Turnus and Aeneid 12.

This paper is a cursory survey of scholarship with particular focus on Turnus in Book 12 of the Aeneid. Scholarship over the past decades has oscillated between outright condemnation of Turnus and sympathy. On the one hand, Turnus is the 'thug', the embodiment of furor and a second Achilles who suspends the heads of his victims on his chariot. On the other hand, Turnus is a handsome noble youth and a victim of the Fates and Furies. He is an Homeric figure whose death is a tragic inevitability in a proto-Roman world. Turnus is a complex character. He cannot, however, be isolated from the themes of the text, the pietas of Aeneas and the Roman and Augustan teleology of this epic, and scholarship has struggled to locate the tensions of his character precisely in the poem as a whole.

This paper therefore will survey how scholarship has addressed the character of Turnus, his relationship to Aeneas, as a foil or a double of Aeneas, and finally how his death has been interpreted. First I will look at earlier pessimistic interpretations of Turnus. Second, I will look at more favourable accounts of Turnus and negative readings of Aeneas, the so-called 'Harvard school' of interpretation. Because Turnus cannot be analysed in isolation in Book 12, much of this survey out of necessity deals with material in other books. Finally, I will separately address the end of the epic, the death of Turnus, and how scholarship has interpreted this. Given the breadth of scholarly opinion on the Aeneid, this cannot be a comprehensive review. Instead, drawing on prominent scholars, I hope to draw out a diverse array of interpretive possibilities to stimulate discussion and enquiry for VCE Latin teachers and students.

Turnus the Villain

Particularly in older scholarship, Turnus has generally been regarded as a villainous character, a thesis which still has proponents. He is 'violentus from first to last, passionate, reckless, and contemptuous of any law or promise that would interfere with his wild, impulsive will'.1 To this school of thought, Turnus is a tyrant ruled by fury and anger, a bad king who fails to consider communal interests over his personal desires, and a monstrous villain who represents the infernal forces of the Furies.

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1 Conway, R (1928), 98.
For Galinsky, the differences between Aeneas and Turnus are manifest. Aeneas is another Hercules; Turnus is another Cacus. Galinsky sees the Hercules-Cacus story, narrated by Evander in Book 8, as an allegory of the duel between Aeneas and Turnus, anticipating 'the victory of Aeneas and the triumph of Augustus.' So he says, 'Turnus is dominated by fury and madness, which takes on the aspect of wickedness.' Galinsky points out a number of verbal parallels between Turnus and Cacus: the simile of anger as a boiling cauldron, use of the word caligo, not merely material darkness but an 'impairment of the power of perception', their huge physiques, and comparisons of Turnus and Cacus to stones and rockslides. Galinsky notes that Turnus was originally a chthonic deity in Southern Latium associated with fire. Galinsky speculates that the original inspiration for the association between Turnus and Cacus was the cult of Caca, who existed before Vesta, although the connection between Cacus and Caca is obscure. Both Turnus and Cacus however are associated with fire in the Aeneid, Cacus being the monster which breathes fire and Turnus whose eyes are fiery (12.101-2). Furthermore, while too Turnus had initially been the victim of Allecto, in Book 12 he is a free agent and voluntarily associates himself with infernal powers. The conquest of Aeneas over Turnus therefore, in Galinsky's words, 'marks the beginning of the triumphant ascendency of the Aeneidae'. Turnus is the monster that a hero of Greek mythology would be expected to slay.

Exploring notions of kingship in the Aeneid, Cairns states categorically, 'In essence, Turnus is a bad king'. Cairns traces the etymology of Turnus to the Etruscan version of the Greek word, tyrannos, and his name would have suggested tyrant. O'Hara disagrees seeing no evidence of any suggestion of 'tyrant' or 'bad king'. Certainly Vergil does seem to make puns on the name, when Turnus is collocated with rex and tyrannos (cf. 9.327, 10.446-8), but there is never any clear pejorative association: O'Hara, J (1996), 185; cf. 218, 227. The point is a matter of conjecture.

