

# *Aeneid* BOOK TWELVE

(Verses 791–842, 887–952)

## *Book Eleven*

Book Eleven, which you should read in English translation before going on to the Latin from Book Twelve in this final unit, opens with Aeneas rendering thanks to Mars and erecting a trophy composed of Mezentius' weapons. Burial is the order of the day. Aeneas joins in the lamentation over Pallas' body, which lies in state, and a funeral procession is organized (1–99). An embassy arrives from Laurentum, Latinus' capital. Drances, their spokesman, requests a truce of 12 days to permit the burial of their war dead and promises to advance the cause of peace by reinstating the treaty between Aeneas and Latinus (100–38). Because Rumor had reported Pallas' death, Evander and his people greet the arrival of the cortege in abject grief. Evander asks Aeneas to avenge his son's death (139–81). Funeral rites continue on both sides.

Drances returns to Laurentum to promote condemnation of Turnus' policy, and indicates that Aeneas will rely on a single combat with Turnus to determine the ultimate victory. Amata and others defend Turnus' policy and actions (182–224). Meanwhile, Latinus' embassy to Diomedes in South Italy, aimed at winning his assistance, is reported as a failure. From his own experience with the Trojans at Troy, Diomedes counsels peace with them (225–95). The Council of the Latins reviews alternatives to continuing the hostilities, either to incorporate the Trojans in the state or to furnish them with ships to sail elsewhere (296–335). Drances issues Aeneas' challenge to a duel, and Turnus accepts (336–444). The report that Aeneas' forces are advancing on Laurentum ends the council meeting and spurs Turnus to action.

The Rutulian prince's strategy dictates that Camilla's cavalry will meet Aeneas' forces on the plain, while Turnus himself arranges an ambush in the hills above (498–531). Diana's speech to Opis, her nymph, reviews Camilla's life story and regrets that she will die in the ensuing action (532–96). The cavalry engagement is an exciting, bloody affair. Camilla fights valiantly and claims eight victims, but is finally struck down by Arruns and dies in the arms of a devoted "Amazonian" companion (648–867). Opis avenges her death by killing the runaway Arruns. The Volscian cavalry retreat to the city in confusion, pursued by the enemy; the gates are so hastily closed that Latins are left outside, straining to enter (868–95). The casualties mount, as friend slays friend, and the women prepare to defend their city. Turnus learns that Camilla's cavalry force has been defeated and abandons the

ambush just before Aeneas' troops arrive. Both groups press towards the same city in view of each other, but nightfall prevents an engagement.

## *Book Twelve*

Book Twelve, which provides Turnus with his moment of truth and concludes hostilities in Italy, should be read in its entirety in English. The build-up to the final duel offers a galaxy of characters and a succession of absorbing, exciting, and delaying incidents. Once again, and for the last time, Vergil's epic merges with tragedy, highlighting the motivations and psychology of the participants, their emotions, their dilemmas, and inner conflicts. We need to be aware that the secret of Vergil's art lies not only in the architecture of the whole epic and in its separate books, but above all in the emotional appeal of his characters, heroes and heroines, human and divine, which is essentially a dramatic appeal.

When Book Twelve opens, Vergil accents the fact that Turnus' recent experience of defeat gives him the reason and the courage to come to grips with himself and to face the inevitable duel (1–80). Latinus tries to deter him and Amata begs him not to yield to the encounter. Turnus shows an innate willingness to display his heroic courage (in the Homeric mode) by facing his adversary. Vergil has repeatedly stressed Turnus' irrational nature as well as his courage, and his violent passions and self-absorption. While Turnus steels himself for the final battle and his personal contest with Aeneas, the Trojan hero likewise prepares for the action with courage and determination.

Vergil introduces a brief scene on Olympus where Juno deters Juturna from any more intrusive action on her brother's behalf, whereupon the preliminaries for the duel are formally initiated: solemn oaths are sworn, first by Aeneas, then by Latinus on Turnus' behalf. The Trojans seem confident; the Rutulians are anxious about the outcome (81–215). Juturna, in disguise, urges the Rutulians to break the truce, and an omen involving an eagle and a swan is interpreted to mean that the Rutulians should try to save their champion (216–310). When the treaty seems endangered, Aeneas tries to keep his side free from fault, but is shot by an arrow from an unidentified source. Turnus sees his advantage and leads his troops into battle. When Aeneas' physician cannot remove the tormenting arrow, Venus appears; the arrow is released and the goddess heals the wound with her "miracle" herb, dittany (383–440).

When Aeneas rearms and returns to the field, his sole objective is Turnus. Juturna intervenes again disguised as Turnus' charioteer Metiscus, and keeps him out of range. When Aeneas realizes that Turnus will not face him, he gives way to battle frenzy and merciless slaughter, and Turnus follows suit (441–553). Venus suggests that Aeneas should lay siege to the Latin capital (554–92). When Amata sees the Trojans advancing and wrongly supposes that Turnus has fallen, she convinces herself that she is the cause of the inevitable disaster, and, like Jocasta,



"Venus Pouring Dittany on the Wounds of Aeneas"  
Giovanni Francesco Romanelli (1610–62)  
Louvre, Paris, France

the queen in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, commits suicide by hanging herself (593–613). Turnus is ready to face Aeneas, but when he hears that the city is under siege and that Amata has died, he is at a loss and in a state of shock; nevertheless he asks his friends and allies to cease fighting and to witness his decisive duel with Aeneas (614–96).

When the contest finally begins, spears are ineffective, so the two adversaries resort to close combat. Turnus tries to bring Aeneas down with his sword, but it shatters like an icicle because Turnus has mistakenly armed himself with Metiscus' weapon. Aeneas pursues Turnus and tries unsuccessfully to regain his own spear that clings to the stump of a tree sacred to Faunus. When Juturna regains Turnus' own sword and Venus restores her son's spear, the contest is renewed (697–790).

