

## VERGIL'S DIRAE, SOUTH ITALY, AND ETRURIA

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THE IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCE of the reconciliation between Jupiter and Juno at the end of Vergil's *Aeneid* is Jupiter's sending of a female demon to help conclude the conflict between Aeneas and Turnus. Her task is to meet Juturna as a sign of Jupiter's will (12.854). As a means of doing this the demon changes into a small bird, then flies into Turnus' face and shield (12.861-866). The consequent weakening of Turnus in his combat with Aeneas has two stages: first he is stunned and afraid (12.867-868); and then, when he tries to lift a huge rock to hurl at Aeneas, it is the so-called Dira that causes his strength to fail (12.914). If Turnus ever had any doubts about Jupiter's hostility to him in the course of recent events in Latium, Juturna now dispels them (12.875-878). When Aeneas hurls insults at his fearful opponent, Turnus is left only to lament the fact that Jupiter is now certainly his enemy (12.887-895).

The role of the Dira is an important one because it reinforces at the end of the poem the fact that Aeneas' killing of Turnus is part of the divine plan. Just as Jupiter's will is emphasised early in Book 1 (257 ff.) in response to Juno's malevolence, so here it is reinforced at the end of Book 12 in response to her final submission to him. Yet, despite the importance of the episode in the resolution of the action of the poem, the actual identity of the Dirae is never made clear. Instead, there is a rather oblique description of them that runs as follows:

*dicuntur geminae pestes cognomine Dirae,  
quas et Tartaream nox intempesta Megaeram  
uno eodemque tulit partu, paribusque revinxit  
serpentum spiris ventosasque addidit alas.  
hae Iovis ad solium saevique in limine regis  
apparent acuuntque metum mortalibus aegris,  
si quando letum horrificum morbosque deum rex  
molitur, meritas aut bello territat urbes.* 12.845-852

The identity of the Dirae is a matter of some interest and importance partly because of the crucial role of one of them at the end of the poem, and partly because of the Fury Allecto's role in precipitating the war in Latium in the first place. How we perceive Turnus in the *Aeneid* depends to some degree on the exact nature of his relationship with the divinities that so influence his life and death. If these Dirae are basically the three Furies, with Jupiter as master, then we are probably inclined to draw some very different conclusions about the *Aeneid* than if they are entirely separate

creatures. More specifically, of course, if the Dira who is sent against Turnus at the end of the poem is Allecto herself, then there is a powerful irony that Turnus is infected and defeated by the same demon figure. As it is, however, Vergil's text is (typically) ambiguous on the matter. The question of identity, therefore, as far as it exists, is often resolved in accordance with more general perceptions of the poem. For some, the Dira is unquestionably Allecto or Tisiphone;<sup>1</sup> for others she is a very different kind of demon. Certainly there has been some work in recent times on the subject arguing for two quite separate groups of demons. Wolfgang Hübner, in his major work on the Dirae in Roman epic,<sup>2</sup> tries to draw a distinction between the Furies as powers of the Underworld, and the Dirae of Book 12 associated with Jupiter. More recently, R. J. Edgeworth has argued that there are two specific sets of demons.<sup>3</sup> His main conclusion (136) is that there are "two sets of sisters, both of infernal origin . . . : three Dirae (Megaera and two unnamed others) and several Erinyes (number unspecified but including Allecto and Tisiphone)." The case for this view is put largely on the basis of internal evidence together with an assessment of the Furies' function as chthonic goddesses of vengeance in some of the Greek literary sources (notably Aeschylus). His argument is essentially that we have no source for the three names Allecto, Megaera, and Tisiphone before Vergil (133, note 1). Moreover, he argues (136) that in the *Oresteia* the Erinyes have no contact with Zeus (*Eum.* 179–197 and 365–366), let alone sit beside his throne.

