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They Might Be Giants: Inconsistency and Indeterminacy in Vergil's War in Italy

by JAMES J. O'HARA

What was Italy like before the coming of Aeneas and the Trojans, and what changes did their arrival bring about? Three decades ago Adam Parry called attention to parts of the Aeneid that project a sense of loss, especially a sense of the lost innocence of Italy, which he connected with the experience of historical Italians in the decades just before Vergil’s birth. Parry argued that “the last books of the poem” suggest “that the formation of Rome’s empire involved the loss of the pristine purity of Italy,” and so Vergil “calls on us to weep for what to his mind made an earlier Italy fresh and true.” This aspect of Parry’s enormously influential essay has been contested in recent years, most recently by an article that cites a large number of passages to demonstrate “the fact that the moral innocence of Italy was compromised before the Trojans ever set foot on its soil” (emphasis added). In broader terms, the question of the guilt, innocence, villainy or heroism of Turnus and the Italians on one side and Aeneas and the Trojans on the other has been the focus of spirited debate. Most contributions to this debate, especially those that focus on the “fact” that Turnus and most of the Italians are villains who deserve whatever suffering comes to them in the poem, claim explicitly or implicitly to have done a better job than their opponents of assembling the clues or evidence Vergil gives us about the Trojans and Italians into a unified coherent picture of what the two groups are really like. Often this produces articles that offer excellent observations about many aspects of the poem, but must ignore, distort, or implausibly explain away features of the poem that do not fit the view of the Aeneid they are promoting. The same flaws sometimes mar attempts to defend Turnus and the Italians, or to stress negative aspects of the portrait of Aeneas and the Trojans. At times scholars on both sides of the debate resemble attorneys prosecuting or defending...

3. Moorton, for example, presents an almost hilariously one-sided account of the way in which “the ferous Latins foist a murderous melee on the Trojans” (123-25). This is his description of the aftermath of Ascanius’ shooting of the pet stag of Silvia, a “faux pas which triggers the impetuous and disproportionate wrath of the Latin farmers.” I think of Juvenal 3.289: si rixa est, ubi tu pulsas, ego vapulo tantum. There are claims about the Latins being “ready to massacre, no questions asked,” the Trojans, but no mention that among the first two to die are an Italian juvenis and seniourque Galaesus, / dum pact medium se offert, iustissimus unus (535-36). The text makes little distinction between the morality of the actions of the two confused and disorderly groups.

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clients accused of crimes in the real world, rather than readers of a literary text or scholars looking objectively at data or evidence.4

This essay will suggest a different approach, and urge that we consider the possibility that Vergil may be intentionally presenting an inconsistent and so an indeterminate portrait of Italy, which lends itself to different viewpoints about whether the Italians are disorderly warlike peoples in need of the civilizing influence of the Trojans or peaceful peoples invaded by an army that destroys something “fresh and true.” This essay, which represents early work on a planned larger project on inconsistency in Latin poetry, aims to make suggestions and stimulate debate rather than be fully convincing; such limited goals are only reasonable given the complexity of the issues involved. Already this paragraph has mentioned terms like intention, indeterminacy, and point of view, that are themselves the focus of heated struggle and so in need of more precise and detailed examination than can be given them in this forum.5 The essay may also seem incomplete in that its ideas may not seem fully developed, or pushed confidently to one or another conclusion, in part because conclusive answers to all of its difficult questions are, quite simply, not apparent to me at this point in time. Still some progress may be made even in an essay of limited goals.

The essay will have three sections. The first will briefly review recent work on interpreting, rather than faulting or explaining away, inconsistencies in ancient texts, with special focus on five Roman poems, including the Aeneid. The second will present some of the passages in the Aeneid that describe “what the situation was in Italy before the Trojans came” (this is of course a loose translation of Aeneid 7.37-39), and will suggest that they are marked by inconsistencies that cannot and should not be resolved. The third will explore similarly contradictory aspects of one mythic model for the actions of the Trojans and Italians in Aeneid 7-12: it will focus on the associations of the two sides in the war in Italy with combatants in a Gigantomachy, but from a new perspective that takes into account some aspects of Gigantomachy, both outside and especially within the poem, that have been neglected or not fully understood by previous discussions of Gigantomachy in the poem. Although my suggestion that the Aeneid presents an ambiguous or indeterminate picture of the war in Italy is not a completely novel one, my comparative material and theoretical framework offer a new angle from which to view and consider this suggestion. I also offer new readings of the details of a number of passages.

I. Inconsistencies in Other Ancient Texts

A central argument of my Death and the Optimistic Prophecy in Vergil’s Aeneid focuses on discrepancies between what is said in prophecies in the poem and what either happens or is predicted to happen elsewhere in the poem. One prominent example would be the difference between the picture of Aeneas’ war

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4. On this see also O’Hara (1993a) esp. 112.
5. On intention see, e.g., Patterson (1990), on indeterminacy, Bahtö (1986), on “point of view” or the differently nuanced “focalization,” e.g., Fowler (1990).
in Italy that Jupiter presents to Venus in Book 1, and the difficult compromise achieved after long struggle in Aeneid 12. Another would be the conflict between the prediction by Jupiter that Aeneas will live only three more years, and Anchises' apparent prediction to Aeneas in the underworld that he will live to be an old man, a longaeus. I have argued that these and other discrepancies are not signs of Vergil's inability to revise the Aeneid before his death, but instead are indications that characters within the poem are or may be being deceived by prophecies, and that readers may be deceived as well, or at least offered conflicting roads of interpretation. Only as I was finishing that book did I realize that it was part of a quiet and unheralded movement throughout classical studies in which poetic inconsistencies are being seen in a new light. So far this has taken place mainly in studies of individual authors, and one goal of this essay is to suggest the value of a more comparative approach. For Homer, Marilyn Katz argues that contradictions in the Odyssey's portrait of Penelope, who seems to be both loyal to Odysseus and ready for remarriage, are not to be explained away, but constitute "an indeterminacy of both narrative form and character representation." Michael Nagler has suggested that both the Iliad and the Odyssey offer "representational inconsistency as a reflection of ideological uncertainty." For Thucydides, W.R. Connor has criticized the goals of "Separatist" critics who seek "to determine the stages in which [his] work was composed," but praises their attention to "the work's tensions, contrasts, and changes of viewpoint," which he views as deliberate, or at least as part of the History's admirable complexity. Greek tragedy offers a number of factual or other inconsistencies; some of these must be caused by dramatic necessity, and we must be very careful with tragedy, but some inconsistencies may have important thematic consequences, as Bruce Heiden argues in a study of the Trachiniae. For the Greek and Latin novel, John Winkler's work on Heliodorus and Apuleius shows how narrative inconsistencies may call attention to a character's lies, and an author's interest in problems of interpretation. Niall Slater's book on Petronius follows some of these same lines. For Vergil's Georgics, work by David Ross and Richard Thomas has shown that in that poem Vergil uses poetic "error," or even lies, to make thematic suggestions; Joseph Farrell has demonstrated that in some passages in the Georgics imitation of different models "causes Vergil's argument to shift back and forth between ostensible hope and despair, between seeming acceptance and rejection of the notions of providence, between apparent agreement with or dissent from the views of now one source, now another."

