NERO'S NEW TROY: THE RECEPTION OF VIRGIL AND HORACE IN THE *ILIAS LATINA*

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In recent years increased attention had been focused on the miniature epic known as the 'Latin Iliad'. Close investigation of its relationship to Virgil's epic 'Aeneid' and to the lyric poetry of Horace will illustrate that the author of the *Ilias Latina* composed a work reflective of the Neronian Age concern with the relationship between Rome and Troy, and with the problem of showing clemency to a defeated enemy. The second of these topics is of particular relevance in light of Seneca and his *De Ira* and *De Clementia*.

Keywords: *Ilias Latina*, Virgil, Horace, Nero, Troy, Rome

НОВАЯ ТРОЯ НЕРОНА: РЕЦЕПЦИЯ ВЕРГИЛИЯ И ГОРАЦИЯ В «ЛАТИНСКОЙ ИЛИАДЕ»

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В последние годы стал заметен рост интереса исследователей к малой эпической поэме, известной как «Латинская Илиада». Подробное рассмотрение связи этого произведения с «Энеидой» Вергилия и лирикой Горация позволяет сделать вывод, что автора «Латинской Илиады» в первую очередь интересовали темы, актуальные для времени правления Нерона: взаимосвязь между Римом и Троей, а также вопрос проявления милосердия к поверженному врагу. Последняя тема кажется особенно актуальной для своего времени в связи с трудами Сенеки «О гневе» и «О милосердии».

Ключевые слова: «Латинская Илиада», Вергилий, Гораций, Нерон, Троя, Рим

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T he *Ilias Latina* is a curiosity, a fascinating survival from the corpus of imperial Latin hexameter verse[1]. Its 1070 lines provide a remarkable condensation of the Homeric *Iliad*, a poetic epitome that afforded centuries of western European readers some access (however abbreviated and jejune) to the world of archaic Greek literature[2]. The simplicity and clarity of the Latin no doubt contributed appreciably to the popularity of the work in the medieval period[3]. The poem has never enjoyed a particularly high reputation for artistry and elegant versification, but few literary compositions have done as much for the preservation of key stories and ancient lore. 'For all the grotesqueries in the *Ilias Latina* as a work of literature (a status it probably never claimed), the fact remains that the *Iliad* itself kept a secure place in the tradition of western literature through this very epitome; for it remained current through the Carolingian and Scholastic eras, and was still being copied in the fifteenth century, when the Renaissance rediscovered Homer's Greek text'[4]. Fittingly, there has been a fairly consistent engagement with the poem in the scholarly literature; both problems of text and (especially in recent years) questions of literary criticism have been addressed in important studies[5]. Notably, the authorship (Baebius Italicus?) and date (Neronian?) of the Latin *Iliad* have occasioned predictable scholarly debate; the prevailing view is that the work is a product of what has been called 'the Trojan frenzy of Nero's court'[6]. While it is impossible in the absence of new evidence to pronounce definitively on these questions, it is reasonable to imagine that this enigmatic work does indeed represent a precious survival of Neronian Age poetry[7].

We cannot be certain of the exact intention of the poet in composing this short epic[8]. One matter is beyond question: Virgil and Ovid stand forth as significant influence on the language and diction of the work[9]. Our purpose will be to explore one aspect of this intertextual engagement in close detail: how does the poet of the *Ilias Latina* seem to read the Virgilian *Aeneid*? What light does this short work shed on the reception of Virgil's epic less than a century after its composition? Certainly the question of how the *Ilias Latina* engages with the controversial ending of the *Aeneid* and Aeneas' slaying of Turnus has inspired critical commentary[10]. The present study will follow on the work of Michael Putnam and others, focusing closely on the problem of the author's response to a pervasive Virgilian

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[1] The reference edition is Scaffai 1982 (second edition in 1997). Plessis 1885 has useful notes, indices, and apparatus.

[2] Green 2019, 161–168 has a good summation here, along with a noteworthy example of the care with which the epitomater approached his subject.

[3] Woods 2019 provides a convenient account of the transmission and use of the work during the Middle Ages.

[4] So Kilpatrick 1992.

[5] Cf. especially Falcone, Schubert 2021.