In the following article I examine these conclusions by incorporating briefly some of the material evidence from South Italy and Etruria where the winged female demon figure is frequently depicted. These sources are examined neither by Hübner nor by Edgeworth although in my view they have some bearing on the whole question.<sup>4</sup> In part 1, on the basis of what we see on Paestan vases, I put forward further evidence for the view that the Dirae of *Aeneid* 12 are Allecto, Megaera, and Tisiphone. In part 2, I proceed to examine the functions that the female demon figure has in the

<sup>1</sup>See, for instance, C. J. Fordyce, *Aeneidos Libri VII–VIII* (Oxford 1977) ad 7.324 ff.; R. D. Williams, *The Aeneid of Virgil Books 7–12* (Basingstoke and London 1978) ad 12.845. The literary sources for the names Allecto, Megaera, and Tisiphone are dealt with by Ernst Wüst in *RE* 8 (1956) s.v. "Erinyes" cols. 123–124. M. C. J. Putnam, *The Poetry of the Aeneid* (Ithaca and London 1988) 163, seems to be very confident that the Dira is specifically Allecto. The text may be pointing us in this direction (see below, nn. 7 and 18), but we cannot simply assume it.

<sup>2</sup>Wolfgang Hübner, *Dirae im römischen Epos* (Hildesheim and New York 1970, Spudasmata 21).

<sup>3</sup>R. J. Edgeworth, "The Dirae of *Aeneid* XII," *Eranos* 84 (1986) 133–143.

<sup>4</sup>Wüst ([above, n. 1] cols. 138–166), however, does deal with the iconographical evidence. For the most recent study with full bibliography, see H. Sarian's entry "Erinyes" in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* 3 (Zurich and Munich 1986) 825–843.

*Aeneid* in the context of the iconography of South Italy and Etruria. In part 3, I look briefly at the forms that Vergil's demons take in the context of earlier depictions. Nowhere is it my intention to claim that Vergil's demonology derives from one specific geographical or cultural source. It is certainly impossible to show convincingly that Vergil is acquainted directly with any of the following iconographical evidence. But we can at least examine Vergil's demonology in a wider cross-cultural context. It may be important, for instance, given the more frequent occurrence of female demons in South Italy and Etruria than is found in Attic vase-painting, that Aeneas encounters the full force of the female demon figure only *after* he reaches Italy.

# I IDENTIFICATION

Of the three demons named in the *Aeneid* only Megaera is cited as one of the three Dirae (12.846). The reference to her as Tartarean Megaera is not reinforced in the *Aeneid* although she may be the *Furiarum maxima* described in the Underworld (6.605).<sup>5</sup> Tisiphone is slightly more prominent in the *Aeneid*, notably in the Underworld. When Aeneas looks back to Tartarus (6.548 ff.), he sees Tisiphone sitting on an iron tower. Her function in Tartarus is to hound the guilty souls, something which she relishes and never shirks (6.570 ff.). She is also very active in the upper world especially in the brutality of the battlefield (*pallida Tisiphone media inter milia saevit*, 10.761).<sup>6</sup> The third demon, Allecto, is easily the most prominent of the three named demons in the *Aeneid*. Pluto is her father and he hates her, as do her Tartarean sisters (Megaera? and Tisiphone? 7.327–328). As with the Aeschylean and Euripidean Fury-figures, Allecto is a daughter of Night (7.331).<sup>7</sup> Her function in the *Aeneid* is to do Juno's bidding, to evoke hatred and war on the Trojans' arrival in Latium. The war that eventually takes place is testimony to the effective conduct of her task.

Vergil is our earliest Latin source for these three named Fury-figures. But the earliest Greek sources for these names are not literary but epigraphic. They are inscriptions on five Paestan vases dated three centuries before Vergil. All five are either signed by Asteas or linked in some way to him. The first of these is a neck-amphora signed by Asteas

<sup>5</sup>See R. G. Austin, *Aeneidos Liber Sextus* (Oxford 1977) ad 605 and 606; cf. below, n. 14.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. *Georgics* 3.551–552: *saevit et in lucem Stygiis emissa tenebris / pallida Tisiphone Morbos agit ante Metumque*.