James Zetzel has called attention to inconsistencies within Horace's first book of Satires and to "the contradictory structures of the book, its creation of a unified sense of disorder, of a speaker who is consistent only in his lack of logic and consistency," although it must be noted that these contradictions are more subtle than many of those described by the other scholars in this list. For ancient theoretical as opposed to practical evidence, an appendix of Death and the

Optimistic Prophecy collects instances in which ancient commentators on Homer defend inconsistencies as being appropriate for the rhetorical needs of the speaker.\(^7\)

Besides this quick list of recent secondary works, I would like to call more vividly to mind inconsistencies at the start of four Roman epics (or, in one case, an epyllion) other than the Aeneid. Each of these passages deserves more thorough discussion than space allows here, and my subjective comments about them are perhaps less important than the cumulative impact of seeing so many inconsistent passages in Roman epics that at least arguably function as a part of the poet’s technique. The passages are from Catullus, Lucretius, Ovid, and Lucan.

1) Near the beginning of Catullus 64 the poet describes the Argo as the world’s first ship:

\begin{verbatim}
illa rudem cursu prima imbuit Amphitriten.
quae simul ac rostro ventosum proscidit aequor,
tortaque remigio spumis incanuit unda,
emersere freti candenti e gurgite vultus
aequoreae monstrum Nereides admirantes.
\end{verbatim}

(64.11-15)

In line 11 adjectives describing both the ship (prima) and the sea (rudem) mark this event as the start of seafaring. The marveling of the Nereids at this monstrum underscores the singularity of the occurrence as well; they are amazed to see this first boat. Soon the scene shifts to the description of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, and the coverlet on the marriage bed, which tells the story of Theseus and Ariadne, which involves an earlier use of a ship:

\begin{verbatim}
haec vestis priscis hominum variata figuris
heroum mira virtutes indicat arte.
namque fluentisono prospectans litore Diac,
Thesea cedentem celeri cum classe tuetur
... Ariadna.
\end{verbatim}

(50-54)

Catullus calls attention to Theseus’ fleet with the phrase celeri cum classe in 53, and compounds the chronological problem by referring to Theseus and Ariadne as prisci in line 50 (the adjective attaches to them even though literally priscis modifies figuris). Many critics have seen this as a blunder, but Weber has argued convincingly that Catullus deliberately creates and calls attention to this problem.\(^8\) Weber shows that the poet’s playfulness reflects an Alexandrian debate about mythological chronology. The relative chronology of Theseus and the Argonauts centers in part on the figure of Medea, whom Jason and the Argonauts meet as a young woman at Colchis and whom the young Theseus meets as an

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\(^8\) Weber (1983); see his extensive references in 263n.1.
older woman in Athens, where she has received asylum from his father Aegeus after killing her and Jason’s children, shortly before the Cretan adventure in which Theseus meets and abandons Ariadne. Callimachus’ *Hecale* (frags. 232-34 Pf. and with more detail now frags. 3-7 Hollis) features the asylum story, in which the expedition of the Argonauts must be earlier than the story of Theseus and Ariadne, but Apollonius of Rhodes has Jason refer to the story of Theseus and Ariadne as something that happened once upon a time (*Argonautica* 3.997-1108, esp. 997 δὴ ποτε). Catullus 64, beginning with the Argo, has obvious debts to Apollonius, but Weber has also shown that in 64.217 reddite... *nuper mihi* Catullus presents an allusion to and perhaps even a “virtual paraphrase” of *Hecale* fr. 234 Pf. = 8 Hollis παρεκ νόον εἰλήλουθας; both phrases refer to Aegeus’ recognition of his son after his arrival in Athens, which saved him from Medea’s attempt on his life. So Catullus points to the very scene in Callimachus’ *Hecale* that causes the most chronological problems. Thus Catullus in a variety of ways makes it hard for the learned reader to miss the inconsistency, or to attribute it to chance. In part Weber argues that Catullus is being playful, but he also briefly suggests that Catullus’ inconsistency is related to the hotly debated question of his portrait of the heroic age. This involves the question of thematic rather than chronological or, to speak more broadly, factual inconsistency. The coverlet on the marriage bed is said to describe “heroic manly deeds” (*heroum virtutes* 51) but focuses on the desertion of Ariadne by Theseus. The marriage of Peleus and Thetis is described by both Catullus (25) and the Parcae (373) as felix, but the song of the Parcae dwells on the brutality and early death of Achilles, which suggest not *felicitas* but the Iliadic notion of Thetis αὕτη ἀριστότοκεία, “ill-fated mother of so great a child” (*Iliad* 18.54). Catullus professes admiration for the heroic age (22-25) and in the last few lines of the poem describes the decline that has led to his sordid times (397-408), but that earlier age falls far short of any ideal, and at its heart seems characterized by the faithlessness decried in so many other Catullan poems. Some have strongly resisted seeing an ambivalent view of the heroic age, and the debate so far has been stridently subjective. But both Weber’s demonstration that Catullus calls attention to chronological inconsistencies, and the apparent use of both factual and thematic inconsistencies in so many other ancient authors, suggest that we should be open to the possibility of the poem’s expressing different and even contradictory views about its subject matter. The influence of Catullus 64 on Vergil and other Latin poets also means that deliberate use of inconsistency here could have had considerable impact on the development of the techniques of Latin epic.

2) Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura* begins with the famous invocation of Venus, in which the poet asks the goddess to be his ally as he composes (*te sociam studeo*...)

11. Cf. Weber (1983) 270: “If the ship said to be the first ever to sail proves in fact to have had a predecessor, nothing could be more appropriate to a poem in which heroic *virtutes* professed are sometimes sordid *scelera* in fact, marriages called happy are replete with insistent reminders of unions ending in tragedy, and the sin allegedly unique to the present is in fact amply attested in the dark recesses of the heroic past.”
scribendis versibus esse 24) and to use her influence on Mars to provide the peace necessary for him to write, and for Memmius to receive, his message (28-43). These lines are followed by six lines that describe the life of the gods:

omnis enim per se divum natura aecessest
immortalae ævo summa cum pace frutatur
semota ab nostris rebus seiusunctaque longe;
nam privata dolore omni, privata periclis,
tipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,
nec bene promeritis capitur nec tangitur ira.

(1.44-49 = 2.646-51)

In one sense, the transition from the request for peace in 29-43 to the description of the peaceful existence of the gods in 44-49 is smooth and comprehensible; lines 44-49, introduced by enim, explain why Lucretius wants peace. But 1-43 and 44-49 represent radically different views of the gods: 1-43 depict conventional mythological Olympian gods who may have human children and interfere in human affairs, especially in response to human prayers; 44-49 depict Epicurean gods removed from and so not interested in human affairs, who are not captured by our services and so are not likely to listen to our prayers, or our requests that they help us with our poems or make the world peaceful. Scholars have tried to deal with this inconsistency in ways that, in the terms once used in Homeric scholarship, we may describe as “Unitarian” or “Separatist.” “Unitarians” would “Epicureanize” the invocation to Venus, stressing the subtle ways in which lines 1-43 are in some way consistent with Epicurean philosophy, while “Separatists” would simply delete lines 44-49, but neither tactic is justifiable. Diskin Clay has argued persuasively that Lucretius is making use of inconsistency for rhetorical purposes, presenting two views of the gods, first the traditional Roman view of religion, which Lucretius is going to suggest is wrong, and the Epicurean view, which the whole poem will argue is right.

