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Recommended Citation
Available at: https://crossworks.holycross.edu/necj/vol42/iss2/8

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Seider’s book is a welcome addition to the recent scholarly work on the *Aeneid* and makes a convincing case for the importance of analyzing the concept of memory as shaping history and identity in the poem. The book’s overall argument, that Aeneas’ Trojan past figures into the Roman future in important ways, is well worth considering, while many of Seider’s layered readings of famous episodes offer interesting insights in the ways in which memory serves as a means to construct social and national identity.

In the introduction, the author lays out the book’s main claim, that memory is the result of a dynamic process carried out by the poem’s protagonist, the narrator, and various other characters. Seider argues that the poem demonstrates that there is no uniform way to construct memory but that it is the result of a process that involves a variety of different and even clashing perspectives. Seider traces vocabulary that relates to the acts of remembering and commemoration and draws on both memory studies (in social sciences) and narratology. Seider uses theory sparingly and his analysis is relatively jargon-free, focusing primarily on the text itself.

The author identifies three types of memory relevant to his argument: individual memory (a person remembers his past), social memory (memory spoken aloud by a group member and influenced by the member’s place within it), and oikotype (a standardized version of the past adopted by the community).

In chapter one, Seider discusses how memory is manipulated in various episodes of the *Aeneid* so as to link the Trojans’ past to their Roman future. Beginning with the Trojans’ eating of the tables when they arrive in Italy, the author argues that Aeneas’ recollection of the prophecy as given by Anchises is not a mistake but an example of oikotype. By consigning Celaeno to oblivion, Aeneas demonstrates that forgetting is an important aspect of creating a foundation story. By contrast, an analysis of various other episodes shows that Vergil employs viewpoints with different and contradicting evaluations of the past. Through a discussion of many interesting episodes (the killing of Lausus, Evander’s description of proto-Rome, Anchises’ words to Aeneas in the underworld, among others), Seider convincingly argues that the Trojans understand their present and future through manipulating memory, by trying to create a past that will do justice both to their present and future.
Although most of Seider's readings are valuable and convincing, some reservations remain about considering prophecy and memory as analogous concepts. While it is true that Aeneas in Book 8 remembers a prophecy given to him in Book 3, the Sibyl's prophecy and that of Anchises in the underworld are profoundly different in nature. Ambiguity is one of prophecy's constitutive characteristics: mortals are called on to provide an interpretation, a precarious endeavor. Even though prophecy can be used to affect collective memory, it rather emphasizes the instability of interpretation and its repercussions on humans.

Chapter two discusses Aeneas’ struggle to create a new remembering community that will both honor the Trojans’ memory of Troy and carry them into the future. The author begins by analyzing Juno's wrath (memorem ... iram, 1.5), whereby she uses her past trauma (injustices by the Trojans) to create new trauma for the Trojans. Seider then proceeds with a thoughtful analysis of Aeneas' famous speeches to his comrades (1.94-101; 1.198-207), arguing that they express anxiety about and hope for commemoration. Viewed in this light, Dido’s murals are a reassurance that memory of Aeneas and Troy will not be lost. Seider ends with a discussion of the episode in Buthrotum, where he posits that it illustrates Aeneas’ decision to pay tribute to Troy’s existence in a new way. It could be countered, however, that Aeneas realizes he needs to found a different city than Troy precisely because Andromache’s and Helenus’ version is such a failure. I would rather suggest that in Buthrotum Aeneas learns the same lesson we saw in chapter one, that a portion of the past needs to be left behind or forgotten as a necessary condition for advancing into the future.

The next chapter explores how Aeneas deals with memory in relation to other people and Dido in particular. The author makes a very good case that in his narration to Dido, Aeneas focuses on events from his past and that his self-representation omits crucial information regarding his future in Italy. Although initially Dido internalizes Aeneas’ memories, she eventually destroys any traces of his memory (monimenta 4.497) in an attempt to create her own commemoration of their relationship. Her suicide rivals Aeneas’ version of events and challenges his assurances that he will remember her as long as he remembers himself. I found particularly perceptive Seider’s discussion of the intertext of Catullus 64, where he argues for Aeneas’ difference from Theseus. I wish he had taken his analysis even deeper to ponder on the implications of Dido’s versions of Roman future (or Roman past for Vergil’s audience), especially in view of her rewriting of Roman history with an alternative interpretation of the Carthaginian wars as retribution for past wrongs (especially in 4.625-29). Dido’s competing legacy has implications for Roman history and how it will be remembered by Romans.
Chapter four focuses on the narrator’s perspective on memory and his attempt to control commemoration. Seider gives an excellent analysis of the narrator’s apostrophes and shows how they shape the audience into a remembering community by championing a standardized version of the past. Various characters, however, display a variety of other perspectives that challenge the narrator’s omniscient version of events; the death of Nisus and Euryalus is a fine example of the ways in which the narrator’s commemoration is challenged by the lament of Euryalus’ mother that offers a strong alternative. Here again, Seider could have reflected more into the ways in which Vergil creates alternative memory-making processes. As in the case of Dido, Euryalus’ mother expresses a female perspective that goes against that of the narrator. We would have benefited from Seider’s insights on the fact that different or opposing perspectives are often gendered in the Aeneid. Overall, I found the author’s conclusion about the dynamic process of fashioning communal memory both interesting and illuminating, not least because I share the view that the Aeneid depicts an ideological process at work, not a fixed result of such a process.

The last chapter focuses on the final scene of the epic. In killing Turnus, Aeneas loses control of memory, gives in to his personal grief for the loss of Pallas, and Rome’s foundational moment, a moment to be remembered in the future, is an act of vengeance. In the reconciliation scene between Juno and Jupiter, Juno states that Troy and Rome cannot co-exist. Seider insightfully observes that Aeneas is absent from her rhetoric and argues that the Latins, not the Trojans, are Italy’s indigenous people and will supply the Romans’ defining characteristics. But Aeneas and the narrator construct a new community which is both Trojan and Roman. Aeneas’ final act shows that personal trauma cannot always be overcome in the name of a future reconciliation, yet an effort to do precisely that is necessary.

The book’s greatest strength is the multitude of sensitive, thought-provoking readings of the text. It is precisely these nuanced readings, however, that make the reader curious about their link to the poem’s Augustan context. The author briefly mentions Augustus and his attempts to control memory, such as in the case of the temple of Mars Ultor, but does not link the dynamic process of memory-making in the Aeneid to the process of ideological formation that occurs during Augustan times in Rome. Is Vergil offering a commentary on the difficulties involved? Is Aeneas’ ultimate failure to forego his personal memory of the past a commentary on Augustus’ difficulties to emerge convincingly as a new founder in the wake of the civil wars? There are instances where the memory of the father-and-son relationship can be fraught with painful difficulty (when for instance, Pompey and Caesar are called socier and gener in Aeneid 6.830-31) and stands in sharp contrast to that of
Anchises and Aeneas or of Aeneas and Ascanius. In the former case, the future is disrupted and memory cannot foster continuity.

If the reviewer may appear to have more questions than answers, it is thanks to the rich and stimulating discussions found throughout the book. Seider’s work tackles a fruitful line of inquiry that will surely stimulate more research on the problem of memory and identity in Roman literature.

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