

**THE INFLUENCE OF CONTEMPORARY EVENTS
AND CIRCUMSTANCES ON VIRGIL'S
CHARACTERIZATION OF AENEAS**

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Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of



MPhil (Ancient Cultures) at Stellenbosch University

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DECEMBER 2008

Declaration

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Date: 22 December 2008

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr Annemaré Kotzé (Department of Ancient Studies, Stellenbosch University) for her dedicated guidance, help and support.

I would like to thank Mrs Shielagh Bamber for her patient proofreading.

I would like to thank my husband Keith, children James and Margot and sister Audrey for all their support.

SUMMARY

Chapter 1 begins by giving the 21st century reader of the *Aeneid* insights into the innovative socio-cultural environment of the Augustan Age. Following this is an investigation into the societal and cultural importance placed on the Four Cardinal Values in Augustan Age society.

Virgil's attitude to war has been a perennial topic of debate amongst Virgilian scholars. The focus of chapter 1 becomes more specific as it examines Virgil's personal history, the socio-cultural environment of his childhood and the influence this may have had on his adult opinion of war and the way it is expressed in the *Aeneid*. An aspect of Virgil's personal history that is fundamental to understanding his social context, is his relationship with Emperor Augustus. To conclude chapter 1, this is investigated with specific reference to two episodes in the *Aeneid*.

In chapter 2, attention is given to particular aspects of Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas' heroic nature. The chapter opens with an examination of Virgil's representation of Aeneas' imperfect heroism, then suggests possible reasons behind the inclusion of ambiguity in this characterization. In addition to this, the question of Homeric characteristics in Virgil's Roman hero is investigated. Chapter 2 then examines the more positive aspects of Virgil's depiction of Aeneas' heroism, concluding with a discussion on the favourable interpretation by Augustan Age Romans of Virgil's demonstration of Aeneas' heroic nature.

Chapter 3 is devoted to a discussion of the manner in which Virgil's environment influenced his presentation of Aeneas' personal interactions. Prior to addressing the actual relationships, the chapter explores the question of Virgil's characterization of Aeneas as somewhat uncommunicative in the epic. This chapter then concentrates on two main facets of Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas' personal relationships, i.e. those with family members and those with relevant non-family members that illustrate the extent to which Virgil's social context influenced his composition of this poem.

In conclusion, this study summarises the importance of viewing the *Aeneid* in its correct context. A bibliography is appended.

OPSOMMING

Hoofstuk 1 begin deur die 21e-eeuse leser van die *Aeneïs* insigte te gee in die innoverende sosiokulturele omgewing van die Era van Augustus. Daarop volg 'n ondersoek na die gemeenskaplike en kulturele belang geheg aan die Vier Hoofdeugde in die samelewing tydens die Era van Augustus.

Onder Vergiliaanse geleerdes was sy houding ten opsigte van oorlog nog altyd 'n blywende onderwerp vir debattering. Die fokus van Hoofstuk 1 raak meer spesifiek na mate daar ondersoek ingestel word na Vergilius se persoonlike geskiedenis, die sosiokulturele omgewing van sy kinderjare en die invloed wat dit op sy volwasse sienswyse van oorlog kon gehad het en die wyse waarop dit in die *Aeneïs* tot uitdrukking kom. 'n Aspek van Vergilius se persoonlike geskiedenis wat fundamenteel is tot die begrip van sy sosiale konteks, is sy verhouding met Keiser Augustus. Om Hoofstuk 1 af te sluit word hierdie verhouding ondersoek met spesifieke verwysing na twee episodes in die *Aeneïs*.

In Hoofstuk 2 word aandag geskenk aan bepaalde aspekte van Vergilius se uitbeelding van Aeneas se heroïese karakter. Die hoofstuk begin met 'n ondersoek na Vergilius se voorstelling van Aeneas se gebrekkige heroïsme, en suggereer dan moontlike redes vir die insluiting van dubbelsinnigheid in hierdie karakterisering. Daarby word die kwessie van Homeriese eienskappe in Vergilius se Romeinse held ondersoek. Hoofstuk 2 verken dan die meer positiewe aspekte van Vergilius se uitbeelding van Aeneas se heroïsme, en sluit af met 'n bespreking van die positiewe interpretasie deur Romeine in die tyd van Augustus van Vergilius se uitbeelding van Aeneas se heroïese karakter.

Hoofstuk 3 word gewy aan 'n bespreking van die wyse waarop Vergilius se omgewing sy voorstelling van Aeneas se persoonlike interaksies beïnvloed het. Voordat die wesenlike verhoudings aangespreek word, verken die hoofstuk die kwessie van Vergilius se karakterisering van Aeneas as ietwat teruggetrokke in die heldedig. Hierdie hoofstuk konsentreer dan op twee hoofasette van Vergilius se uitbeelding van Aeneas se persoonlike verhoudings, d.i. dié met gesinslede en dié met relevante nie-gesinslede wat die mate waartoe Vergilius se sosiale konteks sy komposisie van hierdie gedig beïnvloed het, illustreer.

Ten slotte som hierdie studie die belangrikheid daarvan op om die *Aeneis* in sy korrekte konteks te beskou. 'n Bibliografie is bygevoeg.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis focuses on the socio-cultural context of Virgil's world and how it influenced his characterization of Aeneas in the *Aeneid*. In an effort to enhance the enjoyment of Virgil's epic masterpiece, I suggest that the contemporary reader should take into consideration Virgil's cultural framework, his personal history and a number of socio-cultural and socio-political factors in Augustan Age society that present themselves in his work. Towards fulfilling the aims of this thesis specific socio-cultural customs, attitudes, behaviours and circumstances of Roman Augustan Age society, which appear to be significant and bear relevance, have been selected for examination. Chapter 1 introduces the modern Virgilian scholar to the complex, unique cultural traits of Augustan Age society fundamental to understanding the nuances of the *Aeneid*. The chapter then focuses on specifics within Virgil's personal history that may have influenced aspects of his composition. Chapter 2 explores the manner in which Virgil portrays Aeneas' heroic nature. Controversial issues in Virgilian scholarship, for instance whether Aeneas' heroism could be seen as imperfect and/or ambiguous in nature, and the inclusion by Virgil, of Homeric heroic characteristics in one of the greatest Roman heroes are assessed in this chapter. The above points are evaluated through the cultural framework of an Augustan Age Roman. Continuing with this perspective this chapter concludes by illustrating how the Augustan Age Roman interpreted Virgil's representation of Aeneas' heroic nature to be ideal for that cultural era. Chapter 3 explores Aeneas' interactions with other characters in the *Aeneid*. The first discussion examines scholarly criticism of Virgil's characterization of Aeneas as being uncommunicative. Through close inspection of the text, this criticism is evaluated. Chapter

3 moves on to investigate the socio-cultural influences of the Augustan Age that feature in Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas' personal relationships both with family and relevant non-family members in the *Aeneid*. In Virgil's depiction of Aeneas' interaction with family members, particular emphasis is placed on his relationship with Anchises. With non-family members, special attention is given to his relationship with Dido. Prominence is given to these relationships as I believe they are laden with unique Augustan Age Roman socio-cultural paradigms, that once understood will enhance the modern reader's appreciation of this epic.

The aim of this research is to assess the impact that Virgil's social context may have had on his composition and to explore the manner in which he incorporated Augustan Age cultural traits into his Roman representation of Homeric epic, therefore making it culturally appropriate for the time.

The task of determining the most important socio-cultural factors in Virgil's environment that may have informed his composition of the *Aeneid* to a large extent becomes the subjective choice of the reader. The scope and length of this thesis has restricted the choice of influencing aspects to those I deem to be of greatest relevance and interest to the modern Virgilian scholar. Furthermore this thesis contains factors that I believe may be interpreted as limitations, if my awareness of them is not initially fully explicated and demonstrated. The limitations I am aware of are: the fact that the contemporary reader referred to is assumed by me to belong to a Westernised 21st century cultural background and the assumptions I make about modern culture are based on the cultural framework of this reader.

Virgil depicted the Trojan Aeneas as an Archaic Age mythological hero. I am aware that the Romans of the Augustan Age accepted Aeneas' status as founder of the Italian race and forerunner to their Roman race, as culturally legitimate. I am aware that it is universally recognised that Virgil's epic is largely based on Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad* and recognise that Virgil needed to create a prototype Roman character in his epic who appeared culturally appropriate to Augustan Age society. To achieve this Virgil manipulated time in the *Aeneid* but still managed to portray Aeneas as a believable, recognisable mythological hero who lived during the era around 1200 BCE, occasionally displayed Homeric heroic mannerisms and behaved according to the social norms of Roman society in the Augustan Age. Finally my use of references to dated Virgilian scholars' research on occasion has been limited to those I specifically consider seminal and enduring.

CHAPTER ONE
VIRGIL AND THE AUGUSTAN AGE

1 INTRODUCTION

The fundamental centrality of the Augustan Age social context for understanding Virgil's epic the *Aeneid* cannot be ignored by the reader when the opinions of Virgilian scholars include categorical statements as the conviction that Virgil's *Aeneid* authentically represents "a product of his times ... influenced, perhaps positively, perhaps negatively, by the social and political environment in which he lives" (Williams, 1987:1), or that "the *Aeneid* is thoroughly woven into the Augustan context" (Galinsky, 1996:246). In recent time's research into the ancient epics has moved away from the typical in-depth stylistic and technique analyses of the 1930s and become increasingly sensitive to the fact that all literature is produced in specific social conditions and therefore accurately mirrors that era's culture (Rives, 2006:106). The 21st century is so far removed chronologically, culturally and ideologically from Augustan Age Rome that the contemporary reader of the *Aeneid* cannot fully appreciate this epic without relevant insights into the social context of the poet Virgil's environment. The cultural abyss that exists between a contemporary Westernised reader's worldview and that of an ancient Roman is immense. For instance, the gulf between these ideologies can be demonstrated by the significance and prominence given to the cultural trait of *pietas* in Augustan society and the somewhat negligible cultural emphasis placed on societal and familial obligation in our highly individualised Westernised society. It has been commented that the *Aeneid* is "an entire epic in praise

of this characteristic called *pietas*¹ (Thom, 2006:77).¹ This illustration is but one example of how vitally important it is for modern readers of the *Aeneid* to fully grasp the unique social implications of specific Roman Augustan Age cultural traits in order to understand Virgil's epic.

Considering the above, this chapter will concentrate on furnishing the reader with an overview of insights into particular Roman cultural norms and traits that may have influenced Virgil's composition. Where applicable, these insights will be made relevant through representative illustrations from the text. The examples used, and the specific aspects of Roman culture selected, are in my opinion eminently illustrative of how Virgil's composition and characterizations are illuminated by an understanding of his social context. A complete overview of all facets of this complex cultural period lies beyond the scope of this thesis.

Augustus prioritised particular cultural values within Roman society that facilitated the beleaguered nation's societal cohesion and spirit of patriotism and thereby Rome's transformation into the most powerful society of its time. This chapter (1.1) provides a broad overview of prevailing and dominant cultural forces present in Augustan Age society that are reflected in Virgil's *Aeneid*.

Augustus' leadership and dominance was all-pervasive across every facet of Roman society and culture. Initially this chapter demonstrates how inescapable his influence would have been on Virgil's composition of the *Aeneid*. To underscore the significance and intrinsic importance of the non-material environment to Romans and to illustrate how it commands the decisions and actions of Virgil's character Aeneas, an overview of

¹ The significance of *pietas* in Augustan Age society will be discussed in section 1.1.6 of this chapter.

specific important Augustan Age societal structures such as religion and philosophy is given (1.1.1 and 1.1.2). Additionally, particular Roman cultural behaviours that pertain to the aims of this thesis, such as those connected with familial and gender relations (1.1.3), Roman societal attitudes towards the East (1.1.4) and heroism in the Roman world with a brief comparison made with modern notions of heroism (1.1.5), are briefly explored in this chapter. Furthermore, the four cardinal virtues,² the psychosocial cornerstones that defined, united and upheld the society of this outstanding cultural era, are explored (1.1.6).³

The focus then moves to Virgil's personal history (1.2). Virgil's early life was spent in an era of political and cultural upheaval. How this may have shaped Virgil's attitude towards war (1.3) and the manner in which Virgil gives expression to this in the *Aeneid* is discussed.

In the period in which Virgil wrote the *Aeneid* (29-19 BCE), the impact that the promise of sustained peace under Augustus had on the fractured, war-weary society of Rome cannot be underestimated. The bearing and influence that Augustus and the potential for lasting peace in Rome had on Virgil and his composition of the *Aeneid* are demonstrated by: firstly investigating the dynamics of the relationship between Virgil and Augustus (1.4); and secondly by exemplifying two instances in the *Aeneid* where Virgil gives prominent expression to his attitude towards Augustan leadership, i.e., the Hercules/Cacus episode (1.4.1) and the references in the *Aeneid* to the Roman optimism that the Augustan Age represented a return to the Golden Age of Saturn (1.4.2).

² The four cardinal virtues of Augustan Age Roman society are described by Galinsky (1996:83-8) as being *virtus*, *clementia*, *iustitia* and *pietas*.

³ The relevance of the virtues, especially *pietas*, to Virgil's portrayal of the hero Aeneas will be made apparent in further chapters of this thesis.

1.1 AUGUSTAN AGE SOCIETY

Virgil's lifespan, 70-19 BCE, covered one of the most politically tumultuous and culturally dynamic periods in the Roman, and indeed the Western world's, history. The importance to the ancient world and the history of the world as a whole of Augustus' reign is demonstrated by the manner in which this era is identified by his renowned leadership. Periods and nations in world history are often remembered and categorized for their infamous political policies, such as the Apartheid Era of South Africa. Other eras and nations are remembered and named for their innovation and discovery, for example England's Industrial Age. It is rare to find an age labelled for individual, particularized socio-political and socio-cultural leadership, as well as creativity, as is the case with Rome's Augustan Age. Galinsky highlights the significance of this:

Few cultural periods in the history of the world have taken their name from their rulers for intrinsic rather than convenient reasons: political and cultural creativity are not often related. The age of Augustus was different (1996:10).

In a nation wearied by political conflict and war, Augustus owed much of his popularity to his innovative resolution of domestic and foreign dilemmas. When Virgil composed the *Aeneid* (29-19 BCE) the Roman world was finally experiencing the beginning of a period of extended peace under the leadership of Augustus. Augustus' achievements were notable for the manner in which he united the Roman populace from all social strata of society to participate in the resolution of the Empire's problems. Galinsky (1996:7) stresses that for the reader of the *Aeneid*, comprehending the significant impact the promise of stability and peace had on the demoralized and disunited populace of Rome is indispensable

to understanding how readily and how eagerly they embraced the Augustan regime. Virgil, who died in 19 BCE, did not witness the robustness or great heights that this regime achieved before the death of Augustus in 14 CE, but he predicted its astonishing potential, which he expressed in his work.

A notable characteristic of Augustan society was experimentation and creativity in literature. Galinsky maintains that this era's poetry "represented new heights in creativity and sophistication" and reflected, "the many dimensions of the Romans' view of themselves both as individuals and collectively" (1996:225). In this social milieu of originality, vision and the beginnings of hard won social stability, the adult Virgil became known and recognised as an extraordinarily talented poet and was immediately acclaimed in the Roman world. The respect, validation and admiration of his fellow poets were achieved due to the versatility, relevance and universal appeal of his work:

What makes the reception of Virgil unique among Roman poets is the pervasive quality of his influence, which is visible both at the level of popular culture and of official ideology (Tarrant, 1997a:56).

The importance of understanding the socio-political demands and the pressure of external social circumstances under which poets of the Augustan Age created their masterpieces is, in my opinion, fundamental to understanding how Virgil's social environment impacted upon his composition and characterization of Aeneas. Poets in this era survived on patronage. Lyne gives an extremely comprehensive description of what patronage actually entailed for the poet in the Augustan Age. He describes how "poets attached themselves to, or were collected by, wealthy Roman aristocrats" (2001:184). He describes how the wealthy Maecenas was

Virgil's first patron and initially acted as a "mediator" between the poet and Augustus. Virgil later came under the direct patronage of Augustus as Maecenas inexplicably became less important in Imperial circles. Augustus encouraged Roman poets to create the poetic immortalisation of his life in the first Roman epic to glorify the greatness of the Empire. Lyne informs us Virgil acquiesced and wrote the *Aeneid* "in the sophisticated atmosphere of the first Augustan period ... and the Emperor was, perhaps rather surprisingly, well pleased" (2001:188). Under patronage, Virgil was guaranteed a very comfortable lifestyle. Lyne, however, explicates exactly what the expectations of patronage involved:

[T]he task to which they were being pressured was not just to immortalize the heroic deeds of the greatest general [Augustus] ... Augustus and the state were effectively synonymous. To be in his patronage, directly or indirectly, was to be in the patronage of the government, and there was pressure to publicize the government's policies and to burnish its image. This task could be seen as invidious, but it could also be seen as a challenging responsibility; and with varying degrees of enthusiasm and directness, these scrupulous poets tackled it (2001:186).

Virgil began his Roman epic in 29 BCE as a mythical account of the origins of Rome. There has always been a tendency amongst researchers to find similar character traits between the mythical Trojan hero Aeneas and Augustus in the *Aeneid* and to assume that Virgil modelled his hero Aeneas on Augustus. Cairns warns against presuming this exclusively on the assumption that Aeneas was an ancestor of the house of the Julians, the house into which Augustus was adopted. He however concedes, "any repeated attribute of Aeneas must to some extent have reflected on Augustus" (1989:4). MacKay is somewhat stronger in his rejection of the analogy between the two when he says

Aeneas has very little in common with that witty, shrewd, self-confident cynic who pulled together a distracted civilization, and died saying, “Well, boys, I put on a good show, didn’t I?” (MacKay, 1963:158).

MacKay makes another valid argument against scrutinizing the text of the *Aeneid* for analogies between the two when he points out that “the Augustus we know is largely the product of more than thirty years after Vergil’s death” (1963:158).

On reflection and close examination of the text I believe the reader may be deliberately led by Virgil to assume that analogous links do in fact exist between Aeneas and Augustus. The connection between Aeneas and Augustus is suggested in Anchises’ prophecy in Book VI:

*Turn your two eyes
This way and see this people, your own Romans.
Here is Caesar, and all the line of Iulus, (VI:1058-1060).*

This analogy is reflected again in Book VIII when Virgil confirms Aeneas’ relationship to the persons (that include Augustus) depicted on the shield:

*All these images on Vulcan’s shield,
His mother’s gift, were wonders to Aeneas.
Knowing nothing of the events themselves,
He felt joy in their pictures, taking up
Upon his shoulders all the destined acts
And fame of his descendents. (VIII:987-992)*

An issue closely related to the discussion surrounding the comparison between Aeneas and Augustus concerns the question of whether or not the *Aeneid* is viewed as a panegyric of Augustus. This has been the subject

of debate for many years. Williams in his contribution “The Purpose of the *Aeneid*” in *Oxford Readings in Vergil’s Aeneid* states that “The ancient critics were not in doubt about the purpose of the *Aeneid*: it was to glorify Rome and Augustus” (1990:21). Galinsky (1996:245) shows how this view was “elaborated from the seventeenth century on” until contemporary times when opinion has varied greatly as to whether or not this is in fact the case. Virgil can be seen in the *Aeneid* to be satisfying both his independent artistic spirit and showing his implicit support of Augustus. However, in my opinion, only when the reader fully appreciates the social circumstances under which poets such as Virgil worked and the omnipresent influence of Augustus in all the cultural structures of Rome, can one recognise the subtleness with which Virgil handled this situation in the *Aeneid*. It is beyond the emphasis and scope of this thesis to consider this issue at length, but I concur with the contemporary viewpoint that Galinsky subscribes to: namely to see Virgil (and other Augustan poets) “neither as ideological supporters nor cryptocritics, but as purveyors of ambivalences, ambiguities and ironies on a rather massive scale” (1996:245).⁴ The next section of this discussion deals with religion and religion’s link with philosophy in Augustan Age Roman society.

⁴The relationship between Augustus and Virgil will be examined more closely in section 1.4.

1.1.1 RELIGION

Religious systems are universal components of world culture through which all societies create a link between their material and non-material environments. Kruger, Lubbe and Steyn explain the role of religion in a society:

Religion reconciles a human being to him-/herself and to the world. One feels certain, has deep insight and acts correctly – so one believes. All form of suffering (physical as well as emotional) become tolerable if one is liberated from the torments of meaninglessness and senselessness. The confidence generated in this way endows religious individuals and groups with enormous strength (Kruger, Lubbe & Steyn, 1996:5).

It is essential for the reader of the *Aeneid* to recognize the centrality of religion in the everyday life of Romans in the Augustan Age to fully appreciate what role religion played in Virgil's social context. Crawford illustrates the fundamental integration of religion in the Roman community:

The Roman community did not consist simply of the citizens who belonged to it, together with their female, young, and slave dependents. It also included the gods, and Roman religious structures and history form in a number of very striking ways the mirror image of secular structures and developments (Crawford, 2001:18).

The importance of taking full cognisance of the interconnection between religion and the Roman social context in Virgil's epic is underlined by Williams' statement that the *Aeneid* is "essentially a religious poem" (1987:128) and Warde-Fowler's opinion in *The Religious Experience of the*

Roman People that Virgil “more warmly and sympathetically than any other Latin author, gives expression to the best religious feeling of the Roman mind” (1933:403).

Crucial for our understanding of the *Aeneid* is Galinsky’s emphasis on the fact that in Augustan Age Roman society religion was characterized by “restoration and innovation” and was “evolutionary and adaptive” (1996:288). Augustus’ leadership was renowned for being one of the most creative in the history of the world; this is reflected in his religious innovation. He was always striving for a return to the customs, values and *mores* of the Republican Age while concurrently adopting an attitude of reform and change. All cultural components are interlinked to a greater or lesser degree and the dynamic innovations seen in religion matched the tempo of all cultural change in this period: “Roman religion during Augustus’ reign exemplifies Augustan culture in general” (Galinsky, 1996:288).

Upon commencing reading the *Aeneid*, the reader immediately becomes aware of the prominent role the gods play in the poem. The god Jupiter’s prophecy in Book I (347-398) is the most important section of this book in my mind because it establishes Virgil’s intent to glorify Rome through epic narrative from the outset of the poem. The reader will recognise that the gods of the *Aeneid* facilitate or obstruct the mission of Aeneas and by and large control his life. Book I adroitly provides the reader with an outline of which gods support the Trojans and which gods oppose them.

The most mentioned god in the *Aeneid* is Apollo. He was also the patron god of the Trojans in the *Iliad* and the god who protected his followers against the dangers inherent in undertaking expeditions and establishing

colonies in Augustan Age Roman society (Williams, 1987:133). Apollo's function in the *Aeneid* is to divinely oversee and protect Aeneas on his journey and in his quest to lay the foundation of a future Roman colony. Moreover, Apollo was Augustus' patron god. The temple that Augustus dedicated to Apollo on the Palatine is alluded to by Aeneas in Book VI (110-112) (Williams, 1987:133).

The respect Aeneas shows the gods is illustrated throughout the *Aeneid*. It is in Aeneas' religious observances and rituals in Book XI (39-136) surrounding the preparations for the body of Pallas to be returned to his father, in Pallas' funeral and the funerals of the fallen warriors on both sides (XI:251-289), that the reader is given great insights into the unique socio-cultural customs and ritualised behaviours connected with religion, death and funerals in Roman society.⁵ At the same time, insight into Roman religion in the Augustan Age in general illuminates the reading of these passages in the *Aeneid*.

Politics and religion were two closely allied cultural components in the Augustan Age. Galinsky illustrates the multifarious nature of Roman religion when he says it provided "an elastic framework for many different purposes and needs" (1996:288). A notable feature of Augustan Age culture was the adaptability and flexibility of its cultural institutions. Augustus' religious policies had two main objectives: to elevate his own position (for example securing his election to *pontifex maximus* in 12 BCE); and to create a new order, while retaining the former pantheon of gods as well as rituals and customs of old religious cults (Galinsky, 1996:289-294).

⁵ Warde-Fowler (1933:84-85) gives a comprehensive account of Roman funeral customs and rituals. The practice of burying a bone or bones of the departed after cremation is demonstrated in the *Aeneid* XI: 288-289. The reasons why Roman society did this are given by Warde-Fowler (1933:84).

Galinsky illustrates how Augustus, while respecting entrenched cultural customs, exploited the flexible and innovative mood of Roman society in his religious policies when he says Augustus “observed precedent and extended existing practices and institutions as far as customary allowance for change would permit” (1996:6). Virgil’s composition can be seen to be echoing Augustus’ practice if one takes into consideration the opinion of Warde-Fowler that “Virgil gathers up what was valuable in the past of Rome and adds to it a new element, a new source of life and hope” (1933:404). Although dated, Warde-Fowler’s statement points accurately to the extent to which the *Aeneid* may reflect Virgil’s social context.⁶

Manifestations of Augustus’ religious policies impacted upon the entire Roman world and played a significant part in the lives of Roman citizens. Augustus encouraged enactment of ritualistic behaviours in anticipation of, as well as in acknowledgement and in appreciation of, the gods’ benevolence. The *Aeneid* gives us an example of the social and political importance Romans and Augustus gave to revived ancient religious ceremonies by including one of the most momentous socio-political, socio-cultural and socio-religious events of their recent history: the closing of the Gates of War at the Temple of Juno. Virgil’s lines read as follows:

*And grim with iron frames, the Gates of War
Will then be shut: inside, unboly Furor,
Squatting on cruel weapons, hands enchained
Behind him by a hundred links of bronze,
Will grind his teeth and howl with bloodied mouth.” (I:394-398).*

⁶ The evidence that may suggest that Virgil was continually upholding Augustus’ societal vision does not necessarily imply unqualified support by Virgil for everything connected with the Augustan regime. The opinion of Starr (see section 1.4) that Virgil rather supported Augustus’ vision for the greatness of Rome appears to be the more plausible argument.

Jupiter's prophecy regarding the shutting of the Gates of War can also be seen as a contextualizing literary device whereby Virgil brings the social context of the Augustan Age into his mythological version of the founding of Rome. The socio-political significance of this event is demonstrated by how early in the epic it is mentioned and by the text (*I:347-398*) including a multitude of suggestive and symbolic messages that would have been readily interpreted by Virgil's audience. These lines are significant to the reader because they imply Virgil's gratitude for the peace brought about by the Augustan regime remarkably early on in the epic. The lines also suggest Virgil believes that it is Augustus alone who can uphold lasting stability and bring peace to Rome. These meaningful lines may also exemplify the interrelatedness of the social systems of politics and religion in the Augustan Age, embodying one of Augustus' most significant and triumphant socio-political gestures while on the surface remaining religious in nature.

1.1.2 RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

Warde-Fowler (1933:357) and Williams (1987:128-129) both illustrate how religious beliefs of the ancient Roman world were supported and integrated with the philosophical teachings of the period. The close relationship between these two social systems was especially applicable in Virgil's world where people were wrestling with the intellectual dilemma of where they fitted into their material and non-material environments. Virgil is generally seen as leaning towards the Epicurean and the Stoic philosophical schools,⁷ amongst others, as Braund (1997:205) indicates: "Virgil has been seen as an Epicurean or a Stoic or even as someone who

⁷ The reader can identify doctrines of Stoicism in Evander's words in Book VII 482-485, and Epicurean behaviour in Aeneas in Book VIII 106-111.

changed philosophical allegiance”. According to her, Virgil gave expression to ideologies from different philosophical schools throughout the *Aeneid* and especially in his characterization of Aeneas. Galinsky points to the fact that Augustan Age cultural norms surrounding the expression of emotions such as anger or revenge were largely dictated by the popular philosophical teachings of the particular era and consequently these doctrines were an influencing force upon the poetry produced in that period. For example, Galinsky explains that the savage anger Aeneas displays when he kills Turnus can be completely rationalized from the perspective of Aristotle’s philosophical teachings⁸ that never excluded rare displays of unrestrained temper and violence if they occurred in the appropriate context. The criteria that Aristotle defined for appropriately expressed anger took into consideration the provocation for the anger and the “character of the angry individual” (1988:333).⁹

It was an Augustan Age societal conviction that as their chosen people the gods exclusively supported the Roman nation and its imperial aims. In return the Romans repaid the gods with dutiful respect and piety. In an act of supreme religious piety Aeneas devoutly removes the Trojan gods from the fallen Troy to establish them in Italy and ultimately give them Roman identity. The reader can again distinguish the effect that Virgil’s social context had on his composition of the *Aeneid* identifying how Aeneas’

⁸Although Aristotle lived in 384-322 BCE, he was a major influence in Greco-Roman philosophical thinking for centuries to come.

⁹One could even go so far as to suggest that Aristotle would have approved of the occasional inclusion of anger in the *Aeneid* for the cathartic effect it induces in the audience.

relationship with the gods epitomises Augustan Age religious behaviour. Roman attitude towards their gods was influenced in part by the Epicurean philosophical teachings of the period that advocated a detached pantheon of gods (Williams, 1987:128). I have reached the conclusion that Aeneas' relationship with the gods is one of complete compliance while at the same time being somewhat formal. In Book IV 379-381 Aeneas is shocked and shaken by the appearance of Mercury and the message he brings from Jupiter:

*Amazed, and shocked to the bottom of his soul
By what his eyes had seen, Aeneas felt
His hackles rise, his voice choke in his throat. (IV:379-381)*

The gods map out his destiny for him and Aeneas follows this with unquestioning obedience. This is illustrated in Book IV 382-385 as Aeneas dutifully obeys Jupiter's instructions to leave Carthage:¹⁰

*As the sharp admonition and command
From heaven had shaken him awake, he now
Burned only to be gone, to leave that land
Of the sweet life behind. (IV:382-385).*

Considering the influential role that philosophy played in shaping the religious beliefs of Roman society, for instance how it viewed its gods' involvement in human domestic affairs, the reader can reasonably

¹⁰ Alternatively it may be possible that Aeneas' obedience to the will of the gods in this instance is motivated by a certain amount of cowardly fear on his behalf. This perspective is discussed in section 2.1

conclude that these two cultural components are wholly interrelated.¹¹ They have a significant importance in this thesis as by in large throughout the *Aeneid* Aeneas' religious and philosophical beliefs appear to play a role in guiding his actions. The best example of this is in Book IV when Aeneas justifies his departure from Carthage to Dido:

*The gods' interpreter, sent by Jove himself—
I swear it by your head and mine—has brought
Commands down through the racing winds! (IV:492-494).*

It must be remembered that this is not an excuse by Aeneas. He treats the gods' commands, as would all Romans, with the greatest respect.

