AENEAS’ HUMAN SACRIFICE

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It is the main purpose of this article to demonstrate that the human sacrifice that Aeneas prepares (Aeneid 10.517–20; 11.81–2) must have been intended as an extremely serious attack on Aeneas and also Octavian. I shall begin by citing references to human sacrifice by ancient Greek and then Roman authors. These will show the extent of the revulsion with which it was regarded. They will also serve later to put certain aspects of the Aeneid into perspective. It will then be demonstrated that a very damaging comment is also being made on Octavian’s activities in the civil wars.

To begin with four passages in Plutarch; in Agesilaus 6.4ff. he says that Agesilaus at Aulis seemed to hear a voice in his sleep telling him to imitate Agamemnon’s sacrifice of Iphigeneia. On waking he said he would not imitate Agamemnon’s ignorance, but ‘would honour the goddess with what it was reasonable for her, being a goddess, to take pleasure in...’: a deer. Similarly, in his Pelopidas 20–22 Plutarch records that in his sleep Pelopidas was ordered to sacrifice a virgin to dead girls. This seemed to him to be δεινόν and παράνομον. A horse was sent by divine powers, and they sacrificed it ‘rejoicing’. In Marcellus 3 he says that the Romans were terrified by the Gallic threat and ‘the καινότατον of their sacrifices... showed their fear. For their normal practices are not ἐκτυφλα but they tend to be Greek-like and gentle in religion...’. Nevertheless, on this occasion they made a human sacrifice. Afterwards a different ceremony replaced it. In Sulla 32.2 he states that the murder of M. Marius Gratidianus was regarded as καινότατον of the atrocities committed after Sulla’s victory. Although Plutarch does not say that this was a sacrifice, that is obvious from the Roman descriptions of it, which will be discussed below. On the analogy of the Marcellus, καινότατον here must mean primarily ‘un-Graeco-Roman’. But it also strongly suggested something violent and evil.

Especially important for understanding how Vergil’s contemporaries reacted to Aeneas’ human sacrifice is the way other human sacrifices from the time of the Trojan War were treated in later Greek and Roman literature. The two most frequently mentioned, those of Polyxena and Iphigeneia, will be examined. Pausanias (10.25.10) says that the former was a common subject of painting and poetry. He also says (1.22.6) that Homer’s not mentioning such a brutal [ἀμώδης] act was good. Euripides devoted lines 59 to 656 of his Hecuba to it, showing how cruel it was and the misery it caused. In the Greek Anthology 16.150.5–6 is the following description of a painting of Polyxena: ‘In her suffering she prays for her..."
life. In the virgin’s eyes lies the entire Trojan War.’

By far the most commonly described mythological sacrifice is that of Iphigeneia. It is always treated as abominable and ultimately fatal to its perpetrator: Agamemnon. The longest description is in Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* 199–249. As E. Fraenkel points out, ‘Almost every phrase . . . conveys the idea of something utterly unnatural and horrible.’ 5 For instance, in lines 219–220 Agamemnon is ἕρενός πυέαν δυσεβήτη τροπαίαν ἀναγγον ἀνίερον. It is also significant that in most versions Iphigeneia was saved at the last moment by divine intervention, which was a common motif in such stories. 6 When Euripides portrayed her after her rescue, among the Taurians, he has her say (385–91) that no god could want a human sacrifice; the Taurians are murderers and attribute their fault to Artemis. Homer omitted any reference to the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, perhaps deliberately [Murray, note 6 above, 131 (note 4)].

The sacrifices of Polyxena and Iphigeneia (both as victim and agent) were also mentioned by many Roman authors. Ennius (Scenica 202, Vahlen’) emphasized the merciless bloodiness of the former. In Seneca’s *Troades* (289) it is a ‘facinus atrox’; and in 1154–64 Pyrrhus was ‘piger’ to kill her, both Greeks and Trojans wept, and finally ‘the savage [saevus] mound drank all her blood.’ Ovid (Met. 13.441–532) dwelt at length on Polyxena’s nobility and heroism, the agony her sacrifice caused her mother, and the savagery of Achilles’ ghost in demanding it (442–4, 449, 503–4). Similarly, Catullus 64.362–70 emphasized its brutality and presented it as the culmination of Achilles’ vicious, brutal deeds at Troy (349ff.). This is especially significant since Catullus 64 had a tremendous influence on the *Aeneid*. 8 This influence is obvious in the passage under consideration. In Catullus 64.353–5 Achilles ‘velut messor . . . prosternet corpora ferro.’ Reaping as a metaphor for killing occurs sometimes in Greek literature. 9 But it is very rare in Latin. The *Thi.L* gives no instance for ‘messor’ (perhaps it read ‘cultor’ at Catullus 64.353). For ‘messis’ (8, 857.64–8) it lists Cicero, *Parod.* 46, which refers at least as much to amassing money as killing, and Macrobius, *Sat.* 5.15.6, which refers to Homer’s manner of description. For ‘meto’ (8, 890.35ff.) the earliest example it gives is *Aeneid* 10.513 (‘metit gladio’), at the beginning of Aeneas’ berserk slaughter, which is followed in four lines by his taking captives to sacrifice. The unfamiliarity of the metaphor is clear from Porphyrio’s explanation of Horace, *Ep.* 2.2.178 (‘meti Orcus’), ‘Amputat: et est translatio a segete ac messoribus.’ So it would be perverse not to recognize the direct influence of Catullus 64.353 on *Aeneid* 10.513.

