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Rereading the Death of Turnus: Ritual, Time and Poetics in the *Aeneid*

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Abstract: The death of Turnus, which is depicted in terms evocative of sacrificial rite, evinces a close interconnection between ritual and poetics in Vergil's *Aeneid*. By reincorporating Juturna into the economy of sacrificial imagery at the epic's close, I argue that Turnus' sacrificial death should be seen as a metapoetic act. Indeed, as suggested by an examination of how time operates in the epic and especially in its final scenes, time in the poem is structured like time in ritual practice. The *Aeneid* thus engages the reader in a process of ritually renewing the past.

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REREADING THE DEATH OF TURNUS: RITUAL, TIME, AND POETICS IN THE *AENEID*

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Vergil's *Aeneid* is a poem profoundly concerned with the origins of Rome and especially the ritual significance of Rome's past. As a result, throughout the poem ritual and poetics are closely related.¹ Indeed, not only does ritual form an important subject of the poem,² but also, as recent critics have shown, ritual practice like sacrifice functions on a conceptual level as one of the main structuring principles of the *Aeneid*'s poetics.³ One important *locus* for this tie between ritual and poetics comes in the epic's final scene. There Turnus' death is framed in sacrificial terms, both by Aeneas, who claims that Pallas has immolated Turnus, marking him for death (*immolat*, 12.949), and by Vergil, who employs sacrificial imagery in his characterization of the Rutulian throughout Book 12. By drawing the epic to a close, Turnus' figurative sacrifice signals the importance of ritual to the poem, in form as well as in content.⁴

The interconnection between ritual and poetics is by now a well-worn path in scholarship on both the *Aeneid* and its ending.⁵ Nevertheless, in this paper I would like to examine two related aspects of the subject that have received relatively little attention from critics. The first concerns Turnus' immortal sister Juturna, whose actions and cult associations are crucial for foregrounding the ritual frame of the poem's conclusion. By reincorporating Juturna into the economy of sacrificial imagery that closes the epic, I argue that the symbolic sacrifice of Turnus should be seen as a metapoetic act. In this sense, there is a significant overlap between ritual and poetics in the *Aeneid*, and, accordingly, in the second part of this paper I will examine one aspect of this overlap: time. As we will see, Vergil's poem recreates, specifically, a ritual system of time, and this conclusion has important implications for how we read the *Aeneid*.

The death of Turnus is delayed in large part by the actions of his sister Juturna, who occupies an ostensibly odd place in Vergil's epic, given that she is introduced in Book 12 for the sole purpose of delaying the inevitable death of her brother (12.149-59). Yet the various delays she contrives have poetic significance, for they are easily assimilated to the same delay or *mora* that puts off closure for the poem (e.g. 12.676, 874, 889). As is commonly noted, Juturna represents the self-conscious invention of a

¹ I would like to thank Denis Feeney and Andrew Feldherr for commenting on an earlier version of this paper. Their characteristically incisive remarks have greatly helped the shape and substance of this paper; any remaining errors, however, are my own. Thanks also to Vassiliki Panoussi for showing me a chapter from her forthcoming book. Unless otherwise noted, my quotations and translations of Latin follow Mynors' *OCT* text of Vergil and Thilo's edition of Servius' commentaries on Vergil.

² Vergil depicts the performance of numerous religious rites and sometimes even provides etiologies for their performance: for example, the *lusus Troiae* (5.596-602) or the opening of the Gates of War (7.601-17). See further Horsfall (1991) and, more generally, Franchi (1995).

³ To cite a few recent works: Bandera (1981), Nicoll (1988, 2001), Hardie (1993: 19-56), Smith (1999), Dyson (2001), Feldherr (2002), Panoussi (forthcoming, 56-95); cf. Heiden (1987).

⁴ On the sacrificial imagery surrounding Turnus in Book 12, see especially Pascal (1990), Leigh (1993), Nicoll (2001: 190-1), Panoussi (forthcoming, esp. 75-94).

⁵ So, for example, Hardie (1993: 33-4), Dyson (2001: esp. 112-24), Nicoll (2001: *passim*), Panoussi (forthcoming, 71-95); cf. Bandera (1981: 233-4).

poet struggling to bring an end to his epic.⁶ Her presence thus signals the poet's self-conscious reflection on his own work.

We can press this metapoetic understanding of Juturna further in two respects. In the first place, Vergil's Juturna is tied to artistic creation not only because she delays the epic's end, but also because she does so through various *ars*-like contrivances (*arte morer*, 12.874; *artem*, 12.632, cf. 12.892). The collocation of *ars* and *mora* recalls Vulcan's directions to the Cyclops in Book 8, where eliminating *mora* is an inherent part of using *ars*: *nunc viribus usus/ nunc manibus rapidis, omni nunc arte magistra./ praecipitate moras* (8.441-3).⁷ Vulcan's words remind that, although Juturna's delays signal artistic production, the finished product is created only after these delays are removed.⁸ Of course, the epic's various delays end only with the final, sudden death of Turnus, and it is here, in Turnus' demise, that we find an extraordinary moment of metapoiesis, an ending for epic hero and epic alike. Juturna's presence in Book 12, then, signals not just Vergil's anxiety about how properly to end his epic, but also a keen awareness that the ending itself is somehow emblematic of the epic as a whole.

We will return to Turnus' death momentarily, but for now I would like to highlight a second point about Juturna's metapoetic role in the *Aeneid*, namely, the way this role is contextualized within an explicitly ritual setting. In short, Juturna's delays of the poem's end are cast as delays of ritual practice. So, for example, after Juno first addresses Juturna in Book 12, the Trojans swear an oath that their battle will be settled by Aeneas and Turnus, and they perform a sacrifice in honor of their pact (12.169-174, 213-15). Immediately afterwards, Juturna returns to the scene and castigates the Rutulians for making the pact. That Vergil calls Juturna *haud nescia rerum* here (12.227) is telling, for in effect she reinterprets the ritualized pact and the sacrifice that preceded it as, instead, a sacrifice of Turnus on behalf of all the Rutulians: *he* is the one who 'devotes himself to the altars' of the gods (*se devovet aris*, 12.234); *he* sacrifices 'one life for all the rest' (*pro cunctis talibus unam/ obiectare animam*, 12.229-30).⁹ By importing the logic of 'one for all', Juturna both disrupts the original treaty sanctified by sacrifice and, more to the point, prefigures Turnus' duel as a symbolic sacrifice.¹⁰

⁶ E.g. Conte (1986: 158); Barchiesi (1978: 100) though compare Percell (1997); Johnson (1992: 438); and Hardie (1997: 145-8).

