

FROM FANTASY TO REALITY IN EPIC DUELS— ILIAD 22 AND AENEID 12.¹

Peter Mountford

While writing my MA thesis on the *Aeneid*, I read vast amounts on Virgil and his epic, but I do not think that anyone has yet looked at Book 12 in the way in which I want to approach it today. For the most part commentators have concentrated on themes, the characters of Aeneas and Turnus, the unsettling end and its possible implications for the Augustan programme. Such commentaries range from the positive view of Aeneas of Otis (1964) to the negative one of Putnam (1965), and include the more measured one of Williams (1977). I want to look rather at the way in which Virgil tells his story in *Aeneid* 12 while very much bearing in mind his Homeric exemplar in *Iliad* 22.

When I previously wrote on *Aeneid* 12,² I began with a quote from Quinn. I unashamedly quote it again.

His (Virgil's) poem expressly recalls Homer's story and constantly evokes Homer's conventions—the parallels are close and sustained in some books. Then there are the small things: scenes, similes, numberless details of phrase, not merely influenced by Homer but modeled closely on him. The structure of the poem is Homeric e.g. divine intervention. Yet for all this, Virgil's poem remains consciously, fundamentally, and unmistakably, Roman. Virgil is even striving to outdo his teacher.³

What I hope to do today is to consider the similarities between *Iliad* 22 and *Aeneid* 12, but to show that there is an important difference in the approach of the two poets. This difference may well be the result of the ages in which the poems are composed. The appendix outlines some of the points which I intend to make. Virgil's *Aeneid* is full of echoes of the work of Homer, Catullus and others, and of his own work, *Eclogues*, *Georgics* and the *Aeneid* itself. Commentators will go on finding these links. As I talk, those of you familiar with the Greek and/or Latin works may well hear echoes which I make no mention of.

I should begin with one very important point. *Iliad* 22 is 515 lines long, *Aeneid* 12 952 lines, almost twice the length. This allows Virgil to introduce more issues and to dwell on items longer. For example, Virgil uses 16 similes, which amount to 83 lines (8.7% of the book), whereas while Homer also has 16, they amount to only 42 lines (8.2%—some are really half a line, but I have counted them as one line). (I shall return to similes later.)

Let us consider first the dramatis personae and the role of the gods. In my previous article on Book 12, I discussed the roles of Aeneas and Turnus and argued that comparisons to the *Iliad* are not simple. Suffice to say here that Aeneas = Achilles and Turnus = Hector. I would say that

1 This paper was delivered at a lunchtime seminar given for the Department of Classical Studies in August 2007 to a mixed audience, some of whom had limited knowledge of the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*.

2 Mountford (1996) 2-8.

3 Quinn (1969), 42.

Latinus takes the place of Priam, though he is not Turnus' father. However, his address to Turnus (lines 18-45) mirrors that of Priam to Hector (lines 37-76) and he addresses Turnus as a father would a son, as he begs him not to face Aeneas, but to concede and go. Amata (lines 53-63) takes the place of Hecuba (lines 79-89). Her concern for Turnus is more like that of a mother than a possible mother-in-law (David Ross even suggests 'lover').⁴ With regard to the gods the active participation of the goddess Athene is replaced by the active participation of the nymph Juturna, Turnus' sister.

The echoes are many and varied, from words and phrases to themes and ideas. Some are direct, others have been adapted to Virgil's own needs. The anger of Achilles as a theme is replaced by the anger and hostility of Juno. In *Iliad* 22 Zeus holds up the scales (209ff), in *Aeneid* 12 (725ff) Jupiter does the same. Both use the image of the prize for the chase (*Iliad* 22.159ff/*Aeneid* 12.764ff). Both Hector and Turnus plead with the vanquishers. The simile of the man in the dream (*Aeneid* 12.908ff) reflects that in *Iliad* 22.199ff. The words of Drances haunt Turnus as those of Polydamas do Hector. These are just some examples. Other echoes come from elsewhere in the *Iliad*, especially the similes. Aeneas' embrace of Ascanius and his comforting words (lines 432-440) recalls Hector's farewell to Astyanax in *Iliad* 6.466ff. Homer's influence on Virgil is clear and Virgil's knowledge of Homer's poem is undoubtedly very detailed.