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4 Galinsky, K (1966), 37.
5 Galinsky, K (1966), 37.
6 Galinsky, K (1966), 39. Some recent critics have preferred to interpret Allecto allegorically: Williams, G (1983), 24, but as Keith notes, there is a strong opposition between the two. In 7.444 and 454, there is an ironic reversal in which Turnus claims that men, viri, are responsible for war and peace, bella paxque, but Allecto reveals herself as a woman and brings not peace but war: Keith, A.M. (2000), 73.
7 Galinsky, K (1966), 40.
10 Cairns, F (1989), 67. O'Hara disagrees seeing no evidence of any suggestion of 'tyrant' or 'bad king'. Certainly Vergil does seem to make puns on the name, when Turnus is collocated with rex and tyrannos (cf. 9.327, 10.446-8), but there is never any clear pejorative association: O'Hara, J (1996), 185; cf. 218, 227. The point is a matter of conjecture.
acknowledges that Turnus is 'not without good qualities': he is *ante alios pulcherrimus omnes*, 'most beautiful compared to the rest' (7.55, 7.473, 7.649), has divine and noble ancestry (7.56, 7.476) and he is brave (7.474).\(^{11}\) But for the most part, Turnus is a savage, war-mongering youth who ignores wise counsel, acts without strategy and demonstrates constant implacable rage. The early allusion to Turnus is troubling. Sibyll calls him *alias Achilles* (6.89), an identification Turnus himself accepts, *hic etiam inuentum Priamo narrabis Achillem* 'You shall also report to Priam that Achilles has been found here' (9.742). Turnus implicitly is associated with the rage of Achilles. Cairns gives a detailed enumeration of Turnus' crimes. Turnus ignores portents, whereas Aeneas and Latinus are exceedingly attentive to portents.\(^{12}\) Although the priestess, Calybe, is in fact Allecto, Turnus nonetheless derides her impiously where he should have shown respect for her 'age, sacral status and role as divine messenger (7.436-44).\(^{13}\) Throughout the war, Turnus is dominated by 'bellicose rage'. In Book 9, he is *turbidus* (57), he is like a wolf *asper et improbus ira*, ('harsh and wicked in his anger’ 62). It is *furor* and *caedis insana cupido* (760), madness and an insane lust for slaughter, which rule Turnus. The contrast between Aeneas and Turnus is evident: Aeneas is a lover of peace, Turnus is the lover of war.\(^{14}\) Turnus lacks Aeneas' defining *pietas*. For example, at 10.443, when he kills Pallas, he wishes his father, Evander, could witness it. Turnus too contrasts with the other royal figures throughout the war books of the *Aeneid*: Aeneas, Latinus, Diomedes and Evander. He is characterised by *furor* and *violentia*, rejecting good advice and denying the option of peace.\(^{15}\)

This picture, according to Cairns, is a constant image of Turnus throughout and by Book 12, Turnus has come to unprecedented levels of rage. At the start of the book he burns implacably of his own accord and incites rage in himself, *altro implacabilis ardet/ attolitque animos* (12.3). Later before Aeneas and the Latins make their peace treaties, he again is characterised by rage, *totoque ardentis ab ore/ scintillae absistunt, oculis micat acribus ignis* In all his face, ('as he burns with passion, sparks fly off, a fire flashes in his fierce eyes', 12.101-2). Turnus' rage is an invariable state. As he says

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\(^{11}\) Cairns, F (1989), 68.

\(^{12}\) Cairns, F (1989), 69. As an example, see *Aen.* 7.58 in which Turnus declares *nil me fatalia terrent.*

\(^{13}\) Cairns, F (1989), 69.

\(^{14}\) Cairns, F (1989), 71.

\(^{15}\) Cairns, F (1989), 73-4.
to Juturna in 12. 680: *hunc, oro, sine me furere ante furorem*, 'I beg, let me rage with this fury until death'. Turnus desires only to rage. There is no purpose to his anger except anger itself.

Cairns notes too that Turnus resembles Dido. It is not until late in the narrative at 12.70 that Turnus is identified as an *amator*, a lover, *illum turbat amor figitque in uirgine uultus*, ('Love stirs him and he fixes his face on the maiden'.) Later the *amor*-theme reemerges. It is *furiis agitatus amor*, ‘love roused by fury’ at 12.668 that impels him to reenter the battle. Cairns notes that in this Turnus is similar to Dido. In the same way that Dido neglects her kingdom, because of *amor* and *furor*, Turnus plunges into suicidal combat. Turnus acts not out of communal interests for the state but out of personal desire, out of *furor* and *amor*, and he is the antithesis of Aeneas who is kept awake by concerns for his people and desires only their peace.

