophical explanation of the fate of the soul all find their roots in Homer. 19 At the same time, however, the elaborate geography of the underworld, with fixed places for different classes of soul, the ferry of Charon, the fork in the road between Tartarus to the left and Elysium to the right, the emphasis on judgment, the theory of metempsychosis and purification, all point to a far more developed eschatology with an Orphic-Pythagorean background.<sup>20</sup>

As in the underworld at large, so too in Tartarus the two types of eschatology are not merely juxtaposed, but interpenetrate one another; and, equally striking, the actual punishments and crimes are very different from what we would expect from reading either Homer or a mythological handbook. The Sibyl's account begins with a list of criminals in Tartarus: the Titans (580–81), the Aloidae (582–84), Salmoneus (585–94), and Tityos (595–600). Of these only Tityos is mentioned in the Homeric *Nekuia* (*Od.* 11.576–79);<sup>21</sup> the punishment of the Titans is traditional (cf. *Il.* 14.279, Hesiod, *Theog.* 851),<sup>22</sup> but the presence of the Aloidae in Tartarus is not attested before Virgil,<sup>23</sup> and that of Salmoneus is found before Virgil only in Hesiod's Catalogue of Women (fr. 30.22–23 M-W).<sup>24</sup> But while some of these myths are not widely known, the first real puzzle occurs in the fifth item in the Sibyl's list:

discussion of G. Zuntz, *Persephone* (Oxford 1971) 277-393, supplemented by the important new text from Hipponion with the discussion of M. L. West, "Zum neuen Goldblättchen aus Hipponion," *ZPE* 18 (1975) 229-36.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Polygnotus' painting is described by Pausanias 10.28-31; see Graf 110-12. <sup>19</sup> G. N. Knauer, *Die Aeneis und Homer*, Hypomnemata 7 (Gottingen 1964) 107-

<sup>47.
&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> For general references, see above, note 17. For an analysis of the Orphic-Pythagorean schemes, see especially Dieterich (above, note 12) 150-58, 191-95. The Gold Leaves are particularly relevant for geography; see now M. West (above, note 17) 229-30. David West, *The Bough and the Gate* (Exeter 1987) 12f., is wrong to call such features simply Platonic.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Virgil is here also indebted to Lucretius 3.984-94; see Norden (1957) and Austin ad loc., and below, note 50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> For further references, see Waser in Roscher's Lexikon 5.121-23 s.v. "Tartaros."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Norden (1957) ad loc. cites only *Culex* 234f. and Hyginus, fab. 28; see also Toepffer, *RE* 1.2 (1894) 1591 s.v. "Aloidai."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>Norden says that this passage is the first attestation of Salmoneus, but the fragment of Hesiod was not known to him. Hardie (above, note 2) 183–85 is right to point out Lucretian echoes in this passage, but surely wrong to see its primary purpose as a subversion of Lucretius' attack on the divine origin of the thunderbolt.

Quid memorem Lapithas, Ixiona Pirithoumque? quos super atra silex iam iam lapsura cadentique imminet adsimilis: lucent genialibus altis aurea fulcra toris, epulaeque ante ora paratae regifico luxu; Furiarum maxima iuxta accubat et manibus prohibet contingere mensas, exsurgitque facem attollens atque intonat ore. (601-7)

Here both the names and the punishment are familiar, but the combination is extremely odd. Ixion is normally found on his wheel, Pirithous on his throne, paired with Theseus; while the punishment described is that normally attached to Tantalus (cf. *Od.* 11.582–92). The idiosyncrasies of this account have exercised textual critics, who have variously altered the text in order to make Virgil's Tartarus match our expectations.<sup>25</sup>

The problem is only compounded by what follows. The last group of criminals is thematically associated with the description of Ixion and Pirithous, but it is separated from them by a section on crimes; and it is not even clear where one section ends and the other begins:

Hic, quibus inuisi fratres, dum uita manebat. pulsatusue parens et fraus innexa clienti, aut qui diuitiis soli incubuere repertis nec partem posuere suis (quae maxima turba est), quique ob adulterium caesi, quique arma secuti impia nec ueriti dominorum fallere dextras, inclusi poenam exspectant, ne quaere doceri quam poenam, aut quae forma uiros fortunaue mersit. saxum ingens uoluunt alii, radiisque rotarum districti pendent; sedet aeternumque sedebit infelix Theseus, Phlegyasque miserrimus omnis admonet et magna testatur uoce per umbras: "discite iustitiam moniti et non temnere diuos." uendidit hic auro patriam dominumque potentem imposuit; fixit leges pretio atque refixit; hic thalamum inuasit natae uetitosque hymenaeos: ausi omnes immane nefas ausoque potiti. (608-24)

It is clear that at 608 a section of crimes begins, articulated by the repeated relative pronouns, and continues to 614, where the Sibyl declines to give details of the punishments. But the next line and a half (616–17) pose a puzzle: the vague alii suggests that these may be the punishments meted out to the crimes listed above, but both the fact that these punishments are very familiar from mythology and the fact that named mythological figures follow without any clear break suggest that we are in a second part of the mythological Tartarus.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> For various drastic textual alterations, and for a defense of the transmitted text, see Norden (1957) and Austin ad loc.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> It is clear that in this instance Virgil not only has rearranged the punishments, but has also blurred the distinction between the two primary categories of mythical criminals and human crimes. Norden is inconsistent in his interpretation of 616–17; see (1957) 279 and 290. Austin ad loc. and Solmsen (1968) 12 see the verses as describing punishments for human crimes modelled on mythological precedents, while Dieterich (above, note 12) 203 shows that the use of

Even stranger is the fact that the punishments of rolling a rock and hanging on a wheel, made plural here, are normally attached to specific individuals, Sisyphus and Ixion—but although Sisyphus is not named in Virgil's Tartarus, Ixion has been given a different punishment in line 601.

Nor do the problems of the mythological Tartarus end here. Earlier texts describe Theseus sitting permanently in Tartarus, normally in the company of Pirithous; but although the punishment is attested as early as the fifth century, there are few references to it, if any, between then and Virgil's time. But earlier in Book 6, when Aeneas justifies to the Sibyl his desire to descend to the underworld and return, he cites Theseus as a precedent:

quid Thesea magnum, quid memorem Alciden? et mi genus ab Ioue summo est. (123-24)

The contradiction between the two passages has long been recognized. Soon after Virgil's death it received the attention of the Augustan critic C. Julius Hyginus, who listed it among the errors that Virgil would have removed from the Aeneid had he lived (Gellius 10.16.11). It is clear that Aeneas' version at 6.123 is rhetorically motivated by the context: he desires to give an effective justification for his request, and therefore twists the myth in order to make it a precedent for his own undertaking.<sup>27</sup> But the version given in the Sibyl's description of Tartarus is far less well attested in literature than the story of Theseus' return, aided by Heracles, and thus the presence of Theseus in Tartarus is an anomaly of a piece with the rest.<sup>28</sup>

The last criminal in this series, Phlegyas, is equally puzzling. Neither his crime (the burning of the temple at Delphi) nor his punishment is given here; his presence in Tartarus is not previously attested; and the warning that he gives is clearly modelled on that given by Ixion in Pindar, P. 2.24, to requite good deeds in kind:29

τὸν εὐεργέταν ἀγαναῖς ἀμοιβαῖς ἐποιχομένους τίνεσθαι.

the wheel was a punishment in real life; Radermacher (above, note 11) also provides eschatological parallels unconnected with Ixion. But that is not the case with rock-rolling, and it is the precedent of Ixion that would first come to the

reader's mind.