⁷ Juturna's association with *ars* in general, and with Vulcan's art in particular, might very well stem from her cultic ties to workers, like smiths, who "[pl]ied] their trade (*artificium*) with water" and consequently celebrated the Juturnalia on January 11 (*qui artificium aqua exercent*, Serv. *ad Aen.* 12.139). Dumézil (1966: 592) is most likely correct in identifying these workers as members of the *collegia artificum* who honored Minerva annually at the Quinquatrus festival (Ov. *F.* 3.809-34).

⁸ It should be stressed that in both passages *mora* is necessary, if only something necessary to overcome; that is to say, in both scenes Vergil suggests that a delaying element like Juturna is an indispensable part of artistic creation. Note how on a structural level the constitutive elements of *ars*, *mora*, fire and water are ultimately combined both at the forge and—if Crahay and Hubaux (1959: 173-80, 211-12) are right in following the tradition of Turnus as a chthonic fire deity strongly resembling the Vergilian Cacus—in the death of Turnus, a scene immediately preceded by Juturna's plunge back into the water (12.886).

⁹ Putnam (1965: 165), Hardie (1993: 28-9), Nicoll (2001: 190), Panoussi (forthcoming, 85-6). The idea of 'one for all' underscores the Palinurus episode in Book 5 (cf. *unum pro multis dabitur caput*, 5.815)—on which see especially Nicoll (1988)—and, as detailed in particular by Bandera (1981) and Hardie (1993: 27-32), this sacrificial logic infuses much of the *Aeneid*.

¹⁰ It is clear that Juturna has in mind some form of sacrifice at the altars (cf. *aris*, 12.234). Still, critics are split on the issue of whether or not Vergil intends, specifically, the *devotio* practice, the *locus classicus* for which is Livy 8.6.9-16, where the sacrifice of P. Decius Mus and, later, that of his son achieve great victory

Again, in her final conversation with her brother, Juturna tries to persuade Turnus to fight against the Trojans and thereby to draw him away from one-on-one conflict with Aeneas (12.625-30). Turnus' response, however, expresses his frustration with his sister's efforts (esp. 12.632-4); in particular, he refuses to follow her wishes and turns instead to his imminent death, which he casts as a sacrifice to the infernal gods (cf. *sancta ad vos* [i.e. *Manes*] *anima*, 12.648).¹¹ As Turnus views matters, Juturna foolishly tries to avert the only option he has left: death by self-sacrifice. Finally, when Juturna can delay this figurative sacrifice no longer, she tellingly veils her head (*caput glauco contextit amictu*, 12.885), ultimately acknowledging the sacrifice to come.¹² In this way, throughout Book 12 Juturna's attempts to save her brother are portrayed as attempts to delay, specifically, an impending sacrifice.

It is significant that Vergil frames Juturna's delaying tactics within a ritual context. In so doing the poet plays off of the cultural and ritual associations of Juturna's spring at Rome, the *lacus Iuturnae*. As Servius notes, water from the *lacus* was used in every sacrifice at Rome: *de hoc autem fonte Romam ad omnia sacrificia aqua adferri consueverat* (ad *Aen.* 12.139). In fact, the *lacus Iuturnae* itself was viewed as particularly healthful,¹³ and, as reflected by its central role in public sacrifices, it was of vital importance to the sustained life of the city.¹⁴ Juturna's connection to the city's continued success and good fortune is further bolstered by the *lacus Iuturnae*'s traditional tie to two major Roman victories. As the story goes, on at least two occasions the Dioscuri appeared at the *lacus Iuturnae* to water their horses after battle, and their appearance was taken as an omen of victory.¹⁵ Taken as a whole, these associations with

for Rome: in favor of the *devotio*, O'Hara (1990: 82-5), Leigh (1993) and Panoussi (forthcoming, 75-95); *contra* Pascal (1990), cf. *infra*.

¹¹ Although Servius *ad loc.* denies any actual religious meaning for this phrase (*neque enim sacro aut religioso eius [sc. Turni] tenebatur*; see also his note ad *Aen.* 11.158), it is important that the religious valence of Turnus' phrase is primary.

¹² Barchiesi (1978: 121), Panoussi (forthcoming, 92-3).

¹³ The healthful qualities of the *lacus Iuturnae* were renowned throughout the classical period: Varro *L.* 5.71; Prop. 3.22.26; Frontin. *Aq.* 4; Serv. *ad Aen.* 12.139. Boni (1901: 77) has even attempted to demonstrate the hygienic value of the spring's water by analyzing the chemical composition of the spring, a point explicitly noted by Servius (*cum enim naturaliter omnis aqua noxia sit extraneorum corporibus, hic omnibus saluberrimus fons est*, ad *Aen.* 12.139). In the late imperial period, there was a healing cult located next to the *lacus Iuturnae* in the Forum, from which a statue of Asclepius, among other cult items, has been found: Boni (1901: esp. 114-6).

¹⁴ A notion perhaps manifest both in a genealogical tradition preserved by Arnobius (*adv. nat.* 3.29)—in which Juturna is intimately tied to some of Rome's earliest deities as daughter of Voltumnus and wife of Janus (Aronen [1989a: 58-9; 1989b: 76])—and in the nymph's alternate name as Diuturna or 'the eternal one' (Cic. *Clu.* 101; cf. *CIL* 6.3700=30951; cf. Deubner [1902: 383] with Radke [1979: 161]). Most notably, the *lacus Iuturnae* was sacrificed to when there was a shortage of water (*huic fonti propter aquarum inopiam sacrificari solet*, Serv. *ad Aen.* 12.139); and at least by the fourth century CE the *statio aquarum*, or office for the administration of water, was maintained next to the *lacus* by the *curatores aquarum* (cf. *CIL* 6.36781, 36951, 37121, 37133).