Iliad 22 begins with fantasy. Apollo has been leading Achilles away from Hector and Troy, but he finally reveals himself. Achilles runs to the city where Hector waits outside the walls. The scene is set for the final duel. In the *Aeneid*, nightfall has brought an end to the fighting at the conclusion of Book 11 and in Book 12 the two sides are camped outside the city just as they might be in war. However, the scene is not yet set for the final duel and will not be until nearer the end of the book. At first it seems that it may be, as Turnus realises that the battle is going against him. This makes him angry and gives him the courage to tell Latinus that he is ready to face Aeneas. When Latinus, who feels that he has listened to bad advice, urges Turnus to go, Turnus becomes even angrier and wants to fight as he feels that he can win. Amata begs him not to fight. She says that if he dies, she will die, as she will never live to see Aeneas marry Lavinia. Lavinia weeps and blushes and Turnus, distraught with love, burns even more for war. He tells Amata not to send him to fight with words of ill omen. Turnus sends Idmon to tell Aeneas that a duel will settle the issue on the morrow.

Turnus goes to his chariot and horses, arms himself and prays to his spear for success. He is blazing with fury and is likened to a bull preparing for his first battle. Aeneas in his new armour is already psyching himself for battle, glad that a duel will settle the issue. He reassures Ascanius and agrees to Latinus' terms.

Dawn brings preparations for the religious ceremony which will seal the treaty. Juno, realising that Turnus is facing a hostile fate, tells Juturna to act to save her brother (160). The parties arrive. Aeneas and Latinus offer prayers, lay down the terms and make sacrifices. Were it not for Juno, the reader might think that the duel is about to begin. However, Juturna in the guise of Camers urges the natives, who fear for Turnus, to fight. Tolumnius favourably interprets the omen of the swans and the eagle and hurls his spear. Fighting breaks out again and there are

⁴ Ross (2007), 50f.

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violent deaths. The fighting delays the duel for over 500 lines. If one ignores the action of Juno, all that has happened is not fantasy but all too real.

With the approach of Achilles in *Iliad* 22, Homer abandons fantasy for reality. Priam and Hecuba plead with Hector in vain. His sense of shame keeps him outside the walls, as he recalls his rejection of the advice of Polydamas. He considers trying to strike a bargain with Achilles, but realises that the time for words is past. The sight of Achilles approaching like the god of war with armour blazing like fire or the rising sun causes Hector to panic and run. Though the picture of the chase is beautifully told and embellished with wonderful images, it strays into the realm of fancy. How could a warrior dressed in Mycenaean armour run 100 metres let alone three times round the walls of Troy? The reappearance of the gods keeps the story in fantasy. Zeus expresses his fondness for Hector and wishes that he could save him, but is reminded by Athene that he cannot override fate. He acknowledges this and no longer restrains Athene. He holds up the scales and Hector's doom sinks. Athene tells Achilles to get his breath back while she takes the form of Deiphobus so that Hector will be encouraged to face Achilles. The duel will now begin.

In the *Aeneid* the unarmed Aeneas tries in vain to stop the fighting, but is struck by a stray arrow and is forced to retire to seek medical help. This encourages Turnus to mount his chariot and go on the rampage. Turnus is likened to the god of war (lines 351-56), as Achilles has been in *Iliad* 22.132-34. Virgil gives way to hyperbole as he names 13 victims of Turnus' violence. He also has to move into the realm of fantasy when Venus brings dittany, panacea and ambrosia to help Iapyx, the doctor, bring about a miraculous recovery. He has to do this, as he has painted himself into a corner by having Aeneas wounded. If there is to be a duel, there has to be a miraculous recovery from the arrow's wound. He quickly reverts to the reality of war. Aeneas puts on his armour again and sets out in single-minded pursuit of Turnus. His approach alarms Turnus, his followers and Juturna, who takes the place of Turnus' charioteer and drives Turnus away from the fighting. Aeneas tries to keep up, but is frustrated. When Messapus attacks him, he becomes angry and begins a killing spree. He kills 7 while Turnus kills 6, though Turnus resorts to barbarity when he cuts off the heads of victims and ties them to his chariot. The two are likened to the unstoppable forces of bushfire and flood. Both sides are fully engaged in fighting. At this point Venus puts the idea into Aeneas' head that he should attack the city. A violent attack on the city begins. Aeneas calls on Latinus and blames him for breaking the treaty. Amata, alarmed by the attack and fearing that Turnus is dead, commits suicide. The whole city is dazed by this, especially Lavinia and the Latins. A tiring Turnus hears the noise from a distant part of the battlefield. Juturna tries to lead him away, but Turnus admits that he knows who she is. He recalls the words of Drances and asks himself whether he is to die a coward or to face death worthily? The arrival of a wounded Saces with a plea for help and the news of the death of Amata shames Turnus (*pudor* 667). He addresses Juturna:

‘iam iam fata, soror, superant, absiste morari;
quo deus et quo dura vocat Fortuna sequamur.
stat conferre manum Aeneae, stat, quidquid acerbi est,

morte pati, neque me indecorem, germana, videbis
 amplius. hunc, oro, sine me furere ante furorem.’

