

## Brothers in Arms: Teaching the Homeric Influence on Warrior Pairs in Caesar and Vergil

The current AP guidelines urge teachers to incorporate comparisons of our two authors, Caesar and Vergil. To facilitate students in making comparisons, an investigation of both authors' common literary influences seems in order, and for this I propose Homer. Caesar and Vergil, as well-educated young Roman men, would have studied Greek and would have carefully read the seminal epics of Homer. Unsurprisingly both demonstrate Homeric influences particularly in their descriptions of battles. Like Homer, they are quite cinematic, zooming in from the overall melee onto an *aquilifer* or a pair of adversaries.

As an AP teacher, one fruitful option is to include *The Essential Homer* (Stanley Lombardo, trans., 2000) in the AP summer reading assignments; then throughout the year the teacher can point out ways in which both Caesar and Vergil echo Homer's works in *De Bello Gallico* and the *Aeneid*. In this presentation I will focus on two specific representations of warriors in Homer, which both Caesar and Vergil echo. First is the representation of two opposing warriors facing off in mortal combat, and second the image of two warrior buddies/rivals breaking off from their group to perform some mission. The iconic pairs from Homer in the first instance are Achilles and Hector, and in the second Diomedes and Odysseus.

Vergil clearly looks back to Homer when he writes the *Aeneid*. Both are epic poems in dactylic hexameter. But further, Vergil clearly recreates some of Homer's most memorable scenes. The final mortal combat of Aeneas and Turnus in *Aeneid* 12 echoes that of Achilles and Hector in *Iliad* 22. The foray into an enemy camp of Nisus and Euryalus in *Aeneid* 9 echoes that of Odysseus and Diomedes in *Iliad* 10. Caesar's Homeric influences are more subtle, but are present nevertheless. Caesar, in the midst of describing a battle, abruptly focuses in on a brave *aquilifer* in *De Bello Gallico* 4 or on warrior buddy/rivals such as Pullo and Vorenus or Sabinus

and Cotta in *De Bello Gallico* 5.

This paper will explore how Homer's iconic images of warriors are echoed in specific combat scenes in the texts of both Vergil and Caesar. These Homeric references will be examined in terms of how similar scenes are drawn, what common language is used, as well as in terms of their visual artistic compositions since ancient times. The purpose of this presentation will be to illuminate these references in order to allow teachers to highlight the intertext and provide rich comparisons for their students studying Vergil and Caesar.