27 See Austin ad loc.

28 Neither version of the story is given by Od. 11.631 (see Dieterich [above, note 12] 92 n. 7 against Norden [1893] 392), or by Propertius 2.1.37. In sources earlier than Virgil, Theseus appeared in the underworld in Polygnotus' painting in Delphi and in a fragment of Panyassis (both preserved by Pausanias 10.29.9); so also Apollodorus 2.124. For the sources, see Dieterich 91-93 and Herter, RE Suppl. 13 (1973) 1177-82 s.v. "Theseus." Norden explained the difference between 6.122 and 617 as the result of the use of different sources, with polemical emphasis in the manner of the Alexandrians on the more unusual version at 617. His suggestion of an "Orphic" source for 6.122 gains credibility from his connection of 6.120, "Threicia fretus cithara," with Arg. Orph. 42, ημετέρη πίσυνος κιθάρη. The only other attempt (to my mind, unconvincing) to give a single explanation for all these anomalies is that of A. J. Bell, The Latin Dual and Poetic Diction (Oxford 1923) 13-15, who sees the peculiarities as examples of metonymy and synecdoche.

<sup>29</sup> Norden (1893) 392-93 rightly points out that Plato twice (Gorg. 525c, Rep. 10.616A) draws attention to the paradigmatic quality of all the criminals in

Tartarus.

In a sense, therefore, Ixion appears three times in Virgil's Tartarus: he is named as undergoing the punishment normally given to Tantalus; his own most familiar punishment is awarded to unnamed criminals; and his warning is given to Phlegyas. And of the three punishments described in the *Nekuia*, only one, that of Tityos, appears in Virgil unaltered.

Furthermore, just as the traditional criminals are separated from their traditional punishments in the mythological portions of Tartarus, so too are the traditional groups of crimes in the philosophical portions illogically separated from one another.<sup>30</sup> It was normal to group these crimes by type: sexual crimes, crimes of greed, violations of *xenia* and family, and the like. Here greed is found both in lines 610–11 and in lines 621–22; sexual crimes are found in 612 and 623, and political crimes or treachery in 612–13 and 621–22. The categories, of course, overlap; but the arrangement is in any case abnormal.

There is, however, one further type of dislocation in Virgil's Tartarus, and one which is of great importance for the interpretation of the underworld as a whole. While all revelation texts share with Virgil an orientation towards the specific types of crime mentioned above, Virgil gives the crimes he lists a specifically Roman color.<sup>31</sup> In a general sense, this is a normal procedure in Roman literary adaptations of Greek sources. While *patraloia* is a standard crime in the apocalyptic tradition, the phrase *pulsatus parens* seems to allude to a law of Servius Tullius.<sup>32</sup> Norden thought that the substitution of hatred between brothers for actual fratricide reflected Roman concerns; *fraus innexa clienti* is Roman in thought and expression, and there may be similar overtones in the limitation of the description of greed to keeping money away from one's family.<sup>33</sup>

Virgil's procedure here, however, goes well beyond giving a vague Roman color to his text; he takes pains to identify some of the crimes with specific events and individuals. The description of slave revolt (612–13), as Servius saw, alludes to the war between Octavian and Sextus Pompeius, which was described by Augustus himself in the *Res Gestae* as a slave war.<sup>34</sup> And when Virgil begins the second section of crimes in lines 621–22, he adapts two verses from the poem *De Morte* of his good friend and later executor Varius (fr. 1 Morel):

Vendidit hic Latium populis agrosque Quiritum eripuit; fixit leges pretio atque refixit.

Varius had used these lines to describe the behavior of Mark Antony, but Virgil's adaptation seems to allude to both Antony and the younger Curio, who supported Julius Caesar in 50–49 under the persuasion of a large bribe.<sup>35</sup> Thus

<sup>30</sup> See Setaioli, "Nuove osservazioni" (above, note 13) 220–24.

<sup>31</sup> See Norden (1893) 390.

<sup>32</sup> See Norden (1957) 288 and, more fully, (1893) 391. The law is preserved in Festus 260.9-11 Lindsay.

<sup>33</sup> See Norden (1957) 293, 288 and (1893) 391. For the treatment of clients he cites a passage of the Twelve Tables preserved by Servius ad loc. Grimal and others also connect the reference to adultery in 6.612 to the *Lex Iulia de adulteriis*; but the law itself was promulgated after Virgil's death, and adultery as a crime in this context is so frequent as to make any specific reference unlikely.

<sup>34</sup> See Norden (1957) 289, citing *RG* 5.1ff.; see also Grimal 46.

<sup>35</sup> Servius on 6.621 takes the first part of the couplet to refer to Curio, and on 622 applies the second to Antony. Norden ignores Servius' first comment, and

Tartarus has not merely been made Roman, it has been made modern.<sup>36</sup>

The several different types of peculiarity in Virgil's account of Tartarus work together to create a single effect. In the first place, the anomalous versions of traditional legends tend to diminish the authority of the mythological underworld, and that authority is superseded by that of the moralizing versions of Orphic-Pythagorean eschatology. We are given a Tartarus which is not limited to mythic sinners, but has room for all those who violate the universal canons of justice and morality. In the second place, that universal morality is itself given a more specific location in space and time: it applies quite precisely to the citizens of the Roman state, and enforces the morality of Roman law. The underworld is not frozen in the narrative time of the *Aeneid* or of myth. Its burden is historical, and is directed to the concerns the Augustan age.

