



## Roman Rites for the Dead and "Aeneid 6"

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## ROMAN RITES FOR THE DEAD AND *AENEID* 6\*

In memoriam: *Dorothy Rounds*

The parade of heroes in the sixth book of the *Aeneid* clearly demonstrates the traditional Roman concern for national and family history in general and for pride in one's own distinguished ancestors in particular. Sallust<sup>1</sup> refers to the display of the *imagines maiorum* in Roman aristocratic houses and to the wearing of these likenesses in the funeral processions of recently deceased family members. Eiliv Skard<sup>2</sup> has seen in Virgil's *Heldenschau* (6.752-901) allusions to this traditional Roman way of honoring the dead and inspiring the living. Skard concludes by claiming that Virgil's show of heroes reproduces the funeral of the young Marcellus, son of Augustus' sister Octavia, which took place in 23 BC—about the same time that Book 6 was composed.<sup>3</sup> Gilbert Highet takes exception to the explicit association with Marcellus, arguing that it would have been unlikely for images of Pompey, Fabius Maximus, the Scipios and the Tarquins to have been carried at Marcellus' funeral.<sup>4</sup> Highet accepts, however, the general idea of the procession in *Aeneid* 6 as a *pompa funebris*. The notion is worth closer examination; this article will demonstrate Virgil's ingenious transformation, as I see it, of the *pompa funebris* motif, illustrating once again the complex artistry and the subtlety of Virgil's literary accomplishment.

The scholarly hunt for Virgil's models and sources for *Aeneid* 6 continues unchecked. A variety of reminiscences have been cited as proof of Virgil's skillful eclecticism. There are clearly echoes of traditional Greek mythological themes, such as the underworld journeys of Heracles, of Orpheus, of Theseus and of Odysseus;<sup>5</sup> there are surely reflections of Greek philosophical ideas from such sources as Plato's *Republic*, *Phaedo* and *Gorgias* and from Orphic and Pythagorean texts on the journeying and transmigration of the soul.<sup>6</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> *Jugurtha* 4.5-6.

<sup>2</sup> Skard, Eiliv, "Die Heldenschau in Vergils *Aeneis*," *SO* 40 (1965) 53-65.

<sup>3</sup> Skard (note 2 above) 64.

<sup>4</sup> Gilbert Highet, *The Speeches in Vergil's Aeneid* (Princeton 1972) 242.

<sup>5</sup> Skard (note 2 above) 55; Highet (note 4 above) 241.

<sup>6</sup> On this complex question cf. E. Norden, *P. Vergilius Maro: Aeneis Buch VI*<sup>4</sup> (Stuttgart 1957) 10-48; also R. D. Williams, "The Sixth Book of the *Aeneid*," *G and R* 11 (1964) 48-63. R. G. Austin, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Sextus* (Oxford 1977) 220-221 lists additional bibliography on the doctrine of the transmigration of souls.

following literary parallels to Virgil's parade of heroes are relevant here: the *Teichoscopia* of *Iliad* 3, where Helen points out to the elders of Troy Greek heroes on the plain below; Odysseus' encounters with dead heroes and heroines in *Odyssey* 11; and the list of heroes who accompany Jason in the first book of the *Argonautica*. *Aeneid* 6 was no doubt also meant by its author to remind his audience of such monuments in contemporary Rome as the statues of notable Romans on the Capitol,<sup>7</sup> in the Forum Romanum and in the planned Forum of Augustus,<sup>8</sup> and perhaps also of historical friezes<sup>9</sup> such as would later be found on the Ara Pacis Augustae.<sup>10</sup> Finally, there are of course within the *Aeneid* itself compositions which remind us of the show of heroes, such as the various other prophecies of the Roman future: the shield description of Book 8, the catalogue of Latins in Book 7 and the catalogue of Etruscans in Book 10.