This discussion now focuses on the Augustan Age cultural behaviours reflected in the *Aeneid* concerning family and women.

1.1.3 FAMILY AND WOMEN

A central theme that runs through the *Aeneid* is the relationship between family members. This is illustrated primarily by the relationship between Aeneas and his father, his son and his wife. The importance Virgil gives these relationships in his epic is a reflection of the existing Roman socio-cultural norms and values that prioritised the significance of the family unit in society. Nielsen is of the opinion that there is no doubt “that family and close kin were of major importance to Romans of all social and economic classes” (1999:204).

¹¹ All cultural systems in every society are interrelated to a lesser or greater degree.

It is fundamental that the modern reader of the *Aeneid* understand the uniqueness of the Roman concept of *familia* so as not to confuse it with what constitutes a 21st century family. Jones and Sidwell give a clear explanation:

Our word ‘family’ derives from the Latin word *familia*, and that may lull into thinking the two ideas are much the same. In fact *familia* has some significant differences. Strictly it is a legal term, referring to those under the legal control of the head of household, the *paterfamilias*. As we will see, the *familia* covered slaves of a household, but frequently did not include the wife; so that even if many Romans lived in groupings resembling the modern ‘nuclear family’, that was not what they referred to in talking about the *familia* (1997:208).

A related socio-cultural aspect of Augustan Age society that requires examination is the legislation by Augustus governing marriage and procreation in Roman society. These deserve examination in the light of the statement by Galinsky that the *Aeneid* represented the essential spirit of this legislation: “The moral core [of the legislation] was the time-honoured ideal of social responsibility, which permeates the *Aeneid* and was resolutely identified with the responsibility for a family” (1996:138). Galinsky (1996:130) explains that Augustus’ motivation behind implementing these laws was multifaceted and encompassed his vision of returning Roman society to the moral attitudes that the Republicans embraced. From the early days of the Augustan regime, the idea of cohesive family units, legitimate children and fidelity in marriage was strongly promoted and “central to his reign” (Galinsky, 1996:128). Dixon in her book *The Roman Mother* describes the social and political implications of Augustus’ vision for Roman families and how this eventually became legalised in Roman society in 17 BCE shortly after Virgil’s death:

Two blocks of legislation were passed under Augustus' aegis in 18 BC and AD 9 which penalised celibacy, childlessness and adultery and offered certain benefits to Roman citizens who married and produced legitimate children (1988:121).

She goes further to describe the social and political realities present in Augustan Age society that actually motivated this legislation:

There was some talk of replenishing the depleted Italian stock which was traditionally regarded as the backbone of the Roman army ... but the incentives and penalties laid down by the so-called 'Augustan marriage laws' really applied to the wealthy and politically ambitious (1988:121-122).

The prominent status of Anchises in the *Aeneid* may leave the modern reader speculating as to the significance of this. There is consensus amongst many Virgilian scholars (Heinze, 1993:32, Saller, 1994:105 and Jones & Sidwell, 1997:208) that the greatest expression of Aeneas' *pietas* towards his father is shown in Book II as they leave Troy (*II:921-923*).¹² The relationship between Anchises and Aeneas will be examined further in chapter 3. The investigation in this chapter explores the socio-cultural norms and values that defined the father's role in Augustan Age Roman society. Jones and Sidwell explain the status of the Roman father:

The most persistent, and in the eyes of the Romans the most quintessentially Roman, feature of the family was the power of the father, *patria potestas*. Not only were they aware that the Roman father had powers over his family, and especially his adult children, that were exceptional, but it was a proud tradition to which they clung tenaciously (1997:212).

¹² See Section 1.1.6 for a fuller discussion on the role of *pietas* in Augustan Age society.

The social role and power of the father in Roman families cannot be underestimated. Dixon (1992:40-41) gives a comprehensive account of the Roman cultural traits of the *paterfamilias*, the Roman father.¹³ His authority over the family was extreme, and exploring it helps the modern reader to understand the relationship between Aeneas and Anchises.¹⁴

The role and status of children in the Roman family will be the next focus of this discussion.¹⁵ The aim of this is to conceptualise the status and function of Ascanius for the modern reader of the *Aeneid*. Ascanius was, we imagine, a small helpless boy when Aeneas left Troy. He, however, holds the hopes of the Trojans' future and although Virgil gives him very little prominence as a character his important role in the poem remains constant. His relationship with his father is discussed further in chapter 3.

¹³ See section 2.1 for a discussion of how Aeneas defers to his father's opinion in the early books of the *Aeneid*.

¹⁴ According to Dixon, (1992:40) the father's authority included the following: a Roman father's legitimate children were under his power and authority all of their lives until his death. He could however release them from this authority by having another family adopt them, freeing them, transferring power of married daughters to their fathers-in-law; Roman marriages required the father's consent; offspring of living fathers could not make wills or conduct any property transference; the father in a Roman family held the power of life or death (*ius vitae necisque*) over his children; children of a legitimate marriage were the property of the father's family i.e., while the paternal grandfather lived they belonged to him, upon his death ownership of the children passed on to their own father.

¹⁵ Dixon highlights the interesting fact that although there is evidence that the Romans differentiated between the different stages of childhood and delighted in childish characteristics in the young there "was a tendency to accept the deaths of the very young with impassivity" (1992:107). This attitude correlates closely with that found in modern families in the Northeast Brazilian slums where anthropologist Scheper-Hughes (2001:38) identified the same attitude towards the deaths of small babies. Both Dixon and Scheper-Hughes attribute this attitude, in instances of high infant mortality, to the family's way of protecting itself emotionally against forming attachments with a baby that might not survive.

According to Dixon, the function of Roman children in family and society was to “provide their parents with support in their old age and proper commemoration at death” (1992:108). In my opinion, the reverse of the natural order of survival is given very poignant expression by Evander as he laments his son’s death:

*For my part,
I have outlived my time to linger on,
Survivor of my son. (XI:218-220).*

Dixon further describes how children of elite families were required to maintain and/or improve the status and family honour of the family in their lifetime (1992:109).

In conclusion, I believe that the *Aeneid* portrays many aspects of relationships between children and their parents in a way that is surprisingly familiar and recognisable to the modern reader considering the enormous time period and cultural abyss that separates the two eras.

There are interesting and well-defined female characters in the *Aeneid*, especially that of Dido. Specific socio-cultural factors in Roman society that influenced Virgil’s portrayal of her relationship with Aeneas are examined in chapter 3. Exhaustive detail about the legal status of women in Roman society would prove beyond the scope of this thesis, but this chapter discusses some of the socio-cultural norms that may have shaped Virgil’s portrayal of the characters Creusa and Dido. This aims to prevent the modern reader making inappropriate assumptions about Virgil’s characterizations of them in the *Aeneid*.

It is interesting to note how Creusa, Aeneas' wife and Ascanius' mother, fulfils Roman societal expectations of a good wife in terms of her political, reproductive and social functions. According to Dixon she achieves this in the following respects: politically she links important families (Creusa was the daughter of the Trojan king Priam and his wife Hecuba); reproductively she produces a legitimate heir (Ascanius); and socially her union with Aeneas is represented as harmonious, an ideal "almost as strongly embedded in the notion of Roman marriage as was reproductive purpose" (Dixon, 1992:70).

As I have indicated, a number of socio-cultural influences apparent in Dido's characterization are dealt with in greater depth in chapter 3. Further, the analogy between Dido and Cleopatra, probably apparent to an Augustan Age audience of the *Aeneid*, is discussed in chapter 3. Here, however, I want to draw attention to the fact that Dido's characterization is somewhat unique, as she is the female leader of a great nation. Related to this is the issue of Roman males' socio-cultural suspicions of women who exhibit any tendencies towards the militaristic. Keith explains that there existed an "unprecedented visibility of upper class women in the political upheavals of the decade after Caesar's assassination" (Keith, 2000:78). Keith furthermore explores the fact that in the *Aeneid* "the voice and violence of war is female" (2000:69). He describes Dido as a "warmongering *regina*" (2000:68).

The focus of this chapter now moves to an in-depth discussion of the socio-cultural tension that existed between East and West in the reign of Augustus. This discussion holds relevance for the aims of this thesis because of the obvious manifestations of the enmity in the text of the *Aeneid*.

1.1.4 EAST AND WEST

Examining in detail the political and historical causes of the acrimonious relationship between Octavius and Marc Antony lies beyond the aims and scope of this thesis.¹⁶ However, I believe that the socio-cultural effects that this political discord had within Augustan Age Roman society deserves some attention as it is a distinct feature of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Galinsky's article "The Hercules-Cacus Episode in *Aeneid* VIII" (1966:18-51), gives a full description of the allegorical references in Book VIII of the *Aeneid* to show the contrast made between the apparent faultlessness of the Augustan regime and the degeneracy of the Eastern regime led by Cleopatra and Marc Antony.¹⁷

The political friction that existed between the Augustan regime and that of Antony and Cleopatra culminated in Augustus' victory at the Battle of Actium. This victory resulted ultimately in lasting peace for a war-ravaged empire as well as ensuring the success of the Augustan political regime. The consequences of this historical battle should not be underestimated as it is referred to by historians as one of the defining moments of history in Western Civilization, forever altering the course of the Western world's history, as it facilitated the Roman Empire's growth and expansion under Emperor Augustus.

Another figure that is significant in the presentation of the tension between East and West is Paris, who represents the depravity of the

¹⁶ See Stockton (2001:121-124) for a thorough political and historical account of the origins of Octavian's hostility towards Marc Antony.

¹⁷ This is discussed in section 1.4.1.

East.¹⁸ This would have been significant and relevant to the members of Roman society. The modern reader of the *Aeneid* can only understand the offensive implications of these references once the social context of the friction between East and West during the Augustan Age is appreciated. While it is obvious that this analogy draws attention to the moral values of the Augustan regime and emphasizes the remarkable social achievement of Augustus in reviving the moral values of Republican Rome with the defeat of Marc Antony, this characterization of Aeneas also highlights his human failings as he is drawn in and tempted by the luxurious life with Dido in Carthage.

Oliensis in her contribution to *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil* titled “Sons and Lovers: sexuality and gender in Virgil’s poetry” (1997:294-311) draws our attention to another socio-cultural tension that Virgil exposes through the analogy of Aeneas and Paris. This is the Roman abhorrence of effeminacy in males, its unacceptable connection with homosexuality and Roman societal limits to their acceptance of homosexuality. She explains that while free men who desired men were acceptable within certain social constraints, (that being that their social standing was paramount and the socially superior male retained his social seniority within the homosexual relationship) it was unacceptable for men who were of a socially superior rank to act or behave effeminately within this union. Displaying female traits within a homosexual relationship by

¹⁸ Williams (1972 & 1973) in his commentaries *The Aeneid of Virgil Books 1-6 & 7-12* points to numerous derogatory references made by Aeneas enemies that compare him to Paris, for example in Book IV (291-294). This is dealt with further in chapter 2 of this thesis. (It must be noted that I have utilized Williams’s commentaries extensively in conjunction with Fitzgerald’s translation of the *Aeneid*. This has been done because while I am aware that although Fitzgerald’s 1990 translation of the *Aeneid* has gained popularity as a comprehensible reading of Virgil’s work for modern students, when I compare it to Williams 1972 and 1973 commentaries *The Aeneid of Virgil: Books 1-6 and 7-12* I have reached the conclusion that Fitzgerald’s translation may be considered by some to be somewhat too free in nature).

appearing submissive or passive implied weakness. This weakness would be suspected of overlapping into other areas of life. It was believed such a man gave in to life's pleasures too easily and therefore would be 'soft' on the battlefield as well. To a Roman, the effeminate Paris and his weakness epitomised this type of Eastern man who subordinated his national obligations and duties to pursuing the excessive pleasures of life. Aeneas was criticised by his enemies for appearing to accept this lifestyle while in Carthage under the influence of the dominating Eastern queen Dido (Oliensis, 1997: 296).

An additional socio-cultural tension present in Augustan Age society that requires mention is the ruthlessness of the proscriptions witnessed by Roman society during Octavian's rise to power and how it formed the background to the stability and peace enjoyed in Augustan Age Rome after the Battle of Actium. Virgil, as Starr (1955:34-46) points out, was not naive regarding the inconsistencies and underlying tensions in Augustan Age society and his social commentary on this can be seen to be given modulated expression in the *Aeneid* both by portraying the purported Augustan epic hero's personality as fallible, ambivalent and multidimensional, and in the ambiguous ending of the poem.¹⁹ Galinsky believes these contradictory factors are part of what makes this epic a remarkably "true reflection of the Augustan Age" and "[i]t is in its allowance for contradictions, too, that the age of Augustus was exemplary and influential" (1996:375).

¹⁹There are various ways to interpret Virgil's intent and the meaning of Turnus' death. The two views illustrated here, one recent, one not as current but still well respected, represent a sample of the diversity of views circulating in research at present. Nicol in his article "The Death of Turnus" (2001:190-200) is of the opinion that Virgil portrays Turnus' death as sacrificial and necessary for the establishment of Rome, which would attain its greatest glory in the Augustan Age. By contrast, Otis in his book *Virgil: A Study in Civilised Poetry* believes that with Turnus' death Virgil is commenting on the Homeric model of heroism and the "brutal and senselessly repeated sacrifice of others—of whole societies—to their own selfish desires" (1964:381).

The following subsection of this discussion focuses on the concept of heroism in the Augustan Age Roman world including a brief section on modern notions of heroism for comparative purposes.

1.1.5 HEROISM

The ambivalent nature of Augustan Age society can be witnessed in the manner in which Virgil portrays Aeneas' multidimensional heroic nature in the *Aeneid*. This will be fully discussed in chapter 2 but it is appropriate at this point to discuss, along broad lines, how the audience of the *Aeneid* in the Augustan Age would identify heroic nature and evaluate it by comparing it to our own 21st century perceptions of heroism. The objective of this investigation is to review briefly the basic characteristics and indicators of heroism in the Augustan Age and the manner in which this may have influenced Virgil's portrayal of his hero, Aeneas. Following this, the notion of heroism in the 21st century will be explored briefly. The aim of this is to raise the reader's awareness of the large disparities between an ancient Roman's notion of heroism and our perception of it. This will be done to pre-empt the reader's natural tendency to impose his or her own cultural frame of reference onto an interpretation of Virgil's heroic model. Homer, composing the *Iliad* in approximately 750 BCE, created the literary character of Virgil's mythical Trojan hero, Aeneas. Virgil, however, reoriented time and chronological perspective in the *Aeneid*. Williams states, "one of the outstanding features of the *Aeneid* is the linking of the distant past with the nearer past, with the present, and with future hopes which the present inspired" (1987:34). Williams explains that Virgil achieved this through "prophecies and supernatural revelations of the future, and with various kinds of aetiological references which bring

Augustan Rome into the 'Trojan time-scale' (1987:34). Further, I suggest that Virgil did this by modelling the heroic nature of Trojan Aeneas according to the profile of a Roman Augustan Age hero and adapting the Homeric model of heroism to create a prototype of heroism unique to the Augustan Age social context. By doing so, Virgil fashioned Aeneas' heroism to be culturally appropriate to an Augustan Age audience and acceptable to Augustus' *provisos*.

Hook and Reno (2000:7-8) delineate three indicators of epic heroism in antiquity. Firstly they describe how the hero in antiquity must be communally recognisable and acknowledged as a heroic figure. Identification of a hero in a society was made through a group distinguishing and willingly acquiescing in the outstanding leadership traits of an individual. Consequently, the individual's heroic reputation in antiquity grew by the common and increasing acknowledgement of his prowess. Homer's Achilles, who satisfied all these requirements, personifies the archetypal epic hero of antiquity. Aeneas' portrayal also fulfils these preconditions for heroism.²⁰

Hook and Reno's second requirement demands that the hero possess such all-round excellence of physical and mental ability that the average person is motivated and inspired to imitate him. In the *Aeneid*, Aeneas is initially inspired to fulfil his heroic destiny by the motivation that the hero Hector affords him in Book II (394-397). The esteem in which he holds the heroism of Hector is enduring and is expressed even in the closing scenes of the poem in Book XII (595-602).

²⁰ How Virgil re-establishes Aeneas as a legitimate Roman hero after his rather dismal heroic performance in the *Iliad* is discussed in section 2.4.

Thirdly, according to Hook and Reno the hero in antiquity was required to be wholly participatory in his own heroic quest. This final criterion for recognition of a hero is especially embodied by Aeneas who is portrayed as realizing his own heroic stature through persistently participating in and prioritising his predetermined destiny, and by eventually fulfilling his mission to establish the foundation of Rome.

Hainsworth, (1993:44-50) provides an illuminating synopsis of the universal characteristics of ancient heroes. In it he states that, “the simplest form of heroism is the successful accomplishment of a mighty deed” (1993:47). The prerequisite of any hero in any society demands the surpassing of excellence by an individual and recognition and acknowledgment of his extraordinary accomplishment by members of that society. In an era where survival of the individual depended on the survival of the community, heroes of antiquity, whether in literature or in daily life, were recognized through action and deeds: they accomplished the prodigious deeds necessary to save societies and ensure continuance of populations, akin to the manner in which Aeneas rescued the Trojan community at the fall of Troy. Hainsworth’s description of the characteristics of heroes in antiquity emphasizes how uniquely different and distinguishable they were from the ordinary man. He explains how heroes of antiquity possessed all traits in the extreme but possessed particular traits in excess. These excesses were the motivating force behind their heroism. Their lives were not flawless but their excesses were justified by their power. I agree with the general consensus amongst Virgilian scholars that in the *Aeneid* Aeneas’ *pietas* is the most dominant and salient trait in his personality. His pious nature facilitates his realization and deliverance of greatness when required. The excesses of

antiquity's heroes were excusable because they were the deliverers of the mighty deeds; they saved men of lesser character.

Additionally, according to Hainsworth (1993:44-50), heroes of antiquity enjoyed a special relationship with the gods that was denied the average person. Frequently believed to have divine or semi-divine parents, heroes of antiquity were often given special guidance by their immortal parents. An example of how influential this guidance was in the lives of antiquity's heroes is referred to by both Harrison (1990:50) and Otis (1964:243-244) when they stress how pivotal Venus' intervention in Book II (772-812) was to Aeneas' realization that Troy had finally been defeated.

Finally, Hainsworth believes ancient heroes were innate leaders of men. This is exemplified in Book II (1034-1040) when Aeneas recalls how the Trojan refugees naturally looked to him for survival. In the highly militaristic atmosphere of the ancient world, high military rank was a much-desired attribute that set apart individuals with potential to achieve heroic status. Heroism was proved in combat situations, especially one on one combat. Excelling in the arena of ancient warfare granted warriors with renowned capabilities heroic status in life and remembrance in death (Hainsworth, 1993:44-50).

In my opinion, it is Toohey's comprehensive description of the epic hero that most adequately sums up the characteristics of ancient heroism which the audience of the *Aeneid* would have identified in Aeneas' portrayal:

An epic hero is normally of superior social station, often a king or a leader in his own right. He is usually tall, handsome and muscular. He must be preeminent, or nearly so, in athletic and fighting skills. This latter ability implies not just physical skill, but also the courage to utilize it. The epic hero is sometimes outstanding in intelligence. Yet there seems to be more to the heroic character than is conveyed by such simple prescriptions. To display his heroic abilities the epic hero needs some form of crisis or war or quest. The nature of this crisis and the hero's response are at the heart of the matter (Toohey, 1992:9-10).

Toohey's summary of epic heroism above does not exclude the ever-present influence of Augustus in Virgil's depiction of his epic hero, for elsewhere he does emphasize this: "behind Aeneas there lurks the presence of Augustus" (1992:8). This statement again reminds the reader of the influence of Virgil's social context in his composition of the *Aeneid*.

This discussion now investigates modern perceptions of heroism. This is done in an effort to demonstrate how the intervening epochs have resulted in enormous divergences between the ancient and modern perceptions of heroism.

Because contemporary society is not dependent for day-to-day survival of the community on the individual heroic excellences of particular persons, I believe that the modern reader of the *Aeneid* will benefit from a brief examination of what modern heroism's role is in our society. Once the readers of Virgil's ancient epic can understand how the 21st century perceptions of heroism differ from the notion of ancient heroism they can conceptualise each appropriately.

The nature of heroism in the present era is a complex and convoluted issue that, unlike the heroism of antiquity, does not have clearly defined indicators. Contemporary research into what constitutes modern heroism is largely delineated according to ethnic, political or religious qualifications, there being no common type (Hook and Reno, 2000:10-14).

Hook and Reno (2000:9-14) illustrate how external cultural forces and influences have irreversibly altered the parameters of contemporary heroism. These include: the prevalence in the Western world religious systems of dogmas of austere humility and discipleship which advocate attributing the accomplishment of heroic deeds to a higher power; modern warfare and the invention of weapons of mass destruction that have altered the face of warfare and removed the need for one on one combat and thereby the opportunity to display the most basic of heroic manifestations, i.e., the physical and mental superiority in battle that will guarantee the survival of populations (2000:177); cultural pluralism and homogeneity which has increased tolerance of aliens but reduced cultural identity and loyalty and suppressed any desire to heroically defend one's heritage; and scientific demystification and explanation of unexplained material and non-material phenomena which has eradicated the enigma behind seemingly inexplicable heroic accomplishments, replacing it with rational explanations.

According to Hook and Reno (2000:11) heroism in the modern Western world has been devalued, occurs circumstantially or incidentally and has become sentimentalised.²¹ The parameters of heroism have now been

²¹ The devaluing of heroism in the judgement of Hook and Reno has occurred because of the modern tendency towards "democratisation or levelling", and they explain that the pursuit of excellence as the ancients saw it has been reduced to choosing to excel in only one area of life, for instance parenthood, and therefore being considered to be "the heroic mom or dad" (2000:11). Seldom do individuals in

reduced to highly idiosyncratic recognition of heroic indicators appropriate to one's personalised worldview. They go on to say "The point is that heroism is, in principle, available to all. Special qualities that mark classical heroism are absent" (2000:11). The highly materialistic nature of modern Westernised societies does not encourage the participative or active long-term pursuit of a heroic life that does not result in personal gain, according to Hook and Reno.

When the reader compares these descriptions of ancient and modern heroism, it will highlight the importance of viewing the *Aeneid* within its appropriate period. The radical shift over time in the perceptions of what constitutes heroism or heroic nature in an individual can be seen to render modern opinions and attitudes defunct and irrelevant, if applied to Aeneas who is portrayed in ancient times.

This subsection on particular aspects of Augustan Age society that may have influenced Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas in the *Aeneid* now concludes

modern cultures strive to live a life dedicated to heroic excellence that is ultimately advantageous to their society, as the ancient epic heroes such as Achilles and Aeneas did. When they do members of 21st century societies regard these individuals with incredulity. In a society where submission to a heroic vocation is tantamount to financial ruin, they risk becoming labelled as genetic or spiritual aberrations and the average man does not readily contemplate imitating them. Heroic action that is recognised on a community level is now typically realized in incidental and extraordinary circumstances; it is not actively sought as a lifestyle. Circumstantial heroes are created out of average individuals whose celebrity depends on their immediate and spontaneous reactions to situations and media promotion, not a life dedicated to heroism. Hook and Reno describe the creation of circumstantial heroes thus: "Starved for 'real heroes' we latch onto the extraordinary act and elevate the agent to the status of hero" (2000:12). The very nature of contemporary heroism makes heroic achievement specifically pertinent only to the persons who benefit from their actions. The sentimentalization of heroism according to Hook and Reno has reduced the label of 'heroic' to anyone we personally admire. While they admit this meets the requirements of an ancient hero (i.e., heroes invite the admiration of others) Hook and Reno argue that in contemporary times "The sentimentalised hero is essentially private ... Like so much else in contemporary culture, the public realm of excellence thins as we turn toward spheres of private relationships for satisfaction and fulfilment" (2000:11).

with an investigation into the four cardinal virtues in Augustan Age Roman society.

1.1.6 THE FOUR CARDINAL VIRTUES

The aim of this discussion is to draw attention to the pre-eminence given in Roman culture to the four cardinal virtues of *pietas*, *virtus*, *clementia* and *iustitia*. The importance of these virtues in Aeneas' portrayal in the *Aeneid* will be made apparent in further chapters of this thesis.

Augustus' influence on the cultural institutions of Roman society was all-encompassing. It stretched as far as adopting the entrenched philosophical views of the era,²² the doctrine of living according to the cardinal virtues, as his personal vision for Imperial Augustan Age Romans. Ferguson states "Augustus claimed to embody a quartet of virtues ... Courage (*virtus*), Justice (*iustitia*), Piety or Loyalty (*pietas*), and Clemency (*clementia*)" (1958:48). Galinsky (1996:80-82) illustrates how the ideology of Augustan Age society was dominated by Augustus' vigorous encouragement of and Roman society's acquiescence in living life according to the four cardinal virtues. He goes on to say that adopting these virtues as their principal ideological strategy²³ united and culturally strengthened a society that had been fragmented through an extended period of political turmoil. Galinsky demonstrates the extent to which the Augustan Age poets

²² Jones and Sidwell (1997:252) give an insightful account of the role that the Roman statesman Cicero played in promoting the virtues in Roman society before his death in the proscriptions in 43 BCE.

²³A society's ideology may be described as "an integrated system of ideas and values which serves to unite individuals in a common cause" (Kruger, Lubbe & Steyn, 1996:301).

endorsed Augustus' vision of a Roman society morally guided by the cardinal virtues when he explains, "The poets in particular contributed significantly to the creation of the Augustan ethos" (1996:121). The importance of the four cardinal virtues, *virtus*, *clementia*, *iustitia* and *pietas* in Augustan Age culture is illustrated by the fact that they were inscribed on the golden shield set up in the senate house in 27 BCE when Octavian was renamed Augustus (Galinsky, 1996:80).

Arguably, understanding the nature of these virtues and the role they played in Roman society is fundamental to the modern reader's appreciation of Virgil's characterization of Aeneas. This discussion will open with an investigation of the role of *pietas* in Augustan Age society and briefly examine the portrayal of this important virtue in Virgil's characterization of Aeneas. However, I believe that comprehending the nature of Aeneas' *pietas* in the *Aeneid* is essential for a deeper understanding of this epic; therefore, this topic will be revisited in chapter 2 of this thesis.

Pietas is, according to Galinsky, the most "quintessentially Roman" of all the virtues:

The Roman ideal of social responsibility, which includes a broad spectrum of obligations to family, country, and the gods...Finally, *pietas* again is a quality or a bond that cannot function without reciprocity. It requires the unselfish effort of all for the common good (Galinsky, 1996:86-88).

Pietas is perhaps one of the most entrenched traits in the personality of Aeneas in Virgil's epic. A distinguishing characteristic of *pietas*, the obligatory duty of an individual to his family, is exemplified throughout

the poem but perhaps most vividly in Book II when Aeneas describes to Dido how he carried his old father on his shoulders and led his young son by the hand out of Troy (*II:921-923*). This memorable passage from the *Aeneid*, which is artistically depicted on the Altar of the Gens Augusta (Galinsky, 1996:87) and has become instantly recognisable as an iconic symbol of Aeneas' piety and devotion to his family for future generations of Virgilian scholars.

The cardinal virtues held multidimensional meanings but all contained militaristic overtones according to Galinsky (1996:80-82). The next virtue, *virtus*, translates as valour in battle and is closely associated with nobility's honourable and moral conduct on the battlefield while in service to the Roman state. It must be noted however, that the modern reader is confronted with, and challenged by, the anomaly present in Roman ideological thinking when considering the moral nature of *virtus*. An investigation into the morally paradoxical nature of *virtus* from the Roman socio-cultural perspective will pre-empt any potential misunderstanding in this matter. The readers' dilemma in comprehending the moral quality of *virtus* arises when they compare the ethical distinction Romans made between their grateful appreciation of Augustus' cessation of war and bloodshed on a domestic level and their enthusiastic approval of Augustus' continuing efforts to augment the extent of the Roman Empire through bloody and violent foreign campaigns. Roman society equated *virtus*, and honourable conduct in battle, with a rational justification for aggression if the consequences resulted in the glorification of Rome.²⁴

²⁴ Galinsky (1996:132-134) gives a succinct description of the moral dilemma surrounding the issue of Augustus' Imperial expansion programme.

The Romans, however, appeared to have had little trouble justifying their imperial expansion programme in their own minds. Lyne (1990:316), in his article “Vergil and the Politics of War”, illustrates this apparent lack of scruples:

The Romans had various ways of justifying their imperial aims and methods, some high-minded, some less so. We find in particular that they could give honourable and satisfying explanations of their aims and methods in war (1990:316).

The social function of *virtus* was as much for individual glorification as it was a tribute to the greatness of Rome. This virtue was actively pursued on an individual level by living according to a strict moral code: great rulers were believed to be well endowed with this virtue.

