EMOTIONS BETWEEN GREECE AND ROME

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The cover image shows the head of Laocoön from the sculpture of Laocoön and his sons. Marble, copy after a Hellenistic original from *c.* 200 BC. Found in the Baths of Trajan in 1506. Vatican Museums Inv. 1059, Inv. 1064, and Inv. 1067.
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EMOTIONS AND MEMORY IN VIRGIL'S AENEID*

ALESSANDRO SCHIESARO

I

Emotions and memory – μῆνιν ἄειδε – send off the whole of Western literature on its journey, and the interaction between emotions, memory, and narration lies at the heart of epic. No other genre is as programmatically rooted in the workings and function of memory, and Roman epic poets are eloquent in their claims that *memorare* is both the main epistemic foundation and ultimate objective of their song. In so far as (epic) memory is constructed through narratives, in a process which mirrors the construction of individual memory, it is equally inflected at all stages by the emotions and choices of the remembering subject(s). As personal memories assume their shape in narrative form, so literary narratives partake of the mechanisms of selection, repression, and intermittent activation which characterize emotional memory in individuals.[1]

Much interesting work has been and is being done on how the *Aeneid* forges a collective Roman memory. There is still mileage in further exploring how a collective historical memory can be shaped in and through this poem, especially given the increasing focus on the degree of creativity and originality with which Virgil collects, selects, organizes, or indeed creates significant details of a supposedly factual past. In this paper, however, I will focus on how emotions shape memories within the action of the poem, and how the resulting sense of constructedness reflects on the complexities of the epic project.[2]

The literary critic's awareness of the interaction between (historical) 'truth' and the emotional construction of memories finds a direct correlate in the shared consensus among philosophers and psychologists on the constructivist nature of memory.[3] Freud

* I am grateful to Douglas Cairns and Laurel Fulkerson for their invitation to the Langford Seminar and their comments in Tallahassee and afterwards. Thanks are also due to seminar's speakers and the public for a very stimulating discussion. An earlier draft of this paper, with a somewhat different focus, was presented at Bochum in 2010 in an interdisciplinary workshop organized by Karl Galinsky, whom I thank together with the other participants for another engaging debate. I am grateful to Elena Giusti and Victoria Rimell for their comments.

[1] On the productive exchange between narrative theory and the study of memory see among others J. Bruner, 'The narrative construction of reality', *Critical Inquiry* 18 (1991) 1-21; U. Neisser and R. Fivush, ed., *The remembering self. Construction and accuracy in the self-narrative* (Cambridge 1994). The journal *Narrative Inquiry* hosts several papers on related issues.

[2] N. Berlin, 'War and remembrance: *Aeneid* 12.554-60 and Aeneas' memory of Troy', *AJPh* 119 (1998) 11-41, is an excellent treatment of the role of constructed memory in the *Aeneid.* At the time of submission I had not yet seen A. M. Seider's excellent *Memory in Vergil's* Aeneid (Cambridge 2013), which I have therefore been unable to take into account.

[3] A related issue on which much recent work has been done is the role and nature of intertextuality in historiography, and the interplay between historical facts on the one hand and (we might say) 'remembered facts' as described by historiographical sources and subsequently alluded to by other historical narratives on the other: see especially E. O'Gorman, 'Intertextuality and historiography',

paved the way for an understanding of the creative role of forgetting and repressing perturbing memories, and for promoting a view of memory as a creative act, subject to emotional manipulation and tendentiousness. In his most enlightening essay on this topic, *Project for a scientific psychology*, emotion and memory form 'a functionally unified system'.[4] Freud also suggested that the working mechanisms of social and personal memory are closely comparable. Indeed, as he wrote in *A case of obsessional neurosis* (*The Rat Man*), the process through which childhood memories are elaborated and shaped at a later stage 'involves a complicated process of remodelling, analogous in every way to the process by which a nation constructs legends about its early history'.[5]

II

I take as my cue for exploring the intersection and interaction between emotion, memory, and representation in the *Aeneid* one of the most complex and debated passages of the whole poem, Aeneas' viewing of the temple frieze at Carthage.[6] These images stage, to borrow from Giulio Camillo's famous endeavour, a veritable 'theatre of memory', both a formidable set of props for the activation of memory and a set of ideological options *vis à vis* which Aeneas is forced to take a stance. These pictures are presented as fragmentary and temporally suspended – in spite of *ex ordine* there is no evidence of a linear narrative[7] – and

in *The Cambridge companion to the Roman historians*, ed. A. Feldherr (Cambridge 2009) 231-42; C. Damon 'Déja vu or déja lu? history as intertext', *PLLS* 14 (2010) 375-88; J. D. Chaplin, 'Alluding to reality: toward a typology of historiographical intertextuality', *Histos Working Papers* (2013.01) 1-24; C. Pelling, 'Intertextuality, plausibility, and interpretation', *Histos* 7 (2013) 1-20. A complex case study involving a poetic text is deftly analyzed by L. D. Ginsberg, 'Wars more than civil: memories of Pompey and Caesar in the *Octavia*', *AJPh* 134 (2013) 637-74.

[4] A. H. Modell, 'Emotional memory, metaphor, and meaning', *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* 25 (2005) 555-68 (559). Modell, drawing on recent developments in both psychoanalytic theory and neuro-science, argues for the importance of this model, which Freud subsequently discarded in favour of instinct theory. For a psychoanalytic perspective on the debate about false and recovered memories see M. Billig, *Freudian repression. Conversation creating the unconscious* (Cambridge 1999).