Returning to the *pompa funebris*, we know that funerals of the Roman aristocracy could be quite elaborate; ancient sources describe in detail the *pompa funebris* as well as the custom of keeping on display in the household ancestral images which would be used in the procession itself and in the eulogy or *laudatio* of the dead man and his illustrious ancestors.<sup>11</sup> The most detailed description is that recorded by Polybius (6.53.1-54.5), who was clearly impressed by the emotional and social utility of this Roman custom.<sup>12</sup> Polybius

<sup>7</sup>L. Delaruelle, "Souvenirs d'oeuvres plastiques dans la revue des héros au livre VI de l'Eneide," *RA*, 4<sup>e</sup> série, 21 (1913) 153-170; A. G. McKay, *Virgil's Italy* (Greenwich, Conn., 1970) 143.

<sup>8</sup>Donald R. Dudley, *Urbs Roma* (Aberdeen 1967) 128-129 (cf. Ovid, *Fasti* 5.551-553, 563-566); Tenney Frank, "Augustus, Virgil and the Augustan Elogia," *AJP* 59 (1938) 91-94; Henry T. Rowell, "Virgil and the Forum of Augustus," *AJP* 62 (1941) 261-276; Henry T. Rowell, *Rome in the Augustan Age* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1962) 224-228. Cf. Highet (note 4 above) 241-242 for a summary of these Roman models.

<sup>9</sup>On sculptural reliefs cf. Williams (note 6 above), 59 and H. C. Rutledge, "The Opening of *Aeneid* 6," *CJ* 67 (1971-1972) 110-115, p. 112. On reliefs and *imagines maiorum* see Austin (note 6 above) 232-234.

<sup>10</sup>Rowell, *Rome in the Augustan Age* (note 8 above) 222; R. D. Williams, *The Aeneid of Virgil* (London 1972) on lines 752f. adds that the parade is "a list of *exempla* familiar in rhetorical writing, owing something too to visual arts, friezes and groups of statues."

<sup>11</sup>Polybius 6.53.1-54.5; Sallust, *Jugurtha* 4.5-6; Pliny the Elder *NH* 35.2.6-8 tells of the wax *imagines* displayed in the homes of the Roman nobility which served as constant visual reminders of the family ancestors. Juvenal, *Satire* 8.1-20, and Cornelius Nepos, *Atticus* 18, describe the importance to aristocratic Roman families of accurate, or at least detailed and impressive, accounts of their ancestors' careers. Inscriptions of *tituli* were displayed beneath the *imagines* stating briefly the names, titles, honors and deeds of the individual portrayed. Numerous descriptions survive of the *laudatio* or eulogy read in honor of the deceased: Cicero *de oratore*, 2.84.341; Quintilian, 3.7.2, 11.3.153; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 5.17.3-6. Cf. Jocelyn Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1971) 46-48 on the *pompa* and O. C. Crawford, "Laudatio Funebris," *CJ* 37 (1941-42) 17-27 on the *laudatio*. For the importance of family history, cf. D. W. Black, "Epic and Encomium," *PVS* 8 (1968-69) 38-48.

<sup>12</sup>Excerpts from the Loeb translation: W. R. Paton, *Polybius: The Histories* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960) 389-391, "Whenever any illustrious man dies, he is carried at his funeral into the forum to the so-called rostra, sometimes conspicuous in an upright position and more rarely reclined. Here with all the people standing round, a grown-up son, if he has left one who happens to be present, or if not some other relative mounts the rostra and discourses on the virtues and successful achievements of the dead. As a consequence the multitude . . . are moved to such sympathy that the loss seems to be not confined to the mourners, but a public one affecting the whole people. . . . When any distinguished member of the family dies they take (the *imagines*) to the funeral, putting them on men who seem to them to bear the closest resemblance to the original in stature and carriage. These