¹⁵ First at Lake Regillus in 499/6 BCE (Ov. *F.* 1.706; Dionys. 6.13; Plut. *Aem. Paul.* 25.2-3, *Coriol.* 3.5; Lact. *inst.* 2.7.) and again at Pydna in 168 BCE (Flor. 1.28.15; Val. Max. 1.8.1.) it is said that Castor and Pollux, dressed in military attire, appeared at Juturna's spring in the Forum, watered their horses, and announced the Roman victory, as a result of which omen the Temple of Castor was reportedly built on the spot. Propertius adds that the *lacus Iuturnae* was considered *salubris* inasmuch as it provided water for the Dioscuri's horses (*potaque Pollucis lympa salubris equo*, 3.22.26), and other sources describe variously how the fountain's waters washed away blood, sweat, and dust from the horses: V. Max. 1.8.1, Flor.

public sacrifice and Rome's continued good fortune suggest that it is no surprise to find Juturna intimately associated with ritual sacrifice in Vergil's poem. Perhaps more importantly, by reincorporating Juturna into the imagery of sacrifice that closes the *Aeneid*, we can see how this sacrifice, even if metaphorical, would have been read by Vergil's contemporaries as a sacrifice ensuring the vitality of Rome.

In combining these two points about the metapoetic role of Juturna, it becomes clear that it is not so much Turnus' death as his figurative sacrifice that stands as a metaphor for artistic production. As we have seen, Juturna's retarding effect in the narrative is framed within a ritual context: she employs *ars* only in order to stave off Turnus' sacrifice, and with her delays removed, there remain only that sacrifice and the artistic creation it symbolizes. In short, therefore, Juturna plays an integral part in prefiguring Turnus' death as a sacrifice; and, critically, her actions prefigure Turnus' sacrifice as a metapoetic act.

When after numerous delays Aeneas finally 'buries' (*condit*, 12.950) his sword into his opponent, this singular act signals not just the end of the poem, therefore, but even the poem itself. Undoubtedly the *Aeneid* is a poem about Rome's foundations, so to that extent the symbolic sacrifice of Turnus is fittingly expressed by a verb, *condere*, commonly linked to city foundation.¹⁶ But it is crucial, too, that with the verb *condere* Vergil brings his epic full-circle, returning to the poem's beginning where he refers explicitly to the founding of Lavinium (cf. *conderet urbem*, 1.9) and of Rome (cf. *condere*, 1.33).¹⁷ By self-consciously referring back in the narrative to the poem's beginning, Vergil's use of *condere* here constitutes a metapoetic nod to the completion of the *Aeneid*. Turnus' death is emblematic of the entire epic, indeed.

Strikingly, this metapoetic nod is framed within a ritual context. Although we cannot expect a literary text to represent fully and faithfully any social practice, let alone sacrifice,¹⁸ there are two aspects of the figurative sacrifice of Turnus that suggest strong overtones of the *lustratio* ritual, which was conducted every five years in order both to purify the Roman people and to insulate them from future harm.¹⁹ First, Vergil uses the verb *condere* immediately after Aeneas has referred to Turnus' immolation (cf. *immolat*, 12.949; *condit*, 12.950) and earlier when Juturna plunges into the deep, having just veiled her head as if in preparation for a sacrifice (12.885; *condidit*, 12.886). In both cases, *condere* is used directly after a ritual context has been signaled; that the verb itself refers to a ritual context, then, is at the very least highly possible. Given the *Aeneid*'s focus on city foundation, I suggest that *condere* here hints at the technical phrase *lustrum condere*,²⁰ which referred to that part of the *lustratio* in which the purifying agent—in

1.28.15, D.H. 6.13. In this way, the *lacus Iuturnae*'s associations with healing and cleansing were contextualized within Rome's military history via the spring's associations with Castor and Pollux.

¹⁶ In explicating this passage, James (1995: esp. 633-6) persuasively links bloodshed to the foundation of Rome; insofar as I am concerned with the ritual context of city foundation, however, her discussion does not overlap with mine.

¹⁷ Cf. James (1995: 623-4 *et passim*), Hardie (1997: 150).

¹⁸ Duly noted by Feeney (2004: 4); cf. Nicoll (2001: 191). Accordingly, both Pascal (1990) and his critics are right to point out that there is—and is not—the subtext of the *devotio* in Turnus' eventual death.

¹⁹ On the *lustratio* or *lustrum*, Ogilvie (1961) is foundational.

²⁰ E.g. Varr. *L.* 6.87; Cic. *Orat.* 2.268; Liv. 3.3.9. See further Ogilvie (1961).

this case fire—was assembled or stored.²¹ I see no reason why Aeneas' 'burial' of his sword in Turnus' chest cannot also suggest an analogous association with a ritual purification of the people that ultimately legitimates the fated foundation of the city, whether Lavinium or Rome.²²

A second reason for thinking that the *lustratio* ritual is signified here by the verb *condit* is provided by Juturna's strong ties to the vitality of Rome via the *lacus Iuturnae*—whether as lifeline, source of good omens, or purifying agent in all sacrifices. These ties suggest that the ritual context in which we find Juturna here would most likely ensure the sustained health of Rome. This was precisely the purpose of the *lustratio*, which, incidentally, was also connected to city foundation through its performance before the founding of a colony (cf. Cic. *Div.* 1.45). On this reading, Juturna's appearance in Book 12 activates a ritual register that is sustained through the epic's end. Given the integral role of the *lacus Iuturnae* in all public sacrifices at Rome, we should understand this ritual register as indicating, if only indirectly, a public sacrifice to ensure a proper ritual beginning for Rome, much like that ensured by the *lustratio*. At his death, Turnus is thereby implicated in a sacrifice that establishes for the foundation of Lavinium (and Rome) the same ritual purity that would later be renewed at public sacrifices by water from the *lacus Iuturnae*.

So far we have considered the ways in which the metapoetic tenor of the end of the *Aeneid* is framed within a ritual context. In particular, when Aeneas 'buries' his sword into Turnus, Vergil signals that his poem is complete by recalling its beginning and the city foundations foreshadowed in Book 1. This act also marks the completion of a ritual sacrifice, as we have seen, with strong overtones of establishing a proper beginning, a ritual foundation for Rome. At the moment of Turnus' death, therefore, the very process of looking backwards in the poem involves looking forward, past the Rutulian's death, to the foundation of Rome, a foundation hinted at time and time again throughout the poem.