By nature *virtus* looks towards the future but does not disregard what has happened in the past. Galinsky (1996:84) describes how Augustus embodied the spirit of *virtus* by re-establishing societal stability in Rome, after the cultural mayhem left by the civil wars, while he simultaneously pursued a futuristic vision of Roman world domination on the international front. Southern (1998:100) concurs with Galinsky’s opinion of the manner in which Augustus’ vision exemplified this particular characteristic of *virtus* when he states: “Like the god Janus, Augustus looked both backwards and forwards in time” (1998:100).²⁵

The virtue, clemency or *clementia*, shared common characteristics with the other virtues. As I have stated, all the virtues were by nature

²⁵ This theme of simultaneously concerning oneself with the past and future may be identified in Aeneas’ epic journey of discovery and the prophecies and revelations he receives along the way. This is illustrated most clearly in the words Evander speaks to Aeneas when he arrives at the future site of Rome in Book VIII 415-473.

multidimensional, had military overtones and were interrelated. The social function of *clementia* in the context of the Augustan Age can be described in the following manner: after a conquered foreign nation was subjugated and remained obedient to Roman rule, *clementia* entailed treating the compliant population with respect and moderation. Galinsky (1996:85) illustrates that this particular connotation of the virtue of *clementia* is given expression in the *Aeneid* in Book VI. Anchises describes to Aeneas how an honourable Roman conqueror should conduct himself with *clementia* in the following passage:

*Roman, remember by your strength to rule
Earth's peoples—for your arts are to be these:
To pacify, to impose rule of law,
To spare the conquered, battle down the proud.”(VI: 1151-1154).²⁶*

However, as Galinsky points out

It is typical of the Augustan ambience again that this is not a one-sided relationship but a reciprocal one: *clementia* obligates both the holder of power and those in his care (1996:85).

The second characteristic of *clementia* was the custom of individual clemency between Romans on a personal level. Augustus practised this merciful implication of *clementia* in legal matters. An example of this is the clemency he granted the poet Ovid, one of the political dissenters of this period.²⁷

²⁶It must be noted that here the reader is presented with another moral dilemma between the quintessential meaning of *clementia* and the initial interpretation of Virgil's words. While Galinsky calls this text “Virgil's famous summary of the Roman national character” (1996:85), it is my opinion that the reader's interpretation of Virgil's intent may appear to contradict the spirit of the virtue *clementia*. This quote may be interpreted as being at best ambiguous in nature but at worst aggressive.

²⁷ This will be further discussed in section 2.4

Iustitia, or justice, was the Roman virtue vital to Augustus' vision for peace and conformity to rule of law by Romans and Roman subjects throughout the Roman Empire. Galinsky states, "there are some specific Roman and Augustan implications" (1996:85) to this notion. Augustus was at pains to ensure that the rule of law in the Roman Empire was dispensed fairly and legally and should not resemble the model of legality dispensed in the era of the proscriptions. The Augustan Age model of justice or *iustitia* encompassed diverse applications and was manipulated to suit the context. *Iustitia* like many aspects of Roman ideology was also connected to military endeavours. The virtue of *iustitia* can be related to the virtue of *virtus* when it included such initiatives as the Roman justification for embarking on foreign wars only if they were considered, in Augustus' own words from his work *Res Gestae* (26.3), "*bellum pium et iustum*" i.e., "pious and just" (Galinsky, 1996:85).

Another aspect of Galinsky's discussion of *iustitia*, which shows relevance to how Virgil's social context is reflected in his portrayal of Aeneas, is demonstrated in the religious nuances of this virtue. The Roman historian the Elder Scipio suggested that the implementation of this virtue in one's life "is the way to heaven" (Galinsky, 1996:86). Consequently, Augustus' public observation and practice of *iustitia* in Roman society had the advantageous effect of enhancing his "divine aura". Galinsky explains that "No living man had ever been deified in Rome" and that Augustus' wishes to be the first were clothed in "carefully nuanced suggestiveness" (1996:312).²⁸ Implied references to the future deification of Augustus are observed in the text of the *Aeneid* in the analogies made between Augustus

²⁸Gottlieb's contribution "Religion in the politics of Augustus" in Stahl's *Vergil's Aeneid: Augustan Epic and Political Context* (1998:21-36) gives a concise summary of Augustus' religious policies and the close relationship between politics and religion in the Augustan Age.

and the immortal Aeneas in Book I (390) and the implicit analogy made between Augustus and Hercules in Book VIII.

The focus of this chapter now moves on to a more personalised overview of Virgil's life. It includes aspects of his personal history that may have influenced his outlook and attitudes and examines how these are reflected in the *Aeneid*. Following this is a discussion on Virgil's attitude to war and his relationship with Augustus, including the manner in which Virgil's attitude towards the Augustan regime is given expression in the *Aeneid*.

1.2 VIRGIL'S EARLY LIFE AND PERSONAL HISTORY

To the modern historian, ancient historical accounts fail to fulfil the strict authenticity and validity requirements that satisfy contemporary standards of verification (Smith, 2006:412). The popularity of Virgil's work and its influence upon the Roman literati during and beyond his lifetime led to a plethora of biographical accounts of his life being circulated. Therefore, the apparent dilemma in researching Virgil's life is described by Horsfall (1995:25) as being "a problem not of facts but of sources".²⁹

²⁹The following categories have been identified by Horsfall (1995:2-4) as historical accounts of Virgil's life history, however, they vary in reliability: the work of contemporary scholars and their valuable collections; the testimony of ancient historians and writers who wrote biographies of Virgil between Augustus' death and the famous *Life of Virgil* published by Suetonius; the biography of Virgil *Vita Suetonii/Donati* by Aelius Donatus (which scholars suspect contains mainly Suetonius' original work unaltered); details and scraps from some of Servius' works; unreliable versions of biographies of Virgil written in the mediaeval period; and Virgil's own works such as the *Georgics*.

Citing the posthumous celebration of Virgil's birthday and the most verifiable of the historical sources, Horsfall informs us that Virgil was born on 15th October 70 BCE. Virgil was a native of Mantua; he spent his childhood there and was educated in Cremona (1995:5). Levi (1999:15) describes Virgil's love for his birthplace as follows: "Virgil loved Mantua passionately and mentioned it in all his books, but the mention in the *Aeneid* is the most intrusive and suggestive". Levi illustrates how Virgil's description of Mantua in the *Aeneid* provides the reader with significant socio-cultural information. He explains that by reading Virgil's description of his birthplace in the catalogue of allies in Book X (275-280) we can assume the population of Mantua was made up of three tribes. Although Horsfall describes sources that state Virgil continued his education in Milan and then Rome as 'fragile', he accepts this idea as persuasively truthful. Referring to Suetonius, Horsfall describes Virgil as "tall dark and rustic" with "variable" health (1995:6).³⁰ Virgil died in 19 BCE with the *Aeneid* as yet incomplete. It was Augustus along with Varius and Plotius Tucca³¹ who overruled Virgil's dying wish to see the unfinished *Aeneid* burnt (Horsfall, 1995:22-23).

³⁰Virgil remained unmarried but his sexual preferences appeared to be variable. Horsfall informs us that Virgil's own works gave evidence that "the poet liked boys", then goes on to refer to the *Vita Suetonii/Donati* where Virgil's history of female sexual conquest is described (1995:7). However, the inclusion of a homosexual relationship between Nisus and Euryalus in Book V (425-427) and Book IX (249-250) suggests that Virgil, as was common and acceptable practice in Roman society in the Augustan Age, was no stranger to homosexuality.

³¹Augustus, Varius and Plotius Tucca were partial heirs to Virgil's estate upon his death according to Horsfall (1995:22-23).

It is generally believed that the political and social instability witnessed in Virgil's life is reflected in his poetry (Camps, 1969:1-2, Fitzgerald, 1990:412, Toohey, 1992:123-124). Griffin's description of the political and cultural upheaval in Virgil's life forcefully presents to the reader the horror of living through this era:

It is worth looking at the period through which Virgil lived. Born in the year in which Pompey and Crassus forced their way into the consulship, he was seven when Catiline fell fighting at the head of a revolutionary army opposing the Roman legions. The gathering disorder of the 50s led to civil war; the assassination of Caesar to another, followed by proscriptions, by wars in Italy, and the eventual victory of Octavian, after a third civil war, in 31. As late as 19, the year of Virgil's death, there were serious riots in Rome. Of the fifty-one years of the poet's life, sixteen were years of civil war; the proscriptions which followed the battle of Philippi are said to have caused the deaths of at least 150 senators and 2,000 *equites*; considerable areas of Italy were devastated by fighting, by famine, and by the forcible expropriation of land. It was a terrible period, in which even the survival of Rome seemed in doubt, and that fact is of central importance for Virgil's poetry (Griffin, 2001:206).

The following discussion in this chapter will deal with the impact of spending a childhood and young adulthood spent in the midst of the horrors and suffering of war on Virgil's composition of the *Aeneid* and the characterization of Aeneas.

1.3 VIRGIL'S ATTITUDE TO WAR

The most consistently dominant motif that runs through the narrative of the *Aeneid* is that of warfare. The poet pronounces this within the first line of the first book,

I sing of warfare and a man at war (I:1).

The socio-cultural factors that may have determined Virgil's attitude to the foremost theme of the *Aeneid*, war, deserve investigation because of the opportunity it will afford the *Aeneid's* modern reader of appreciating the social and psychological consequences and lingering after-effects of warfare in ancient times,³² and the implications of this for any interpretation of the *Aeneid*.

Throughout history artists, musicians and poets have used their talents as a vehicle to express their political inclinations and comment on their social environment. Williams (1987:1-2) supports this when he agrees that Virgil's poetry reflected the political and social events of his lifetime. It is probable that Virgil, although his *Aeneid* is considered by some, especially the ancient critics, to be pro-Augustus in nature, does not shy away from

³² There has been a growing awareness in contemporary times of how traumatic childhood experiences, such as living through warfare, can psychologically taint future attitudes. To demonstrate how the social context of Virgil's childhood may have shaped his long-term attitudes towards war, I present the research results of the sociologists Schuman and Scott, who have investigated the long-term psychological effects of childhood war experiences. Schumann and Scott in their article "Generations and Collective Memories" concur with the well-known studies made in the 1950s by the sociologist Mannheim that state, "late adolescence and early adulthood are the formative years during which a distinctive personal outlook on politics emerge"(1989:359). They go on to explain that individuals carry forward into their adult lives, and are directly influenced by, the social and political experiences of this period. Studies by Schuman and Scott investigated how momentous events of the 20th century, such as the Second World War, affected the social and political ideologies of the relevant generation.

using his experiences of the civil wars or the proscriptions to reflect his innermost feelings towards war. The overshadowing militaristic tone of the *Aeneid*, especially in the last six books of the epic, is obvious and Virgil's horrifically vivid descriptions of death in battle may well have been influenced by a childhood dominated by his exposure to the horrors of civil war and proscriptions and spent witnessing the futility of death in war.³³

The manner in which the adult Virgil gave poetic expression to his personal, innermost views on warfare within a society that was aggressively militaristic by nature has been identified by Virgilian scholars as one of the most fundamental messages in the *Aeneid*, especially by those who view this poem pessimistically (Harrison, 1990:5). It is the opinion of many scholars (MacKay 1963, Williams 1990, Lyne 1990) that Virgil's feelings towards war often appear to the reader to be ambivalent.³⁴ Harris and Platzner in *Classical Mythology: Images and Insights* make the valid point that Virgil's attitude and ambivalence is understandable:

Rome in general and Virgil in particular had already witnessed the alternative, and nothing in the gloom of the Underworld could match the horrors of real-life wars ... Of course Virgil was ambivalent about war—what compassionate human being isn't? (Harris & Platzner, 2004:890).

³³ Alternatively, one could view Virgil's inclusions of violence in the *Aeneid* as being a result of conforming to epic tradition: Homer's *Iliad* contained many battle episodes that were especially violent.

³⁴ The external cultural factors that may have contributed to Virgil's ambivalence will be discussed further in chapter 2.

I believe that the ambivalence and conflict in Virgil's attitude to war can be seen in the frequent evidence of the underlying tension between the themes of war and the price paid for peace in the *Aeneid*. Book IX is described as the bloodiest of all the books. Williams (1973:276), in his introduction to his commentary on Book IX, explains that Virgil faced a moral dilemma in accepting the idea of lasting peace obtained through superior military dominance. Williams explains how Virgil's earlier works the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics* showed an obvious abhorrence of violence. However, the traditional epic format demanded a narrative centred on warfare and bloodshed. According to Williams Virgil gave expression to this traditional prerequisite of ancient epic in two ways:

sometimes by intensely felt pity for the victims (as for Euryalus and for his mother), sometimes by a deliberate and almost reckless intensification of the horror (as in the slaughter of the sleeping Rutulians, or some of the detail of Turnus' triumphs) (1973:276).

Morgan introduces another perspective to the debate on Virgil's attitude to, and inclusion of, episodes of unrestrained violence in the *Aeneid* when he maintains that Virgil was suggesting violence was "ultimately meaningful and purposeful" (1998:190) because the reward was lasting peace. Morgan acknowledges that this concept presents the modern reader with difficulty but advocates that the reader should consider the possible alternative that Virgil was perhaps implying that "the Civil Wars had a power for good" (1998:190).

The focus of this chapter now moves on to investigate the relationship between Virgil and Augustus. Two subsections (1.4.1 and 1.4.2) are presented in this discussion to demonstrate how Virgil favourably represented Augustus in the *Aeneid*.

1.4 VIRGIL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH AUGUSTUS

To begin this section, a preliminary examination of the complex relationship is offered. How Virgil's attitude towards Augustus and the Augustan regime is favourably expressed in the *Aeneid* is illustrated with two examples. The first example is Virgil's inclusion of the mythological Hercules/Cacus episode in Book VIII. This episode is explored to draw attention to the analogy Virgil suggests between Hercules and Augustus. Secondly, Virgil's endorsement and promotion of the concept of an Augustan Golden Age, the ideological nature of the Augustan Golden Age in Roman society and its social ramifications is examined.

Although dated, the perspective gleaned from Starr's article "Virgil's Acceptance of Octavian" (1955:34-46) in my opinion still provides a satisfactory and plausible interpretation of the relationship that existed between Virgil and Augustus. Starr's article gives us a convincing scenario of how Virgil and Augustus' relationship might logically have evolved and criticizes those biographers that make assumptions about how Virgil began to support Augustus' political and social ideology:

The fact, however limited, that Virgil supported Caesar does not entail, as some have assumed, the conclusion that Virgil would automatically shift to support Caesar's grandnephew Octavian (1955:41).

It is problematic to assume, as Starr points out, that Virgil, who witnessed the effects of the Augustan land reclamation policies in Mantua and Cremona and who also witnessed the ruthlessness and brutality of Augustus' proscriptions, would support this heir to Caesar prior to 40 BCE. What Starr suggests as being more believable is that Virgil came to accept Augustus after 40 BCE (1955:35-36) after the end of Augustus'

bloody rampage in the era of proscriptions. He quotes the historian Dio Cassius' explanation of why Augustus found it necessary to abandon his ruthless policies at this stage:

[Augustus] learned by actual experience that arms had no power to make the injured feel friendly toward him, and that, while all those who would not submit might perish by arms, yet it was out of the question for anyone to be compelled to love a person whom he does not wish to love (Dio Cassius in Starr, 1955:39).³⁵

After 40 BCE Augustus pursued a policy directed at the reconstruction of Italy. Augustus prioritised domestic social reforms in the decade following the proscriptions. This coupled with the defeat of Marc Antony at the Battle of Actium secured Virgil's support, according to Starr. So strong was Virgil's love of his native land, his belief in Rome's greatness and his hopes for lasting peace, that his support of Augustus was not based on anything as crass as Augustus' sponsorship of Virgil's poetry but rather the obvious fulfilment of these hopes by Augustus. "Once won, Virgil was true to Octavian–Augustus for the rest of his serene life" (Starr, 1955:46). Levi sees the period between Virgil's completion of the *Georgics* and commencement of the *Aeneid* as vitally important to his development as a poet. It was during this period that Virgil became, according to Levi, "a sturdy supporter of the establishment" (1998:124).³⁶

³⁵ Whether or not Dio Cassius was correct it is interesting to note that, coincidentally, Octavian's "last explosion of his policy of frightfulness" was concluded after the fall of Perusia in this same period (Starr, 1955:39).

³⁶ The reader must, however, be warned against confusing the meaning of terminologies when labelling Virgil an 'Augustan' poet. This label 'Augustan' refers to the time period in which the *Aeneid* was written, and does not imply that Virgil's *Aeneid* was a propaganda piece for the Augustan regime. From the earlier argument proposed by Starr it seems plausible to me that Virgil's admiration of Augustus grew out of a shared ideology and vision for Rome. This is made obvious in the *Aeneid* in "unmistakable references to the Augustus Age, such as the return of the primeval virtues, the closing of the Gates of War, and the subduing of civil unrest" (Galinsky, 1996:251)

The manner in which this approval is expressed in the *Aeneid* is the focus of the next section of this chapter. Two examples that I deem to best illustrate the subtlety with which Virgil conveyed his support of Augustus are discussed below. In my opinion, these two examples have the additional advantage of demonstrating how significant socio-cultural beliefs in Roman society are included in the *Aeneid*.

1.4.1 THE HERCULES/CACUS EPISODE

Virgil's tacit approval of Augustus as a Roman leader is exemplified in Book VIII (258-354) of the *Aeneid*, in the Hercules/Cacus episode. This episode is an excellent example of the enigmatic manner in which Virgil gave expression in the *Aeneid* to the high esteem in which he held Augustus.³⁷

Metaphoric comparisons identified within this episode support the claim that Virgil is intentionally making an analogy between Hercules and Augustus in Book VIII. Morgan (1998:177) following Gransden and Galinsky sees Hercules, Aeneas and Augustus as restorative agents who facilitate the return of order through defeat of agents of terror and disorder, that is: Cacus, the marauding monster of Evander's era; Turnus; and in Augustus' era Marc Antony, who aligned himself with Rome's eastern enemy Cleopatra and the Egyptian monstrous gods. Additionally, Virgil provides various pointers that deliberately lead the reader to identify

³⁷Contemporary scholars of the *Aeneid* commonly view this episode as an obvious example of Virgil's panegyric of Augustus (Morgan, 1998:175). Galinsky (1966) in his article "The Hercules-Cacus Episode in Aeneid VIII" suggests that Virgil's purpose for using this myth was to cryptically suggest a correlation between Hercules, Aeneas and Augustus in the ancient reader's imagination.

Hercules as the restorer of cosmic peace and Augustus as the restorer of Roman peace after the Battle of Actium.

This is exemplified when Virgil links Hercules and Augustus in Book VIII through Aeneas' arrival at the settlement of the Arcadian Evander, where the future Rome will stand, while they are sacrificing to Hercules at the original *Ara Maxima* in thanksgiving for his restoration of peace after defeating Cacus. This correlates with Augustus' restoration of peace to the Roman world after the Battle of Actium (Camps, 1969:98-99). Hardie (1986:118) agrees that this analogy points to the restoration of order by Augustus after the Battle of Actium, which was celebrated with religious rituals, celebration and thanksgiving just as Hercules' victories were. Morgan (1998:176) demonstrates the suggested analogy between Augustus and Hercules by showing how the arrival of Hercules (*VIII:269-271*) mimics the arrival in Rome of the victorious Augustus in 29 BCE after the victory at the Battle of Actium. This event, according to Morgan (1998:176), was held in 29 BCE at the actual *Ara Maxima*, when Augustus returned victorious from Actium. The fact that Augustus' celebrations intentionally followed immediately after Rome celebrated their annual festival of Hercules at the *Ara Maxima* would have further enhanced the analogy between Augustus and Hercules in the minds of the Roman populace. Virgil's suggested association of Augustus with Hercules is seen to "hint at Augustus' deification ... because he has the same spiritual qualities as Herakles" (Galinsky, 1990:284).

Augustus, however, always wary of appearing to promote himself, never publicly promoted his Herculean connections: "he [Augustus] showed no special favour to the cult of Hercules in Rome or elsewhere" (Galinsky, 1990:285). He did not need to. Augustan Age poets such as Virgil and

Horace readily alluded to this connection in their poems (Camps, 1969:99).

The theme of the restoration of order, represented by Hercules (and thus Aeneas and Augustus) triumphing over chaos (represented by Cacus, Turnus and Marc Antony) is extended throughout the Hercules/Cacus episode in the *Aeneid*. This example of the victory of order over the forces of chaos would have greatly appealed to the Romans who valued an ordered lifestyle. The interaction of opposing forces is again given expression in the text in lines *VIII:258-326*. In this excerpt, darkness is replaced by light just as Augustus metaphorically brought Rome out of the darkness of civil war into the light of peace (Morgan 1998:176).

The violence in the Hercules/Cacus episode has elicited various opinions from Virgilian scholars. I have chosen to present two quite different perspectives in an effort to raise the modern reader's awareness of the eclectic manner in which researchers select factors in Virgil's social context which were influential in his composition of this episode. While some, such as Morgan, see an analogy between the victories of Hercules and Augustus and emphasize their part in the restoration of peace, others such as Lyne (1987:31) see it from a different perspective and suggest that Virgil was not attempting to present blatant propaganda in equating Augustus with Hercules in this episode.³⁸ Lyne suggests that the motivation for Virgil's inclusion of the violence depicted in this episode is his attempt to assimilate the horrors of the recent civil wars into the *Aeneid* and thereby confront the reader with Augustus' implication in them.

³⁸ Propaganda implies a partial picture and Lyne proposes that Virgil's rendering of this incident represents the reality of the situation. (1987:31).

Morgan (1998:185) considers Lyne's alternative perspective and responds with the following statement:

[W]hat I want to suggest Vergil does with this violence is argue that it is, in a paradoxical way, constructive; in fact he seems to imply that the more unqualified the violence the more constructive it is. If we look at the Romulus and Remus myth we will get an idea of what I would suggest he is trying to do. Romulus committed fratricide, an appalling act, an act terrible enough to foreshadow civil war; yet this act was also, paradoxically, a constructive act, quite literally: the death of Remus allowed the foundation of the city of Rome. It was in fact a prerequisite of it (Morgan, 1998:185).

I suggest that Morgan's perspective not only adds a further dimension to Lyne's perspective on why Virgil included this violent episode but also argues that Virgil did not want to ignore the issue of the war but confront it and then manipulate it in the reader's mind to appear as something that had the potential for good.

1.4.2 THE RETURN OF THE GOLDEN AGE

The popular notion in Roman society that the Augustan Age signalled a return to the Golden Age of Saturn and the way in which Virgil expressed this in the *Aeneid* is the focus of this discussion. Galinsky explains that the poets of this period embraced the concept of a return to a Golden Age in their works and that Virgil went the furthest in suggesting that the Augustan Age represented the return of the Golden Age of Saturn. This is evidenced in Virgil's works the *Eclogues*, *Georgics* and the *Aeneid* (Wallace-Hadrill, 1982:19-22). It is the opinion of O'Hara (1990:128) in his book *Death and the Optimistic Prophecy in Vergil's Aeneid*, that one of the most significant examples of Virgil's belief that Augustus will restore the Golden Age is contained in Book I (347-398) in Jupiter's prophecy to

Venus. Williams (1987:36) identifies line 391 in this prophecy as “the fair vision of Augustus’ golden age” and an important expression in the *Aeneid* of Virgil’s optimistic vision of Augustan rule.³⁹ Galinsky argues that the promotion of the concept of an Augustan Golden Age by Augustan Age poets was “not chronological perspective or grammatical convention, but the poet’s moral attitude, which reflects that of the age in general” (1996:93). Wallace-Hadrill’s article, “The Golden Age and Sin in Augustan Ideology”, informs us that

The Roman fascination with the Golden Age theme derives above all from a single epoch-making poem, Virgil’s fourth *Eclogue*. In it the return of the Golden Age is prophesied (1982:20).

Galinsky draws our attention to the fact that Augustus did not actively promote the concept that his leadership implied a return to the mythical Golden Age of Saturn. He rather advocated a return to virtuous living. The concept, or label, ‘Golden Age’ was one promoted by Augustan Age poets and adopted publicly within a few generations after his reign. The analogy between the morals of the Golden Age of Saturn and Augustus’ campaign for the return to the values of the Republican era was created within the imaginations of the Romans when Augustus encouraged Romans to adopt lifestyle attributes such as *fortitudo*, *labor*, *vigilantia*, *diligentia*, *cura*, *industria* and *prudentia* (Galinsky, 1996:83). These attributes are embodied in the four cardinal virtues of Augustan ideology. Augustus did not rigidly constitutionalize the adoption of this ‘way of life’ but rather

³⁹A debate that gained popularity in the middle of the 20th century concerned the presence or absence of a ‘messianic’ tone in the *Aeneid*. Ryberg (1958:119) in her article “Vergil’s Golden Age” considers whether or not this ‘messianic’ tone is in fact related to the Christian faith. However, she firmly places it in the Roman context when she concludes that “it was Messianic within Roman horizons, a voice not only of hope but of prophecy”. She strengthens her conclusion with the statement: “It was the first poetic expression of the new imperial Rome, broadened and strengthened, but not totally changed, in the culminating prophecy of Rome’s destiny in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*”.

attempted to implement virtuous behaviour through the example set by the top strata of society.

Virgil included the prophecy of a returning Golden Age in the *Eclogues* and in the *Georgics*. By the time that he wrote the *Aeneid*, Virgil had become more explicit and had no hesitation in proclaiming to readers of the *Aeneid* that Augustus was the saviour of the Roman people who would return them to the Golden Age (Wallace-Hadrill, 1982:22). This is illustrated in Book VI when Anchises tells his son Aeneas

...*this is the man, this one,*
Of whom so often you have heard the promise,
Caesar Augustus, son of the deified,
Who shall bring once again an Age of Gold
To Latium, to the land where Saturn reigned (VI:1062-1066).

Wallace-Hadrill (1982:19) informs us that while Augustus publicly gave the impression of not actively promoting the suggestion of an Augustan Golden Age, he privately exploited the Romans' idealistic wish for a return to the Golden Age so that it functioned as a tool of social control. In Wallace-Hadrill's opinion most world religious and political ideological doctrines take advantage of the promise that following the 'fall' and the 'sin' of the present age they will deliver their followers into a 'Golden Age'⁴⁰. He then shows how in order to restore the Golden Age Augustus had to secure a return from the 'fall' and 'sin' (1982:25). Augustus achieved this through ensuring the absence of war, which he secured with the victory at Actium and the societal promotion of a reduction in *scelus* or sin. Poets such as Horace, in his third book of *Odes*, and historians such as

⁴⁰ Wallace-Hadrill draws attention to the analogy between the Christian ideological exploitation of the Genesis story and the Christian teachings of Paul, and Augustus' promise of a Return to the Golden Age by investigating Seneca's essay *On Clemency* in this article.

Livy, began to link the *scelus* of civil war with the *scelus* of immorality. This paved the way for Augustus to introduce his extensive legislation against immorality, an expression of *scelus*, in 18 BCE.⁴¹ Wallace-Hadrill describes how this led to a change in the attitudes and behaviour of the majority of Romans. A certain measure of loss in personal freedom for Romans ensued as part of the effort to rid the nation of *scelus*, and there were voices of dissension amongst Virgil's contemporaries, for instance the poet Ovid (Wallace-Hadrill, 1982:27-29).

Romans learnt that an Augustan Golden Age was subject to their "voluntary submission to the great mediator Augustus" (Wallace-Hadrill, 1982:29) and his domination. Wallace-Hadrill explains that those who spoke out against Augustus gave up the opportunity to participate in and reap the benefits of the Augustan Golden Age. Consequently, the concept of living in this utopia became linked to the notion of Augustan domination, subjugation and Augustan clemency. Dissenters, such as the poet Ovid and Augustus' own daughter Julia, who rose against Augustus and flouted his immorality laws, were exiled. Ovid, however, later threw himself on the mercy of the Emperor Augustus and was granted clemency (Wallace-Hadrill, 1982:29).

1.5 CONCLUSION

The enormity of the impact that Augustan rule had on the history of the Western world cannot be underestimated. After the demise of Republican Rome, bloody civil wars and the death of Julius Caesar in 44 BCE,

⁴¹ Galinsky maintains that the link between Augustus' immorality legislation and the promotion of the idea that the Augustan Age pointed towards a return to the Golden Age is made explicit in the *Aeneid* in Book VI (1062-1072). He says, "Peace prevailed under Saturn, but it was a peace born of *labor*. The connection with Augustus is evident. The one passage in the *Aeneid* that casts him explicitly as Saturn's successor does so in the context of both Augustus' legislation on morals and marriage and the ever expanding Roman *imperium*" (1996:96).

Octavian (63 BCE- 14 CE) rose to power to eventually dominate the ancient world. Stockton underlines the magnitude of this remarkable ascent to domination of the ancient world:

By 30 BCE, still little over thirty years old, Octavian [renamed Augustus in 27 BCE] had eliminated the last and most formidable of his rivals and, like his adoptive father before him, bestrode that world 'like a Colossus' (Stockton, 2001:121).

It was in this era of one of the most dynamic transformations in the socio-cultural and socio-political direction of the Western world that Virgil created his masterpiece, the *Aeneid*. This chapter has investigated what I judge to be the aspects of the Augustan Age culture and Virgil's social context that hold relevance for the further chapters of this thesis. Chapter 2 provides an in-depth discussion of the socio-cultural factors in Virgil's social context that influenced his portrayal of Aeneas' heroic nature.