stresses that the recently deceased Roman notable is generally carried in an upright position and seems in other ways to have been treated and addressed as if he were still alive and participating in the festivities; Polybius is explicit also about the likeness of the *imagines* or masks to the persons they represented. He also points out that the living relatives wearing the various *imagines* would be equipped with the clothing and regalia appropriate to each ancestor. The emotional, social and even political effects of the ceremony are also remarked upon: the constant renewal of the memory of the past and its brave men serves as an inspiration to each new generation. Funerals of the imperial household could be especially grandiose. Tacitus tells us that, at the funeral of the younger Drusus in AD 23, the procession of masked relatives included Aeneas, the Alban kings, Romulus, Sabine nobles and "the rest of the Claudian effigies which filed in long procession past the spectator."<sup>13</sup> We are told by Dio<sup>14</sup> that at the funeral of Augustus there were images of his ancestors (with the exception of Caesar who was a god), of Pompey the Great and of other important Romans going back to Romulus. The presence of Pompey (and of "other important Romans," some of whom presumably were not related to the emperor) might allow us to revive Skard's notion of Virgil's show of heroes as a literal description of Marcellus' funeral, which might, judging from Dio's account of Augustus' *pompa*, have included Romans not strictly related to the young man. It is however both unnecessary and somewhat limiting to link Virgil's parade with an actual, historical Roman funeral. Rather, I hope to show that by creating a scene reminiscent of the traditional *pompa funebris* Virgil has, in a startlingly original way, inverted many of the features of the Roman funeral and thus produced not a description of an actual event but a literary sequence with far greater symbolic power than a mere chronicle of Marcellus' funeral could ever have had. We shall see that Virgil has produced a funeral with national and not merely familial significance.

The following elements, then, are involved in the Roman funeral ceremony: the *pompa* itself was a parade or procession led by the dead man, generally sitting up on his bier, followed by certain relatives chosen for reasons of similar build or character to wear the family *imagines* and decked out in appropriate ceremonial gear. The effect must have been extraordinary: in essence, time was imagined to have ceased to exist; in the presence of the recently deceased Roman were gathered all members of his family, from the most remotest past on down to the gentleman who had just become an ancestor.<sup>15</sup> Everyone was present; the deceased condition of many of the participants was apparently regarded as an irrelevant detail.

The general setting of much of Book 6 of the *Aeneid*, the land of the dead,

representatives wear togas, with a purple border if the deceased was a consul or praetor, whole purple if he was a censor . . . and other insignia by which the different magistrates are wont to be accompanied. . . . There could not easily be a more ennobling spectacle for a young man who aspires to fame and virtue. For who would not be inspired by the sight of the images of men renowned for their excellence all together and as if alive and breathing?"

<sup>13</sup>*Annals*, 4.9.

<sup>14</sup>*Roman History*, 56.34.1-4; cf 53.30.4-6 on the funeral and burial of Marcellus.

<sup>15</sup>Pliny, *NH*, 35.2.6: "semperque defuncto aliquo totus aderat familiae eius qui umquam fuerat populus."

certainly justifies a search for funerary associations. More particularly, there has been a constant concern throughout this whole segment of the epic with death and burial. In Book 5, Aeneas had returned to Sicily in order to celebrate the rites honoring the first anniversary of his father's burial. His role as pious son is never more clear; we learn from Ovid's *Fasti*<sup>16</sup> that Aeneas is honoring the Roman custom, which he himself originated, of paying yearly respect to ancestral graves. Proper burial rites for Misenus are made a condition for Aeneas' being admitted to the Underworld (6.149-152). On his way to meet his father, Aeneas encounters Palinurus, who had died at the end of Book 5 and who requests and receives a promise of proper burial from Aeneas. The hero next encounters Deiphobus, Priam's son, who was betrayed by Helen, killed by the Greeks at Troy, and for whom, we learn, Aeneas had erected a *tumulum inanem* (505), performing all the proper rites even though the body could not be found. Finally, at the very end of Book 6 (883-886), Anchises performs a rite reminiscent of the *Rosalia* or *Violaria*, days when flowers were scattered as offerings at Roman graves: Anchises asks for flowers to scatter over the grave of the young Marcellus whose birth and untimely death are still over 1000 years in the future.

In Virgil's parade of heroes, the following elements correspond to Roman funerary practice: first, the *pompa* itself, the procession of notable men (754: *longo ordine*); next the strikingly recognizable appearance (754-755: *posset . . . venientum discere vultus*) of these members of disparate generations gathered together on a single day, telescoped in time as it were (time, we have seen, seems to cease to matter when the family is gathered to glorify itself);<sup>17</sup> third, the *laudatio* or praise of the deeds of the ancestors and of the glory of the family line (758: *inlustris animas nostrumque in nomen ituras*); and finally, there is the closely related notion of genealogy, of the family linked in an unbroken line which connects the remote past of the family with the present (756: *prolem*; 757: *Itala de gente nepotes*; 763: *proles*; 765: *parentem*). In Virgil, however, although the emphasis is clearly on the *gens Iulia*, the scope of the procession has been expanded to include many non-Julian participants. That is, Virgil's *pompa* is an event which implicitly treats all Roman heroes as members of one immense, extremely ancient family.<sup>18</sup>

These figures out of Roman history or the Roman future are visually striking

<sup>16</sup>2.543-548.