<sup>7</sup>As is the Dira (12.860); note the repetition *sata Nocte* (7.331; 12.860). For Aeschylus' Furies (i.e., the Greek *Erinyes*) as daughters of Night, see *Eum.* 321–323; 416, 745, 791–792, 844–845. The Euripidean figure of Lyssa (on whom see below, n. 14) is also a daughter of Night (*HF* 822–823). Contrast Hesiod *Th.* 184 ff. where the Furies are daughters of Earth.

and now at San Antonio, Texas.<sup>8</sup> It depicts Orestes at Delphi shrinking back in fear of two Furies who are inscribed ΜΕΓΑΙΡΑ and ΑΛΛΗΚ[ΤΩ]. The second vase, a Paestan hydria, also signed by Asteas, depicts the story of Bellerophon.<sup>9</sup> It was perhaps inspired by Euripides' *Stheneboia*.<sup>10</sup> The four figures on the main part of the vase are inscribed as Proitos, Bellerophon, Stheneboia, and Astyanassa (Stheneboia's maid). Above this scene we see the bust of Aphrodite (inscribed) between two Furies. The Fury on the left carries the inscription ΑΛΛΗΚ[ΤΩ]; the name of the Fury on the right is lost (ΤΕΙΣΙΦΟΝΗ?/ΜΕΓΑΙΡΑ?). A third vase, a Paestan squat-lekythos attributed to Asteas, depicts the purification of Orestes at Delphi.<sup>11</sup> The participants in the scene are all identified by inscriptions (Leto, Artemis, Manto, Orestes, Apollo). Orestes stands in front of a column with his sword in his hand as Apollo approaches him for the ritual of purification. Above this scene are the busts of two Furies. The one on the left is identified by the inscription ΤΕΙΣΙΦΟΝΗ and the figure on the right by ΜΕΓΑΙΡΑ. Two fragments of a fourth vase, probably by Asteas, show two Furies with identifying inscriptions ΤΕ[ΙΣΙΦΟΝΗ] (right) and [ΜΕΓΑ]ΙΡΑ (left).<sup>12</sup> Finally, a calyx-krater by a later artist of the Asteas-Python workshop has Orestes, Apollo, and Elektra at Delphi.<sup>13</sup> Above, framed in the windows, are two Furies inscribed ΠΟΙΝΑ and ΤΕΙΣΙΦΟΝΗ.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup>A. D. Trendall, *The Red-Figured Vases of Paestum* (London 1987) 85–86, 96–97, no. 133, pls. 53 and 54a. See too LIMC 3.832 "Erinyes" no. 51, pl. 599.6.

<sup>9</sup>Trendall (above, n. 8) 86, no. 134; 98–99, pls. 55–56.

<sup>10</sup>A. D. Trendall and T. B. L. Webster, *Illustrations of Greek Drama* (London 1971) 102.

<sup>11</sup>Trendall (above, n. 8) 109, no. 142, pl. 62a.

<sup>12</sup>Trendall (above, n. 8) 111, no. 144.

<sup>13</sup>Trendall (above, n. 8) 245, no. 971, pl. 150; LIMC 3.715, "Elektra 1," no. 52, pl. 548.4.

<sup>14</sup>For Poina in Aeschylus, see Ag. 58–59 (ὑπερόποινον ... Ἐρινόν) and *Eum.* 321 ff. (ὦ μήτηρ Νύξ, ἀλαοῖσι καὶ δεδορκόσιν ποινάν, κλύθ'). For other references to Poina, see Wüst (above, n. 1) cols. 90–91. For depictions of Poinai (inscribed) associated with vengeance on Apulian vases, see A. D. Trendall and A. Cambitoglou, *The Red-Figured Vases of Apulia 1* (Oxford 1978) 431, no. 81, pl. 160.1; 431, no. 82, pl. 160.2; *The Red-Figured Vases of Apulia 2* (Oxford 1982) 472, no. 75. The possibility that Poina is an alternative name for Megaera cannot be ruled out given that both names are apparently applied to the leading Fury-figure (*Eum.* 321 ff., *Aen.* 12.845–847); cf. Austin (above, n. 5). Likewise, it is tempting to see a connection between Allecto and Lyssa, given the similarity of their roles (*Eur. HF* 822 ff.; *Aen.* 7.323 ff.). For the possible Lyssa-Vanth-Allecto connection, see O. J. Brendel, "Der Grosse Fries in der Villa dei Misteri," *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 81 (1966) 230–234, at 232 and Larissa Bonfante (ed.), *Etruscan Life and Afterlife* (Detroit 1986) 267. For Lyssa (inscribed) on an Apulian calyx-krater, see Trendall and Cambitoglou, *ibid.*, 1.263, no. 27a. For another possible influence, that of Discordia in Ennius, see E. Norden, *Ennius und Vergilius* (Leipzig and Berlin 1915) 10 ff.