[5] *SE* 4: 206.

[6] Bibliography on this episode is massive. W. Polleichtner, *Emotional questions. Vergil, the emotions, and the transformation of epic poetry* (Trier 2009) 159-91 offers an insightful reading focused on Aeneas' emotions and discusses in detail previous contributions, among which I single out for the purpose of this paper D. Clay, 'The archaeology of the temple of Juno in Carthage', *CPh* 83 (1988) 195-205; A. Barchiesi, 'Rappresentazioni del dolore e interpretazione dell'*Eneide*', *A&A* 40 (1994) 109-24 (Engl. transl. in *Virgil: critical assessments of classical authors*, ed. Ph. Hardie, 4 vols. (London 1999), III 324-44, from which I quote); M. C. J. Putnam, 'Dido's murals and Virgilian *ekphrasis*', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 98 (1998) 243-75 (now in M. C. J. Putnam, *Virgil's epic designs.* Ekphrasis *in the* Aeneid (New Haven and London 1998) 23-54. I am also indebted to E. J. Bellamy, *Translations of power. Narcissism and the unconscious in epic history* (Ithaca and London 1992) 60-69, a brilliant treatment of the episode as a 'disturbance of memory', and to D. Quint, *Epic and empire. Politics and generic form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton 1993) 50-96 on repetition in the *Aeneid.*

[7] Line 1.456: see most recently M. Squire, *The* Iliad *in a nutshell. Visualizing epic on the* Tabulae Iliacae (Oxford 2011) 156 and n. 82.

thus, as Freud will point out when discussing similar issues in connection with photos, such images work especially well as catalysts for emotions.[8] This scattering of memories and emotions is an accurate reflection of the overall state in which Aeneas, his fellow Trojans, and the material mementoes of their past stand after the storm: *rari nantes* amidst the floating debris of their Trojan past (1.118-19).

At least two important general features of the episode must be mentioned. Firstly, what we read is a partial description of fragmentary images, of isolated tableaux which we perceive through distinct layers of subjective organization – the artist's, Aeneas', and the narrator's. Secondly, because of this structural lack of integrity and linearity, these images are snapshots which are not so much frozen, as suspended in time. The lack, or at least the weakness, of the linear links connecting these images to each other not only creates a space for alternative and competing interpretations, but also for a coexistence of past, present, and even future in the perception of the viewer.[9]

Of the many issues raised by this section of the poem the most prominent one is connected with the ideological implications of the paintings. Aeneas and the narrator promote a moving, indeed consolatory interpretation: that fame of their glorious, if ultimately unsuccessful, military prowess has reached as far as Carthage; that the Carthaginians are evidently aware of the Trojans' miserable fate; and that as a consequence they will offer help to the exiles. The authorial intervention at 450-52 encourages readers to share Aeneas' relief at the unforeseen sighting of this *nova res* (450),[10] which is supposed to ease his anxiety, but the subsequent description is inadequate to support such an interpretation, in spite of Aeneas' own positive spin at 461-63.

The pictures themselves, even as we observe them through Aeneas' eyes, offer little direct evidence of pro-Trojan sympathy, since they foreground the suffering of the Trojans only to the extent that they suggest the Greeks' military superiority. Aeneas eschews any such conclusion from the images through a careful balancing act: in the first scene, for instance, Greeks and Trojans are both pursuing and fleeing in turn, although it is noticeable that the snapshot cuts off with Achilles in a dominant position. But note how the compressed *ambobus* at line 458 (*Atridas Priamumque et saevum ambobus Achillem*) comes close to offering a programmatic indication of the rather open-ended reading Aeneas promotes. To say that Achilles was 'cruel' both to Agamemnon and his brother Menelaus on the one hand, and to Priam to the other, implies the erasure of a fundamental difference both in what that 'cruelty' actually entailed in each case and in what its final outcome turned out to be.

The two following scenes focus on Diomedes' and Achilles' *aristeia*. Even the supplication scene, where the Trojan women approach the temple of Pallas, is shot through with disconcerting undertones, for the hostility of the goddess, both *non aequa*

[8] M. Bergstein, *Mirrors of memory. Freud, photography and the history of art* (Ithaca and London 2010).

[9] Putnam, 'Dido's murals' (n. 6, above) *passim,* esp. 265-67 examines in detail the prefigurative force of the descriptions.

[10] On the possible meta-literary overtone of *nova res* see Polleichtner, *Emotional questions* (n. 6, above) 161 n. 14.

(479) and *aversa* (482), acts as a *mise en abyme* of Juno's own attitude as witnessed so far in the poem. Prominent throughout is Greek brutality, rather than Trojan heroism.

A related issue is whether we should assume that Aeneas is aware that the temple is dedicated to Juno. This possibility is generally ruled out because the effect of dramatic irony which dominates the scene would in this case veer towards implausibility – Aeneas cannot have forgotten that Juno is Troy's mortal enemy. Yet, even on this point, the text is less explicit than we might expect. The temple is not yet entirely finished (*condebat*, 447), but so far advanced as to be decorated, and, in any case, replete with gifts – presumably inscribed with the name of the dedicatee – and enriched by the very presence of the goddess' *numen* (447). Readers, if not Aeneas, should perhaps be made slightly uncomfortable by the anaphoric reference to bronze (*aerea/aere/aenis*) at 448-49, if they recall the detail that Aeneas' ships, in Juno's eyes the purveyors of eventual destruction rather than salvation, are anachronistically endowed with bronze *rostra* at the beginning of Book 1 (34-37). Later in the poem the repetition *aerei/aerea* (7.609, 615) will characterize the opening of the Gates of War in Book 7, where 'grating portals' (*stridentia limina*, 7.613) also figure.