[6] Armstrong 2008, 187 (with consideration of the renewed popularity of Troy lore in the Neronian Age). See further Griffin 1984, 153.

[7] The present study accepts that the *Ilias Latina* is Neronian; for the sake of convenience, its poet is referred to as 'Baebius Italicus', even if the arguments advanced herein do not hinge on the identity of the author.

[8] For a start in exploring a difficult subject, note Reitz 2007, 334–351.

[9] For Ovidian reception in the poem, see Galasso 2021, 194–210.

[10] Putnam 2018, 157–172. Putnam highlights the description of Achilles as *accensus furiis* (854) in the wake of Hector's slaying of Patroclus, in echo of Verg. *Aen.* XII. 946 *furiis accensus*, of Aeneas with Turnus once he sees Pallas' *balteus*.

problem: the question of the relationship of Troy and Italy, especially the difficulties occasioned by the union of the two in the establishment of what would be Rome[11]. The acrostics that mark the opening and close of the poem (spelling out *Italicus scripsi*), point not only to a name, but also to the fact that the author has recast the Homeric tale as an eminently Roman one[12]. Our investigation will also shed light on how the Latin *Iliad* reflects certain particular concerns of the Neronian regime and its artistic and philosophical milieu, specifically the question of the so-called rebirth or renewal of Troy in Italy, and the problem of anger, wrath, and the temptation to seek vengeance.

The Trojan figures most prominently featured in the *Ilias Latina* are Hector, Aeneas, and the notably complex character of Paris, who is presented with both positive and decidedly negative attributes, most dramatically as the very flame that brings ruin to his city[13]. Hector's death is associated also with the ultimate fiery destruction of Priam's realm; his end is prelude to Troy's[14]. Not surprisingly given the poem's Roman audience, Aeneas takes on special significance.

Aeneas is introduced with reverential language that highlights his sacral nature and divine lineage: *et sacer Aeneas, Veneris certissima proles* (236). The solemn language harks back to the Sibyl Deiphobe's address to Aeneas at Verg. *Aen*. VI. 322 *Anchisa generate, deum certissima proles*; especially after *sacer*, it looks forward to the hero's deification. Hero and goddess are juxtaposed; from the start, all the emphasis is on how the son of the goddess is destined to be a god.

After this introduction, Baebius' Aeneas appears next in a combat with Diomedes, as the poet relates the famous episode of *Iliad* 5 in which the son of Tydeus would have slain his opponent, had not his goddess mother intervened to rescue him (454—465)[15]. Diomedes attacks Venus and drives her from the battlefield (466—471), at which point *Troianus Apollo* sees to the safeguarding of Aeneas, and to his restoration to battle (472—473). Venus' son proceeds to enjoy an *aristeia* in the wake of his Apollonian rejuvenation (474—485); he shines forth like a light on the battlefield: *emicat interea Veneris pulcherrima proles* (485)[16]. Hector joins him, as the Trojans enjoy a powerful moment of success on the plains. Agamemnon rouses the Greeks in response, and soon he, too, faces Aeneas; he hurls his weapon at the Trojan, killing not his quarry, but his foe's hapless charioteer (495—515). Aeneas in turn leaps from his chariot and slays Crethon and Orsilochus (516—518).

The battlefield clashes of Aeneas with both Diomedes and the son of Atreus are prelude, however, to his decisive encounter with Achilles[17]. This last engagement is cast in

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[11] Note here Glei 2018, 31—51.

[12] Cf. here Hilberg 1899, 264—305; 1900, 317—318. The *Italicus* acrostic is secure, despite the textual difficulties of verse 7a. Identification of the 'Italicus' has been a favorite problem of students of the work, coupled with the question of whether the Roman author was following a Greek epitome.

[13] See here Aricò 2023, 83—100; more generally, note Falcone 2021, 173—193.

[14] Cf. McClennan 2019, 106.

[15] Hom. *Il*. V. 297—318. Fletcher 2006, 219—259 and Papaioannou 2000, 193—217 offer extended consideration of the importance of Diomedes to Virgil's epic.

[16] One may think here of the celebrated Julian comet of 43; Aeneas shining forth on the battlefield is something of a harbinger for that signal light of Caesar's apotheosis.