(*Aeneid* 12.676-80)

‘Now, now, sister, fate has defeated me; stop trying to put it off. Let us follow the path where the god and harsh Fortune lead. I am determined to meet Aeneas in battle and to suffer death however bitter it is; you will no longer see me behaving shamefully, sister. I beg you to let me give free rein to my frenzy before the end.’

These last words encapsulate the nature of Turnus, a man in the grip of *furor*. He rushes through the opposition to the city like a boulder crashing down a mountain and, when he reaches the city, he stops the fighting. Aeneas breaks off his attack on the city, leaps for joy and clashes his armour with a thunderous noise. He is likened to massive mountains. At long last the duel will begin.

In *Iliad* 22 the duel lasts for just over one hundred lines (lines 247-366): in the *Aeneid* it is more than twice as long (lines 704-952). Homer begins with the doomed Hector trying to bargain with Achilles about the treatment of the loser’s body. The arrogant Achilles rejects his plea and tells him that there is no escape as ‘Pallas Athene will beat you down under my spear’. He throws his spear, but misses. In the world of fantasy it does not matter, as Athene gives it back to him. Hector taunts Achilles in heroic style and throws his spear, which bounces off Achilles’ shield (divine, of course!). He asks Deiphobus for his, but Deiphobus is not there. He realises that the gods have tricked him and that his fate is sealed. Determined to die heroically, he draws his sword and swoops on Achilles like an eagle on a lamb or hare. Achilles charges and drives his spear into Hector’s neck, the only unexposed part of his body, though the wound spares his windpipe so that he can still speak. Achilles taunts the fallen Hector and says that his body will be mauled by dogs and birds. When Hector pleads for his body to be spared, Achilles brushes aside his plea and says that he would like to eat his flesh. Hector acknowledges the inevitability of this, but prophesies Achilles’ death before he dies and his soul goes to Hades. Achilles tells him to die and says that he himself will face death whenever the gods decree.

In *Aeneid* 12 the two warriors throw their spears, clash shields and use their swords. Virgil illustrates their duel with that wonderful extended simile of two bulls fighting (lines 715-22). At this point Jupiter raises the scales, but no outcome is given. His action merely points to the finality of the duel. One or other will win, but, though we feel that Turnus is doomed, his fate is not stated here, and this allows for the hesitation at the very end of the poem. Turnus raises his sword (which he mistakenly thinks is his father’s divine sword) to launch a lethal blow, but it breaks in mid-blow. As he is unarmed, he flees, but cannot escape as he is hemmed in by the Trojans, the wall and a marsh. Though hampered by his injury Aeneas pursues him like a hunting dog after a stag (another extended simile—lines 749-57) and threatens death to anyone who responds to Turnus’ plea for a sword. They begin their run, but it is not round the city. They run five times one way and five times the other round the circle formed by the troops. (I imagine something more like a boxing ring or a hockey pitch.) Aeneas’ spear has stuck in the root of an ancient olive tree sacred to Faunus. Aeneas wants it back so that he can reach the victim he cannot catch. Turnus prays to Faunus and Mother Earth to hold the spear when Aeneas strug-

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gles to release it. Juturna, again in disguise, gives Turnus his sword. An indignant Venus releases the spear for Aeneas. The divine intervention is hardly necessary here, as one can imagine one of his men giving Turnus his sword back and Aeneas finally tugging his spear free. However, it allows the supporter of each hero the last chance to interfere, because, as the warriors face each other, Jupiter addresses Juno.

The duel and its final outcome are delayed for almost 100 lines (791-886) while matters are resolved on a divine level. Jupiter addresses Juno and tells her that she cannot stop fate and that she should stop harrying the Trojans. Juno concedes, admits her complicity and agrees to withdraw, but lays down conditions. In turn Jupiter grants her requests, which merely recognise the reality of history. He tells her that, when the Trojans and Latins have combined, no people will honour her more. A happy Juno withdraws. Jupiter then sends one of the Dirae to force Juturna to leave. The frightening apparition of the bird in Turnus' face has the desired effect and Juturna querulously plunges into the river and leaves the scene.

