Fama and Fiction in Vergil's Aeneid

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Matter out of Place I

Across the Styx

For much of the *Aeneid* we hear no more about the Trojans' efforts to clean things up in the interests of ritual purity than about their dishwashing or laundry. But at a few key junctures the poem shows how material dirt, if it is not cleaned away, may disrupt the relations between humans and gods. A tidy cosmos requires things to be put in their place.

The *Aeneid*'s narrative becomes most emphatic about the process of cleaning up material dirt just when the Trojans are most concerned with finding their own place in the world—the *sedes* where they may rest.[1] Through its depictions of pollution and the avoidance of pollution, the poem rhetorically aligns geopolitical order with the ritual order that seeks to map in the human realm the proper relations between mortals, gods, and the universe.

1. One reason why questions of purity and pollution rise to the surface of the story at these moments is because the problem of homecoming for the Trojans (losing and finding their *sedes*) is repeatedly linked with figurative visits to the underworld that foreshadow and echo Aeneas' journey in Book 6, as many readers have noticed. These visits occur during the conflagration of their city in Book 2, over and over again in Book 3 (above all in the settlement created by Andromache and Helenus), and in Nisus and Euryalus' sortie in Book 9. See especially Putnam 1965, chap. 1, "Madness and Flight," 3–63, on the connections between Books 2, 6, and 9.

The dirt that most interests epic is the dirt of death: the material facts of decay make themselves felt even while the *Aeneid,* true to its genre, imagines its heroes defying the limits set by mortality through their *fama.*[2] Mary Douglas has pointed the way to understanding dirt, ritual pollution, and purity in relation to a culture's symbolic systems. She argues for the advantage of "matter out of place" as a "compendium category" that "implies only two conditions, a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order."[3] Ways of demarcating material dirt form part of the same conceptual network as anomaly, category confusion, and excess—all the more abstract variants on what we might think of as "actual filth."

Yet a distinction between dirt as "actual filth" and as concept is as artificial as it is necessary. The distinction is artificial in that individual and cultural experience of what counts as "dirty" depends on boundaries that are established conceptually. In that sense material filth and abstract disorder exist on a continuum of transgression. But the distinction is necessary because this continuum extends across a wide range. Acts of transgression are often envisaged as materially "dirty" through a process of perceptual blending that brings together matter and metaphor.[4]

In chapter 2 the focus was on how *fama* is represented in the *Aeneid*—by the poet's voice, by Aeneas, by Jupiter, by Iarbas, and by Dido—and how those representations entwine *fama* with the authority of Jupiter's *fata.* In this chapter I am less concerned with direct depictions of *fama,* and begin to attend more closely to the interplay of imagination and remembrance through which the epic presents its fictive knowledge.

In poetic narrative all "matter" is imagined. Sometimes we are asked to envisage physical contamination (blood and filth), sometimes wondrous transformations (Circe's bewitched animals, or Cybele's ship-nymphs). It is then up to us how we link these imaginative experiences with our material experience outside the story world. In the *Aeneid* the metamorphoses offered by similes and metaphors, however, often take place at one remove

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2. We know all too little about pollution ideas in Rome in the late first century B.C.E. Thome 1992, 78 notes the obscurity, adding that "the concept of purification—which as such presupposes the concept of pollution—is of great importance also in Latin, though there is no single central term for it as there is in Greek." Lennon (2010, 427) notes that "a comprehensive examination of pollution in Roman society is still lacking." Bradley 2012 takes a step towards filling that gap. See also Lindsay 2000; and Maurin 1984.

3. Douglas 1975/1999, 109. Douglas points out that in offering this "compendium category," she is not arguing for a transhistorical or transcultural definition of dirt.

4. For a discussion of these problems see Campkin and Cox 2007, particularly their introduction (1–8) and Wolkowitz's contribution (15–24). Parker 1983, 10, notes the difficulty of separating "from pollution any situation where breach of a religious rule has created danger" in Greek thought.

beyond the story world (distinguishing between these layers of fictionality becomes much harder in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*). At the start of Book 6, the narrative describes Daedalus' journey and artwork using category-confusing metaphors that heighten sensitivity to the transgressions communicated through Daedalus' art. Syntax and reading conventions prevent us from understanding Daedalus as transformed into a flying ship (6.16–19) within the same imaginative dimension as some of the metamorphoses described by the *Aeneid*—the story world in which the Fury Allecto becomes the priestess "Calybe," and the Trojan ships become sea goddesses. Or to take an instance from later in the poem, Aeneas in his blazing armor is not fully metamorphosed into the Dog Star (10.273–75) within the *Aeneid*'s main story world. We are invited to apprehend materiality on a spectrum with greater or lesser degrees of reification, operating in different layers of the fabric of fiction.

The continuity between material and conceptual "matter out of place," and the interaction between these different imaginative layers, help the *Aeneid* ground its construction of fictive knowledge in representations of ritual. Douglas in *Purity and Danger* traces an intellectual heritage for her inquiry that overlaps in part with Burke's exploration of "piety" as a "system-builder," governed by "*the sense of what properly goes with what.*"[5] When Douglas started looking comparatively at ideas of pollution, she built on William James' use of the phrase "matter out of place" to define dirt, paying special attention to the context in which James likens evil to dirt as something to be excluded from a rational order of things, according to the "gospel of healthy-mindedness" that he explains in the passage cited by Douglas.[6] In contrast with a monistic view such as Hegel's, in which evil must "have a function awarded to it in the final system of truth," James describes this "healthy minded" thinking first as a careful process of forgetting: "Evil, it says, is emphatically irrational [. . .]. It is a pure abomination to the Lord, an alien unreality, a waste element, to be sloughed off and negated, and the very memory of it, if possible, wiped out and forgotten."[7] He defines this pointed forgetfulness as a way of sweeping away the intrusive clutter of evil as "so much irrelevance and accident—so much 'dirt,' as

5. Burke 1934/1984, 74; see chapter 1.1.

6. Douglas 1966/2002, 44. But in an essay from 1968 ("Pollution," reprinted in the collection *Implicit Meanings* in 1975), which both develops and distills some of the arguments of *Purity and Danger,* Douglas attributes "matter out of place" to Lord Chesterfield.

7. James 1987, 125–26. Throughout her work, Douglas pursues this problem of rationality, reversing the terms of the ienquiry to put "dirt," instead of evil, at its center, but with a continued focus on how different cultures and groups conceptualize and manage the problem of evil.

it were, and matter out of place." The *Aeneid* is far from "healthy-minded," and presents a world of conflict with plenty of room for anomaly, dirt, and evil, where the *pius* man remembers and at times reenergizes confusion and evil, even while *pietas* aspires to purity and order.

The questions Douglas asks about dirt are deeply involved in the ways the epic melds recognition and imaginative creation for its fictive knowledge. Douglas observes that individuals and groups resist dealing with anomaly and ambiguity, on the whole, and that we find ways to harmonize the things we recognize—and remember—with the patterns we have already begun to establish. Sometimes the pattern is adjusted to accept "discordant cues." Sometimes we take positive pleasure—aesthetic pleasure, for instance—in confronting and even celebrating ambiguity and anomaly.[8] The *Aeneid,* too, celebrates aesthetically some forms of anomaly, weaves some forms into acceptably familiar patterns, and marks out others as needing eradication. These processes allow *fama* to turn individual stories of a Misenus, a Palinurus, or a Caieta into collective memories built into the Italian landscape. So the poem builds its *fama* on the sometimes disorderly poetics of *pietas.*

Book 6 links three boundary-crossing scenes of grief with the ultimate boundary-crossing act of remembrance—Aeneas' living descent into death in search of his father. The first of these scenes of mourning (Daedalus' sorrow for his son Icarus, evoked through ekphrasis at the very start of the book) makes its imprint on the territory Aeneas encounters in the *Aeneid*'s story world. The others (for Misenus and Palinurus) leave their mark on the topography that the poem's Roman readers would know in their own time.

Fama has it (6.14) that Aeneas shares his landing place at Cumae with Daedalus, who touched down there after Icarus fell from the sky during their escape from Crete. Daedalus shapes the memories surrounding his son's death into an incomplete visual autobiography. Amidst a variety of concerns about representational and ethical transgressions, the ekphrasis raises the question of whether the grieving artist may put his son commemoratively in his place.