[17] On the depiction of Achilles note Ziegler 2012.

terms and language that allude to the significance of the Trojan hero for the later history of Rome (895–902):

> ... contra Cythereius heros
> occurrit fortis, sed enim non viribus aequis,
> Aeacidae nec erat compar; tamen ira coegit
> conferre invictis iuvenem cum viribus arma.
> quem nisi servasset magnarum rector aquarum,
> ut profugus Latiis Troiam repararet in arvis
> Augustumque genus claris submitteret astris,
> non pulchrae gentis mansisset origo.

Verses 899–902 make a striking declaration about the importance of Aeneas' survival to the future history of Rome, with reference both to the rebirth of Troy in Latium, and to the glorification of the *Augustum genus*[18]. The language is densely compressed and richly connotative. Homer's Aphrodite is motivated to save Aeneas out of maternal affection and anxiety; Baebius' Venus also explicitly manages to serve the cause of the Roman, Augustan future.

It is here that the poet expressly engages with his Augustan predecessors, both Virgil and Horace. *Profugus* (900) of Aeneas recalls the second line of the *Aeneid*: *Italiam fato profugus Laviniaque venit*. Verse 900 juxtaposes Latium and Troy (*Latiis Troiam*). The mention of the *pulchra gens* (902) serves as a reminder of the lovely origin of Aeneas' line with the goddess of love and sexuality. The line-ends of 899–901 highlight three distinct realms: the sea (*aquarum*), the land (*arvis*), and the heaven (*astris*). Two pluperfect subjunctives (899 *servasset* and 902 *mansisset*) frame two imperfects (900 *repararet* and 901 *submitteret*).

It is an extraordinary summation, not least in terms of its engagement with Virgil's epic. *Reparare* is a verb that does not occur in the *Aeneid*. Rather, Baebius here alludes to a significant passage from Horace's 'Roman odes' (*Carm.* III. 3. 57–60):

> sed bellicosis fata Quiritibus
> hac lege dico, ne nimium pii
> rebusque fidentes avitae
> tecta velint reparare Troiae[19]

The sentiments are reversed; for the poet of the *Ilias Latina*, the point is for Troy to be restored in Italy, while in Horace's vision, it is an exercise of excessive (and implicitly perilous) *pietas* (III. 3. 58 *nimium pii*) to entertain such dreams. The reference to a hazardous degree of loyalty plays with the signal quality of Virgil's hero, *pietas*[20]. Verse 900 of the *Ilias Latina* thus powerfully echoes two Augustan poets: in *profugus* we remember Virgil's *Aen.* I. 2, and in *reparare Troiae*, Horace's *Carm.* III. 3. 60. Whence came this notion of restoring Troy? Caesar was rumored to have entertained the notion of transferring the capital of the empire from Rome to Troy (Suet. *Iul.* 79); we may compare Lucan's fictional account of Caesar's visit to Troy (Lucan. *Phars.* IX. 964–999), an episode that likely reflects the renewed fascination with Troy that was current in Nero's reign. "Nero's own fascination with Troy, which should be

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[18] 'The date of the poem is reasonably set before Nero's death in 68 A.D., because of the allusion in lines 899–902 to the Julian dynasty' (Haight 1947, 261).

[19] The text is cited from Shackleton Bailey 1985; for commentary note especially Nisbet, Rudd 2004 and Woodman 2022, *ad loc*.

[20] On *pietas* see Traina 1988, 93–101 and Erdmann 2000, 184–187.

viewed not just as an academic or literary interest, but as part of his claim to imperial authority, was evident early on"[21]. Nero composed his own Troy poem, which he performed (Dio Cass. LXII. 29. 1), and he was not averse to innovation of the heroic record: for him, for example, Paris was even greater than Hector in strength and fortitude[22].

Baebius offers a clear equation: the rescue of Aeneas = the furtherance of *Troia rediviva* and the *Augustum genus*, at least in nascence; without Aeneas' survival, there is no *Roma* (= *Troia nova*), and no (divine) lineage of the Caesars. This equivalence is strikingly different from the course charted by Virgil in his epic, where what Baebius envisages is firmly and explicitly ruled out by Jupiter in his climactic colloquy with Juno in *Aeneid* XII Juno's request is that the hated city of Troy remain truly dead: *Sit Latium, sint Albani per saecula reges, / sit Romana potens Itala virtute propago; / occidit, occideritque sinas cum nomine Troia* (Verg. *Aen*. XII. 826—827). Jupiter's response *subsident Teucri* (XII. 836) accedes to the demand for the city's demise[23].