Our initial selection from Book Twelve (791–842) is concerned with the resolution of conflict at the cosmic level. Juno concedes her "failure" but on her own terms. Her enmity yields to the prospect of her supplying protection and advancement for the Italians. Romans and Italians, not Trojans, will be the civilizers of the world to come. "Troy has fallen, and let her stay fallen, name and all" (828).

Jupiter intervenes, not by sending Mercury but by dispatching a fiend, a Dira (*dei-ira*, "wrath of God"), from Olympus to terrify Turnus by flying in front of his face and to induce Juturna to withdraw once and for all.

In our closing selection (887–952), Turnus attempts to throw a huge rock at Aeneas but his strength is not equal to the task, and Vergil compares his actions to those of a man in a dream. Aeneas hurls his spear and wounds the Rutulian in the thigh. When Turnus, like a fallen gladiator, begs for mercy, Aeneas pauses for humanity's sake, but when he sees Pallas' baldric over Turnus' shoulder, overwhelmingly furious and enraged, he proclaims that it is Pallas himself who is the sacrificer and he kills his suppliant enemy, burying his sword deep in his chest.

What should our reaction be to vengeance killing? Certainly the imagery of sacrificial offering has been an undercurrent from the outset of the epic, and it recurs in this final scene. Turnus is sacrificed, we must suppose, to end the cycle of killings and to gain a lasting peace. Vergil side-steps a reconciliation on earth when Jupiter sends his agent of terror in order to end the action and to fulfill his own promise and purpose. Juno had done the same in Book Seven when she sent the Fury Allecto to incite war in Italy. When the hero assigns the final act of sacrifice to Pallas, the "Italo-Arcadian" offensive hero meets and kills the Italian enemy, the defensive hero Turnus. The epic engagement is thus, in the final reckoning, an episode of civil war, which we know will be Italy's century-long ordeal. Is that why Vergil ends his epic with a disturbing scene of revenge and sacrifice? Was Aeneas right to refuse Turnus' supplication? The abrupt ending with Turnus' defeat and "execution" must be designed to shock the reader. But should we be left in a state of uncertainty? Does Vergil at the end mean to raise doubts about the *imperium sine fine* (1.279) granted by Jupiter? How can we reconcile the callous sacrifice of Turnus by the goddess who originally provoked him to fight? And how do we reconcile ourselves with *pious* Aeneas in the end "burning with fury and terrible in his rage"? What has become of Anchises' instruction *parcere subiectis* (6.853) to his "Roman" son? The epic ends with violence and discord. Should the poem have ended differently, with a spirit of compromise, with mercy and forgiveness? Should Turnus have been spared? Or would you argue that Vergil's epic in fact offers remarkable insight into the realities of history and humanity? Vergil's "Song of War" has become a classic for a great many reasons: for its dramatic power and its poetic beauty, to be sure, and also, not because it provides us with all the answers, but because of the profound and enduring questions that it raises and compels us to consider.

- 791 **intereā**: here Vergil turns his camera away from the battlefield, where Turnus and Aeneas are poised for combat, toward Mt. Olympus, where the long struggle between Juno and Jupiter over the destiny of the Trojans must be resolved before the duel can continue to its fateful conclusion.
- omnipotentis**: TRANSFERRED EPITHET, properly applying to **rēx** = Jupiter; see note on 4.220.
- 793 **Quae . . . finis**: for the gender, see note on 2.554.
- 794 **indiges, indigetis**, m., *native god, patron deity, native hero* (Aeneas was worshipped under the title of **Iuppiter Indiges**).
- scīre**: sc. **tē** as subj.
- 795 **dēbērī**: with **caelō**, *is owed to* = *has a right to*; i.e., Aeneas is destined for immortality and a place among the gods.
- 796 **Quid . . . haerēs**: cf. 4.235 and 271 above.
- 797 **Mortālīn**: = **mortālīne**; modifying **vulnere**, but positioned at the beginning of the verse to underscore the contrast with **dīvum** at the end. The divine Aeneas, son of Venus and thus grandson of Jupiter himself, had been wounded by an enemy warrior's arrow earlier in this episode (10.318–23).
- violārī . . . dīvum**: subj. (like the inf. phrases **ēnsem . . . reddī** and **vim crēscere** in 798–99) of the impers. vb. **decuīt**, *was it fitting for a . . . to be . . .*
- 798 \***Iūturna**, -ae, f., *Juturna* (river nymph, favorite of Juno, and sister of Turnus; see note on 10.439).
- ēnsem . . . victīs** (799): in an earlier scene (731–41) Turnus had left behind his own sword, *snatched from him* (**ēreptum** 799) by a random act of chance, and his sister had restored it to him, thus rescuing him temporarily from certain death (785).
- 800 **īnflectere**: pass. imper.
- 801 **nē . . . edit . . . et . . . recursent** (802): a JUSSIVE NOUN CL./IND. COMMAND dependent on **precibus** (800), *my prayers that . . . not . . .*; **edit** is an archaic form of the pres. subjunct., = **edat**. The staccato effect of the line's opening monosyllables and disyllables and the extensive **t/d** ALLITERATION lend a tone of intensity to Jupiter's command, which truly is an order more than an entreaty.
- tantus . . . dolor**: a dominant facet of Juno's characterization from the outset of the poem (see, e.g., **dolēns** 1.1 and **saevī . . . dolōrēs** 1.25).
- 802 **tuō dulcī . . . ex ōre**: in a light, very human moment, Jupiter softens the demands he imposes upon his wife with a touch of flattery.
- 803 **Ventum . . . est**: the brief, abrupt **sententia**, the grave spondees, and even Jupiter's use of the impers. pass., all add a tone of finality to his assertion.
- Terrīs . . . bellum** (804): the lines recall only generally, but perhaps deliberately, 1.3–4, **et terrīs iactātus et altō / vī superum, saevae memorem Iūnōnis ob iram**.
- 805 **dēfōrmō** (1), *to spoil the appearance of, disfigure, mar*.
- dēfōrmāre . . . hymenaeōs**: the allusion is to the grief suffered earlier in the story by the house of king Latinus; the king's wife Amata had committed suicide by hanging (12.593–611) after mistakenly supposing that Turnus, whom she strongly favored over Aeneas for the hand of her daughter Lavinia, had died in battle.