Citing but correcting the old theory of the “anti-Lucretius in Lucretius,” Clay explains that a number of passages throughout the poem are indeed inconsistent with Lucretius’ beliefs, but are part of Lucretius’ strategy for identifying with the reader, so as to be able to move the reader from his Roman beliefs towards
Lucretius’ Epicurean teachings. Somewhat similar arguments about the way Lucretius either works with contradictions within Epicureanism, or uses inconsistency as a deliberate poetic device, have been made by De Lacy, Anderson, Segal, Hardie, and others (although I do not mean to claim that each of these scholars would agree with the views presented here).\(^1\) In leaving Lucretius I would like to stress that this earliest extant Roman epic, which had at least some, and most would say enormous, influence on Vergil, begins with a striking example of inconsistency.

3) Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* begins with a cosmogony presided over by a being described in 1.21 as *deus et melior . . . natura*. The same being is described in 1.69 as *quisquis fuit ille deorum*. The creation or development of the cosmos which this god supervises is rational, orderly, and teleological; according to Richard McKim, “the higher nature . . . designs the cosmos as it must be designed to satisfy Reason’s demands.”\(^1\) The account of creation is at least partly Stoic, partly eclectic, but surely wholly rational, serious, even philosophical. The rational god of philosophy who presides over Ovid’s rational creation, however, soon disappears from view, and for the rest of this long poem the gods will be not merely the mythological Olympian gods (who are introduced rather casually in 1.73 *astra tenent caeleste solum formaque deorum*, and more explicitly only in the dependent clause at 1.113-14 *postquam Saturno tenebrosa in Tartara misso / sub love mundus erat*) but a particularly disorderly, unphilosophical version of the mythological gods, who in Ovid are emotional, lustful, venegul, and at times vain, cruel, and thoughtless. It also seems significant that what Ovid’s rational *fabricator mundi* does is to put an end to the instability of chaos, where, in 1.17, *nulli sua forma manebat*, “nothing kept its own shape”; in the rest of Ovid’s poem, of course, few things will “keep their own shape,” as metamorphosis will be the order of the day. Some would argue that this is an insignificant inconsistency, arguing that here as elsewhere in the *Metamorphoses* Ovid is mainly interested in producing good or enjoyable poetry, regardless of the content.\(^1\) McKim argues that the inconsistency is more important and that the shift from the rational-philosophical to the mythological serves to suggest . . . that the rational cosmos and its God never existed in the first place, being figments of philosophers’ imaginations, and that the mythical cosmos of the poet’s imagination, though according to the narrative it follows on the rational one, is the only one of the two which resembles or represents the world that does exist.\(^1\)

15. Cf. De Lacy (1957), Anderson, (1960), Segal (1990), and Hardie (1986) 165, who in discussing the inconsistent picture of Spring in *Geo.* 3.329 and 2.323-45 suggests that “this technique of writing deliberately contrasted and apparently irreconcilable passages is . . . heavily indebted to Lucretius (in whom it was one of the factors inviting the construction of an ‘anti-Lucrèce chez Lucrèce’).” Cf. too Fowler (1991) (reviewing Schiesaro and Segal): “The stress (over the last 30 years) has been on the control of apparently disturbing elements. But recent literary theory has made this concept of ‘control’ problematic: what keeps these elements in their place? Why can’t one flip the *DRN* as well as the *Aeneid*? What about a dark ‘two-voices’ view of Lucretius for a change?”


17. Little (1970) lists numerous inconsistencies which he says can only be explained in this way.

18. McKim (1985) 102. Like McKim, Rhorer (1980) calls attention to the contrast between the god who is the “first creator” of the poem and Jupiter as he reigns in the poem. Rhorer however finds in the contrast criticism of Jupiter, who “consistently works against the principles of order and harmony that sustain the Cosmos” (p. 305), and sympathy for the *fabricator mundi* who is “not the supreme king but the supreme artist” (p. 306).
Still others suggest that this inconsistency is ambiguous, because Ovid is not quite sure whether he thinks the world is orderly and rational or disorderly and irrational. 19 This view becomes interesting when compared to the larger question of the structure and organization of the Metamorphoses: are they orderly, disorderly, or some brilliant compromise between order and disorder, between continuity and variety? The approach may also be extended to other aspects of the Metamorphoses, for example the thematic inconsistency many have seen between the work’s overt praise of Augustus and its less explicit criticism of or indifference to Augustanism. 20

4) Lucan’s Bellum Civile begins by announcing its theme, civil war, or more than civil war; thirty-three lines into the poem comes the poet’s encomium of the emperor Nero. Lucan says in 33-45 that the civil wars were worth it, as the cost of bringing Rome Nero, then in lines 45-62 he speculates on the site of Nero’s future apotheosis, and then in 63-66 Lucan says that Nero is sufficient inspiration for his poem. Scholars have long noted that the praise of Nero is in conflict with the praise given later in the poem to Brutus, the future assassin of Julius Caesar, and with the condemnation of slavish acquiescence to tyrannical one-man rule, in such passages as 7.442-47 (ex populis qui regna ferunt sor sor ultima nostra est, / quos servire pudet) and 7.638-46 (proxima quid suboles aut quid meruere nepotes / in regnum nasci?); recently Elaine Fantham has described reconciling the praise of Nero with “the denunciation of Caesar’s victory” as “the biggest dilemma in considering the De Bello Civili.” 21

For Lucan as for Lucretius it has also been possible to pursue “Separatist” or “Unitarian” solutions to this problem. 22 “Separatists” would disjoin Book 1 from Book 7 because of the story in the biographical tradition that Lucan only published three books of the poem before his death, and so the prologue, this interpretation goes, predates Lucan’s hostility to Nero, and he died before being able to fix the inconsistencies in his poem. This argument is like the approach to the Aeneid that suggests that if Vergil had not died before putting final polish to the Aeneid he would have brought the poem more in line with our notions of unity and consistency. 23 The “Unitarian” tactic is to explain away the inconsistency by following the scholia to Lucan in seeing irony and sneakily clever insults of the fat, bald, squinty-eyed Nero in the encomium. This is a little like the attempt to “Epicureanize” Lucretius’ Hymn to Venus: here we “Republicanize” the enco-
mium to Nero. Some of these suggestions about irony tempt or convince me, but not quite all, and the problem remains that if this irony is there, it is easy for readers to miss it, as one of the latest proponents of this theory is cautious enough to admit, and so these readers still have a poem that begins with an encomium of Nero, then later denounces tyranny and the principate.