Vergil's depiction of Turnus' death thus both recalls past events in the narrative and prefigures future events that never actually happen in the narrative. In this sense, it looks forwards and backwards, actively renewing the past just as it prefigures the future. Significantly, this process of renewing the past and prefiguring the future—or, to be more precise, of describing the past and prescribing the future—is precisely a function of ritual: in a sacrificial context, for instance, ritual actions are both descriptive and prescriptive in that they re-enact past events and pre-figure future ones as well.²³ In other words, what is striking about the figurative sacrifice of Turnus is the way it operates like an actual sacrifice by structuring the poem in a ritual fashion. By recalling the city foundations foreshadowed in Book 1, the verb *condit* effectively *renews* them, and it prefigures the foundations of Lavinium and Rome that occur outside the narrative. I will return later to this process of 'renewing' a text; for now, at least, it is sufficient simply to note how,

²¹ Eitrem (1915: 133-97) is still especially helpful on the purificatory qualities of fire. On this point, it is helpful to recall the extended fire imagery that surrounds Turnus throughout the second half of the *Aeneid*: e.g. Crahay and Hubaux (1959: 179-80), Hardie (1986: 118-9), and especially Small (1959: 246-7).

²² I sidestep the vexed issue of whether this ritual of purification is not in fact perverted by Aeneas' burial of a sword into the chest of a suppliant, on which point Panoussi (forthcoming, 71-95) is essential. Instead, I am interested to outline what I view is a basic process at work in the *Aeneid* without going into the (further) issue of the morality or potential corruption of this process as depicted in the epic's final scene.

²³ Cf. Elsner (1991: 55), Feeney (1998: 118-9).

within the ritual context of Turnus' death, a verb like *condere* recalls previous instances of the same verb within the poem and prefigures future occurrences of city foundation outside of the narrative.

Vergil's *Aeneid* displays a significant overlap of ritual and poetics, indeed. By reincorporating Juturna into the economy of sacrificial imagery that surrounds Turnus' death, we have seen how any metapoetic role she plays is contextualized within a ritual register. In turn, this significant interconnection between ritual and poetics has led us to consider the possibility that the text itself functions like a ritual by recalling or 'renewing' past actions within the narrative and prefiguring future ones outside the narrative. In order to examine further this bifurcated process of renewing the past while prefiguring the future, it is necessary to consider in more detail the intricate workings of time, both in ritual practice and in the *Aeneid*. To forecast one of my conclusions, in the *Aeneid* Vergil uses a number of poetic devices in order to recreate the appearance of an explicitly ritual experience of time, in which the present renews the past. Accordingly, it is perhaps more helpful to think not of an overlap between poetics and ritual, but of poetics *as* ritual.

A ritual practice like sacrifice is a moment of contact between human and divine realms; as such, it marks a unique point in time during which human and divine systems of time collide. Consider, for instance, how ritual time is codified in a calendar according to the performance of various sacrifices or festivals, each occupying a different space within the calendar. For humans, time in a calendar progresses in a linear fashion, moving diachronically from past to present to future. This diachronic sequence of time mirrors the span of a mortal life: humans are born, grow old, then die. For the immortal gods who never grow old nor die, however, a linear, diachronic progression of time does not apply. Instead, a day of celebration for the gods is a day that is periodically and continually renewed from year to year; the day of celebration occupies the same position in the calendar each year, and from the gods' perspective, a celebration one year is fundamentally no different from the same ritual celebration another year. In this respect, the immortals experience the ritual time of a calendar in a circular, synchronic fashion. Accordingly, a ritual like sacrifice distinguishes human and divine by the mode in which each experiences time, whether in a linear or in a cyclical fashion, respectively.

Ritual practices thus mark both a unique point in the linear progression of human time and a moment of renewal along the cyclically recurring passage of divine time.²⁴ We can link this concept of ritual renewal to something that was noted earlier, namely, how ritual actions are both descriptive and prescriptive in that they re-enact past events and pre-figure future ones as well. Insofar as a ritual is descriptive of past ritual performances, it renews those past performances. And at the precise moment of this ritual renewal, when the actions of the past get replayed in the present, past and present are synchronized; they become one and the same.

This process is easily understood within the circular time of the gods, for the original act and its subsequent renewal in ritual are already thought to occur at the same time. Within a linear temporal progression like that of human time, however, this merging, this synchronizing of past and present tenses would normally be impossible. Hence, we should view this ritual renewal as, properly, a temporary suspension of

²⁴ Holliday (1990: esp. 554-6). For the circularity of ritual sacrifice, see also Elsner (1991: 55), Feeney (2004: 10-11).

diachronic time²⁵; that is, we should view the precise moment of ritual renewal, when divine time crashes into contact with human time, as a temporary synchronic fusion of past with present. For a festival like the Parilia, for example, humans experience the passage of time outside of the ritual context of the festival as diachronic and linear: April proceeds normally from the Nones to the Ides to the XI Kalends of May. But on that day, once the rituals of the Parilia have begun, the Romans reenact the first, prescriptive performance of the Parilia. Consequently, they experience the passage of time during the ritual in a synchronic fashion, for at that moment their re-enactment effectively becomes, for them, an act from the original founding of Rome.

Accordingly, at the exact moment of its occurrence in ritual a singular event in diachronic time is perceived to be *every* such event ever performed in past rituals. The present event, which would normally occupy a unique position along a diachronic timeline, is thereby stripped of its present particulars. As a result, it is experienced and represented in idealized form; that is, it becomes just like all of the other ritual performances it is meant to re-enact.²⁶

It is important to note here that this idealization stems from a synchronic conception of time, whereas a diachronic system of time would differentiate sharply between a present action and its past performance. For humans, who do not normally experience time in a synchronic way, there results an inherent interpretive gap between a ritual idealization of an action and the simple recognition that the present performance of a ritual is not the same thing as its performance in the past.²⁷ In other words, the collision of human and divine time causes humans to have contradictory interpretations of the ritual actions they perform. With the Parilia, for instance, Romans might ritually re-enact the first ‘jumping over the fire’ among other rites, as Ovid describes (*F.4.731-82*), but their cognition of both the similarities and the differences between contemporary ritual performance and its purported origins causes Ovid to falter about how the ritual actions should properly be interpreted (*F.4.783-806*).²⁸ We might say, then, that the normal diachronic progression of human time is significantly disrupted by being brought into contact with the divine realm in ritual. This temporal rupture causes significant dissonance in the way that action in the present tense is experienced and consequently interpreted.