## II. The Unreality of the Underworld

The version of Tartarus that stands at the center of the Virgilian underworld provides the clearest and most concise illustration of Virgil's techniques and goals in Book 6, but it should not be forgotten that much that is found there is also found in other portions of the underworld. It was noted above not only that two different and mutually incompatible types of eschatology are combined in the description of Tartarus, but also that even the punishments of mythological criminals are disconcertingly unlike the traditional stories. In fact, what Aeneas sees and hears in the underworld is in many details different either from other sources or from the narrative in the first five books of the Aeneid itself. A clear instance of this comes in Aeneas' first major encounter in the underworld, his meeting with Palinurus on the banks of Acheron. At the end of Book 5, the death of Palinurus is described as a kind of sacrifice exacted by Neptune on behalf of the safe arrival of the rest in Italy: "Unum pro multis dabitur caput" (5.815). Accordingly, Somnus comes down in the guise of Phorbas, puts the unwilling and suspicious Palinurus to sleep, and throws him and the helm into the calm sea. When Aeneas appears, he mourns Palinurus as having been too trusting of the elements: "O nimium caelo et pelago confise sereno" (5.870).

takes the whole sentence to refer to Antony, as does M. Wigodsky, Vergil and Early Latin Poetry, Hermes Einzelschriften 24 (Wiesbaden 1972) 103. Austin explicitly rejects the connection with Curio as a tactless attack on Julius Caesar; A. S. Hollis, "L. Varius Rufus, De Morte (frs. 1-4 Morel)," CQ 27 (1977) 188, also rejects it. In fact either half could refer to either man, but it is much more difficult to find a reference to Antony in the first half. When Varius wrote "uendidit hic Latium populis agrosque Quiritum / eripuit," he referred to Antony's grants of citizenship or Latin status and his distributions of land, a suitable subject for criticism. But Virgil's "uendidit hic auro patriam dominumque potentem / imposuit" is harder to understand of Antony. To whom is Antony supposed to have sold his country, and who is the master he imposed? To say that it is Antony himself makes no sense, and to say that it is Octavian would be beyond mere tactlessness. The accusation of selling out is more naturally levelled at Curio; note Lucan's famous line "emere omnes, hic uendidit urbem" (4.824, cited by Austin). The syntax suggests that both halves refer to a single person, but the same is true, with equal difficulty, of lines 616-17.

true, with equal difficulty, of lines 616-17.

36 The use of a highly specific Roman allusion to sharpen the point and provide a historical context is not unique to Virgil; for Catullus' similar use of a speech of Gaius Gracchus, see J. E. G. Zetzel, "Catullus, Ennius, and the Poetics of

Allusion," ICS 8 (1983) 264-65.

When Aeneas meets the shade of Palinurus in the underworld, however, things are very different. It is Aeneas this time, not the narrator, who explains the death of Palinurus as a divine intervention, and claims that his death contravenes an oracle which had promised that he would reach Italy safely (6.341–46); and it is Palinurus who offers a natural cause, a storm, for his accident and offers an account of the fulfilment of the oracle. Not only has no oracle concerning Palinurus ever been mentioned, but the circumstances of Palinurus' death are completely different in the two books. In Book 5, Palinurus' death is supernatural in origin; in Book 6, it is described in purely naturalistic terms. In Book 5, the sea is calm; in Palinurus' speech in Book 6, it is stormy. In Book 5, Aeneas is between Sicily and Italy; in Book 6, the position is described as Libyco cursu (6.338). There is also a basic chronological contradiction. In the narrative, Aeneas reaches Cumae on the morning after Palinurus' death, and proceeds immediately to the Sibyl, presumably descending to the underworld at dawn on the second day. But Palinurus' own account of his death has him swimming for three days and reaching land only on the fourth (6.355–57).<sup>37</sup>

The divergent accounts of Palinurus offer the most striking inconsistency between the upper world and the Virgilian underworld, but there are others. When Aeneas meets Dido, he says that the reports of her death must have been true (6.456–57); but we have heard no reports of her death, and at the beginning of Book 5 it is clear that the Trojans can only guess at what has happened at Carthage. 38 Even more striking is the difference between Deiphobus' description of the last night of Troy (6.509–29) and Aeneas' earlier narrative in Book 2. There we are told that the Greek fleet used a fire signal to alert Sinon to open the horse (2.257-59); Deiphobus says that it was Helen who sent a signal to the Greeks (518–19). His account also contradicts not only the Helen episode of Book 2, but the whole general sense of the final battle of Troy.<sup>39</sup> There are also some minor contradictions in the underworld of generally accepted versions of myth or even history. The metamorphic Caenis/Caeneus, the last in the list of mythical erotica pathemata preceding the appearance of Dido (6.448-49), is given a final transformation from male back to female attested in no other source.<sup>40</sup> In the parallel list of heroes preceding the appearance of Deiphobus, Adrastus is listed as having died in battle (6.480), while all other sources name him as the only one of the Seven who survived the expedition against Thebes.<sup>41</sup> In the Parade of Heroes, Ancus Marcius is described as a popularis (6.816), an attribute normally given to Servius Tullius (the only one of the seven kings not named by Virgil), and not normally applied to Ancus.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> On the contradictions in the story of Palinurus, see R. D. Williams, P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Quintus (Oxford 1960) xxv-xxvii and on 5.827ff. Norden and earlier critics believed that the discrepancies arose from the fact that Book 5 was written after Book 6, and that Virgil never eliminated the contradictions; so too G. Williams 281-82.

<sup>38</sup> The discrepancy may be, as Austin on 6.456 suggests, "a piece of poetic economy," but it is also, I believe, a piece of deliberate mystification.

39 See Norden (1957) on 494-547 and Austin on 518.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> See Norden (1957) on 445ff.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Norden (1957) on 477-93 explains that Virgil must have been using an unusual (Theban) source here; see also Norden (1893) 381-82. Austin on 480 is willing to overlook the difficulty: "But Virgil puts him with his companions, where he ought to be." The problem, however, remains.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> See Austin on 815. Ancus' attribute has been explained in various ways. Grimal 815-16 took it as a positive description, alluding to the connection

These discrepancies between the Virgilian underworld and the world of myth and history as Virgil's readers would know it are normally explained individually—as the result of the incompleteness of the Aeneid, of the use of unfamiliar sources, or of Virgil's tendency to episodic composition—but it is significant that so many such peculiarities occur in a single book. At the very least, it is reasonable to see them as forming a pattern, an attempt on Virgil's part to demonstrate the simple fact of the difference between the underworld and the world above, between the afterlife and this life.<sup>43</sup> At least as important, however, is the demand that these discrepancies place on the reader. In all these instances, Virgil is dealing with problems of historical knowledge and interpretation (using history in a broad sense, to encompass also the legend of Aeneas himself and traditional mythology): and while he insists on the impossibility of complete factual accuracy, he raises those larger questions of truth and causation essential to historical understanding. Who was the real popularis, Ancus or Servius? Was divine intervention or human error the cause of Palinurus' death? How can single events be made significant and coherent? There is a strong suggestion, and an unsettling one, that the interpretation of events sub specie aeternitatis may be strikingly different from our own human and limited understanding.

Just as Virgil makes use of unfamiliar or contradictory versions of myth, history, and the events of the *Aeneid* itself to insist that the reader apply critical intelligence to the facts of his narrative, so too he commands attention to the multiple philosophical and religious frameworks of the underworld; he makes it abundantly clear that, on the one hand, the narrative is not to be taken as literal truth and that, on the other, it is equally impossible to see it as the elaboration of a single philosophy or as a rigidly applied allegory. One of the most familiar, and perplexing, instances of Virgil's procedure comes at the very end of the book. After the end of Anchises' speech, the Sibyl and Aeneas return to the upper world through the Gates of Sleep, and they take the ivory gate through which *falsa insomnia* are sent into the world. The significance of this incident has been widely debated and diversely interpreted: to Norden it was only an indication that they left the underworld before midnight;<sup>44</sup> to others—as to Servius—it has suggested that all that Aeneas has seen is false: "uult autem intellegi falsa esse omnia quae dixit." Otis and others have argued that the

claimed by Caesar to king Ancus. Feeney 10-11, following Badian, connects it to what he calls "a dubious political tradition" of popular agitation in the family of the Marcii. Norden offers no explanation.