We return to the duel. Aeneas with his huge spear pursues Turnus and taunts him to face him. Turnus replies that he does not fear Aeneas, but the gods. He lifts up a huge stone to throw at Aeneas, but his effort is feeble like that of a man in a dream. He is overcome by fear and realises that there is no escape. Aeneas hurls his spear, which goes through Turnus' shield and the rim of his breastplate into his thigh. Turnus falls and the Rutulians groan. Turnus appeals to Aeneas. It is very different from that of Hector to Achilles. He admits that he has done wrong and concedes that Lavinia is destined for Aeneas. However, he begs Aeneas to pity his father Daunus and to return him dead or alive. This prepares us for Aeneas' hesitation. Turnus begs him not to carry his hatred any further. Aeneas hesitates, perhaps recalling his father's instruction *parcere subiectis* (6.853). The sight of Pallas' belt reminds him of his grief and fills him with anger and *furor*. Claiming that Pallas (repeated twice in line 948) is exacting revenge through him, and boiling with rage he plunges his sword into Turnus. Turnus' life leaves him and flees angrily to the shades. There is no opportunity for Turnus to foretell Aeneas' death, as Hector does Achilles.

And so the duel and the poem come to a sudden and dramatic end, one that troubles many scholars. The poem lacks the comforting reconciliation of the *Iliad*. When Hector dies, there are still 150 lines of the book and two more books to come. That is not to say that the rest of Book 22 is comforting—it is quiet the opposite. Achilles strips Hector's body and the other Greeks show their contempt for his corpse by stabbing it. This is the way in which the Greeks and Achilles begin to defile Hector's body. Achilles then attaches it to his chariot and drags it through the dust to his camp. We are shown the pitiful reaction of Hecuba and Priam. Homer cleverly introduces the homely picture of Andromache, who is unaware of Hector's death, so that he can heighten the impact which the death has upon her. The book ends with lamentation, especially that of Andromache, who points to the unhappy future of Astyanax. Though the mistreatment of the corpse continues, Book 23 has a softer focus with the funeral games for Patroclus and Book 24 brings closure with the ransoming of Hector's body, the tears of Priam and Achilles, the end of the anger of Achilles, and the funeral of Hector. However, it is not a fairy story in which all live happily ever after.

I have said before⁵ that, when I first read *Aeneid* 12, I expected Aeneas to kill Turnus and saw it as the logical thing for Aeneas to do. The sudden end and the lack of reconciliation at first sight are troubling. Yet the sudden end invites us, the readers, to question what has happened and gives rise to the possibility of discussion. There is no need for reconciliation in fact, because the future has already been assured in Jupiter's prophecy (1.254-96), Anchises' description of Rome's future (6.756-892), Aeneas' shield (8.608-731) and Jupiter's discussion with Juno (12.791-842). It means that Virgil can leave us with a troubling and much more realistic ending. It shows the brutality of war. There is no mistreatment of Turnus' corpse. Such mistreatment would seem to be out of character for Aeneas when one considers his treatment of the dead body of Lausus. Daunus has played no part in the story and it would be inappropriate for him to appear now to plead with Aeneas for the return of Turnus' corpse.

To my mind Homer's story belongs in the realm of fantasy, whereas Virgil's brings home the realities and horrors of war. One of the most important differences is the way in which the gods are used. In *Iliad* 22 the gods are intimately involved in the action. Apollo has taken the form of Agenor to lead Achilles astray. Athene, once empowered by Zeus, plays a vital role in the final duel. She gives Achilles time to get his breath back, and by taking the form of Deiphobus persuades Hector to face Achilles. She gives him back the spear which has missed Hector. Achilles acknowledges her help in his victory. There is inevitability in the course of events in *Iliad* 22. We know that Hector has no chance. Achilles is almost invulnerable and has divine armour. The scales have foretold Hector's death and the gods actively work to bring it about. Apollo tries to help by giving him the stamina to keep running, but he goes once the scales have fallen and Hector is alone against overwhelming forces.