The question we must inevitably face, even after a cursory look at part of the *ekphrasis,* is a different one: how is it possible, in terms both of narrative plausibility and of psychological characterization, for Aeneas to misread the evidence?

The answer I would like to suggest brings us back to the theme of emotions and their role in shaping Aeneas' memory and therefore his character. At Carthage, the Trojan leader confronts his past in an objectified form, as, literally, a work of art. It is quite likely that, as in the tradition of vase painting and other visual artefacts, individual figures in the temple pictures were identifiable through captions. This would make Aeneas a character other from himself, a third party inviting both identification and estrangement, in a sort of cognitive dissociation which energizes the interplay of truth, fiction, and interpretation staged in this scene. The 'Aeneas' Aeneas now sees both is and is not 'himself'. Meeting this 'other self' is crucial both for recollecting his own 'true' past and for rewriting it. The murals act as a trigger of memory, but what we witness here is memory being constructed under the influence of the specific emotional circumstances prevailing at the time, not retrieved unperturbed from a safe storing place.

Indeed, one of the peculiar motives of interest in this scene resides in the fact that we see at work, as if on a stage, not just how the act of interpretation works, but also the way memory acts. Ancient and modern theorists alike, from Aristotle onwards, have assigned a central role in the shaping of memory to traces, but most scholars now reject a notion of memory-as-storage (with its concurrent metaphoric baggage). They opt instead for an interactive model in which traces are involved in the act of recollection, while great importance is assigned to the context in which recollection occurs. Endel Tulving suggests that we label as 'synergistic ecphory'[11] the mostly pre-conscious process through which the trace interacts 'conspiratorially' with the present cue and circumstances, thus reactivating the stored information. Aeneas at Carthage is seen reacting to a 'trace' of his

[11] Tulving introduced the term 'episodic memory' in 1972. His *Elements of episodic memory* (Oxford 1983) provides a restatement and overview of his theories. See also 'Synergistic ecphory in recall and recognition', *Canadian Journal of Psychology* 36 (1982) 130-47.

past situation, while we are invited to reflect on how prominently the emotional context of recollection interacts with and influences that trace.

That Aeneas, at this juncture, might well be ready for reassessing his past in a less static and more creative manner is not hard to understand. His arrival at Carthage marks not just the beginning of the *Aeneid*, but a new beginning for Aeneas himself. This is the first time, as the narrator emphasizes with his repetition of *primum* at 450 and 451, that he allows himself to hope for a better future, even if 1.452 is admittedly a very tricky line: *hoc primum in luco nova res oblata timorem / hic primum Aeneas sperare salutem/ ausus et adflictis melius confidere rebus* ('here first did Aeneas dare to hope for safety and put surer trust in his shattered fortunes', 1.450-52).[12]

In fact this new beginning is more radical than we might suppose at first. The storm, in its totalizing cosmological reach, echoes the impact of flood narratives such as the one Ovid will describe at the beginning of the *Metamorphoses*. Not a standard tempest, but the unleashing of divine powers which ignore their allocated spheres of influence and provoke a perturbing mixing up of air, water, and earth. From this temporary return to primeval chaos, brought to an end by Neptune's restoration of proper boundaries, only a chosen few emerge unscathed to an unknown land which at least for a while appears neither hospitable nor civilized. Note the Trojans' first actions as they reach shore. Achates' fresh 'discovery' of fire aligns him with primitive men in narratives of *Kulturentstehung* – fire being regularly mentioned as the first step (again *primum* here at 174) in the path towards civilization.[13] Immediately thereafter they rediscover grain and the art of making bread – all markers of the foundational importance of the tempest and the subsequent salvation.

There is in fact a good deal of overlap between the narrative sequence we observe here and the patterns which both clinical psychologists and narratologists have identified in the narrative of transformative crises,[14] which find a literary parallel in the so-called 'rebirth' plots. These plots chart a journey from entrapment to freedom via redemption and liberation, thus revolving around the metamorphosis of fear, or even anguish, into hope.

The beginning of *Aeneid* 1 insisted on memory as (supposedly unproblematic) preservation of the past, both through the narrative and within it. When the narrator asks the Muses to 'remember the causes' (*Musa, mihi causas memora*, 8) of the conflict, and Juno is fixated with the memory of Paris' offence, of the Trojan war, and of all the *saevi dolores* (25) she was made to endure, the emphasis is on memory as continuity. Juno's anger is (divinely) timeless, so much so that at line 4 hypallage endows *ira* itself with the potential to retain memories (*memorem* […] *iram*, 4). As such it will ultimately defy the compromise reached at the end of the poem – indeed Juno will continue to be regarded as the divine supporter of Rome's enemy well into historical times.

After the storm, however, Aeneas is metaphorically reborn as a new self – one who will also be able to reconstruct and narrate his previous life with an unexpected degree of freedom (itself mirroring the author's own creative take on the existing tradition). Here we

[12] Translation of the *Aeneid* by Fairclough-Goold (Loeb Classical Library).

[13] See for instance Lucr. 5.1015-27.

[14] O. Robinson and J. Smith, 'Metaphors and metamorphoses: narratives of identity during times of crisis', in *Narrative, memory and identities*, ed. D. Robinson (Huddersfield 2009) 85-94, with reference to C. Booker, *The seven basic plots: why we tell stories* (London 2005).

see memory not as recollection, but as re-enactment. This strategy fits well with Aeneas' new agenda of endearing himself to the queen as a reliable guest, and, more broadly, of shifting away from the legacy of his Trojan past.