As for Iphigeneia, Ennius emphasized her innocence (Scenica 226, Vahlen’). Cicero (*Off.* 3.95) described her sacrifice as a ‘taetrum facinus’ and added as an example of promises that should not be kept. For Horace (*Sermo* 2.3.199–223), it was an example of insanity; for Juvenal (12.115–20), of someone who has no scruples. Ovid (Met. 13.184–8) has Odysseus say, ‘dueraque iubent Agamemnona sortes inneritam saevae natam maciare Dianae’ and ‘ego mite parentis ingenium verbis . . . verti’. At the end of Odysseus’ speech Ovid neatly contrasts him as ‘disertus’ with Achilles as ‘fortis’ (383). In *Tristia* 4.4.59–
Ovid illustrates the cruel barbarity of the people among whom he lives by their proximity to 'ubi Taurica dira caede . . . spargitur ara', but Artemis hates the 'crudelia sacra'. Obviously of special relevance for the \textit{Aeneid} are the four instances where the sacrifice of Iphigeneia (as victim or agent) is characterized as 'impium'. Lucretius (1.83) used it as an example of the 'scelerosa atque impia facta' that religion has caused.\textsuperscript{13} Ovid (\textit{Met.} 12.29–30) said about Agamemnon's decision, 'pietatem publica causa . . . vicit', and (\textit{Pont.} 3.2.81) described Iphigeneia among the Taurians as 'pia virgo', just after she said to Orestes and Pylades, 'non ego crudelis . . . sacra suo facio barbariora loco'. (77–8, \textit{cf.} 98). In Seneca's \textit{Agamemnon}, Calchas shuddered at 'recedentes fucos' (167–8) and Aulis drove from its port 'impias rates' (173).

Allegations made by Roman authors of actual human sacrifices will now be examined. Livy (7.15.10) used the word 'foeditas' to describe the sacrifice of 307 Roman captives. In 22.57.6 he describes a Roman human sacrifice as a 'minime Romanum sacrum'. In fact, this sacrifice probably never occurred (Reid, note 3 above, 37–40). Cicero used the Gallic practice of human sacrifice to discredit the religious oaths of Gallic witnesses in his \textit{Pro Fonteio}. He says (30) that they differ from all other peoples because of their hostility to religion. He provides as proofs two acts of terrible sacrilege. Then (31),

‘Prostremo his quicquam sanctum ac religiosum videri potest, qui . . .
humanis hostis eorum aras ac templum funestant? . . . Quis enim ignorant
eos usque ad hanc diem retinere illam immanem ac barbaram consuetudinem
hominum immolandorum. Quam ob rem qui fide, qui \textit{pietate} existimatis
esse eos . . .?’

In his \textit{Pro Flacco} 95–6 and \textit{In Pisonem} 16, Cicero employs the allegation of intended human sacrifice to the dead in order to make his opponents' intentions seem as horrible as possible. In the latter he gives this as an example of the 'odium inclusum nefariis sensibus impiorum'.

In the two paragraphs above, there are six instances, five among Vergil's contemporaries, of human sacrifice described as 'impium' or contrary to 'pietas'. Furthermore, Greek authors often applied to it the Greek equivalents, δοκοεβής (e.g. Aeschylus, \textit{A.} 219) and δοκοβής (e.g. Apollodorus, \textit{Library} 3.8.1). The striking anomaly of 'pius' Aeneas making a human sacrifice and often being 'inclemens', 'furiosus', and 'iratus' was pointed out by Lactantius (\textit{Div. Instit.} 5.10). In view of the passages cited above it is unreasonable to attribute this to a change in the meaning of 'pietas' after Vergil's time or a perversion of its meaning for polemical purposes. Of course, Lactantius' explanation, that despite his erudition Vergil was ignorant of the nature of 'pietas', is untenable.