As we will see, this account of how humans and gods experience the passage of time in ritual underlies the following discussion of poetics in the *Aeneid*. First the notion of time.²⁹ There are two distinct plots of time in the *Aeneid*: *fata* and *fortuna*. *Fata* represent a series of divinely ordained goals one must eventually achieve, whereas the

²⁵ See further Holliday (1990: 554-6).

²⁶ Holliday (1990: 547-8); cf. Beard (1987: 8-9) on the way that historical meaning could be accrued through ritual celebrations on various days of the year. In terms of iconography, I would suggest that these two modes of time correspond to Ryberg’s distinction between “descriptive’ human-level events and “allegorical,” personified abstractions removed from actuality (1955: 203-5).

²⁷ This interpretive gap has been variously formulated: Bandera (1981: 220-2), Gordon (1990: 206), Elsner (1991: 58), Feeney (1998: 120-1). Cf. Feldherr (2002: 70-5).

²⁸ See further Beard (1987), Feeney (1998: 129-31).

²⁹ The scholarship on time and poetics in the *Aeneid* is vast, but I note here important works that have been particularly useful in formulating my own thoughts on the subject: Pöschl (1962), Mack (1978), Segal (1981), Williams (1983), Conte (1986), Heinze (1993), Quint (1993), Putnam (1998).

vicissitudes of *fortuna* are not part of any larger plan or broader temporal context.³⁰ For this reason, the gods—whose divine knowledge allows them to see and understand this larger plan—speak in terms of *fata*, whereas humans without access to this divine knowledge experience the happenings of the world in terms of *fortuna*.

Although each of these axes marks off human from divine, in one significant respect these axes differ from the ritual scheme of time we just examined: neither *fata* nor *fortuna* is inherently circular or linear. On the contrary, even the ordered line of *fata* pronounced by Jupiter are continuously injected into a cyclical scheme, where the scrolls of the Fates must be unrolled (cf. *volvens*, 1.262) just as the months roll by during Ascanius' rule (cf. *volvendis mensibus*, 1.269) or as the 5-year *lustrum* cycles glide by (cf. *lustris labentibus*, 1.283).³¹ Nevertheless, despite this fundamental difference between the ritual scheme of time and the poetic scheme of *fata* and *fortuna*, I argue that Vergil goes to great lengths to make *fata* and *fortuna* function as if they were, respectively, the divine and human conceptions of time coming together in a ritual setting.

One further difference between *fata* and *fortuna* is that divine *fata* simply exist—they might have to be revealed from time to time, but they exist independent of whether every god is explicitly aware of them—whereas *fortuna* must be lived and actually experienced as an act of *fortuna*.³² Significantly, the apprehension of this *fortuna*, its lived experience, is an act of perception and interpretation. Without full access to the divine forces guiding their lives, human characters like Turnus and Palinurus interpret their own misfortunes as the work of *fortuna* even though the fates of each are destined by the gods (e.g. Nicoll [1988: 460-5; 2001: 196-7]). So, for example, Juturna rightly considers Turnus' death an act of *fata* when she recognizes the Dirae as a mark of Jupiter's will (12.869, 876-8), but the Rutulian himself holds that the outcome lies in *fortuna*'s hands. In his final conversation with his sister, Turnus asks, "what Fortuna still promises safety?" (*quae iam spondet Fortuna salutem*, 12.637). And again, as he leaves his sister and goes to fight Aeneas, the Rutulian calls out: *iam iam fata, soror, superant, absiste morari;/ quo deus et quo dura vocat Fortuna sequamur* (12.676-7). Although the battle itself is destined by *fata*, Turnus is unaware of this larger plan, a lack of awareness signaled by his crucial mention of *Fortuna*. For Turnus the actual enactment of *fata*—that is, the human performance of divinely sanctioned actions—is interpreted as an act of *fortuna*.

It is important for our purposes that this interpretation of *fortuna* is framed in terms of the past in two different respects. First, when Turnus asks what Fortuna promises safety (12.637), he immediately turns to prior events in the *Aeneid* as demonstration that *fortuna* extends no safety to him at that moment: both Murranus and Ufens already died, Turnus comments (12.639-42) with the implication that his own death, too, soon will come. He understands his present *fortuna* explicitly in terms of the past. More striking is the way that Vergil himself frames Turnus' *fortuna* in terms of past

³⁰ Cf. Nicoll (1988: 463-5; 2001: 196-7).

³¹ Similarly, Anchises' prophecy to Aeneas in Book 6 is prefaced by a description of the recycling of souls in the Underworld (6.724-51); additionally, as Putnam (1998: 134-8) has recently argued, the circular presentation of the shield of Aeneas mirrors the circularity of Roman history depicted thereon.

³² For this point, Juno's words to Juturna are particularly revealing: *qua visa est Fortuna pati Parcaeque sinebant/ cedere res Latio, Turnum et tua moenia texi* (12.147-8). The Parcae actively allow certain events to happen, whereas Fortuna must be interpreted or felt to do the same.

moments from the epic. For instance, Turnus emphasizes Murranus' size and, likewise, the size of the wound that killed his comrade by calling both *ingens* (*oppetere ingentem atque ingenti vulnere victum*, 12.640). By emphasizing the word *ingens*, Turnus unwittingly recalls Vergil's use of the same word in his description of Murranus' death (*ingentis turbine saxi*, 12.531). Again, when Turnus states that he will follow the path of the god and Fortuna (*quo deus et quo dura vocat Fortuna sequamur*, 12.677), his words echo Palinurus' similar exhortation to follow Fortuna (*superat quoniam Fortuna, sequamur, quoque vocat vertamus iter*, 5.22-3) right down to the line-ending *Fortuna sequamur* wherever she might *vocat*.³³ In this way, Turnus' experience of *fortuna* is interpreted with respect to the past.

Indeed, Turnus is not alone in interpreting *fortuna*—that is, in interpreting his experience of divine *fata*—through the lens of the past. Particularly in the case of Aeneas, whose numerous misfortunes stem from a tension between the direction of divine *fata* and his own desires for the present, the human characters of the *Aeneid* repeatedly endure divine *fata* by reliving and reinterpreting their own past.³⁴ Moreover, as Turnus' unknowing echo of Palinurus suggests, when characters explicitly interpret *fortuna* in terms of the past, present and past become fused. Turnus' adherence to *fortuna* becomes a continuation of Palinurus' fateful choice to follow the same path; and, in effect, Turnus relives Palinurus' tragedy.