In Books 2 and 3 Aeneas offers – literally – a *re-narration*[15] of his previous plight, a re-enactment, based on memory (*meminisse*, 2.12), which cannot be judged according to the simple dichotomy between telling the truth and lying. Recent work on re-enactment[16] as an artistic form suggests that it may prove helpful to replace this opposition with a more nuanced set of motivations and narrative catalysts. Re-enactment is empowering precisely insofar as it enables performers to impose a fresh interpretation on historical events. The emancipatory role of re-enactment is at the same time personal and social. Individuals as well as communities can re-enact and rewrite their own plots and put forth a different version – and *a fortiori* a different interpretation – of the events they have experienced, not necessarily with full awareness of the potential falsehood of the re-enactment itself. Crucially, these re-enactments are not necessarily perceived as 'false', even when they do not adhere to known and provable facts. They have also been shown retroactively to affect the protagonist's memory of events. In visual arts, the term 'third memory' has gained currency to describe a recollection of events which diverges from ascertained facts because it is affected, in the mind of those actually involved in those facts, by their subsequent, secondary re-enactment.[17] Re-enactment can therefore be seen also as a way to overcome negative experiences and emotions by way of reshaping them into a new narrative emerging from a fresh set of emotional demands.

In the temple at Carthage, Aeneas exploits the images as passive props for an active re-enactment which precipitates his estrangement from his previous self and promotes a version of events that provides the foundation of his own new self-perception and self-narrative. Lucretius argues in Book 3.847-53 that the 'self' is defined by the *repetentia* of itself, its ability to recall previous events. He concludes, famously, that even if the very same aggregation of atoms occurred again in the infinity of time and space to recreate the same individual, that individual would not actually be the same, because his memory of himself has been forever interrupted at death.[18] Now Aeneas is and is not his previous self: his estranged reading of the pictures overrides the ideological underpinnings of the murals, which should have been clear from the context. It enables him to create a fresh narrative of the war, freeing him from the constraints of his previous self, much as

[15] M. Fernandelli, '*Sic pater Aeneas…fata renarrabat divom*: esperienza del racconto e esperienza nel racconto in *Eneide* II e III', *MD* 42 (1999) 95-112.

[16] R. Blackson, 'Once more… with feeling: reenactment in contemporary art and culture', *Art Journal* 66 (2007) 28-40.

[17] 'The Third Memory' is the title of a short film presented by Pierre Huyghe in 1999 in Paris and the following year in New York. John Wojtowicz retells the story of the bank robbery in which he was involved years earlier and which was pictured in the 1975 Sidney Lumet film *Dog Day Afternoon*. Wojtowicz's re-narration turns out to be heavily dependent on the film. See R. Erickson, 'Real movie: reenactment, spectacle, and recovery in Pierre Huyghe's *The Third Memory*', *Framework: the Journal of Cinema and Media*, 50 (2009) 107-24.

[18] A. Schiesaro, 'La palingenesi nel *De rerum natura* (3.847-869)' in *Epicureismo Greco e Romano*, ed. G. Giannantoni and M. Gigante (Napoli 1996) 795-804.

he will do to a larger extent in Books 2 and 3. The productive opposition posited here clearly is not the one between remembering and forgetting, but between a passive and an active form of memory, one which represents a form of mastery over events which would otherwise be passively experienced.

This opposition may shed some light on a notoriously difficult part of the scene, the statement that Aeneas is filling his eyes with 'empty images' (464-65): *animum pictura pascit inani,/ multa gemens largoque umectat flumine voltum*. *Inanis* is usually[19] credited with a concessive force *vis à vis* the following burst of emotion: Aeneas is deeply moved even if what he sees is nothing more than an 'insubstantial' painting, but, as Austin puts it *ad loc*., one 'full of ghosts' for him. This is true so far as it goes, but the association with *pascere* arguably points to the specific concept of vision and cognition discussed by Lucretius. The act of seeing entails the absorption of atoms carrying over from the object into the eyes of the beholder, a process partly analogous to the absorption of food. Unlike food, however, images are insubstantial, and it would be foolish to assume that they can satisfy emotional hunger in the same way food actually counteracts the lack of food. As Lucretius points out at 4.1089-1104, images of the beloved are nothing but 'thin images' (*simulacra* […]/ *tenuia*, 1095-96) which have no material effect on the body and which, even when we absorb them through the eyes, deceive lovers, since they arouse passion rather than quench it.[20] In the *Aeneid*, such images are no less deceptive: both Cupid and Pygmalion, in different ways, deceive Dido with false images.[21]

Read from the vantage point of Lucretian theory, the insubstantiality of the images which Aeneas confronts can also be seen as a marker of their unreliability, since their very 'emptiness' opens up the space for tendentious rewritings. The pictures in the temple – like the mnestic traces which produce memories – are flexible signifiers which can be rearranged in a different order and yield a different meaning from the one they carried in their original context. We see Troilus' spear writing in the sand (*pulvis inscribitur hasta*, 478), but we cannot read the signs it produces.[22] Reading Aeneas' reading of the temple frieze, we could never know for sure what happened at Troy, because what emerges is the story of a balanced fight rather than of a disastrous rout. Nor can we ascertain whether this degree of indeterminacy is embedded in the pictures or stands as a product of Aeneas' own focalization, or both – even if it is safe to assume that the latter is the more likely option.