<sup>17</sup>Cf. note 15, above.

<sup>18</sup>Cf. Norden (note 6 above) 316 on the notion of national and family history combined. It has been pointed out that the Forum of Augustus likewise conveys this idea of the Roman people as a single immense family; cf. Rowell, "Virgil and the Forum of Augustus," (note 8 above) 228: ". . . the Forum of Augustus was, in spirit, the atrium of a noble house, executed on a colossal scale befitting the family to which it belonged. The family was, of course, the family of the Roman people (*gens populi Romani*).'" In the same article, Rowell establishes links between the Forum of Augustus and the palace of Latinus in *Aeneid* 7.170-189 in order to show that Virgil did know in detail the plans for the projected Forum; Rowell even suggests that Virgil may have been consulted by Augustus in drawing up the plans. In any case, it seems that in both the Forum of Augustus and Virgil's show of heroes analogous transformations have taken place: the public and political functions of the Forum are extended to include the emotional associations of a family atrium; the familial *pompa funebris* has become, through the inclusion of non-Julian Romans, a national celebration. On the arrangement of statuary in the Forum of Augustus see William L. MacDonald,

but in a sense unreal—like the impersonated ancestors in the *pompa funebris*. They are, after all, still shades, unborn souls which, like all the other shades, including Anchises himself, Aeneas can see but not touch (700-702). These heroes appear as adults, at the time of life in which they were greatest or most memorable, just as the imitated ancestors in Polybius' description are adorned with the insignia appropriate to their accomplishments in life (6.53.7-8).

It is in the last scene in the parade of heroes, where the doomed youth Marcellus appears, that we begin to see precisely *why* Virgil has adopted the funeral motif here. As Anchises imagines himself scattering flowers over the shade of Marcellus (883-886),<sup>19</sup> he must either be imagining himself 1000 years in the future at Marcellus' grave<sup>20</sup> or else figuratively performing simple funerary rites for the boy 1000 years before his birth and untimely death. I have suggested that Skard's interpretation of the scene as a literal description of Marcellus' funeral is inadequate. Both the Roman *pompa funebris* and the procession in *Aeneid* 6 manage to compress or telescope the long progression of history into a single moment. In the normal *pompa*, figures from the recent to the remote past appear together simultaneously; Virgil's *Heldenschau* assembles characters from Aeneas' present to the distant future.<sup>21</sup> Past, present and future are blended here in *Aeneid* 6 into a scene isolated from normal time.<sup>22</sup>

*The Pantheon* (Cambridge, Mass., 1976) 77-82 and Rowell, *Rome in the Augustan Age* (note 8 above) 223-228. A similar duality of function has been noted with regard to the Ara Pacis Augustae: Augustus and his relatives are associated with Aeneas, the founder of the family; the officials of the city are similarly linked with Romulus, the founder of the city; cf. Rowell, *Rome in the Augustan Age*, 222, and G. Karl Galinsky, *Aeneas, Sicily and Rome* (Princeton 1969) 226.

<sup>19</sup>See Norden (note 6 above) 346 on the funerary associations of both lilies and the color purple; Norden also reminds us that the words *manibus date lilia plenis* are used by Dante (*Purg.* 30.21) as part of his farewell to Virgil. See Austin (note 6 above) 272-273 on flowers as gifts to the dead.

<sup>20</sup>Austin (note 6 above) 272 remarks that "Anchises ends by envisaging himself at the actual funeral of Marcellus."