The Neronian poet reimagines Aeneas' action, dismissing both Virgil's account and Horace's admonition. Explicit verbal reminiscence of Horace's language about 'repairing Troy' is used as part of a bold correction of his predecessors, in an exercise of poetic revisionist history: Rome is now imagined to be nothing less than a new Troy, or precisely what the gods of the *Aeneid* had dismissed.

Besides the notion of rebuilding Troy, for Baebius the survival of Aeneas is connected with the future apotheosis of the Augustan lineage: *Augustumque genus claris submitteret astris* (901). There is no explicit reference in the *Ilias Latina* to the Julians; no form of *Iulus*, *Iulius*, etc. occurs in the poem, and this verse offers the only reference to 'Augustan'. Aeneas is identified as the *pulchrae gentis origo* (902), where certainly the *pulchra gens* is the *gens Iulia*; interestingly, however, while Baebius allusively refers to the lovely (*pulchra*) line of descent from Venus through Aeneas and Iulus to Gaius Julius Caesar and Augustus, he avoids the name of the Trojan hero's son Iulus, or his homonymous descendant Julius. The language, in this case, is noteworthy. *Augustum genus* is a striking collocation that occurs nowhere else in extant Latin; Baebius' *claris astris* may be an echo of Cicero, fr. 1 Courtney *hunc genuit claris delapsus ab astris / praevius Aurorae* (of Lucifer' generation of Ceyx)[24]. Simply put, Baebius omits mention of the ancestor who was assassinated; while the Augustan position on Troy and its proposed rebirth is not the Neronian, the sanctity of the successful *Augustum genus* provides a mantle of greater security than any invocation of Caesar, who while deified also posed problematic associations given the circumstances of his end. To the degree that Augustus provided a model for the Neronian principate, Baebius has underscored the association of the *princeps* of his day with his eminently successful predecessor.

The *Ilias Latina* is likely a product of the circle of Neronian court poets[25]. The argument has been made that even at the level of ensuring that "the sanguinary slaughter of the *Iliad*" is emphasized (i.e., in accord with the literary predilection of the period for

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[21] Connors 1998, 95 has a valuable survey of the topic.

[22] Servius, *Ad Aen*. V. 370. The *Ilias Latina* does not shy from depicting Paris with negative attributes, but given the relatively strict adherence to its Homeric model, this was unavoidable.

[23] Cf. Traina 2017, *ad loc*.

[24] Courtney 1993, 152—153; see further Kenney 1996 on Ovid. *Her*. XVIII. 112 *praevius Aurorae Lucifer*, also Cairns 2006, 211—212. *Clara astra* does not occur elsewhere in surviving Latin until Statius (*Theb*. X. 636—637).

[25] Cf. Schubert 1999, 137—141.

blood and *Grand Guignol*), Baebius took care to ensure that he did not omit much of the violent incidents of his original[26]. Certainly the work is deeply invested in the promotion of the image of *Troia rediviva*, in marked contrast to the sentiments of the Augustan Age regarding the Trojan past and its place in the Roman present.

We may look more closely and certain details of the depiction of Aeneas and Achilles at *Ilias Latina* 895−902. Aeneas is referred to as the *Cythereius heros* (895), a periphrasis likely borrowed from Ovid, who employs it three times: first at *Metamorphoses* XIII. 625 in the context of Aeneas' departure from Troy, second at XIV. 584 as the poet turns to the hero's apotheosis, and lastly at *Fasti* III. 611, of Aeneas with Anna in Latium[27]. *Cythereius* emphasizes Aeneas' association with Venus; Virgil uses it half a dozen times in the *Aeneid* of the goddess (Verg. *Aen*. I. 257, 657; IV. 128; V. 800; VIII. 523, 615).