That Lucan's prologue is either deliberately or, if we are to be cautious about intentionalism, functionally inconsistent with other parts of the poem has been argued, as far as I can tell, only in unpublished dissertations by Kepple, who says that "Lucan intended the 'encomium' to be read as a statement of the ideology he wrote the Bellum Civile to attack," and by Barton, who sees a more radical and unavoidable inconsistency in both Seneca and Lucan. Recent work on Lucan by Masters and Feeney has also offered largely convincing arguments in support of the view that Lucan is often deliberately inconsistent. Masters shows that the clash between Lucan's professed sympathy for the Republican cause and his apparent attraction towards his poem's exciting villains Erictho and Caesar produces a disunified work with a "fractured" narrative voice: "In spite of the fact that Lucan's violence, his perversity, his savage manipulation of the epic genre marks him clearly as a 'Caesarian' type of poet . . . none the less we must take seriously [his] claim to be a Pompeian . . . ." The result is that "Lucan is at war with himself." Feeney demonstrates the "uncertainty" of the poem's "confrontation between the Stoic dispensation and a non-teleological randomness," in which the "ignorant narrator," like the characters in the poem, cannot "understand whether the catastrophe of the poem is the will of the gods or simply haphazard accident."

The inconsistencies in Catullus, Lucretius, Ovid and Lucan need more detailed analysis than may be given here. To some my suggestions that the discrepancies in each poem are deliberate, or at least a legitimate part of the poems' meanings, may seem like a series of misguided misreadings. But the number of ancient poems and Roman epics containing inconsistencies makes me confident that it is the project of explaining away inconsistencies in ancient poetry that is misguided. It should also be noted that the passages from Catullus, Lucretius, Ovid and Lucan on which I have focused come from the start of each poem, from the portions of the poem in which the poet introduces characters, concepts, and themes. With this in mind, we turn to the second half of the Aeneid and the introduction to Vergil's war in Italy.

24. Some have tried the more laborious task of reading support for the principate into the whole poem, so as to make it consistent with the poem: see the summary of and criticism of such views in Ahl (1976) 35-54.
29. For this type of warning in a different context cf. Kovacs (1987), who quotes Housman on the potential circularity of developing consistent grammatical rules only from looking at manuscripts, and then convicting many manuscripts of error based on those rules; I am not sure I share Kovacs' confidence about the ease with which the danger of circularity can be avoided.
II. The Situation in Italy Before the Trojans Arrive

The question about the status of Italy before the arrival of Aeneas is one that is explicitly asked and answered in the famous evocation of the Muse Erato that forms the delayed prologue to *Aeneid* 7:

\[
\text{nunc age, qui reges, Erato, quae tempora, rerum}
\]
\[
\text{quis Latio antiquo fuerit status, advena classem}
\]
\[
\text{cum primum Ausoniis exercitus appult oris,}
\]
\[
\text{expediam, et primae revocabo exordia pugnae.}
\]
\[
\text{tu vatem, tu, diva, mone. dicam horrida bella,}
\]
\[
\text{dicam acies actosque animis in funera reges,}
\]
\[
\text{Tyrrenamque manum totamque sub arma coactam}
\]
\[
\text{Hesperiam. maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo,}
\]
\[
\text{maius opus moveo, rex arva Latinus et urbes}
\]
\[
\text{iam senior longa placidas in pace regebat.}
\]
\[
\text{hunc Fauno et nympha genitum Laurente Marica}
\]
\[
\text{accipimus; Fauno Picus pater, isque parentem}
\]
\[
\text{te, Saturne, refert, tu sanguinis ultimus auctor.}
\]

(7.37-49)

Many characterizations within the *Aeneid* of Trojans or Italians or of individuals such as Aeneas, Turnus, or Mezentius are presented through the voice of, and therefore potentially qualified as merely the biased opinions of, characters within the poem. These lines are presented in the narrator’s own voice, and though the whole poem may be said to be inspired by the Muses invoked here and at the start of Book 1, the invocation of Erato here must imply special authority for the statements that follow. Strikingly, the Trojans are referred to here as an *advena exercitus*. Katharine Toll has well described how “shocking” the adjective here is, for it views the arrival through Latin eyes, as an invading army that “does not belong here” and has come “to conquer and kill.” As I write these words I find it hard to resist slipping into the role of “prosecuting attorney” or “counsel for the defense,” as do so many scholars who discuss these passages or the war in Italy, but this temptation must be resisted. For this passage is not “evidence” of what the Trojans’ arrival was “really” like; rather these verses are designed by Vergil to create impressions or produce effects on the reader. After the invocation of the muse, and the announcement that *maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo, / maius opus moveo*, Vergil as narrator makes his first direct statement about the situation in Italy: *rex arva Latinus et urbes / iam senior longa placidas in pace regebat*. This Vergilian sentence is clear and unambiguous; following the reference to Aeneas and the Trojans as an *advena exercitus*, it describes the areas and peoples ruled by Latinus as peaceful, and as having been so for a long time: *longa placidas in pace*.

This description is soon directly contradicted. When the men sent by Aeneas to Latinus approach his city they see youths engaged in what must appear to the reader to be training for war:

ante urbem pueri et primaevi flore iuventus
exercenatur equis dominatique in pulvere currus,
aut acris tendunt arcus aut lenta laceritis
spicula contorquent, cursuque ictuque lacessunt.
(7.162-65)

Aeneas' men are then invited into the regia Pici, which is then described at some length. Among the images of Latinus' ancestors (veterum effigies ex ordine avorum 177) are those of Italus, Sabinus, Saturnus, Ianus, other kings, and "those who have been wounded fighting wars for their homeland" (Martiaque ob patriam pugnando vulnera passi 182). There are also weapons, armor, and captured war chariots and other spoils:

multaque praeterea sacris in postibus arma,
captivi pendent currus curvaeque secures
et cristae capitum et portarum ingentia clastra
spiculaque elipeique ereptaque rostra carinis.
(183-86)

This is a real inconsistency. There is no way to harmonize these passages. They are not two sides of the same coin, or two aspects of the same peoples, or the same peoples looked at from two different perspectives, or statements made by two different characters. It is not that between lines 37-49 and 162-86 "the Trojans have come to Latium and in their way they taint the Latin Golden Age themselves long before Juno interferes";31 to this view the objection has rightly been made that "surely Vergil did not mean to say that the Trojans have changed the realities of the Latin past merely by setting foot on the soil of Latium."32 And it is not simply that in 177-86 "Vergil deliberately complicates and qualifies the sylvan picture of the Latin past he gave in 7.45-49," or that "it is possible to view the genealogy of Latinus in 7.45-49 and the contents of the regia Pici not as the two terms of a contradiction, but as complementary opposites."33 In a poetic world closely imitating the real world, the peoples over whom Latinus ruled would either be peaceful peoples in long peace or they would not; to be at war and to be at peace may be complementary opposites, but one people generally does not experience these opposites at the same time. Nicholas Horsfall, who knows both Vergil's sources and in particular Aeneid 7 as well as anyone, puts it succinctly: "Certainly, Virgil exhibits two opposed conceptions of the condition of primitive Italy; it seems likely that he found antecedents for both conceptions in his sources."34 Farrell's observations about the interesting thematic effect of the use of different sources in the Georgics, mentioned above, should be recalled here;