The Sibyl thrusts Aeneas away from contemplation of Daedalus' images and towards ritual duties. But she also attaches great urgency to the problem of putting the dead in their place. She alerts Aeneas to the defiling presence of one of his Trojan companions, now an unburied corpse on the shore not far from Apollo's temple. "Return him first to his own home and settle him

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8. This is not to claim synonymy for "ambiguity" and "anomaly," but as Douglas argues (1966/2002, 47), they pose much the same problems for systems of classification.

in his tomb," the Sibyl instructs Aeneas (*sedibus hunc refer ante suis et conde sepulcro,* 6.152). The dead man turns out to be the bugler Misenus. Burial and lamentation for his corpse then form the core of the purifying rituals to be undertaken before Aeneas can make his descent.

After Aeneas has entered the underworld, he is confronted with the suffering that ensues when the dead are deprived of ritualized remembrance. He meets his helmsman Palinurus, who died in puzzling circumstances in Book 5, but who has not yet crossed the Styx and so asks Aeneas for help—either eventual burial, or a ride with him in Charon's ferry: "Give your right hand to a poor wretch and take me away across the waves, so that—in death, at least—I may rest in a tranquil home" (*da dextram misero et tecum me tolle per undas, / sedibus ut saltem placidis in morte quiescam*, 6.370–71).

At the start of Book 7, the poem continues to address the concerns about remembrance raised in Book 6, and follows up on Aeneas' reascent from the underworld with another burial scene. Here the poem offers a more confident appraisal of how an individual—Aeneas' nurse, Caieta—may generate *fama* for a particular location. This topographical *fama* in turn marks out the fact that Caieta has found her final resting place (her *sedes,* 7.3).

> Tu quoque litoribus nostris, Aeneia nutrix,
> aeternam moriens famam, Caieta, dedisti,
> et nunc seruat honos sedem tuus, ossaque nomen
> Hesperia in magna, si qua est ea gloria, signat.
> at pius exsequiis Aeneas rite solutis,
> aggere composito tumuli, postquam alta quierunt
> aequora, tendit iter uelis portumque relinquit.
>
> You, too, to our shores, Aeneas' nurse,
> gave in death, Caieta, fame (*fama*) unending;
> even now your honor preserves the abode (*sedes*), and your bones are marked
> in great Hesperia, if that glory means anything, by the name.
> But Aeneas, after devotedly (*pius*) carrying out the rituals in due order,
> when the mass of the funeral mound was piled up, after the high
> seas have come to rest, sets sail on his journey and leaves the harbor.
> (*Aen.* 7.1–7)

The poet brings the memory of Caieta into the community of present-day readers, with an apostrophe that celebrates her for granting eternal *fama* to "our" shores. After the apostrophe to Caieta, when the narrative picks up its account of Aeneas' labors, the transition emphasizes how Aeneas through

his *pietas* fixes Caieta's *sedes* in unending remembrance. The focus of the narrative shifts at this point: homes for the living, for the gods, and for future generations become a more pressing concern than resting places for the dead. This change in emphasis is reflected in a cluster of vocabulary in the first half of Book 7. Here the noun *sedes* (and related verb forms) will refer not to tombs, as for Misenus, Palinurus, and Caieta in Book 6 and the opening lines of 7, but instead to the existing home of King Latinus, as well as the long-desired Trojan settlement.[9]

At the very start of Book 7, as in the hero's earlier endeavors, *pietas* links past, present, and future. Aeneas is called *pius* for his careful execution of the rituals owed the dead woman just at the point when the poem emphasizes that he leaves this harbor for the next stage of his journey, moving on from the activities of mourning to the next task at hand.[10]

The adjective *pius* typically reflects the specific circumstances in which Aeneas is acting at any given moment in the story. Its uses reinforce the way *pietas* demands action driven by attentiveness to memory. Often these show tensions between the competing pressures of *pietas.* Often, too, as at the start of Book 7, the adjective *pius* marks a transition from purely commemorative activity to an action that contributes more directly to the search for a new home—the search which is itself part of a much larger mission to renew the memory of Troy. This narrative shape recurs whenever Aeneas is engaged in ritual acts of remembrance: he is repeatedly driven to new activity while still involved in memories for those who have been lost.

Aeneas is remembered as *pius* chiefly because he so attentively remembers and commemorates others. His capacity for memory sometimes has benign results (properly burying and mourning his comrades and father), sometimes aggressive (a series of pitiless, vengeful killings in Books 10–12 after Pallas dies, culminating in the failure to spare Turnus), and often a mixture of the two. Almost every time the poem employs the quasi-formulaic epithet and noun *pius Aeneas,* Aeneas is in the midst of remembrance or grief for someone, or is involved in some specific commemorative act. The pattern is so strong that even those uses of *pius Aeneas* that do not involve

9. 7.52, 158, 175, 193, 201, 229, 255, 431; chapters 3.1 and 4.3 return to the issues raised by this vocabulary.

10. In 7.5 the not unusual ambiguity between the attributive and predicative force of an adjective is highlighted by the word order, which separates pius from Aeneas and links his being *pius* with the *exsequiis* [. . .] *rite solutis.* My translation above brings out the adverbial force of a predicative adjective; we could perhaps interpret the adjective attributively and opt for "but *pius* Aeneas, once the funeral rituals had duly been carried out," etc. The syntactical ambiguity reflects the importance of how the poem's references to Aeneas as *pius* are contextualized by his activities at any given moment.

specific instances of memory or commemoration—and there are remarkably few moments when *pius Aeneas* is neither remembering nor mourning—help define Aeneas' entire mission as an act of remembrance for those destroyed along with Troy.[11]

The normative excess that Jupiter spells out for Hercules in Book 10, as we saw in chapter 2, does not exactly provide a master code for the *Aeneid,* but it does resemble the logic by which the poem turns *pietas* into the theme for an epic. Being outstandingly *pius* means being outstandingly ordinary—or at least, what Roman social norms would define as ordinary.[12] Being really very good at *pietas,* as Aeneas and the Trojans are said to be, means being attentive to the acts, thoughts, and emotions that make people function fully as humans in society, according to Roman thought. It means remembering what one owes all the different people and gods to whom one is connected. This remembrance offers the hope of preserving or restoring order and a state of ritual purity.

3.1 Dirt and disorder

Mary Douglas emphasizes throughout her scholarship that dirt "is a relative idea" and depends on classification.[13] Anne Carson memorably uses eggs to clarify this observation: "the poached egg on your plate at breakfast is not dirt; the poached egg on the floor of the Reading Room of the British Museum is."[14] The point of the egg example, of course, is to emphasize

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11. Examples of *pius Aeneas* engaging directly in lamentation or commemoration of the dead include 1.220, 5.26, 5.286, 6.175, 6.232, 7.5, and 11.170; more ambiguous designations of Aeneas as *pius* that imply but do not overtly describe lamentation or remembrance include 1.305, 1.378, 4.393 (see especially Farron in Deroux 1992, 260–76), 5.685, 6.8, 10.591, 10.783, and 10.826. At 8.84 Aeneas is primarily concerned with due ritual and the future of his people; at 12.175 and 12.311 the adjective emphasizes devotion to the rituals of the truce. After the violent grief of Book 10 and the great funeral rituals of Book 11, mourning surrounds all acts of war and peace between Trojans and Italians. See Rossi 2004, 89 on the vocabulary of *maestitia,* which comes close to linking "in a string of sorrow all the major deaths in the *Aeneid.*"

12. This is not to say that Roman social norms are uniform, consistent, or easily interpreted, in relation to *pietas* or any other ideal, even as far as we can deduce them from (mostly elite) authors of surviving literature from any particular period. As Garrison 1992, 9 emphasizes of *pietas,* an "ongoing process of redefinition" is seen already in classical Latin, even within a single author's oeuvre. Cicero, for example, unlike Vergil, presents several explicit definitions of *pietas,* but each definition has a different emphasis. See also Lind 1992, 15–21.

13. Douglas 1966/2002, 44 acknowledges that relatively recent scientific developments have changed conceptions of dirt, thanks to the nineteenth-century discovery of bacterial disease transmission, but argues that most of our dirt-related behavior reflects a much older conceptual system.

14. Carson 1990, 158.

how often what we count as "out of place" depends on context, custom, and memory, as well as imagination. In everyday life as well as in ritual structures, dirt is something we define by the way it disrupts our mentally ordered categorizations, as much as by germs and bacteria, even with our heightened contemporary awareness of e coli and the other nasty things that may end up in one's spinach.