Virgil is true to the epic form (and perhaps to the beliefs of his own time) by having a divine element in the *Aeneid*. The hostility of Juno towards the Trojans and the foundation of Rome forms the proem of the poem. The resolution of this issue brings the epic to an end. However, she does not directly take part in the action, but plots and conspires in the background. Her interference is through the agency of humans (Dido and Turnus) or minor divinities (Aeolus, Allecto and Juturna), yet her interference is malevolent, and, as Ross says,⁶ none more so than her interference in Book 12. Though she knows what fate has decreed, she cannot forget her personal sense of being wronged and, rather than letting the duel decide the issue, starts another round of senseless human suffering. Nevertheless it is much easier to accept Juturna's interference than that of Athene. Though she is semi-divine (so too is Aeneas), her role could quite easily be taken to be that of a sister trying to save the life of a brother whom she loves. After the story of Camilla in Book 11 it would not be out of order for Juturna to play such a role. However, Virgil chooses to have her take the forms of Camers and Metiscus rather than allowing her to be herself. Perhaps he does this to show that he is following the Homeric example of Apollo and Athene. One can imagine a member of the Rutulian side, feeling sorry for Turnus, urging his fellows to restart the fighting. It doesn't have to be Juturna, but by using her Virgil is able to show the interference of Juno. In the heat of the battle and with the situation as it is, Juturna's attempt to save Turnus is logical—drive his chariot away from the fighting and Aeneas.

⁵ Mountford (1996), 6.

⁶ Ross (2007), 68.

The fact that Juturna is disguised as Metiscus allows for the tender scene in lines 631-83. Though the actions of the semi-divine Juturna take us out of the realm of reality, they are much more real and believable than those of Athene in *Iliad* 22. In the *Aeneid* the gods are much less intimately involved in the action than they are in the *Iliad*. We are spared the improbability of Paris being whisked away from the battle (*Iliad* 3), of a god being wounded by a mortal (Aphrodite by Diomedes in *Iliad* 5) and of Athene returning Achilles' spear (*Iliad* 22). Venus brings curing herbs, but I have explained why this is necessary. Her other interferences can easily be explained in logical terms. She puts into Aeneas' mind that he should attack the city. This is similar to the way in which Athene stops Achilles from killing Agamemnon in *Iliad* 1. Human thought processes are often linked to the inspiration of a god. When Aeneas finally releases his spear from the olive tree, colour is added by the idea that Venus frees it for him. None of these interferences detract from the overall reality of Virgil's story.

If one disregards these divine interruptions in *Aeneid* 12, Virgil's story is starkly real. It may be difficult to think that battle stops for a duel which will decide the outcome, but one only has to think back to Livy's story of the Horatii and the Curiatii to see an example in Rome's history, even if some centuries before Virgil's day. The foolishness of Tolumnius breaking the truce, the violent fighting, Turnus' rampage (even if exaggerated), Aeneas' single-minded pursuit, Juturna trying to save her brother, the attack on the city to bring Turnus back, and the final duel are a very real sequence of events. Virgil maintains suspense by delaying the final confrontation in a variety of ways. Though we know that Turnus' cause is lost, especially after the meeting of Jupiter and Juno, and that he is likely to die in the light of what he and Juturna say to each other, his death is not a certainty until the very end. We may have been expecting it, but it does not become a *certainty* until the end. The scales do not give the game away and, even when Turnus is down, death is not certain until Aeneas sees Pallas' belt (which brings back to him and to us the memories of 10.474-509). The whole story is far from the realm of fantasy. It is steeped in the reality of warfare, something with which Virgil is all too familiar. It must have seemed so to his audience too. We as the readers are left with a clear picture of the brutality and cost of war, but also of its necessity to achieve one's goals.

Before I finish, I want to return to Virgil's similes. There are sixteen of them in Book 12, the highest number in any book. Three of them [Turnus likes Mars (331-36), Aeneas pursuing Turnus like a dog pursuing a stag (749-57), and Turnus being like a man in a dream (908-12)] have a direct parallel in *Iliad* 22 [132-34, 189-92 and 199f. respectively]. Four others have a parallel in another book of the *Iliad*. There is an excellent discussion of the use of the similes in Book 12 by Hornsby,⁷ who sees many links and much symbolism in them. I much recommend him to those who have not read him. The opening simile (4-8)—Book 12 is the only book to begin with a simile⁸—likens Turnus to a wounded lion. The mention of Carthage will recall Dido and her sacrificial death and hint at Turnus's. The wounded lion reflects the wounded Turnus at the very end, but the behaviour of the lion reminds us that Turnus is still a dangerous force. As Putnam says, *fremit ore cruento* reminds us of Furor (1.294-96) and Nisus (9.341).⁹ Turnus is