Thus, the Paestan vases provide us with five fourth-century identifications for different pairs of Furies: Megaera/Allecto (Vase 1), Allecto and another Fury [name lost] (Vase 2); Tisiphone/Megaera (Vase 3); Tisiphone/Megaera (Vase 4); and Tisiphone/Poina (Vase 5). Given the existence of these five inscribed vases we cannot really say that Vergil is our first source for Megaera, Allecto, and Tisiphone as the three Furies.<sup>15</sup> Certainly we are unable to place them definitively as a group of three (leaving aside Poina) in the Paestan pottery (or in Vergil for that matter) partly because the vase painters have sought a balance by having only two Furies rather than three.<sup>16</sup> Whether on the vases or in the *Aeneid*, demons, it seems, do not operate as a group of three. Nevertheless, the weight of evidence encourages us to place them together as a single group. The existence of a group of Furies specifically three in number (with possible variations in names?) goes back to Euripides.<sup>17</sup> The fact that there are three named Furies in the *Aeneid* suggests that Vergil is following this tradition.<sup>18</sup> The Paestan vases therefore seem to support the view that Megaera's two unnamed sisters (*Aen.* 12.845–852) are Allecto and Tisiphone. Similarly, on the basis of this evidence, one finds it difficult to separate the three of them into two groups. The fact that Megaera is seen twice with Tisiphone, and once (possibly twice) with Allecto means that we are really bound to think of them as a group of three. Thus, Edgeworth's division for the *Aeneid* (Megaera and two unnamed others = Dirae beside Jupiter's throne; Allecto, Tisiphone, and others = Furies acting in and from the Underworld) is certainly not supported by our earliest evidence. Whilst the description of the Dirae in the *Aeneid* is undoubtedly oblique, we cannot really explain it by an arbitrary separation of demons into two groups.

## II FUNCTIONS

If this identification of Allecto, Megaera, and Tisiphone as a group of sisters is correct for the *Aeneid*, as it appears to be for the Paestan vases, it means that they have a dual function and dual provenance in the poem.<sup>19</sup> They are demons associated with the powers of darkness and the Underworld (note

<sup>15</sup>As Edgeworth does (above, n. 3) 133, n. 1. For reference to Tisiphone in Book 4 of Lucilius' *Satires*, see F. Marx, *C. Lucilii carminum reliquiae* (Leipzig 1904) 13.

<sup>16</sup>It is noteworthy in this context that there are two Dirae pictured beside Jupiter's throne: *geminæ pestes cognomine Dirae* (*Aen.* 12.845).

<sup>17</sup>*Eur. Tro.* 457; *Or.* 408, 1650; there is a larger number at *IT* 968 ff. See R. O. A. M. Lyne, *Words and the Poet* (Oxford 1989) 192–194, especially n. 19.

<sup>18</sup>The verbal parallels strengthen the case for one group of three demons: *Allecto dirarum ab sede dearum* (7.324 Mynors's text); *adsum* [*Allecto*] *dirarum ab sede sororum* (7.454); *dea dira* (12.914); cf. *sata Nocte* (above, n. 7).

<sup>19</sup>Philip Hardie ("The *Aeneid* and the *Oresteia*," *Proceedings of the Virgil Society* 20 [1991] 42) describes them "as a corps of stormtroopers on behalf of Rome."

especially Books 6 and 7) and also with Jupiter's sky realm (Book 12). In the former they are associated with vengeance (Book 6) or primitive violence in opposition to Jupiter (Book 7), and in the latter with the enforcement of Jupiter's decrees (Book 12). Thus, they are agents of both Juno and Jupiter, of disorder and order; and it is Turnus who experiences the horror of both their upper-world roles.