Placing the disruptive egg in the British Museum's Reading Room, as Carson does, provides a lure to our imagination that in its topographical (and indeed temporal) specificity is particularly relevant to the *Aeneid*'s way of treating "matter out of place." It is easy to see a practical logic, of course, in preventing egg yolk from sullying precious books, or preventing library users' shoes from dirtying an egg that someone intends to eat. But Douglas observes that decisions about where to apply this logic of separation are highly contingent on patterns of thought developed within distinct cultures and by individuals.[15]

In Roman thought death, above all, poses a threat to purity. A corpse washed up on the shore is in the wrong place, and it will pollute Aeneas' fleet until it is properly buried, much as Carson's poached egg would pose a problem for the British Library until it is put in the right bin. The Trojans' display of *pietas* in response to Misenus' death puts him in his place (6.152). Misenus' name will live on in this location. Concerns with limiting death pollution give us a verbal overlap in Latin that comes close to the play on words in the English phrase "matter out of place."

"Matter out of place" in English carries its special resonance because it exploits two different senses of what it means for something to have a "place." The phrase invites one to link concerns about a specific location with beliefs about what counts as orderly or anomalous. In the *Aeneid,* the word *sedes* provides just such a hinge.

Sedes pivots between a ritual and a geographic sense of place. *Sedes* in the *Aeneid* usually means "home" in some sense, often referring to the abode of a goddess or other supernatural being (including *Somnia* in 6.283, the *Dirae* in 7.324 and 7.454, Venus in 1.415 and 1.681). Most often *sedes* is used for the home that the Trojans long for. This home will allow them to

15. Douglas 1966/2002, 44–45, 150. See also Gerrig 1993, 186–87, who gives an anecdote of how nurses in a children's hospital were successfully deterred from drinking orange juice filched from the children. The juice was served in new urine collection bottles (the children didn't care). Hygiene is not the issue; being aware that the bottles were clean could not prevent the nurses from associating even the unused bottles with dirt and disgust. Through this example, Gerrig situates in a wider context the ability of fiction to stir powerful emotions. This power of fiction is unhampered by knowledge that might rationally be expected to weaken or prevent such emotions in readers.

rest (they hope) in peace at last, and will establish what the poem presents as the proper place in the world for the people who are not-quite-yet-Romans.

The word *sedes* as "home" for the Trojans crops up over and over again in Book 3 (e.g., 3.88, 3.161, 3.167, 3.190), when they are most confused about exactly where their place is going to be. It is the end that Aeneas promises hopefully to his men in 1.205 after their shipwreck. Palinurus uses the word for the calm home where he may rest in death (6.371), if only he can cross the Styx. The word *sedes* is repeated emphatically in Book 7, referring to the Trojans' settlement, their lost home at Troy, and to Latinus' existing home.

But we have seen already that *sedes* also denotes the material resting place provided by burial (6.328), which marks the location of death (Caieta's in 7.3), and which safely contains polluting matter, as in the Sibyl's instructions about Misenus (6.152). And it is the word used for where the dead are placed (6.431) after being classified by Minos according to their modes of life and death.

So the *sedes*-vocabulary recurrent in the poem unites the cosmological order (which arranges the relations between living and dead, human and divine, good and evil) with the geopolitical order (which will be established when the Trojans find their proper place in Italy). On one rhetorical level, this convergence aligns Rome's imperial destiny with order in the universe as a whole. A sequence of events that would keep Aeneas from founding Lavinium, and keep Rome from achieving supremacy, would flout the order of things as much as the allocation of a virtuous soul to Tartarus; it would be as untidy as the pollution of an unburied corpse.

Yet the poetic logic that—on one level—works to assert this sense of order is entangled in the messiness of anomaly and dirt. This becomes apparent already in Books 2 and 3, in which Aeneas takes over the burden of sustaining Trojan *fama* by bringing to life his painful memories for Dido and the other Carthaginians, as well as by materially salvaging the human and divine remnants of Troy. When they leave the family home, Aeneas tells his father to bring the *sacra* and the *patrios penatis,* explaining that it would be against divine law (*nefas*) for him to handle them until he has washed in running water, having come straight from the intensity of war and fresh slaughter (2.717–20). Aeneas' worry recalls the Iliadic Hector's awareness of his polluted state when he explains to his mother why he cannot pour a libation to Zeus (*Iliad* 6.266–68), but the Homeric recollection fits the events occurring just at this moment in Aeneas' story. The explicit mention of battle-dirt in Book 2 reflects the special circumstances: departure from one home, and the start of a search for another. Anchises gives up his determination to die in his home only after he sees compelling signs that

the ancestral gods will preserve their home in a new location.[16] A series of divine communications convince Aeneas and his father that their gods must be uprooted from their place, even while divine order erupts in a chaotic conflagration to bring about Troy's fated end.

In Book 3 Aeneas continues his *fama*-building narration for the Carthaginians, telling of his postwar labors during a confused journey in which the Trojans are relentlessly propelled forward by uncanny portents, which foul their attempted settlements, and even their rest stops. Most of the time in Book 3 they are on the run from pollution, rather than heading towards a clearly identified place. After leaving the Thracian territory polluted by Polydorus' murder, which I discuss further below, they attempt a settlement on Crete, where drought and disease deprive them of food. This time there seems to be no problem inherent in the place, but the contamination serves as a prodigy: Anchises has misunderstood the enigmatic oracular directions they were given at Delos.[17] Next comes their struggle with the filth-dripping Harpies, after the Trojans land on the Strophades and plunder the apparently unguarded cattle roaming there. They achieve a more propitious, if brief, landing at Actium, where they manage to give offerings to Jupiter and hold games (3.278–83). The site of Actium is going to be a good thing for Trojans—or for their descendant Octavian, at least. Following this, they land at Buthrotum, where Andromache is performing a ritual at Hector's empty tomb near a fake Simois. In this ghost town the living are so easily confused with the dead, and the power of mourning so excessive, that Andromache briefly goes mad, *magnis exterrita monstris* (3.307).[18]

Finally, rivaling the sheer nastiness of the Harpies' filth on the Strophades is the Cyclopean pollution that the Trojans manage to avoid. They experience this only in the tale told by the Odyssean crew member Achaemenides, who vividly communicates the foulness of the Cyclops' human dinner (3.618–27). All these dirt-filled episodes in Book 3 are in keeping with what we know of Greek and Roman ideas of ritual pollution, though none is more explicit than the brief attempt to settle in the place where

16. Cf. the arguments of Livy's Camillus for rebuilding Rome and against transferring the city's gods to Veii (5.52–53).

17. On Crete the contamination descends on the land from above. Aeneas never asserts directly that Apollo is the one hurling plague-arrows, but the sky-borne disease becomes merged with the land rather than originating in the Cretan earth. Miller 2009, 115–19 discusses in detail whether we should regard the plague as an expression of Apollo's anger.

18. Panoussi 2009, 154 regards Buthrotum, too, as polluted by contagious grief. On Helenus and his Trojans as "too Trojan," beset by nostalgia and regressively devoted to memory, see especially Bettini 1997. Seider 2010, however, corrects any tendency among readers to overemphasize the emptiness of memory at Buthrotum.

Priam's son Polydorus is buried.[19] The prodigies that help the Trojans understand how to set in order the past also direct them to shape their present and future in accordance with divine will. The poem presents this guidance as a material substance through which past contamination intrudes into the present and beyond, part of the territory where their foundation fails.

At the start of Book 3 the dead Polydorus makes his first communication with blood rather than words. In Thrace, where Aeneas lands after leaving Troy, he prepares to sacrifice a bull to his mother and to the gods who look after new undertakings. A shocking portent (*monstrum,* 3.26) interrupts him as he gathers foliage for the altars. The tree he is working on begins to stain the ground with dripping blood. After praying to rustic deities, Aeneas keeps tugging, but a voice warns him that he is on the verge of a hyperbolic act of violation.[20]

> gemitus lacrimabilis imo
> auditur tumulo et uox reddita fertur ad auris:
> 'quid miserum, Aenea, laceras? iam parce sepulto,
> parce pias scelerare manus. non me tibi Troia
> externum tulit aut cruor hic de stipite manat.
> heu fuge crudelis terras, fuge litus auarum:
> nam Polydorus ego.'

> A tear-filled moan from the depth
> of the mound is heard and an answering voice reaches my ears:
> "Why do you mangle an unhappy wretch? Hold back from the grave,
> hold back from staining pure (*pias*) hands with wickedness. No stranger
> to you,
> Troy bore me, nor does this gore drip from a stump of wood.
> Ah, run from cruel lands, run from a rapacious shore:
> Polydorus is who I am." (*Aen.* 3.41–45)

The speaker quickly explains the riddling *monstrum* of the bleeding bush: *nam Polydorus ego.* Memory is maintained not—or not only—through *fama* and the tears of mourners, but through the dead man's own voice, with its tear-filled moan. Aeneas is breaking up a burial mound, and the death is now renewed in dripping *cruor* ("gore"). A disruptive need to be remembered becomes a material substance.