This indeterminacy carries with itself two tangible implications. Inevitably, it complicates the aetiological ambitions of a poetic project which aims to 'remember causes' (*Musa, mihi causas memora*, 1.8). Furthermore, if memory in the poem is seen as an active form of reshaping and re-enacting the past, then what we should naturally expect is a similar attitude *vis à vis* the poem's models – no slavish imitation, of course, but creative reconstruction, taking its cue from previous, real events (first and foremost

[19] For an interpretation of *inanis* in connection with Plato's critique of poetry see Polleichtner, *Emotional questions* (n. 6, above), 171-85.

[20] Lucr. 4.1101: *sic in amore Venus simulacris ludit amantis* ('so in love Venus mocks lovers with images').

[21] See 1.351-2 (*vana spe lusit amantem*) and 1.683-88 and 712-22 (at 716 Cupid, disguised as Ascanius, *magnum falsi implevit genitoris amorem*).

[22] For a different take on Troilus' spear see Bellamy, *Translations of power* (n. 6, above) 62-63.

Homer's poems), but building freely upon them. Homer, like Troilus, has left traces, but it will be up to Virgil to reactivate them and fill them up with new meaning. As it happens, however, the one trace with which Homer can scarcely be credited is the story of Troilus himself, about whom the *Iliad* offers nothing more than a fleeting mention.[23]

III

Among the scenes Aeneas observes in the temple, there is Achilles dragging Hector's body three times around the walls of Troy and then offering it for sale to Priam (483-87):

> *ter circum Iliacos raptaverat Hectora muros,*
> *exanimumque auro corpus vendebat Achilles.*
> *tum vero ingentem gemitum dat pectore ab imo,*
> *ut spolia, ut currus, utque ipsum corpus amici*
> *tendentemque manus Priamum conspexit inermis.*

> Thrice had Achilles dragged Hector round the walls of Troy and was selling the lifeless body for gold. Then indeed from the bottom of his heart he heaves a deep groan, as the spoils, as the chariot, as the very corpse of his friend met his gaze, and Priam outstretching weapon-less hands.

In Homer the body is actually carried around Patroclus' tomb and is then returned to Priam as an act of mercy. Even if the 'gifts' and 'ransom' which Priam offers in order to obtain the corpse back from Achilles are mentioned frequently in *Iliad* 24, the blunt use of the largely prosaic *vendebat* and the prominence of *auro*,[24] which must have been glittering on the temple's wall, point to the post-Homeric version of the story.[25]

The plot thickens once we hear Aeneas' version of the same events in Book 2, where he reports *verbatim* – we are assured – Priam's vituperation of Pyrrhus. This time it appears clearly, if indirectly, that he is following the Homeric plot (540-43):[26]

> *at non ille, satum quo te mentiris, Achilles*
> *talis in hoste fuit Priamo; sed iura fidemque*
> *supplicis erubuit corpusque exsangue sepulcro*
> *reddidit Hectoreum meque in mea regna remisit*.

> Not so did Achilles deal with his foe Priam, that Achilles whom you falsely claim as you father, but he had respect for a suppliant's rights and trust; he gave back to the tomb Hector's bloodless corpse and sent me back to my realm.

[23] At 24.257, in a list of dead Trojan heroes. To a Roman audience his name would have resonated with the emphasis it attracts in Plautus' *Bacchides* 954, where the killing of Troilus is singled out as one of the three crucial events of the Trojan War.

[24] Dido's own memory might have had an impact on the representation of this story, since gold was the prime motivating factor in Pygmalion's killing of Sychaeus (at 1.349 he is described as *auri caecus amore*).

[25] A distinct issue, which I will not address here, is whether references to the post-Homeric tradition, as opposed to Homer's text, play a different role in the formation of Aeneas' memory.

[26] On this passage and its implications see Berlin, 'War and remembrance' (n. 2, above) 15-16.

No hint can be perceived here of the fact that Achilles acted primarily for financial gain, rather than out of sincere compassion for Hector's old father and respect for abstract moral values.

Both in Book 1 and in Book 2, to be sure, memory of these pivotal events is mediated – first by the murals, then by Priam's words – but it is striking that the same narrator, who was also a direct observer of the events, fails to indicate that he is struck by this substantial divergence. If the Carthaginian version is wrong, we would expect some surprise on his part – after all he takes the murals as evidence of the locals' emotional involvement in the memory of the Trojan war. Different focalizations only go so far towards explaining the discrepancy. True, Priam has something to gain from holding up Achilles' benevolent approach as a model to his straying son, while the Carthaginians are at best disinterested, if not keen to emphasize the Trojans' suffering – but why should they put Achilles in less favourable a light than he deserves? It is one thing for the narrator never to come clean about what 'really' happened at Troy, quite another to suggest, albeit indirectly, that Aeneas' memories can be either faulty or mutable, subject to external stimuli and changing emotional states.

How Achilles 'actually' behaved at the end of the Trojan war is not just a question, as it were, of factual accuracy, but entails significant implications in other respects as well. The two conflicting versions of the hero's actions paint two conflicting images of his psychological and moral outlook, which are liable to provide different behavioural models. Priam remembers Achilles' respect for *iura fidemque* (541), indeed even his blushing, as part of an impassioned appeal to Pyrrhus' better feelings, which he should have inherited from, and modelled upon, his own father's example. If Priam is not the one promoting an overly optimistic retrospective memory of Achilles, then it is Pyrrhus who is straying from paternal values, thus showing a lack of respect for the memory of his own father.