CHAPTER TWO

SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS THAT INFLUENCED VIRGIL'S PORTRAYAL OF AENEAS' HEROISM

2 INTRODUCTION

The 21st century reader of the *Aeneid* cannot presuppose a comprehensive understanding of Virgil's epic without judiciously taking into consideration the impact that the poet's social context had on his portrayal of the multiple facets of Aeneas' personality. In an endeavour to demonstrate the fundamental importance of this consideration this chapter will focus on what I believe to be one of the most socially relevant and culturally complex concepts presented in the *Aeneid*: Virgil's representation of Aeneas' heroism.

Due to continual evolution of the Western world's cultures and societies our attitudes towards, and our comprehension of, ancient cultural concepts⁴² have become increasingly limited to academic specialists. Consequently when one considers such historically distant notions as what constituted the Augustan Age Roman's concept of heroism as compared to our 21st century perception of it, there are few recognisable areas of commonality, particularly when motivation is taken into account.⁴³

⁴²I believe the gap in our comprehension of ancient cultural concepts originates from fundamental differences between the determinants of ancient and modern worldviews. The modern Westerner's worldview is orientated towards individualistic survival unlike the ancients' worldview that was dominated, out of necessity, by the primary objective of community survival.

⁴³ See section 1.1.5 for a discussion of the characteristics and motivations of modern heroism.

The obstacles that stand in the way of our fully comprehending the influence that Augustan Age Roman culture had upon concepts such as heroism in Virgil's world are numerous.⁴⁴ For example Kennedy (1997:26) in his contribution “ ‘Augustan’ and ‘Anti-Augustan’: Reflections on Terms of Reference” in *Roman Poetry and Propaganda in the Age of Augustus* highlights just one fundamental obstacle that the reader of ancient epics is confronted with when considering such things as Aeneas' heroic characterization: the disparities that become apparent in the complex cultural interpretations of language and the subtle changes that have occurred in the subtext of words over the centuries. He warns that interpreting classical texts of the Augustan Age and the cultural concepts presented in them through contemporary linguistic perspectives that are determined by our modern cultural framework is highly inappropriate. He prudently warns that “words cannot be taken for granted or as something given, but themselves have a history and are involved in history”. For instance he explains, “the Romans had no term which represented the range of meanings that have become associated with the English word ‘politics’ ” (1997:26).⁴⁵ Kennedy's viewpoint demonstrates for the reader the dangers of not interpreting Virgil's epic within the appropriate cultural context.

This chapter explores the impact of Augustan Age socio-cultural factors examined in chapter 1, on Virgil's depiction of Aeneas' heroic nature. To demonstrate how Virgil's social context may have influenced his characterization of Aeneas this chapter will not follow the progression of Aeneas' heroic development throughout the text of the poem but rather

⁴⁴ See chapter 1 section 1.1.5 for a fuller discussion of the characteristics of ancient heroism

⁴⁵In the contemporary Western world politicians and leaders are an example of the habit of indiscriminately granting heroic status to those with ability and distinction. “Starved for ‘real heroes’, we latch onto the extraordinary act and elevate the agent to the status of hero” (Hook & Reno, 2000:12).

highlight specific aspects of Virgil's depiction of Aeneas that may have been influenced by his social context.

The notion that the reader may view Aeneas' heroism as imperfect has remained a divisive topic of study in Virgilian research. Because of the importance that this subject area is given in scholarship this chapter initially gives an overview of the salient opinions of specific present-day Virgilian scholars on this issue (2.1). The focus of this section then moves to examine selected socio-cultural factors in Virgil's environment that may have contributed to his depiction of Aeneas' heroic nature in this manner. I consider that Virgil's most illuminating and descriptive portrayal of Aeneas' imperfect heroic nature is afforded to us by investigating the socio-cultural connotations of the derogatory references to Aeneas made by his enemies. It is obvious that Aeneas' enemies would have had negative perceptions of him but the focus here is on the factors in Virgil's social context that determined how he portrayed these references. The Augustan Age context of these derogatory references is explored to illustrate and conceptualize their unique cultural connotations and judge their significance within the appropriate timeframe.

Aeneas is often criticised by Virgilian scholars for his indecisive nature and the manner in which he defers to his father's opinion in the early books of the *Aeneid*. The discussion of Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas' imperfect heroism will also examine the socio-cultural context of these criticisms and assess their validity within that context. In addition, because of the socio-cultural and socio-political significance and the aftermath of the Punic Wars, and the tensions between the Western and Eastern worlds in Augustan Age society, Aeneas' behaviour in, and apparently unheroic

departure from, the Eastern city of Carthage deserves attention in this section.⁴⁶

While some Virgilian scholars see Aeneas' behaviour in the *Aeneid* as outright unheroic,⁴⁷ the multiple facets of his character have led many to conclude that Virgil's portrayal of his heroism is ambiguous rather than indicative of imperfection. Chapter 1 describes the social upheaval present in Virgil's lifetime. The discussion in section 2.2 explores the possible ramifications of this tumultuous historical period in Virgil's life and attitudes, and illustrates how this may have contributed to ambiguity in the *Aeneid*. Tarrant's article "Poetry and Power: Virgil's poetry in contemporary context" (1997b:169-188) describes the atmosphere of hopeful uncertainty that permeated the socio-cultural environment of the decade in which Virgil composed the *Aeneid*. This further supports my conviction that to fully appreciate the poem one must take cognisance of the socio-cultural influences within Augustan Age society. Tarrant states that "just as the grounds for hope within the poem are historically contingent, so too is the perspective needed to read the poem optimistically" (1997b:184-185). Tarrant explains that the reader's historical circumstances have always influenced interpretation of the *Aeneid* and this has led to judgements being made on Virgil's ambivalent characterization of Aeneas that are determined more by the reader's socio-cultural frame of reference than that of Virgil.

The issue of Virgil's inclusion of Homeric heroic characteristics in his portrayal of Aeneas' heroic character, briefly touched on in chapter 1, is pertinent to this chapter. Therefore the focus of the section 2.3 is on the

⁴⁶ This discussion is also pertinent to chapter 3.

⁴⁷ Putnam in his book *The Poetry of the Aeneid* (1965) is consistently critical of Aeneas' imperfect heroism.

Augustan Age audiences' interpretation of these Homeric characteristics in the founder of their Roman Empire, Aeneas.

Due to the fundamental role that the four cardinal virtues played across all facets of Augustan Age society, a comprehensive background of their function in Roman society was given in chapter 1. The next section of this chapter (2.4) focuses on the manner in which Virgil portrays Aeneas' heroic Roman character as an embodiment of these culturally important virtues. This discussion centres largely on the nature of Aeneas' *pietas*, as I judge this to be the principal feature in his heroic portrayal. Finally, in conclusion this chapter (2.5) examines the question of why Aeneas was indeed recognised as an ideal Roman hero.

2.1 VIRGIL'S PORTRAYAL OF AENEAS' IMPERFECT HEROISM

Criticism of Virgil's rendering of Aeneas as an imperfect epic character began in antiquity and at the beginning of the 19th century Virgil's artistic repute had sunk to an all time low as scholars, especially in German academic circles, censured his portrayal of Aeneas. (See Wlosok in Heinze, 1993:X.) Virgil's ambiguous ending to the poem may have contributed to this, but external social factors also influenced judgements. By the 20th century historical events such as the First World War saw the demise of many imperial models of government worldwide, as well as widespread political and cultural disruption. In this atmosphere of political and social turmoil scholars revisited ancient models of imperialistic regimes. Virgil's *Aeneid*, and the relevance of its theme of population relocation, once again became a popular subject of academic interest (Cox, 1997:327).

Cox (1997:327-329) illustrates how seminal works such as Haecker's *Virgil, Father of the West* in 1933 and Broch's *The Death of Virgil* in 1937 laid the foundation for and gave stimulus to the wide variety of sophisticated responses to Virgil's works that divided 20th century scholarship into pessimistic or optimistic reading and interpretation of the *Aeneid*. Galinsky points out that the contemporary outlook has changed significantly from the 1930s and attributes this change in attitude to the fact that "We have witnessed that 'ideology' and 'propaganda' are inadequate foundations for lasting political systems" (1996:5). Cox and Galinsky's opinions highlight the influence that prevailing socio-cultural and socio-political circumstances have on our interpretation of the *Aeneid*, as does Michels when she says that "each generation reads it [the *Aeneid*] with a fresh point of view determined by its own experience" (1997:400).

It is the opinion of Morgan (1998:180) that the dispute surrounding Aeneas' heroism is divided along the lines of whether one views the *Aeneid*, and Virgil's characterization of Aeneas, optimistically or pessimistically. He, however, states that contemporary research is moving towards ignoring this division and finding new "more interesting approaches" to interpreting Virgil's intent (1998:180).

Stahl in his article, "Aeneas—An 'Unheroic' Hero?" (1981:157-175), gives a comprehensive background of the influential opinions that have been expressed about Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas' heroic nature. His article takes into account the opinions of respected researchers such as Williams and Poe. While some, according to Williams (1987:78), steadfastly saw no heroic development in Aeneas,⁴⁸ others like Poe in his article "Success and

⁴⁸ Williams illustrates this with the famous quote by Charles James Fox that in his opinion Aeneas was "always either insipid or odious" (1987:78).

Failure in the Mission of Aeneas”, conceded: “Whether or not it can be said that Aeneas’ ‘character’ develops within the course of the epic, at least his attitude develops”(1965:321-322). Fuhrer’s article, “Aeneas: A Study in Character Development” (1989:63-72) also gives a comprehensive introduction to the various arguments and opinions that have influenced and shaped contemporary perspectives on this issue. Fuhrer (1989:63) illustrates how Heinze, in his seminal work (translated by Harvey H, Harvey D & Robertson F) *Virgil’s Epic Technique* 3rd ed., argues that Aeneas reaches full heroic potential at the end of Book V after he obeys the advice of his father’s ghost (*V:973-976*) According to Fuher (1989:63) Howe suggests the more popular notion that Aeneas is indeed a different and more heroic character after he visited the Underworld in Book VI. Aeneas’ new-found heroic attitude was thought by Seneca to embody the very essence of Stoic wisdom in the face of fate, according to Heinze who concurs with this ancient perspective (1993:225). Wlosok, (1993:XI) in the preface to the 3rd ed., 1993 English translation of Heinze’s book, explains that this opinion was one of the discriminating factors that stood in the way of wholehearted acceptance of this work in 1903. He describes how Heinze’s controversial viewpoint, that “Aeneas’ character underwent a development in the course of the work ... towards perfection and towards the Roman Stoic ideal” (1993:XI) eventually gained acceptance in due course through his perseverance and adherence to his viewpoint:

He [Heinze] firmly maintained this view even in the third edition of his book, in which he adduced further evidence to support it. Amongst its most influential adherents were C.M. Bowra and K. Büchner, and even today it has still not been totally refuted (Wlosok, 1993:XI).

It is my opinion that in the same way in which Virgil’s social context affected his composition of the *Aeneid* and his portrayal of Aeneas’

heroism, the 21st century reader's social context affects the individual's interpretation of Aeneas' heroic characterization. The highly complex social context of the present era, where a multidisciplinary approach to problem solving dominates, has resulted in classicists adopting a multidimensional interpretation of Virgil's heroic characterization of Aeneas. Research such as that of Ziolkowski's 1993 work, *Virgil and the Moderns*, epitomises this multifaceted approach to investigating the *Aeneid*. The diverse ways in which the poem is being interpreted is illustrated, for example, by Pöschl's view that the *Aeneid* is Western civilization's moral and cultural consciousness. He is of the opinion that Aeneas "prefigures the Christian hero" (1962:53). Alternatively, Oliensis argues that Aeneas appears largely un-heroic and has a "manly" character with "effeminate" undertones, which he illustrates by drawing a comparison between Aeneas in the *Aeneid* and his cousin Paris in the *Iliad* (1997:296).⁴⁹

While staunch critics of Virgil's characterization⁵⁰ detect episodes of remarkably unheroic behaviour in Aeneas, my approach to this controversial topic is to treat Aeneas' heroic nature as a character trait that develops and matures, albeit rather sporadically, throughout the progression of the poem. I hold this opinion because I view Virgil's depiction of Aeneas' heroic maturation not as linear and predictable a progression as that of the earlier Homeric-type epic heroes.⁵¹ If the modern reader examines and compares the earlier books of the *Aeneid* with the later books they will detect subtle indicators of Aeneas' growth as a heroic figure. However, on occasion, Aeneas does revert to episodes of behaviour that do not befit a Roman heroic figure of the Augustan Age.

⁴⁹ See section 1.1.4

⁵⁰ This perspective on Virgil's characterization of Aeneas is demonstrated throughout Putnam's book, *The Poetry of the Aeneid* (1965).

⁵¹ See section 1.1.5 and section 2.3 for a fuller discussion on the characteristics of Homeric heroes.

This inconsistency is most strongly demonstrated by his behaviour at the end of the *Aeneid* when he kills Turnus in a Homeric-type fit of rage.⁵²

I believe that if one considers Aeneas' defeatist attitude in Book I of the *Aeneid*

Every sign

Portended a quick death for mariners.

Aeneas on the instant felt his knees

Go numb and slack, and stretched both hands to heaven,

Groaning out:

“Triple lucky, all you men

To whom death came before your fathers' eyes

Below the wall at Troy! (I:129-136)

and compares it with adjectives Virgil uses to characterize Aeneas as the narrative of the *Aeneid* continues⁵³ one can discern that Virgil's intent was to convince the reader that Aeneas was indeed growing in heroic stature especially in the last six books of the poem.

In addition to this, if one again compares the earlier books of the *Aeneid* with the later books one can distinguish that Aeneas is progressing towards fulfilling another requirement of ancient heroism, i.e., the physical prowess, beauty and superb physical form typical of heroes of the ancient world (Hainsworth, 1993:44-50 and Toohey, 1992:9-10). In Book I (801-806) Venus is compelled to beautify him before he meets Dido. However, after Book VI the reader starts to detect obvious indications that Aeneas'

⁵² The Romans would probably describe this rage as *furor*. This term encompasses many more complex emotions than the modern term 'rage' which equates with anger. I suggest the term *furor* can be used also to describe Dido's highly emotional state at the end of Book IV.

⁵³ For example in Book VII Juno even refers to Aeneas as "Venus' distinguished son" (VII:762), in Book VIII Vulcan, the maker of Aeneas' shield, states that "Armour is to be forged for a brave soldier" (VIII:591-592) and in Book XII (150) Aeneas is described as "fierce".

physicality and strength are becoming identifiable as characteristically heroic by others. In Book VIII he is described as having a “*mighty figure*” (VIII:487) and in Book XI Aeneas in battle is described as a “*surging mass*” in line 385.

Furthermore, in the last books of the epic various incidents convince the reader that in fact Aeneas does indeed possess heroic tendencies. For example in situations where in the earlier books he may well have waited for divine instruction, his father’s guidance, or been indecisive, in Book XII Aeneas shows bravery and heroism as he anticipates shouldering the responsibility if the truce is broken. This is illustrated by his words,

*“Where bound? Are you a mob?
Why this outbreak of brawling all at once?
Cool your hot heads. A pact has been agreed to,
Terms have been laid down. I am the one
To fight them. Let me do so. Never fear:
With this right hand I’ll carry out the treaty.
Turnus is mine, our sacrifice obliged it.”* (XII:430-436)

These indicators are arguably included by Virgil to persuade the reader that Aeneas is augmenting all dimensions of his heroic disposition.

However, the manifest inclusion of character flaws in Virgil’s portrayal of Aeneas remains pertinent to this thesis. The apparent flaws deserve closer examination as they have the potential to perplex the reader if the influencing social context of the poet is not taken into consideration. Therefore in an effort to demonstrate to the reader the fundamental importance of considering the implications of Virgil’s cultural context when evaluating his characterization of Aeneas’ heroism, the focus of this

discussion moves on to examining the possible rationale behind his depiction of Aeneas as a relatively weak character in some instances.

My investigation of secondary sources—Putnam (1965), Pöschl (1966), Lyne (1987) and Williams (1987), amongst others—reveals that the fundamental question asked here is whether Virgil's opinion of mankind was so blighted after a childhood spent in war that episodes of unheroic behaviour in Aeneas are the metaphorical personification and expression of his own bitter experience of the futility of war. Alternatively Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas as un-heroic may be read as a subtle political anti-Augustan statement that reflected the fears of a society conditioned to living in tentative anticipation of impending catastrophe under megalomaniacal leadership.⁵⁴

As discussed earlier, important Augustan Age socio-cultural factors that may have influenced the portrayal of Aeneas' imperfect heroism are brought to light for the modern reader when one reflects on Virgil's representation of how Aeneas' enemies saw him. The issue of Aeneas' departure from his native land of Troy to seek a new homeland in Italy becomes one focus of their criticism. Societies of the ancient world that were materially and spiritually bound to their homeland and culturally conditioned to sustain and maintain it may have initially interpreted Aeneas' act as cowardly desertion. Aeneas' enemies refer to him as a refugee (*VII:495*), a rover (*VII:500*), a colonist (*VII:584*) and a deserter from Asia (*XII:20-21*) (Michels, 1997:404). This criticism, however, has to be evaluated by the reader in light of the revelation as early as Book I in the prophecy of Jupiter (*347-398*), that Aeneas is a man who is predetermined

⁵⁴ Virgil's generation was probably particularly sensitive to the threat of autocratic dictatorships following the dissolution of the Republic under Julius Caesar.

to fulfil his destiny, and fated to leave the homeland of the Trojans to establish the Roman colony (Williams, 1972:154). The notion that a man must subordinate his own life's plan to that preordained by the gods, ties in closely with Augustan Age ideology that the ideal Roman prioritised his *pietas* to the gods and the state above his own desires.⁵⁵ This fundamental premise in the *Aeneid* that Aeneas is a man following his god-given destiny is repeatedly mentioned in the text as if to convince the reader that forces beyond his control are directing Aeneas:

He came to Italy by destiny, (I:3)

*We hold our course for Latium, where the Fates
Hold out a settlement and rest for us. (I:280-281)*

I followed the given fates. (I:527)

*Be happy, friends; your fortune is achieved,
While one fate beckons us and then another. (III:655-656)*

The gods' commands drove me to do their will, (VI:621)

Modern readers may conclude that Virgil's characterization of Aeneas as an epic hero, who dutifully obeyed his mission, reinforced for the Augustan Age audience of the *Aeneid* one of the cardinal obligations of their society that became a cornerstone of the unification of this community and the exceptional success of this era: that a Roman's first loyalty was to the gods' will and the well-being and advancement of the state.

⁵⁵ See references to the importance to Roman society of this manifestation of *pietas* in sections 1.1.6 and 2.4.

The comparisons Aeneas' enemies make between him and his cousin, Paris, become significant to this discussion on his imperfect heroism for two reasons: they provide the modern reader with more in-depth, subtle but informative insights into the socio-political and socio-cultural attitudes prevalent in Augustan Age Roman society that are discussed in chapter 1;⁵⁶ and taking into consideration the tensions in this era between the West and the East, Virgil's inclusion of these comparisons appear to me to be the most derogatory of references against Aeneas included in the portrayal of his imperfect heroic nature in the entire text of the *Aeneid*.

Dido's former rejected lover King Iarbas says about Aeneas

*... Sir Paris with his men, half-men,
His chin and perfumed hair tied up
In Maeonian bonnet, takes possession. (IV:291-293).*

and Juno contemptuously calls Aeneas

...a Paris once again, (VII:440)

Concluding this discussion of the socio-cultural factors that may have influenced Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas through his enemies' eyes it is pertinent because of the ubiquitous atmosphere of ambiguity present in this society, to briefly delineate some alternative perspectives that may perhaps have played a role in determining the poet's representations. It may be surmised that a personal anti-Augustan attitude motivated Virgil to give expression to how negatively Aeneas was viewed by his enemies.

⁵⁶ See section 1.1.4 for a fuller discussion on the socio-political and socio-cultural tensions between the West and the East in Augustan Age Roman society.

(Aeneas, it is supposed in some academic circles,⁵⁷ has analogous links to Augustus); it may also be possible that by highlighting Aeneas' alleged Eastern mannerisms, as seen in the quotes above, Virgil was subtly reminding the Augustan Age audience of the *Aeneid* that Aeneas, their founding father, was in fact from the East.⁵⁸

Aeneas' indecisive nature in the early books of the *Aeneid* becomes a noticeable flaw in his heroic nature. Otis (1964:254), Williams (1987:101) and Horsfall (1995:121) all draw our attention to the impression Virgil gives that Anchises is making all Aeneas' decisions in the early books of the poem. This is made apparent in the lines:

*When faintness of dread left me,
I brought before the leaders of the people,
My father first, the portents of the gods
And asked their judgement. (III:82-85).*

Horsfall (1995:121) explains, however, that Aeneas' deference to his father's opinion would have been appropriate behaviour for a Roman son who culturally conforms to the norms of an Augustan Age society *familia*.⁵⁹ Horsfall's observation highlights the necessity of viewing the *Aeneid* from the cultural perspective of the Augustan Age Roman and not

⁵⁷ See Cairns (1989:4) footnote 7 for a list of researchers' opinions regarding this.

⁵⁸ The Romans' attitude towards the East may have been shaped in part by the philosophical teachings of the Stoic school of philosophy, which was popular in Rome during this period. As discussed in chapter 1, section 1.1.2. Stoicism was one of the philosophical schools that influenced Virgil's outlook. The Stoic doctrines abandoned hedonistic pursuits and prioritised living a virtuous existence centred on the life-long effort to attain wisdom (Meredith, 2001: 298-300). Paris represented an anti-Stoic attitude because of his sybaritic lifestyle and Aeneas can be seen being tempted by this way of life as he idles his time away in Carthage with Dido, "Unmindful of the realm, prisoners of lust." (IV:265).

⁵⁹ The cultural concept *paterfamilias* is discussed in section 1.1.3

assuming that Virgil portrays Aeneas' heroic nature as somewhat lacking in this instance. Furthermore, he is of the opinion that the reader can understand this behaviour by Aeneas as an expression of the ongoing development of his *pietas* in the epic:

[H]e very properly defers to his father's *auctoritas*, on several occasions. This is *pietas* rather than insecurity ... Aeneas is hardly to be dismissed as a mere future leader, still hidden by the long shadow his father casts (Horsfall, 1995:121).

I would like to lend another perspective to Horsfall's opinion above: it must be remembered that Anchises was an exceptional man. He was chosen by the goddess Venus to father her son and was related to the Trojan royal house of Priam. In Roman society where the gods were devoutly worshiped and society's leaders were revered, it would have been appropriate for Aeneas, or for that matter any Trojan, to be deferential to Anchises' opinion.

I believe another valuable illustration that is worthy of investigation in Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas as an imperfect hero is the fact that Dido's alluring charms in Book IV come very close to corrupting Aeneas' resolution to find a home for the Trojan people. Aeneas' apparent lack of concern about resuming this quest while he helps build and improve Carthage in Dido's company becomes the main criticism levelled at him by Mercury in Book IV:

*"Is it for you
To lay the stones for Carthage's high walls,
Tame husband that you are, and build their city?
Oblivious of your own world, your own kingdom! (IV:361-364)*

Mercury's reprimand prompts Aeneas into action and he prepares to leave Carthage (382-385). The subject of Aeneas' departure from Carthage and his rejection of Dido remains a popular focus of discussion amongst Virgilian scholars. Monti (1981:37-69) in particular gives an illuminating and valuable account of this episode. The significance of investigating the issue at this point is to explore what socio-cultural influences of Augustan Age Rome must be taken into consideration to avoid misinterpreting Aeneas' rather abrupt leaving of Dido. Aeneas' reasons for leaving Dido and Carthage, rather than his relationship with Dido,⁶⁰ are the focus of discussion.

Monti (1981:78) draws our attention to the Romans' belief that Aeneas' departure from Carthage, and consequently Dido's curse, resulted in the Punic wars. He elucidates the manner in which Aeneas' departure and Dido's curse would have been interpreted by the Augustan Age audience of the *Aeneid* thus:

In the speech of the curse Dido makes Aeneas' desertion, which at that point she sees primarily as a political betrayal, into the motive for her curse of him and his progeny ... The enmity of Carthage is presented as the legacy of Aeneas to his people. Although Rome is in the end victorious, it is the memory of the horrors of the Hannibalic War which is meant to be evoked by the frighteningly powerful close of Dido's speech ... However unwittingly—for he cannot foresee the consequences of his own actions—Aeneas becomes a source of disaster for his own descendants (Monti, 1981:78).

Galinsky (1996:125) maintains that Virgil uses Aeneas' leave-taking of Dido as a tool that not only helps conceptualise Aeneas as Roman as he

⁶⁰ This is discussed in section 3.3.1 of this thesis.

abandons Dido and her attempt to transform him into an Eastern prince, but as part of the historical process of eventual amalgamation between the Trojans and the Latins. My own interpretation of this episode leads me to support Galinsky's perspective. I suggest that the reader can assume that Aeneas' leave-taking of Dido in Book IV facilitates the total adoption of his Roman identity and thus enhances the Augustan Age audience's recognition of Aeneas as their Roman ancestor. Furthermore, Aeneas' visit to the Underworld in Book VI and Anchises' prophecy (*VI:1015-1222*) affirm this. Indications in the text that Aeneas has assumed a new identity are given in Book VII when he exclaims,

*"A blessing on this land
The fates have held in store for me, a blessing
On our true gods of Troy! Here is our home,
Here is our fatherland. (VII:158-161)*

In addition to the above I would suggest that the reader may interpret Aeneas' obedience to Mercury's commands to leave Carthage as being partly motivated by a bout of cowardly fear of the wrath of the gods amongst other factors.⁶¹ If the following lines are examined closely the reader may identify this:

*Amazed, and shocked to the bottom of his soul
By what his eyes had seen, Aeneas felt
His hackles rise, his voice choke in his throat. (IV:379-381)*

A feature of Virgil's epic that has become apparent to me is the rather formal relationship that Aeneas has with the gods. As discussed in chapter 1, Aeneas does not address the gods directly, with the exception of his

⁶¹ Alternative interpretations of this passage are given in section 1.1.1

mother Venus. His attitude towards the other gods is more tentative and cautious.

It is possible that the abandonment of Dido in order to establish the foundations of Rome would have been very acceptable to Augustan Age Romans who, particularly in the decisive decade between 20 BCE and 10 BCE,⁶² emphatically believed in and were witness to, the greatness of Rome in the Augustan Age. According to Hook and Reno contemporary judgements of Aeneas' abrupt withdrawal from Carthage are based on present-day ideals of personal integrity:

If Vergil attributes a fault to Dido, modern readers often redirect the fault, much magnified, towards Aeneas, not for his sexual promiscuity, not for failing to understand the fragility of Dido, not for jeopardizing his future (the gods fault him on this last score), but for failing to be 'true to himself' (Hook & Reno, 2000:72).

The modern Westernised socio-cultural trend of being preoccupied with the concept of being 'true to oneself' can form a stumbling block to deeper understanding of the *Aeneid* as it interprets the poem through the perspective of a contemporary cultural framework.

As mentioned in the introduction, some critics see Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas' heroic nature as ambiguous. The next discussion in this chapter will focus on factors in Virgil's social context which may have influenced this.

⁶² It was in this decade according to Galinsky (1996:101) that Augustus secured and more importantly sustained convincing "stability" and "internal regeneration" in Rome.

2.2 AMBIGUITY IN THE HEROIC PORTRAYAL OF AENEAS

On close examination of the text of the *Aeneid* I agree with the opinions of Virgilian scholars, Pöschl (1966:50) and Griffin (2001:223) amongst others, that Virgil presents two clearly discernable viewpoints.⁶³ This can be seen as the main contributory factor to the reader detecting the underlying tone of ambiguity in the heroic portrayal of Aeneas. The assumption that Virgil is being ambiguous in the *Aeneid* is founded on the following perspectives, or voices, that are expressed in the text: the public voice of Virgil that celebrates the greatness of Rome, the Augustan Age and occasionally Augustus, which can be considered to be panegyric in tone; and the other, private voice of Virgil that mourns the loss of life in war and questions whether the cost in human lives and suffering is too high a price to pay for the eventual guarantee of peace. This is illustrated in Book VIII when Virgil sadly refers to Aeneas as “... *heartsick at the woe of war,*” (VIII:38).

Although it is apparent that war was an ever-present threat and often a semi-permanent circumstance of life within many societies of the ancient world, I believe much of Virgil’s attitude towards war can be attributed to the especially traumatic circumstances of his childhood, as described in

⁶³Toohey points out the presence of what he considers to be a third voice in the *Aeneid* that is Virgil’s ironic voice. He calls this a “ludic, ironic, Alexandrian voice which fits ill with the gravity imposed upon the epic by proponents of the public and private” (1992:139). Toohey states that Virgil’s third voice, “which often threatens to disrupt the seriousness of the political and the private voices” (1992:141), is exemplified by the Hercules/Cacus episode in Book VIII and the transformation of the ships into nymphs in Book IX.

chapter 1.⁶⁴ In my estimation the following lines of the *Aeneid* are the most illustrative of Virgil's private voice, which grieves at the untimely loss of young life through war. Virgil's intent here was surely to emphasize the grim realities of war for the *Aeneid's* readers by highlighting Laridës' and Thymer's domestic and familial context:

*And you twin brothers, too,
Laridës, Thymer, fell on the Rutulian field,
Identical sons of Daucus, so alike
Their parents, happily bemused, could never
Tell the two apart. Now Pallas made
A grim distinction: now Evander's blade
Cut Thymer's head off, while you, Laridës,
Dying fingers of your right hand, severed,
Fluttered as they groped for the sword hilt. (X:536-544)*

It is clear that I do not agree that the *Aeneid* is wholly a panegyric for Augustus. It is rather a reflection of the guarded hopefulness that Virgil and Roman society felt towards Augustus.⁶⁵ Virgil interrupts the text of the *Aeneid* with apostrophe to communicate both his tentative hope as well as his feelings of hopelessness experienced during this turbulent period. D'Alessandro Behr advises us in her article "Narrator's Voice: Apostrophe in Virgil's *Aeneid*" that the interruption of Virgil's voice to the text of the *Aeneid* is employed "to reflect on what seems most important

⁶⁴Pöschl believes that Virgil expresses his own personal feelings about the futility of war through his characterization of Aeneas: "Aeneas is the personification of the feeling of tragedy which is basic to the poem ... the innermost core of Vergil's 'psychography' may be drawn from Aeneas' personality. The sensitivity to tragedy which characterizes the hero is the same sensitivity with which the poet himself looks at the world and life" (1966:50).