The many Roman references to the death by torture of M. Marius Gratidianus as an example of the utmost savagery are also relevant, since he was slaughtered over the grave of Q. Lutatius Catulus in revenge for the latter's death. Examples are Q. Cicero (\textit{Comm. Pet.} 10), Sallust (\textit{Hist.} 1.55.14), Livy (\textit{Per.} 88), Lucan (2.173–93), and Seneca (\textit{Ira} 3.18.1–2), who wishes that such 'saevitia' and 'suppliciorum irarumque barbaria' had remained foreign and not passed over
into Roman practices. Lucan and Seneca say that Catulus' spirit did not want such an offering. It is true that Aeneas does not torture his victims. But there are eight of them and they are common soldiers, whose names are not even mentioned, and who can in no way be reasonably held responsible for Pallas' death. That is not true of M. Marius, whom Seneca calls 'a man who set a bad example'.

This point is significant. The ancient Greeks and Romans felt the same moral revulsion we do at punishment being inflicted on those innocent of the deed punished. For instance, according to Appian (B.C.5.14), Octavian's land confiscations were widely denounced as being more unjust than the proscription since they were directed not against enemies but against those who did no harm. This feeling extended even to animals. Zoilus of Amphipolis criticized Homer because in *Iliad* 1.50 Apollo attacked the mules and dogs, who were innocent of the Greeks' wrongdoing. Zoilus was notorious for his carping criticism of Homer. However, this charge was taken seriously, as the two explanations recorded by the scholiasts show: οὐρημα meant guards (cf. Aristotle *Poetics* 1461A); and the god, because he loves humans, was trying to scare the Greeks to change their attitude.

However, the *Iliad* provided what is clearly the literary model of Aeneas' human sacrifice. In 18.336–7 Achilles announces his intention of slaughtering twelve Trojans at Patroclus' funeral pyre. In 21.27–32, he takes his intended victims captive. He repeats his intention in 23.22–3. In 23.175–7 he makes the sacrifice. Except for the much debated clause, κακά...μηδέτε οργα (23.176), Homer does not comment directly on the sacrifice. However, scholiast T (on 23.174–6) interpreted it as illustrating the brutality [ονειδισμον] of Achilles' nature (cf. Pausanias 1.22.6, discussed above), which Patroclus' death made even more savage. This is significant because Vergil usually avoided what the Homeric scholia objected to. Furthermore, Zeus expresses disapproval of Achilles' intention (18.357–9).

Moreover, Homer has Achilles constantly link his human sacrifice with the mutilation or exposure of Hector's corpse (18.334–8; 23.20–23, 180–3). Similarly, Plato (*Rep.*.391 B-C) mentions them together, as incidents that should be said to be false since they show arrogance to men and gods. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Homer's attitude and the attitude he intended his audience to have to Achilles' human sacrifice was similar to that for Achilles' treatment of Hector's body. Indeed, if there was any difference the former must have been regarded as worse, since its victims were totally innocent common soldiers, whereas Hector killed Patroclus and boasted that vultures would devour his corpse (16.836; cf.17.125–7; 18.176–7, and 155ff in Zenodotus' text).

For the sake of brevity, my discussion of Homer's attitude to Achilles' treatment of Hector's body will be restricted to an outline of C. Segal's excellent analysis. The ancient Greeks regarded the mutilation of bodies as an abomination (p.22). Homer concentrated attention on the agony of the family of the man whose corpse was threatened with maltreatment (pp.17, 29, 30, 33–4, 40, 43–7,
61–3, 68), and made threats of mutilation of corpses an indication of unusual savagery and lawlessness (pp. 9, 14–15, 19–21, 31, especially 38–42). He described Achilles’ intentions for Hector’s body as δεικῶα ἔργα (e.g. 22.395; 23.24 [right after mentioning the human sacrifice]); and ‘In all cases where ergon aetikes refers to defeat . . . it is the person who “performed” . . . [it] who is discredited’ (p.15, (note 2); cf. pp. 18, 29, 34, 37, 41–2, 57). The gods pity Hector’s corpse and attack Achilles’ brutality (pp.57–60; as do the human characters, pp.61–3). They protect it, thus defeating Achilles’ intention (pp. 54–5, 57; cf. p.67 [of Niobe]). The gods also point out that the maltreatment of Hector’s lifeless body is gratuitous and futile (p.59; cf. p.69). Furthermore, the appearance of Patroclus’ spirit shows Achilles that the dead are not concerned with revenge; so Achilles has been merely satisfying his own selfish desire for vengeance (cf. Iliad 18.107–11) and, by so doing, has neglected what he should have done for Patroclus: bury him (p.51). Achilles himself realizes the futility of his revenge (pp.61, 64). At the end he makes sure that Hector will be properly buried (p.65) and shows sympathy and respect for Priam (pp.66–7). Thus the desires and feelings of the Trojans and Hector’s family are fulfilled or assuaged (pp.68–71). The Iliad concludes on a calm, serene note, resolving the fury of the preceding books (pp.70–1; cf.51–7, 60–61).