<sup>43</sup> For a very different understanding of the difference between the underworld and the real world, see W. R. Johnson, *Darkness Visible* (Berkeley and Los

Angeles 1976) 88–89.

Norden (1957) on 893ff., with summary of earlier interpretations. Although time is not the only meaning of the Gates, it is certainly one of the meanings. Aeneas enters the underworld at dawn (255); at noon the Sibyl pushes Aeneas on (535, 539; note also the pressure of time at 630 acceleremus), and they certainly must depart before midnight (more likely just after sunset, given that they enter at dawn). Despite Austin's doubts (on 893–901) about the timing of true and false dreams, Horace Serm. 1.10.33, "post mediam noctem uisus, cum somnia uera," seems to me quite clear; see also Kiessling-Heinze ad loc.

45 Servius on 6.893, who also gives several other strange and unbelievable interpretations. While Servius' explanation is probably wrong, it cannot be dismissed, as it is by D. West (above, note 20) 8, on the grounds that "Everything he has said is true." West's own Platonizing interpretation (not citing Tarrant),

Gates show that we are to see the entire underworld as a dream.<sup>46</sup> More recently Tarrant has seen the departure through the gate of false dreams as an indication of the illusory nature and false impressions pertaining to man's corporeal existence,<sup>47</sup> and Gotoff as a device to explain Aeneas' later lack of memory of the vision of Rome's future.<sup>48</sup> What is most important, however, is the deliberate polyvalence of Virgil's invention: in strict logic the connotation of "falseness" should apply to Aeneas, who actually passes through the gate (as in Tarrant's interpretation), but readers almost inevitably apply it not to Aeneas himself, but to what he has seen. In some respects, the gates function as an extended form of enallage, a transferred description which applies with slightly different connotations both to Aeneas and to the underworld.<sup>49</sup> We are left with a sense of the unreality of what we have seen.

Equally important, if less widely recognized, are the equivalent indications at the beginning of the catabasis. But here, rather than Platonic overtones, we find allusions to Lucretius and to Epicurean doctrine. As Aeneas and the Sibyl begin their descent, the house of Dis is described as *uacuas* and his kingdom as *inania* (269). The terms make little sense in describing an underworld that is so heavily populated, but they are standard Lucretian terms for void, nothingness, and empty space. Further allusions in the succeeding lines allude to various Lucretian passages in which the existence of the afterlife and of mythical monsters is disproved. And while the underworld which follows these allusions is obviously not a Lucretian one—that would be impossible—their effect is to undercut the literal truth of what is to come, and to alert the reader to the possibility of larger interpretations.

Just as the mythological underworld is uneasily juxtaposed to the eschatological schemes of Orphic-Pythagorean texts, and just as factual inconsistencies and anomalies forbid a simple reading of Book 6, so it is with the philosophical schemes: an Epicurean introduction leads to Pythagorean geography, Stoic cosmogony, and a Platonic scheme of metempsychosis. In part, the reason for this is simply that Virgil does not wish his underworld to represent the beliefs of any single sect or school; in part, it is to discourage simplistic readings and encourage detailed investigation; but in part its function is to allow his eschatology to remain open-ended, to permit the inclusion of Roman history and values

while partially correct, is open to many of the same objections he raises against others.

<sup>46</sup> Otis, "Three Problems" (above, note 15) 173-79, with a summary of other literature; so also more recently A. Thornton, *The Living Universe: Gods and Men in Virgil's "Aeneid"* (Dunedin 1976) 60-69.

<sup>47</sup> Tarrant (above, note 2). Tarrant is one of the few recent critics to recognize that it is Aeneas, not the underworld vision, which passes through the gate of false dreams, and that strictly speaking the "falseness" applies to him alone. Feeney follows and expands on Tarrant's use of Anchises' speech in explaining the gates, and applies a similar argument to the Parade of Heroes.

<sup>48</sup> Gotoff (above, note 2).

<sup>49</sup> Williams's interpretation (46-58) is the only one that takes account of the context in Book 6, and he has many acute observations to which I am indebted. His conclusion, however, that the function of the gate is to make the reader turn back and reread the book (49), is essentially negative and thus unsatisfactory.

<sup>50</sup> On the Lucretian echoes in the opening of the catabasis, see Michels (above, note 11) 135-48, an article supplemented, but not replaced, by such recent studies of the subject as Wigodsky (above, note 35) 132-39 and Hardie (above, note 2) 157-240.

in a mythological frame. The combination of myth, religion, philosophy, and history bears a close resemblance to one of the texts to which Virgil, in the composition of Book 6, was most greatly indebted, Cicero's Somnium Scipionis, in which the Platonic myth of Er is extended and altered to allow a place for Rome in the cosmic order, in which the Roman state acquires a religious and moral importance in the universe at large. And it is the religious aspects of Book 6 that we must now consider.

## III. Religion and Ritual

As a necessary precondition for his descent into the underworld, Aeneas is required by the Sibyl to pluck off from a tree and bring with him as an offering to Proserpina the Golden Bough. That the Bough has been the object of convincing interpretations from a number of different and perhaps mutually incompatible perspectives is in itself merely another instance of the indeterminacy and complexity of the whole book: it is clearly a symbol of crucial importance in understanding the fact of the catabasis itself; it is equally clearly an allusion to the Platonic inspiration of much of the eschatology of what is to follow.<sup>51</sup> But it also has a third significance, in the context of religious ritual and mystery cults, and, like the others, it is one that fits into a larger pattern in the book. Those who wrote about the rituals of Proserpina, according to Servius, asserted that the Golden Bough was quiddam mysticum; and Servius adds that it was not possible to approach the sacra Proserpinae without a raised branch, commenting: "inferos autem subire hoc dicit, sacra celebrare Proserpinae." Aside from the Bough itself, there are two elements in the text which connect the catabasis with mystery religions.<sup>52</sup> Before the descent, Aeneas makes a sacrifice to the

52 D. West (above, note 20) 10–11 connects the Bough with Eleusinian cult with no recognition of the problems involved. A larger connection between Virgil and Eleusis was proposed in the eighteenth century by Bishop Warburton (originally published in *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated on the Principles of a Religious Deist*, 1737–41, which I have not seen). For an attempt to bring Warburton's ideas up to date, see G. Luck, "Vergil and the Mystery Religions," *AJP* 94 (1973) 147–66. It should be noted that Luck (147 n. 2) is wrong to say that Jackson Knight is the only modern scholar to refer to Warburton; see J. Henry, *Aeneidea* 3 (Dublin 1881–89 = Hildesheim 1969) 362–63 on 6.620 and Norden (1893) 384. Luck's view (adapted from Warburton) that