33. Moorton (1989) 121, 122. Moorton's wording is telling here: "it is possible . . ."; the implication is that readers are always looking for ways to escape from troubling readings.
34. Horsfall (1981); cf. now Horsfall (1991) ch. 6 "Incoerenze.
Cf. too Hexter (1992) 335: "proper appreciation of the Homeric expectations with which Vergil's readers approached his text, and of Vergil's Homer, must take as its point of departure the Homer of the various schools of Hellenistic literary scholarship . . . [T]he Homer of ancient scholarship may be described as a poet whose inconsistencies and divergences from other mythological traditions were carefully noted. . ."
in the *Aeneid*, what is the purpose or effect of this inconsistency, of this choice to follow now one, now another source? In the light of the apparent use of inconsistencies in other Greek and especially Latin authors, and in view of the numerous inconsistencies, many of them arguably deliberate or functional, elsewhere in the *Aeneid*, it makes sense at least to explore the possibility that this inconsistency is deliberate, and functional, and so to try to interpret Vergil’s text rather than blame, ignore, or through contorted readings explain away the discrepancy. A reader should respond to all the signals provided by the poet rather than acting like an advocate for one or the other side, stressing the “evidence” that makes one’s “client” look good and belittling or providing contorted counter-explanations of the “evidence” that interferes with such a view. The narrator of the *Aeneid* states clearly that Latinus’ peaceful people had lived in peace for a long time before the arrival of the Trojans. He also clearly describes them as warlike people with a strong martial tradition. Thus the view that Vergil “calls on us to weep for what to his mind made an earlier Italy fresh and true” and the view that “the moral innocence of Italy was compromised before the Trojans ever set foot on its soil” are both supported by the text, which allows the Trojans to be seen both as civilizers and as invaders.

The same potential for conflicting readings characterizes not merely the explicit statements about or descriptions of the two sides in the war in Italy, but also the more subtly allusive mythological associations of each side. To one important example of these we now turn.

III. Gigantomachy, Indeterminacy, and the Decline from the Golden Age

A central feature of Philip Hardie’s bold and learned Virgil’s *Aeneid: Cosmos and Imperium* is his demonstration, building upon brief comments of Buchheit and others, that the *Aeneid* alludes often to the myth of Gigantomachy, in which Zeus or Jupiter and the other gods, who represent the forces of order, fight for control of the universe against gigantic foes like the Titans or Giants, who represent disorder or even chaos. Hardie offers largely convincing explications of allusions to Gigantomachy in a number of passages, among them the description of the storm winds in *Aeneid* 1; the mention of “Aetnaean fires” in the description of Turnus’ shield at 7.785; Evander’s story of the battle between Hercules and Cacus in *Aeneid* 8; the comparison of the warring navies at Actium.
as depicted on the shield of Aeneas, to the clash of uprooted islands or of high mountains; the end of Aeneid 10, where “Aeneas acts as a Giant-killer in his defeat of the monstrous Mezentius”; and the final duel between Aeneas and Turnus, where Aeneas, by the use of words like fulminat (654), intonat (700), and fulmen (922), is likened to Jupiter fighting Giants or Titans with his customary lightning, and Turnus, harassed by the Fury in the shape of an owl (861-66), is thus associated with oversized Gauls defeated by Romans in Livy and presumably earlier versions of the stories Livy tells. 36 In the storm in Aeneid 1, Hardie writes, Vergil “introduces an idea of cosmic order and of the forces that threaten it”; throughout the poem we see “scenes which depict conflict, the attempt by the forces of Rome, of order, of civilization, to defeat the forces of barbarism and chaos: the Storm in book one, the battles against Cacus and the Egyptians in book eight, the war with the Italians in the last four books.” Much of this is brilliant, original, and persuasive, but Hardie’s characterization of the war in Italy as simply a fight between the forces of order and those of “barbarism and chaos” has been challenged as inadequate. 37 But if the critic is right to assume that Vergil’s Gigantomachic imagery lends itself to a coherent synthesis, Hardie can hardly be blamed, because much of the Gigantomachic imagery does suggest such a dichotomy. The problem here, as with attempts to produce a synthesis of the more explicit statements about the Trojans and Italians, is the assumption of univocal thematic unity, the assumption that contradictory details must be bent to the service of a single totalizing theory about the poem’s meaning.

The Aeneid’s Gigantomachic imagery, like so much else in the poem, instead makes conflicting suggestions and pulls the reader in different directions. This is most apparent at the end of Hardie’s two long chapters on “Gigantomachy in the Aeneid,” where he finally discusses the comparison of Aeneas to Aegaeon in Aeneid 10. It will be useful to quote the passage, as Hardie does, and then the beginning of his discussion:

Aegaeon qualis, centum cui bracchia dicunt
centenasque manus, quinquaginta oribus ignem
pectorisque arsisse, lovis cum fulmina contra
tot paribus streperet clipeis, tot stringeret ensis:
sic toto Aeneas desaevit in aequore victor
ut semel intepuit mucro.

(10.565-70)

Any idea that the Gigantomachic allusions in books nine and twelve mark the limits of a smooth curve defining the necessary readjustment of our perception of the proper distribution of the roles of gods and giants must come to terms with the striking comparison of Aeneas to the Hundred-hander Aegaeon-Briareus, as he rages across the battlefield after the death of Pallas. In Hesiod the Hundred-handers assist Zeus in his fight against the Titans, but Virgil here follows the version of the Titanomachia, according to which Aegaeon fought with the Titans against the gods (lovis fulmina contra, 567). 38

The implication that Aeneas is fighting on the wrong side is one that Hardie resists; he mentions but rejects the explanation that suggests that “Virgil did not really uphold the values of imperialist militarism,” and seems also to find inadequate the view that “the war in Latium is an image of civil war, in which guilt adheres to both sides.” His way out is that “we may also see the ambivalence as in a sense already present in the basic myth of Gigantomachy” in which “similarity between hero and villain may extend to the interchangeability of attributes or roles,” and he ends the chapter by quoting, without comment, from the conclusion to Fontenrose’s *Python*:

(1) It becomes apparent that both creative and destructive forces are mingled on both sides of the divine combat. So myth is nearer to reality in this respect than that sort of partisanship in life or that sort of melodrama in literature which pits pure good on one side against pure evil on the other.

This is a moment of great insight, but the insight undermines much of what has been presented in the last seventy pages of Hardie’s analysis, which has seen in the *Aeneid’s* Gigantomachic imagery very nearly a depiction of “pure good on one side against pure evil on the other.” If a mechanic takes apart and then reassembles an automobile engine, but then finds one large part left over, it seems safe to assume that the engine has been reassembled incorrectly. What is needed is a reexamination of Gigantomachic imagery better able to accommodate all the features of Vergil’s text: in simplest terms, if data seem not to fit an hypothesis, the hypothesis should be adjusted. (Here it should be noted that Hardie’s study is admirably short on the kind of obfuscatory rhetoric, far-fetched theories and special pleading that are often used to obscure aspects of a text that do not fit the author’s hypothesis.) The theory that Vergil is often deliberately inconsistent can be extremely helpful here, for Vergil often sends contradictory messages through the Gigantomachic associations of Trojans and Italians in *Aeneid* 7-12. This confusion or inconsistency cannot be mapped as a clear pattern of misdirection where one side at first seems to be associated with the victorious side in the battle of gods and giants, but then the other side is shown to be the “true” counterparts of the gods; as the quotation above shows, Hardie has suggested such an interpretation on the analogy of some readings of the use of Homeric models in the *Aeneid*, but both his inability to explain the Aeneas-Aegaeon connection and some aspects of both Gigantomachy and the *Aeneid*’s allusions to it that he has overlooked point in a different direction.