⁶⁵ This lack of faith in the long term prospects of extended peace in the Roman world was not unique to Virgil when he composed the *Aeneid* in 29-19 BCE. According to Tarrant it "could even be claimed as one of the distinguishing features of that decade" (1997b:183).

to him” (2005:204). I believe the use of this device by Virgil also contributes to the reader’s perception of Aeneas’ ambiguous heroism.⁶⁶

Alternatively Virgil’s public voice portrays incidents of warfare and depicts the ferociousness of Aeneas’ fighting with such gruesome explicitness that it belies the tender sensitivity of earlier passages. This explicit savagery is clearly demonstrated in Book X (755-788). For the modern reader to accept this type of ambiguity presented in Virgil’s heroic portrayal of Aeneas it is necessary to take cognisance of the social context within which Virgil composed the *Aeneid*. As described in chapter 1, at this time Roman society was creative, revolutionary and dynamic, and Virgil’s life took place during rapid and dramatic evolution in socio-political and socio-cultural circumstances.

When the reader appreciates the atmosphere of uncertainty that pervaded Augustan Age society the question of why Virgil included ambiguity in the *Aeneid* becomes understandable. How the uncertainty of Roman society affected Virgil’s work is demonstrated by the poet’s hesitant acceptance of Augustus’ leadership.⁶⁷ Even Toohey, who considers Virgil’s political attitudes to be pro-Augustan, qualifies his opinion by saying this about Virgil’s political inclinations: “the context within which they were formed was far too ambivalent to allow them unambiguous expression” (1992:12).

⁶⁶ Toohey’s quote (p 27) shows that many attributes of ancient heroism were linked to the notion of warfare and manifested in fighting. Virgil’s portrayal of Aeneas’ heroism may appear ambiguous when he, on occasion, depicts his hero as a reluctant fighter. The most expressive illustration of this is given in Book XI (148-154). This suggestion of Aeneas’ unwillingness to perpetuate the cycle of bloodshed may contribute to the theory that Virgil portrays Aeneas’ heroic nature ambiguously. Additionally, this passage can be seen as subtly giving expression to Virgil’s innermost feelings regarding the futility of war.

⁶⁷ See section 1.4 for remarks on Starr’s illuminating discussion regarding this issue.

The ambiguity in the characterization of Aeneas' heroism highlights yet another complex layer Virgil has added to Aeneas' proto-Roman characterization, and one which distinguishes it from the super-hero models of Homeric heroism such as Odysseus and Achilles. Aeneas is portrayed as a believable hero with human failings, one that the Augustan Age Roman can not only look up to but also empathise with to a certain degree. The sensitivity and human qualities with which Virgil endows Aeneas help to make the *Aeneid* timeless. I further suggest that the human dimension, so obvious in Virgil's heroic portrayal of Aeneas, has a somewhat closer analogy with modern ideals of heroism than with the Homeric heroic models with which we find difficulty identifying with in an era when sensitivity and benevolence have become desirable heroic attributes.

Ambiguity in Aeneas' heroic portrayal is in my opinion an expression of the contradictions not only in Augustan society and Augustus'/Octavian's leadership history but also in Virgil's own attitudes and outlook. It must be remembered that Virgil died without completing or reworking the *Aeneid*; he also died before witnessing the pinnacle of Augustan greatness. One cannot help but wonder if with reworking and a longer lifespan Virgil may have reconciled his conflicting attitudes and gained some greater measure of confidence in Augustan leadership, which would have been reflected in Aeneas' heroic portrayal.

The next discussion in this chapter revolves around the inclusion of Homeric characteristics in Virgil's Roman hero.

2.3 HOMERIC HEROIC CHARACTERISTICS IN AENEAS

To fully appreciate Virgil's characterization of Aeneas an explanation needs to be given of the manner in which Augustan Age Romans may have culturally interpreted Aeneas' sporadic displays of Homeric heroic behaviour. Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas' heroism would not have been as culturally appropriate if it had adhered to a strictly Homeric heroic model.⁶⁸ The uniqueness of Virgil's Aeneas lies in the distinctive duality of his heroic model, both Homeric and Roman, as these contradictions mirror the ambiguous and creative socio-cultural environment of the Augustan Age. By employing a duality of heroic characterization in Aeneas, typifying both Homeric heroes and the prototype of a Roman hero, Virgil breaks away from an epic convention that until this point had perpetuated Homer's example.

Chapter 1 outlines the nature of ancient and modern perceptions of heroic nature. It also briefly describes how Aeneas embodied the characteristics of ancient heroism (1.1.5). This section examines, in greater detail, the incorporation and implications of Homeric heroic characteristics in the characterization of Aeneas by discussing the Augustan Age cultural interpretations of his typically Homeric heroic behaviour in an effort to illustrate for the modern reader the ways in which Virgil created a hero appropriate to the Augustan Age.

Bowra's synopsis of the characteristics of an Homeric hero contained in his book *The Greek Experience* (1958) remains, in my opinion, a very useful

⁶⁸Beye tells us that in 260 BCE the Alexandrian epic poet Apollonius was the only epic poet to come close to diverging from the Homeric heroic model before Virgil when he portrayed Jason in the *Argonautica*. Beye suggests that Jason's heroic model forms a bridge between the Homeric Achilles and Odysseus and the Virgilian Aeneas and that "Virgil was looking back at the Homeric epics through the lens of the Apollonian view of them" (1999:277).

description of Homeric heroism. Homeric heroes are created through opportunity seized in conflicts, and according to Bowra Homeric heroes' honour is affirmed and confirmed through combative action. The theatre of war was the paramount arena in which Homeric heroes could excel. Bowra sums up the nature of Homeric heroism in the following way:

The essence of the heroic outlook is the pursuit of honour through action. The great man is he who, being endowed with superior qualities of body and mind, uses them to the utmost and wins the applause of his fellows because he spares no effort and shirks no risk in his desire to make the most of his gifts and to surpass other men in his exercise of them. His honour is the centre of his being, and any affront to it calls for immediate amends. He courts danger gladly because it gives him the best opportunity of showing of what stuff he is made ... Fame is the reward of honour, and the hero seeks it before everything else. This outlook runs through Greek history from Homer's Achilles to the historical Alexander (Bowra, 1958:20-21).

It is the opinion of some scholars, for example Otis (1964) and Wilson (1969) that Aeneas' heroism advances in a rather uncomplicated, linear manner throughout the *Aeneid*: from a somewhat savage Homeric model to a more civilised Roman model that represents all that is good in Augustan Age Roman society. While this argument was popular, especially amongst those inclined to take an optimistic view of Aeneas' heroic characterization and the *Aeneid* as a whole, one cannot overlook the fact that throughout the poem Aeneas periodically reverts to behaviour typical of the Homeric hero. Virgil appears to be adding new dimensions to the existing model of Homeric heroism in order to manufacture a highly

complex but totally authentic Roman hero.⁶⁹ I believe that rather than assess Aeneas as behaving either in a typically Homeric or a typically Roman manner, one should view Virgil's representation of heroism as an original prototype combining old and new elements to make it culturally appropriate to Augustan Age Romans.

The key to understanding the objective behind Virgil's application of the Homeric heroic model to the character of Aeneas lies in determining where and why he employs it. For example, according to Fuhrer (1989:66) and Michels (1997:414) the reader's first introduction to Aeneas (*I:131-133*) is typical of Homeric and not Virgilian style. Michels remarks how easily Aeneas is moved to tears and weeping and that apart from this first tearful introduction to Aeneas she "found some fifty places in the *Aeneid* in which Aeneas is beset by anxiety or sorrow that often leads to groans and tears" (1997:414). It is her opinion that this characterization of Aeneas is classically Homeric in nature and more acceptable in epic than in actual Roman life. Fuhrer suggests that weeping is a "traditional feature" (1989:66) of epic heroes and goes on to catalogue the Homeric heroes' numerous bouts of weeping. An alternative viewpoint that I find particularly plausible, expressed by Williams, is that the intention behind introducing Aeneas as a frightened, tearful man at the outset is to establish that he is not a flawless but a very human hero. He says "Virgil wishes to show us at the outset Aeneas' human frailty" (1972:167). This portrayal of Aeneas' frailty at the start distinguishes him as a complex hero in need of transformation if he is to accomplish the mighty task of laying the foundations of Roman civilization. One could draw a comparison between this prodigious task facing Aeneas and the phenomenal task Augustus

⁶⁹ In my opinion, this is most ably demonstrated by the pronounced emphasis on Aeneas' *pietas* in the *Aeneid*. I believe this very Roman virtue defines Aeneas' socio-cultural appropriateness for the Augustan Age audience of Virgil's work. This is discussed further in the next section of this chapter.

undertook to transform Roman civilization into one of the greatest the world has ever witnessed.⁷⁰

Stahl (1981:162) also draws our attention to the fact that Aeneas' introductory speech (*I:134-143*) resounds with Iliadic references and analogies. Roman audiences would have been aware of Aeneas' rather dismal performance in Homer's *Iliad* where he did not distinguish himself as an outstanding warrior. Stahl suggests (1981:162) that Virgil is at pains to immediately rectify this impression by introducing the Virgilian Aeneas to the ancient world as the most easily recognisable of heroic models: the Homeric hero. In the following extract Stahl illustrates exactly what Virgil's intent was in introducing and characterizing Aeneas in this manner:

He [Virgil] wants to make sure from the beginning that Aeneas' survival is not understood to be the result of unmanliness or lacking courage. We can see why, throughout the epic, he would wish to place him repeatedly in situations that prove him as a full-scale Homeric hero (Stahl, 1981:163).

Another feature of Homeric heroism that Virgil exploits in his portrayal of Aeneas is the archetypal, fearsome fury for which antiquity's heroes were renowned. Galinsky sheds light on the acceptable cultural parameters of anger in Augustan Age society in his article "The Anger of Aeneas" (1988). By understanding the cultural nuances of emotions such as anger in the society of the Augustan Age the modern reader can appreciate how Virgil's social context influenced his composition. Aeneas' anger may

⁷⁰ Williams implies that Virgil's introductory characterization of Aeneas has an additional intention. He suggests that Virgil was drawing an analogy between Aeneas and Odysseus, who in Book V of the *Odyssey* has a similar fearful reaction to the power of the storm in which he is caught. It appears that Virgil represented Aeneas in this manner to conform to Homeric epic tradition.

appear to motivate actions in him that possibly exceed the bounds of decency, as for example in the lines

*He slashed open the breast where life is hid.
And deaths like these all over the battlefield
The Dardan captain brought about, in fury
Wild as a torrent or a dark tornado (X:844-847)*

However, Galinsky refers to the fact that for the Augustan Age Roman Aeneas' anger in the *Aeneid* would have been regarded as appropriate behaviour:⁷¹

To the contemporary Greek and Roman, then, the picture of the avenging Aeneas, who is stirred to anger and meting out punishment in proportion to the crime, would have looked anything but odd or out of place (Galinsky, 1988:327).

Williams draws our attention to what many contemporary readers believe to be Virgil's most terrible portrayal of Aeneas' anger, the human sacrifices in Book XI (108-111). Virgil's portrayal of this episode may have been influenced by more than one motivation. While I agree with Stahl's plausible explanation, which is given below, it is as likely that Virgil would have been partially influenced by epic tradition and adapted Achilles' human sacrifice in Book XXIII of the *Iliad*, (XXIII:198-203) for the his epic. Furthermore, I suggest that including this episode may be an expression of a somewhat anti-Augustan attitude by Virgil, reminding the audience of Augustus' vengeful nature. Williams suggests, "Aeneas now behaves in as unrestrained a fashion as Turnus or any Homeric hero" (1973:355). Stahl (1998:158-159) illustrates the socio-cultural context of this act when he

⁷¹ Also see section 1.1.2 for the influence of philosophical teachings in Augustan Age society.

suggests that Virgil's idea for this episode may well have originated from the era of the proscriptions when Octavius is said to have "performed human sacrifices at his adoptive father's altar"(1998:159). For the Roman audience of the *Aeneid* this episode in their recent history would serve to conceptualise the actions of the hero Aeneas within their cultural context.

Lyne (1990:335) suggests that one of the most prominent displays of Homeric anger by Aeneas, his furious slaying of Turnus in Book XII of the *Aeneid*, is reminiscent of Achilles' actions in *Iliad* Book XXII and it is an archetypal Homeric defence of honour that motivates the anger in both Achilles and Aeneas. This final reversion to the raging Homeric type of hero has become a major contributing factor in some Virgilian scholars' assessment that Aeneas' heroic character does not develop or achieve any stature in the *Aeneid*.⁷²

Virgil's audience may have been a little disillusioned with Aeneas' conduct at the end of the epic. In the fragile and uncertain socio-political atmosphere of the period in which Virgil had just completed his epic, the ambiguous ending may have left the Romans of 19 BCE without any real sense of hope for the future as they reflected on Virgil's representation of the unpredictable behaviour of those destined to lead them. Aeneas' conduct in the closing scene of the *Aeneid* appears to be predominantly Homeric in nature and it does not reflect favourably on his heroic portrayal. Furthermore, it is preceded by a re-emergence of Aeneas' tendency towards indecision and his actions are fuelled by irrational rage. Homeric rage is to my mind an important contributory factor in the death of Turnus and on careful examination of the text it would be difficult to

⁷² This opinion is supported by scholars such as Putnam (1965).

attribute Aeneas' victory to any heroic act or superior fighting skills on the Trojan leader's part. (Turnus has been immobilised by divine forces when Aeneas thrusts his spear into him). Alternatively it may also be interpreted by the reader that Turnus' death was facilitated and motivated by his own overconfidence and the arrogance he displays in donning the arms of Pallas. This is his fatal mistake as it ignites a fury in Aeneas that is irrevocable.⁷³

The focus of this chapter now moves on to examine the manner in which Virgil portrays Aeneas as uniquely Roman. This discussion will concentrate on how Aeneas' heroic depiction fulfilled the prerequisites of the four cardinal virtues that were so important in Augustan Age society.

2.4 AENEAS AS A ROMAN HERO

For the *Aeneid* to be relevant and significant to Romans living in Augustan Age Rome and acceptable to his sponsor Augustus, Virgil was required to portray Aeneas' heroic character in such a manner that he would be recognisable to Romans as the credible founder of their nation. Possessing sufficient culturally appropriate heroic characteristics would identify him as a Roman hero and make him a worthy ancestor of Augustus.⁷⁴ This

⁷³ The motivations surrounding the death of Turnus remains a much-debated topic in Virgilian scholarship. It may be seen as due to an uncontrolled bout of Homeric rage on Aeneas' behalf to the fact that Aeneas was actually obeying Evander's wish for revenge for Pallas' death (XI:245). It however appears obvious that Turnus' death was mandatory for the narrative of Virgil's poem. The amalgamation of the Trojans and Latins within the context of the poem would have been impossible if Turnus had survived.

⁷⁴ As early as Book I of the *Aeneid*, I:385-387, Augustus is linked ancestrally to Aeneas. Toohey states, "Caesar claimed descent from Aeneas, at least when it suited his political aspirations" (1992:125).

section will demonstrate how Virgil's social context, described in chapter 1, influenced his portrayal of Aeneas as distinctively Roman.

I have reached the conclusion that one of the most significant ways in which the Roman uniqueness of Aeneas' heroic nature is demonstrated in the *Aeneid* is through the manifestations of the four cardinal virtues in his character. As I have argued, *pietas* remains the most defining characteristic of Aeneas' heroic nature. Galinsky's description of what the virtues⁷⁵ represented ideologically in Augustan Age society embodies the tentative spirit of hope and renewal that permeated the socio-cultural atmosphere in which Virgil composed the *Aeneid*:

The virtues point to the future and to the tasks ahead, in accordance with Augustus' endeavour to put the past behind everybody and to rule with the *auctoritas* of an Augustan *princeps* rather than the force of an Octavianus *vindex* (Galinsky, 1996:82).

Warde-Fowler, a 1930s Virgilian scholar who is described by Harrison (1990:11) as one the scholars who initiated research into specialized aspects of Virgil's *Aeneid*, explains what the nature of Aeneas' *pietas* is when he states

Aeneas is not playing his own game, but rather fulfilling the order of destiny which was to bring the world under Roman dominion. Individualism of the wrong type, that of Dido, Turnus, Mezentius, has to be escaped or overcome by the hero, for whom the call of duty is that of the State to be (1933:411-412).

⁷⁵ Galinsky's explanations of the nature of the Four Cardinal Virtues in Augustan Age society is given in section 1.1.6

Warde-Fowler (1933:412) views Aeneas' *pietas* in the *Aeneid* as primarily motivated by religion and the gods.⁷⁶ However, I believe Aeneas' *pietas* holds a much broader significance than merely a religious connotation and his *pietas* in the *Aeneid* responds to a multiplicity of stimuli that ultimately reflect the extent to which Virgil's social context influenced his characterization of Aeneas. It is of value to note Michels' views on the terms *pius* and *pietas* in the *Aeneid*:

“Of recent years, scholars have been recognizing that *pius* and its abstraction *pietas*, have, in implication, little to do with their derivatives “pious” and “piety,” and that the words in the literature of the late Republic and early Empire refer more often to a code of behaviour between human beings than to an attitude towards the gods” (1997:405).

Outside of the *Aeneid* the implications of Roman *pietas* are described in many of the historical manuscripts of Roman antiquity. Saller uses these texts to further illuminate the multidimensional nature of *pietas*. In his book *Patriarchy, property and death in the Roman family* (1994:106) Saller explains that Roman *pietas* was associated with the notion of submission and obedience to a higher power. He further shows that this notion does not fully explain the underlying attitude of compassion and devotion that underpinned the essence of *pietas*. Saller illustrates this with examples taken from the texts of the Elder Pliny who recorded occurrences of *pietas* that fall outside of the scope of the Oxford Classical Dictionary's definition which states that *pietas* is the “typical Roman attitude of dutiful respect towards gods, fatherland, and parents and other kinsmen” (Saller, 1994:105). The following incidents documented by the Elder Pliny exceed

⁷⁶ Warde-Fowler argues that Aeneas' *pietas* was “imperfect” until his individualism was “tamed and brought into the service of the State *with the help of the State's deities*” It is his opinion that this is what “makes the *Aeneid* a religious poem” and that “the character of Aeneas is pivoted on religion; religion is the one sanction of his conduct” (1933:412).

the bounds of duty and include such things as: a freedman throwing himself on his patron's funeral pyre when he became overwhelmed on hearing his patron had made him heir to his estate; a brother dying of a minor illness upon hearing his brother had failed to win an election; or a man dying of a broken heart after he divorced his wife. From these accounts from the Elder Pliny we can assume that to Romans in the Augustan Age, *pietas* had a broader significance than just an "attitude of dutiful respect" towards higher authorities; it encompassed sentiments akin to compassion, pity, esteem and passion (Saller, 1994:108). These illustrations show us the diversity of social connotations which *pietas* may have had in Roman society.

The following illustrations exemplify some of the diverse interpretations made by Virgilian scholars of Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas' *pietas* in the *Aeneid*. Heinze views Virgil's famous portrayal of Aeneas' *pietas* in Book II (921-925) from the perspective that it was motivated by Virgil's desire to leave the reader with a lasting impression of Aeneas' sense of duty towards his family. He says "[f]or Virgil, more important than any successful feat of arms was the act of *pietas* which constituted Aeneas' chief claim to fame" (1993:20). Camps believes Virgil's most prominent portrayal of *pietas* in Aeneas is embodied in his compassionate nature. He says that "[c]ompassion is a principal element in Virgil's image of his hero ... This quality in the hero is reflected, with others, in the epithet *pius* which is recurrently applied to him" (1969:24). Tarrant distinguishes in Virgil's characterization of Aeneas' *pietas*, an analogous link between the *pietas* of Aeneas and the corresponding *pietas* of Octavian. He says, "Aeneas' salient virtue, the respect for duty and authority denoted by the term *pietas*, corresponds to Octavian's vaunted devotion to his adopted father Julius" (1997b:179). This perspective, when seen in the light of other opinions,

highlights the diversity of possible interpretations regarding the nature and function of Aeneas' *pietas*.

Lyne in his book *Further Voices in Vergil's Aeneid* is of the alternative opinion that Virgil has depicted Aeneas' personality as struggling to assimilate the Roman's preconceived notion of Homeric heroism with the prerequisite of *pietas* in the Augustan Age prototype of heroism. According to Lyne Aeneas' *pietas* does not sit easy with his character type in the beginning of the *Aeneid* and obeying the call to duty comes at great cost to Virgil's hero:

In all things Aeneas has in fact to display 'pietas': that 'piety' which involves devotion, loyalty, self-abnegation, and, crucially, *subordination*, to a greater good or cause; a quality which came quite naturally to historical Romans ('non sibi sed patriae natus'), but which was manifestly ill-suited to the tensely individual, egotistical hero. Aeneas has to learn to become someone dutiful and subordinate, the 'heros pius', a paradoxical and unblessed role. And he does so at great cost, and far from consistently (1987:107).

Arguably, the most publicly expressive demonstration of Aeneas' *pietas* is exhibited in Book V when he pays dutiful obligation to his father in the rituals and rites of his funeral and the games that follow. However, in this book I suggest that there are more subtle and disguised indications of Aeneas' steadily improving *pietas* if one examines closely the finer details of the occasions when Aeneas pays his comrades respect and gives them honour, for example in lines *V:317-348* and *V:683-693*.

Although I agree that *pietas* is the most noticeably entrenched virtue in Aeneas' character, highlighting the presence of the remaining virtues, *virtus*, *clementia*, and *iustitia* in Aeneas' character is essential to this

discussion. The existence of these virtues in Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas holds great significance for demonstrating not only the Roman uniqueness of the poet's hero, but also the extent to which the fundamental socio-cultural and psycho-social cornerstones of Augustan Age society impacted upon his work. Galinsky illustrates the elegance with which Virgil integrates these Augustan Age virtues into the *Aeneid* when he points out that "Virgil is presenting us not merely with the personified abstraction of Roman virtues ... but also with a believable human character" (1996:249). He later elaborates that Virgil does not explicitly promote Augustan ideology in the *Aeneid*, but rather reflects the "Augustan ambience" of the era (Galinsky, 1996:251). Due to the close connection of the four cardinal virtues with the military ideals of Augustan Age society, examples of Aeneas' manifestation of *virtus*, *clementia*, and *iustitia* occur mainly in the last six books of the *Aeneid* and particularly in Books X and XI, the most martial of the books.

Virtus, the virtue that Galinsky describes as "the quintessential 'competitive' virtue" was primarily expressed by Romans through "valour on the battlefield" (1996:84). Furthermore, it was associated with leaders and was the "result of moral effort" (Galinsky, 1996:84). It is my opinion, that what defines Aeneas' manifestation of *virtus* in the *Aeneid* as Roman is not just his courage or aptitude in battle but the manner in which his expression of *virtus* was underpinned by his attitude of *humanitas*.⁷⁷ This

⁷⁷Monti describes the multidimensional nature of *humanitas* as follows: "The Romans employed the term *humanitas* in two basic senses, benevolence or philanthropy, and culture or what we would call education in humanities. A large number of semantically related concepts were drawn into one or other of the spheres of meaning, and so we find in the usage of the first century B.C. that the word can bear, on the one hand, the sense of kindness, compassion, indulgence, tolerance, obligingness, tact, courtesy, and consideration, and on the other, the sense of good taste and discrimination in cultural matters, wit, cleverness, humor, and charm" (Monti, 1981:14).

view is illustrated in the following example from the *Aeneid*; Aeneas has just killed the youthful Lausus in Book X when suddenly he is consumed with pity and compassion for the fallen Rutulian:

“O poor young soldier,
How will Aeneas reward your splendid fight?
How honor you, in keeping with your nature?
Keep the arms you loved to use, for I
Return you to your forebears, ash and shades,
If this concerns you now. Unlucky boy,
One consolation for sad death is this:
You die by the sword-thrust of great Aeneas.” (X:1154-1161)

This unique combination of *virtus* and *humanitas* in an epic heroic model reiterates how the ambiguity of the Augustan Age is reflected in Virgil’s characterization of Aeneas.

Williams (1973:320-321) also refers to the Aeneas/Lausus episode in terms of its *humanitas*, but also for the *clementia* displayed by Aeneas here. He describes how, in his opinion, although Aeneas has killed Lausus, his pity and remorsefulness at having to do so and the compassion he shows towards the dead youth in Book X (1150-1161) embodies the spirit of the virtue *clementia*, as well as such Roman virtues as *miser cordia* and *humanitas*.

The final scene of the *Aeneid* is notably controversial in nature and, as I have indicated, open to different interpretations. Here I examine it for what it reveals about the Roman virtue *clementia* and how, in Aeneas’ heroic characterization by Virgil, this virtue reflects the socio-cultural practices of the period. Given the savagery of the act the reader could be forgiven for believing that Aeneas’ personality shows complete lack of the spirit of *clementia* as he thrusts his sword into Turnus (XII:1295). This action

may however be misinterpreted as wantonly violent unless the reader is aware of the diverse social applications of granting or withholding *clementia* in Roman society. Galinsky not only explains that Aeneas' actions were culturally appropriate for the Augustan Age but also describes exactly what the cultural norms of Roman society were for granting *clementia* when he says, "As a breaker of treaties, Turnus has forfeited his life before gods and men and we know of no instance where Romans extended *clementia* to such an individual" (1996:250). Additionally this scene gives us insight into the poet's portrayal of Aeneas' heroic nature. Galinsky (1996:250) draws our attention to what Aeneas' moment of hesitation before he kills Turnus reveals to us about his heroic nature. It is Galinsky's opinion that Aeneas' hesitation, so uncommon in heroic actions in literature preceding the *Aeneid*, indicates Virgil's intent to characterize Aeneas as acting more humanely than earlier epic heroes such as Achilles (1996:250).

As a conclusion to this discussion on the Roman dimensions that are displayed in the heroic portrayal of Aeneas, the hero's manifestation of the virtue *iustitia* is investigated. *Iustitia* is described by Galinsky as the virtue that encouraged Romans to return to the "*leges and mores*" (1996:82) of the Republican era. As early as Book I (739) it is established that Aeneas embodies this virtue. Galinsky (1996:85-86) describes how Augustus was at pains always to underline the legality of his rise to power especially in his *Res Gestae*. Otis (1964:297) is of the opinion that the section in Book VI (723-846), where Aeneas witnesses the horrors endured by those who did not abide by the law, indicates Virgil's intention to emphasize that all human life is obligated to obey the rule of justice embodied in the Roman virtue *iustitia*.

This chapter concludes with a summation of what factors in Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas' heroism made him the quintessential Roman hero appropriate to the Augustan Age.

2.5 CONCLUSION

The portrayal of Aeneas' heroism remains a contentious issue in Virgilian scholarship. Opinions on whether Aeneas achieved his full heroic potential and whether he could be considered to be the ideal Roman hero appear to be predetermined by the critic's perspectives.⁷⁸ For example, some scholars' perspectives lean towards appraising Virgil's characterization of Aeneas either pessimistically or optimistically; others interpret it according to Stoic parameters and still others according to the modern perceptions of heroism. Moreover, judgement is often influenced by, and is a reflection of, the prevailing socio-political and socio-cultural circumstances of a critic's environment.

It must be remembered that the majority of Romans viewed Aeneas as the quintessential Roman hero and to deny this perspective in favour of evaluating his heroic portrayal from a pessimistic or a contemporary point of view does much to contradict Roman cultural perceptions. There is a much in Aeneas' heroic portrayal that when viewed from the Roman perspective, gives authority to that perspective, and the theory this is the appropriate lens through which to view the behaviour of Virgil's hero. Bowra's opinion is that "[i]t is true indeed that orthodox Romans believed in Aeneas as an ideal man" (1990:364). He gives further illustrations and

⁷⁸ Otis states our responses to the *Aeneid* are tempered by our "knowledge of the later empire and of Rome's 'decline and fall', by our own experience of Christianity and of the whole modern world" (1964: 389).

descriptions of the popularity of Aeneas as a legendary heroic figure, which include temples and altars built in his honour and panegyrics of him in the educational curriculum. The average Roman's adoration of Aeneas was enduring and according to Bowra lasted for four centuries (1990:365).

To fully appreciate the reasons behind Aeneas being granted such high heroic status by the Romans, one must take cognisance of the fact that the Romans evaluated heroism on a worldview that was dominated by ideals of community survival and not individual survival. This brings further dimensions to Aeneas' heroism. Additionally Homeric epic tradition in the Roman world had thus far dictated that epic heroes had foreknowledge of their goals. Odysseus has to return to Ithaca and Achilles to become eternally remembered as the greatest Greek hero. Aeneas on the other hand leaves his home and has to learn and interpret the nature and outcomes of his mission through prophecies as he journeys towards Italy. For the modern reader, in a world of scientific rationalization, Hainsworth's and Toohey's characteristics of ancient heroism, (1.1.5) of physical prowess, stamina, courage and mental dexterity, may appear to be obvious and even prosaic heroic ideals. However, in a society whose material environment contained many inexplicable phenomena Aeneas' heroic endeavours must have held much greater significance.