Fortuna in the *Aeneid* is thus depicted as a present reliving of the past; it is the phenomenon humans refer to when they cannot see that their lives are in fact colliding with the *fata* of the gods. Crucially, this description of *fortuna* in the *Aeneid* mirrors exactly what we saw earlier about the way humans experience the performance of ritual. There we saw how in the performance of ritual, human and divine time come together, how this encounter disrupts humans' normal experience of time and forces them temporarily to relive the past, thereby fusing past and present together synchronically in a process of ritual renewal. Similarly, when humans encounter the *fata* of divine time, there results a dramatic temporal rupture for humans, who proceed to interpret their present in terms of their past. For a character like Turnus, coming into contact with the *fata* of Aeneas causes the present to seem like a continuation, a reliving of the past. By interpreting his present in terms of the past, Turnus *renews* that past, and his life unsurprisingly suffers the same fate as that of Murranus, Ufens, or Palinurus himself.

More broadly, then, I suggest that the human experience of *fata* in the poem takes on a ritualized dimension of viewing the present through the lens of the past: as in ritual practice, characters renew their past when they experience *fortuna*. Now, this is not to suggest that every time a character interprets his or her present in terms of the past, this is an explicitly *ritual* renewal of the past, as if somehow the characters of the *Aeneid* were constantly involved in some ritual performance or other. Instead, I am suggesting that the way human characters like Turnus experience *fata* and *fortuna* is very much *ritualized* in the sense that it so strongly resembles ritual renewal. In fact, as Mack (1978: 38-40)

³³ For the similarities between Turnus and Palinurus, see further Hardie (1993: 33), Nicoll (2001: 196-7).

³⁴ A point cogently detailed by Quint (1993: 50-96); cf. Mack (1978: 80). This experience of *fortuna* through the lens of the past is perhaps unexpected. As other scholars have detailed, *fortuna* does not form part of any larger plan and is wholly bound up with the experience of a singular moment. As a result, its conceptual home is in the present tense in which humans normally apprehend the world: Mack (1978: 37-41), Conte (1986: 160-1), Segal (1981: 81). That we find it here expressed as a present reliving of the past, therefore, is all the more remarkable.

details, this is a process that lies at the heart of the *Aeneid*: in the poem, she argues, the past tense generally describes the grounds or circumstances through which the present can be understood. Actively experiencing the present in the poem thus requires shaping that experience through reference to the past; experiencing the present requires renewing the past.³⁵

As the case of Turnus suggests, the *Aeneid*'s human characters read—and thereby renew—their present through reference to the past. We also saw with Turnus' echoing of Palinurus, moreover, how Vergil himself could structure the present so that it actively replays and renews seemingly unrelated past events in the poem. On one level, then, Turnus views his present through the lens of his own past history; on another level, however, Vergil replays not just prior events from Turnus' life, but prior events from the *Aeneid* and even from other poems. Both with Aeneas' 'burial' of his sword in Turnus' chest and with Turnus' unwitting echo of Palinurus, I suggest that Vergil actively renews the past in a way recognizable from ritual practice. In short, these intertextual allusions operate like ritual renewal. As when in ritual performance an action becomes fused with its own past performance, these intertextual allusions collapse the distinction between an event and its continual replaying in the past.³⁶ Just as the verb *condit* essentially renders Turnus' death a foundation for Lavinium and Rome, Turnus himself effectively becomes a new Palinurus.

I have dwelled at length on the dynamics of *fata* and *fortuna* in order to demonstrate how fundamental the process of ritual renewal is to the *Aeneid*'s poetic structure. This is an important point which will be borne out by what follows, where I reconsider the final duel between Aeneas and Turnus with an eye towards examining the effects of Vergil's poetic art. In so doing, I hope to emphasize how in this final scene Vergil actively draws attention to his use of poetic techniques like *enargeia*, simile, and ecphrasis, a use which I argue takes on an explicitly ritual function, particularly for readers of the *Aeneid*. In essence, as we shall see, Vergil assimilates his poem, in composition and in reading, to a ritual practice, with the result that reading the *Aeneid* engages its readers in a process of ritual renewal. In a concluding section I will consider some of the implications for this understanding of reading as a ritual process.

Throughout this final scene Vergil signals the ritual overtones of Turnus' death both through explicit wording, as already noted, and also through his use of tense. In particular, he casts Turnus' death as a ritual sacrifice by recreating the temporal dynamics of a ritual practice; as Turnus nears his death, past and present become synchronically fused, and Vergil is sure to call attention to this process. What is important here is not so much the characters' as the readers' experience of this scene in terms of ritual renewal.

³⁵ Gian Biagio Conte has astutely pointed out how the present tense of the *Aeneid* is the tense of tragic action that results from coming into conflict with Aeneas and the *fata* he represents (1986: 160-1). In the temporal scheme we have been developing, though, we can in fact reframe Conte's idea by positing that the tragic action of the present tense is, simply, the human experience and interpretation of divine *fata*. If the tragedy of Aeneas and others consists of the temporal contrast between forward-looking *fata* and the characters' own backward-looking memory of the past (cf. Conte [1986: 181]), it should be noted that this is a *present* memory: the *fata* of the future conflict with a present continually invested in rereading and renewing the past.

³⁶ That Vergilian intertexts actually import some form of meaning from one text to another marks a crucial distinction in Vergil's practice from that of, say, the Alexandrian poets who generally used intertextuality primarily as vehicles merely for demonstrating poetic erudition: see, for example, Barchiesi (1984: 32-3).

At the moment of Aeneas and Turnus' final confrontation, Vergil shifts to the present tense (cf. *instat, coruscat*, 12.887), which he employs almost without interruption until the end of the poem. Vergil commonly employs the present tense in his description of battle scenes,³⁷ and this technique, called *enargeia*, is effective in painting a more immediate and vivid scene for the reader.³⁸ This immediacy brings the past events of the poem into the present time, literally the present tense, of Vergil's readers. In this respect, *enargeia* collapses the distinction between the reader's present and the past depicted within the epic. Here, Vergil's metapoetic concern to bring his epic to a close is particularly important, for in the same moment that first Turnus then Aeneas hesitates (*cunctanti*, 12.919; *cunctantem*, 12.940), the reader experiences the poet's own hesitation, his own struggle to finish his epic. In this final scene, therefore, readers are forced to view their own experience as readers in terms of the action playing out before their eyes and ears: their reading is delayed just as Turnus' death is put off. As a result, Vergil's use of *enargeia* causes the readers to replay—one might say to renew—the past of Turnus and Aeneas.