Hardie has provided an extensive discussion of passages that link Aeneas and the Trojans to Jupiter and the gods as they fight gigantic forces of disorder, but there are also a considerable number of passages that present Turnus and the Italians fighting Giant-like invaders who are threats to their civilization. Here an addendum must be made to our notion of the connotations of Gigantomachy; much of the crucial information for such an addendum can be found by reading slightly “against the grain” in Hardie’s own thorough treatment. The association of Gigantomachy with the struggle of order against disorder is indeed prominent in ancient art and literature, but no less prominent is the association of Gigantomachy with the repelling of foreign invaders. The Athenian victory
against Persian invaders, for example, is what is commemorated in the scenes of Gigantomachy on the metopes of the Parthenon. Pindar’s Pythian 1 links the victories of Hiero of Syracuse over the Carthaginians and the Etruscans to Zeus’ defeat of Typhoeus: the defeat of the Etruscans at Cumae prevented them from expanding into Cumae and the rest of southern Italy, the defeat of both the Carthaginians and the Etruscans persuades them to “stay at home” (κατ’ οἶκον in 73) rather than invading Greek territory, and Hiero, like the Athenians, is said by Pindar to have saved Greece from “hard slavery” (βαρείας δουλίας in 75). The Galatians associated with Gigantomachy by Callimachus, who in Hymn to Delos 172-75 calls them “late-born Titans,” were invaders repelled from Delphi. The Gigantomachic scenes on the Great Altar at Pergamum served not only to connect Pergamum to the glory of classical Athens, but also to commemorate Attalid resistance to invading Gauls. The Gauls who invaded Rome and Italy, as Hardie has shown, have Gigantomachic associations in Vergil and in other texts. These prior associations of Gigantomachy with the repelling of barbarous invaders suggest that Vergil’s readers may well have seen conflicting messages in the association of now one side, now another with the role of the gods fighting against the Giants or Titans. A number of passages fits this theory much more naturally than they do any reading of the poem that claims to find consistent and clear sympathy for one side and condemnation of the other.

In Aeneid 7 news comes to Latinus that “huge men” have arrived (ingentis ignota in veste... advenisse viros 7.166-67). Here advenisse echoes the advena exercitus of 7.39-40, and, in the light of Hardie’s demonstration of the ubiquity of Gigantomachic allusions in the poem, ingentis must suggest not merely that the newcomers are “heroic,” as R. D. Williams comments here, but that they are potentially like the invaders of the myths of Gigantomachy. In Aeneid 9, as Hardie notes, there are clear Gigantomachic associations in the description of the enormous Trojan brothers Pandarus and Bitias, who are as large as trees or mountains (abietibus... patriis et montibus aequos 674). When Turnus slays Bitias, he wields his weapon like a lightning bolt (fulminis acta modo 706), which suggests Jupiter fighting a Gigantomachy, and then the simile describing Bitias’ fall mentions the monstrous “Typhoeus, buried by the commands of Jupiter” (durumque cubile / Inarime Iovis imperiis imposta Typhoeo 715-16). The association of Turnus fighting against the Trojans with Jupiter fighting against Titans, Giants and Typhoeus could not be more clear.

In Book 10 the comparison of Aeneas to Aegaeon, with which Hardie ends his chapters on Gigantomachy, must be analyzed carefully from the point of view of a real reader or listener actually confronting the passage line by line. When the first two-and-one-half lines compare Aeneas to Aegaeon, the reader is apt to think first of the more common myth of Aegaeon as the ally of Jupiter against the Titans.
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Aegaeon qualis, centum cui brachia dicunt centenasque manus, quinquaginta oribus ignem pectoribusque arsisse. . . .

Only with the second half of the third line comes the information that Aegaeon is fighting against Jupiter's lightning: Iovis cum fulmina contra. Recent critics have pointed to examples of "provisional" or temporary syntactic ambiguity in Vergil; here we see a temporarily misleading (or "misdirecting") allusion to myth, as the whole simile sends the reader first in one direction, then in the opposite. The Aegaeon simile is not merely the leftover piece of the puzzle that does not fit Hardie's scheme; over the course of the few seconds or minutes it takes the reader to process the information presented in these lines, the simile embodies the contradictions and ambiguities of much of the Aeneid's allusions to Gigantomachy, and of many aspects of the War in Italy as well, presenting Aeneas first apparently as the ally, but then in "reality" (for now) as the enemy of Jupiter.

A number of passages in Book 12 associates Aeneas with Jupiter fighting a Gigantomachy, but one of them sends similarly conflicting signals. When Turnus returns to meet Aeneas after Saces has told him that Aeneas is threatening the city (fulminat Aeneas 654), Aeneas rushes to confront him:

at pater Aeneas audito nomine Turni
desert et muros et summas desert arces
praecipit atque moras omnis, opera omnia rumpit
laetitia exsultans horrendumque intonat annis.
(12.697-700)

Hardie, quoting the passage with a full stop after line 700, notes the suggestion of Jupiter's lightning in that line: "It is no accident that the verb intonare, which we saw in the Bitias passage, is used to introduce Aeneas." But it is better to place a colon after line 700, and note the simile that follows:

quantus Athos aut quantus Eryx aut ipse coruscis
cum fremit ilicibus quantus gaudetque niuali
verte se attollens pater Appenninus ad auras.
(701-03)

41. See Batstone (1988) on "readers' provisional syntactic and lexical assumptions." Perkell (1989) 5-7 on labor / improbus at Geo. 1.145-46, Clausen (1987) 23-24 on speluncam Dido dux et Troianus eandem / deveniunt at Aen. 4.165-66 ("For a moment, the reader construes 'dux' with 'Dido'; the effect is untranslatable"). Cf. Fish (1980) esp. 86: the reader's "temporary adoption of . . . inappropriate strategies is itself a response to the strategy of an author; and the resulting mistakes are part of the experience provided by that author's language, and therefore part of its meaning."

42. Williams (1983) 179-80 rightly argues that the simile "views Aeneas through the eyes of his opponents," but I do not share his confidence that readers "can be trusted" not to share this viewpoint, largely because Aegaeon has "the hundred arms and fifty chests that breathe fire" and "these details clearly have no objective analogy in Aeneas, only in the terrifying image of him that the doomed Latins see." Harrison (1991) 315 cites Williams but also has the benefit of reading Hardie, and so notes that "it is difficult to avoid the notion that the equivalence of Aeneas and Aegaeon is somehow disturbing. . . . [T]he choice of a theomachic giant as a comparison for pius Aeneas seems darkly appropriate at a point when he is behaving most brutally." On the problem of point of view or focalization more generally see Fowler (1990).
The association of Aeneas with the Apennine mountains in 703 may, as Cairns has argued, call to mind the idea of Aeneas and the Trojans as natural Italians returning to the land of their ancestor Dardanus. But in Hardie’s terms, the comparison of Aeneas to three mountains must associate him with the monstrous opponents of the gods in a Gigantomachy, no less than did the comment that Pandarus and Bitias are “large as trees or mountains.” The result is that in some way “the text is at war with itself.” The phrase is reminiscent of Masters’ approach to Lucan, but is in fact used by Hardie himself of the Aeneid in a study of Ovid published four years after Cosmos and Imperium, and seems an apt way of describing what we see in the second half of the Aeneid.