The poet takes care to note that Aeneas was no match for Achilles (896 *non viribus aequis*, 897 *Aeacidae nec erat compar*); anger (897 *ira*) is what is said to have inspired the Trojan hero to attempt the impossible[28]. This emotion is by no means the province of Aeneas only; his adversary Achilles is also noted for his wrath as he pursues his hapless adversaries in the wake of Neptune's rescue of the son of Venus: 909 *ira dabat vires*[29]. This reference to Achilles' rage echoes the theme of the poem from 1 *Iram pande mihi Pelidae, diva, superbi*. It is not unreasonable to see an allusion here to Seneca's *De Ira* and the education of the young Nero in the business of restraining excessive, inappropriate manifestations of rage[30]. The *Iliad* is an epic centered on wrath and anger, but by its end Achilles' fury has been quelled. The *Aeneid* ends with the portrait of a furious Aeneas; Baebius' choice of subject allows him to provide a more clement close to his work, given that Homer's Achilles has a reconciliation scene with Priam in the epic's last book[31].

In light of this contrast, we may note that something strange confronts us as a veritable surprise ending to the poem, something with no parallel in Homer. Alongside a clear acrostic *scripsit* to serve as a seal on his composition, Baebius concludes his epic with references to Calliope and the Muses, and then to Pallas and Phoebus (1063−1070):

> sed iam siste gradum finemque impone laborem,
> Calliope, vatisque tui moderare carinam,
> raris quam cernis stringentem litora remis,
> iamque tenens portum metamque potentis Homeri,
> Pieridum comitata cohors, summitte rudentes
> sanctaque virgineos lauro redimita capillos,
> ipsa tuas depone lyras. ades, inclita Pallas,
> tuque fave vati, cursu iam, Phoebe, peracto.

The passage is not without difficulties of interpretation, punctuation, and text. Verses 1063−1065 refer to Calliope, and to the poet's metaphorical arrival in port. 1066−1069a

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[26] See here Horn 2020, 767−773 with good analysis.

[27] Cf. Heyworth 2019, *ad loc*.

[28] See Fantuzzi 2012, 175 on how the *Ilias Latina* presents Achilles in a generally favorable light, in particular in comparison to Agamemnon.

[29] For the problem of anger (a concern from (*inter al.*) Philodemus to Seneca), note Braund, Most 2003.

[30] See here Braund 2012, 84.

[31] The pattern is thus Achilles-Priam reconciliation in *Iliad* XXIV, paralleled by Juno-Jupiter in *Aeneid* XII.

focus on the cohort of the Pierides/Muses[32]. The intensive *ipsa* does not refer to Calliope alone[33], but to the *comitata cohors* as well as their leader. The lyres of 1069 belong to the Muses and no one else; the goddesses of song carry instruments that will be put down now that the poem has ended. The imperatives follow a balanced course: *siste*, *impone*, and *moderare* of Calliope (1063–1064), then *summitte* and *depone* of the cohort of the Muses (1067, 1069), and finally *ades* and *fave* of the deities Pallas and Phoebus: the polite commands are all related (Calliope the restrainer, the cohort that lets go of ropes and lyres, and the immortals who come to be present and to show their favor).

Citing Phoebus Apollo makes sense here, given his impeccable credentials as a god of music and poetry[34]; Pallas (i.e., Minerva) might seem less obviously relevant[35]. 'Pallas' is mentioned in the climactic scene of the *Aeneid*, or more precisely, *Pallās* the Arcadian as opposed to *Pallas* the goddess, as Aeneas ascribes his deadly vengeance to the action of his slain friend (Verg. *Aen.* XII. 948–949): *Pallas te hoc vulnere, Pallas / immolat, et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit.* Aeneas asserts that it is Pallas who is killing Turnus, in right revenge for the Rutulian's actions in *Aeneid* X. Sarah Spence has argued that the nominative here is ambiguous, with allusion to *Pallas* as well as *Pallās*[36]. Baebius exploits this ambiguity at the close of his *Iliad*, where the unexpected introduction of Pallas at the close of his poem comes in part to remind us of the end of the *Aeneid*.