Vergil is sure to draw attention to this reliving of the past in the penultimate simile of the epic, a comparison between the powerlessness of Turnus and that of someone in a dream. Significantly, Vergil shifts briefly to the perfect tense immediately before this simile (cf. *evasit...pertulit*, 12.907), and shifts back to the present tense in the main verb of the sentence following the simile (cf. *negat*, 12.914), after which the present tense continues in the narrative for another 24 lines. This conspicuous shift of tenses immediately surrounding the simile exaggerates the entrance of Vergil's poetic voice as marked by the simile: here is Vergil trying to get the readers' attention. And get their attention he does: unique among similes in the *Aeneid*, this comparison uses first-person verbs (cf. *videmur*, 12.910; *succidimus*, 12.911) and thereby actively includes the reader in the scene. Moreover, these first-person verbs are in the present tense, in effect doubling the reader's engagement. In other words, it is impossible for a reader to avoid reading herself into this scene. More importantly, because this is a simile after all, it is impossible for a reader to avoid comparing Turnus to herself. By reading this simile, a reader is therefore forced to interpret her own experience in light of Turnus' death.³⁹ Within the ritual context of this death, this fusion of past and present should be viewed in terms of ritual renewal: if Turnus' experience is ritualized, so too is that of the reader. Emphatically, the first-person verbs and shift of tenses here dramatize the ritual renewal that is operative throughout the entire scene.

The second, and final, point at which the narrative breaks from the present tense comes after Turnus' last speech, as Vergil describes Aeneas' response before and after seeing Pallas' baldric (12.938-47). As before, when a shift to the past tense indicated the poet's voice entering into the narrative, so here Vergil noticeably highlights the reading of Pallas' baldric by placing it in the past tense. This is again significant for the way it dramatizes the ritual renewal of the past involved in Aeneas' reading of the baldric. Such ritual renewal is expressed in two different ways. On the one hand, Aeneas claims that it

³⁷ Note the preponderance of the present tense in the battle scenes before the deaths of Cacus (8. 247-267), Pallas (10.474-509), and Mezentius (10.777-788, 883-908), to name but a few examples.

³⁸ Rossi (2004: 125-49) is fundamental on this subject; cf. Heinze (1993: 297-8).

³⁹ Accordingly, for this simile Thomas (1998: 290-1) posits a shared focalization between Turnus and Vergil or one of his readers, a notion similar to Conte's (1986: esp. 156-7) idea of copresence.

is Pallas who marks Turnus for death (*te...Pallas/ immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit*, 12.949-50), and it is striking in this regard how the duel between Aeneas and Turnus subtly replays the duel between Pallas and Turnus. As Hardie (1993: 33-4) has cogently argued, Pallas's death already constitutes a ritual substitution of sorts, and it is relived again in ritual fashion when Turnus dies. Aeneas' words merely signal the ritual renewal that Turnus' sacrificial death is meant to represent.

On the other hand, this ritual renewal is also expressed through the act of reading the baldric; as such, it metapoetically signals that reading and ritual renewal are inherently linked. The baldric itself, famously described in a brief ecphrasis (10.497-9), is unique among ecphrases in the *Aeneid* in that it is 'read' twice in the poem, first in the context of Pallas' death and again here by Aeneas.⁴⁰ Just as Turnus' death ritually renews Pallas', so too we should imagine that Aeneas' reading of the baldric ritually renews its initial description and reading by Vergil. One significant implication of this ritual renewal is that Aeneas is not the same reader who initially read the baldric. Vergil's mention of the baldric in this passage, then, highlights the inherently multiple audiences that every ecphrasis potentially has.⁴¹ His description of the baldric as *saevi monimenta doloris* (12.945) thus inherently begs the question of who views the scene as evocative of *saevus dolor*.

One thing about the baldric is clear: because it is read and reread by different audiences, there can be no single, authoritative interpretation of its description.⁴² But we can be clearer about the problems of open signification and conflicting interpretation here. Within the ritual context of this scene, the different readings of Pallas' baldric correspond to the different timeframes colliding in the performance of Turnus' ritual death. First, we have the 'original' meaning of the baldric according to its artist Clonus, as described by Vergil at the time of Pallas' death (10.497-9). This 'original' meaning corresponds to the 'original' death of Pallas which Turnus' figurative sacrifice is meant to renew. On this note, it is important that, when he kills Pallas, Turnus does not explicitly read the baldric but instead simply rejoices in having gained possession of it (cf. 10.500). Though perhaps running the risk of making too much of Vergil's economy of expression, I think it is nonetheless significant that Vergil explicitly frames this ecphrasis in terms of Clonus—and presumably Clonus' audience—alone. By contrast, when the baldric is read for a second time, Vergil is clear to say that Aeneas reads it; in point of fact, the hero's reading is essential for the epic's end. Thus, at the moment when Aeneas renews Pallas' death, Vergil frames the audience of the baldric in terms of Aeneas—and, again, presumably Aeneas' 'audience', the Trojans (cf. 12.937).

The different interpretations of Pallas' baldric, therefore, correspond to the different timeframes implicated in ritual practice: how we read the baldric depends on

⁴⁰ For the ecphrasis of Pallas' baldric, Conte (1986: 185-95), Harrison (1998), and Putnam (1998: 189-207) are especially helpful.

⁴¹ To the extent that an ecphrasis, essentially a self-referential pause in the narrative, functions in part as a synecdoche for the entire poem—on which see, for example, Fitzgerald (1984), Fowler (1991), Putnam (1998: esp. 3-10)—it is important to consider how the scene it depicts is actually read. Fowler (1991) has helpfully delineated the numerous audiences implicated in an ecphrastic description, including the artist of the original, the observer of the ecphrastic scene, the author and even the reader of the poem.