<sup>51</sup> On the Golden Bough, the best discussion of the ritual and religious aspects remains that of Norden (1957) on 6.136ff. For broader interpretations, see particularly R. A. B. Brooks, "Discolor Aura: Reflections on the Golden Bough," AJP 74 (1953) 260-80 and C. Segal, "Aeternum Per Saecula Nomen: The Golden Bough and the Tragedy of History," Arion 4 (1965) 617-57 and 5 (1966) 34-72. Recent surveys of opinion may be found in Clark 185-203 and, more briefly, Austin on 6.138f. The connection made by Merkelbach 86-90 between Aeneas and the King in the Wood at Nemi (followed by Clark 201-3) is improbable at best. It should be noted that both Lyne (above, note 2) 217 n. 1, and D. West (above, note 20) 6-7, offer some gratuitously disparaging remarks on Brooks's article which reflect less on Brooks than on Lyne and West. One interpretation that seems rarely to be mentioned (but see now D. West [above, note 20] 11-12) is that of Agnes Michels, "The Golden Bough of Plato," AJP (1945) 59-63, who connects the phrase with Meleager's description of Plato in AP 4.1.47-48 (Hellenistic Epigrams 3972-73). More than one interpretation of the Bough may be right, and Michels's reading has the virtue of connecting the Bough with the Gates of Sleep.

gods of the underworld, and Hecate appears. The Sibyl then shouts (258) "procul o procul este, profani." The usual appearance of such cries is at the outset of a religious ritual, to warn the uninitiates away;<sup>53</sup> what is most striking here is that it occurs not before the sacrifice, but after; the ritual it announces must be what follows, namely the entry into the underworld itself. What is more, as the Sibyl and Aeneas descend into the underworld, Virgil himself invokes the shades and the gods who rule them:

Di, quibus imperium est animarum, umbraeque silentes et Chaos et Phlegethon, loca nocte tacentia late: sit mihi fas audita loqui, sit numine uestro pandere res alta terra et caligine mersas. (6.264–67)

The phrase sit mihi fas audita loqui, like the order to the uninitiate to depart, clearly suggests that the poet is about to reveal things that should not be revealed; the contents, in other words, of a mystery. Virgil's account, however, is not a representation of any mystery cult, and certainly bears no close resemblance to what actually happened at Eleusis or other mysteries of which we have any knowledge. Nevertheless, revelations of the afterlife were an important part of mysteries, and these elements of the preparation for the catabasis suggest that what follows is a revelation of something secret and important. The fact that Virgil utters a prayer in his own voice, and in the present tense, is also significant. In the first place, it suggests the underworld has a religious meaning; and secondly, it implies that that meaning pertains to the poet himself and to his contemporaries as well as to the legendary narrative of Aeneas. In order to justify that hypothesis, however, it is necessary to consider in some detail the connections between the events of Aeneid 6 and the religious life of Virgil's own time.

At the end of the Parade of Heroes, Anchises offers a ringing declaration of the task of Rome:

Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento (hae tibi erunt artes), pacique imponere morem, parcere subiectis et debellare superbos. (851-53)

Book 6 is a description of initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries is largely speculative, and involves circular reasoning; Graf makes it clear that we must distinguish carefully between Eleusinian and Orphic-Pythagorean mysteries (on which see below), and that we know remarkably little about what happened in the Eleusinian ceremonies. There was certainly no ritual catabasis; see Graf 126-31. On the other hand, it is clear that initiation was a precondition for catabasis in Pindar's account of Heracles; see H. Lloyd-Jones, "Heracles at Eleusis: P. Oxy. 2622 and P.S.I. 1391," Maia 19 (1967) 206-29, with a discussion of the Virgilian underworld (and Virgil's use of a catabasis of Heracles) on 221-26.

53 On 6.258 see Norden (1957) on 6.46, Austin ad loc., Luck (above, note 52) 159, Quiter (above, note 17) 82-84. The closest parallel is Callimachus, Hymn 2.2. Austin recognizes the importance of the position of the line, and rightly equates the underworld rather than the sacrifice with mysteries. Williams 50 is, I think, wrong to emphasize the elements of necromancy in the scene, which derive largely from the Odyssey and from Apollonius, not directly from necromantic practice; on the sacrifice to Hecate, see below, pp. 280-81.

<sup>54</sup> See Luck (above, note 52) 159-62, with unwarranted biographical speculations; also Williams 50, Quiter (above, note 17) 85-88. Austin ad loc. wrongly connects this prayer with the more familiar appeal to the Muses, an interpretation

already rejected by Fletcher ad loc.

Just as the implicit presence of Antony in Tartarus is an anachronism, so too is Anchises' vocative. The person addressed here is not the immediate audience, Aeneas, but *Romane*, the future citizen of the Roman state, and the readers of the *Aeneid* itself.<sup>55</sup> What is striking, aside from the anachronism, is that the same phrase occurs in the opening of the Sibylline oracle produced for the Ludi Saeculares of May 31–June 3, 17 B.C.:<sup>56</sup>

'Αλλ' ὁπότ' ὰν μήκιστος ἴηι χρόνος ἀνθρωποίσιν ζωῆς, εἰς ἐτέων ἐκατὸν δέκα κύκλον ὁδεύσας, μεμνῆσθαι, 'Ρωμαῖε, καὶ εἰ μάλα λήσει ἑαυτόν, μεμνῆσθαι τάδε πάντα... (1-4)

The exhortation  $\mu\epsilon\mu\nu\eta\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ , 'P $\omega\mu\alpha\iota$  of the oracle is precisely the same as Virgil's Romane, memento: "eine Konkordanz, aus der sich interessante Schlüsse ziehen ließen," remarked Norden, but he failed to identify just what those conclusions were.<sup>57</sup>

Given the chronological uncertainties, it is not possible to be certain that Virgil is in fact alluding to precisely this text; indeed, given the fact that the oracle was composed by, or at least under the direction of, a Roman, it would be possible to argue that it was Virgil's phrase that was alluded to by the oracle—if the oracle was not in fact composed much before the Ludi Saeculares took place in 17 B.C. Virgil died two years before the Ludi were performed, but it is completely uncertain when they were planned, or if they were in fact intended to take place some time earlier. In some ways, that does not matter. It is obvious that there was a general sense of the arrival of a new saeculum in this period, and that Virgil was well aware of it, from the time of the Fourth Eclogue to Aeneid 6 itself: when Anchises says of Augustus "aurea condet / saecula" at 6.792–93 it need not refer specifically to the Ludi, but it clearly belongs in that context. Furthermore, an attractive argument suggests that Augustus had

55 Lyne (above, note 2) 214 observes of this passage: "We may, incidentally, see Anchises as speaking outside and beyond the dramatic situation to the 'Roman' of the future; but it is also right in context for him to address Aeneas this way." Scarcely: Aeneas is not, and never will be, a Roman, and that fact is central to the entire Aeneid. There is no parallel in the poem for so striking an anachronism. There is, of course, a contemporary parallel to this solemn form of address in Horace, Odes 3.6.1-2: "Delicta maiorum immeritus lues, Romane, donec templa refeceris..." Romane in this passage of Horace is scarcely surprising: it is addressed by a Roman to his contemporaries and fellow-citizens; so too with all the other uses of this vocative. For other parallels see Austin ad loc.