The cohort of Pierian Muses is invited to put down their lyres; their locks are girded with the laurel that is associated with Phoebus. The poem will close with him, but not before the celebrated and famous goddess Pallas is asked to be present[37]. The *Ilias Latina* thus draws to a close with two deities noted for favoring opposing sides; Phoebus is an inveterate ally of the Trojan cause, while Pallas is a patroness of the Greeks. The last lines of Baebius' epic paint a picture of implicit harmony, of Trojan and Greek immortal defenders now united in their patronage of the arts. There is nothing like the conflict signified by the invocation of the other Pallas at the end of the *Aeneid*, where a Greek was cited by a Trojan as the justification for slaying an Italian.

The goddess Pallas appears elsewhere in the *Ilias Latina* at 78, where she restrains Achilles from harming Agamemnon, 333, where Paris complains to Helen that he was defeated by the *castae Palladis ira*, 394 and 400, where she is present to assist Diomedes in battle, 532–533, where Mars fights with her and she wounds him, 543–545, where Hector senses that the goddess is lending her aid to the Danaans, 548, where the Trojan women go to make supplication at her shrine, 894, where she cooperates with Juno in granting strength to Achilles, 936, where suddenly she appears before Hector, and 956, where she bestows her divine power on the Greeks. Unlike the final, innovative reference to the goddess, these previous appearances accord with her Homeric depiction. Citing Pallas with Phoebus at the close of the poem evokes a spirit of reconciliation; the fact that Pallas normally has no particular association with poetry like Phoebus or Calliope

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[32] There is no need to read *Pieridem* for *Pieridum* with Emil Baehrens (Baehrens 1881).

[33] *Pace* in Baehrens 1881, who takes it to = *era*.

[34] Cf. 165–166 of *Ilias Latina: sitque auctor Apollo / aspiretque libens operi per singula nostro*.

[35] Hodapp 2019 is an essential source for the study of the goddess in post-classical works, with appreciable material of relevance for earlier Greek and Latin literature as well.

[36] See here Spence 1999, especially p. 157–158.

[37] *Inclita Pallas* occurs also at Sen. *Ag.* 369.

and her Muses serves to bring greater attention to her insertion, with the added benefit of recalling the homonymous Arcadian Pallas, on whose account Virgil's Aeneas succumbs to *ira* in his decision not to spare his adversary Turnus.

We may note that Aeneas' slaying of Turnus was evidently a subject of interest to Nero; Suetonius records that the *princeps* had expressed interest in performing a *Turnus* pantomime, though death cut short his ambition (Suet. *Nero*. 54)[38]. It is a tantalizing detail, which raises many questions. Would the *Turnus* have followed the Virgilian plot? Would Nero have performed the roles of both Turnus and Aeneas? What would the pantomime have been intended to convey to a Neronian audience? While we cannot be certain of the answers to any of these questions, the scene was evidently a popular one with the *princeps*. The *Ilias Latina* is faithful to its Homeric source in closing with the burial of Hector, and it underscores the tone of quiet harmony by its coda, not least the memory it conjures of the markedly different close of the *Aeneid*.

There may be another reason why Baebius highlights the goddess Pallas at the close of his miniature epic. Minerva came to be associated with the March festival of the Quinquatria or Quinquatrus, which in origin was celebrated in honor of the month's patron god Mars on 19 March, the fifth (hence its name) day after the Ides (the day of Caesar's assassination); later it became associated with Minerva and her birthday[39]. The Quinquatria of 59 A.D. was notorious for the assassination of Nero's mother Agrippina, an event that marked a grim turning point in the reign of the young *princeps* (Tac. *Ann*. XIV. 4—13)[40]. 'Tacitus and Suetonius, followed by many modern scholars, blame the "wicked" Nero'[41]. Why Agrippina was killed, and the reaction to her death on the part of Nero's advisors and subjects, has been the occasion of critical debate; most would agree with the ancient assessment that the matricide marked a critical turning point in the imperial career.