*As Aeneas and Turnus at last face each other on the battlefield, Jupiter commands Juno to cease her hostility against the Trojans*

- 791 Iūnōnem intereā rēx omnipotentis Olympī  
792 adloquitur, fulvā pugnās dē nūbe tuentem:  
793 “Quae iam finis erit, coniūnx? Quid dēnique restat?  
794 Indigetem Aenēān scīs ipsa et scīre fatēris  
795 dēbērī caelō fātisque ad sīdera tollī.  
796 Quid struis? Aut quā spē gelidīs in nūbibus haerēs?  
797 Mortālīn decuit violārī vulnere dīvum?—  
798 aut ēnsem (quid enim sine tē Iūturna valēret?)  
799 ēreptum reddī Turnō et vim crēscere victīs?  
800 Dēsine iam tandem precibusque īnflectere nostrīs  
801 nē tē tantus edit tacitam dolor et mihi cūrae  
802 saepe tuō dulcī trīstēs ex ōre recursent.  
803 Ventum ad suprēmum est. Terrīs agitāre vel undīs  
804 Trōiānōs potuistī, īnfandum accendere bellum,  
805 dēfōrmāre domum et lūctū miscēre hymenaeōs:

### Quaestiones

1. Take careful note of the verbal echo in 796 of Jupiter's words to Mercury in 4.235 and Mercury's to Aeneas in 4.271. Does Vergil mean for us here to recall the earlier scenes from Book Four, and if so, why? Even if the language is only formulaic, what is the effect of the connection among the three passages?
2. What rhetorical device does Jupiter employ repeatedly in 796–99, and what is the intended effect?

Therwhiles th'almighty king to Iuno speaking thus he told,  
That from a yellow cloud aboue, the battell did behold.  
What shall the end herof be wife? what now remaineth? say.  
Aeneas is a god thou knowest, thy selfe canst not deny,  
And that to heauen he longs, and to the starres to be extold,  
What dost thou worke? or in what hope abidste in clouds so cold?

*From the translation of Thomas Phaer and Thomas Twyne, 1573*

- 827 **Rōmāna potēns . . . propāgō**: an echo of Anchises' prophecy, **Rōmāna propāgō vīsa potēns** (6.870–71 above).
- 828 **occiderit**: sc. **ut**; perf. subjunct. after **sinās**.  
**Trōia**: subj. of both **occidit** and **occiderit**, suspensefully delayed to the end of the line and of Juno's bold entreaty.
- 829 **rērum**: (all) things, i.e., the world.  
**repertor, repertōris**, m., discoverer, originator.  
**Ollī . . . repertor**: cf. **ollī subrīdēns hominum sator atque deōrum**, at the beginning of Jupiter's reply to Venus in Book One (line 254).
- 830 **Sāturnus, -ī**, m., *Saturn* (Italic deity associated with the Greek Cronus, father of Jupiter and Juno, who are elsewhere in the poem called **Sāturnius** and **Sāturnia**, e.g., 1.23 and 4.372 above).
- 831 **īrārūm . . . flūctūs**: a reminder of Vergil's characterization of Juno in the question he poses at the very beginning of his epic (1.11), **tantaene animīs caelestibus īrae**? And is the phrase **tantōs volvis sub pectore flūctūs** an intentional echo of **vāstōs volvunt ad litora flūctūs** in Vergil's description of the storm unleashed by Juno in her opening act of malevolence against the Trojans at 1.86?
- 832 **vērūm**, adv., but (at the same time), however.
- 833 **remittō**: here give in, yield in turn; the vb. is meant to respond to the related compound **summitte** in the preceding verse, i.e., if Juno will relent, then Jupiter will offer her concessions in return.
- 834 **Sermōnem**: i.e., their (Latin) language; the verse responds to Juno's request in 825.
- 835 **commixtī corpore tantum**: probably mingling in stock only, though some read **tantum** with **subsident** (836) and take **commixtī corpore** to mean integrated with the mass (of native Italians).
- 836 **subsīdō, subsīdere, subsēdī**, to crouch down, settle; to sink to a lower level, subside, decline.  
**rītus, -ūs**, m., rite, ritual.  
**Mōrem rītūque sacrōrum**: i.e., the whole body of religious custom and ritual; native Italian religion will be commingled with Trojan beliefs and practices as represented by the Penates that had been dutifully brought by Aeneas to his new country (**īnferret . . . deōs Latiō** 1.6 above and passim).
- 837 **adiciō, adicere, adiēcī, adiectus**, to throw at/toward; to insert, attach, add.  
**adiciam**: for the scansion, see note on **obicitur** (2.200); the internal rhyme with **faciam** is accentuated by positioning the final syllables under the ictus.
- 838 **genus**: subj. of **īre** (839).
- 839 **suprā īre deōs pietāte**: an extraordinary concession.
- 840 **nec . . . honōrēs**: Augustus restored the temple to Juno Regina on the Aventine, and the goddess was worshipped as well in temples on the Esquiline (to Juno Lucina) and the Capitoline (in the sanctuary of Juno Moneta and the ancient temple to the Capitoline Triad, where she was honored along with Jupiter and Minerva).
- aequē**, adv., equally, to the same extent.  
**celebrō** (1), to crowd around, attend in large numbers; honor, celebrate.

- 827 sit Rōmāna potēns Italā virtūte propāgō:  
 828 occidit, occideritque sinās cum nōmine Trōia.”