19. See Johnston 1999.

20. For a recent discussion of Polydorus in relation to tree imagery in the *Aeneid,* see Gowers 2011.

The land itself shares in the memory: a *litus auarum* (3.44), it has taken on the criminal qualities of Polydorus' murderer. No wonder all the Trojans agree to leave the *pollutum hospitium* (3.61) as soon as they have held a funeral for this son of Priam. Polydorus' *monstra* (his flowing gore and his story) communicate both that the Trojans must put Polydorus in his place with proper mourning rituals, and that this is decidedly *not* the place for them to stay and make their home.[21] The past must be remembered and put in order, if possible. But the permanent defilement of the land and the Trojans' fearful experience of that defilement suggest that no expiation can altogether wipe away the blood spilled here, first by the murderers and then once more by Aeneas.

3.2 Daedalean excesses

Aeneid 6 occupies itself with category-confusing violations from the start, giving both Aeneas and the poem's readers a glimpse of humans acting like birds—or like gods—and mating with beasts. The artwork created by Daedalus for the doors of the temple he has built for Apollo evokes the memory of several transgressive prodigies—the cow-disguise crafted for Pasiphae so that she could fulfill her love for a bull, the birth of her son the Minotaur, and the wings Daedalus makes for himself and his son to escape from Crete.

The narrative does not fully articulate what kind of dedication prompts Daedalus to devote the temple and his commemorative art to Apollo. The poem leaves it up to readers to view Daedalus' work as thanksgiving for his eventual landing in Italy along with the consecration of his wings (dedicated like a seaman's oars, 6.19), as an expiatory offering for his transgressions, or both. In this section of the poem the feats of the imagination are elided with the feats of epic heroism. Together, these are presented both as marvelous achievements, worth remembering through a layering of art forms, and—potentially—as outrageous defilements.

The poem makes the man-bull in the Cretan myth just one monstrous hybrid in a series that we encounter on different planes of the narrative, thanks to a cluster of intriguing metaphors in the first few lines of the book, as William Fitzgerald (1984) and Michael Putnam (1998) have pointed out.[22] Even before we hear about Daedalus' portentous wings, Pasiphae's

21. See Dufallo 2007, 106–9, who links Aeneas' defilement by Polydorus' blood with Rome's fratricidal curse (the murder of Remus by Romulus).

22. Fitzgerald 1984, 52 observes, "The metaphor of the first line produces a hybrid horse-ship that is echoed by the journey of the bird-man, Daedalus, whose wings are in turn described as oars

disguise, and the minotaur itself, we find Aeneas speeding on his fleet by loosening its reins (*habenas,* 6.1); when the Trojans arrive at Cumae, an anchor grips the shore with its tooth (*dente tenaci,* 6.3); a blazing group of young men look for fire that grows from seeds (6.5–7).[23] Then we learn that in his novel journey (*insuetum per iter,* 6.16) Daedalus swam (*enauit,* 6.16) to Cumae on his wings, and used oars to fly (6.19, *remigium alarum,* which is Mercury's equipment in 1.301). Alone, none of these figures of speech is unique. Packed so densely in succession they make the Trojans, Daedalus, and their equipment into prodigious hybrids.

Taken together, these hybrids establish a continuum between myth's capacity for tall tales of man-birds and bull-men and the ability of metaphor to join animate and inanimate categories like "ship," "horse," and "bird." The metaphors, along with Daedalus' artwork, prepare the reader for Aeneas' living entry into the underworld, a journey that is itself a kind of category confusion. They draw attention to the possibilities for imaginative transgression that abound in the process of narrating Aeneas' *pietas* in tightly structured hexameters, as they hint at the fissures that give entry to a kind of disorder—even *furor*—in any form of perception.[24]

The poem's oblique telling of the Cretan myth continues the emphasis on category-confusion. Daedalus' story becomes an art–life hybrid to match the bull-man mix that he helped bring into being. When we learn that Pasiphae's double-shaped offspring is present on the temple doors as a reminder of cruel Venus (or as a "monument to outrageous Passion": *mixtumque genus prolesque biformis / Minotaurus inest, Veneris monimenta nefandae,* 6.25–26), the implication is that the Minotaur's body itself, as much as its representation in Daedalus' artwork, stands as *monimenta* to the sacrilegious horrors Venus can cause. Conversely, Daedalus commemorates Icarus' death precisely by not sculpting it; the poem evokes the fall (*casus,* 6.32) in the failure (*patriae cecidere manus,* 6.33). The artist can recreate his son's death only with the poet's help: *bis conatus erat casus effingere in auro, / bis patriae cecidere manus* ("twice he had tried to express in gold the

(*remigium alarum,* 19). At the heart of the story of Daedalus is that hybrid *par excellence,* the Minotaur, who can be reached only through that most curious of paths, the labyrinth." Putnam 1998, 78 also regards the poet's metaphors as hybrids akin to the fake cow and the Minotaur.

23. See Austin 1977 ad loc., especially on *semina flammae,* 6.6; Lucretian echoes are the most obvious ones here, but both Austin and Servius remind us that the idea is found in Homer, too (*Od.* 5.490).

24. In his exploration of conceptual blending, neuroscientific research, and the "literary mind," Mark Turner emphasizes that "at the most basic levels of perception, of understanding, and of memory, blending is fundamental" (1996, 110). Literary uses of metaphor, parable, and so on merely heighten sensitivity to a central mode of cognition.

falls, twice the father's hands fell," 6.32–33).[25] Evidently Daedalus' autobiographical artwork—which seems to help maintain his *fama* in 6.14—has trouble handling the excess of sorrowful remembrance that results from his thrust towards the sky. The poem in one sense tries once more to make the restitution that is out of Daedalus' reach, while at the same time noting the impossibility of repairing the loss.

But as well as blending categories themselves, as they mingle art and life, the images on the temple doors make room for the transgressive excess that generates epic. The Cretan story is obliquely told in terms that point to Aeneas' own mixed parentage: like the minotaur, Aeneas has a *mixtum genus* (6.25), though he mingles human and god rather than human and bull—the poem does not go so far as to fully identify Aeneas' category-confusing birth and achievements with the anomalies involved in Daedalus' flight or in the procreation of the Minotaur.[26] Still, in the phrase *Veneris monimenta nefandae* it is hard to believe that metrical reasons alone prompt the word *Veneris* in place of the more abstract *amoris,* especially given the other phrases in the ekphrasis that suggest the relevance of this artwork to Aeneas' own story—the work involved in achieving a home (*labor . . . domus,* 6.27), the wandering (*error,* 6.27), and the "great love of the queen" (*magnum reginae . . . amorem,* 6.28). The narrative does not clarify whether Aeneas manages to contemplate Daedalus' images; we do not know whether to visualize him sharing the readers' experience of this visual quasi-narrative, before the Sibyl orders him away from the viewings (*spectacula,* 6.37) and towards the performance of rituals.

A little later in Book 6, the Sibyl will show Aeneas that even thinking about the descent and reascent necessary for visiting his dead father is an act of imaginative transgression. She has already indicated her intolerance for such transgressions when she cut short Aeneas' examination of the Daedalean *spectacula.* Dying is easy enough, but not a return to the upper air. To describe Aeneas' eagerness for the job, the Sibyl uses the language of outsized passion that often goes with a kind of madness in the *Aeneid.* She calls his desire *tantus amor,* and *tanta cupido,* and then, just in case either Aeneas

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25. *Casus* may be a poetic plural, avoiding the elision of *casum,* but the plural suits the repeated failure of expression. Fitzgerald 1984, 63–64 n. 18 connects this doubling repetition with the threefold failure of the dead and living to touch one another in an embrace—Odysseus and his mother (*Od.* 11.206ff.), Aeneas and Creusa (2.792–94), and later in this book Aeneas and his father (6.700–702).

26. See Spence 1988, 38–42 for a more fully elaborated reading of Aeneas' story as figured both by Icarus and by Theseus in Book 6. Bartsch 1998, 336 suggests that in addressing Icarus apostrophically, "Virgil has assumed the position of an imaginative viewer of his own artwork."

or we as readers have not yet grasped the point, she describes the work as *insanus*:

> 'quod si tantus amor menti, si tanta cupido est
> bis Stygios innare lacus, bis nigra uidere
> Tartara, et insano iuuat indulgere labori,
> accipe quae peragenda prius.'
>
> "But if so great a yearning forms your intent, if you have such a desire
> to swim the Stygian pools twice, twice to see black Tartarus,
> and if you like to give yourself to a demented task,
> take in what must be accomplished first." (*Aen.* 6.133–36)

But in response to Aeneas' subtly assertive reminder about Theseus, Hercules, and his own Jovian heritage (6.122–23), the Sibyl admits, well, yes, there is a special group of people who have managed it, and of course Aeneas fits right in the middle of that set: *pauci, quos aequus amauit / Iuppiter aut ardens euexit ad aethera uirtus, / dis geniti potuere* ("A few have been able to, the ones whom Jupiter has justly loved or whose blazing excellence has carried them to the upper air, people born from gods," 6.129–31).