Nero also established quinquennial games, the so-called Neronia; music (specifically lyre-playing) was featured at that celebration, as were gymnastic events. Tacitus references this event: he notes that in the year after Agrippina's death, during Nero's fourth consulship (i.e., 60 A.D.), a *quinquennale ludicrum* was inaugurated (Tac. *Ann*. XIV. 20). Suetonius records that Nero provided a gift of oil (which was associated with Minerva) to all senators and equestrians on the occasion (Suet. *Nero*. 12. 3). The Neronia of 60 A.D. in some ways marked the commencement of a new phase in the principate, certainly one that would be free of the influence of the emperor's mother. The Quinquatria was an established Roman holiday, while what we might refer to as the first *quinquennium Neronis* marked a significant anniversary for the principate[42]. From October of 54 to

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[38] On this see especially Connors 1998, 98.

[39] Cf. Ovid, *Fast*. 3. 809—848.

[40] For the impression made by Nero's matricide on his court and the reaction of the senate and others, note especially Luke 2013, 207—228.

[41] Drinkwater 2019, 179.

[42] There would be a second Neronia in 65, as attested to by Tacitus (*Ann*. XVI. 2, on which see Fratantuono 2018, *ad loc*.). We may note here the problem of the alleged judgment of Trajan on the *quinquennium Neronis* cited in Aurelius Victor *Liber de Caesaribus* V. 1—4, which may refer to the period from 54—59, though it could also allude to the period between the Great Fire of 64 and Nero's death. The difficulties of this late reference (insoluble in view of the extant evidence) do not affect the arguments presented in this study on the *Ilias Latina*; see

March of 59 Nero had reigned under Agrippina's more or less watchful eye; now he was liberated from her (just as in 62 he would divest himself of Seneca and Burrus). Minerva had associations with both the assassination of 59 and the festival of 60, which otherwise were connected principally because the most infamous event of the Quinquatria of 59 made the quinquennial observance of 60 all the more noteworthy. Nero would survive to see a second such 'Neronian' festival, in 65.

It is not unreasonable to speculate that the *Ilias Latina* was a composition for either the first or the second Neronia. We may note here a famous problem: if the Neronia was quinquennial, it should have been celebrated every fourth year given the Roman (and Greek) practice of inclusive counting, and if in origin it commemorated the fifth year of Nero's accession, it should have been commenced in 59, not 60. In his mention of the second Neronia of 65, Tacitus refers once again to a *quinquennale ludicrum*, adding the detail *secundo lustro*[43]. The argument has been made that the Neronia of 65 was actually the delayed festival of 64[44], thus resolving the problem of inclusive or exclusive counting, though not everyone has been convinced of the attempted solution[45]. Our literary study of Baebius' epic does not hinge on the problem of the dating of the Neronia[46]. There were two such festivals in Nero's reign, and a poetic epitome of the *Iliad* may have been performed at either. Any special, prominent mention of the goddess Pallas would have been appropriate in the context of the Neronia, and to the extent that the Neronian circle was supportive (officially, at least) of the elimination of Agrippina, the memory of the fateful Quinquatria of 59 would also linger. Pallas/Minerva sprang from the head of Jupiter, with her prudent mother Metis conveniently absorbed, as it were, by the supreme god; the Quinquatria celebrated the birth of the goddess whose mother conveniently departed the scene, thus providing a perverse parallel for the events of the spring of 59 and the emergence of an emperor who would not be restrained by any maternal influence.

Virgil's *Aeneid* ends with its protagonist Aeneas frozen, as it were, in a moment of fury. The epic closes with violence and mortal conflict, in contrast to the peace that prevails among the immortals[47]. Not long before Aeneas' fateful encounter with Turnus, Jupiter and Juno agree to the death of Troy and the uneven terms by which Teucrian and Ausonian would unite in furtherance of the future Rome. The Trojan element, it is decided, will contribute a bodily element only: *commixti corpore tantum / subsident Teucri* (XII. 835−836), with a firm rejection of any dream of a reborn Troy in Latium. Whatever Julius Caesar may have entertained to glorify his Julian *gens* and to highlight the Trojan ancestry of his line, the Augustan verdict was clear: Troy and its eastern associations

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further Murray 1965, 41−61; Levick 1983, 211−225; Griffin 1992, 423−427 and the extensive bibliography conveniently compiled by Thornton M.K., Thornton R.L. 2008, 101.

[43] The historian echoes the reference to the *lustrum* at *Ann*. XVI. 4 *lustrali certamine*.

[44] So Bolton 1948, 82−90 invoking numismatic evidence.

[45] Cf. MacDowall 1958, 192−194.