⁴² This is a problem inherent in ecphrasis and has been approached from a number of different angles: Boyd (1995), Feldherr (2002: 77-9); Barchiesi (1984), Conte (1986), Heiden (1987), Bartsch (1998), and more generally Morgan (1998) for the openness of signification in the *Aeneid*.

what part of ritual time—past or present—we focus on.⁴³ Of course, ritual practices are both descriptive and prescriptive, so they can be broken down into past, present, and, crucially, future. And reading the baldric of Pallas is no different, for the last remaining audiences of the baldric—the poet and his readers—correspond precisely to the renewal of Turnus’ death which we have already seen at work when Vergil’s audience reads his poem. As Vergil so painstakingly guarantees in this final scene, readers of the *Aeneid* ritually renew Turnus’ sacrificial death by reading it. To that extent, their ritual renewal of the past is a renewal explicitly prescribed by Turnus’ figurative sacrifice. By ‘reading’ Pallas’ baldric—whether here at Turnus’ death or earlier at Pallas’ end—readers of the *Aeneid* thereby engage in the same process of ritual renewal constituted by Aeneas’ reading of the same baldric. In this regard, Pallas’ baldric, like Vergil’s use of *enargeia* or his first-person simile, is yet another means for demonstrating how reading the *Aeneid* is a way of ritually renewing the past.⁴⁴

At this point it might be fruitful to compare the juxtaposition of Evander’s tale of Hercules and Cacus (8.185-275) with the Salian hymn sung in honor of Hercules (8.288-305). Above and beyond having tremendous resonance with the rest of the *Aeneid*,⁴⁵ Evander’s narrative mirrors Vergil’s in precisely the ways we have been examining. First, the king establishes the background for the confrontation of Hercules and Cacus using a series of past-tense verbs (8.185-242). This sequence of past-tense verbs is interrupted by the present tense at the exact moments when an explicitly poetic voice enters and employs poetic figures like anaphora (*ter.../lustrat...ter...temptat/...ter...resedit*, 8.230-2) and epic hyperbole (*fugit ilicet ocior Euro*, 8.223; *impulsu quo maximus intonat aether/dissultant ripae refluitque exterritus amnis*, 8.239-40).

Further, just like in the *somnus* simile before Turnus’ death (12.908-12), Evander marks a major shift to the present tense with a simile comparing the exposure of Cacus’ cave to the opening up of the Underworld. Given the vivid, present-tense scene that follows (8.247-67), commentators have noted how this simile marks a distinct change in perspective.⁴⁶ But it is also important that the choice of similes exaggerates the insertion of an explicitly poetic voice into the narrative. After all, Evander could not know about the *barathrum* of the Underworld, just as he could not truly know what happened inside Cacus’ cave. In other words, these dramatic shifts to the present tense signify the

⁴³ Feldherr (2002: esp. 75-6) rightly points out how representations of sacrifice configure the reader’s perspective either as a detached or as a participatory viewer—on which see further Segal (1981). Drawing on a Girardian understanding of sacrificial ambiguity, Feldherr posits that these two perspectives, respectively, can provide closure on past conflicts or reopen those very conflicts. By contrast, I would say that the violence of sacrificial rite should not be viewed as inherently problematic or ambiguous; indeed, even if we do follow Girard’s (1977) dubious account on the ‘historical’ origins of sacrifice—though cf. Hardie (1993: 21n.5) and Feeney (2004: 2)—this ‘historical’ origin has no bearing on how the rite is later interpreted, or what cultural valence the rite later has: cf. Beard (1987: esp. 1-2). As Feeney (2004: 2-4 with further bibliography; quote from 2) reminds, “It is always the current work of ritual that matters, not where it might once have come from.”

⁴⁴ On this note it is surely significant that readers of the *Aeneid* would have interpreted the scene on Pallas’ baldric in light of the Danaid sculptures that were part of the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine: see especially Harrison (1998). By referencing these temple sculptures, Vergil again ensures that readers must ‘read’ the baldric from within a ritual context.

⁴⁵ Galinsky (1966), Heiden (1987), Morgan (1998)

⁴⁶ Cf. Williams (1983: 243-4), Smith (2005: 150).

intrusion of a poetic voice with divine knowledge into the narrative. As such, Evander's voice becomes aligned closely with the poet's (Williams [1983: 151]).

Given how Evander's tale mirrors the composition of Vergil's poem, it is all the more important that the story is subsequently incorporated into ritual practice through the Salian hymn. Vergil details how the Salii go through all of Hercules' exploits and then add in the story of Hercules and Cacus at the end of their song (*super omnia Caci/speluncam adiciunt spirantemque ignibus ipsum*, 12.303-4). Evander's poem-like story thus prefigures future performances of the battle in ritual song and is thereby located in an extra-textual ritual frame. That is to say, Evander's story is subsequently 'read' anew through each ritual performance of the Salian hymn; likewise, as we have seen, the *Aeneid* is structured as a text that is ritually renewed as it is read.

The death of Turnus vividly illustrates how poetic figures like intertexts, *enargeia*, similes, and ecphrases actively engage the reader in a ritual process of renewing the past. For the human characters of the *Aeneid*, time is experienced within a ritual frame, where present and past are viewed synchronically—one read through the lens of the other—just like in ritual practice. In fact, as the epic's final scene shows, Vergil actively shapes his depiction of time in order to recreate a ritual frame. This ritual context, however, encompasses both the characters in the poem and the readers who gaze upon the epic from beyond the narrative's arc. For on a meta-poetic level, as I have argued, the act of reading, too, is brought into this ritual frame. As such, reading Pallas' baldric from the standpoint of a reader of the *Aeneid* locates the reader in the same process of ritual renewal that Aeneas engages in when he gazes upon and 'reads' the sword-belt. Through reading, Vergil's audience relives and thus renews his poem.

By way of conclusion I would like to consider one of the ways in which we can frame this understanding of reading as a process of ritual renewal. In reconsidering Juturna's role at the end of the *Aeneid*, we have seen how Turnus' figurative sacrifice can be read as a metapoetic act. Significantly, Juturna's role in this figurative sacrifice has enabled us to understand its potential function as an act of foundation providing a proper ritual beginning for Rome even as it renews the beginning of Vergil's poem. I suggest that these, then, are the ritual beginnings renewed every time the *Aeneid* is read: the action of the poem is ritually renewed through reading and, with it, so too is the foundation of Rome, a foundation prefigured by the 'burial' of Aeneas' sword into Turnus. In this way, Vergil's poem on the origins of Rome draws his readers into a timeless scheme of renewal wherein the ritual foundation of the city signified by Turnus' death becomes a meta-poetic process of ritual renewal involving every reader of the *Aeneid*. Although Vergil's poem must end, the poet guarantees that the poem's meaning, like Rome, will never truly end, but will always have a continued life being reread, reinterpreted, and renewed.

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