Another scholar, Goldberg, sees Turnus as an expression of old Homeric codes of honor which Aeneas must overcome in order to establish proto-Roman values. He argues that the *Aeneid*, while obviously paying homage to the *Iliad*, ultimately escapes the ' confines of Homeric virtue'. Compare Aeneas in Book 2 to Hector in Book 6 of the *Iliad*. Hector abandons his family to enter the battlefield; Aeneas must abandon the battlefield for his family. It is ultimately Turnus, 'the truly Homeric hero of the *Aeneid*', who loses. Goldberg argues that Turnus is comparable to Achilles motivated by *furor* and *caedis...insana cupido*, 'madness and an insane lust for slaughter' (9.757-61). What the *Aeneid* shows is, in Goldberg’s words, 'The man set aflame by the Fury's torch is gradually undone by a prowess that, under other epic conditions, would have won him the greatest glory. In the Roman context, it is only a prescription for failure'. Turnus fights for personal glory like a Homeric hero whereas Aeneas is ultimately motivated by *pietas*. Aeneas is the exemplar of Roman values and Turnus is its antithesis.

Of course, Aeneas too shows anger. How do some of these scholars distinguish Turnus' rage from Aeneas’? Oliver Lyne argues that the crucial distinction is that

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16 Cairns, F (1989), 76.
Aeneas ultimately desires peace. Lyne argues that for the most part Aeneas is a Stoic imperialist. Although he struggles to accept the responsibilities of a Stoic king, often moved by *furor*, *dolor* and *amor*, he nonetheless tries to restrain his passions and obtain peace, clearly exemplifying Stoic moral teachings. This is what distinguishes the rage of Turnus from the wrath of Aeneas.

So, for example, in Book 12, Aeneas comes to the treaty filled with anger,

\[
\text{nec minus interea maternis saevus in armis}
\]

Aeneas acuit Martem et se suscitat ira

Meanwhile, no less savage in the armour given by his mother Aeneas rouses war and gears himself with anger.

\[
12.107-8
\]

but this is not *furor* and Aeneas' state at this moment is in contradistinction to Turnus, in lines quoted above:

\[
\text{his agitur furiis, totoque ardentis ab ore}
\]

\[
\text{scintillae absistunt, oculis micat foedere bellum.}
\]

He is lead by these furies, as he burns with passion, sparks fly from his whole face, a fire flashes in his fierce eyes.

Aeneas however only has mind for peace, not personal interest

\[
\text{non ego nec Teucris Italos parere iubebo}
\]

\[
\text{nec mihi regna peto:}
\]

I will not order the Italians to obey the Trojans nor do I seek a kingdom for myself.

\[
12.189-91
\]

The opening of Book 12 characterises the two very differently.

Bowra agrees that Aeneas is characterised by Stoic principles, although Aeneas only attains these gradually over the course of the *Aeneid*. Bowra notes as well that Aeneas' immoderate anger and desire for vengeance against Turnus is alien to Stoicism. War is permissible but not *furor*. Aeneas' anger is clearly not Stoic but nonetheless his aims and intentions are. But for a small indulgence in *ira*, Aeneas is

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19 Stoicism permitted war only for the sake of peace: Bowra, C.M (1990), 375. Aeneas acts on morally justifiably grounds whereas Turnus does not. Turnus 'fights for his own glory', *sinas pro laude pacisci* (12.49). He is 'the antithesis of the Stoic ideal', 'His motive is a mere desire for war -- *amor ferri et scelerata insania belli* (Aen. 7.641) -- and this is later reinforced by his feelings of injured pridce at the loss of Lavinia and the taunts of Drances'. 365-6.

'the Stoic imperialist'. When finally the truce is broken, Aeneas responds 'impeccably', *O cohibete iras* (12.313), 'restrain your anger'. It is only with the greatest provocation that Aeneas (12.494-9) commits indiscriminate murder, engaging in 'savage slaughter without distinction'. Lyne stresses nonetheless that while Aeneas' behaviour here is not Stoic, his aims are and while the duel between Aeneas and Turnus closely resembles that between Achilles and Hector, Aeneas is not motivated by 'vengeance owed to a friend' but by a desire for peace.