One more aspect of what Hardie has called “Gigantomachy” must be discussed. I say “what Hardie has called ‘Gigantomachy’” because, as he notes, he collapses within that term Jupiter’s battles against the Titans, Giants, and other monstrously oversized opponents like Typhoeus. Such conflation is valid, “especially where ancient indifference to the distinctions is plain” (p. 85), but it may be useful to keep in mind that the term collapses the distinctions between several stages of the myth in which Zeus/Jupiter first drives out Cronos/Saturnus and the Titans, next fends off their attempt to regain power, and then later defeats attempts by forces like Typhoeus and the Giants to overthrow his rule. This being the case, it must also be true that Vergil’s allusions to Gigantomachy interact with his specific references to the myth of Jupiter’s overthrow of Saturn and the association of that overthrow with the end of the Golden Age. Anchises’ prophecy to Aeneas in the underworld expresses hope for the future achievements of Augustus by saying that he will return the Saturnian age to Italy:

hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti saepius audis,
Augustus Caesar, divi genus, aurea condet
saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva
Saturno quondam, super et Garamantas et Indos
proferet imperium.

(6.791-95)

Within the second half of the Aeneid Evander presents an account that starts with Jupiter taking Saturn’s reign (regnis . . . ademptis) by force of arms (arma Iovis 8.320). Saturn flees to Italy, where he plays two roles not easily yoked together:

44. Hardie (1990) 229. Both in that study of Ovid and in parts of Cosmos and Imperium, such as the end to the second chapter on Gigantomachy with its quotation of Fontenrose, and a brief discussion of a passage in the Georgics (above, note 15), Hardie mentions the idea of deliberate inconsistency, citing in both studies the Lucretian precedent. The notion of the deliberate use of inconsistency that I am proposing in order to read the Gigantomachic allusions in the Aeneid in a way differently from Hardie’s perhaps owes much to my own interested reading of Hardie.

See too now Hardie (1993) (available to me only after my paper was completed) 22 (“from some angles Aeneas and Turnus are sharply distinguished, from others they merge into one figure”), 58 (on Heaven and Hell: “Virgil’s dualistic scheme already contains its own contradictions and tensions, of such a kind that final stability is never attained”) and 74 (“it is precisely the tendency of the Aeneid to install in the epic a partisanship that pits evil against good, yet at the same time radically to problematize that opposition”). On the instability of Gigantomachic imagery see also Feeney (1991) 297-99 on the depiction of Caesar in Lucan.

45. West (1966) on Theog. 617-719: “The Titanomachy began, apparently, as a revolt of the younger gods. . . . In a later version it is the revolt of the Titans after Zeus had already dethroned Kronos.”
he is both a civilizing culture hero (*is genus indocile ac dispersum montibus altis / composuit legesque dedit 321-22*) and one who rules over a primitive Golden Age, significantly described in some of the same words Vergil used to characterize Latinus’ rule in Latium: *aurea quae perhibent Ulo sub rege fuere / saecula: sic placida populos in pace regebat* (324-25). After Saturn comes decline: *deterior donee paulatim ac decolor aetas / et belli rabies et amor successit habendi* (326-27), and then a series of immigrations or invasions of Italy by the Ausonians, Sicanians, and the people of “harsh king Thybris,” which seem clearly to further the process of decline.

The possible associations of Aeneas and the Trojans with aspects of Evander’s story are many and varied. On the one hand, we can see them as civilizing culture heroes like Saturnus.46 On the other hand, their arrival seems like that of earlier immigrants, whom Evander associates with change for the worse and decline.47 Most significantly, any association of Aeneas and the Trojans with Saturnus’ Golden Age flies in the face of the poem’s frequent linking of the newcomers with Jupiter, who supplanted Saturn and put an end to the Golden Age. Here we must take note not only of the versions of Hesiod and of “Evander,”48 but also of the description of the changes brought about by Jupiter in a crucial passage in Book 1 of Vergil’s *Georgics* (121-46). This is not the place for another round in the debate over whether Jupiter’s changes were beneficial or harmful; a simple summary will suffice. Before Jupiter (*ante lovem, a clear reference to the Saturnian age*) mortals were “sluggish” (*torpere gravi ... veterno* 124); they neither farmed nor owned property, and the earth provided all their needs (*ipsaque tellus / omnia liberius nullo poscenteferebat* 127-28), as honey flowed

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47. Stressed by Thomas (1982) 97: “the addition of the Trojan element, as it appears in the *Aeneid* at any rate, is to be seen as continuing the decline that follows Saturn: *et belli rabies et amor successit habendi* (8.327); what line would better describe *Aeneid* 7-12? Do the waves of Ausonian and Sicanian migrations have any greater effect in speeding the end of the Saturnian land than do the Trojans? Not in this poem certainly.” (He goes on to discuss the *pax Augusta.*)


Two other allusions to Jupiter’s supplanting of Saturn may be noted, one an overlooked passage of the *Aeneid*, one a well-known passage in Tibullus: *In Aen. 8.357-58 hanc Ianus pater, hanc Saturnus condidit arcem; / Ianiculum huic, illi fuerat Saturnia nomen, Vergil* (through Evander) presents explicit aetiologies of the ancient towns of Ianus (Ianiculum) and Saturnus (Saturnia), with an implied aetiology of the name of the Ianiculum Hill, which Paulus-Festus p 93, 1 L connects instead with the verb *ire* The difference between the fates of the names Ianicum, which survives to Vergil’s day, and Saturnia, which does not, calls attention to Saturnia. Varro *LL* 5.42 explains that Saturnia was on the Capitoline Hill, so Vergil may be calling attention to the way in which Saturn was supplanted by Jupiter Capitolinus. Vergil may be following Varro closely: cf. Augustine *De Civ. Dei* 7.4: *Saturnum fugiement benignus exceptit [Ianus]; cum hospite paritus est regnum, ut etiam civitates singularis conderent, iste Ianicum, ille Saturniam.*

Hardie’s initial survey of specific references to Gigantomachy notes that Tibullus 2.5 does not precisely fit his notion of the connotations of Gigantomachy: “the defeat of the Titans is presented less directly as an image of Augustan order in the opening invocation to Apollo in Tibullus 2.5, a poem which, in his respect as in others, stands in a close relationship to the eighth book of the *Aeneid.*” Just so: the reference to Apollo lauding Jupiter’s victory over Saturn (*quaem te memorant Saturno rege fugato / victori laudes consciusse fovi* 9-10) has some associations with Augustus’ victory at Actium, but broader ties to the changes the Trojans bring to the world of Italy, an Italy described in literally pastoral terms in 23-38, despite the different tone struck by the words of the seer at 48, *barbare Turne.*