<sup>21</sup>Virgil's paradoxical and poetically ingenious language in this passage has often been remarked upon. Norden (note 6 above) 341-345 discusses Virgil's subtle variations of traditional rhetorical *topoi* in Anchises' *logos epitaphios*, especially the lament for an untimely death (*immatura mors*); cf. Austin (note 6 above) 268-269. Frank Fletcher, *Vergil: Aeneid VI* (Oxford 1941) suggests in his note on line 879 that in *tulisset* Anchises "speaks as though what he was prophesying were already past"; on 885-886 Fletcher claims that "Anchises anticipates by his action the ceremony of the funeral that is one day to be." Cf. note 20 above. James Henry, *Aeneidea* (London 1874) on lines 875-877 points to the paradoxical situation whereby Marcellus, who is never to realize his potential, raises the hopes of his *Latini avi*, "dead a thousand years before Marcellus was born." Austin (note 6 above) 270 likewise comments on Marcellus' wasted potential and refers to Henry's "merry note" on the improbability of Marcellus' ghostly ancestors' being filled with hope for him. Brooks Otis, "Three Problems of *Aeneid* 6," *TAPA* 90 (1959) 165-179, points out that in Book 6 we encounter "the past and the future in juxtaposition or opposition" (168) and conceives of this opposition as that between the Platonic-Pythagorean goal of "timeless and unchangeable being" (172) vs. the Roman fixation on political activity and history. Thus, the funeral compresses or eliminates time for the purpose of glorifying the entire family on one occasion.

<sup>22</sup>In commenting on Aeneas' experiences in Book 6 as a dream, Otis (note 21 above) further remarks (176) that death is an appropriate context for the suspension of normal time: "Sleep and death are alike in their revelation of an underworld unknown to the waking consciousness yet exerting upon it the most powerful effect, precisely because it is only in such a realm that the meaning of time—of past and future, of history and its climax in Rome's eternal empire—can be found." On the general idea of Aeneas' journey as a dream see Norden (note 6 above) 47-48, 348-349.

Aeneas watches the procession from a small *tumulus* or sepulchral mound, just as at the Roman funeral the recently deceased Roman was placed before the assembled ranks of his predeceased relatives. The importance of the *tumulus* (754), particularly when taken in conjunction with the *tumulus* of Marcellus (874) at the end of the passage, seems not to have been previously remarked upon. Henry (note 21 above), on *tumulum*, line 874, remarks that the word "must be understood not in its primary and particular sense of *barrow*, but in its secondary and general sense of *tomb*." I suggest that Virgil uses the word twice deliberately to link Aeneas and Marcellus. The grave mound upon which Aeneas stands to view the parade of descendants corresponds to the tomb within which the young Marcellus is prematurely interred;<sup>23</sup> this opposition points the way to an understanding of Virgil's ingenious poetic use of the funeral motif: the tragic burial of the doomed Marcellus contrasts with the positive and hopeful "funeral" of Aeneas, which is a celebration of the Roman future. Skard, as we have seen (note 3 above), understands Virgil's *Heldenschau* as a transformation of the funeral of Marcellus in 23 BC; although Virgil certainly makes reference to the historical event in 872-874, it seems far more likely to me that *Aeneas* is the primary subject of the funeral proceedings.<sup>24</sup> The chthonic rituals (236-263) accompanying Aeneas' descent to the land of the dead and the hero's association, to be discussed below, with a grave-mound or *tumulus* at 754 seem to me to warrant further investigation and testing of this hypothesis. Aeneas, as most recently "deceased" or most recently arrived in the land of the dead, seems to play the part of the corpse according to Polybius' description of a Roman funeral: in Polybius we have a recently dead man, sitting up and treated as if he were alive; here in Virgil we have Aeneas, still alive but in a place reserved strictly for the dead. The "dead" Aeneas,<sup>25</sup> as it were, views the future of his family and nation; Polybius' deceased Roman was treated to a recapitulation of his family's illustrious history. In a significant adaptation, Virgil has moved Aeneas from the traditional position of the deceased at the head of the procession to the *tumulus* whence he reviews his assembled descendants. Furthermore, in *Aeneid* 6, the *laudatio*, in keeping with Virgil's inversion of normal funerary custom, is spoken by Anchises, the "deceased" Aeneas' father, rather than by the son prescribed by Polybius (6.53.2). Aeneas' son, of course, has no place in the land of the dead.