But memory of this Iliadic scene is also active as an implicit moral template at the very end of the *Aeneid* (12.931-36), when a defeated Turnus makes his final appeal to Aeneas:

> '*equidem merui nec deprecor' inquit;*
> *'utere sorte tua. miseri te si qua parentis*
> *tangere cura potest, oro (fuit et tibi talis*
> *Anchises genitor) Dauni miserere senectae*
> *et me, seu corpus spoliatum lumine mavis,*
> *redde meis.'*

> 'I have earned it,' he cried, 'and I ask no mercy; use your chance. If any thought of a parent's grief can touch you, I beg you – you too had such a father in Anchises – pity Daunus' old age, and give me – or, if you prefer, my lifeless body – back to my kin.'

As Turnus begs to be spared, or at least that his body be returned (*redde*, 936; *cf. reddidit*, 2.543) to his old father (*miserere senectae*, 934; *cf. senior*, 2.544), it is his turn to connect his present position with the archetypical confrontation between Priam and Achilles, as ineffectually evoked in Book 2. Aeneas, rather than behaving as the Achilles he remembers through Priam's words in Book 2, follows in the steps of the wrathful Achilles whom the Carthaginians have chosen to portray and whom Phyrrus elected as a model. The memory of

Pallas' slaughter, the *monimenta doloris* Turnus carries on his own body, overcomes the memory of Achilles' benevolent behaviour and induces Aeneas to harken back to the crueller model he met at Carthage.

Memory of events, even crucial ones, is adaptable to different factual and emotional contexts, not fixed forever. The same set of actions can be remembered, and used as a model, in markedly different ways. As we reach the end of Book 12, all we can attest is that the Carthaginians' take on the final moments of the Trojan siege, painful and uninspiring as it is, offers a more realistic assessment of what the stark reality of war actually entails. Under similar circumstances Aeneas' behaviour will be closer to the Carthaginians' Achilles than to the encouraging model Aeneas himself later appears to be honouring.

There is one further, but not yet final, layer of complication to the stratification of memory and emotions in the temple scene. Dido shares with Aeneas her own personal recollection (*memini*, 619) of Trojan events (619-26):

> *atque equidem Teucrum memini Sidona venire*
> *finibus expulsum patriis, nova regna petentem*
> *auxilio Beli; genitor tum Belus opimam*
> *vastabat Cyprum, et victor dicione tenebat.*
> *tempore iam ex illo casus mihi cognitus urbis*
> *Troianae nomenque tuum regesque Pelasgi.*
> *ipse hostis Teucros insigni laude ferebat,*
> *seque ortum antiqua Teucrorum ab stirpe volebat*.

> Indeed, I myself remember well Teucer's coming to Sidon, when exiled from his native land he sought a new kingdom by aid of Belus; my father Belus was then wasting rich Cyprus, and held it under his victorious sway. From that time on the fall of the Trojan city has been known to me; known, too, your name and the Pelasgian kings. Foe though he was, he often lauded the Teucrians with highest praise and claimed that he was sprung from the Teucrians' ancient stock.

Once again we face indirectness and elusiveness. Dido's knowledge of the Trojan past is inevitably second-hand, but her source is a peculiar one, a half-Greek, half-Trojan bitter enemy of the Trojans, who carries in his name traces of this disconcerting lineage. Not surprisingly, the hard evidence we can glean from this report is very limited. Teucer extolled the Trojans' prowess in battle, which is prominent in the murals as well. *Insigni laude ferebat* at 625 validates *sunt hic etiam sua praemia laudi* ('here, too, virtue finds its due reward') at 461. This prowess indirectly adds to the importance of the Greeks' victory. *Volebat* at 626 is the only (faint) hint of the fact that Teucer's account of the Trojan past may have been at least in part sympathetic.

Dido's elusiveness is not without cause. Her opening remarks to Aeneas are encouraging as far as they go, an early indication that Jupiter's moral suasion is already at work even before Venus sends Cupid on his mission. However, they pointedly omit to correct the impression that the temple decoration is meant to celebrate Juno's favourites rather than the Trojans' suffering. Her attitude is closer to a suspension of judgement than to a wholehearted expression of long-established sympathy.

We find out only later, in Book 4, that this is indeed the case. Once Aeneas has left, Dido vents her rage and belatedly recognizes that she was wrong to welcome him and his people

and that she should have actually killed Ascanius, his father, and their companions (590-606). At first Dido attributes to *insania* her change of attitude towards the Trojans, which is now openly aggressive, yet she quickly realizes that she should have known better from the start. Here a different set of memories emerges – not that of pious Aeneas, but of the villain who has sold out to the Greeks and sees himself *permixtum Achivis* (1.488), not because he is fighting against all hope in the midst of enemy troops, but because – as Servius already notes *ad loc*. – he has sided with them and bargained his way to safety at the price of treason.[27] The same memory, that is, which is side-lined in the main narrative, but which Turnus will bring to the fore when he vows to kill the 'deserter of Asia' (*desertorem Asiae*, 12.15). *Tum*, at that time, as Dido puts it, a positive emotional attitude towards Aeneas blinded her from understanding, or even recollecting, factual information which was already in her possession and which could have alerted her to the dangers involved in welcoming the Trojan exile. Since we know that Dido was at that time under the spell cast upon her by Venus, her state was akin to ἄτη, an irrational aberration.