*Jupiter grants Juno's wishes and proclaims that her Latins shall subsume the Trojans and create a nation that will surpass all others in power and in their reverence for her majesty*

- 829 Ollī subrīdēns hominum rērumque repertor:  
 830 “Es germāna Iovis Sāturnique altera prōlēs,  
 831 īrārūm tantōs volvis sub pectore flūctūs.  
 832 Vērūm age et inceptum frūstrā summitte furōrem:  
 833 dō quod vīs, et mē victusque volēnsque remittō.  
 834 Sermōnem Ausoniū patrium mōrēque tenēbunt,  
 835 utque est nōmen erit; commixtī corpore tantum,  
 836 subsīdent Teucrī. Mōrem rītūque sacrōrum  
 837 adiciam faciamque omnēs ūnō ōre Latīnōs.  
 838 Hinc genus Ausoniō mixtum quod sanguine surget,  
 839 suprā hominēs, suprā īre deōs pietāte vidēbis,  
 840 nec gēns ūlla tuōs aequē celebrābit honōrēs.”

### Quaestiōnēs

1. What are the most striking rhetorical features of 826–28 and what is their effect?
2. Compare Juno's speech in 808–28 with her speech to the council of gods in Horace *Odes* 3.3, which was composed at about the same time as the *Aeneid*; what are the most striking similarities?
3. Comment on the effectiveness of the meter and other sound effects in 833.

Call them not Trojans: perish the renown  
 And name of Troy, with that detested town.  
 Latium be Latium still; let Alba reign.  
 And Rome's immortal majesty remain.

*From the translation of John Dryden, 1698*

- 841 **retorqueō, retorquēre, retorsī, retortus**, to twist back around; to reverse the course of; to reverse, change, alter.  
**retorsit**: Vergil means us to think of the word's root meaning, which here suggests the immense force of the goddess' will.
- 887 \***coruscō (1)**, to shake, brandish; to quiver, tremble; to glitter, flash, gleam.  
 889 **retractō (1)**, to draw back, hang back, retreat.  
 890 **Nōn . . . armīs**: the grave spondees, conflict of ictus and accent, the harsh c's and hissing, disdainful s's all suit the violence and reproachfulness of Aeneas' challenge.
- 891 **faciēs**: here *forms, shapes*; Aeneas taunts his enemy by challenging him to transform himself into a bird (**optā ardua pennīs / astra sequī** 892–93) or some other creature as a means of escape, an allusion perhaps to the mythic shape-changer Proteus.
- contrahō, contrahere, contrāxī, contractus**, to draw together; to assemble, collect, muster.
- 892 **valēs**: = *potes*; sc. **contrahere**.  
 893 **astra . . . terrā**: the nouns are positioned to FRAME the line and emphasize Aeneas' point, i.e., that there is no place for Turnus to escape to, not from the very heights of heaven to the bowels of the earth; the WORD-PICTURE in **cavā tē condere terrā** contributes to the image, and the **q/c** ALLITERATION adds a deliberately harsh sound effect.
- 894 \***fervidus, -a, -um**, intensely hot, boiling, burning; seething, blazing (with anger).  
**terrent / dicta . . . dī . . . terrent (895)**: the contrast is underscored by CHIASMUS, ANAPHORA, and ASSONANCE.



*Duel of Aeneas and Turnus*  
 Woodcut from a 1664 French translation of the Aeneid

- 841 Adnuit hīs Iūnō et mentem laetāta retorsit;  
 842 intereā excēdit caelō nūbemque relinquit.

*Unaware that the conflict on Olympus has now been resolved and the future union of Italians and Trojans determined, Aeneas challenges Turnus to face him in a battle to the death*

- 887 Aenēas īnstat contrā tēlumque coruscat  
 888 ingēns arboreum, et saevō sīc pectore fātūr:  
 889 “Quae nunc deinde mora est? Aut quid iam, Turne,  
       retractās?  
 890 Nōn cursū, saevīs certandum est comminus armīs.  
 891 Verte omnēs tētē in faciēs et contrahe quidquid  
 892 sīve animīs sīve arte valēs; optā ardua pennīs  
 893 astra sequī clausumque cavā tē condere terrā.”

*Turnus replies and attempts to hurl a huge stone at Aeneas, but his strength fails him and the throw falls short*

- 894 Ille, caput quassāns: “Nōn mē tua fervida terrent

### Quaestiōnēs

1. Compare the entire encounter between Jupiter and Juno in 791–842, the final divine dialogue in the poem and a denouement to the story's celestial action, with the poem's first such scene, the dialogue between Venus and Jupiter at 1.223–96 above. What functions do the two passages serve? In what specific ways are they complementary? Vergil invites us to compare in particular Jupiter's speeches of concession to the two goddesses, his daughter and his sister/wife, by introducing each speech (1.254f. and 12.829f.) with strikingly similar formulae (see note on line 829); what similarities are there between the two speeches, and are the concessions contradictory or complementary?
2. What consistencies are there in the characterization of Jupiter in the scenes at 1.223–96 and 12.791–842? What similarities are there in the roles played by Venus and Juno in these episodes? Evaluate the goddesses' interactions with Jupiter from the perspective of gender.