<sup>23</sup>In any case, Aeneas' position on a *tumulus* in 754 surely suggests something more than Austin's "idea of height . . . a good vantage point" (note 6 above) 232.

<sup>24</sup>That Aeneas is the central figure of the book and that virtually everything in it is done or said for his benefit has often been pointed out. Cf. Williams (note 6 above) 48: "This book (like the rest of the *Aeneid*) is above all about Aeneas himself . . . the aim is to present a poetic vision which has special reference to Aeneas and Rome." Otis (note 21 above) discusses the degree to which the events of *Aeneid* 6 are directly and personally relevant to Aeneas (167); cf. also L. A. Mackay, "Three Levels of Meaning in *Aeneid* VI," *TAPA* 86 (1955) 180-189. In any case, Skard fails to take into account that Marcellus marches last in the procession (863: *comitatur*) whereas it is clear that the deceased was at the head of the *pompa*: cf. Jocelyn Toynbee (note 11 above) 46.

<sup>25</sup>See Georg Luck, "Virgil and the Mystery Religions," *AJP* 94 (1973) 147-166 for an exhaustive discussion based on the idea of an 18th century scholar that the *Aeneid* is an allegorical representation of the Mysteries of Eleusis; one need not, however, accept the notion presented here of the initiate Aeneas' symbolic death and rebirth as one of Demeter's elect in order to concede that the hero is, nonetheless, in Hades and is therefore in some sense dead. On the "initiation" of Aeneas cf. also W. Warde Fowler, *Religious Experience of the Roman People* (London 1911) 419.

Wendell Clausen has called Book 6 “a Janus-book looking to past and future.”<sup>26</sup> The Janus head, of course, has two faces turned outward. At this point in *Aeneid* 6 we are not, however, dealing with a simple transition from past to future, although this is part of Virgil’s purpose as has often been pointed out.<sup>27</sup> Here in Virgil’s parade of heroes, the Regal and Republican past *becomes* the Augustan future; the past as Virgil knew it is inverted and becomes the future of Aeneas, who himself has no relevant or Roman past. Clausen’s Janus head might almost be imagined, grotesquely, as split in two so that the two faces look *toward* one another, one from the vantage point of Anchises and Aeneas on their grassy grave-mound (the *tumulus*, as it were, of Aeneas) and the other from the *tumulus* of Marcellus, which recalls the Mausoleum of Augustus in which, in 23 BC, Marcellus was the first to be buried. Anchises, a dead man, performs a funeral rite and recites the *laudatio*, not for the yet unborn Marcellus, as Skard would have it, but, paradoxically, for the benefit of the still alive Aeneas, whose vision of the Roman future is presented not merely as a weird and supernatural sequence of events, such as befall Odysseus in *Odyssey* 11, but as a specifically Roman funerary experience, an experience in which time ceases for the moment to exist, and such matters as life and death become mere technicalities as the entire Roman family of Anchises and Aeneas is brought together in order to establish its importance and significance. Thus, Virgil turns the *pompa funebris*, a rite the living perform in memory of the dead man and his long dead ancestors,<sup>28</sup> into a memorial commemorating and celebrating the future: a dead man, Anchises, commemorates or brings to mind for his son those who are yet to live. The normal roles here are turned around in a fascinating and brilliant way. Aeneas’ function here is much more than that of the spectator who is inspired by the sight of the noble heroes of the past. Polybius reports that the purpose of the *pompa* and *laudatio* is to instruct and inspire the young (6.54.2-4; cf. Pliny, *NH* 35.2.7: *stimulatio ingens*); Skard (note 2 above) claims, “Gerade dies ist die Absicht der Heldenparade bei Vergil” (62). This is certainly correct as far as it goes; however, Skard misses the subtle inversion Virgil has introduced. In a real funeral, those to be inspired would certainly include the masked ancestors, that is, the members of the family chosen to represent one or another of their distinguished forebears. Here in *Aeneid* 6, however, those present are literally ancestors and presumably need no inspiration to become what they already are (or, from the perspective of the first century BC, what they have already been). Rather, it is the “deceased” Aeneas who is being inspired at what appears to be his own funeral.