Several of the above points are of particular relevance to Aeneas’ human sacrifice. The view that revenge for a dead person is not desired by him and loathed by the gods is expressed in many of the ancient accounts of human sacrifice discussed above (also Frazer, note 6 above, Vol.I, 390–1). Of special significance is that Catullus, whose Poem 64 (with its sacrifice of Polyxena to the dead Achilles) had such a strong influence on Vergil, assumed that there was no life after death (5.5–6) and that the dead do not appreciate what the living do for them (101.4). Even more pertinent is that Vergil himself in several key passages pointedly denies that the dead care for offerings. Aeneid 6.212–35 is a long, detailed, solemn description of the funeral ceremony for Misenus. Aeneas is ‘pius’ for performing it (232). But Vergil introduces it with ‘cineri ingrato suprema ferebant’ (213; cf. Copa 35). Then Anchises ends his revelation of Rome’s future with reference to the ‘inane munus’ for Marcellus (6.885–6), which Donatus (ad lac.) points out is astonishing in the mouth of a dead person. Most significant is that Aeneas describes the funeral rites for Pallas, at which he makes the human sacrifice, as ‘vanus honor’ (11.52=61).

It is also significant that the Iliad concludes on a calm, serene note because of Achilles’ generosity to Priam, which Vergil has Priam remember with admiration (A.2.540–3). This makes it clear that Achilles’ savagery in Books 18 to 23, including his human sacrifice, is a temporary aberration from his normal, humane conduct. The end of the Aeneid is clearly designed to remind the reader of the end of the Iliad. Turnus is Hector’s counterpart. His killing Pallas causes Aeneas’ furious desire for revenge; and Aeneas’ brutality against others, including his human sacrifice, is subordinate to his desire for retaliation against Turnus (10.514–15). The same is true of Hector’s killing Patroclus and Achilles’ revenge.
(18.114–15; 20.75–8). Furthermore, Hector is the only character in the *Iliad* to plead for the decent treatment of his corpse (Segal, note 14 above, 38–9), thus foreshadowing Book 24, and he pleads in the name of Achilles' parents (22.338). Turnus is the only character in the *Aeneid* to beg for his corpse. His first argument in support of his request is his father's old age, and he drives that point home by mentioning Aeneas's father (12.932–4). That clearly recalls Priam's misery, which is described so poignantly in *Iliad* 24, the fact that Priam's only argument is a pathetic speech in which he appeals to Achilles to 'remember your own father, the same age as me' (24.486–506; cf. 22.420–1; *Aeneid* 2.560–1) and that Achilles pities specifically his old age (24.516; cf. 22.419–20). Finally, the description of Turnus' death evokes Hector's (22.362–3).

But the crucial point is that that is the last line of the *Aeneid*. It provides the most brutal ending of any extant work of Greek of Latin literature, 16 and its savagery is heightened by its evocation of the end of the *Iliad*. Indeed, Aeneas at the end of the *Aeneid* changes in the opposite direction from Achilles. At first he is inclined to compassion, but then becomes 'furiis accensus et ira terribilis'; and the last word to describe him is 'fervidus', which is very emphatic at the beginning of a line and end of a sentence.

Aeneas' human sacrifice had two immediately recognizable models, the literary one in the *Iliad* and a historical one: Octavian's alleged sacrifice of captives from Perusia at the altar of Julius Caesar in 40 B.C., when Vergil and most of the original readers of the *Aeneid* were already adults. These two prototypes were linked by the fact that Octavian justified his activities during the civil wars as revenge for Julius Caesar and cited Achilles' revenge for Patroclus as his model. 17 Vergil could not have recalled an incident that was more detrimental to Augustus' reputation, as an analysis of the three sources in which it is mentioned will show.

The first is Seneca's *De Clementia*. There (1.11.2) he contrasts Nero's 'vera clementia . . . quae non saevitiae paenitentia coepit' (cf. *Suetonius Aug*. 27.2) and had no stain of murder, with Augustus' 'clementia'. Augustus was forgiving to his public and private enemies after he had secured sole power (1.9–10); that is, after Actium, the defeat of Sextus Pompey, and 'Perusias aras et proscriptiones'; for during the civil wars, he 'caluit, arsit ira, multa fecit ad quae invitus oculos retorquebat' (1.11.1). Augustus' regret for his early brutality and unwillingness to look back on it was caused not only by whatever guilt he might have felt but also because it conflicted with his propaganda of always having been 'clemens'. 18

The second source is *Suetonius* *Augustus* 15. In this chapter and in 13 he records two other deeds that Octavian committed against defeated enemies which are identical to those Aeneas perpetrates while avenging Pallas and which no other character in the *Aeneid* does: refusing to spare people who beg for their lives and gloating that a corpse will not be buried but will be eaten by animals. 19 But in *Suetonius' account Octavian's acts are regarded as hideous. Indeed, *Suetonius* report of Octavian's civil war activities relied very heavily on anti-Octavian propaganda and most, if not all, of these deeds were probably invented
or exaggerated by his enemies. Augustus later asserted that he never refused burial to those he had had killed (Ulpian, *Dig* 48.24.1) and that he had spared all defeated citizens who sought mercy (*Res Gestae* 3.1).

