

## Who Kills Turnus? 'Pallas' and Aeneas' Revenge in Aeneid 12.938-952

The end of the Aeneid evokes fear and pity, whether either response is presented as 'good', bad', or 'both'. Something frightful happens; it looks like Hector's death (West 1974; Gross 2003), Dido's suicide (Nielson 1984), Camilla's death (Springer 1987, Warren 2001), Orpheus' failure. It may or may not be emblematic or allegoric of Augustan peace; its religious character is unclear, but undoubtedly present. Scholarship examining Aeneas' last words, in which he claims that it is Pallas who is killing Turnus (*Pallas te hoc uulnere, Pallas immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit* (948-949)), seems to cluster around two claims: (1) Aeneas has lost his individuality (Quint 1993); and (2) Aeneas is doing something religious or numinous (Putnam 1965, Hardie 1997). The second claim is less purely literary, and I address it only indirectly in this paper. The first seems to address incompletely the specific content of what we might call Aeneas' self-emptying. The meaning of Aeneas' final self-effacement is the problem I take up in this paper.

The core of my argument is a close reading of 12.939-952, with particular emphasis on the changing meaning of the *balteus* in Aeneas' sight and memory in relation to Homeric intertexts and Vergilian intratexts both near and distant. The order in which specific aspects of the *balteus* appear to Aeneas (and the reader) is significant: I follow the movement of Aeneas' eyes (12.939-947) like a downward-panning cinematic lens through which Aeneas, with the reader, recalls the development of Aeneas' relation with Turnus implied by the sequence of Turnus' history with Pallas. The moment Aeneas changes his mind from mercy to vengeance involves particularly rich focalization that deserves word-by-word analysis, and I explain the reversal by reading Turnus' supplicating *sermo* (12.931-938) together with Aeneas' first speech in book 1 (1.94-101), in which Aeneas wishes he had died a heroic death at Troy.

The sudden appearance of the baldric at line 942 separates Aeneas' eyes and his memory precisely in respect of the baldric's double and contradictory relation to the living and the dead. Aeneas sees the baldric as belonging to the living Turnus, but remembers it as belonging to the dead Pallas. Specific poetic features of the passage (the desperate *iam iamque* at 940, and the enjambed *balteus*, visually vivid *fulserunt*, and semantics of *cingula* at 942) highlight the fracture in subjectivity entailed by the disconnect between sight and memory, and emphasize how the baldric's appearance causes a profound reversal in Aeneas' consciousness. This locates in the seen/remembered baldric a logic of strict opposition between Pallas' life, in relation to which the *balteus* belongs to Pallas, and Turnus' life, in relation to which the *balteus* belongs to Turnus. This opposition re-interprets, simultaneously for Aeneas and the poem's audience, the double intertext relating Aeneas and Achilles (rejecting Hector's supplication at Iliad 22.345-354, and accepting Priam's at Iliad 24.507-512) by suggesting the respect in which Aeneas ceases to resemble Achilles: unlike Achilles after Patroclus' death, Aeneas after Pallas' death does not see himself as dead. The reason for this difference is Aeneas' identification with Pallas *qua* living, an identification engendered by the visual and memorative reversal at 942-944, and claimed by Aeneas explicitly at 948-949. For Aeneas, this identification aligns revenge with life. The choice to kill 'as' Pallas (*Pallas te hoc uulnere*) is thus presented as Aeneas' final choice of undesired life.

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