In this light the detail *auro corpus vendebat Achilles* (1.484) acquires a further, unsettling connotation, since it voices, conveniently displaced onto a Greek foe, the very charge that had actually been levelled against Aeneas himself, that of selling out. This 'disturbance of memory' may after all be an instance of return of the repressed.

IV

Falsae imagines had already played an important role in a previous episode rich with symbolic implications. The narrative of Aeneas' and Venus' encounter highlights the cognitive imbalance between Aeneas and the readers. While the latter learn from the first line of the scene that he is actually meeting his own *mater* (314), Aeneas does not recognize her in her disguise as a Diana-like huntress. Moreover, he labours at length, vainly, in the effort to understand who she is and what she should be called. Line 327 is especially poignant. Words fail Aeneas – here the rhetorical figure of *dubitatio* almost shades into *aposiopesis* – and he is unable to 'call' his own mother. Thanks to the nuanced value of the verb *memorare*, Aeneas' outburst, *o quam te memorem virgo?*, declares both a failure of language and a failure of memory. This betrays Aeneas' subconscious awareness that he *ought* to remember who the woman standing before him actually is, and leaves open the question whether he is not, to an extent, co-operating in allowing his mother to deceive him.

Unlike his Homeric counterpart Odysseus, Aeneas here fails to recognize not just any goddess, but his own mother, who has unhelpfully chosen to look like the fellow-goddess with whom she has the least in common in terms of functions and interests. Predictably, awkwardness in the language points to deeper, substantial problems. *O quam te memorem* puzzles commentators because, once they identify this expression as an instance of *dubitatio* or *diaphoresis*,[28] they are also bound to admit that the closest parallels to this

[27] This tradition is discussed by K. Galinsky, *Aeneas, Sicily and Rome* (Princeton 1969) 46-51. The negative interpretation of *permixtum Achivis* is advocated by F. Ahl, 'Homer, Vergil, and complex narrative structures in Latin epic: an essay', *Illinois Classical Studies* 14 (1989) 1-31 (26) and S. Casali, '*Facta impia* (Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.596-9)', *CQ* 49 (1999) 203-11 (208-09).

[28] As defined by the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.40: see G. Calboli, ed., *Cornifici Rhetorica ad C. Herennium* (Bologna 1993^2) 368-69.

specific type – the one in which the speaker is uncertain as how to address another character – imply, in Austin's words *ad loc*., 'something abusive', as explained at *Rhet. Her*. 4.40. Aeneas is not on the verge of insulting the huntress, but there could be no better way simultaneously to express bewilderment, cognitive failure, and latent aggression. It is precisely in front of his own mother than Aeneas' mother tongue proves unequal to the task. By the end of the poem, this momentary collapse will come to be seen as an early intimation of the demise of the Trojans' original language, which will have to be abandoned for the sake of better integration with the Latins (12.834-36).

A comparison with the Homeric model for this scene is revealing. Aeneas' words are closely modelled on Odysseus' address to Nausicaa in *Od.* 6.149-52, where the shipwrecked hero is seized by awe at the sight of the beautiful young woman. After briefly wondering whether she is a mortal or a goddess, he inclines towards this second option because of Nausicaa's looks. If she is indeed a goddess, he opines, she is closest in appearance to Artemis. Odysseus is soon disabused of this notion – not an unreasonable one given his recent encounter with the nymph Calypso – but this tentative identification finds its way into the *Aeneid*. Here, Odysseus' mixture of awe and hope tinged with fear yields to a momentary repression of emotions. We can see what Aeneas' predicament is at this juncture. The Homeric intertext is bound to elicit complex emotions, since the erotic tension in the encounter between Odysseus and Nausicaa strengthens the troubling implications of an already thorny mother-son relationship. Just as Aeneas is gazing at the murals, Dido enters the temple and is compared to Diana (498-504), while he himself will later be likened to Apollo (4.143-50). This further complicates the connections set in motion by the intertextual echo of *Od.* 6. Aeneas' reaction to this emotional tension – silence – is the only possible answer to the complexity of the situation.

We have to wait just a few lines for Aeneas' aggressive feelings to become explicit and even overflowing (405-09):

> *ille ubi matrem*
> *adgnovit tali fugientem est voce secutus:*
> *'quid natum totiens, crudelis tu quoque, falsis*
> *ludis imaginibus? cur dextrae iungere dextram*
> *non datur, ac veras audire et reddere voces?'*

> he knew her for his mother, and as she fled pursued her with these words: 'Why, cruel like others, do you so often mock your son with vain phantoms? Why am I not allowed to clasp hand in hand and hear and utter words unfeigned?'

Aeneas is finally able to recognize Venus as his own mother (*adgnovit*, 406), but charges her with repeated betrayals of trust. Why should he say *totiens* (407)? Readers may assume that a number of similarly fraught meetings have taken place before, but at 2.589 we learn that in fact Venus has appeared to her son only once before Carthage, and, at that, without any disguise. The only implication is that Venus is able to deceive Aeneas not just by assuming an unrecognizable aspect, as she is doing here, but that even when she does retain her natural appearance she veers towards deceit. Here Aeneas appears to be calling into question nothing less than the central message Venus conveyed to him as Troy collapsed, namely that she would always be at his side and land him safely in his new homeland (*numquam abero et tutum patrio te limine sistam*, 'nowhere will I leave

you but will set you safely on your father's threshold', 2.620). At least so far his worries are not unjustified. He may be forgiven if he allows himself to think that his own mother is as cruel as other gods, openly hostile to him (*crudelis tu quoque*, 407), as Servius remarks ('just as Juno and the other gods hostile to the Trojans', 407). Creusa, whose fate Venus had mentioned in her earlier appearance (2.597) has vanished, much of the fleet has been destroyed, and Aeneas and his surviving companions are lost in a primitive and arguably inhospitable land.

