

Jupiter the Politician: Brokering Rome's Identity in the *Aeneid*

Identity politics is on many people's minds these days. As a concept, identity and related questions started to become more and more important since Erikson's seminal study entitled "Childhood and Society" appeared in print in 1950. Nevertheless, ethnic identity is also part of Vergil's *Aeneid*. Even if the word *identitas* is of medieval origin, it is clear that the Trojan past, the tribes in Latium, the Carthaginians, and many more identities play a decisive role in Vergil's description of how Rome came into being and what their respective roles would be within that new society. Consequently, many scholars have dealt with these identities (cf., e.g., Syed 2005, Bettini 2006, Schmitz 2013, Fletcher 2014, Giusti 2018, Farrell 2021).

This paper will argue that Jupiter will be able to make the fates' idea that there will be a new Roman people in Latium palatable to Juno and Venus only by playing to his audiences' ideas about their cultural identity. The issue that is at stake here has at its center the question, which role the Trojan past of the newcomers will play for Rome and how important the natives and their culture will be. When talking to the Trojan side of the dispute, namely Venus, he will stress the role of Troy's past in Rome. And when he has to convince the proponents of the Latin cultural identity, i.e. Juno, he shows the importance of their traditions in the new society. The issue becomes problematic when he has to address both sides at the same time. We will therefore have to look especially at Jupiter's prophecies of Rome's future to Venus in book 1, to Juno in book 12, and his negotiations with both deities in book 10.

In 1.227-253, after the sea storm that almost annihilated Aeneas' fleet, Venus addresses Jupiter and asks him if he wants to end the suffering for Aeneas and his crew at all and how he wants to accomplish that the Trojans will rule again (253). Jupiter asks Venus not to worry and

then gives a detailed account of the future of Venus' descendants (254-296). Among them will be the Iulian and Trojan Caesar (286). *Troianus* connects the history of the Iulian, i.e. Venus', family explicitly to its Trojan heritage. Researchers have different opinions on who is meant by this Caesar: Iulius, Augustus, or both. Both Caesars, however, became supporters of Troy that was destroyed by Fimbria in 85 BC. If we are to believe Lucan in his 9th book of his *Pharsalia*, Caesar visited Troy and his visit was of great importance. Whatever either Caesar or Augustus did to earn the cognomen *Troianus*, this attribute manages to let the post-Trojan future of Venus' family be Trojan, not necessarily Roman, although the word *Romanus* would have fitted the verse, too. It is clear that Jupiter explicitly answers Venus' concern about the future of Troy in verse 253.

The assembly of gods at the beginning of book 10 shows us Jupiter who wants peace in Latium (15). Venus and Juno prove to be unforgiving and intransigent, presenting lists of accusations against each other and their respective clients. Jupiter in the end cannot but state that peace is not possible at the moment between both the Ausonians and the Trojans on the one hand and Venus and Juno on the other (105f.), that he himself is impartial, and that the fates will find their way (113).

Jupiter will come back to the fates of Aeneas in 12.795. He "forbids" Juno to go any further in her support of Aeneas' enemies (*veto*, 806). Juno then gives in and asks Jupiter that the people of Latium will not change their names, their language, or the way they dress. She explicitly wants that the new people will not be called Trojans. Even if she uses other adjectives than *Troianus*, it becomes clear that Jupiter's subsequent assent, that Ausonian blood will be mixed into the new coming nation, contradicts his own promise to Juno in 1.286.

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