Could the notion that Aeneas and the Trojans are returning to the land of their ancestor Dardanus (see Cairns [1989] 109-28) be mapped against the fact that the Titans are trying to reclaim the realm from which they have been driven by Jupiter/Zeus?
from trees and wine in rivers. Jupiter added *curae* to human life: poison snakes, wolves, and the work of farming, sailing, and hunting, until *labor omnia vicit / improbust duris urgens in rebus egestas* (145-46). Readers need not agree about the desirability of these changes to see that in the most basic Vergilian terms the ages of Saturn and Jupiter are quite different, and that Jupiter’s displacement of Saturn brings about a transition from a type of Golden Age to what can best be described as the age in which the readers of both the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid* have themselves lived. Much of this has been explained in Richard Thomas’ monograph on ethnography and Roman poetry, in a way that might be open to the criticism of only telling part of the story, except that his chapter on the *Aeneid* begins with the explicit disclaimer that it “should not be seen as representing a reading of the entire poem,” but rather “as material contributing towards the restoration of a more balanced attitude.” A balanced picture of what is presented in the second half of the *Aeneid* requires seeing both what Hardie has noticed about the poem and what Thomas has revealed and trying to come to grips with how the Gigantomachic imagery, itself ambiguous or indeterminate, interacts with the motif of the Golden or Saturnian Age. Which of the characters in the poem is associated with Jupiter, and which with his opponents? And are Jupiter’s opponents to be thought of as invading barbarians, as barbarians standing in the way of progress, or as representatives of a Golden Age like that of Saturn? In brief, who is Jupiter, and is being Jupiter a good thing? Similar, though not exactly similar, problems beset the analysis of the Homeric models for characters in the war in Italy, where the simple question might be, who is Achilles, and is being Achilles a good thing because of his heroic prowess, or a regrettable thing because of his savagery?

It is time to step back and review the strengths and weaknesses of what this essay has done. I have tried first to provide a context for viewing Vergilian inconsistency by describing in the briefest form some attempts to interpret rather than explain away inconsistencies in other ancient texts, with slightly more in-depth but still perhaps inadequate discussions of factual or thematic inconsistencies in Catullus, Lucretius, Ovid, and Lucan. It will be noted that I have used the other four Roman poets as evidence for the prominence of inconsistency in

49. Thomas (1982) 93; on Saturn, the *Georgics*, and the “post-Golden-Age world” in *Aeneid* 7-12 see also Kristol (1990) and Perkell (1989) ch. 2, “The Poet’s Vision.” Similar disclaimer in Hardie (1986) 1: “My work was not undertaken directly with the aim of confronting the critical issues that have dominated recent work on Virgil, but grew out of a more general, historical interest in the ancient theory and practice of allegory; the results should be seen as preliminary to a global critical approach to the *Aeneid*.” And then p. 2: “Of course the relationship between cosmos and imperium is but a part of the story told in the *Aeneid*; a comprehensive appraisal of the poem would require the complementary study of ‘imperium and the individual’, which it is not my purpose here to undertake in detail, and of which there exist several recent sketches.”

50. Cf. Johnson (1976) 165n.65: “If we can somehow fuse the precision of Otis’ great defense of Aeneas with Putnam’s masterly defense of Turnus, we will be able to read Books 7-12 with an unusual degree of accuracy.” Cf. Feeney (1991) 162-72 on Allecto, e.g., 168: “reading the Allecto-Amata episode is like looking at an object through a pair of binoculars with incompatible lenses. If you close each eye in turn you can get the picture into focus, but it is impossible to harmonize the image with both open at once.”

51. Cf. Feeney (1991) 221 on the association of Augustus with Jupiter in Ovid: “The comparison of man with god is subject to the same analogy as any analogy, simple, or metaphor, for the boundaries of the analogy are malleable, and its applications cannot remain rigidly fixed. If Caesar, for example, is Saturn, and Augustus is Jupiter, then we must now be in the Iron, and not the Golden, Age.”
Roman epic, and for its likely thematic significance or use as a deliberate poetic device, but I have not extracted from those poems a single model of how a poet may be consciously or unconsciously using factual or thematic inconsistencies. Thus when I turn to Vergil, I have good reason to suggest that discrepancies should be interpreted rather than ignored or explained away, but the way in which I have interpreted them perhaps involves some subjectivity. In particular I suppose that this essay may be unlikely to win over to my way of reading the Aeneid anyone obstreperously opposed to what I did in Death and the Optimistic Prophecy in Vergil's Aeneid. Still I think that my readings of both the inconsistent literal statements about the Italians in Book 7, and the allusive associations of the Italians and Trojans with Gigantomachic imagery, have the virtue of at least potentially being able to accommodate all the details of the poem, even if this essay has not gone through every piece of “evidence.” There are no leftover engine parts, no portions of the poem that corroborate my assumptions about the poem only if looked at with one eye closed and the other squinting just so. But where my project admittedly needs more extensive research and thought is on the nature of inconsistencies or discrepancies in ancient texts, and on how inconsistent passages interact or, looked at from another angle, how ancient or Roman or other readers could, should, and did or do react to them. Some may argue that all readers or that all readers before this century would tend to construct a view of the world of a poem or novel that harmonizes or explains away inconsistencies. I see little reliable evidence for this view, although I admit that it should be properly refuted rather than simply left aside, as it largely has been in this essay, which has basically argued for the way of reacting to inconsistencies that makes most sense to me, given the details of the text. To me the inconsistencies in the Aeneid examined in this essay suggest ambiguity or indeterminacy about the character of the two sides, both of them mythical ancestors of the Romans of Vergil’s day, in the war in Italy. The different inconsistencies, occurring largely in prophetic statements, studied in Death and the Optimistic Prophecy in Vergil’s Aeneid suggested most often an overt confidence undercut by a more subtle doubt, but at times an indeterminacy or uncertainty about the future. Both this essay and that longer study have clear affinities with the views of those who have seen “two voices” or “further voices” or “many voices” or “deviant focalization” in the poem, and most of these views have something in common with deconstruction and other post-structuralist views of literature, but this list blithely combines a variety of views that really should be distinguished and examined more closely.52 I have also neatly sidestepped, for the most part, the question of intentionality. Are inconsistent features of a text planned by the poet, or do they come naturally regardless of the poet’s intention either in any literary text, or in certain genres, or in certain poetic traditions, or particularly in texts that present struggles between two opposing

52. My thinking on these issues has been greatly helped by the seminar on “Ambiguity in Vergil” organized by Karl Galinsky and Christine Perkell at the 1992 meeting of the American Philological Association in New Orleans; in particular I would cite the excellent and thought-provoking papers by Perkell, William Batstone, Barbara Weiden Boyd, and Charles Martindale.
sides? My view is that the extensive evidence suggests that many ancient authors must have been aware of the possibility of deliberate use of inconsistency for certain poetic goals; beyond this some inconsistencies may be produced by other factors, although this does make them irrelevant to interpretation. But this paragraph has presented enough and perhaps too much speculation on matters that cannot be fully explored by this essay.

What was Italy like before the coming of Aeneas and the Trojans, and what changes did their arrival bring about? Beginning with the surprising phrase _advena exercitus_ at 7.37-39, and continuing through both the literal statements and the allusive suggestions made about the Italians and Trojans, the _Aeneid_ presents and considers contradictory views in a way that is not surprising, given the strong likelihood that Romans of Vergil’s day may have been deeply ambivalent about the many changes of their own recent past. Shrrill insistence that only an unambiguous and unhesitant poem would have pleased Augustus and won Vergil his friendship and sponsorship does little credit to Augustus and relies on the unfounded belief that only such a one-sided poem could have been useful to a monarch. Augustus may well have seen that a poem that gives voice to concerns, worries, and regret about and even opposition to the changes that have taken place served his interests better than any _o fortunatam natam te principe Romam_.


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