56The text is preserved by Phlegon of Tralles, Peri Makrobiôn, FGrH 257 F

56The text is preserved by Phlegon of Tralles, *Peri Makrobiôn*, *FGrH* 257 F 37.5.4, and by Zosimus 2.6. It may conveniently be consulted in the introduction to the Kiessling-Heinze commentary on Horace, *Carm. Saec.*, along with relevant parts of the inscription recording the Ludi of 17 (= *ILS* 5050). That the oracle is not an acrostic is puzzling, and may indicate either revision or a change in Sibylline practice after 83 B.C.; for discussion see H. Diels, *Sibyllinische Blätter* (Berlin 1890) 15, 25–26, and Pease on Cicero, *Div.* 2.111. See also the discussion of Rzach, *RE* 2A.2 (1923) 2113–14.

57 Norden (1957) ad loc., who also thought that there might be an Ennian model. The parallel between Virgil and the oracle is also noted by Austin ad loc. and by Kiessling-Heinze on *Odes* 3.6.2. Merkelbach 97 n. 66, records the parallel, but because he assumed that the oracle was only composed for the actual celebration in 17, he believed that this must have been an older formula.

58 On the general sense of the new *saeculum*, see particularly Nilsson, RE 1A.2 (1920) 1707-10 s.v. "Saeculares ludi"; on Aen. 6.792-93, see Grimal 54,

originally intended to celebrate the Ludi not in 17 but in 23, the *terminus post quem* for the completion of *Aeneid* 6.<sup>59</sup> There is no ancient testimony for this, and the chronological argument is ambiguous;<sup>60</sup> but it would be surprising if Augustus had not had the Ludi in mind for some time before the ritual was actually performed.

There is further evidence that Virgil had the new *saeculum* in mind in the composition of Book 6. At the beginning of the book, Aeneas makes a vow in

return for the Sibyl's assistance:<sup>61</sup>

Tum Phoebo et Triuiae solido de marmore templum instituam festosque dies de nomine Phoebi. te quoque magna manent regnis penetralia nostris: hic ego namque tuas sortis arcanaque fata dicta meae genti ponam, lectosque sacrabo, alma, uiros. (69–74)

The first two lines of the vow might allude to several different temples or festivals, but the remaining lines of the vow can refer only to the establishment of the board *sacris faciundis*—two men originally, fifteen in the Augustan period—to look after the Libri Sibyllini, the collection of oracles allegedly supplied by the Cumaean Sibyl herself. The proof that the period referred to is the 20s B.C., moreover, is readily available: before the dedication of the temple of Palatine Apollo on October 9, 28 B.C., the Libri Sibyllini had been kept in the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline, and they were transferred to the new temple of Apollo by Augustus himself.<sup>62</sup> And, to the best of our knowledge, the Libri were formally consulted only once in this period, when Ateius Capito produced the oracle cited above, prescribing the form for the Ludi Saeculares. The temple and the festival are thus securely identified as well: the temple is that of Palatine Apollo, the festival is the Ludi Saeculares themselves.

It is also important, in this context, to recognize the peculiarity of the role and presence of the Cumaean Sibyl herself. In previous versions of the legend of Aeneas, there is no reason to believe that he ever encountered this Sibyl.<sup>63</sup> Tibullus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus report his meeting with Sibyls at Troy and at Erythrae;<sup>64</sup> Naevius seems to have described an encounter with the Cimmerian Sibyl near Avernus, who was quite distinct (and recognized by Varro

Merkelbach 90-91, and further references in Austin ad loc. The last genuine Ludi Saeculares had been celebrated in 146 and so were long overdue in the 20s.

<sup>59</sup> So, most recently, Merkelbach 90-97.

<sup>60</sup> For a clear statement of the evidence and arguments, see Nilsson, *RE* 1A.2 (1920) 1710–12, who rejects the idea of a celebration planned earlier. See also G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer* (Munich 1912<sup>2</sup>) 430–32.

<sup>61</sup> For discussion, see Norden (1957) and Austin ad loc.

62 See Norden (1957) ad loc.; Grimal 53; Merkelbach 83 n. 2.

63 Norden (1957) on 83-97, p. 148-49, and Merkelbach 84-86, among others accept that the encounter was traditional, but Waszink's arguments are completely

convincing.

64 Tibullus 2.5; D. Hal. 1.55. On Tibullus see Waszink 43-49. I will not deal here with the larger question of the relationship between Tibullus 2.5 and Aeneid 6. The story of a prophecy to Aeneas in Troy about the future of Rome may derive from Cassandra's prophecy in Lycophron 1273-80, and is ultimately dependent on the mysterious utterance of Poseidon in *Iliad* 20.307-8; see Waszink 51-53.

to be so) from the Cumaean Sibyl.<sup>65</sup> The Cimmerian Sibyl was associated with an oracle of the dead, and the Naevian scene was presumably modelled on the Homeric *Nekuia*;<sup>66</sup> the Asian Sibyls may have given prophecies about the future of Rome. It was Virgil who combined these two traditional legends and attached them to the Sibyl of Cumae, thus giving her two completely incompatible roles, as priestess of Cumaean Apollo and of Diana-Hecate at Avernus, as prophet and as necromancer, connected to both celestial and infernal cults.<sup>67</sup> The two are formally incompatible in terms of Roman religious practice and in terms of the facts concerning the cults of Cumae and Avernus.

In a sense, this doubling of the roles of the Sibyl is parallel to the doubleness of the underworld itself in the Aeneid, as both mythical and religious, as concerning both the time of Aeneas and the present day of Rome. But perhaps even more important is the fact that the doubling can be seen as a reflection of Augustus' reforms of the Ludi Saeculares themselves. The ceremony performed by Augustus in 17 is remarkably well documented, both in the oracle and in the inscription recording the actual performance of the rituals.<sup>68</sup> On the three successive nights of May 31-June 2, there were sacrifices of black female lambs and goats to the Moerae, of ritual cakes of three kinds to the Eilythuiae, and of a pregnant sow to Terra mater; on the three days following (June 1–June 3), there were sacrifices of white bulls to Jupiter, white cows to Juno, and the same ritual cakes to Apollo and Diana. All sacrifices were performed Achiuo ritu;69 the nocturnal sacrifices took place in the Campus Martius at the so-called Tarentum, and the daytime sacrifices took place on the Capitol and the Palatine. This was by no means the same ritual as had been performed at previous celebrations of the Ludi: then, the rite had consisted only of nocturnal sacrifices at the Tarentum to Dis and Proserpina alone, on three successive nights. 70 What is more, the nature and purpose of the ceremony itself were drastically altered by Augustus: the earlier form had been a ritual of expiation for the past, a purificatory offering to the gods of the underworld. The new form was an offering to the celestial divinities and to the gods of fate and childbirth, and the accompanying prayer was not one of expiation, but one of hope for future assistance.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Naevius' Cimmerian Sibyl (fr. 18 Morel = fr. 12 Strzelecki), generally combined with the reference to a Sibyl at "Cimbario" in *Origo Gentis Romanae* 10; see Waszink 54-55.
66 On the related problems of the Cimmerian Sibyl and the nature of the oracle