**Sympathy for Turnus: The Nobility of Turnus.**

The Turnus of the *Aeneid* differs significantly from the Turnus who figured in contemporary Roman literature. Here Thomas raises an important point against critics of Turnus. Whereas Livy (1.2) narrates that all of Italy had been joined in alliance and Aeneas and Lavinia united, Vergil following the tradition of Cato takes a more favourable account in which Turnus is not unambiguously a public enemy. Turnus is part of a 'pan-Italian resistance to the Trojans'. Whatever the moral status of Turnus in the end, Vergil has deliberately chosen not to make Turnus a straightforward villain. Turnus initially fights in the interests of Italy and his right to Lavinia, which he had won in his defense against the Etruscan threat.

Turnus does possess good qualities and Turnus' characterisation, despite his violence and rage, is highly favorable in some parts. Ross tells that in Book 7, Turnus is introduced as a youth of exceptional beauty and nobility. He has *decus egregium forma*, 'the honour of outstanding beauty' (7.473), and in the *Aeneid* 'physical and spiritual beauty are inseparable'. Turnus in fact is very similar to Aeneas in their similar nobility and matching rage. In 12.216-21, he is very far from being the typical warrior figure. Phrases such as *incessu tacito* 'silent step', *demisso lumine*
‘downcast gaze’, *pubentes genae* ‘youthful cheeks’, *iuvenali in corpore pallor* ‘pallor in his young body’, may be the attributes of a young girl.29

Readers even may pity Turnus despite his morally abject actions. Williams acknowledges that Turnus’ character is villainous (for example, Turnus lacks strategy in 9.756-61 as he devastates the Trojan camp but does not seek reinforcements which Vergil tells would have assured his victory). Nonetheless Williams believes that there is growing sympathy over the course of Book 12 for Turnus.30 In 12.665-68, sympathy comes to a climax when Turnus realises Latinus' city is under attack. He has *conscia virtus*, 'that self-conscious pride in one's reputation for valour' and so the decision to face Aeneas is noble.31 Williams argues here that Turnus is more like Hector in *Iliad* 22, than Achilles. Both face their imminent deaths motivated by a noble desire to preserve their reputations. Turnus however deserves even more sympathy because whereas Hector only once fled from Achilles out of fear and then fought bravely to the end, Turnus in contrast is constantly afraid of his death and, unlike Hector who begs only for burial, Turnus begs essentially to be spared.32 Turnus is truly humbled and pitiable. Vergil's intention is to evoke sympathy for Turnus. This is not intended to exculpate Turnus. Williams argues that a twelth century man would be expected to kill Turnus.33 In a similar way, Mezentius was evidently a tyrant and an impious *contemptor divum* but Vergil nonetheless concedes him nobility when he learns of his son's death.34 The moral ambiguities merely reflect the poet's hatred of war and preference for peace and his aversion to 'easy moral condemnations'.35

Vasiliki Panoussi sees Turnus ultimately as a tragic figure. It is Panoussi's argument that Vergil draws on both the Homeric and Sophoclean Ajax as a subtext of Turnus. In the *Iliad* Ajax is a morally exemplary hero characterised by concern for his community as well as a great hero of amazing martial prowess. It is this military prowess and martial rage, however which in Sophocles' Ajax cause madness and in

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29 Ross, D (2007), 51; cf. di Cesare, M (1974), 214: 'His demeanour reflects Juturna's despair and the whole Latin situation. The emphasis on Turnus' youthful body suggests his lack of maturity and stability'.
30 Williams, G (1983), 220.
31 Williams, G (1983), 221.
32 Williams, G (1983), 221.
33 Williams, G (1983), 223.
35 Williams, G (1983), 225.
the end suicide. Homeric martial valour undercuts the very moral features that Ajax showed in the *Iliad*, his concern for the community. Similarly the tragedy of Turnus is that he too shows the same Homeric values but ultimately in the *Aeneid* these values are futile. This is a proto-Roman world, not a Homeric world. Turnus, like Sophocles' Ajax, is a tragic figure caught in this change of values. Turnus ultimately is portrayed in the same tragic vein as Ajax, divided between Homeric codes of honor on the one hand and contemporary values. The *violentia* of Turnus in the Homeric world would have been a heroic virtue but in a proto-Roman world with an Augustan teleology, it is doomed to failure. So Panoussi says, "Turnus... due to his inability to conform to the new role his community is called on to play in Aeneas’ Latium, finds himself in complete isolation, grasping at his outdated sense of honor and rushing to certain death as a result." The irony is that Turnus is just like Hector but this is not a world of individualistic ethic and κλέος, 'glory', but of communal survival and preservation.