Aeneas' memory may be failing him insofar as he is unable to recognize Venus, but his poetic memory is at this very juncture most accurate. *Crudelis tu quoque*, to be sure, is a *verbatim* repetition of *Eclogues* 8.48. Here, *saevus Amor* is berated as an irrational force which can be so destructive as to push mothers to slaughter their own children, a transparent allusion to Medea: *saevus Amor docuit natorum sanguine matrem/ commaculare manus; crudelis tu quoque, mater* (47-48).[29] Although no actual blood stains Venus' hands, Aeneas interprets her behaviour at Carthage as a severing of the connection between mother and son, a repudiation which is tantamount to a symbolic infanticide.

This is the first time that infanticide lurks in the background of the *Aeneid*, where it will go on to play a significant role, always mediated by allusions to the Medea myth and often by a resurfacing of the keynote reference to *Eclogue* 8.[30] The erotic implications of the reference are also particularly relevant. Medea's story foregrounds the role of transference as precondition and cause of the aggression. Her children will die because they remind her of unfaithful Jason (they look too much like him), and Dido arguably harbours similar feelings towards the non-existent child which she belatedly wishes she had conceived with Aeneas. But the interplay of substitutions had begun earlier, when Cupid metamorphoses into Ascanius in order to approach Dido. It continues even here, for Venus resembles Diana, the goddess to whom Dido is explicitly compared at her first appearance in the poem. Venus' puzzling intervention in disguise thus acts on two complementary fronts: it signals the necessity of breaking off a maternal link and it heralds Aeneas' forthcoming erotic entanglement with Dido. There would be nothing inherently problematic in such a *rite de passage*, were it not for the disturbing Medean and Oedipal implications of this sustained sequence of disguises, analogies, and exchanges which finally break through in Aeneas' disturbed emotional state.

Aeneas' rebirth at Carthage implies a severance – or at least a drastic weakening – of his maternal affiliation. As he re-emerges from the engulfing maternal waters which had almost drowned him (*vorat*, 117), he enters a new phase in his relationship with Venus and – by implication – with his own past.[31] But plunging into the waves of the Mediterranean, which acts as a kind of *Ersatz* Lethe, a medium for attempting to erase

[29] A. Schiesaro, 'Furthest voices in Virgil's Dido', *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica* 100 (2008) 60-109 and 194-245 (72 n. 47).

[30] E. Oliensis, 'Sons and lovers', in C. Martindale, ed., *The Cambridge companion to Virgil* (Cambridge 1997) 294-311 (305-06); Schiesaro, 'Furthest voices' (n. 29, above).

[31] This new phase actually begins, as we will find out only later, in the night Troy falls, its flames resembling an infernal *ekpyrosis*. There Aeneas 'forgets' his wife (*amissam*, 741), thus severing a crucial link with his past. Indeed, during that night '[t]he space of previous existence is abolished' for Aeneas: J. Starobinsky, 'Memory of Troy', *The Hudson Review* 59 (2006) 15-41 (41).

memory even of the most primary kind, should not be taken as a pursuit destined to complete success. The contrast between remembering and forgetting in the *Aeneid* can be pressed into service to promote a cut-and-dried ideological solution to the many insoluble quandaries the poem poses. But what a constructivist theory of memory teaches us first and foremost is that memories cannot really be preserved in an intact and pristine state – under spirit – for any length of time, nor blithely erased without trace. As Umberto Eco neatly points out, there can be no *ars oblivionalis* parallel to the well-established *ars memoriae* because memory is made up of traces which are made of signs, and signs, even if erased, leave traces.[32] What we can say, at most, is that in different contexts those traces interact differently with the explicit or implicit emotional situation prevailing at the time, and effectively create different memories – a fitting instance of the concurrence between cognitive psychology and Freudian theories of repression.

Tempting as it is to contrast, for example, Juno's determined will to memory, especially as seen at the beginning of Book 1, with her apparent willingness to forget in Book 12, all we can say is that the power and contents of memory are shaped in both cases by other emotional factors: desire, rage, deceit. Juno's memory of the slights she has suffered is no less strong and vital when she ostensibly decides to forgive than when she pointedly emphasizes her determination to remember. Juno's 'decision to forget' in Book 12 may at some level represent an attempt to achieve 'a conciliatory and harmonious conclusion'[33] to the poem at the divine level, but is, after all, the outcome of a different synergy between her memory traces and her present emotional state. This guarantees, not oblivion and harmony, but the very real possibility that in different circumstances and under the influence of different emotions all her memories will be reactivated and will still be liable to cause the delays and destructions we have already witnessed in much of the *Aeneid.* All we are left with, at the end of the poem, is yet another instance of the interaction between memory traces and emotions: Pallas' baldric is but a fleeting image, but, as *monimenta doloris* (945) more than enough to awaken Aeneas' own *memor ira*.

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[32] See his semi-ironic 'An *ars oblivionalis*? Forget it!', *PMLA* 103 (1988) 254-61 (Eco originally presented his thoughts on the matter in 1966).

[33] G. Most, 'Memoria e oblio nell'*Eneide*', in *Memoria e identità. La cultura romana costruisce la sua immagine*, ed. M. Citroni (Firenze 2003) 185-212 (200).