- 898 **lis, litis**, f., *disagreement, dispute, quarreling*.  
 899 **illum**: m., to agree with **limes** (898), though some mss. have **illud**, agreeing with **saxum** (897).  
**lēctī**: (*carefully*) *chosen men*.  
**bis sex**: a necessary poetic circumlocution, as **duodecim** with its series of consecutive short syllables does not fit into dactylic hexameter verse; the notion that the heroes of old were far more powerful than modern men is, like much else in the closing scenes of this book, Homeric (cf. *Iliad* 12.445f., of Hector).  
 900 **quālia . . . hominum . . . corpora**: *such bodies of men as = men of such physique as*; in appos. to **lēctī** (899).  
 901 **raptum**: sc. **saxum**; Eng. would use a vb., rather than the partic., *he caught it up and . . .*  
**torquēbat**: CONATIVE, *was attempting to . . .*  
 902 **īnsurgō, īnsurgere, īnsurrēxī**, *to get up, rise (here to stretch)*.  
 \***conciēō, conciēre, concīvī, concitus**, *to stir up, rouse, set in motion*.  
**concitus**: here *moving rapidly, speeding along*; Turnus runs forward and stretches out his arms as he attempts to throw the huge rock with all his might.  
**hērōs**: with **ille** (901), and delayed to the end of the sent. in order to focus our attention on the man in this heroic posture one last time, before we see him in the following verses faltering, and fearful, and struck down by his mightier foe.  
 903 **neque . . . sē . . . cognōscit**: *he does not recognize himself*, i.e., he does not have his usual strength.  
**neque . . . nec . . . -ve . . . -ve** (904): POLYSYNDETON enhances the cinematographic effect by prompting us to focus on each individual action; the rhyming of the four carefully positioned particls., **currentem . . . euntem / tollentem . . . moventem** (904), reinforces this effect, suggesting that Turnus attempted to act, but ineffectually, again and again and again.  
 904 **moventem**: here *throwing*.  
 905 **genua**: SYNIZESIS of the **u** here not only allows the word to be scanned as a disyllable, but also has the effect of lengthening the first syllable as a consequence of the **nu = nv** consonant cluster.  
 906 **lapis ipse virī**: the point is that not only does Turnus' usual strength fail him, but the stone he has hurled also seems somehow mystically to lack force; a cinematographer would film Turnus' actions and the rock itself, as it moves through the air towards its intended target, using slow-motion photography.  
**ināne**: here substantive, *space*.  
**volūtus**: lit., *turned*, i.e., thrown with a turning motion, = *whirling*.  
 907 **pertulit**: *carried the . . . all the way through* (to its target).  
 908 **velut in somnīs . . . / sīc** (913): in the Homeric SIMILE (*Iliad* 22.199f.) that inspired Vergil's image here, Achilles is in pursuit of Hector and cannot catch up to him, nor can Hector escape; Vergil makes the analogy even more vivid for his audience through his use of the first pers. pl. vbs. **vidēmur** (910) and **succidimus** (911).

- 895 dicta, ferōx; dī mē terrent et Iuppiter hostis.”  
 896 Nec plūra effātus, saxum circumspicit ingēns,  
 897 saxum antīquum ingēns, campō quod forte iacēbat,  
 898 līmes agrō positus lītem ut discerneret arvīs.  
 899 Vix illum lēctī bis sex cervīce subīrent,  
 900 quālia nunc hominum prōdūcit corpora tellūs;  
 901 ille manū raptum trepidā torquēbat in hostem,  
 902 altior īnsurgēns et cursū concitus, hērōs.  
 903 Sed neque currentem sē nec cognōscit euntem  
 904 tollentemve manū saxumve immāne moventem;  
 905 genua labant; gelidus concrēvit frīgore sanguis.  
 906 Tum lapis ipse virī, vacuum per ināne volūtus,  
 907 nec spatium ēvāsit tōtum neque pertulit ictum.

*Like a man in the midst of a nightmare, Turnus seems unable to move or to speak and, panicked, he sees no escape*

- 908 Ac velut in somnīs, oculōs ubi languida pressit

### Quaestiones

1. How does Vergil employ meter and other poetic effects in 896–97 to focus our attention on the size of the rock that Turnus sees?
2. What ironic point does Vergil intend to make with the detail provided in 898?

And as, when heavy sleep has clos'd the sight,  
 The sickly fancy labors in the night;  
 We seem to run; and, destitute of force,  
 Our sinking limbs forsake us in the course:  
 In vain we heave for breath; in vain we cry;  
 The nerves, unbrac'd, their usual strength deny;  
 And on the tongue the falt'ring accents die:  
 So Turnus far'd; whatever means he tried,  
 All force of arms and points of art employ'd,  
 The Fury flew athwart, and made th' endeavor void.

*From the translation of John Dryden, 1698*

- 910 **velle vidēmur**: the extensive ALLITERATION of *v* in this passage, continued esp. in 912–13, is possibly meant to lend an airy, dreamlike effect; at the very least it adds a delicate musicality to the dream sequence.  
**cōnātus**, -ūs, m., *effort, attempt*.  
**aegrī**: here *weak, faint*.
- 911 **succidō, succidere, succidī**, to give way under one (esp. of the knees); to collapse, fall down.  
**succidimus**: this detail looks back to **genua labant** (905), just as **nōn . . . vīrēs** (911–12) recalls 903–04.
- 913 **quācumque**, adv., *wherever* (more likely than the view that the form is abl. of the adj. **quaecumque**, modifying **virtūte**).
- 914 **dea dīra**: the ALLITERATIVE phrase refers to the Furies, called **Dīrae** by Vergil in a lengthy description at 12.845–86, where Jupiter dispatches one of them to assail Turnus and drive off his sister Juturna.
- 916 **lētum . . . īnstāre**: IND. STATE. with **tremēscit**; Aeneas has not yet cast his spear, and the threat Turnus feels is more general, so **lētum** is more likely the correct reading than **tēlum**, which appears in some of the mss. and is accepted by some editors.  
**tremēscō, tremēscere**, to tremble, quiver; to tremble at, dread.
- 917 **quō . . . ēripiat, . . . quā . . . tendat**: IND. QUESTS. dependent on **videt**; Turnus feels helpless either to escape or to attack.
- 918 **aurīgam . . . sorōrem**: Juturna, who had courageously fought at Turnus' side, had been compelled to withdraw from the battle by one of the Furies (see above on 914).
- 919 **Cūctantī**: the word echoes the identically positioned **cūctātur** (916).  
**tēlum Aenēās . . . coruscat**: the camera turns back to Aeneas, in slow spondaic rhythm, and we see him again just as we had at the opening of his previous scene—**Aenēās īnstat contrā tēlumque coruscat** (887)—poised to hurl his spear; but Vergil in this instance adds one crucial detail to his description of the Trojan's weapon, **fātāle**, which here means both *fated* and *fatal*, thus unambiguously foreshadowing the events soon to follow.
- 920 **sortītus fortūnam oculīs**: i.e., seeing, as Turnus faltered, a favorable opportunity to attack.
- 921 **ēminus**, adv., *from a great distance, at long range*.  
**mūrālis**, -is, -e, *off/relating to a city's wall/fortifications; for the assault of city-walls*.  
**numquam**: with **sic** (922); for the negative SIMILE, cf. 2.496–99.
- 922 **tormentum**, -ī, n., *rope; machine, catapult*.  
**Mūrālī concita . . . / tormentō . . . saxa** (922): INTERLOCKED WORD ORDER;  
**mūrālī . . . tormentō**, freely, *from a siege-machine* (a catapult designed to hurl rocks against a city's fortification walls).
- 923 **dissultō, -āre**, to leap forth from; to burst/flash forth.  
**crepitus**, -ūs, m., *loud noise, cracking/crashing sound, crack, crash*.  
**īnstar**: here *like*.
- 924 **ōrās**: here *edge(s), rim*.