The category *dis geniti* ("the ones born from gods") draws attention to the anomalous nature of heroes whose parentage mingles human and god. The phrase *ardens euexit ad aethera uirtus* uses the fiery sky-reaching vocabulary of *fama.*[27] This touches on an ambiguity repeatedly seen in classical literature, in which the language of deification, achieved through cultic ritual and through the imagination of myth, becomes almost interchangeable with the language of figurative immortality granted by human memory.[28]

In this context, the word *aethera* in 6.130 seems pointedly ambiguous: it refers to the ordinary open sky that would be savored by those few people who are permitted to reenter the world of the living, but it also suggests the heights where the Olympian gods live. A Hercules or an Aeneas can descend into and return from the underworld while still alive, because of the same blazing *uirtus* and divine birth that eventually allow these anomalous figures to reach the sky as gods after death. Daedalus himself is remembered in *fama* (6.14) for a daring ascent (*ausus se credere caelo,* 6.15), which mimics

27. See especially Hardie 1986, 267–92 and 2009b, 76–135.

28. *Fama* may be achieved by mythic and cult-based commemoration, but can also be thought of in many other ways, of course. Dido can envisage herself as en route to the stars through *fama* (4.323) without announcing imminent deification.

the skywards motion of deified heroes and those celebrated hyperbolically as reaching the stars through their glory.

Aeneas begins, in fact, by making the death-defeating achievements of Orpheus and Pollux the grounds for his plea, in an elaborate conditional sentence. He closes more abruptly by simply citing—or rather by disclaiming the need to cite—Theseus and Hercules: *quid Thesea, magnum / quid memorem Alciden? et mi genus ab Ioue summo* ("Why should I remind you of Theseus, of great Alcides? My family too comes from Jupiter on high," 6.122–23). Theseus serves as paradigm of outrage for joining with Pirithous in attempting to rape Proserpina, as much as a heroic example, whose name is worthy of being summoned by Aeneas to justify his own attempt.[29] Later in Book 6, Charon remembers the hubristic violence of Hercules, Theseus, and Pirithous as grounds for his assertion that ferrying the living in the Stygian boat is *nefas* (6.392–97).

In her reply to Charon the Sibyl is careful to differentiate Aeneas from these more flagrantly transgressive heroes, on the grounds that his notoriety lies in his *pietas* as much as his strength as a warrior (*pietate insignis,* 6.403). Yet her earlier dialogue with Aeneas emphasizes that his *pietas* generates epic *fama* precisely because it crosses the bounds that she asserts as the limits defining both human sanity and divine law.

3.3 Misenus and the substance of *fama*

Even before we hear of Daedalus' art-defying sorrow, *Aeneid* 6 begins with tears; the very first words of the book (*sic fatur lacrimans*) look back to the close of Book 5 and Aeneas' farewell to Palinurus, lost at sea. Aeneas' mistaken view that Palinurus has drowned because he believed too readily in the serenity of sky and sea (*o nimium caelo et pelago confise sereno,* 5.870) prefigures Daedalus' entrusting himself to the sky in his numinous flight (*praepetibus pennis ausus se credere caelo,* 6.15).[30] Servius' commentary assumes that the loss of Palinurus deeply affects the way the Trojans investigate the Italian landscape (*inuentaque flumina monstrat,* 6.8): they

29. This fundamental ambivalence perhaps explains what many scholars have perceived as a flagrant contradiction: Theseus provides a positive exemplum for Aeneas, but in 6.617–18 the Sibyl pictures him settled for eternity in Tartarus: *sedet aeternumque sedebit / infelix Theseus.* Charon offers another point of view when he lists his reasons to regret ferrying Hercules, Theseus, and Pirithous (6.392–97), whose transgressive violence in the underworld is one of the reasons why ferrying living bodies across the waters of the Styx is *nefas* (6.391).

30. See Servius and Norden *ad loc.* on the augural implications of *praepetibus.*

need running water so that Aeneas can cleanse himself of death pollution, which Servius argues can be conveyed through memory as much as through contact.[31] Later in the book, a detailed description of Misenus' funeral will include the *lustratio* in which Aeneas' men are cleansed of death pollution (6.229–31). Not all readers have agreed with Servius that the drowning of Palinurus overlays the Trojans' first actions on reaching Cumae, but we do not need to be convinced by his reading of 6.8 to notice the connection between pollution, memory, and landscape in this part of the poem.[32]

The displaced bodies of Palinurus and Misenus will order the Italian landscape through the commemorative place names that are passed down to future generations. The names of both drowned men will remain part of Roman experience, and Vergil's aetiologies derive their firm imaginative grip on the landscape both from the anxieties over their funeral rites and from the disorderliness of their deaths.[33]

When the Sibyl tells Aeneas what must happen if he is to enter the Underworld—and to be allowed to leave—her instructions presage the situation in which Aeneas will find the golden bough. They imply that his worthiness to step beyond normal human limits depends on his appreciating the importance of the commemorative rituals needed to cleanse death pollution. So she follows up her information about the golden bough with the warning that a friend lies dead. She does not name the friend, but she warns Aeneas that the body is sullying the whole fleet with death (6.150, *totamque incestat funere classem*). Immediately after commanding Aeneas to put his friend in his proper resting place (6.152, *sedibus* [. . .] *suis*) and get him settled in a tomb she gives instructions about the expiatory offerings that need to be made (6.153). The Sibyl makes a sharp transition to this guidance about expiation and then, after a single line commanding the atonement, moves directly to a warning: "This is the only way (*sic demum*) you'll set eyes on the groves of the Styx and the realms that offer no route to the living" (6.154–55). The succinctness of her instructions, followed by

31. Servius comments on 6.8: *flumina monstrat: et sciendum monstrari Aeneae ad expiandum se: nam funestatus fuerat morte Palinuri, non quod eum viderat, sed quod funus agnoverat, id est doluerat; in eo enim est pollutio quod ait "casuque animum concussus," nam ipsa inpiant quae agnoscimus. unde in Livio habemus Horatium Pulvillum, cum Capitolium dedicare vellet, audisse ab inimico mortuum filium, et, ne pollutus dedicare non posset, respondisse, cadaver sit. hanc autem purgationem Aeneae polluto dat ubique Vergilius, ut paulo post "corpusque recenti spargit aqua."*

32. Fitzgerald 1984, 51, for instance, describes *Aeneid* 6's first sentence, which begins with tears and ends with the fleet's approach to Cumae, as an "almost brutal turn away from bereavement to the matter at hand."

33. But, for contrast, see Bleisch 1999 on the ineffectuality of Deiphobus' *fama* in achieving a lasting topographical imprint.

an abrupt silence, suggests that Aeneas' sacrifice of black herd animals is needed both to expiate the particular pollution caused by the corpse on the shore, and to address the larger question of category confusion at stake in this whole section of the poem—that is, a living man's desire to walk among the dead.[34]

So the Sibyl's speech not only ensures ritual purity for Aeneas (presumably a minimum requirement for being allowed to break a host of other divine laws!), but also prepares readers for the central role played by Misenus' death in the problems of transgression and remembrance that dominate Book 6. When Aeneas and Achates walk away from the Sibyl's cave their conversation does not turn to the first part of her prophecies—her Italian mini-*Iliad* (6.83–97)—though the poem pointedly frames these prophecies as terrifyingly ambiguous, barely human speech produced by Apollo's violently inspired madness.[35] The memory of those turbulent words yields instead to the more immediate questions that the Sibyl has raised: which of their companions is dead? What body needs burial?