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> On the related problems of the Cimmerian Sibyl and the nature of the oracle at Avernus, see the discussions of Waszink 55–56, Austin 56–58 with full bibliography and also C. Hardie's appendix in Austin 279–86, and Clark 204–11. On the Cimmerian Sibyl see also Rzach, *RE* 2A.2 (1923) 2095–96.

<sup>67</sup> So Waszink 57-58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> On the ritual of 17 B.C. see the lucid exposition, following Mommsen, of E. Fraenkel, *Horace* (Oxford 1957) 365-68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> The Achieus ritus is explicitly mentioned only in connection with the first sacrifice, to the Moerae (ILS 5050, line 91), but is presumably used for all the sacrifices. See Fraenkel (above, note 68) 368.

<sup>70</sup> For the evidence concerning the earlier form of the Ludi, see Wissowa (above, note 60) 309-10 and Merkelbach 94-95. The most important texts are Varro fr. 70 Funaioli (Censorinus, *De die natali* 17.8) and Festus 440.13-28 and 478.15-21 Lindsay, s. vv. Saeculares ludi and Terentum.

71 Note the opening prayer to the Moerae (ILS 5050. 92ff.); for the difference in

<sup>11</sup> Note the opening prayer to the Moerae (*ILS* 5050, 92ff.); for the difference in the purposes of the rites, see Wissowa (above, note 60) 74–76 and Fraenkel (above, note 68) 366.

With these rituals in mind, it is worth looking closely at the sacrifice which Aeneas and the Sibyl perform before entering the underworld (6.243–54). Both that sacrifice and those of the original Ludi (and half those of the reformed Ludi) took place at night, and were performed Achiuo ritu;<sup>72</sup> they also both took place at the entrance to the underworld, for that is what the Tarentum was. The first sacrifice in the Aeneid is performed by the Sibyl, who offers four black bullocks to Hecate; Aeneas then sacrifices a female black lamb to Night and Earth (described in periphrasis as the mother of the Eumenides and her sister), a sterile cow to Proserpina, and a bull (burned whole) to Dis.

The ritual performed by Aeneas and the Sibyl is obviously not identical to that performed for either the old or the new Ludi Saeculares, but it is possible to disentangle a number of motifs. In the first place, the sacrifice to Hecate, while reasonable in itself—being offered by a priestess of Hecate before a descent to the underworld—leads to an epiphany of the goddess which has no function in a catabasis; it belongs instead to magic and necromancy.<sup>73</sup> Its literary source is in Apollonius 3.1199–1211, where Jason sacrifices a female lamb at night to Hecate, who duly appears accompanied by the same howling of dogs as occurs in the Aeneid. Norden emphasized this aspect of Aeneas' sacrifice: but while necromancy is an element here—as it is in Odysseus' equivalent sacrifice in Odvssey 11—there are major differences. Not only does the sacrifice in the Aeneid take place on an altar rather than over a necromantic bothros, but both the sacrificial victims and the deities honored are much more varied.<sup>74</sup> In particular, one must ask why Aeneas sacrifices to Dis and to Earth.

It is here that similarities to the Ludi Saeculares are significant. The black lamb which Aeneas sacrifices to Night and Earth may reflect the sacrifice of black lambs and goats to the Mocrae, and the fact that Night in the Aeneid is called the mother of the Eumenides draws the two closer together. And, although the same victim is not used, there is a sacrifice to Earth in both the reformed Ludi and the Aeneid. Equally significant is the sacrifice to Dis. As noted above, the old form of the Ludi Saeculares was a sacrifice to Dis and Proserpina alone, and Aeneas sacrifices to both of them. It is of some significance that, in this period, the Ludi Sacculares were the only Roman ceremony devoted to these divinities.75

It has been suggested by Merkelbach that the catabasis of Aeneid 6 is somehow an aetion for the Ludi Saeculares of Augustus, 76 but that is far too narrow an interpretation of the religious aspects of the book. In the first place, even the connections with the Ludi are not entirely directed to the Augustan form of that ritual: some point to either the old or the new form, some to the new, and some very explicitly to the old. Indeed, the very fact of the descent to the underworld is far closer in spirit to the old, expiatory ritual of the dead than

<sup>72</sup> These features are not particularly striking, as a nocturnal sacrifice is obviously appropriate in both cases, and the use of the Achieus ritus was normal in a ritual ordained by the Sibyl; see Norden (1957) 202.

<sup>73</sup> So Norden (1957) 199 and Williams 50.

<sup>74</sup> Norden cited as parallel to Aeneas' sacrifice that of Menippus in Lucian, Menippus 9, but the collection of divinities there is quite different. It should be noted that the sterile cow which Aeneas sacrifices to Proserpina is based on Odyssey 10.522, the sacrifice Odysseus is instructed to make after his safe return from the underworld.

See Wissowa (above, note 60) 309-13.

<sup>76</sup> See Merkelbach 97. His analysis of the sacrifices (94-95) is too general to be useful.

to the new celebration of the Palatine divinities and the future. But even more important is the fact that Virgil associates the revelatory manner of a personal mystery cult with the civic and public observances of the Ludi. But if the underworld is a revelation for Rome, we must, finally, consider just what it is that is revealed.

#### IV. Romane, memento

The culmination of Aeneas' visit to the underworld is Anchises' revelation to him of the future of Rome, the parade of heroes describing the great figures among Aeneas' future descendants.<sup>77</sup> It is an exhortation to greatness—as Anchises' famous words quoted above make clear—and yet there are aspects of Anchises' speech that have always been troubling: references to the Gracchi, to the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, to the bitter decision of the first Brutus to execute his own sons (with its implicit allusion to Caesar's assassin), and, above all, the elegiac closure with its moving reference to the untimely death in 23 of Augustus' chosen heir, the young Marcellus. Most recently, all this has been seen in the light of the contrast between Anchises' speech on metempsychosis, in which mortal aspirations are revealed as unimportant, and the emphasis on gloria in Rome and in the Parade of Heroes itself:<sup>78</sup>

The personal aims and sufferings of the politicians on view are put into a disconcerting perspective once we have been invited to see them as characters in a Platonic myth, once we have been reminded of the moral exhortations for which Plato's myths were a vehicle, turning us away from the vanity of this world, and especially from the vain, hollow harshness of public life.