It is Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas' response towards his preordained mission, responsibilities and destiny that qualifies the Roman nature of his heroism. Although Aeneas does lapse and revert to behaviour typical of an Homeric hero he perceives, when he witnesses the fall of his beloved Troy, that he can no longer pursue the individualistic path of the archetypal epic hero exemplified by Achilles. The heroic stature of Aeneas is reliant on the abandonment of individualistic aims and goals and his

commitment to uniting the Trojans with the Latins to lay the foundations of Rome.

Throughout the *Aeneid* Virgil portrays Aeneas' character as epitomising the spirit of the Four Cardinal Virtues. In particular Aeneas' character is seen as relentlessly observing his *pietas* towards the gods and his fellow man. When one considers the importance that these virtues held in Roman society one can assume that this possibly was a major contributory factor towards making Aeneas the ultimate Roman hero of his time. Additionally Virgil's portrayal of these virtues in Aeneas' heroic character makes apparent to the reader the extent to which Virgil's social context influenced his work.

This chapter has given an overview of the issues surrounding Virgil's characterization of Aeneas' heroism. Evaluating that heroism through the lens of the social context of Virgil's world described in chapter 1 is in my opinion, the most appropriate approach for the modern reader to adopt. I believe the prevailing views of the pessimists and the optimists will in time give way to a new perspective on interpreting Virgil's work that will adopt a multidisciplinary approach. Therefore, I have attempted to illustrate the view that when the imperfections and ambiguities in Virgil's heroic portrayal of Aeneas are viewed within the Augustan Age cultural framework, they may be judged culturally meaningful to Romans of the Augustan Age and Aeneas was in fact an ideal Roman hero.

The next chapter will investigate facets of Virgil's socio-cultural context that may have influenced his portrayal of the characters with whom Aeneas had personal relationships and how these factors may have shaped Virgil's characterization of Aeneas' interaction with them.

CHAPTER THREE

AENEAS' PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

3 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the socio-cultural factors of Augustan Age society that may have determined Aeneas' interaction with other selected characters in the *Aeneid*. In an effort to illustrate the significance and influence of Virgil's cultural frame of reference on his composition of the *Aeneid*, this chapter does not concentrate on the unfolding of these relationships within the narrative, but rather on the behaviours and actions of Aeneas and the other characters with whom he interacts, with the focus centred on Augustan Age social traits and norms that may have shaped Virgil's characterizations.

Characters in literature are primarily given defining characteristics through their speech and conversation. According to Lyne "[i]t exhibits men in their relationships with one another, affording an author splendid opportunities to individualize and to differentiate his characters" (1987:145). However, Virgil hardly exploits the opportunity of delineating Aeneas as a character through his conversation with others. An example of this is Virgil's characterization of Aeneas as a father. He speaks to his son Ascanius only once in the *Aeneid*, in Book XII (595-602). The initial discussion in this chapter (3.1) therefore examines what socio-cultural

factors in Virgil's cultural environment may have contributed to his portrayal of Aeneas as largely uncommunicative.⁷⁹

The next section (3.2), explores what socio-cultural factors present in Augustan Age society may have shaped Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas' relationship with, and behaviour towards, his *familia* and vice versa, and focusing on: the relationships that Aeneas has with his father Anchises (3.2.1) and his son Ascanius (3.2.2); what I believe the reader may view as the somewhat puzzling relationship between Aeneas and Creusa (3.2.3); and a discussion on the socio-cultural determinants of Aeneas' deep respect and feelings for his nurse Caieta (3.2.4). Following this (3.3) an in-depth examination of Aeneas' relationships with those outside the *familia* will be presented. As Dido has captured the interest of so many readers of the *Aeneid* throughout the ages her relationship with Aeneas (3.3.1) takes precedence in this section. Once the socio-cultural norms of Augustan Age society that governed Aeneas' relationship with Dido are understood and some of the many distinctive elements of this relationship are placed within the appropriate cultural perspective, a diversity of alternative interpretations for the modern reader is introduced; next, the relationship between Aeneas and Pallas is discussed (3.3.2); and lastly, the adversarial relationship between Aeneas and Turnus is focused on (3.3.3).

3.1 PORTRAYAL OF AENEAS AS UNCOMMUNICATIVE

Exploring the reason why Virgil does not use speech to demonstrate how Aeneas interacts with others, is necessary to the aims of this discussion as it highlights some of the idiosyncratic socio-cultural viewpoints of

⁷⁹ The opinion that Aeneas is portrayed to a large degree as uncommunicative is commented on by Virgilian scholars such as Feeny (1983:204-219) and Lyne (1987:145-146).

Augustan Age society that should be taken into consideration when evaluating Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas' uncommunicativeness. Lyne draws attention to the fact that Virgil frequently "interrupts" Aeneas when it appears he is about to make a profound statement (1987:146). He describes how these interruptions can take the form of the sudden appearance of an omen as in Book II (891-893), divine or mortal intervention of another character as in Book VI (723-724), or by the abrupt withdrawal of a character with whom Aeneas is interacting, as in Book IV (503-550). The most striking example of this form of interruption is exemplified in Dido's sudden departure after her emotional diatribe against Aeneas in Book IV (503-544) (Lyne, 1987:146).

The interaction between Dido and Aeneas in Book IV (503-550) draws attention to the manner in which Virgil does not exploit an opportunity to characterise Aeneas through speech and interaction with other characters. Dido appears to accuse Aeneas of inadequate verbal and emotional responses to her plight with the words

*Sigh, did he, while I wept? Or look at me?
Or yield a tear, or pity her who loved him? (IV:509-510)*

However, she immediately continues her tirade thus:

What shall I say first, with so much to say? (IV:511).

This is an example of an incident where it would appear that Virgil is actually denying Aeneas an opportunity to speak. It is evident from the lines IV:525-528 that Dido is aware of Aeneas' plan and therefore it can be assumed they have discussed his need to leave Carthage at some point to resume his search for a new home for the Trojans:

*I shall not
Detain you or dispute your story. Go,
Go after Italy on the sailing winds,
Look for your kingdom, cross the deepsea swell! (IV:525-528)*

Therefore it appears that Aeneas cannot always be accused so much of being uncommunicative but rather that Virgil on occasion chooses to portray him as being denied the opportunity to articulate his feelings, for example by Dido's sudden departure:⁸⁰

*At this abruptly she broke off and ran
In sickness from his sight and the light of day,
Leaving him at a loss, alarmed, and mute
With all he meant to say. (IV:539-542)*

There are additional ways in which Aeneas is thwarted in his desire to react verbally to a situation. For instance, in particular moments of high drama the sudden appearance of an omen may inhibit Aeneas' response. This can be observed in Book II (880-889), when Creusa implores Aeneas to protect them. Lyne (1987:146-149) provides an explanation of Virgil's possible rationale behind these interruptions, or as he calls them "cut-offs". I find Lyne's reasoning for the cut-offs interesting but not totally convincing. He argues that the *Aeneid* is concerned with the speculative "moral dilemmas" of life not the individuals demonstrating them (1987:148).

⁸⁰ In addition, I believe that modern readers, in an era that values sophisticated, emotional responses to situations, may perceive Aeneas as responding rather guilelessly to situations. This is demonstrated by his naive and exasperating response to Dido's ghost in Book VI "Was I, was I the cause?" (VI:616).

Galinsky's line of reasoning that "mistrust of powerful language was a very Roman trait" (1996:248) is to my mind, a much more promising perspective from which to view the lack of grand speeches made by Aeneas in the *Aeneid*. This socio-cultural idiosyncrasy of the Romans is also explained by Feeney (1983:204-219) in his influential article "The Taciturnity of Aeneas". Feeney takes a more benign stance to Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas than does Lyne (1987:166) who, apart from the influence of Stoicism, tends to dismiss the influence of external socio-cultural factors in Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas. Feeney on the other hand examines the reasons for Aeneas' uncommunicative characterization from the perspective of Virgil's social context which influenced this portrayal. For instance, Feeney illustrates how Virgil's characterization of Aeneas' taciturnity may have been determined by the Roman socio-cultural mistrust of "high rhetoric":

High rhetoric does not admit of dubiety: it is concerned in the first and last resort, not with any objective establishment of truth, but with getting its way; and it gets its way by whirling speaker and audience up in a grip of passion in which judgement and discrimination are deliberately expunged, in which partial justification, half-truth, uncertainty are nothing but irrelevancies. Criticisms of such language as an evil have a long history of which the *Aeneid* is a part (Feeney, 1983:217).

Lyne's opinion (1987:149) is that Virgil's characterization of Aeneas' interpersonal relationships is defined by his actions not his words. Feeney believes Aeneas' limited discourse with other characters leaves him "free from the manipulation and distortion which controls the words of the other outstanding orators of the poem" (1983:217-218).

Virgil portrays Aeneas as a man whose actions speak louder than his words. This is most ably demonstrated at the beginning of Book XI (1-38) when Aeneas attends to the ritualistic burial of fallen comrades without any hesitation before finally grieving for his own personal loss. This attitude of overriding obligation to duty, or *pietas*, characterizes Aeneas' personal relationships and often conveys more to the reader about his innermost sentiments than do his words. The action of burying his dead comrades at the beginning of Book XI while still distraught over the death of Pallas is one of Aeneas' most considerate gestures in the *Aeneid*, being highly expressive of the respect he has for his fellow man. This respect is shaped and demonstrated by his solicitous actions more often than it is verbalised. When one evaluates Aeneas' reticence one must constantly be aware that Virgil portrayed his main protagonist as a character created within a specific socio-cultural context with idiosyncratic social reference points that shaped all facets of his portrayal.

The Augustan Age socio-cultural influences that may have determined how Virgil portrayed Aeneas' personal interaction with family members will now be examined in section 3.2.

3.2 SOCIO-CULTURAL INFLUENCES IN AENEAS' FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Chapter 1 (1.1.3) of this thesis deals with the socio-cultural dynamics of familial relationships in Augustan Age Roman society. This section now explores how these cultural practices in Virgil's social context may have influenced his representation of Aeneas' familial relationships in the *Aeneid*.

3.2.1 AENEAS AND ANCHISES

The relationship between Aeneas and Anchises is examined by investigating the following facets of their relationship: the role of Anchises as Aeneas' father and head of the *familia* in the *Aeneid* and the closeness of the relationship between Aeneas and Anchises. Lastly the discussion will focus on how the relationship between Aeneas and Anchises may function in the *Aeneid* as a subtle reminder to Augustan Age audiences of the *Aeneid* of their ancestral Trojan heritage and the vulnerability of political powers in the ancient world.

The interaction between Aeneas and Anchises deserves attention because it is imbued with the socio-cultural traits of Roman society that may appear unfathomable to a reader of the *Aeneid* if assessed from the perspective of 21st century father/son relationships. In the Western world where notions of respect for elderly parents is compromised in a culture that places such high value on youth advanced age places the modern elderly father a societal disadvantage

Braund (1997:210) is of the opinion that in his characterization of the relationship between Aeneas and Anchises “Virgil is drawing upon the entire range of ideas and expressions available to him”.⁸¹ Cairns' opinion is that Anchises is “an older kingly figure whose example and affection inspire Aeneas” (1989:39); Hook and Reno see Anchises' function as a prophet of the future for Aeneas, especially in Book VI (2000:76); and Heinze emphasizes Anchises' role as an interpreter of omens for Aeneas

⁸¹ Heinze (1993:37-43) raises the question of whether Virgil borrowed many elements, such as the famous episode in Book II when Aeneas saved his father from the fallen Troy by carrying him out on his shoulders (II:921-922), from traditional literary accounts of the fall of Troy such as those of Quintus and Tryphiodorus, or if they in fact borrowed from him.

(1993:33-34). It is, however, Beye's evaluation of Anchises' function in the *Aeneid* that I find most pertinent to the aims of this thesis as it accentuates Roman cultural attitudes towards Augustan Age fathers in a *familia*:

Anchises functions in the poem as a typical father. Roman culture centered on the *pater familias*, "father of the family," who was the keystone in Roman social structure. Tradition orientated, the Romans looked to the father figure whether in the family (*pater familias*) or the imperial throne (*pater patrias*, father of the country), or as repository of ancestral attitudes and customs (Beye, 1968:223).

In Virgil's *Aeneid* one of the warmest relationships that Aeneas has is that with his father. It is significant that in Book II (730-734) when Aeneas pauses in the midst of furious battle, it is his father's safety that first comes to mind:

*For the first time that night, inhuman shuddering
Took me, head to foot. I stood unmanned,
And my dear father's image came to mind
As our king, just his age, mortally wounded,
Gasped his life away before my eyes. (II:730-74)*

The closeness of their relationship is illustrated as early as Book II when Aeneas refers to Anchises as "dear father" twice, in lines 732 and 921. Additionally this is made apparent in Book V by Aeneas' actions, as he attends to the anniversary funeral rites of his beloved father with love, reverence and grace (V:105-107). The reader is made aware that Aeneas obviously had intended his father to share in his journey of discovery as he says

*It was not given me
 With you beside me to explore the coasts
 And plains of Italy, nor discover,
 Whatever it may be, Ausonian Tiber..." (V:107-110)*

I further suggest that the relationship between Aeneas and Anchises is the most consistently alluded to relationship that Aeneas has in the *Aeneid*. Virgil reiterates, recalls and emphasizes this relationship (even after Anchises' death) in significant moments in the *Aeneid*, for example in Book V lines 527 and 549. On close examination of the text it can be seen that Virgil's reference to Aeneas as Anchises' son often occurs most poignantly at times when other fathers and sons interact tenderly. For example in the episode in Book VIII when Evander is bidding his son farewell as he commits him to Aeneas' care (*VIII:696-697*)⁸² and in Book X when Aeneas is exasperated by Lausus' actions to save his father (*X:1135-1137*) but then recognises in Lausus' actions his own as devotion to Anchises (*X:1150-115*) (Williams, 1973:375). In the midst of both these emotional episodes, *VIII:706* and *X:1150*, Virgil suggestively refers to Aeneas as "Anchises' son". This to my mind recalls and reiterates the closeness of their relationship in an era when Augustus was emphasizing family unity and family values.⁸³ Moreover, the relationship between Aeneas and Anchises is notable because it demonstrates Aeneas' *humanitas*

⁸²One could suggest that Aeneas was a substitute father to Pallas. The analogy of substitute fathers can be taken further and it could be suggested that Evander was in fact a substitute father to Aeneas. I find support for this if one compares the passages in Book VI (*1014-1210*), in which the ghost of Anchises gives Aeneas a genealogical prophecy for the future of Rome, and the passage in Book VIII (*415-473*) when Evander gives Aeneas a geographical history of the site where Rome would be situated. Both these passages strengthened Aeneas' resolve to carry on his mission to a lesser or greater degree. Alternatively, one could suggest that the concept of substitute fathers would have appealed to Augustus who we can assume saw Julius Caesar as a substitute father. Evidence for this is seen with Julius Caesar adopting Augustus and then naming him his sole heir; furthermore Augustus held Caesar in extraordinarily high esteem and was devoted to his memory, as one would perhaps be to a father.

⁸³See section 1.1.3 for a further discussion on this.

and compassion, an important component of Augustus' Four Cardinal Virtues. This is perhaps most obviously demonstrated in Book II (921-923) in the famous episode in the *Aeneid* when Anchises is carried out of Troy on Aeneas' shoulders.

As described in chapter 1 (1.1.6), a fundamental tenet of Roman *pietas* is dutiful obligation to one's family and parents.⁸⁴ In my opinion, the nature of the relationship between Aeneas and Anchises reaches the limits, and in some instances exceeds the boundaries of societal expectations of what constitutes *pietas* in a Roman *familia*. Aeneas' extreme filial *pietas*, is illustrated by his refusal to leave his father in Troy in Book II:

*Did you suppose, my father,
That I could tear myself away and leave you? (II:857-858)*

Aeneas is aware that by staying with his father he will sacrifice not only the future of the Trojans as a race and his own life, but also that of his family (Heinze, 1993:32). He articulates this awareness with the words

*...if your heart
Is set on adding your own death and ours
To that of Troy, the door's wide open for it: (II:861-863)*

The precedence that Aeneas gives filial *pietas* by remaining with his father may appear inappropriate to the modern reader where the elderly are often undervalued. However once Virgil's social context is considered it becomes understandable. Beye (1968:222) explains most clearly why Virgil

⁸⁴ Burrow (1997:22-23) demonstrates how the Scotsman Douglas corrupted this connotation of *pietas* in his translation of the *Aeneid* into Middle Scots in the year 1513 CE. Douglas exaggerated the familial obligatory connotation of *pietas* in his translation to win fame and secure favour with his own kinfolk.

may have characterised the relationship between Aeneas and Anchises as so close and dominated by Aeneas' sense of filial *pietas*:

The attention which Aeneas pays his father gives the Aeneid a consciously Roman flavor. Aeneas' sense of responsibility to other persons, his humanistic piety, is born in the love which he bears his father (Beye, 1968:223).

The idea that Aeneas' love for his father may have facilitated his *pietas* in general prompts Grubbs to state that "it is more than anything else the devotion of Vergil's Aeneas to his father Anchises that earns him the epithet *pius*" (2006:313). Tarrant (1997b:179) draws our attention to the analogy that may be made between Aeneas' *pius* attitude towards his father and Octavian's *pius* attitude towards his adoptive father Julius Caesar.

In my interpretation of the *Aeneid* Virgil's portrayal of *pietas* in the relationship between Aeneas and Anchises becomes the pivotal initiator and one of the prime factors that enables Aeneas' maturation as a character. The manner in which Aeneas' filial *pietas* facilitates his maturity is demonstrated in the text as early as Book II in the famous episode where Aeneas carries his father out of Troy, but I believe this is demonstrated even more strongly in Book VI:

*"Your ghost,
Your sad ghost, father, often before my mind,
Impelled me to the threshold of this place."*(VI:932-934)

This passage epitomises Aeneas' *pietas* towards his father, which continues even after his father has died. In Book VI the ghost of Anchises facilitates what becomes his most decisive act of resolve, the acceptance of his god-

given mission (VI:1219-1222). Further episodes demonstrating this are also illustrated in Book IV and Book V. In Book IV Aeneas realizes that he must leave Carthage to continue the mission. He is motivated to leave not only by the strong scolding he received from Mercury (IV:361-375) but also by the realization that by lingering in Carthage he was not obeying his dead father's wishes. His *pietas* towards Anchises is such an entrenched feature of his character that he is greatly troubled by not fulfilling his duty and he has nightmares of his father reprimanding him. This is partly what prompts Aeneas to leave Carthage. He tells Dido

*Are we not
Entitled, too, to look for realms abroad?
Night never veils the earth in damp and darkness,
Fiery stars never ascend the east,
But in my dreams my father's troubled ghost
Admonishes and frightens me. (IV:483-488)*

Book V (60-140) illustrates for the modern reader the *pietas* that sons showed their departed fathers in the Augustan Age by describing the rituals surrounding the "...anniversary vows and ceremonies" (V:71). *Pietas* towards his father compels Aeneas to perform these rituals and he emphatically says

*Were I today exiled in Libyan sands
Or caught at sea off Argos, or detained
In walled Mycenae, still I should carry out
My anniversary vows and ceremonies, (V:68-71)*

Aeneas' whole speech (V:60-94) can be seen as one of his finest tributes to his father in the *Aeneid*. It resounds with love and respect for his father, it displays leadership and maturity, which up to this point are somewhat

lacking in the manner in which Aeneas takes control of the occasion, and it embodies the true spirit of *pietas* as it honours Anchises with reverence.

I consider *pietas* to be the primary defining characteristic of the relationship between Aeneas and Anchises. Furthermore, the underlying importance of duty and the practice of filial *pietas* in Roman society was one of the most important Roman socio-cultural factors to contribute to Virgil's portrayal of the close relationship between Aeneas and Anchises.

Another interesting way that the relationship between Aeneas and Anchises may be interpreted is given by Beye (1968:223-224) who suggests that this relationship is a reflection of how Romans culturally viewed their Trojan ancestry in the Augustan Age. Anchises represents the heritage and history of the Trojan race while Aeneas represents the future and continuation of the Trojan bloodline in the future Roman race. Beye explains that the Romans had a socially entrenched "repulsion and fascination" (1968:223) with their Trojan ancestry. They regarded it with the same attitude as they did those cultures that they considered uncivilised, unlike their own contemporary civilization, which they considered superior, encompassing the promise of greatness under Augustus. I suggest that Virgil attempts to negate this attitude of the Romans in the *Aeneid* by the manner in which he emphasizes the positive attributes of the Trojans. For instance in Book VI Anchises praises the might of the future Italian race that had its roots in Trojan ancestry with the words

*"What glories follow Dardan generations
In after years, and from Italian blood
What famous children in your line will come,
Souls of the future living in our name, (VI:1015-1018)*

Perhaps the strongest testament to the glory and strength of the Italians' Trojan ancestry is given in Virgil's description of Aeneas' shield in Book VIII. As the Trojan captain examines Vulcan's fine craftsmanship (VIII:846-992) and sees the future leaders, "*The generations of Ascanius' heirs*" (VIII:852), one may be led to conclude that perhaps Virgil's intent was shrewdly to emphasize and reinforce to the Augustan Age audience of the *Aeneid* that the shield's glorious pictorial forecasts were initiated by the Trojans. A further reminder of the greatness of the Trojans is given in Book VIII as Evander remembers:

I admired

The Trojan leaders, and admired Priam, (VIII:216-217).

A controversial issue in Virgilian scholarship has always been Aeneas' exit from the Underworld through the Gate of False Dreams (VI:1217-1218) when he leaves Anchises' ghost. If one is of the opinion that Aeneas was to a certain extent a literary representation of Augustus, it may be that Virgil was subtly suggesting that in fact he did not fully believe in the durability of Augustus' vision for peace and feared that in reality, over time it would prove to be a false dream.⁸⁵ Furthermore, as ambiguity is a characteristic of Virgil's *Aeneid*, it is possible that Virgil's portrayal of the Trojans (the ancestors of the Augustan Age audience) as being in a politically vulnerable position in the *Aeneid* was his subtle way of reminding the poem's Roman audience of the fact that political regimes in the ancient world were extremely fragile.

⁸⁵ It must be remembered, as pointed out in chapter 2, that nervousness, uncertainty and caution about the durability of Augustan peace was a feature of Roman society in the period in which Virgil wrote the *Aeneid*.

The next focus in this section is on Aeneas' relationship with Ascanius.

3.2.2 AENEAS AND ASCANIUS

The other significant relationship between father and son in the *Aeneid* is that of Aeneas with Ascanius, his son and preordained leader of the new Italian race. As chapter 1 illustrates,⁸⁶ Roman fathers regarded their sons with a special partiality. They were perceived to be the future not only of the *familia* but also of the Roman Empire. This socio-cultural feature was especially applicable in Ascanius' case. On examination of the text one finds that Ascanius' future responsibilities as leader of the Italian nation are alluded to by the gods (*IV:372-375*) in omens as in Book II (*890-901*), and also in prophecies such as the one in Book I when Jupiter forecasts:

*But the boy,
Ascanius, to whom the name Iulus
Now is added—Ilus while Ilium stood—
Will hold the power for all of thirty years, (I:360-363).*

This idea is reinforced by the manner in which Ascanius is socially accepted as the future heir of Aeneas' leadership role, as seen in Book VIII (*407-408*) when Evander entertains both Aeneas and Ascanius, and again in Book XII as Aeneas and Ascanius majestically enter the scene to secure a peace pact with King Latinus:

*Then from his quarters Lord Aeneas came—
The father of the Roman race—aglow*

⁸⁶See section 1.1.3 for a more detailed discussion on this.

*With starry shield and armor forged by heaven,
Close at his side the second hope of Rome,
Ascanius. (XII:224-228)*

One of the most important socio-cultural influences distinguishable in Roman father/son relationships concerns the necessity for heirs in their familial dynamics.⁸⁷ This is highlighted in the *Aeneid* in the following lines of Book IV: 317-319, 372-375 and 488-491 (Feeny, 1983:214). I believe the most defining characteristic of Aeneas and Ascanius' relationship is the fact that Aeneas sees his son's inheritance and his future responsibilities as being intrinsically bound to the nation that he is preordained to lead. This adds a complex dimension to their relationship over and above the responsibilities of inheritances within a normal Roman *familia*. If one considers the relationship from this perspective it becomes apparent that from the moment Aeneas witnesses the omen of fire atop Ascanius' head in Book II (891-895) the nature of their father/son relationship is irrevocably altered. Apart from Aeneas' parental obligations he comes to realize that Ascanius is the future of the Roman world and Roman destiny lies in securing his child's survival. Ascanius becomes the representation and continuation of everything Aeneas is preordained to initiate.

As I have said, the relationship between Aeneas and Ascanius in the *Aeneid* is not characterized to a significant extent through speech. Therefore, the reader is obliged to examine closely the dynamics of this relationship through the subtext of these characters' actions, but while doing so to be constantly aware of the influences of Virgil's social context determining his portrayal of these interactions. This is seen in the way in

⁸⁷ Saller (1994:161-180) gives a thorough description of the Roman customs of inheritance in his book *Patriarchy, property and death in the Roman family*.

which Aeneas is aware of Ascanius' importance as a future leader.⁸⁸ Ascanius' dynastic inheritance determines many of Aeneas' actions towards his son, for example, the way in which he protects Ascanius when he leaves Troy in Book II (971-973), and the despair he expresses over denying Ascanius his true legacy if he dallies in Carthage. He laments:

*Each night thoughts come of young Ascanius,
My dear boy wronged, defrauded of his kingdom,
Hesperian lands of destiny. (IV:489-491)*

If one examines Aeneas' only speech to Ascanius it can be seen that Aeneas, as leader of the Trojans, is aware that his son must be prepared to accept his role as a future leader. The wise counsel that he gives to Ascanius demonstrates that by the end of the poem Aeneas sees his son primarily as a future leader.⁸⁹

*“Learn fortitude and toil from me, my son,
Ache of true toil. Good fortune learn from others.
My sword arm now will be your shield in battle
And introduce you to the boons of war.
When, before long, you come to man's estate,
Be sure that you recall this. Harking back*

⁸⁸One of the ways in which the Augustan Age audience of the *Aeneid* would have been fully aware of their important dynastic past was via the genre of myth. In accordance with traditional mythic beliefs, Virgil portrayed his main protagonist as the instrument that facilitated this. By faithfully replicating the mythic beliefs of his society in the *Aeneid* Virgil illuminates for the contemporary reader the importance and validity of myth in the culture of the Augustan Age.

⁸⁹ It could be suggested that the emphasis on Ascanius' inheritance may have highlighted for the Augustan Age audience of the *Aeneid* the succession problems in Augustus' own family.

*For models in your family, let your father,
Aeneas, and your uncle, Hector, stir your heart.” (XII:595-602)*

Dixon (1992:109-111) illustrates another socio-cultural trait of Roman society that is revealed in Virgil’s depiction of the relationship between Aeneas and Ascanius. Her work illustrates the duties of children belonging to the aristocratic class of Rome and their obligations upon inheritance. She highlights the obligation of the upper-class child to maintain the status of the family by learning appropriate socio-cultural behaviours. The importance of this in Roman society is clarified if we closely re-evaluate the behaviour of Ascanius in the *Aeneid* through this alternative perspective. Virgil is consistent in his efforts to characterize Ascanius as fulfilling these obligations by learning and improving his social skills through hunting, riding and assuming leadership roles.⁹⁰ This is illustrated by Virgil’s portrayal of Ascanius’ hunting episodes⁹¹ in Book IV (215-218) and Book VII (681-682). In Book V (743-777), Ascanius hones his military riding skills in the parade of Trojan youths in the funeral games; and later in Book XII (224-228) he accompanies his father to the negotiations with the Latins as a witness to the leadership duties and obligations that will present themselves in his political future. It is through illustrations such as these that the reader can appreciate the dynamics of the relationship between Ascanius and Aeneas and how their behaviours in the *Aeneid* are

⁹⁰It may be suggested that the overly enthusiastic way in which Ascanius enters into these activities is perhaps motivated by a wish to impress his father, Aeneas. This is especially noticeable in Book IX (359-393) when Ascanius, in Aeneas’ absence, passionately endorses the ill-fated sortie of Nisus and Euryalus into the Rutulians’ camp.

⁹¹ Lyne informs us “that hunting was regarded in Rome as a healthy and toughening exercise” (1987:193), Fagan (2006:383) remarks that hunting for leisure in the Augustan Age was a “royal pursuit”.

actually a reflection of the behaviours between fathers and sons in Virgil's social environment.

Heinze (1993:128) gives the reader a plausible socio-cultural explanation for why Virgil especially emphasises the aspect of Ascanius' youth and potential in the relationship between Aeneas and Ascanius. He sees this as a reflection of the attitude of Augustus towards the youth of Rome. He points out how Augustus had a special penchant for the exuberance of youth and "was particularly fond of the *lusus Troiae*" (1993:128). This parade of youths unblemished by the hardships of war in Book V (715-742) is an analogy of the parade of youths Augustus so admired:

Numerous features in the emperor's private life as well as his public measures indicate how deeply he cared about the moral and physical welfare of adolescents and how deeply he cared about the youth of Rome as a means of perpetuating his life's work. This is very understandable: he yearned so passionately to see a new generation spring up from the blood-sodden battlefields of the civil wars, a generation which, innocent of the guilt of their fathers, would be able to reap the fruits of decades of slaughter. This longing should not be underrated simply because it was not destined to be fulfilled. This is the frame of mind in which Virgil had once written his poem to celebrate the birth of the little son of the consul Pollio; it is also the frame of mind which underlies the description of the *lusus Troiae* (Heinze, 1993:129).