The broad range of functions that these demons perform in the *Aeneid* is an extension of anything seen in the *Oresteia*.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, if we examine some of the numerous (generally uninscribed) representations of similar demons in South Italy and Etruria, we see the same basic functions. On South Italian vases their most common function is the avenging of Orestes' blood guilt.<sup>21</sup> These scenes are largely in accordance with the Aeschylean version of Orestes' matricide. As with the Paestan vases on this subject seen above, Orestes is often shown at Delphi being confronted by two avenging Furies. On a different theme, however, the demons can have an Underworld function very similar to that seen in *Aeneid* 6. An uninscribed Apulian volute-krater dated about 350 B.C. shows the punishment of Theseus and Pirithous in the Underworld.<sup>22</sup> A Fury with an uncommonly vicious appearance (see below, section 3) ties the hands of one warrior (Theseus?), whilst the other, already bound, lies to the left. The scene is very similar to that in Tartarus in *Aeneid* 6 where a long list of victims is described as suffering torture in the Underworld (6.580 ff.). The list ends with Pirithous (601) and then re-commences with Theseus (617 ff.). In between these two a torturing Fury is described (Megaera?) who springs forward with a torch and a thunderous voice (605 ff.). The depiction of the punishment of Theseus and Pirithous on the Apulian volute-krater is the only treatment of this subject from South Italy.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, the theme may have become a favourite one. Our only evidence for the Etruscan death-demon Tuchulcha in the Tomb of Orcus at Tarquinia (fourth century B.C.) shows the terrifying winged demon with the face of a vulture and the ears of a donkey.<sup>24</sup> Tuchulcha holds snakes in his hands and torments Theseus and Pirithous, who sit in a state of dejection.

<sup>20</sup>See *Eum.* 179–197 and 365–366 where the Furies, unlike Athena and Apollo, have absolutely no access to Zeus. See too Hardie (above, n. 19) 29–45. Note, however, that at *Iliad* 15.204 Iris makes it clear that the Erinyes will help protect Zeus' rights (as the elder born) over Poseidon's.

<sup>21</sup>The full details are provided in *LIMC* 3.826 ff., "Erinyes."

<sup>22</sup>Trendall and Cambitoglou (above, n. 14) 1.397, no. 14; *LIMC* 3.828, "Erinyes," no. 8, pl. 595.5.

<sup>23</sup>Trendall and Cambitoglou (above, n. 14) 1.397.

<sup>24</sup>See S. Steingraber (ed.), *Catalogo ragionato della pittura etrusca* (Milan 1985) 334–337. On this subject, see I. Krauskopf, *Todesdämonen und Totengötter im vorhellenistischen Etrurien* (Florence 1987).

But, as we have seen, Vergil's winged demon figures have a role which extends well beyond the Underworld. The Dira in Book 12 functions both as a symbol of death and as an active participant in death. We see these same two aspects in the demon figures of South Italy and Etruria. On some vases the Fury is regularly a symbol of impending doom. An Apulian volute-krater by the Darius painter, for instance, shows the prelude to the chariot race between Pelops and Oinomaos.<sup>25</sup> Prior to the race Pelops, Oinomaos, and Hippodamia stand together for the administering of the oath to Pelops. Eros and Aphrodite stand to the left, whilst to the right Myrtilus brings a ram to the altar for sacrifice. On the far right a Fury leans on a spear and simply watches the scene. Her role here is to prefigure the tragic destiny of the protagonists.<sup>26</sup> This is very often the case too with Vanth, the female demon figure associated with death in Etruscan iconography.<sup>27</sup> Vanth often accompanies the grim Underworld god Charun in scenes of death or sacrifice.<sup>28</sup> Understandably, therefore, just as Charun seems to find his way into the *Aeneid*, so probably does Vanth.<sup>29</sup> Vanth's most common function is to symbolise death in a way similar both to the South Italian Fury-figures and to Vergil's Dira of Book 12.<sup>30</sup>

The Dira of Book 12, however, is not just a symbol of death but an active participant in it (861–868; 903–914). She helps bring Turnus to his knees so that Aeneas can finish him off. Likewise, we can see this function also in the iconography of South Italy and Etruria. An Apulian volute-krater

<sup>25</sup>Trendall and Cambitoglou (above, n. 14) 2.487, no. 18, pl. 173.2.