Similarly, despite Turnus' egregeious character, di Cesare argues that in the final duel, Vergil positions the reader to sympathise for Turnus. The *Dira* deprives him of any possibility of escape: *sic Turno, quacumque viam virtute petivit/ successum dea dira negat* ('just like that the *Dira* denies any success wherever he sought a path with his courage', 12.913-4). Di Cesare describes the verb *negat* as 'harsh and inexorable'. He points out that one of the central motifs of this passage is the images of enclosure: the Trojans already hemmed Turnus in (12.743-5) and Turnus had been compared to a stag *inclusum* (12.749-57); Juturna hides from the *Dira* (*contexit...condidit* 12.885-6); Aeneas threatens Turnus *clausumve cava condere terra* ('to hide himself shut up in the hollow ground' 12.893). Ultimately Turnus 'embodies a desparate but heroic nobility, doomed but unforgettable' and is both 'hero and victim'.

The scholarship certainly offers a diverse breadth of opinion. As Conte observes, scholarship shows a broad spectrum of interpretations of Turnus and 'at the one extreme, he is barbarous and uncivilised, an enemy of the state, a daemonic dark

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36 In the same way that Athenian tragedy is an attempt to come to terms with the realisation of a complex city-state and its collision with ancient values: Hardie, P (1997), 316.
character; at the other, he is the innocent victim of Fate, champion of victory'. Conte seeks to collapse this dichotomy between the "Harvard" and "European" school of interpretation. He argues that scholars have taken the contradictory features of Turnus' character, whether the positive or negative, and 'projected them outside the text simply to become the differing voices of interpreters who contradict one another'. Instead, Turnus should be understood as a genuinely contradictory character. Contradiction is not an incidental feature of the Aeneid but intrinsic to the construction of Vergil's characters. Turnus is like Mezentius who is a deplorably evil character but, after his son's death, adumbrates the central theme of filial love. Conte sees this as a tragic device of the Aeneid. The tensions of his character is a genuine Vergilian artistic strategy. The Aeneid is a truly tragic drama and not a catachectic text. it is an agitating, distressing text, which engenders a crisis of doubt.

The Death of Turnus

One particularly vehement area of debate has been the question of whether Aeneas's execution of Turnus is morally justifiable and whether in the end Aeneas is a moral exemplar of pietas. Did Aeneas justly execute Turnus or is Turnus ultimately a victim? Even if conceding that Turnus was a villainous character, scholars do not necessarily concede that the death of Turnus was morally justifiable, or at least not straightforwardly so.

Otis is perhaps the most cited seminal scholar in recent scholarship. He argues for the most positive reading of Aeneas at the conclusion of the epic. He argues that 'In one sense, Aeneas is the 'good' opposite of the 'bad' Turnus: He is pietas and humanitas versus impietas and violentia.' However even while affirming Aeneas forcefully as a symbol of Augustan imperial ideology, Otis nonetheless believes that Turnus is in part redeemed. Otis writes, 'We are vastly more impressed by the fact that Turnus finally comes to himself and heroically defies Juturna's efforts to save him.' Indeed it is the 'unromantic combination of humanity with moral realism -- of justice with sympathy' that gives the ideology of the Aeneid its balance.'

41 Conte, G (2007), 162.
42 Conte, G (2007), 162.
43 Otis, B (1963), 392.
44 Otis, B (1963), 392.
45 Otis, B (1963), 393.
Otis' reading of the *Aeneid* has been largely criticised. Putnam argues that Aeneas' mental state at this moment in the narrative is morally unjustifiable because of the presence of *furiae* and *ira*. Putnam asks, 'Is this Aeneas who kills Turnus so very different from the earlier Aeneas we see pondering the murder of Helen during Troy's dark night?'\(^46\) Compare how Aeneas is described in 2.575-6:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{exarsere ignes animo; subit ira cadentem} \\
&\text{ulcisci patriam et sceleratas sumere poenas.}
\end{align*}
\]

Fire burned in his mind. Anger assails him to avenge his falling fatherland and exact punishment for this *sceles*.