- 909 nocte quiēs, nēquīquam avidōs extendere cursūs  
 910 velle vidēmur et in mediīs cōnātibus aegrī  
 911 succidimus; nōn lingua valet, nōn corpore nōtae  
 912 sufficiunt vīrēs nec vōx aut verba sequuntur:  
 913 sic Turnō, quācumque viam virtūte petīvit,  
 914 successum dea dīra negat. Tum pectore sēnsūs  
 915 vertuntur variī; Rutulōs aspectat et urbem  
 916 cūctāturque metū lētumque īnstāre tremēscit,  
 917 nec quō sē ēripiat, nec quā vī tendat in hostem,  
 918 nec currūs usquam videt aurīgamve sorōrem.

*Aeneas casts his spear, which flies like a black tornado and pierces Turnus' thigh, bringing him to bended knee*

- 919 Cūctantī tēlum Aenēās fātāle coruscat,  
 920 sortītus fortūnam oculīs, et corpore tōtō  
 921 ēminus intorquet. Mūrālī concita numquam  
 922 tormentō sic saxa fremunt nec fulmine tantī  
 923 dissultant crepitūs. Volat ātrī turbinis īnstar  
 924 exitium dīrum hasta ferēns ōrāsque reclūdit

### Quaestiō

What significant differences do you see between Vergil's simile in 908–14 and the Homeric original that inspired it in *Iliad* 22.199f.?

The hero measur'd first, with narrow view,  
 The destin'd mark; and, rising as he threw,  
 With its full swing the fatal weapon flew.  
 Not with less rage the rattling thunder falls,  
 Or stones from batt'ring-engines break the walls:  
 Swift as a whirlwind, from an arm so strong,  
 The lance drove on, and bore the death along.

*From the translation of John Dryden, 1698*

- 925 **extrēmōs**: here *at the bottom*, as the spear passes through Turnus' shield into his thigh (926).  
**septemplex, septemplicis**, *sevenfold, seven-layered*.  
**clipeī . . . septemplicis**: Bronze-Age shields, as Homer and Vergil described them and archaeology confirms, were made of multiple layers of bronze and animal hide; cf. the description of Pallas' shield at 10.482–85 above.
- 926 **femur, femoris**, n., *upper leg, thigh*.  
**Incidit, ictus, / ingēns** (927): in the abrupt DIAERESSES and harsh c/g/d/t ALLITERATION we hear the sudden violence of the spear's impact and mighty Turnus' fall to the ground.
- 927 **duplicātus, -a, -um**, *doubled (over), bent*.  
**poples, poplitis**, m., *knee-joint, knee*.  
**duplicātō poplite**: the buckling of Turnus' knee here recalls his earlier collapse at 905 (*genua labant*).
- 928 **cōnsurgō, cōnsurgere, cōnsurrēxī, consurrēctus**, *to rise up together, rise all at once*.  
**Cōnsurgunt . . . remittunt** (929): Vergil's camera draws back from Turnus and pans the Rutulian army and the surrounding countryside; the army, and even the mountains and forests, groan in dismay.
- 930 **supplex**: here, as often, a substantive.
- 931 **prōtendō, prōtendere, prōtendī, prōtentus**, *to stretch forth, extend; to lift, raise*.  
**oculōs . . .** (930) / **prōtendēns**: ZEUGMA, as the vb. has one sense with **oculōs** and another with **dextram**.  
**dēprecōr, -ārī, -ātus sum**, *to try to avert by prayer; to seek pardon, beg for mercy* (the word here plays on **precantem** in the preceding verse).
- 932 **sorte**: *opportunity*, an echo of **sortītus** in 920.
- 934 **Daunus, -ī**, m., *Daunus* (king of the Rutulians and aged father of Turnus and Juturna).
- 935 **seu corpus . . . māvīs = vel corpus . . . sī māvīs**.  
**lūmine**: here *life*.
- 936 **victum**: sc. **mē**, subj. of **tendere**; the wordplay with **vīcistī** effectively underscores Turnus' point.  
**tendere palmās**: for the gesture, see note on 1.93.
- 937 **Lāvīnia, -ae**, f., *Lavinia* (only child of Amata and king Latinus, princess of Laurentum; see note on 805 above).
- 938 **ulterius**: though the point should not be pressed, it is tempting to suppose that Vergil may have intended an echo here of line 806 above, where the adv. is identically positioned in Jupiter's mandate to his queen not to press her hatred of the Trojans any further, **ulterius temptāre vetō**; Vergil certainly intends for us to see that, whereas Juno manages at last to control her **īra** and her **furor** and her **saevus dolor**, Aeneas in the end is utterly incapable of doing so (see below, esp. note on **saevī . . . dolōris** 945).