Thus, a Roman custom which is an act of piety toward the past is here turned into an act of piety toward the future at just that point in the epic when Aeneas does in fact begin, in Book 7, to tend to the future’s business, which is, of

<sup>26</sup>“An Interpretation of the *Aeneid*,” *HSCP* 68 (1964) 139-147, p. 145.

<sup>27</sup>Florence Dupont and Jean-Pierre Neraudau, “Marcellus dans le Chant VI de l’*Enéide*,” *REL* 48 (1970) 259-276; Marcellus’ death is seen as a transition from the bellicose Republican past to the peaceful Augustan future (270-271) and even as (272) “une conversion du fer à l’or, de la guerre à la paix.”

<sup>28</sup>Cf. Skard’s (note 2 above) striking description of the *pompa* as “eine Prozession lebender Leichname” (61); the masked “ancestors” then sit upon ivory chairs such as they occupied when alive and wielding political power (cf. Polybius 6.53.9).



course, the founding of the new Trojan-Italian state. Anchises sees the future and recounts it: cf. *memorare* (716) and *memorat* (890); the word mixes the ideas of remembering, commemorating and recounting. Aeneas, who has recently exorcised the memories of his disastrous past in Troy and Carthage,<sup>29</sup> must now “remember” the future in order to fulfill his obligations to his unborn descendants. The show of heroes informs Aeneas of the significance of his future career as a Roman soldier and statesman; it is in the context of the traditional *pompa funebris*, where a deceased Roman’s past accomplishments and illustrious ancestors are recounted, that Aeneas’ future deeds and glorious descendants are presented to him.

*Aeneid* 6 recounts Aeneas’ final meeting with his father and the hero’s final act of piety toward Anchises’ *patria potestas*. Anchises has been pushing Aeneas toward the future and Italy ever since their escape from Troy. It is at this point in the epic, when Anchises has given his final advice (890-892), that Aeneas, at what I argue can be seen as his own funeral, takes final leave of his father. Anchises appears no more; Aeneas himself now becomes the prototypical Roman *paterfamilias*, while Anchises becomes an ancestor. Yet even here at their final meeting, Anchises seems to be an especially lively shade. While most of the other inhabitants of the Groves of the Blessed spend a blissful and timeless existence dancing and singing, Anchises stands apart, obsessively counting his children to be and pondering their future careers (679-683).<sup>30</sup> He tells Aeneas that he has been counting the hours and days (690-691: itself an unusual pastime in this timeless world)<sup>31</sup> until Aeneas would come. Anchises, in fact, seems to feel time as none of the other inhabitants of Elysium can. Virgil wishes us to see Anchises as the archetypal Roman ancestor, a true Roman forefather, conscious of his eternal and vital place in family history;<sup>32</sup> in any case, the Roman concern for ancestry, family and lines of descent (described by Polybius, Sallust, Pliny and others; cf. note 11, above) is mirrored in Anchises’ enthusiastic and detailed description of his posterity—not merely the *gens Iulia* but all of Roman history. True, the Trojan ancestors, the *gens antiquum Teucrum* (648), are all there in Elysium, but they are leading a vacuous though happy existence, quite unlike the purposeful Roman heroes who are yet to be born. So Anchises, along with Aeneas, is tied to the long procession of historical characters who will become part of every historical Roman’s heritage.

One final aspect of the analogies between Roman funerary observances and Virgil’s procession of Roman heroes: the memory of the past, as recounted in the *laudatio funebris* or in the inscriptions associated with ancestral portraits,

<sup>29</sup>Brooks Otis, *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford 1964) 281-312.

<sup>30</sup>Austin (note 6 above) 213 remarks on the combined religious and political overtones of *lustrabat* (681): “Anchises is like a Roman censor, making an official list, but a list of ghosts, destined to live again.”

<sup>31</sup>Austin (note 6 above) 215: “*dinumersans*, as if crossing off days on a calendar.”