The third source is Dio 48.14.4. He also was clearly following anti-Octavian sources here because he mentions the fire that destroyed Perusia without explanation, thus leaving the impression that it was caused by Octavian’s army. But Appian (*B.C.* 5.49) says that the fire was caused by a citizen of Perusia. Appian was not very pro-Octavian in this passage because he states (as opposed to Velleius Paterculus 2.74.4) that Octavian intended that Perusia be plundered.

Seneca’s reference shows that the story of Octavian’s human sacrifice was believed widely enough for it to be mentioned as a fact by someone who wanted to emphasize his brutality during the civil wars. But Suetonius and Dio, who record many other brutal acts of Octavian as facts, report his human sacrifice only as an allegation (‘Scribunt quidam’, ‘λόγος τε ἔχει’). It was nearly certainly fabricated by Octavian’s enemies. A large amount of anti-Octavian propaganda survived his victory in the civil wars and was preserved in historical accounts. Furthermore, the Greeks and Romans, and especially the Romans of the late Republic, had a strong tendency to attack their political opponents with wild accusations which often had no regard for the truth or even a pretence of plausibility. Indeed, these allegations were often governed by literary conventions. Ritual human sacrifice has been a very common false accusation from antiquity to the twentieth century. The number 300, given by Suetonius and Dio as the number of Octavian’s victims, was definitely conventional.

As has been pointed out in the discussion of Suetonius, Augustus later took pains to refute the charges that he was brutal during the civil wars (also, e.g., *Suet.Aug.* 27.4). His apologists also implicitly denied that he ever committed anything like human sacrifice. For instance, Dio (56.40.6.; 41.6) records Tiberius asserting that Augustus punished wrongdoers ἀνθρωπόν τὸν. Scholiast M on Aeschylus, *Agam.* 247–8 described human sacrifice as ἀνθρωπόν (cf. Livy 1.28.11 and Varro, *apud* Non. 443L, on the punishment of Mettius Fufetius). It is probable that Tiberius’ eulogy was derived from the same source as Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.9 and that Dio followed that source more closely than Tacitus. Also, Dio (47.7.2) argues that Octavian was not brutal during the proscription because he was by nature not ὀμοίος, the same word Pausanius (1.22.6) and scholiast T on *Iliad* 23.176 used to describe human sacrifice.

Just as no one praised the proscription and land distribution, not even those who made them (*Tac. Ann.* 1.10), so no ancient author tried to explain Octavian’s brutal deeds in the civil wars so that they would redound to his credit. The closest an apologist came to this was Ovid’s (*Fasti* 3.707–10) vague reference to the soil of Philippi ‘white with scattered bones’, but that was only a ‘first beginning’. Instead, four approaches were used by those who did not want Octavian’s savage acts during the civil wars to create an unfavourable impression of him. The first has already been mentioned: denying that they occurred. The second was following what seemed to have been a Roman proverb, ‘Optima civilis belli..."
defensio oblivio est' (Seneca, Con. 10.3.5). So Appian, in a long and generally very pro-Octavian account of the surrender of Perusia, drawn largely from Augustus' Memoirs (B.C.5.45–48), mentioned the murder of the city council as only a short parenthesis between two acts of clemency (c.48). Augustus himself, in his Res Gestae, ran through his activities in the civil wars in thirty-four words (2–3, 1; see Syme, note 4 above, 522–3). Indeed, according to Dio (54.16.6), Augustus recommended forgetting ‘the terrible deeds that the civil wars brought forth’. However, their horror was burned too deeply into the Roman memory for them to be forgotten, even generations later, if someone wanted to attack Augustus (Suet. Cal.23.1) or if similar catastrophes seemed imminent (Tac. Hist.1.50). The third approach was to argue that Octavian was forced to do what he did. The fourth was that Octavian’s civil war record was outweighed by his later, constructive; achievements, especially bringing peace (e.g. Dio 56.44.1–2). So after he had defeated Sextus Pompey, Octavian announced that peace had been restored (Appian, B.C. 5.130); and nearly immediately after the defeat of Antony the most fulsome praises of Octavian were dependent on the hope that he would restore internal peace after the horrors of the civil wars. Of course, these defenses of Octavian did not disappear with antiquity. For instance, V. Pöschl uses the third and fourth.