Aeneas is motivated by unreason, *ira* and *furiae*, which cause him to contemplate murder. Aeneas at the end of Book 12 is characterised by a similar state of mind, he is *furiis accensus et ira terribilis*, 'lit by fury and terrifying in his anger'. Since these passions were impious in Book 2, explicitly reprimanded by Venus, then surely they are again in Book 12.

Most significantly, Putnam sees the conclusion to this epic as a failure of *clementia*. In Book 6, in Aeneas' *katabasis*, Anchises had instructed his son *parcere subiectis et debellare superbos* ('to spare the conquered and fight the proud' 12.853). Before his death, Turnus is *supplex* (931). Putnam here sees an etymological word play. While Turnus had originally been *super-bus*, he is now *sub-plex* and this is physically manifest in the final moments of the poem as Aeneas stands *super* ‘over’ and Turnus is *sub* ‘below’.\(^47\) This is the exact moment in which Aeneas should spare the *subiectus*. Consequently the death of Turnus ultimately represents a final act of *impietas* by Aeneas. Aeneas disobeys his father's commandment, killing a suppliant whom he stands over, *superbus*. Aeneas had already conquered the *superbus* but he has failed to fulfil the second half of his father's injunction.

Another important point of symbolism in the final scene is the baldric of Pallas.\(^48\) Putnam sees the death of Turnus as a reenactment of the crime of the Danaids, which had been depicted on Pallas' belt. In this myth, Danaus had married his fifty daughters

\(^{48}\) Putnam, M (1998), 189-207.
to the fifty sons of his brother, Aegyptus. Immediately after their nuptials, during the
night, forty nine of the daughters of Danaus kill their husbands. Vergil's ecphrasis
of the baldric, so Putnam argues, has significant implications for how to read the end
of Book 12. Turnus is 'a youth basely slaughtered' and Aeneas is 'a type of Danaid
enforcing the vendetta of her father'. Aeneas then in the final moments of the Aeneid
is comparable to the Danaids, guilty of the double of crime of killing their husbands
and their cousins, impietas.

Galinsky explicitly responds to Putnam's criticism of Aeneas here. First, he says,
Turnus is a 'thug'. In 12. 511-12, Turnus suspends heads from his chariot. Turnus too
has broken the peace agreement and is a war criminal. Turnus also had vowed his
life, vobis animam hanc soceroque Latino/ Turnus ego, haud ulli veterum virtute
secundo/ devovi ,'I, Turnus, vow this soul to Latinus, father-in-law, I second to none
of my ancestors in courage' (11.440-2). Also me verius unum/ pro vobis foedus luere
et decernere ferro ('It is better that I alone alone for the treaty instead of you and
settle this with the sword' 12.694-5). According to his own terms, Turnus has no right
to ask for Aeneas' clemency and live. Second, in response to arguments concerning
Aeneas' anger, which Putnam sees as damnable, Galinsky notes that anger has a
justifiable place outside of the Stoic tradition. In the administration of justice, wrath
was regarded as an essential component of determining the appropriate penalty and
Galinsky cites examples from Demosthenes and Lysias, and later Cicero, where anger
is part of deciding punishments. It is in this tradition that St Paul had written in 1
Thess. 1.10 of the ira ventura, ‘the wrath to come’. Anger was also widely accepted
as morally permissible by Plato and Aristotle, and even when carried to excess, it was
less damnable than other passions. Finally, Aeneas' anger is quite different from
Achilles' wrath. Whereas Achilles fights for a private cause, takes pleasure in killing
and has no hesitation in killing Hector, Aeneas acts for the sake of a community, he