I suggest that Ascanius and Aeneas' relationship in the *Aeneid* represents more than an incidental father/son portrayal by Virgil but rather a metaphoric expression of the importance to Romans of their ancestry.⁹² Virgil's inclusion in the *Aeneid* of the *lusus Troiae* may have been a reminder to the audience of the debt they owed those gone before.

⁹²Venus refers to the Roman's Trojan ancestry as early as Book I reminding Jupiter that the Romans were indeed born of "Teucer's line" (I:320).

The relationship between Aeneas and Ascanius may appear to the reader to be somewhat distant if one considers the amount of personal interaction between these two characters. However, I believe that if one examines the text of the *Aeneid* closely one can discern that this is not necessarily the case. For example, Aeneas is at great pains to secure the safety of his young son when they abandon Troy.⁹³ This is demonstrated in Book II as Aeneas ensures he is safe before he returns to the burning city to look for Creusa:

*Ascanius,
My father, and the Teucrian Penatës,
I left in my friends' charge, and bid them well
In a hollow valley (II:971-974).*

Virgil demonstrates the closeness they share in other ways, for instance in Book I when Aeneas, upon being received into Dido's royal house, sends for his son:

*Meanwhile parental love would not allow
Aeneas' mind to rest. He sent Achatës
On a quick mission to the ships, to tell
Ascanius and bring him to the city—
Fond father, as always thoughtful of his son— (I:877-881).*

Additionally, Aeneas' reaction in Book X (339-81) to the sea nymphs' warning that Ascanius was in trouble (315-338) exhibits the priority he gave his son's safety, and Book V (706-711) and Book XI (78-79) resound with the pride Aeneas had in his son's achievements. Ascanius also

⁹³ Lyne (1987:151) demonstrates that securing the safety of young sons was a well-received socio-cultural behaviour in the Roman world: "Roman tradition admired and recorded fathers who were attentive and anxious for their young sons". In addition to this, he goes on to note that Suetonius records that Augustus in particular was very attentive to his adoptive grandsons.

demonstrates his love for his father in the concern he shows the wounded Aeneas in Book XII (527-529). If the reader takes into account the above displays of closeness between father and son then the relationship does not appear as distant. From this perspective, it can be seen that the foundation for the emotion and poignancy shown in the passage in Book XII lines 595-602, quoted above (p 107), is actually well prepared for throughout the *Aeneid*.

Aeneas wife, Ascanius' mother, is the subject of the next subsection.

3.2.3 AENEAS AND CREUSA

As discussed earlier, Lyne (1987:149) suggests that Aeneas' actions characterize his interpersonal relationships to a greater degree than his words. I believe the relationship between Aeneas and his wife Creusa is highly indicative of this because there is so little dialogue between these two characters. This section investigates the socio-cultural influences that shaped Aeneas' actions in his relationship with Creusa.

For the modern reader one of the most perplexing aspects of this relationship must be the question: how did Aeneas manage to lose Creusa⁹⁴ when the family left Troy and what was behind Virgil's depiction of this episode? To investigate this issue fully we must firstly address the manner in which Augustan Age socio-cultural notions of hierarchy within dynastic families influenced Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas' actions in this

⁹⁴ Creusa appears to be such an insignificant person that Aeneas is not sure how or where he lost her,
.....did she

Linger, or stray or sink in weariness?
There is no telling (II:960-962).

In my opinion, this statement by Aeneas indicates that he had been paying little attention to Creusa as the family fled Troy.

episode. While the contemporary Westernised perspective of equal status for both men and women in the family is the instinctive cultural framework through which we interpret Aeneas' actions, it is necessary for the readers' accurate interpretation of this episode that they understand the basics of Augustan Age cultural ideals concerning the family hierarchy.

Indications of the hierarchy present in Roman families are contained most evocatively in the following lines when Aeneas, in the turmoil of Troy's collapse, remembers his family. However, his father's safety comes to mind before his wife's:

*For the first time that night, inhuman shuddering
Took me, head to foot. I stood unmanned
And my dear father's image came to mind
As our king, just his age, mortally wounded
Gasped his life away before my eyes Creusa came to mind, too left alone;
The house plundered; danger to little Iulus (II:730-736).*

Lyne (1987:151) shows us how Roman convention and dynastic considerations dictate that Creusa was a relatively minor concern for Aeneas. The head of the family, Anchises, and future of the family Ascanius, took priority while Creusa came in a poor third:

Aeneas' policy here may accord with Roman, dynastic, and practical priorities: 'pietas' is primarily owed to Anchises, whose leadership is in any case still needed; the future rests with young Iulus; and Creusa is strictly, in these terms, third in importance (1987:151).

The fact that Aeneas' status as a widower was necessary to the dynastic amalgamation of the Trojan people with the Latin population through his marriage with Lavinia would not have been as culturally startling for the

Augustan Age Roman as it may be for the modern reader. Cairns raises a valid point that helps to offset our astonishment at the necessity of Creusa's loss and premature death. He draws our attention to the importance of dynastic marriages in the Augustan Age (1989:106).⁹⁵ Virgil and the Roman audience of the *Aeneid* would have been fully *au fait* with the ruling class practice of arranged marriages for dynastic purposes. They would have witnessed how Augustus arranged the marriage of his widowed daughter Julia to Agrippa in 23 BCE, for the explicit purpose of securing heirs to the Augustan line (Stockton, 2001:13). Cairns says, "The disappearance of Creusa makes Aeneas an eligible widower...and his marriage with Lavinia produces the concord which makes the Roman world domination possible" (1989:105).⁹⁶

Alternatively, Aeneas losing Creusa may have been influenced by epic tradition. Cairns makes the point that "erotic causation" or centring the outcomes of narrative on the realization of a particular male and female relationship "was standard within epic tradition, in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as well as the *Argonautica*" (1987:106). Virgil does not characterize the relationship between Aeneas and Creusa romantically and she does not become the traditional epic "erotic causation". Aeneas must acquire another romantic interest, Lavinia, to fulfil this role. Her betrothal to Aeneas becomes the focus of Turnus' wrath and the cause of his hostility towards the Trojans and their leader. In this regard, Lavinia has a more crucial role to play in the *Aeneid* than does Creusa. She provides not only

⁹⁵ See section 1.1.6 for a fuller discussion of Augustus' views on marriage and procreation in aristocrats to ensure the survival of the ruling class.

⁹⁶Keith (2000:117) goes as far as to call Creusa one of Aeneas' sacrificial victims, the other being Dido. He says, "It is a critical commonplace that both Dido, Aeneas' Carthaginian lover, and Creusa, Aeneas' Trojan wife, are in some sense sacrificed to the hero's mission".

the erotic causation of the epic but her marriage to Aeneas has political advantages as well. Creusa's role of providing Aeneas with a familial heir appears to be the most important of her functions, and once Aeneas sets out on his mission, her role is redundant and she has to make way for his marriage to Lavinia. Although Lavinia also lacks characterization, to my mind she appears a more mysterious and interesting character than Creusa and it is perhaps because of her enigmatic portrayal that she captivates the reader.⁹⁷

The relationship between the widower Aeneas and widow Dido must have held more dramatic appeal⁹⁸ and interesting socio-cultural dimensions for the Augustan Age audience of the *Aeneid* as it defiantly takes precedence over that of Aeneas and his somewhat colourless wife Creusa. This relationship is the focus of another discussion (3.3.1) in this chapter.

Creusa is characterized so blandly that her mysterious disappearance holds little tragic impact and the reader feels Aeneas almost blames her for her own death if the following lines are examined closely:⁹⁹

Here at last

All came together, but she was not there;

She alone failed her friends, her child, her husband. (II:966-968)

⁹⁷The origins of Lavinia's blush (XII:92-98) is one of the significant facets of her portrayal that I believe grants her a uniquely enigmatic characterization that ensures timeless appeal. Lyne (1987:115) briefly discusses whether or not the blush is motivated by love for Turnus.

⁹⁸Unlike any previous characterizations of female lovers of heroes, such as Calypso in the *Odyssey*, Dido comes the closest to halting the progress of the epic.

⁹⁹It must however be noted that, in my opinion, more than once Aeneas views the deaths of those close to him only from the perspective of a personal betrayal. This can be seen in his accusation in this incident and again in Book III (941-942) when he bewails the fact that his father "forsook" him when he needed him.

Although Creusa is a significant part of Aeneas' life, her death is a necessity for its progression. Her role might appear superfluous, except her giving birth to Ascanius perhaps and the instructions her ghost gives at the end of Book II (1007-1025). This is somewhat indicative of the expendable role that women, especially older women, traditionally played in Roman society.¹⁰⁰ Augustus' reign however "saw both apparent and genuine changes in the position of women in the family" (Fantham *et al*, 1994:212). These changes were enforced shortly after Virgil's death.¹⁰¹

The inclusion of the next character's relationship with Aeneas under the section on Aeneas' *familia* is pertinent because, as is shown below, Caieta was considered to be a member of Aeneas' family in Augustan Age society.

3.2.4 AENEAS AND CAIETA

The relationship between Aeneas and Caieta is discussed here as, according to Roman cultural tradition, slaves such as Caieta were considered part of the *familia*. Book VII opens with these words:

*Nurse Caieta of Aeneas, in death you too
Conferred your fame through ages on our coast,
Still honoured in your last bed, as you are,
And if this glory matters in the end
Your name tells of your grave in great Hesperia.*

¹⁰⁰Fantham *et al* *Women in the Classical World* (1994) provides a comprehensive account of the lives and status of women in the ancient world.

¹⁰¹Fantham *et al* (1994:303) explain that Augustus' prescriptions on marriage and adultery were legalised in 18BCE and "[a]ll women's lives were affected profoundly in various ways by the social ideology being articulated in laws and dynastic imagery by the emperor" (1994:314). Galinsky (1996:130) in his book *Augustan Culture* gives a summary of what these laws entailed. For a further discussion on Augustus' laws on marriage and how they affected women see section 1.2.3 of this thesis.

*When he had seen Caieta's funeral
Performed, her mound of tomb heaped up, Aeneas
Waited until the sea went down, then cleared
Her habor under sail. (VII:1-9)*

This incident, which initially appears to bear little relation to the narrative of the epic, is laden with socio-cultural indicators of the status and role of nurses in Roman society. Bradley (1991:13-35) gives a comprehensive description of the social role of wet nurses in Roman society and cites the historian Pliny recording the fact that Aeneas had a wet nurse. Bradley (1991:27) illustrates how important the wet nurse was in the life of the infant and growing child, explaining that the wet nurse had a dual purpose in the Roman *familia*. Initially she cared for the baby and breast-fed it. Then, as the infant grew, she played a major role in socializing the young child, so gaining importance in the child's emotional and familial context. Bradley illustrates the bond between nurses and their young charges when he says that upon the premature death of a child, "the grief of a nurse was second only to that of a mother" (1991:27). Dixon concurs with Bradley's opinion and points to another social dimension presented in this relationship when she says, "important social bonds existed between slave and free—for example, between a slave nurse and her nurseling and between her own child and the nurseling" (1992:54). Included in Bradley's discussion of the role of wet nurses in Roman families is his suggestion that the Roman concept of *familia* encompasses a much broader notion of family than the narrow contemporary Western idea does (1991:28). The perspectives raised by Bradley can be seen to contribute significantly to our appreciation of the inclusion of Caieta in the *Aeneid*.

This episode can also be seen as a manifestation of Aeneas' *pious* nature. The dutiful manner in which Aeneas performs Caieta's funeral rites is

another expression of his most outstanding attribute in the *Aeneid*, his dedication to the concept of Roman *pietas*. The honour and respect that Aeneas pays his nurse and the execution of his religious obligations fulfil the essence of the spirit of *pietas* in the material and non-material worlds. This concludes the discussion on the manner in which Virgil's social context influenced his portrayal of Aeneas' relationships with family members. The focus now shifts to his portrayal of Aeneas' relationships with significant characters outside of the *familia*.

3.3 AENEAS AND OTHER CHARACTERS IN THE AENEID

As Dido has remained a perennial favourite topic of research amongst Virgilian scholars, this discussion will open with an investigation into how Virgil's social context may have influenced the portrayal of the relationship between Aeneas and Dido.

3.3.1 AENEAS AND DIDO

The meeting of the Trojans and the Carthaginians in Book I (710-894) of the *Aeneid*, is laden with socio-cultural implications. The cultural context and implications of the relationship that Aeneas initiates with Dido need to be probed to fully understand the further developments in Book IV.

It is Ilioneus, the Trojan ambassador, who first encounters the Carthaginian queen Dido. He believes, as did the Romans of the Augustan Age, that Carthaginians are barbarians who need to be taught civilising ways by the Romans. This interesting encounter establishes from the onset the Roman suspicion of the Carthaginians and their barbarous ways

(Monti, 1981:10). Ilioneus' words "*What race of men is this? What primitive state could sanction this behaviour?*" (I:731-732) typifies the arrogant attitude in Augustan Age society towards other nations outside of the Empire.¹⁰² Pavlock (1990:83) makes the valid observation that Dido's behaviour, her furious verbal attack on Aeneas (IV:503-538), her obvious knowledge of the magic of Hesperides the Massylian witch in Book IV (670-674) and her apparent madness towards the end of Book IV (825-827) all point to behaviour that would be considered by Romans in Augustan Age society to be highly uncivilised.

Aeneas, however, is impressed as he gazes with admiration at the level of sophistication in Carthage in Book I (576-596). He realizes that this is what he must achieve for his homeless Trojan refugees. Once common civilizing values are recognised Aeneas is encouraged to further the social and political relations needed with the Carthaginians in order to carry on with his journey:

*Here in this grove new things that met his eyes
Calmed Aeneas' fear for the first time.
Here for the first time he took heart to hope
For safety, and to trust his destiny more
Even in affliction. (I:610-614)*

The socio-political dimensions of this first meeting between the Trojans and the Carthaginians are significant for understanding the nature of Aeneas' relationship with Dido. In the episode where Dido first meets Aeneas, the presumptions of obligation and reciprocity made on both

¹⁰² Another example of this can be seen in Anchises' statement in Book VI 1151-1154.

sides are governed by Augustan Age social and political expectations that dictated behaviour when leaders of great nations met (Monti, 1981:24-25).

Dido welcomes Aeneas with the words

*I shall dispatch you safely with an escort,
Provisioned from my stores. Or would you care
To join us in this realm on equal terms? (I:775-777)*

Dido, as the leader of a nation that in the future is strong enough to rival and come close to threatening Rome initiates the beginnings of a personal and political alliance by acknowledging Aeneas appropriately and extending her lavish hospitality to the Trojans. She prepares a banquet and Aeneas sends to the ships for any presents he has to thank her (I:862-892). Monti (1981:24-25) states that the socio-cultural norms that dictated behaviour in this episode are determined by the Roman concepts of *fides*, *hospitium*, and *gratia*. “*Fides* and *gratia* require, if not some more concrete action, at least the everlasting verbal expression of gratitude for the *hospitium* offered and accepted” (1981:26). In Book I Aeneas is not in a position to compensate Dido for the hospitality she offers and after appealing to the gods to reward her (I:821-825) can only offer some presents and a verbal expression of gratitude. It becomes apparent that the dynamics of this relationship revolve around Aeneas never appearing to have enough to offer Dido, materially, emotionally or politically. Monti explains that the nature of Roman politics was fundamentally centred on ensuring personal allegiances, and interpersonal relationships between allies both domestic and foreign aimed at political advancement and “at the core of the system was the notion of reciprocity” (1981:9). In Dido’s bitter verbal attack on Aeneas in Book IV (503-542) when he leaves, she draws attention to her gracious hospitality, which serves only to accentuate Aeneas’ lack of reciprocity. In light of this, it is clear that this tirade of

Dido's and the subsequent curse she places on the Trojans has cultural and political dimensions in addition to being personally motivated.

Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas' and Dido's relationship reflects and at the same time affords insight into the necessity of making alliances, and the danger of political rivalries in the ancient world. By examining and understanding the complexities of ancient international politics, the modern reader will view the relationship between Dido and Aeneas from a new perspective. Alliances made in this era determined whether a nation survived. The Dido/Aeneas relationship exemplifies the necessity of making alliances with powerful nations to ensure military and political survival. Dido has refused other suitors and to this point very successfully governs her kingdom alone. However, in the ancient world alliances with stronger nations ensured sustained survival. Living with Dido in Carthage, Aeneas has assumed the role of "*master in her realm*" (IV:290). This, as Monti points out (1981:46), presupposes the amalgamation of the Trojans and the Carthaginians should they get married.

When Aeneas departs, Dido has few political options for making alliances as she admits she has spoiled her chances of political alliance with those she rejected as suitors in the past:

*"Look now, what can I do? Turn once again
To the old suitors, only to be laughed at—
Begging a marriage with Numidians
Whom I disdained so often? (IV:740-743)*

This, now coupled with her rejection by Aeneas, leaves Dido politically vulnerable, alone in a hostile environment and susceptible to military attack by stronger enemies. In a world where "unfortunately ancient

culture had never rid itself of its uneasy companion warfare” (Purcell, 2001:180) Dido’s newly founded kingdom now finds itself in great danger. In Book IV Dido calls attention to the fact that her rule of Carthage has been negligent of late because of her relationship with Aeneas and therefore her leadership position has become vulnerable with the words,

“Have pity now on a declining house!” (IV:435).

I believe Dido’s words at this point betray the fact that her motivations behind her relationship with Aeneas are to an important extent politically orientated. This becomes more pronounced as thoughts of her dynasty and Carthage come to dominate her emotions when she reaches a crisis point towards the end of Book IV. In the grip of despair and madness, she starts her plea to Jupiter by giving expression to her concern about the integrity and status of her kingdom in the eyes of others in the ancient world:

“O Jupiter,”

She said, “will this man go, will he have mocked

My kingdom, stranger that he was and is? (IV:818-820)

Monti explains that Dido knows that even if she were to follow Aeneas, her fellow Carthaginians would not (IV:754-758). Besides, she now is aware that the Trojans do not necessarily reciprocate political favour for political favour and she considers them untrustworthy. This breakdown in the assumed alliance between the Trojans and the Carthaginians spells the end for Dido politically. Aeneas’ desertion insults the honour of not only Dido personally but the Carthaginian nation as a whole. In light of this, although it appears obvious that Dido’s curse was emotionally motivated, I am of the opinion that a very strong motivation for her curse was of a

political nature and support Monti's opinion that "the political aspect of the Dido-Aeneas relationship emerges most clearly from Vergil's use of the theme of the curse" (1981:59). The historical and social implications of this curse were very evident to the Augustan Age audience of the *Aeneid*.¹⁰³ Victory over the Carthaginians in the Punic Wars was costly economically, politically and socially. After them, the Roman nation was left beleaguered, politically unstable and ultimately the victim of civil war. This was all apparent to the audience of the *Aeneid* who had suffered through the consequences of many years of civil war. Dido's curse resulted in the Romans harbouring an ongoing mistrust of Carthage. Monti highlights this when he says "Dido is a Carthaginian, and Roman prejudice against Carthaginians lived long after the terrors which inspired it were removed" (1981:77). He adds that Romans saw Carthaginians as "faithless" and "dangerous" (1981:77). Tied into this entrenched mistrust was a general mistrust and suspicion of all things Eastern.¹⁰⁴

Dido's liaison with Aeneas does not progress to a socially acceptable natural conclusion and there are no children born of it, a fundamental

¹⁰³ Dido's curse described in the *Aeneid* was traditionally believed by the Romans to have resulted in one of the most devastating periods in Roman history, the Punic Wars. The First Punic War, 264-241 BCE, ended in a Roman victory. However, the Second Punic War 218-201 BCE resulted in a Roman disaster. Under the brilliant leadership of Hannibal the war reached a climax in the infamous battle at Cannae in 216 BCE that saw "perhaps the worst losses ever suffered by a Western army on a single day" (Lazenbury, 2004:225). The Italians in the Battle of Zama in 202 BCE eventually defeated Hannibal and in the Third Punic War 149-146 BCE Carthage was completely destroyed by the Romans. Lazenbury attributes the demise of the Roman Republic to the effects of the First and Second Punic Wars. While they served to increase the size of the empire they decimated resources such as agriculture and the military "Basically, the institutions that had stood the Roman Republic in such good stead during the wars were stretched to the breaking point by the demands of the empire", according to Lazenbury (2004:240). He explains how this and the unwillingness of the leaders of the Republic to change led to revolution, civil war and the downfall of the Republic. Also emanating from the Punic wars was an entrenched mistrust of Carthaginians by the Romans (1981:77).

¹⁰⁴ See section 1.1.4 for a discussion on this topic.

socio-cultural priority of marriage in the Roman world, especially in the Augustan Age. Dido may have been seen as something of a cultural oddity for the Augustan Age: she leads a nation; and she remains childless even though she has been married. In addition to this, Virgil's depiction of Dido is certainly less than sympathetic in places. For example, Mercury's warning to Aeneas includes such derogatory statements as

*Ha! Come, break the spell! Woman's a thing
Forever fitful and forever changing.”(IV:791-792)*

I find Virgil never defends or excuses Dido's actions in the same way he does Aeneas'.¹⁰⁵ He portrays her as devious and manipulative. For example, he emphatically accuses her of knowing that the wedding to Aeneas was under false pretences:

*She thought no longer of a secret love
But called it marriage. Thus, under that name,
She hid her fault. (IV:236-238)*

In lines 933-934 of Book IV we see that Dido is portrayed as a character not above deceiving even her own beloved sister. Anna cries out when she comes across her dying sister,

*“It came to this, then, sister? You deceived me?
This pyre meant this, altars and fires meant this? (IV:933-934)*

¹⁰⁵ It appears as if Virgil does excuse Aeneas' behaviour more readily. I find evidence for this in Book IV line 499 and in Book VI lines 620-625.

One may deduce that although Dido's suicide was depicted overall with sensitivity,¹⁰⁶ Virgil may have subscribed to the Roman notion that women in general behaved suspiciously and were untrustworthy. Lingering societal rumour and scandal about the behaviour of women in Roman society in the Late Republic, as described by Fantham *et al* (1994:211-212) may have influenced Virgil's characterization of Dido in the years that followed. According to Fantham *et al*, the women of the Late Republic attained "a new level of self-assertion" (1994:211). "Great ladies and self-reliant non-citizen women without family or status paraded their sexual charms and relationships before a public both fascinated and prurient" (1994:212). I suggest that in the Augustan Age when Augustus was promoting, and even enforcing by legislation, doctrines of moralistic behaviour within society, Virgil's narrative and characterization of Dido represented to the *Aeneid's* audience a model of a woman destroyed by her own motives and passions. I believe Virgil's intent in depicting Dido in this manner functioned, at least at some level, as a warning to Roman women of the dangers of reckless, assertive behaviour in romantic relationships. Dido can be seen to represent the antithesis of what an upstanding Augustan

¹⁰⁶Levy (1997:89-90) illustrates how a contemporary of Virgil's, Horace, in the last ode of Book I (1, 37) pays tribute to the Eastern Queen Cleopatra whom Dido is often compared to. It may be possible that Virgil was influenced by other Augustan poets such as Horace to depict Dido sympathetically at her death. This may again illustrate the extent to which Virgil's composition was influenced by his social context. I find evidence for this sympathetic attitude towards Eastern queens amongst these Augustan Age poets if one compares Levy's description (1997:90) that suggests Horace paid tribute to the dignity with which Cleopatra faced her death in his ode, and the manner in which Virgil portrayed Dido's suicide undertones of a tragedy in Book IV:

For since she died, not at her fated span
Nor as she merited, but before her time

In addition to this, Virgil portrays the pitiless Juno as demonstrating pity for the dying Dido (IV:959-962).

Age woman was supposed to be.¹⁰⁷ In addition to this, she posed a threat to the future of eventual Roman domination of the ancient world by waylaying Aeneas in Carthage and by pronouncing her curse. It is likely that Virgil's intent in emphasizing Dido's independence and strength in the beginning of Book IV was to highlight her descent into a world of what men considered feminine deception and manipulation, demonstrated in lines 226-239 and 933-934 of Book IV. Other areas that caused concern to Roman men were the female propensity to what men regarded as hysteria or madness, and their inclination to dabble in magic. Virgil depicts Dido succumbing to both these unfortunate states in Book IV (622-919). He portrays Dido as "...broken in mind by suffering..."(IV:656) and as Williams shows (1972:378-379) there is evidence that Dido and the priestess, who originally came from the Massyli, an African nation west of Carthage (Williams, 1972:376), were performing dark and sinister magical rites in Book IV (697-722). For example in their rites, the priestess calls on "*Erebus, On Chaos and on triple Hecatē,*" (IV:706-707). Williams informs us that *Hecatē* was the "goddess associated with witchcraft and horror" (1972:378). In addition to this according to Williams, "Magic demands the elimination of knots" (1972:379) and in Book IV (717-718) during the performance of these rites, Dido's knotted sandal straps and girdle fall free.

I believe that in the Roman world where concepts such as *fides*, *hospitium*, and *gratia* determined the integrity of nations and were the cornerstones of political alliances, Virgil portrayed Aeneas in his relationship with Dido in a somewhat ignominious manner. Considering the length of time Aeneas accepted Dido's hospitality, and the significant role he played in her court, Aeneas did not behave ethically or within the social obligations of

¹⁰⁷ Refer to Harris and Platzner (2004:885) for a discussion on this issue.

international alliances in the ancient world. Mercury, who is sent by Jupiter to admonish Aeneas, quickly notices how contented and comfortable Aeneas has become in Dido's world. He is immersed in building the town of Carthage and he is adorned in Eastern dress and jewels given to him by Dido. Mercury finds Aeneas

*Laying foundations for new towers and homes.
He noted well the swordhilt the man wore,
Adorned with yellow jasper; and the cloak
Aglow with Tyrian dye upon his shoulders—
Gifts of the wealthy queen, who had innoven
Gold thread in the fabric (IV:354-359)*

In lines 472-484 of Book IV Aeneas is suddenly concerned about resuming his mission. This for a long time had not been his priority. If the passage quoted below is examined, the reader may be led to suspect that Aeneas holds Dido, to some extent, accountable for waylaying him in Carthage. This is suggested by Virgil's use of acerbic words such as 'begrudge' in line 482 and Aeneas' sardonic plea "Are we not Entitled, too" in lines 483-484. In this passage, it appears as if Aeneas now regards Dido's behaviour as selfish and not just a sentimental unwillingness to let him leave Carthage:

*There is my country. If, as a Phoenician,
You are so given to the charms of Carthage,
Libyan city that it is, then tell me,
Why begrudge the Teucrians new lands
For homesteads in Ausonia? Are we not
Entitled, too, to look for realms abroad? (IV:479-484)*

In addition to this Aeneas now suddenly remembers his responsibilities towards securing his son's future, also a problem about which latterly he had not been overly concerned:

*Each night thoughts come of young Ascanius,
My dear boy wronged, defrauded of his kingdom, (IV: 489-490)*

When Book IV lines 479-484 and 489-490 are read without negative bias towards Dido, and Aeneas' belated concerns are taken into consideration, it can be seen that Aeneas' departure from Carthage cannot be blamed exclusively on Dido. Given the conflicting ethical and moral standards that Virgil most likely applied to Aeneas' and Dido's characterizations the modern reader may be led to assume that Virgil was bigoted in his portrayal of Dido. However, modern notions of gender equality may influence this judgement.

The next section of this chapter deals with the common analogy made between Dido and Cleopatra and what this reveals about Roman socio-cultural circumstances. Harris and Platzner (2004:884) suggest that, because of the recent history between Octavian and Marc Antony and his consort Cleopatra the queen of Egypt, Augustan Age Romans would most certainly have drawn an analogy between Cleopatra and Dido. Also Cairns, calling attention to the popularity of this opinion amongst Virgilian scholars, takes for granted that "[i]t is well understood that Virgil to some extent modelled Dido upon Cleopatra" (1989:57).¹⁰⁸ Examining this

¹⁰⁸ Lyne (1987:123) and Gross (2004: 140) draw our attention to analogies that have been made between Dido and several other female literary characters in Graeco-Roman literature. Some of the comparisons that they made are between: Dido and Nausicaa because of the similarity between the simile in the *Odyssey* VI: 112-120 and the simile in the *Aeneid* I:676-684 (1987:123 & 2004:140); Dido and Medea because of the anguish they both felt at being betrayed by their lovers (1987:128); and Dido and the Amazon Camilla because Dido displays the same "masculine authority" (1987:136).

parallel from the perspective of the Augustan Age Roman's attitude towards the East assists the modern reader in envisioning the impact that Virgil's characterization of Dido in this manner must have had on the Roman audience of the *Aeneid*.

Cleopatra VII was a demonised figure in Augustan Age society. Wyke in her book, *The Roman Mistress*, gives an enlightening précis of how the Augustan Age poets perpetuated the societal denigration of the East and the Eastern regime of Cleopatra. Investigating how the poets mirrored and supported Octavian's anti-Eastern stance that reverberated throughout Augustan Age society provides the modern reader with valuable added insights into the Dido episode in the *Aeneid*.

Wyke shows that the Roman poets of the Augustan Age readily expressed Roman misgiving about Cleopatra. In the run-up to the Battle of Actium poets such as Propertius, Virgil and Horace lent support to Octavian's anti-Eastern stance through their poetry. Chapter 1 has already referred to the Roman abhorrence of the effeminacy of Easterners. Additionally Wyke describes how the Augustan Age poets promoted the Roman societal notion that "The womanish Easterners enthralled by their Egyptian queen need imposed upon them the masculine order of the West, embodied in the figure of Octavian/Augustus" (2002:215). Other factors that contributed to the tensions between the East and West, according to Wyke, included the fact that Romans were aghast at what they conceived to be the almost unlimited political power of Cleopatra, a direct opposite of the political power of even the most high ranking Roman women, for example Octavian's wife Livia (2002:219). Harris and Platzner (2004:885) illustrate how Roman society's mind-set about the unsuitability of women as rulers is influential in how Virgil portrays Dido.