- 925 **lōrīcae et clipeī extrēmōs septemplicis orbēs**;  
 926 **per medium strīdēns trānsit femur. Incidit, ictus**,  
 927 **ingēns ad terram duplicātō poplite Turnus**.  
 928 **Cōnsurgunt gemitū Rutulī tōtusque remūgit**  
 929 **mōns circum et vōcem lātē nemora alta remittunt**.

*The Rutulian prince concedes defeat and, as a suppliant, begs Aeneas to return him, or at least his corpse, to his aged father*

- 930 Ille humilis supplex oculōs dextramque precantem  
 931 prōtendēns, “Equidem meruī nec dēprecōr,” inquit;  
 932 “ūtere sorte tuā. Miserī tē sī qua parentis  
 933 tangere cūra potest, ōrō (fuit et tibi tālis  
 934 Anchīsēs genitor), Daunī miserēre senectae  
 935 et mē, seu corpus spoliātum lūmine māvīs,  
 936 redde mēis. Vīcistī et victum tendere palmās  
 937 Ausonī vīdēre; tua est Lāvīnia coniūnx;  
 938 ulterius nē tende odiīs.”

### Quaestiones

1. What is the term for the word order seen in **clipeī . . . orbēs** (925), and how is it here appropriate to the image Vergil is describing?
2. What device of word order is employed in 927, and what is its effect?
3. How might the extensive assonance of long and short **u** sounds in 928 be regarded as onomatopoeic, particularly in view of the action described in the emphatically positioned verbs, **remūgit** and **remittunt** (929)?
4. Analyze in detail Turnus' last, crucial speech in 930–38. What posture does he take in addressing Aeneas? What aspect of his character is reflected in the entreaty on behalf of his father? Consider not only what reasons Turnus may have for mentioning Aeneas' father, but also what Vergil's purposes may be in focusing on the relationship each man had to his own father. What victories does Turnus concede that Aeneas has won? And finally, what general appeal does Turnus make to Aeneas at the end of his speech, and why is this especially important here at the close of the poem?

- 939 **oculōs dextramque**: is this only an inadvertent echo of **oculōs dextramque** in identical position just nine lines earlier (930), or another allusion to the connection between these two men, who, although the bitterest of adversaries, have so many traits in common, not least of all their rage? Or perhaps, in yet another brilliant cinematographic touch, Vergil means to focus our attention first on Turnus' eyes and his right hand, in gestures of supplication and entreaty, and moments later on Aeneas' eyes, as he surveys his victim, and his right hand, which he holds back for an instant, hesitating on the brink of slaughter.
- 940 **cūctantem**: applied to Aeneas here, to Turnus at 919 (**cūctantī**).
- 941 **īnfēlix . . . / balteus** (942): the cl. is very effectively FRAMED by displacement (ANASTROPHE) of the epithet, which gives it special prominence, and ENJAMBEMENT of the noun, which creates suspense. In fact, the entire ABCBA arrangement of the cl. (nom.-abl.-vb.-abl.-nom.) is at once highly visual and suspenseful: following the strong DIAERESIS at **coeperat** comes a hint of foreboding (**īnfēlix**), then, as if through Aeneas' eyes (**volvēns oculōs** 939), we see Turnus' shoulder (**umerō**), where there appears (**cum appāruit**), high up on that shoulder (**altō**), the ill-fated belt (**balteus**), that fateful swordbelt stripped from Aeneas' young friend Pallas by Turnus (at 10.496–505 above) in his own moment of vengeful rage.
- 942 **bullā**, -ae, f., *bullā* (a magical charm); *stud*, *boss* (on engraved metalwork).
- 943 **puerī**: the detail serves as a reminder of how young Pallas was when he was slain by Turnus.
- victim**: a deliberate echo of **victim** in 936—Pallas had been at the mercy of Turnus, who could have spared him, just as Turnus is now at the mercy of Aeneas.
- 945 **oculīs**: purposely repeated from 939; the camera turns back to Aeneas' eyes, as through them he *drinks in* (**hausit** 946) this reminder of his young friend's death and is filled with terrible rage. For the metaphor **oculīs haurīre**, cf. 4.661–62, where it is also used in the context of death.
- saevī . . . dolōris**: the same phrase had been applied to Juno at the very outset of the poem, where Vergil attributed to the goddess a propensity for rage and vengefulness that he repeatedly suggests is shared by Aeneas himself; with **saevī monimenta dolōris** here and **furiīs accēnsus et irā / terribilis** in 946–47, cf. **necdum etiam causae irarum saevique dolōrēs / exciderant animō** of Juno at 1.25–26 and **hīs accēnsa** at 1.29 (and see 801 and note above).
- monimenta**: used elsewhere of the Minotaur, **Veneris monimenta nefandae** (6.26).
- 948 **ēripiāre**: DELIBERATIVE SUBJUNCT., *are you to be . . .*
- 949 **immolō** (1), *to offer* (a victim) *in sacrifice*; *to kill* (like a sacrificial victim), *sacrifice* (the word here deliberately suggests a ritual slaying).
- poenam . . . sūmit**: cf. **scelerātās sūmere poenās** (2.576), of Aeneas' desire to slay Helen.
- 950 **adversō . . . pectore**: as the action of lines 938–49 has taken only a matter of seconds, we should picture Turnus still down on his knee, with his right hand still extended in entreaty, his eyes upturned in supplication to Aeneas, and his chest therefore turned towards his enemy, exposed to his sword.