49 See also Harrison, S.J. (1998), 223-42. Harrison argues that rather than being a symbol of guilt, implicating Aeneas in criminality, the belt is a symbol of victimhood, of youth tragically killed.
53 Galinsky, K (1988), 326-8. For a sample of positive judgments on anger in antiquity, see Demosth. 21.147.9., 34.19.4., 23.168, 24.218; Laws, 731D; Tusc. 4.43-44. A similar point made by di Cesare is that for Aeneas, pietas is juxtaposed with war and brutality, arma and vis: di Cesare, M (1979), 239. Aeneas is afterall pietate insignis et armis and there must be an equilibrium between pietas and force, anger, violence and brutality.
does not take pleasure in killing Turnus and in a humanising way Vergil shows Aeneas moved with pity for Turnus.\textsuperscript{55} Pietas and furor however are not mutually exclusive: pietas is not 'Quakerish meekness'\textsuperscript{56}

Similarly, Mackie interprets Book 12 as a final affirmation of the complementarity of pietas and furor, in contrast to Putnam who sees these as antithetical.\textsuperscript{57} Commenting on 12.565-73, Mackie argues that Aeneas' pietas centres on his awareness that he follows a course ordained by Jupiter and that he seeks to reimpose the treaty by which he swore a sacred oath. He believes in short that his course of action is just and right. His furor complements his pietas and can be seen in his determination, unless the enemy to submit, to show no mercy to the city.\textsuperscript{58}

So when Aeneas engages in indiscriminate slaughter (\textit{saevam nullo discrimine caedem}, 12.494), this is a sign of his absolute pietas to the oaths they had sworn. The fact that he is ruled by furor in the duel with Turnus, that he has a \textit{saevum pectus} (12.888), is not a transgression of pietas but a realisation of it. The complicity of Jupiter in Aeneas' furor, after the council between Jupiter and Juno, reaffirms his pietas. Aeneas has the support of the Fates and Jupiter and the, albeit reluctant, assent of Juno. Aeneas may exhibit 'irrational violence' but this does not justify the view that he is impius.\textsuperscript{59} Sympathy for Turnus ultimately underscores the conflict between pietas and humanitas. As in the case of Dido, Aeneas must subordinate his humanity, to stay with Dido or to spare Turnus, for the sake of his community.\textsuperscript{60}

There is however a middle-ground between these views in scholarship, beyond condemnation and exculpation. Lyne argues that Turnus’ spoliation of Pallas is no justification for Aeneas but nonetheless Aeneas should not be wholly condemned. While scholars such as Galinsky have argued that Aeneas' actions at the end of the \textit{Aeneid} are motivated by pietas to Pallas and Evander, Oliver Lyne convincingly argues that Turnus' conduct in fact is quite defensible in Book 10 (10.495-505):

\textsuperscript{56} Galinsky, K (1981), 991. See also Wright, M.R. (1998) for more discussion on anger in Plato and Aristotle and the \textit{Aeneid}.
\textsuperscript{57} Mackie, C.J. (1988), 190-218.
\textsuperscript{59} Mackie, C.J. (1988), 214.
\textsuperscript{60} Mackie, C.J. (1988), 217.
despoiling his enemy, Pallas, accords with 'Roman no less than Homeric codes of
honour'. Remember too that Pallas had promised to despoil Turnus (10.449). Virgil
himself is silent about the morality of Turnus' actions. He criticises Turnus'
callousness, confidence and arrogance, but never accuses him of any 'absolute offence
against morality, divine or human', although there seems to have been some taboo
about wearing spoils. At the end of Book 12, the words humilis ‘low’, supplex
‘suppliant’ and Turnus’ own words, are significant, ‘you have conquered and the
Ausonii have seen me conquered strateching out my palms’: Turnus is defeated and
humiliated. On the whole, Lyne does not believe that Aeneas' killing of Turnus is
justifiable in proportion to Turnus' crime. Rage is morally damnable according to
Stoic doctrine.

Ultimately however what Book 12 shows is that Aeneas, while able to repress human
urges and passions (such as his love for Dido) and is sympathetic to Stoic imperial
ideals, succumbs under the greatest pressures. According to Lyne, Vergil shows an
'Aeneas trying to keep in view the high-minded aims enjoined by a Stoic imperialism
and finding again that sometimes it is not humanly feasible. Turnus may not have
deserved to die but nor should Aeneas be condemned. He ultimately desires peace.
Lyne cuts through the dichotomous readings of Aeneas and accepts there are failings
in both characters.