They suggest that Dido is portrayed as changeable, flighty and too emotional in her relationship with Aeneas. They go on to describe how Roman men justified their attitudes towards women as rulers:

It is clear that females, especially those with armies at their command, must be defeated to ensure social and political order in Rome, just as Roman females must be kept in their proper (and properly subordinate) place—again recapitulating the politically useful myth about the Sabine women, who not only accepted their subordinate condition but also stopped their fathers and brothers from attacking Rome (Harris & Platzner, 2004:885).

Wyke goes further to demonstrate how the Augustan Age poets influenced the way Roman society evaluated Cleopatra by portraying her as culturally inappropriate for the Augustan Age: “The Horatian, Virgillian and Propertian Cleopatras...transgress all the social and political constraints which Roman society imposed (ideally) upon its women” (2002:220).¹⁰⁹ Political dominance of the West by the East was a very real threat for Romans before the Battle of Actium and the anti-Cleopatra propaganda emanating from Rome in the period just before her death was particularly virulent. Wyke illustrates how this hatred was perpetuated through Roman literature. The expression that this hatred was given in Roman society was

¹⁰⁹ The notion that literature is influenced by, and has influence upon, the reader’s cultural context is attested to by Wyke when she states, “In different periods, cultures, and media, representations of the Ptolemaic queen Cleopatra VII and her relations to Rome have ceaselessly shifted in structure and meaning” (2002:245). To exemplify this Wyke provides an illuminating account of how the contemporary Westernised individual’s perceptions of Cleopatra have been shaped by such things as the 1934 film *Cleopatra* by Cecil B. DeMille or Mankiewicz’s 1963 film version of the story of Cleopatra which starred Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton (2002:279-320).

predominantly male, Roman and poetic. At this distance, we seem to be witness only to the extreme partiality of the winning side for, within the discursive pattern of Augustan iambics, lyric, epic and elegy, Cleopatra VII is the defeated enemy of *res publica* and potent only in her sympotic and erotic perversity. She is the Egyptian whore, a drunkard, mistress of eunuchs and (almost) of Rome itself. Both this poetic and later historiographic tradition have been said to create around an opponent of Octavian's 'a miasma of romance, glamour, sentiment and prurience', and to invoke a form of political propaganda against the queen that constitutes 'one of the most terrible outbursts of hatred in history' (Wyke, 2002:196-197).

From the discussion above it can be inferred that the link that Virgil makes between Cleopatra and Dido is probably not benign in nature. To the Roman audience of the *Aeneid*, Dido, like Cleopatra, would have represented not only an obstacle to the fulfilment of Rome's destiny but an uncomfortable reminder of the not-so-distant past threat of Roman domination by the barbarous, uncivilised leaders of the East. To fully appreciate how deplorable this domination would have been for Roman society one has only to examine the socio-cultural context of their entrenched loathing of both the Carthaginian and Egyptian societies.

The following investigation illuminates additional areas that the Augustan Age audience of the *Aeneid* may have found problematic in the relationship between Aeneas and Dido. Firstly, the Roman socio-cultural connotations of the widowed Dido's availability to marry Aeneas, and secondly the socio-cultural legitimacy of this marriage. The most appropriate perspective with which to view the marriage of Dido and Aeneas focuses on the complex matrimonial rites and rituals consistent with Virgil's cultural frame of reference. These rites and rituals would have governed the appropriateness and legitimacy of such a union in this period. I believe that without an understanding of the cultural

determinants of marriage in the Augustan Age the modern reader's interpretation of this episode is compromised. This section therefore concentrates on investigating the socio-cultural criteria of marriage in Augustan Age Rome that may have influenced Virgil's portrayal of the assumed marital union between Aeneas and Dido.¹¹⁰

One of the first responses to the marriage of Dido and Aeneas that would have presented itself as an obstacle to an Augustan Age audience of the *Aeneid* are the socio-cultural norms surrounding widowhood in Roman society. Heinze's description of the Roman cultural prohibitions on widowed women is one of the most illuminating. Heinze (1993:99) describes the concept of the *univira*, the traditional belief that a widow should remain faithful to her first deceased husband, a practice that Dido until this point had upheld. Heinze illustrates a valuable point when he explains that it is Dido's avoidance of a sense of shame or her *pudor* that has inhibited her pursuit of romantic liaisons and marriage until now. The fear that her *pudor* may be violated is expressed by Dido in Book IV (33-40). Heinze goes on to describe the uniquely Roman socio-cultural importance of widowed women behaving as morally righteous members of society when they did not remarry (1993:99). The Augustan Age societal commitment, at least in theory, to the moral obligation of the *univira* was motivated by their ideal of returning Roman society to the moralistic lifestyle of the Republican era (Heinze, 1993:99). Monti (1981:54) explores Dido's dilemma of forsaking her first husband Sychaeus by marrying Aeneas, from the perspective that the moral obligation of remaining faithful to one's first husband in Roman society had become somewhat lax

¹¹⁰ A discussion on the marriage reforms of Augustus can be found in section 1.1.3.

by the Augustan Age and did not reflect reality.¹¹¹ Heinze feels that Virgil used the Roman socio-cultural notion of *univira* in the story of Dido and Aeneas' relationship as a narrative device that justifies her eventual death:

Virgil has used her traditional faithlessness to her first husband to create conflict within Dido herself which is of the great importance for the action. If Dido's death is to give the impression of poetic justice, she must be burdened with some form of guilt. This guilt lies in her deliberately violating the duty of fidelity which she herself regards as binding (Heinze, 1993:99).

Given the attitude of Romans in Virgil's era to the notion of the *univira* as described by Monti (1981:54), one can assume that Virgil's representation of it in the *Aeneid* does not reflect how this socio-cultural norm actually operated within society. An explanation for why Virgil did not faithfully reflect this reality may have been that it had the potential to lessen the narrative impact of his composition. This issue is perplexing as it is clear that Virgil's composition of the *Aeneid* and the portrayal of the personal relationships Aeneas has with the other characters do reflect the reality of the Augustan Age social context. Heinze's explanation (1993:99) that cultural acquiescence to at least the ideological value of *univira* in Augustan Age society symbolised a return to the moralistic ideals of the Republican era may be valid and Virgil's emphasis on Dido's distress over her faithlessness to Sychaeus may have been an example of the poet's endorsement of Augustus' desire to restore Roman society's moral foundations.

¹¹¹ Monti (1981: 54) stresses that in the period when Virgil wrote the *Aeneid*, *univira* was not a moral obligation but only an ideal. Fantham *et al* describe the notion of the *univira* as an unpragmatic ideal in Roman society because widowed women with children realistically needed a "social protector" to survive within this culture (1994:232).

A second issue that surrounds the marriage of Aeneas and Dido is the disputed legitimacy of the union according to Roman cultural norms. Ambivalence surrounds the socio-cultural legitimacy of their marriage because of the rites and rituals performed in the cave, for example the supposed clasping of their right hands (Monti, 1981:1-8).¹¹² This Roman social habit signified a wedded union and is illustrated by Dixon (1992:65) when she describes Roman funeral sculptures, which depict the bride and groom clasping right hands. Monti (1981:1-8) lays emphasis on the commitment of alliance and trust that accompanies the clasping of right hands in Roman society. His perspective is that the clasping of right hands “is used to designate symbolically reliability in a variety of international and domestic, public and private political relationships” (1981:8).

The other ritualistic elements of the supposed marriage ceremony that may illustrate the manner in which Virgil’s social context is reflected in Aeneas and Dido’s relationships are the traditional Roman marital elements such as the torch bearers (*IV:230*),¹¹³ the witnesses (*IV:231*) and the singing of hymns (*IV:232*):

Now to the self-same cave

Came Dido and the captain of the Trojans.

Primal Earth herself and Nuptial Juno

Opened the ritual, torches of lightning blazed,

¹¹² It must however be noted that at no time in the cave ‘wedding’ did Virgil mention the clasping of right hands. Dido only mentions this later on in Book IV line 430. This highlights the political and not an emotional union aspect of the Aeneas/Dido union.

¹¹³ The presence of torchbearers at Roman weddings is verified by Dixon (1992:64).

*High Heaven became witness to the marriage,
And nymphs cried out wild hymns from a mountain top. (IV:227-232)*

In the *Aeneid* these elements are represented as supernatural phenomena at Aeneas' and Dido's wedding. To the modern reader the fact that these are supernatural may invalidate their authenticity. However, Pöschl raises the point that in the culture of the Augustan Age, manifestations of the divine such as those at the supposed wedding were a highly believable phenomenon.¹¹⁴ "The Age of Augustus was not yet blind and had not yet turned its back on the manifestations of the divine" (1966:73). Given this belief in and connection to the non-material world the fact that Aeneas and Dido did have torchbearers, witnesses and hymns, albeit in a supernatural manifestation, at their wedding may well have added to its validity for the audience of the *Aeneid*.

Viewing the relationship between Aeneas and Dido from the perspective of the different socio-cultural factors in the Augustan Age that may have influenced Virgil's composition opens up avenues of alternative interpretations for the contemporary reader. It helps explain puzzling nuances of their relationship that may have been overlooked, thus adding deeper insights into Virgil's characterizations.

The next important relationship that Aeneas has is that with Pallas. This will form the focus of the next investigation.

¹¹⁴ Pöschl (1966:73) argues that given Virgil's religious inclinations, portraying the nymphs acting as witnesses at the wedding would certainly have been, to his mind, a real, viable and legitimate characterization: "Virgil truly believed in divine power ... it was a symbol of his religion" (1966:73).

3.3.2 AENEAS AND PALLAS

In my opinion, this relationship also deserves scrutiny for the representations of the socio-political and socio-cultural practices of Roman society that it exhibits. Williams (1983:105) describes the relationship between the older leader, Aeneas, and Evander's son Pallas, as a mentorship. Evander expects Aeneas to both protect his son Pallas and teach him the arts of warfare. Williams describes the manner in which the norms of Virgil's cultural environment are observable in this relationship:

[T]he poet is here making use of the Roman practice of *contubernium*, whereby an aristocratic father would put his son in the care of an army commander on active service; the young man would live in the general's tent and learn the business of war from him; the general would be *in loco parentis* to him for the period of his service (Williams, 1983:104).

Lyne (1987:157-158) raises a notable and valid point that suitably demonstrates the way in which Virgil's social context influenced his portrayal of Aeneas' relationship with Pallas, when he describes the role of the older mentor, both in literature and in Augustan society and especially in the life of Virgil. Firstly, he describes how in ancient literature the idea of a younger man having an older mentor was present in literature such as Homer's depiction in the *Iliad* of Patroclus and Achilles. Homer's portrayal may well have additionally influenced Virgil's portrayal of the relationship between Aeneas and Pallas. But it is also the role mentors such as Maecenas and Agrippa played in Virgil's personal history that we see reflected in the Aeneas/Pallas relationship. The importance of these mentors in Virgil's life, illustrated by the manner in which Agrippa was given the honour of special mention in the *Aeneid* in Book VIII (921-925) (Lyne, 1987:158), is discussed fully in chapter 1 (1.4).

I believe that Aeneas' mentorship of Pallas is used by Virgil as another instance that illustrates the political vulnerability of societies in the ancient world. As discussed earlier, in order to achieve the fulfilment of his god-given mission, Aeneas is obliged to form political alliances. The omnipresent threat to ancient societies of domination by powerful enemies determined that alliances were mutually beneficial to both sides. This is demonstrated in Book VIII in Aeneas' circumspect warning to Evander regarding the military agenda of the Daunians:

*The Daunians,
The race that harries you, now harries us
In savage war. If they defeat and rout us,
Nothing, so they believe, stands in the way
Of their subduing all Hesperia,
Ruling the seas that bathe her, north and south.
Trust us as we trust you. We have the stamina
For warfare, and we have the spirit for it.
In difficulties our men have proved themselves." (VIII:195-203)*

I believe his alliance with Evander and relationship with Pallas must be recognised from the political perspective of mutual benefit for an appropriate interpretation to be made. The fundamental value of this alliance and the general importance of alliances in the ancient world are demonstrated by Aeneas' reaction to Pallas' death. Although Aeneas is notably disturbed by Pallas' death, the fact that he is overly concerned with Evander's reaction to the news of his son's death (Lyne, 1987:159) probably also reflects the socio-political priorities of this era as well.

The sword belt removed so brutally from Pallas' body by Turnus, and Aeneas' reaction upon seeing Turnus wearing it, is yet another instance of

an episode in the *Aeneid* being better understood if the socio-cultural factors pertaining to it are investigated. Harrison (1998:223-237) describes how Virgil instils Pallas' sword belt with multiple symbolic cultural connotations. He illustrates how, for example, the ancient, classical myth of the Danaids¹¹⁵ (*X:695-699*) depicted on Pallas' sword belt held socio-cultural significance for Augustan Age Roman society.¹¹⁶ Harrison (1998:224) gives a detailed description of how the deplorable act the daughters of Danaus committed correlates with the deplorable act of Turnus when he kills Pallas and rips off his sword belt. This act facilitates Turnus' death when Aeneas, so inflamed at seeing him wear the belt, kills him in revenge for his young companion's death (*XII:1281-1295*). Harrison argues that the act of the Danaids and the act of Turnus are equally considered as violations by Augustan Age Romans. The daughters of

¹¹⁵ Howe and Harper outline the myth of the Danaids thus: Danaus was the twin brother of Aegyptus. He had fifty daughters of marriageable age whom he promised to the fifty sons of Aegyptus. In the ensuing years, Danaus and his daughters fled from Libya to Argos to escape the violence of Aegyptus and his fifty sons. However, when his brother's sons came to claim their wives in Argos Danaus had arranged that his daughters would kill them with the daggers he had provided because it had been prophesied that one of his sons-in-law would kill him. To prevent this happening all of the daughters killed their husbands with their daggers on their wedding night except one, Hypermnestra. It was the husband of Hypermnestra that killed Danaus and the other forty-nine wives who murdered his brothers. The forty-nine departed sisters were forever condemned to a life in Hades and their punishment was to fill a jug with a leaky bottom by pouring water continually into it (1996:76).

¹¹⁶ The sword belt not only becomes the facilitator of Aeneas' wrath and his motivation for killing Turnus in Book XII to avenge Pallas, but it represents other symbolic messages that are contained in the depiction of the myth of the Danaids on the belt. Harrison (1998:223-237) draws an interesting comparison between this myth depicted on Pallas' sword belt, which Turnus rips off, (*X:693-694*) and how this symbolises certain socio-cultural elements of Augustan Age society. The importance of this myth in Augustan Age society in my opinion may well have contributed to Virgil's use of it at such a critical part of the poem. Harrison tells us this particular myth was a fashionable feature of Augustan Age poetry: Virgil as well as Horace and Ovid used it in their work. Its popularity may have related to the prominence Augustus gave it by including it on the Temple of Palatine Apollo. Harrison (1998:232) suggests that Augustus' motivation to prominently display statues of the forty-nine daughters of Danaus killing the forty-nine sons of Aegyptus on Apollo's temple, was to symbolize Apollo's triumph over barbaric acts and draw an analogy to his own conquest of the barbaric East and the defence of the civilised West at the Battle of Actium. Harrison elaborates, "Placed in the portico of Augustus' temple of Palatine Apollo, the depictions of the Danaids, barbarians prepared to commit the most appalling crimes, are trophies representing the kind of monstrous opposition overcome at Actium through the support of Apollo, who matches Augustus in his role as civilised victor over barbarians (Harrison, 1998:236).

Danaus violated the sanctity of the marriage chamber and Turnus violated the inviolability of youthful potential by killing Pallas. Turnus further violated Roman socio-cultural customs by not dedicating the spoils of war, the sword belt, to the gods but wearing it himself (Harrison, 1998:229). This adds to the nefarious nature of Turnus' act.

I agree with Harrison (1998:237) when he proposes that Pallas' death equates more to the tragedy and sorrow of war than to the triumph. Arguably this was Virgil's intent: he wanted to bring to the attention of his readers his own attitude towards the futility of the violent death of the young,¹¹⁷ whether it is the forty-nine young husbands of the Danaid women or Pallas. The consequences of the Danaids' and Turnus' actions are more loss of life as others avenge these deaths and the cycle of tragedy continues. Gordon Williams (1983:102) draws attention to an additional socio-cultural practice of Roman society that helps the reader understand the relationship between Pallas and Aeneas. This is the military practice of the highest commanders of each side deciding the outcome of a battle by a single one-on-one combat. The winning commander was awarded the *spolia opima* and the victory. Williams points out that this was what Virgil's depiction of the Pallas/Turnus one-on-one combat entailed in the mind of Pallas. This is demonstrated in the text by Pallas' very defiant declaration:

*“Either I win the honour of taking spoils
From the enemy commander, or I die
A noble death. My father will bear alike
One destiny or the other. No more threats.” (X:623-626)*

¹¹⁷ Williams (1987:69-70) illustrates this by showing how Virgil interrupts the narrative twice in Book X at the death of Pallas. Firstly with an admonishment (X:701-707) and then with an expression of his sorrow (X:711-714).

Williams (1983:103) concludes that Pallas, according to the uniquely Roman tradition of “surrogate single combat” to decide a battle’s outcome, should never have engaged in this fight, as Aeneas and not Pallas was the highest commander of the Trojans.

Over and above the political importance and the obligations of mentorship between Aeneas and Pallas, the reader may, on closer examination of the text of the *Aeneid*, distinguish an erotic dimension to the relationship between these characters. The literary example of the inferred homosexual relationship between Achilles and Patroclus in the *Iliad*¹¹⁸ may well have influenced Virgil’s portrayal of this relationship, which appears to exceed the bounds of mentorship. My conviction that this relationship had erotic undertones is determined primarily by Aeneas’ behaviour at Pallas’ funeral in Book XI of the *Aeneid*. Virgil may have been suggesting that Aeneas and Pallas’ relationship was erotically motivated when he portrayed the bereaved Aeneas wrapping Pallas’ corpse in the cloak made so lovingly for him by Dido.¹¹⁹ The use of this cloak is ostensibly to cover Pallas’ wounds. However, because a former lover of Aeneas made the cloak it could symbolically represent the love Aeneas now has for Pallas. Furthermore, the cloak is obviously Eastern in style according to Virgil’s description in *XI:96-102*, and as seen in chapter 2 (2.1) we have evidence that the decadence of the East was associated with overt homosexual inclinations in men.

In addition to this, Virgil, in my opinion, alludes to the sexual nature of this relationship in Aeneas’ final words to Pallas’ corpse:

¹¹⁸ An illuminating discussion on the homosexual nature of this relationship and how it was viewed by the ancients is given by Morales and Mariscal in their article “The Relationship Between Achilles and Patroclus according to Chariton of Aphrodisias” (2003:292-326).

¹¹⁹ Wiltshire’s contribution “The Man Who Was Not There: Aeneas and Absence in *Aeneid* 9” (1999:174-175) in Perkell’s *Reading Virgil’s Aeneid: An Interpretive Guide* gives an explanation of the status of gifts and the cultural meanings behind gift giving in Roman society.

*When the long file had gone
A distance on its way, Aeneas halted,
Sighed from the heart, and spoke a final word:
“More of the same drear destiny of battle
Calls me back to further tears. Forever
Hail to you, my noble friend, my Pallas,
Hail and farewell forever.”(XI:127-133)*

If one looks critically at Virgil’s subtle insinuations in this passage in addition to the fact that Aeneas wrapped Pallas in his former lover’s cloak, it may be concluded that a romantic connection existed between these men. The most suggestive phrase from the above quote that supports this is Aeneas reference to Pallas as “*my Pallas*” (XI:132). Moreover, he does so in private and he “*Sighed from the heart*” (XI:129). It may be assumed that the reader could associate these descriptions with the loss of a lover.

This relationship would have been socio-culturally appropriate in the eyes of the Roman audience of the *Aeneid*. As was discussed in chapter 1 homosexuality was an accepted practice amongst men, provided Aeneas retained his social superiority in the relationship, and as Pallas’ mentor, this would have been so.

To conclude this chapter’s examination of Aeneas’ personal relationships attention will now be given to Aeneas’ relationship with Turnus.

3.3.3 AENEAS AND TURNUS

Turnus, like Dido, represents an obstacle to Aeneas' successful completion of his mission. We saw in chapter 1 (1.4.1) in the discussion of the Hercules/Cacus episode how Turnus in the Aeneas/Turnus relationship can be compared to Marc Antony in the Augustus/Marc Antony relationship. Just as Turnus presents an obstacle to Aeneas' fulfilment of his destiny to marry Lavinia and establish an Italian colony, so Marc Antony, until the Battle of Actium, stood in the way of fulfilment of the Augustan vision of world domination.

The recklessness with which Turnus approaches battle with Aeneas can be compared to the chaos and disorder the Romans associated with the East. The people of the Augustan Age prioritised orderliness in their lifestyle. By contrast, Turnus, when preparing to confront Aeneas in battle, is consistently portrayed by Virgil as emotional and overwrought, feelings that are conveyed to his army. The opening words of Book VIII demonstrate this:

*That day when Turnus raised the flag of war
Over Laurentum tower, and his trumpets
Blared hoarse-throated, when he laid the whip
On fiery teams, making bright armour clang—
Then hearts were stirred by fear, then all of Latium
Joined in distracted tumult, and young men
Grew bloody-minded, wild. (VIII:1-7)*

The above quote typifies the mood before battle of Turnus and the Rutulians, in direct contrast to Virgil's portrayal of the Roman attitude of orderliness exhibited by Aeneas and the Trojans before battle. This can be demonstrated by Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas in the beginning of Book XI

when he first attends to his ritual prayers and the burial of the dead before resuming battle:

*When Dawn came up from Ocean in the east
Though Pallas' death had left Aeneas shaken,
And duty pressed to give time
For burial of the dead, he first
In early light discharged his ritual vows
As victor to the gods. (XI:1-6)*

Nicol (2001:190-200) proposes the interesting perspective that Turnus can be viewed as a sacrificial victim in the *Aeneid*. He points out that this opinion was evident as early as the time of Servius (2001:190). He suggests that Aeneas declares Pallas is actually offering Turnus as a sacrifice in the closing scene of the *Aeneid* when he says

*This wound will come
From Pallas: Pallas makes this offering
And from your criminal blood extracts his due" (XII:1292-1294).*

Nicol's argument centres on the willingness of Turnus to be offered as a sacrificial victim of Aeneas. This, Nicol demonstrates, would have tied in with the Roman socio-cultural ritual of *devotio* in which one life is sacrificed to save the lives of many (2001:190). He supports the argument with allusions to this ritual made in the text, initially spoken by Turnus in Book XI (585-596) and then by his sister Juturna in Book XII when she criticises the Rutulians for letting Turnus give up his life for them (XII:305-327). Nicol (2001:197) also suggests that Turnus' death at the hands of his rival, Aeneas, gave Aeneas the final sacrificial victim that would secure his later deification. Nicol explains how this theme of sacrifice tied in with the socio-political mood of the Augustan Age:

Virgil, however, by introducing the idea of sacrifice, sees Aeneas' deification, not as a compensation for the death of Turnus, but rather obtained at the price of his death ... the political context of the poem must be remembered. The theme of peace and reconciliation is crucial to the *Aeneid* and the stress on it will have reflected Augustus' own concerns in the aftermath of the Civil War (Nicol 2001:198).

The theme of peace and reconciliation is taken further by Nicol (2001:198) when he points out that Trojans and Rutulians will make up the new Italian race. They would therefore have both been ancestrally linked to the audience of Virgil's *Aeneid*.

Especially significant within the context of this thesis is Galinsky's (1996:211) interpretation of Turnus' death in the *Aeneid* through the perspective of the ancient Roman historian, Servius. Galinsky reports that from Servius' perspective that Aeneas' slaying of Turnus is culturally appropriate. He says "Servius ... clearly saw (*ad Aen* 12:949) that it was *ultio foederis rupti*—revenge for the breaking of the treaty, a violation of divine and human law for which there was no clemency in Rome" (Galinsky, 1996:211). Galinsky later compares this Roman cultural approval of exacting revenge for transgressions to how Augustus built the temple of *Mars Ultor* as a symbolic token of the revenge he exacted upon Julius Caesar's assassins and the Parthians (1996:211).

An alternative perspective through which one can view the relationship between Aeneas and Turnus is the Augustan Age perception of what type of kings they were. Cairns (1989:1-28) gives an illuminating account of the

socio-cultural context of kings in Augustan Age society.¹²⁰ He suggests that while the term king held negative connotations for Republican Age Romans because of the threat of tyranny associated with it, in the Augustan Age this term was slowly becoming socially acceptable, especially amongst the more educated class of Roman with whom Virgil associated (1989:3). As early as Book I (739) Aeneas' royalty is mentioned. I believe Cairn's argument makes a valid case for this label being a positive attribute that enhances Virgil's depiction of Aeneas as a leader while realistically reflecting the socio-cultural realities of Augustan Age Roman society. In contrast to the positive picture Virgil presents of Aeneas' kingship, Turnus is portrayed consistently as a bad king according to Cairns (1989:68). He is only called a king as late as Book VIII (23-24).

It can be argued that the disparate portrayal of leadership models that Virgil bestows on Aeneas and Turnus highlights the socio-cultural relevance of how Turnus' model of leadership is outdated in the Augustan Age era of cultural change and innovation. If readers view Virgil's depictions of Turnus' heroism from this perspective they will probably realize that ultimately his death is directly attributable to his repetitive displays of Homeric style arrogance. His manifestations of arrogance can be interpreted as Homeric in nature as they are evocative of Homeric superheroes such as Achilles in the *Iliad*. The reader of Book VII (581-591) will be able to discern that when Allecto initially attempts to goad Turnus into war by taunting him about the humiliation he will suffer if he loses Lavinia, she appeals to the Homeric heroic facets of his nature.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Braund provides further insight into this issue by suggesting "The *Aeneid* then, can be set in the context of the ancient debate about kingship, focussing upon the qualities of 'good' and 'bad' rulers" (1997:216).

¹²¹ The reader will be probably reminded at this point, of how Agamemnon humiliated Achilles by withholding the spoils of war due to him in the *Iliad*.

*“Turnus, can you bear to see
So many efforts wasted, spilt like water,
And your own rule made over to the Dardan
Colonists? The king withholds your bride,
Withholds the dowry that you fought and bled for.
Go into danger and be laughed at for it!
Mow down the Tuscan ranks, shelter the Latins
Under your peace-pact! So? These messages—
While you lay in the stillness of the night—
Saturn’s almighty daughter ordered me
Herself to bring before you. (VII:581-591)*

This loss of honour would be repugnant to a Homeric warrior. However, Turnus’ arrogance is such an entrenched trait in his personality¹²² that he replies to her warning thus:

*“News of the squadron making port on Tiber
Has not failed, as you think, to reach my ears.
Do not imagine me afraid. (VII:604-606)*

Turnus’ most critical act of overconfidence, however, remains his arrogant wearing of Pallas’ sword belt in his final confrontation with Aeneas. I suggest that Turnus’ death is a direct result of this final mistake in the flaunting of his arrogance in Book XII, and not reflective of Aeneas’ superior combat skills or necessarily the ending Virgil would have been ultimately satisfied with had he lived long enough to revise it.

¹²² Turnus’ character portrayal I believe is significant for the obvious flaws in his nature that it shows when compared to Aeneas.

3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter focuses on the socio-cultural connotations of Virgil's portrayal of Aeneas' relationships without emphasizing how these relationships advance the plot of the *Aeneid*. This stance has the potential to open up deeper insights into the influential social factors present in Virgil's social context. The 21st century is so far removed chronologically and culturally from the Augustan Age that many of the finer cultural distinctions that influenced ancient relationships are misunderstood or overlooked by modern readers. It is only through understanding and acknowledging the impact that Virgil's social context had on his composition of the *Aeneid* that we can fully appreciate the extent to which this affected his portrayal of Aeneas' relationships.

CONCLUSION

The value of making an effort to consider ancient literature from the cultural perspective of the author that penned it should not be underestimated. Furthermore, there are probably few texts from the ancient Roman world that better demonstrate how one's social context influences a poet's perspectives than Virgil's *Aeneid*.

I believe the added dimensions that the modern reader's perspective acquires through the consideration of the influence that Virgil's social context had on his composition of the *Aeneid*, are significant enough to warrant renewed attention to the subject. This thesis has shown through various examples, and in various ways, how the reader's understanding of Virgil's characterization of Aeneas is irrevocably determined by his socio-cultural environment. The advantage to the modern reader of considering the influence of culture upon the composition of the *Aeneid* is considerable, as I believe that through this approach we can come closer to appreciating Virgil's intent.

This thesis has shown that the cultural appropriateness of Virgil's *Aeneid* for Augustan Age Rome should not be denied. The skill and elegance with which Virgil adapted an essentially Homeric theme into a uniquely Roman epic prototype which satisfied the cultural parameters of the Augustan Age while manipulating time differences makes the *Aeneid* a perennial masterpiece of Western literature.

Contemporary trends in scholarship that give priority to a multidisciplinary approach to research, will most likely dominate in the future, leading Virgilian scholars in diverse directions that may possibly bear relevance to the interminable moral dilemmas of life that have faced

all cultures in every era. As a consequence of adopting a multidisciplinary approach researchers in the 21st century have become ever more sensitive and appreciative of the richness, diversity and influence of culture in ancient literary works such as the *Aeneid*. Given the appreciation in modern times of appropriate cultural contextualizing in literature Virgilian scholarship will probably in future take even greater cognisance of the role that Virgil's socio-cultural environment played in his composition of the *Aeneid*.

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