[46] Nonetheless a suggestion may be offered. Claudius' death occurred on 13 October of 54. Nero's first consulship was in 55. Agrippina's murder came on 23 March of 59. The Neronia of 60 may have been dated from the first consulship, thus marking five years.

[47] We may compare *Iliad* I and *Aeneid* XII, with respect to the conflict of Achilles and Agamemnon, and the boisterous harmony of Homer's gods, and the duel of Aeneas and Turnus, which comes after and not before the reconciliation of Juno.

would not take precedence in the picture of the new Golden Age in the wake of the end of the civil wars[48].

For Nero, the opposite would hold true. Troy mania would be in vogue, not least in poetic composition. The *Ilias Latina* offers an opposing vision to that of Virgil and Horace, one in which Troy will be restored in Italy. This implicit rejection of the decisions made by the immortals in *Aeneid* XII would not, however, be associated with any denigration or downplaying of the Augustan regime. On the contrary, Baebius' poem references Augustus, not Caesar; the unquestionably successful *princeps* serves as icon and paradigm for Rome's restored Golden Age under Nero, not the assassinated (even if deified) Julius. Julius could be viewed as an imperfect precursor of Augustus; history verges toward the *princeps*, who is the omega point[49].

Not only did Virgil suppress Troy in his epic vision of the *sermo* and *mores* of the future Rome, he also left his audience with a violent, bloody picture of his hero, as Aeneas in effect inherited the wrath of Juno in his decision to slay Turnus[50]. Regardless of how one interprets the close of the *Aeneid*, the final vision of Virgil's epic is one of vengeance, without any analogue to Homer's portrayal of Achilles with Priam. As with his reference to the question of the rebirth of Troy in Italy, so here Baebius offers a picture that stands in contrast to Virgil's: the *Ilias Latina* epitomizes the Homeric *Iliad*, and so its hero Achilles not only kills Hector, but also displays clemency and compassion in granting the body of his victim to Priam, and in abandoning his savage anger and irascible temperament. Baebius' short epic closes not with the vengeful specter of the Arcadian Pallas, but with the goddess Pallas now invoked alongside Phoebus, in a powerful image of divine harmony and the end of war. Former adversaries in the Trojan War are now coupled in the poet's address for divine favor and blessing at the end of his composition. The end of the *Ilias Latina* offers another response (not to say rebuke) to Virgil, this time not in the matter of whether there would be a new Troy, but with respect to the question of revenge and justice, of anger and vengeance.

Learned, literate listeners to Baebius' composition at the Neronia of 60 or 65 would have been struck by both the relevance of the work to the tenor and tone of certain aspects, at least, of the principate. Renewed interest in the image of Troy is reflected in the poet's unambiguous rejection of the conclusions and admonitions of his Augustan predecessors Virgil and Horace, and the simple declaration that there would indeed be a new Troy in Latium. Further, like Seneca in his treatise on anger, the author of the *Ilias Latina* offers a meditation on *ira*, one that focuses on the lessons of Homer's Achilles and the limits of rage. The violent vision of the end of Virgil's *Aeneid* is replaced with an irenic picture of Pallas not as Trojan adversary, but as would-be patroness of the arts. And, for those with a more jaded (not to say cynical) view, there was the slightly

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[48] The Cleopatra element may be noted here: for the Augustan regime in the aftermath of Actium, primitive Italy would be celebrated, not the decadence associated with the eastern Mediterranean and the all too recent memory of Antony and his paramour.

[49] The slain dictator was a problematic figure for the poets of the Augustan Age as well. 'Virgil's feelings about Iulius Caesar were tinged with deep unhappiness' (Austin 1971, 110, *ad* I. 286).

[50] Cf. Verg. *Aen*. XII. 841–842 *adnuit his Iuno et mentem laetata retorsit; / interea excedit caelo nubemque relinquit*, of Juno as she leaves Jupiter's presence after learning of the ultimate disposition of Troy, and the depiction of Aeneas with Turnus in the closing scene of the poem.

subversive, certainly clever hint of how the invocation of an artistic, peaceful Pallas in a Neronian Age poem might conjure darker memories, of a Minervan Quinquatria marked by matricide.

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