The Aeneid, however, controverts all four justifications. As has been pointed out, it has the most brutal ending of any extant work of ancient literature, with no promise of a better future, which was common in conclusions of works of Greek and Roman literature and would have been very easy to provide for the Aeneid (note 16). Furthermore, it is made perfectly clear that Aeneas is in no way forced to commit any of the vicious deeds he does while avenging Pallas, nor can he hope that they will bring any social benefit (10.528–9; 12.936–8). Moreover, the Aeneid dwells on these deeds. For instance, in addition to describing the capture of the victims for human sacrifice (10.517–20), Vergil brings them back gratuitously in 11.81–2. This is, of course, modelled on Iliad 23.175–7. But that is very attenuate for a Homeric description of a sacrifice (Murray, note 6, 141), even though it occurs in by far the longest description of a funeral in Homer. However, Vergil, as opposed to Homer, had a ‘not very infrequent practice of passing over even a principal fact sub silentio’. Vergil especially avoided describing violent acts when he did not want to leave an impression of their brutality. An excellent example is Aeneid 2.382, where, as Servius observed, the imperfect ‘abibat’ indicates that Androgeos did not get away.

Furthermore, had Vergil not wanted to bring Aeneas’ human sacrifice so strongly to the reader’s attention, he would have had abundant precedents. For example, in Aeschylus’ Agamemnon when Agamemnon resolves to sacrifice Iphigeneia, he avoids mentioning his intention, and the chorus makes a point of not describing it (247–8). Scholiast M (ad loc) explains their silence as caused by the sacrifice being ἄναβλησθηκέναι. Similarly, in Euripides’ I. T. 37 and 41 Iphigeneia says that she will not describe the sacrifices in which she participates, which are ἀρρητα. Also similar is Ovid, Tristia 4.4.68: Iphigeneia ‘sacra deae coluit
qua, accumque. It was also a much admired practice in paintings of Agamemnon’s sacrifice not to show his face."

Moreover, in addition to dwelling on Aeneas' actual human sacrifice, Vergil strongly suggests in 10.541 and 12.949 that Aeneas' killing someone in revenge for Pallas is metaphorically a human sacrifice. He does this by using the verb 'immolo', which is also used in 10.519. In the latter occurrence the victim is Turnus; in the former it is

‘... Haemonides, Phoebi Triviaeae sacersdos,
infula cui sacra redimibat tempora viita,
totus conlucens vestes atque insignibus albis.’ (537-9)

Vergil must have intended that the sacrificial meaning of 'immolo' be felt very strongly in both instances. It had never been used metaphorically before in extant Latin literature (ThLL 7.489.61ff.), and the ancient commentators pointed out its literal meaning in both passages. Servius glossed 12.949 with 'tamquam hostiam' and 10.541 with 'quasi victimam, ut ille consueverat, nam hoc verbo ad sacerdotis nomen adlusit.' Similarly, Donatus observed there, 'pulchre non occisum, sed immolatum dixit, adlusens ex officio ac nomine sacerdotis.' This is significant. Priests wore woollen headbands while sacrificing (e.g. Aeneid 3.369-71), as did their victims (e.g. Georgie 3.486-7). Vergil and other Roman poets mentioned them on human offerings to emphasize that a perverse sacrifice was taking place. Furthermore, this is not the only place in the Aeneid where they emphasize the terrible irony that the sacrificial official, who usually controls them, becomes the victim. R. Austin remarks on 4.637 ('pia ... viita'), 'a ghastly detail here, when Dido is herself to be the sacrifice'; and while Laocoon was sacrificing at his altar (2.202), he became 'perfusus sanie vittas atroque veneno' (221). It is noteworthy that the aspects of the Aeneid pointed out in this paragraph belong to a literary tradition that a work which refers to a human sacrifice has aberrant sacrificial imagery elsewhere, to show that the human sacrifice is part of a general perversity.

The description of Haemonides is also deliberately disturbing in four more ways. First, Vergil must have assumed that his readers would remember that all the trouble in the Iliad began because a priest of Apollo carrying a woollen headband was insulted (1.14,28). Second, the woollen fillet was regarded as sacrosanct (Aeneid 2.167-70, 296-7). Third, the only other 'Phoebi sacersdos' who is killed in the Aeneid is Panthus, who 'sacra manu victosque deos ... ipse trahit' (2.319-21), but, 'nec te tua plurima, Panthu, labentem pietas nec Apollinis infula texit' (429-30). Fourth, the worship of Apollo, and to a lesser extent of Diana, was an extremely important part of Augustus' propaganda, and this is very evident in Vergil's poetry and that of his contemporaries.

There is one more significant way in which Aeneas' human sacrifice undermines both what is stated to be one of Aeneas' essential characteristics and Octavian's civil war propaganda. Aeneas is supposed to be the archetypal Roman. In 6.851 Anchises addresses him in the singular as 'tu Romane', when telling him to spare the defeated. He is 'pater Aeneas, Romanae stirpis origo' (12.166). However, as
has been shown, the ancient Greeks and Romans regard human sacrifice as fundamentally un-Greek/Roman, 'barbarian', a ὄπισθα ἥνη (Pausanias 7.19.8: cf. Plutarch, Mor. 284C). Furthermore, Aeneas captures the victims to be sacrificed while he is symbolically recreating Octavian's civil war activities. But a basic aspect of Octavian's civil war propaganda was that he was defending Roman and Italian values against Antony's foreign conspiracy. This is reflected in Aeneid 8.678–728. But it was typical of Vergil to undermine his own assertions. Even Servius noted this (on Ecl. 8.108 and A. 6.893). It has already been pointed out for Aeneid 6.213; and this entire article has shown how powerfully and in how many ways Aeneas' human sacrifice accomplishes this purpose.