<sup>32</sup>Cf. Skard (note 2 above) 57: “Die Römer besaßen eine ganz andere, positive Einstellung zum Historischen als die Griechen”; on 58-59 Skard discusses this Roman historical consciousness which the Greeks lacked. Cf. also Otis (note 21 above) 172. On the general notion of Roman, and particularly Virgilian, conceptions of history see Brooks Otis, “Virgil and Clio: A Consideration of Virgil’s Relation to History,” *Phoenix* 20 (1966) 59-75.

tended to be simplified, gilded, glorified.<sup>33</sup> Both Cicero and Livy are aware of how family history can become distorted or falsified by too favorable a description of a certain ancestor's deeds and honors.<sup>34</sup> Could Virgil be hinting that image and appearance can be deceptive, that the past (or, here, the future) is never as gloriously simple as it might appear in either a funeral eulogy or in this parade of heroes? It is Aeneas who interrupts his father's predominantly positive *laudatio* and asks him to identify the youth who turns out to be the doomed Marcellus.<sup>35</sup> The pathetic appearance of Marcellus serves to undercut the glorious optimism of the procession and sets present Augustan tragedy alongside the idealized past.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Frank W. Walbank, *An Historical Commentary on Polybius* (Oxford 1957) on 6.53.2: "... its encomiastic character made it a danger to historical truth."

<sup>34</sup>Cicero, *Brutus*, 16.62; Livy 4.16.4 on false inscriptions on *imagines*, 8.40.4-5 on general criticism of falsified funerary inscriptions, and 22.31.11 on misleading *tituli*.

<sup>35</sup>Henry (note 21 above), on *funera* (874) points out that the word means not merely *lamentatio* but also "the immense multitude, the pomp, the equipages, the torches, the gifts, the ceremonies of various kinds, often the trophies, the orations, etc." That is, the sad funeral of Marcellus here contrasts with and undercuts the hitherto happy "funeral" of Aeneas.

<sup>36</sup>The meaning of the gloomy final note of the *Heldenschau* needs to be more precisely articulated. R. D. Williams (note 10 above) is representative of many commentators when he remarks (on 854f.) that the Marcellus passage "presents the equipoise between triumph and disaster which the *Aeneid* so constantly explores." Williams sees the tragedy of Marcellus as being one of several tragic or negative elements in the passage; cf. his note on the tragedy of Brutus' ambition (1. 817 f.) and the tragic conflict between Caesar and Pompey. The following are in general agreement with Williams: Steven V. Tracy, "The Marcellus Passage (*Aeneid* 6.860-886) and *Aeneid* 9-12," *CJ* 70 (1974-75) 37-42, p. 38, where the death of Marcellus symbolizes "the death of the future"; Otis (note 29 above) 303, who sees Marcellus' loss as the price of victory; Clausen (note 26 above) 143 and 146, who understands the entire *Aeneid* as a "long history of defeat and loss" and "a long Pyrrhic victory of the human spirit"; Henry W. Prescott, *The Development of Virgil's Art* (Chicago 1927) 409. Austin (note 6 above) 264-265 suggests that in the Marcellus passage Virgil's "sense of contour demanded a descent, and the exaltation slowly subsides, to end in grief as well as pride." Less typical is W. R. Johnson, *Darkness Visible* (Berkeley 1976) who first (107) sees Marcellus' death as "a tragedy, indeed a bitterness that threatens to overwhelm the magnificence of Roman achievement . . . a question of blighted hope" but later (110-111) denies Williams' "equipoise between triumph and disaster" and claims that "this stern dialectic issues in no synthesis." Johnson also (n. 59) observes, correctly I think, that there is more darkness (and, less convincingly, more light) than Brooks Otis allows in the *Aeneid* and concludes, "In any case, Vergil is fond of picturing disintegration, nonbeing, failure of potentiality." Here Johnson follows the views of M.C.J. Putnam, *The Poetry of the Aeneid: Four Studies in Imaginative Unity and Design* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), on tragedy, violence and irrationality in the *Aeneid*; see especially pp. 40, 192-3. Dupont and Neraudau (note 27 above) claim on the other hand (272) that "la mort de Marcellus prend un sens positif, ce n'est pas un échec"; one wonders whether Virgil could really have expected Augustus to react sympathetically to a view of Marcellus' death as "le sacrifice préparatoire aux prochains jeux séculaires" (275). In any case, shortly after the sobering Marcellus episode Aeneas rejoins his companions by exiting through the gate of false dreams; surely a genuinely funereal note has been introduced into Virgil's premature burial of Aeneas.