Until he is named, the death of their friend briefly becomes one of the many problems of knowledge that drive the poem's story; the question temporarily displaces other momentous questions about the struggles that will precede the Trojans' settlement in Italy, though Aeneas and Achates quickly resolve the most pressing part of the puzzle over the dead man's identity.[36] The poem makes sure that readers or listeners share the Trojans' moment of discovery, giving us the name, Misenus, early in the sentence, before devoting two lines to the discovery of the body (6.162–65). Then Misenus' name is repeated along with his patronymic; the poem defines his excellence as a bugler in words that suggest a kinship between Misenus' skill and the potentially inflammatory work of poetic song (*Martemque accendere cantu,* 6.165; cf. the *fama* that comes to Iarbas: *incenditque animum dictis atque aggerat iras,* 4.197). As we learn more, Misenus' death is revealed as liminal in a number of ways, beyond the fact that his funeral rites will mingle with Aeneas' preparation for the *katabasis.* His body is found on

34. Norden 1957 *ad loc.* distinguishes the burial and the sacrifice as two distinct prerequisites for Aeneas' *katabasis;* Austin 1977 *ad loc.* goes further, saying that this is a "new injunction, not connected with the burial rites." Norden and Austin presumably base this view on the narrative at 6.236, which does separate the Sibyl's instructions for Misenus' burial from the appeasement of the underworld divinities, though these rituals are not clearly distinguished in the Sibyl's own speech.

35. Within four lines (6.98–101), we hear of the Sibyl as poet/singer, mooing sacrificial animal, and maddened horse.

36. Perhaps because Helenus has already summarized the Sibyl's warnings of war (3.458), Aeneas hears her *horrendas* [. . .] *ambages* (6.99) placidly and tells her that he has already anticipated every facet of these struggles (6.103–5).

land, but only just—it is on the dry part of the shore (*in litore sicco,* 6.162), a striking phrase for the shore just above high water.[37]

Like his body, recollection of the way Misenus dies seems to have been partly submerged, but not taken wholly out of reach. We are told without reservation that he was crazy enough to challenge the gods to a conch-blowing contest (6.171–72), but the poet hedges the sequel to this folly with the parenthetical reservation, *si credere dignum est* ("if it's worth believing," 6.173), before completing the tale of how Triton takes him on as a rival and drowns him. Misenus has followed the pattern of transgressive behavior that is established for this book of the *Aeneid,* confusing the categories of mortal and divine, and has—perhaps—been drowned as a result of setting himself up as another Triton.[38]

The Trojans' rituals of lamentation and pyre building for Misenus perpetuate this category-confusing act. To equal or perhaps surpass the spilling over of pollution—the impurity of the body left drowned on the shore—the Trojans' extreme grief spills over in the sky-reaching funeral pyre they build. The monstrous size of pyre and burial mound appears in words echoing Sinon's account of the Trojan's horse in Aeneas' Book 2 narrative (which Sinon claimed was to expiate the impiety of ritual pollution, *nefas quae triste piaret,* 2.184): *hanc tamen immensam Calchas attollere molem / roboribus textis caeloque educere iussit* ("this, however, Calchas ordered them to raise up as a boundless mass by enmeshing tree-trunks, and to build it up to heaven," 2.185–86).[39]

The hyperbole of the funeral preparations directly recalls the discourse of *fama* in its vocabulary. Misenus' tomb becomes an altar, ready for the offerings that will keep its memory fresh (*aramque sepulcri,* 6.177). The Trojans heap this altar with trees and strive to build it up to heaven (*caeloque educere certant,* 6.178), just as *fama* helps those who are best remembered achieve a kind of figurative divinity—and as Daedalus reached the sky in his boundary-crossing flight. Even as the tomb prevents the corporeal remnants

37. It is hard to know whether *litore sicco* would have struck Vergil's first readers as remarkable, or if it would have been taken as a neutral way to say "above the high water mark" (as Austin 1977 *ad loc.* glosses it). Similar wording occurs during the boat race of Book 5 (5.180) when Menoetes clambers onto a rock after being shoved overboard from his helm, and twice in Book 3 (135 and 510) when the narrative emphasizes that the Trojans or their ships are just barely out of the water, a liminal position that reflects the uncertainties involved in the various landfalls they make.

38. See Austin 1977 *ad* 6.171 on the *concha* as Triton's special instrument.

39. The most obvious verbal connections link 2.185–86 with 6.178 and 232, but there are other more oblique resonances: the object of the horse's size is to prevent *religio antiqua* from protecting the Trojans, according to Sinon, an idea recalled in the movement *in antiquam siluam* (6.179), a wood that is measureless, like the horse (*siluam immensam,* 6.186).

of Misenus from spilling over and polluting the community, in its skyward reach the monument embodies the transgressive power of *fama.*[40]

Throughout the Misenus episode, the threads of poetic memory are woven together with a thickly layered texture. The poem matches the threat posed by the polluting body by using extraordinary materials for putting Misenus in his place. In a section which already more broadly recalls the earlier traditions of Latin epic through its archaizing levels of dense alliteration, the poem tells of a movement into an ancient wood (6.179: *itur in antiquam siluam*).[41] The passage that follows then fulfills this movement in its poetic technique, alluding to lines in Ennius which in turn echo the *Iliad*'s wood-cutting session for Patroclus' funeral (23.110–28).

> ergo omnes magno circum clamore fremebant,
> praecipue pius Aeneas. tum iussa Sibyllae,
> haud mora, festinant flentes aramque sepulcri
> congerere arboribus caeloque educere certant.
> itur in antiquam siluam, stabula alta ferarum;
> procumbunt piceae, sonat icta securibus ilex
> fraxineaeque trabes cuneis et fissile robur
> scinditur, aduoluunt ingentis montibus ornos.
>
> So they all made moan around him with a great outpouring,
> mindful Aeneas most of all. Then they hurry on the orders of the Sibyl,
> no delay, weeping, and in rivalry they struggle to heap
> the tomb's altar with trees and to draw it right up to the sky.
> Entry is made into an ancient wood, the deep-set dens of wild creatures;
> prone fall the pitch-pines, the holm-oak rings out with axe-blows
> and with wedges ashen beams and fissile oak
> are split; they roll down huge flowering ash trees from the hills.
> (*Aen.* 6.175–82)

Stephen Hinds has analyzed the "intense reflexivity" of this well-acknowledged allusion, showing how the figuration works in multiple directions.

40. See Hardie 1986, 273–75, who explores the Giant-like description of Book 4's monstrously animated *Fama* treading on the ground while her head plunges into the clouds (4.177).

41. The emphasis on Misenus' prowess with sound (perhaps combined with the emphasis on the inarticulate sounds made by the Trojans' mourning in 6.175 and 177) may explain the marked levels of alliteration in this section, but the alliteration also conveys the sense that this part of the narrative stretches back along a trajectory of memories that have been verbally transmitted with traditional poetic techniques.

There is no need to choose between reading "Aeneas' intervention in an ancient Italian landscape as a metaphor for Virgil's intervention in archaic Roman poetry, or Virgil's intervention in archaic Roman poetry as a metaphor for Aeneas' intervention in an ancient Italian landscape."[42] Readers often comment on the excesses of the Trojans' response to the death of Misenus, but the poem itself does not condemn the mourners for their fervor. Instead it shares in that fervor with its own allusive excess.[43]

Excessive matter is transformed by the poem into a spilling over of grief and of memory. This is sustained across time through the naming of the Italian territory. Human interventions are blended with the natural features of the land, so that human *fama* and the landscape mold one another. In 6.234–35 we are told that the hill above Misenus' tomb is called after him, and keeps his name eternal. The hill is *aerius* (sky-reaching); the narrative presents it almost as a naturally occurring large-scale model for the mound of the tomb (the tomb which Aeneas' men were working so hard to build heavenwards in 6.178).[44] It is as if the land itself shares the penchant for the hyperbolic metaphors of commemorative immortality that are so prevalent in the discourse of *fama.* The poem shapes the landscape in a way that grafts together the figurative resources of the region with the rhetorical tools at the poem's disposal.[45]

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42. Hinds 1998, 13. Hinds emphasizes the phrase *itur in antiquam siluam,* as well as the competitive activity of the Trojans' tree-felling, as a "programmatic gesture of reflexive annotation" (12), the result of which is that "the epic project of the poet is seen to move in step with the epic project of the hero" (13). Norden 1957 ad loc. discusses the allusion as an example of rivalry with Ennius.

43. See especially Thomas 1988a, 267–68 on the lurking possibility that Aeneas and his men may be violating numinous trees. Thomas contrasts the austerity of the Sibyl's instructions with the "excessive action" in response and notes that Aeneas is described as going to war against the forest (6.183–84). Aeneas' preparations for entering the underworld are depicted as *fama*-generating through precisely the kind of heroizing language that also conveys potentially transgressive violence. So when the bough delays as Aeneas eagerly/greedily breaks it off (6.210–11, *auidusque refringit / cunctantem*), it provides a narrative-worthy (if very brief) struggle for Aeneas, but it also worries readers (e.g., Dyson 2001 as well as Thomas 1988a). Both Thomas and Dyson regard the contradiction with the Sibyl's words at 6.146–47 ("it will follow willingly and easily of its own accord, if the fates are calling you") as an indication that Aeneas may be improperly executing the Sibyl's commands. Another problem arises from the Sibyl's instruction that Misenus' burial needs to happen "beforehand" (*ante,* 6.152); the sacrifice will be the *prima piacula* (6.153). I read the Sibyl's temporal markers in relation to the larger undertaking of entering the underworld, but Thomas and Dyson argue that they order a specific sequence in which the necessarily preliminaries must be performed; if this is so, Aeneas violates the sequence.