Addendum

Silius Italicus 4. 765–797 contains a very important illustration of the Roman attitude to human sacrifice. Especially significant is that it is contrary to 'pietas' (791, 794), it results from ignorance of the gods' nature (793, for note 2), and is 'infandum dictu' (767, for note 34). Silius 11. 249–51 contains a false accusation of intended human sacrifice to make one's enemy seem as evil as possible.

P. Hardie, 'The Sacrifice of Iphigeneia . . .' CQ 34 (1984) 406–12 offers a valuable analysis of several points raised in this article.

NOTES

1. These will be far from complete. Porphyry, De Abstinentia 2.53–6 provides a long list of putative human sacrifices as examples of κακία κατ’ τίνων ἰδιών κακία.
2. The reading ἢμαθίαν is preferable here because that was commonly said to be a cause for human sacrifice (e.g., note 1 above and Euripides, I.T. 386[abstract for concrete. Modern scholars have proposed needless emendations for it]). The copyist probably would not have known this, and could have been led to write ἀνάμειαν by the famous description in Aeschylus, A. 228–46.
3. J. Reid, 'Human Sacrifices at Rome . . .', JRS 2 (1912) 34–45, especially 36. Human sacrifice was often contrasted with mildness (e.g. Pausanias 7.19.4–9 and passim in this article). Cf. Livy 1.28.11: the punishment of Mettius Fufetius was 'a great abomination' (foeditas; cf. 7.15.10, of a human sacrifice) and 'the first and last such punishment among Romans, of a type that forgets human laws. In other cases it can be boasted that no people has more mild punishments.' It is significant that Vergil included this episode on Aeneas' shield (8.642–5).
11. Among Cicero's contemporaries, or near contemporaries, these Gallic human sacrifices are not used of Achilles in the Iliad. The closest is threshing (20.495–502).

10. Lucretius must be using 'impius' here with a commonly accepted meaning for his effective. In view of Epicurus' assertion (apud Diogenes Laertius 10.123), 'the δορής [= 'impius'] is not the one who denies the gods of the masses, but he who imposes on the gods the masses' opinions', it is possible that 'impius' here has a religious connotation, as it does in line 81. But the subsequent description emphasizes lack of pity as the crime. Vergil sometimes used 'piaetas' to mean 'pity' (e.g. 9.493). Indeed, the wide range of connotations of 'piaetas' was probably a major reason for Vergil choosing it as the fundamental ethical concept of the Aeneid. He loved words that are ambiguous and multi-vocal [S. Farron, 'Dido Aversa...'] AClass 27 (1984) 83–90, especially 83).


12. Among Cicero's contemporaries, or near contemporaries, these Gallic human sacrifices are mentioned by Diodorus Siculus (5.31.3) as a παραδοξος και ἠπερος σώματος, by Strabo (Geog. 19.3.12) a μυστικός και ἐλέητος τομή κορών, and by Pomponius Mela (3.18) as 'impuls'. The 12th two say that the Romans abolished them. That probably happened as soon as they conquered Gaul, or shortly thereafter (R. Syme, Tacitus, Oxford 1958, 457). Cf. Plutarch, Mor. 283 F, on the Roman suppression of human sacrifice in Spain.


17. On avenging Caesar as Octavian's goal, see S. Farron, 'Aeneid VI, 826–835...'. AClass 23 (1980) 53–68, especially 64; and R. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, A Commentary on Horace: Odes, Book I, Oxford 1970, on 2, 44. According to Appian (B.C. 3.13), when Octavian first declared his intention of avenging Julius Caesar, he quoted Iliad 18.98–9 (at the beginning of Achilles' resolve for revenge). There Achilles is talking about aiding Patroclus when he was dying. But Plaito's Apology 28D shows that it was understood to refer to avenging his death; and Appian says that Octavian proclaimed as his model especially Achilles' following deed.