While accepting too that the death of Turnus is not wholly defensible, Cairns argues
that Aeneas' moral failings do not compromise his otherwise pious moral character.
He writes, 'That Aeneas is not a woodenly perfect hero, but has humanising faults
throughout, is clear and is a tribute to Virgil's artistic realism'. Aeneas does act cruel
according to the standards of Vergil's time (his sacrifice of prisoners in 10.517-20; his
slaughter of helpless Magus in 10.521-36); and his sacrificial killing of the priest,
Haemonides (10.541). This however can be attributed to an interest in antiquarianism,
acknowledging the recurrent feature of human sacrifice in the ancient past. These
episodes must be understood as out of character for Aeneas and more as an artistic

61 Lyne, R.O.A.M (1990), 326.
62 Lyne, R.O.A.M (1990), 327, 335.
63 Lyne, R.O.A.M (1990), 334.
64 Lyne, R.O.A.M (1990), 337.
65 Cairns, F (1989), 78.
necessity for an epic of a distant past. Therefore, while Aeneas may be *impius* at certain moments in the narrative, this is a credit to Vergil’s aesthetics. Vergil seeks to construct real people with human emotions and to locate them in their historical context.

As Winn makes explicit, Vergil points readers in two directions. Aeneas is certainly not another Achilles who taunts his victims. Aeneas displaces the act of bloodletting from himself onto Pallas. His act ultimately is rational according to the requirements of empire, as an end to war. On the other hand, the emotional intensity of the end 'entails a return to the dark and primitive world of vengeance and shame'. Vergil does not invite readers to make an easy, dualistic reading of Aeneas and Turnus but encourages different readings at the same time.

If Aeneas however in the end is not a perfect exemplar of *pietas* but a flawed human being, what are the implications of this text as a political and ideological affirmation of Augustan *imperium*? Boyle argues that what the *Aeneid* shows is the gap between empire and its practice. In Book 10, for example, when Aeneas enters the battle, he becomes 'a rabic, frenzied incarnation of *furor*'. Key words illustrate this, *ardens, furit, furens, dira frementem*. He is compared to the hundred-handed fire-breathing monster, Aegaeon (10.565). Boyle notes however that there are many favorable features to Turnus. He is far from being a fully *impius* character and his sororal affection is constantly reinforced. Juturna loves her brother, she is concerned that the match between Aeneas and Turnus is unfair and Vergil dwells on her agony and the vacuity of her immortality when her brother must die young. The images of Turnus in Book 12 also evoke sympathy: he is a wounded lion (12.4), a bull deprived of his kingdom and spurred on by love (12.103), a bull fighting over his pasture (12.715) and a hunted stag (12.749). In contrast Aeneas is the hunter dog (12.751).

Ultimately Boyle suggests that the sympathy for Turnus is intended to belie the imperial ideology and historical forces that Aeneas represents. So Boyle concludes, 'The death of Turnus may signify the victory of Aeneas, Rome and her empire, but it

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66 Winn, (2008), 98.
67 Boyle, A.J (1986), 89.
is Vergil's concern to emphasise that it is a victory for the forces of non-reason and the triumph, if of pietas, of pietas redefined as furor.\textsuperscript{71} The death of Turnus represents the practical side of empire and the necessity of furor behind the Augustan ideology of pietas. Turnus is ultimately the victim of the machinations of empire and the historical imperative of the foundation of Rome.

**Conclusion.**
While earlier scholarship generally regarded Turnus as a villainous character, there has been growing recognition of the many positive aspects of Turnus and, even while he displays many moral failings, nonetheless there are many reasons to feel sympathetic to Turnus. He is an ambiguous character. On the one hand, he shows rage and fury, acts out of private interests and is comparable to Dido; on the other hand, Turnus has a noble ancestry, he is introduced as a beautiful youth, much like Iulus, and many times there are reasons to see him as a tragic figure. The final scene in which Aeneas executes Turnus has of course provoked debate throughout generations of readers and this survey of recent scholarship confirms the diversity of views still in currency. Perhaps as Conte argues, this very crisis of interpretation is the heart of the Aeneid as a complex, tragic and meditative text.\textsuperscript{72}

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\textsuperscript{71} Boyle, A.J. (1986), 131-2.
\textsuperscript{72} Conte, B (2007), 168; cf. 150-69.
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