44. The narrative repeats the word *sepulcrum* (6.152, 177, 232) to embrace the whole procedure of putting Misenus in his place as the Sibyl instructed, bringing together the immensity of pyre and mound.

45. Clark 1977, 70, in an article discussing the topographical challenges posed by Vergil's Misenus narrative, remarks that Cape Misenum's "resemblance to a *tumulus* has often been pointed out."

But if the landscape has a share in the discourse of *fama,* its commemorative geography also engages with the Trojans' *pietas.* What the poem marks out as memory-worthy in this episode is not so much Misenus' god-rivaling as a bugler. As we saw, the poem more or less invites us to doubt the story of his being drowned by a jealous Triton. We are asked rather to visualize the tremendous efforts *pius* Aeneas and his men devote to their companion's funeral. After making a rare explicit negative judgment on Misenus himself (*demens,* 6.172), which is perhaps hedged by the *si credere dignum est* insertion about the manner of his death, the poem's comments here on the extreme acts of mourning performed by the Trojans are, if anything, favorable. Aeneas is designated *pius* at the moment when he participates with special vehemence in a great outcry of lamentation (6.176).[46] *Pietas* here doubly generates epic *fama,* assisting in its work of remembrance with a fervor that calls for poetic celebration.

3.4 Putting Palinurus in his place

When the Sibyl overcomes Charon's belief that carrying living bodies in the Stygian ferry is against divine law (*nefas,* 6.391), her justification for the anomaly again links Aeneas' presence in the underworld with Misenus' burial. She tells Charon of Aeneas' distinctive *pietas,* which is taking him to his father (6.403–5). In case Aeneas himself as a visible instantiation of *pietas* should have no effect on the ferryman, she also shows him the golden bough discovered by Aeneas during the funeral preparations, which communicates the authority of fate (*fatalis uirgae,* 6.409). The narrative here leaves it open whether the bough convinces Charon purely by its power as a sign of fate, or if it carries the authority of fate precisely as a token of Aeneas' divinely acknowledged *pietas,* a token that Charon will recognize even if the Sibyl's explanation about the hero's loyalty to his father leave the ferryman unmoved.

A spokesperson for *fata,* the Sibyl uses anomaly and disorder as aids in prescribing the rules for what purports to be an ordered cosmos. The verbal overlap in English between "order" as organized structure and as "command" suits the ambiguity in Latin of *fata* as denoting impartially the structures of destiny and "things spoken"—primarily by Jupiter. Those who have the

46. See Erasmo 2008, 77–91, who notes the contrasts between Misenus' cremation and the funeral preparations made for Pallas. As Erasmo points out, the extremes involved in Misenus' burial are all the more striking because he is a minor character, imagined by the poem only in terms of his death.

power and authority to command are likely to get an outsize role in determining which structures count as orderly.[47]

The lasting commemorative potential of *fama* is an important part of the Sibyl's toolkit, as we see in the scene with Palinurus immediately preceding the conversation with Charon, as well as in her emphasis on Misenus' burial before the descent. Before Aeneas makes the crossing of the Styx, the poem brings home the emotional and ritual significance of that ferry ride by picturing the fluttery wanderings of the unburied dead. Among these sad souls Aeneas sees Orontes, who suffered the death at sea that he himself had dreaded (1.92–101), but Palinurus is the one who comes forward in the hope that Aeneas' astonishing presence may mean help for him.

The parts of the poem that narrate Palinurus' death notoriously contradict one another. Some of this incoherence reflects specific gaps in mortal knowledge of divine action. But not all is easily explained according to poetic logic—though the very fact that the narrative should be fractured so strikingly when reporting the circumstances of his death suitably reflects Palinurus' fundamentally anomalous position as a dead man whose body is unburied.[48] We hear from Palinurus himself that his body is now in an inverted version of the liminal place from which the Trojans rescued Misenus. Misenus was drowned just offshore, but his body appeared on the dry part of the beach, while Palinurus has had the opposite experience: though killed after barely reaching land, the waves now hold him, and winds turn him to and fro on the shore. He had nearly found safety after being torn away from the ship as he clung to the helm, but was murdered as he clawed his way up the cliffs.

Palinurus' first thought seems attainable in the human sphere—that they should go and put some earth on his body. He makes this sound very

47. Prendergast 1986 enjoys the multivalence of "order" in his presentation of "the order of mimesis," which is remarkably like the Sibyl's use of Jovian rhetoric: "Mimesis is an order, in the dual sense of a set of arrangements and a set of commands. On one interpretation, the mimetic 'command' consists, through a stress on the values of imitation and repetition, in an imperative to submit to the set of symbolic arrangements (the mimetic 'plot'), as if the latter corresponded to the natural order of things. [. . . T]he logical matrix of mimesis is formed from the combination, and confusion, of three (heterogeneous) kinds of sentences: a descriptive, a prescriptive and a normative. The descriptive says 'this is how things are'; the prescriptive says 'you must accept that this is how things are'; the normative says 'there is an authority validating the two previous sentences'" (5). Even if we do not share so bleak a view of how mimesis issues the commands of ideology, this description applies to Jupiter's representational rhetoric in the *Aeneid.* The *Aeneid* encourages us to envision Jupiter as the speaker of these three sentences; he acts as the "authority," while invoking it as an external reinforcement for his ordering of persuasive speech.

48. See Feldherr 1999, 118–19 and O'Hara 2007, 92 for recent discussions of these inconsistencies.

easy (6.366, *nam potes*). He gives the exact location and avoids mentioning anything about full burial rites. But another possibility occurs to him, as he correctly deduces that Aeneas would not be about to cross the Stygian waters without help from the gods. Maybe Venus' son can take Palinurus with him? Palinurus makes something approaching a grim joke at this point, referring to the calm resting place (*sedes placidae,* 6.371) that he might hope for at least in death—presumably to make up for the less than tranquil voyages he's shared in, the not at all tranquil way he was killed (though Sleep plays a crucial role in getting him off the ship, in the Book 5 account), and the restless tossing of his body in the waves offshore. *Da dextram misero et tecum me tolle per undas, / sedibus ut saltem placidis in morte quiescam,* he pleads ("Give your right hand to a poor wretch and take me away across the waves, so that—in death, at least—I may rest in a tranquil home," 6.370–71). Since he will miss out on reaching their destined *sedes* in Italy with his comrades, surely he could at least be allowed to settle somewhere in the underworld. Palinurus clearly realizes that this peace would normally be unobtainable without burial, but he has a perfectly reasonable idea that he might piggyback on Aeneas' ability to break the usual rules.

The Sibyl, however, scornfully reasserts the systems of classification that are about to be flouted by Charon's accepting Aeneas' heavy, living body in his leaky boat:

> 'unde haec, o Palinure, tibi tam dira cupido?
> tu Stygias inhumatus aquas amnemque seuerum
> Eumenidum aspicies, ripamue iniussus adibis?
> desine fata deum flecti sperare precando [. . .]'
>
> "How do you come, Palinurus, to have so foul a desire?
> You—unburied—will set eyes on the Stygian waters and the stern river
> of the Eumenides? Will you really approach the water's edge unbidden?
> Give up hoping that the gods' pronouncements (*fata*) can be swayed by
> praying [. . .]." (*Aen.* 6.373–76)

She responds with contempt to Palinurus' hope of altering the fates. Earlier in Book 6, the Sibyl called Aeneas' desire to cross the Stygian pools twice *tanta cupido,* but Palinurus' hope of crossing without being buried is something more threatening: *dira cupido* (6.373). It is a "foul desire" to dirty the underworld as his body will dirty the world above until some expiation can be made as a substitute for burial. At the same time, she hints that Palinurus is trying to trespass on the domain of the Eumenides in every sense—

taking it upon himself to cross their "stern river," and trying wishfully to talk his way into claiming some authority over matters of mourning and burial, like one of the *Dirae.*

The Sibyl puts Palinurus in his place with her rebuke, but consoles him by promising him that his body will be attended to. Her command continues,

> 'sed cape dicta memor, duri solacia casus,
> nam tua finitimi, longe lateque per urbes
> prodigiis acti caelestibus, ossa piabunt
> et statuent tumulum et tumulo sollemnia mittent,
> aeternumque locus Palinuri nomen habebit.'