7 Hornsby (1970), 119-40.

8 Putnam (1999), 210.

9 Putnam (1999), 212.

then likened to a young bull, another dangerous animal, preparing for its first battle. This is picked up brilliantly with the description of Aeneas and Turnus beginning their duel by clashing like bulls (715-22). Hornsby points to the fact that those likened to lions or bulls generally die. He also remarks that Virgil pointedly says that the whole herd will follow the leader, just as the Trojans and Latins will. The last animal simile is that of a hunting dog pursuing a stag (749-57). There are echoes here of Book 4, especially the simile of Dido being a deer (4.68-73) and the use of *puniceae pennae* (750), but one should remember that a stag with its antlers is a dangerous animal. It echoes Homer too (189-92) who likens Achilles chase of Hector to a dog chasing the fawn of a deer (not a stag as Putnam incorrectly states¹⁰—the fawn is sometimes a sign of cowardice and perhaps is here). This fact points to Virgil's subtle use of differences. The doomed Hector is not the dangerous threat that Turnus is. To study his similes is to gain some understanding of the virtuosity of Virgil. His choice and use of animal images is deliberate and so clever. Apart from the image of the dog and the stag, none of his animal images comes from *Iliad* 22. Homer's animal images are of Achilles approaching Hector like a champion horse (22f.), Hector waiting for him like a snake in a hole (93-95), Achilles' pursuit of Hector like a hawk pursuing a dove (139-42) and like a horse race (162-64), and Hector's final charge at Achilles like an eagle swooping on a lamb or hare (308-10). For the most part they hint at Hector's end.

When hostilities are renewed and Turnus goes on the rampage, the opposition gives way like clouds before Boreas (365-67). When Aeneas has recovered from his wound and sets out after Turnus, his approach is likened to clouds which presage a coming storm (451-56). They are both destructive elements. When Aeneas, angered by Messapus' attack, begins to match the slaughter of Turnus, they are likened together to a bush fire or a raging flood (521-25), two more very destructive natural elements, both of which are usually the result of a violent storm. The linking together of these destructive images is very clever. I see a link in this last image, which Hornsby does not comment upon. It brings to mind the simile of the shepherd in 2.304-08 who hears a fire or a flooding stream, which are likened to the destructive force of the Greeks within Troy. Homer does not use such images in *Iliad* 22, though he does in other books. Virgil cleverly contrasts Turnus as a dislodged boulder crashing down a mountain (684-89), which will be destructive, but become inert, (borrowed from *Iliad* 13.136ff.) with Aeneas likened to massive, solid mountains (701-03). Virgil seems to make such excellent use of simile to present appropriate analogies to the events which he is describing. The images which he presents to his audience would have been so familiar to many of them. This surely must be the test of a simile. Does it resonate with the audience? Though we in Melbourne are less concerned with the countryside than Virgil and his contemporary Romans, most of them resonate with us too.

In conclusion, I see *Iliad* 22 as a wonderfully raw and vivid episode, full of passion and sadness, but one that belongs largely in the realm of fantasy. This is perhaps appropriate for a poem composed at a time before history, when the distinction between man and god was often blurred. In contrast *Aeneid* 12, equally vivid and full of passion and sadness, is much more realistic and believable, reflecting the age in which Virgil lived. His Rome and Italy had been

¹⁰ *ibid* 220.

racked for a hundred years by the wars which accompanied the downfall of the republic. Peace may have come with the rule of Augustus, but the memories of the brutality of war were too vivid to ignore. War is no longer the gentlemanly playground of the hero.

I am not trying to say that Homer or Virgil is better. I think that they are both wonderful poets. I am trying to show that, though Virgil is consciously alluding to Homer and making use of Homeric exemplars, *Aeneid* 12 is essentially his own work and illustrates his outstanding skill as an epic poet. The reality of his story and the excellent choice of similes make this a powerful, yet troubling conclusion to his Roman epic.

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Postscript

After I had given this talk my attention was brought to the article by David West on the deaths of Hector and Turnus.¹¹ I have since read that article. I would recommend readers of this article to read his article for a different view. He points to differences in the 'organization of the elements in these two duels' and explains the effect that he believes that these changes have. He is critical of Virgil for lacking the 'soldierly realism' of Homer and for making too much use of the supernatural. Yet he does not mention the way in which Athene intervenes to return Achilles' spear to him, which would damage his claim for 'soldierly realism' and must be seen as supernatural. He makes some good points, some of which I have ignored, such as the possibility of Aeneas being able to plunge his sword into Turnus' breast. This article and his prove that it is possible for two people to approach the same facts and reach opposing conclusions.

11 West (1974)