21. Vergil's contemporaries must have regarded Aeneas' brutality to his Italian opponents as similar to Octavian's alleged brutality to citizens during the civil wars. An important part of Augustus' propaganda was emphasis on the unity of all of Italy (Syme, note 4 above, 286–8 and passim). That is certainly evident in the Aeneid (e.g. 4.275; 8.513, 678, 714–15; 12.827); also J. MacInnis, 'The Use of "Italus" and "Romanus"...'. CQ 26 (1912) 5–8; L. Holland, 'Place Names and Heroes in the Aeneid', AJPh, 56 (1935) 202–15; especially 204–5 on Aeneid 12.296, suggesting the 'Peninusul area', and 213 for A. 10.518. Furthermore, the battle in Aeneid 7–12 is described as 'discordia' (7.545), which often meant civil war in Vergil (e.g. Ecl.1.71; A. 12.583) and elsewhere (ThLL 13.1383.7ff; 1340.528f; and 4.83.766f).

22. Carter, note 20 above; Scott, note 20 above, 27–8; Reid, note 3 above, 42–4; M. Adams, C. Suetonius... Augusti Vita, London 1939, 93.

23. Charlesworth, note 20 above; Scott, ibid., 8–28 and passim (Scott gives more credence to some of these stories than Charlesworth). E.g. Dio 51.2.5 says that the father and son whom Octavian
allegedly forced to draw lots for their lives 'were especially famous' (also in Suetonius, Aug. 13).


25. Reid, note 3 above, 44. Plutarch, Them. 13.2–3 records an allegation of a human sacrifice which is certainly false (F. Frost, Plutarch's Themistocles, Princeton 1980, 150). Dio (48.48.5) mentions such an allegation against Sextus Pompey.

26. A. Pease, Publi Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Quartus, Cambridge, Mass. 1935, on 510 ('ter centum'). Themistocles (note above) is said to have sacrificed three victims.


28. Indeed, Seneca himself, who described Augustus as 'clementissimus' (Con. 4. pr. 5), seems to have departed from the truth in his history when he began the civil wars (J. Fairweather, Seneca the Elder, Cambridge 1981, 16). Cf. Suetonius, Cl. 41.

29. E.g., Velleius Paterculus 2.74.4; 2.66 (as opposed to Suet., Aug. 27); Tac., Ann. 1.9; Dio 47.7; 56.37–38.1; 56.44.1–2 (for sources, see note 27 above). Cf. Plut. Them. 13.3.

30. E.g., Georgie 1.500 ff., Horace, Carm. 1.2 and 35 (and Nisbet and Hubbard, note 17, 16–17, 399); Farron, note 18, 100–101.

31. ‘Virgil und Augustus’, ANRW, II, 31, 2 709–27, especially 711–17, cf. 721–7. I have assumed that Aeneas’ human sacrifice and the other brutalities he commits while avenging Pallas were intended to remind Vergil’s contemporaries of Octavian during the civil wars. This is supported in note 17. Furthermore, this association would have been natural since Aeneas very often adumbrates actions of Octavian–Augustus: W Camps, An Introduction to Virgil’s Aeneid, Oxford 1969, 98–104, 137–143; D. Drew, The Allegory of the Aeneid, 1927 (repr. N. Y. 1978), 4–5, 13–19, 25–31, 43–91 [Much of this book is fanciful. Also, it is perverse of Drew to argue that it is in Book 2 that Aeneas reproduces Octavian’s vengeful brutality during the civil wars, including ‘the massacre of Perusia’, which ‘made a deep impression on Virgil’ (64–5). But he does say that in Aeneid 9–12 Vergil ‘explains . . . the tragedy of the past ten years of Roman history, allusions to which are plain enough ’ . . .’ (61); R. Williams, P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Tertius, Oxford 1962, on lines 12, 274ff., 278f., 280; Williams, note 4, on 545ff.; R. Austin, . . . Liber Sextus, Oxford 1977, on 69, 70, 71; W. Fowler, Aeneas at the Site of Rome 1917 (repr. N. Y. 1978), 74–6. Also, Octavian at Actium (8.690–1) is recalled when Aeneas enters battle in 10.261, 270–2. But even if no direct reference to Octavian is intended, the ancient attempts to justify his civil war record show the Roman attitude to the acts of which he was accused and which Aeneas committed.


33. Fraenkel, note 5, on 217 (ἀδὰ γὰρ ἐπὶ). By contrast, Aeneas’ intention is mentioned in 10.519–20 and 11.81–2 (‘mitteret’ and ‘sparsurus’. [In the Aeneid there is a very strong tendency for the future participle in the nominative and vocative to indicate intention (K. Quinn, Virgil’s Aeneid, London 1968, 12; J. Mackall, The Aeneid, Oxford 1930, on 11.741).]


36. Aeneid 2.133, 156; Lucretius 1.87–8; Ovid, Pont. 3.2.73–5; Juvenal, 12.117–18.


11.785–8. Cf. Porphyrio on Horace, Saec. 37: ‘lectio Vergiliana . . . ubi frequenter dicitur Apollinis oraculis instructum Aeneam Italicam petisse.’ So it is also interesting that the second Italian whom Aeneas kills is ‘tibi, Phoebe, sacrum’ (10.316).

40. Scott, note 20, 37–45; Syme, note 21.
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