> "—but instead pay attention and remember my words, as comfort for a hard lot.
> Neighboring people, among cities far and wide,
> driven by heaven-sent portents, will pay atonement to your bones,
> and will build a grave-mound and dispatch solemn offerings to the mound,
> and the place will keep Palinurus' name for ever." (*Aen.* 6.377–81)

The Sibyl's consolation presents the taxonomies that give people their proper *sedes* in the underworld as part of a dynamic interaction between humans and gods. Visible anomalies will match Palinurus' anomalous situation and will mark the fact that there is matter out of place, dirt that needs to be cleansed. Prodigies will be sent by the heavenly powers (and/or will appear in the sky, 6.379).[49] Local and not so local inhabitants will make expiation, and, as is usual in Roman practice, will honor the tomb with the dues that acknowledge the dead man, so as to give him a lasting—even unending—place in the land of the living.[50]

The Sibyl has already aligned these systems of commemoration with the special recognition—*fama,* in essence, though she doesn't use the word—which is given to exceptional *uirtus.* This special recognition has allowed Aeneas to enter the realms of the dead because of his remarkable *pietas.* But one of the ways that the Sibyl puts Palinurus in his place, even while consoling him, is to link the dead man's own attentiveness with the mindfulness of

49. The Sibyl's adjective *caelestibus* in 6.379 suggests that the signs will come from the sky (rather as Daedalus does on his *praepetibus pennis* in 6.15), not from the earth. But given the confusion of heaven and hell (as Hardie 1993 puts it), there is no telling what means the heavenly powers may use to communicate.

50. See Feldherr 2000; Maurin 1984.

the living who will care for him: she asks him for a kind of commemorative reciprocity. In 6.377 she tells him *cape dicta memor* ("take my words into your mind"), in imitation of the remembrance that the gods will provoke to ensure that the pollution is expiated. He must keep in mind that the landscape itself will end up keeping him in mind, preserving his name forever; the topographical order of things is underpinned by divine order.

The poem hints, though, that Palinurus is unable to match this lasting topographical memory: his pain is driven away only for a little while by the Sibyl's words (*parumper,* 6.383). He will receive a funeral when prodigious signs alert people to his corpse, much as the bleeding bush alerts Aeneas to Polydorus' polluting presence in Book 3. But like the still bleeding Polydorus, Palinurus will have to act as mourner for himself.

PIETAS fuses expectations which modern western cultures tend to separate as distinct categories: purity, and the conscientious remembrance of what one owes to individuals, to a community, and to an ordered cosmos. *Pietas* demands a purity poised on the brink between material and metaphorical cleanliness. This instability is intrinsic to a ritual economy in which acts of expiation may wash away both material and figurative "dirt" through a process of symbolic exchange.

Pietas asks that memory should be materialized in a web of substitutions. These displacements make expiation possible through figurative interactions between dirt and purification. The hopes vested in the restitutive capacity of *pietas* negotiate the give and take between aspects of the *Aeneid* that sometimes seem starkly opposed: conflagration and rebirth, vengeful punishment and affectionate benevolence, frenzied lament for the past and careful dedication to the future. Aeneas is supremely *pius* as much in his capacity for intense and potentially contaminating remembrance of the dead as in his obedient devotion to the divine will directing the Trojans' future. Aeneas' devoted remembrance of his father is powerful enough to flout the usual rules that govern life and death.[51]

Tidying up—whether one is cleaning up conceptual anomaly or material dirt—means involvement in the mess. That is why mourning is both pollut-

51. This logic is emphasized repeatedly in Books 5 and 6 and is summed up by Anchises at 6.687–89, when he joyfully exclaims that Aeneas' *pietas* has triumphed over the hard journey (*uenisti tandem, tuaque expectata parenti / uicit iter durum pietas? datur ora tueri / nate, tua et notas audire et reddere uoces*). Anchises celebrates the bridging of the normally impenetrable divide between dead parent and living son, in contrast with Venus, who appears to Aeneas in 1.409 to use a mortal disguise precisely to maintain the divide between divine parent and mortal son.

ing and part of a purifying process. Death rituals acknowledge the pollution experienced by mourners, and include specific steps to cleanse that pollution, which comes both from contact with the corpse and from grief-filled memories. One reason that *pietas* makes for stories is that Aeneas' attempts to live up to all his obligations to maintain human and divine order often lead to tumultuous results. But the converse is also true: the poem shows that being *pius* can be memorable and story-worthy by presenting *pietas* as a principle that stimulates transgression.

We have seen how the Sibyl tries to guard the distinctions that order the world of the dead. She links these structures with commemoration above ground, and speaks harshly to Palinurus when he hopes to cross Acheron without burial. Yet when she helps Aeneas descend into the underworld, the Sibyl makes *pietas* itself violate the most basic systems of classification, the order that divides the living from the dead, and mortal from immortal.[52] Palinurus' hope of getting a ride across the Styx is itself inspired by the anomalous presence of a living man in the realm of the dead (6.363–71). This kind of anomaly, of course, lies at the heart of epic, where lasting *fama* arises from exceeding ordinary human limits.[53]

When the poem depicts Aeneas' obedient defiance in the visit to his father in Book 6, it draws attention to another kind of transgressive *pietas* on the poet's part. The poet's transgression lies in imagining what it would mean to have Sibylline knowledge of the distinctions that order existence beyond death. The poem marks an awareness of this transgression several times in Book 6, but perhaps most strikingly at 6.563, when the Sibyl warns Aeneas that "it is sanctioned for no pure man to tread the threshold of crime" (*nulli fas casto sceleratum insistere limen*). Aeneas can hear the sounds of suffering from Tartarus, but his vision of the punishments enacted there must be limited to the Sibyl's transmission of what Hecate has taught her. The need to keep purity separate from pollution is here explicitly

52. Discussing the inconsistencies of Vergil's underworld, Zetzel 1989 and O'Hara 2007, 91–95 show how any aspirations to order expressed by *Aeneid* 6 are deeply embedded in disorder, and vice versa. Zetzel 1989, 264 points out that "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."

53. We are told that Anchises' guided tour among the unborn Romans inflames his son's mind with passionate love for the *fama* that is coming (*famae uenientis,* 6.889). Austin 1977 *ad loc.* suggests that the present participle *uenientis* indicates that this *fama* is already on its way. The poem elides Aeneas' immediate future, which will be imagined/remembered by the *Aeneid,* with the *fama* that will be won by the city yet to be built (as with the *fama* predicted for Julius Caesar in Jupiter's prophetic promise in 1.287). See Hardie 1998, 251 on the repetition in 6.889 of the first half of 4.197, which tells of the effects of the foul goddess *fama* on Iarbas; as Hardie observes, the second half of that line is repeated in 11.342 to describe the force of Drances' speech.

linked with the question of where knowledge of such inaccessible spaces originates.[54]

One of the most important ways for imagination to cross the normal boundaries claimed by human knowledge is through metaphor. Kenneth Burke sums this up in Aristotelian terms that echo his description of piety: "Metaphor is a device for seeing something in terms of something else. It brings out the thisness of a that, or the thatness of a this."[55] Burke's Aristotelian account presents metaphor as evoking a kind of recognition, but allows space for rupture in the connections made between "this" and "that."

Shocking metaphors—expressions of anomaly—ask their interpreters to connect categories that would usually be kept separate. *Fama* is sustained not only by forging links of recognition between "this" and "that," but also by breaking the links that are conventionally accepted. Daedalus' arts (his inventions and his commemorative door-panels) get into difficulties because they simultaneously forge and break such links. But those arts become incorporated into the *Aeneid*'s poetic *fama* precisely because they are so successful—too successful—in their imaginative transgression.

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54. The disquiet caused for readers by the whole poetic journey of Book 6 can be measured by the never-ceasing debate over Aeneas' exit by the ivory gate meant for the dispatch of false dreams, which underlines Aeneas' anomalous status as neither a true shade (6.894) nor a dream—deceptive or otherwise (6.895–96). Casali's recent discussion (2010, 134–37) of the pointed, allusive obscurity of the troublesome ivory gate cites bibliographies in Horsfall's 1995 Brill Companion and the 1995 article of Molyviatis-Toptsis in the *American Journal of Philology* that indicate the notoriously dense scholarly history of this passage.

55. Burke 1945/1969, 503.