In fact, it is precisely the flaws pertaining to mortal existence—"hinc metuunt cupiuntque, dolent gaudentque" (6.733)—which are responsible for some of the failures of the figures described in the Parade of Heroes. Ancus is nimium gaudens popularibus auris (816); the elder Brutus is overcome by laudum immensa cupido (823). In perfect accord with Anchises' explanation of the nature of human life, the Romans to come are no more, and no less, than human beings. And, if we extrapolate ahead to a new cycle of palingenesis, they too are likely to have to undergo the same purifications or punishments necessary for all mortals. There is no grand disjunction here between pathos and glory, or between Platonic myth and Roman public life; not even Plato succeeded in accommodating his myths to the functioning of the real world. Virgil is neither a panegyrist nor a philosopher; he is, as Clausen saw, "his country's truest historian."

<sup>77</sup> On the Parade of Heroes see most recently Feeney, with references to earlier literature.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Feeney 16.

<sup>79</sup> It will be apparent that I diverge greatly from Feeney in the interpretation of the Parade of Heroes, which he sees as far more negative and paradoxical than I do. Many of his less convincing observations derive from his comparisons between Virgil and Lucan, but it is a mistake to interpret a middle-aged Augustan through an adolescent revolutionary of the Neronian age.

80 W. V. Clausen, "An Interpretation of the Aeneid," HSCP 68 (1964) 146. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> W. V. Clausen, "An Interpretation of the *Aeneid*," *HSCP* 68 (1964) 146. The present study owes much more to Clausen's views than this single reference to his article would suggest.

But relevance to contemporary Rome is not by any means limited to the final, grand speech of Anchises, and many of the peculiarities of the Virgilian underworld examined above can now be explained somewhat more satisfactorily. Most obviously relevant is the Romanization of Tartarus. In the first place, the oblique references to future Romans anticipate the Parade of Heroes by implicitly including in what is purportedly the past figures who will not, at the dramatic date of Aeneas' descent, exist for a thousand years. In that respect, the anachronism of Tartarus is of a piece with the present tense of Virgil's prayer at the opening and with the allusion to the death of Marcellus at the end. The proleptic vision of recent Roman history points ahead to Virgil's own day. In the second place, it is worth noting that the idea of including specifically Roman crimes—those, for instance, of Sextus Pompeius, of Antony, and probably of Curio—in the Tartarus which the Sibyl had seen in her youth, of incorporating the language of Roman law in a scene the dramatic date of which is well before the foundation of Rome itself, offers a remarkably grim vision of predestination: Antony, a good millennium before his birth, is paying the penalty for crimes which he has obviously not yet committed and which are, technically, not yet even crimes. Even if one takes this passage in a slightly weaker sense, it is clear that Tartarus has been prepared for criminals such as Antony well before the existence of the society in which he lived.81

In fact, one of the most important effects of Virgil's construction of the underworld is its stress on human reponsibility for human actions and on absolute justice. Well before we learn about Tartarus, which applies the moral values of the Orphic-Pythagorean afterlife to the Roman world that is to come, this emphasis is apparent. It is evident in the very first encounter of Aeneas with the soul of Palinurus; in the narrative of Book 5, he had been killed by a god; in the underworld, he states explicitly that no god was responsible. There is only a natural cause for a natural event. In the area near Acheron, as in Tartarus, there is a judge dispensing justice (430–33), correcting the false verdicts of the world above. As is not the case in life, in death justice is true and unchanging. In Tartarus, no Heracles appears to rescue Theseus from his deserved punishment: he is there, and he will be there forever. One of the results of Virgil's combination of mythological and moral visions of the afterlife is to introduce into even the most Homeric sections an emphasis foreign to the Nekuia on rules, punishment, and justice. 82 In a sense, Virgil's mythology is demythologized. There are no miraculous interventions, there is no divine vengeance; although there is a divine order which ensures ultimate justice, humans are left to make their own decisions—and to live for all time with the results. It is not without cause that Phlegyas, in Tartarus, addresses his warning to all men:

Discite iustitiam moniti et non temnere diuos. (620)

Although Orphic-Pythagorean texts in general share an emphasis on proper morality and avoidance of crime, the emphasis on the justice of posthumous retribution is Virgil's own. In an important sense, too, the emphasis on justice

Note particularly the Sibyl's command to Palinurus at 6.376: "Desine fata deum flecti sperare precando," and "fas obstat" at 437.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> There is a similarly pointed anachronism in Book 8, where Vulcan makes Cato a judge and Catiline a criminal in the underworld (8.668–70). The effect is not quite so striking, however, as Vulcan's shield is prophetic, not set in the mythological past.

also entails an emphasis on admonition and on memory. The decades before Virgil wrote had witnessed events which many of the participants, not least Augustus himself, would rather have forgotten: civil war, treachery, murder, proscription. In the underworld which Virgil created, such deeds are not forgotten: the crimes and, implicitly, the criminals have their place allotted already, while Minos is correcting the verdicts of those unjustly condemned on earth. Humans may choose to forget, but divine justice does not. It is perhaps also worth recalling that in Cicero's *De Republica*, through the Dream of Scipio one of the primary inspirations of Book 6, it is argued that a state—the Roman state in particular—can only survive if it embodies the principles of divine law.<sup>83</sup>

It is in this context that Virgil's evocation of both the old and the new forms of the Ludi Saeculares acquires its fullest force. When Augustus reformed the ritual, he eliminated the expiation of past faults in favor of prayers for future success. Virgil, as we have seen, acknowledges the importance of the new form, but, as a historian and a poet, he places equal emphasis on the old. The coming of the new saeculum pervades Book 6; not, as has recently been suggested, in a transcendent vision of a Roman ideal set in a generalized world of the spirit, but as the recreation of a precise moment—the end of one age and the beginning of another—in its historical and moral context. The coming of the new saeculum does not permit forgetting the old; past crimes as well as past glories remain as warning and precept.

Visions of the afterlife generally have an admonitory function, and Virgil's is no exception. It is something to be seen and not forgotten, with lessons for all readers. Before the souls of the future Romans are permitted to take on their future lives, they are required to drink from Lethe and forget their past existences; but when the initiated carried magical gold leaves into the underworld, they drank not from the spring of Lethe, but from the spring of Memory. Like the initiates, and like Plato's Er, Aeneas and the readers of the poem are allowed to return to the world of the living without being forced to forget what has been seen. What the underworld supplies for the new age of Augustus, above all else, is the memory of justice.

85 See most recently M. West (above, note 17) 229-30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> See particularly Rep. 3.34. For a discussion of the context of this fragment, see E. Heck, Die Bezeugung von Ciceros Schrift De re publica, Spudasmata 4 (Hildesheim 1966) 139-40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> So Helen Bacon, "The Aeneid as a Drama of Election," TAPA 116 (1986) 305-34, at 312. On Virgil's attitude to transcendence, see also Johnson (above, note 43) 89-90.