*Aeneas considers sparing Turnus, when, enraged by the sight of Pallas' swordbelt on his enemy's shoulder, he buries his sword in the Rutulian's chest and sends his soul fleeing to the shades*

Stetit ācer in armīs

- 939 Aenēās, volvēns oculōs, dextramque repressit;  
 940 et iam iamque magis cūctantem flectere sermō  
 941 coeperat, īnfēlix umerō cum appāruit altō  
 942 balteus et nōtīs fulsērunt cingula bullīs  
 943 Pallantis puerī, victum quem vulnere Turnus  
 944 strāverat atque umerīs inimicum īsigne gerēbat.  
 945 Ille, oculīs postquam saevī monimenta dolōris  
 946 exuviāsque hausit, furiīs accēnsus et irā  
 947 terribilis: “Tūne hinc, spoliīs indūte meōrum,  
 948 ēripiāre mihī? Pallās tē hōc vulnere, Pallās  
 949 immolat et poenam scelerātō ex sanguine sūmit.”  
 950 Hoc dīcēs, ferrum adversō sub pectore condit,

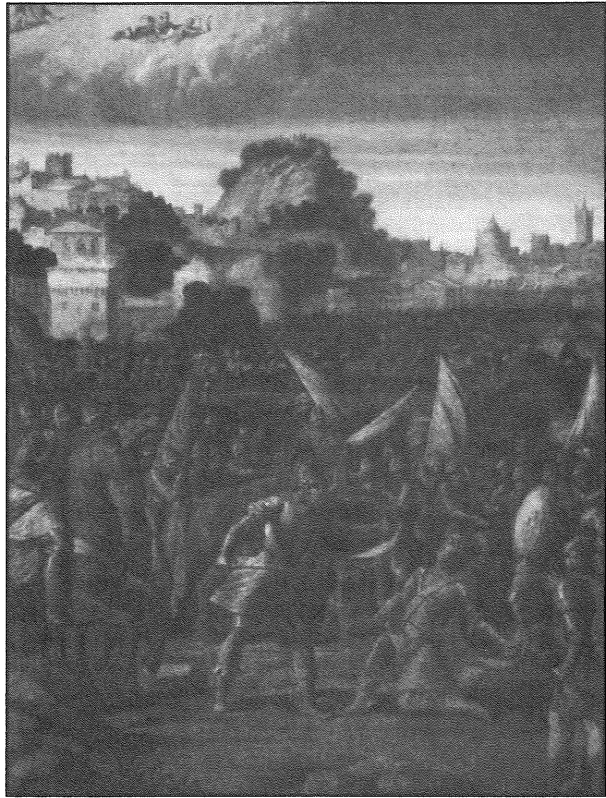
### Quaestiōnēs

1. Servius' view is that in 938–39 Aeneas stands forth in all his glory, and doubly so, as his **pietās** is evidenced first when he considers showing Turnus mercy, and second when he slays his foe out of respect for Pallas' father Evander, who had (in 11.177f.) implored Aeneas to seek revenge against his son's murderer; is this a reasonable interpretation?
2. Comment on the dramatic effect of the anaphora and polysyndeton in 940.
3. What is the point of the echo in **vulnere Pallās** (948) of **vulnere Turnus** (943)? How does the anaphora in 948 add to the effect?
4. Compare 941–49 with 10.496–505 above and discuss how Vergil had prepared us in that earlier episode for this last scene of the poem.

In deep suspense the Trojan seem'd to stand,  
 And, just prepar'd to strike, repress'd his hand.  
 He roll'd his eyes, and ev'ry moment felt  
 His manly soul with more compassion melt.

*From the translation of John Dryden, 1698*

- 951 **fervidus**: of Aeneas also in 894 above. The forcefully ENJAMBED epithet has great point: it is ASSONANT with **ferrum** (950), connecting Aeneas' violence with his wrath; it contrasts with **frīgore** (the heat of anger, the chill of death); it punctuates the sent. with a quick dactyl and an abrupt DIAERESIS, which is then followed by a series of spondees marking the cold spreading slowly through Turnus' collapsing limbs.
- solvuntur frīgore membra**: the same phrase, identically positioned, is used to describe Aeneas himself at his first appearance in the epic, just as he is about to express his dismay over the violent storm Aeolus had unleashed at Juno's instigation.
- 952 **vīta . . . umbrās**: the epic's final line (adapted from Homer and repeated from 11.831, where it had been used of the death of Turnus' ally, the Volscian warrior princess Camilla) begins with the word for life and ends in death and darkness; the flight of Turnus' soul is scored in quick dactyls to the line's midpoint, where the strong and unusually positioned DIAERESIS—a split second of thunderous silence—is followed by the sluggish, reluctant **indignāta**.



"The Death of Turnus"  
Niccolo dell'Abate (1509/16–1571)  
Galleria Estense, Modena, Italy

- 951 **fervidus**; **ast illī solvuntur frīgore membra**,  
952 **vītaque cum gemitū fugit, indignāta, sub umbrās**.

### Quaestiōnēs

1. What significance do you see in the fact that Vergil employs the very same phrase, **solvuntur frīgore membra**, in describing both Aeneas at his first appearance (1.92, above) and Turnus here in his final moment at the poem's close (951)?
2. Compare line 952 with Homer *Iliad* 16.856–57 and 22.362–63; why does Vergil end his poem with this deliberate recollection of Homer, and how does this resonance between the two epics enrich our understanding of this final scene of the *Aeneid*?
3. As you contemplate the poem's closing action, particularly in 930–52, consider again the issue raised earlier (in the discussion question on lines 791–842) of the hierarchy of power among gods, men, and fate. Does Aeneas follow the mandate given him by Anchises during their encounter at 6.851–53 above? Would the gods have wanted Aeneas to slay Turnus? Was the action fated?—and, if so, does Vergil conceive of fate as some external force beyond all control or rather is the human suffering in this final scene, and the suffering depicted throughout the poem, ultimately the consequence of man's own character? If Aeneas is responsible for his actions in this last moment of vengeance and rage, does he ultimately succeed as the poem's hero and emerge as victor, or does he fail, as the powerless victim of his own **saevus dolor**, **furia**, and **īra**?



"Vergil"  
Joos (Justus) van Ghent  
(ca. 1435–ca. 1480)  
Oil on wood  
Louvre  
Paris, France