<sup>26</sup>Sarian (above, n. 4) 838, no. 106. Cf. the Campanian neck-amphora (A. D. Trendall, *The Red-Figured Vases of Lucania, Campania and Sicily* [Oxford 1967] 339, no. 795, pl. 131.8) which probably depicts a scene of Hippolytus, Phaedra, and the nurse. Above them a Fury with huge wings symbolises and prefigures the tragic destiny of the protagonists.

<sup>27</sup>There are eight occasions when the name Vanth is inscribed; see A. Rallo, *Lasa, iconografia e esegesi* (Florence 1974) 50–53. For the case for applying her name to numerous female death demons, see J. P. Small, *Studies Related to the Theban Cycle on Late Etruscan Urns* (Rome 1981) 181–185. It is worth pointing out that whereas the South Italian vases generally date from the fourth century B.C., many of the Etruscan representations of these demons are much later and therefore closer to Vergil's own time.

<sup>28</sup>See for instance, the François Tomb, Vulci (M. Pallottino, *La Peinture étrusque* [Geneva 1952] 115–117), and the "Tomba degli Anina" at Tarquinia (M. Pallottino, "Un gruppo di nuove iscrizioni tarquiniesi," *Studi Etruschi* 32 [1964] 108, tav. XXVI, fig. 2). For their frequent depiction on Volterranean cinerary urns, see *Corpus delle urne etrusche di età ellenistica* (Florence 1975–86) *passim*.

<sup>29</sup>For the Vanth-Allecto connection and the *Aeneid*, see above, n. 14. For Charun and Charon in the *Aeneid*, see F. De Ruyt, *Charun, démon étrusque de la mort* (Rome 1934) 247 ff.; Austin (above, n. 5) ad 298 ff.; R. H. Terpening, *Charon and the Crossing* (Lewisburg 1985). See too "Charu(n)," *LIMC* 3.225–236 (E. Mavleev and I. Krauskopf).

<sup>30</sup>See E. H. Richardson, *The Etruscans* (Chicago 1964) 243; S. De Marinis, "Vanth," *Enciclopedia dell'arte antica* 7 (Rome 1966) pp. 1089–90.

now in the British Museum shows the impending death of Hippolytus as told in Euripides' play.<sup>31</sup> Hippolytus drives along in his chariot, and his horses rear up as the bull sent by Poseidon emerges from the sea. This is the moment when "wild panic fell upon the horses" (Εἰθὺς δὲ πάλοις δεινὸς ἐμπίπτει φόβος, *Hippolytus* 1218).<sup>32</sup> The painter, however, has added to the scene a menacing Fury-figure who is about to hurl a flaming torch at him or perhaps is about to grab the horses to madden them. She acts from the front of the horses as the bull acts from below. The Fury is both a symbol of Hippolytus' impending death and an assistant in it. Her action in attacking Hippolytus in the face is very like that of Vergil's Dira who flies into Turnus' face in the shape of a small bird (12.861-868).

The same two basic functions may well be true of Etruscan Vanth. For instance a typical scene on about 200 cinerary urns is a single combat between two warriors (Eteocles and Polyneices? Arruns and Brutus?).<sup>33</sup> One brightly coloured example in terracotta now in the Archaeological Museum in Florence (5719) has been discussed in some detail by Jocelyn Penny Small.<sup>34</sup> It depicts the two warriors striking each other with their swords; the right warrior is struck in the neck, the left warrior in the lower stomach. Flanking the two warriors are two winged demons both holding large torches in their outside hands. Both demons extend their inside arms towards the centre of the urn above the head of the warrior near to them. The two demons provide an artistic balance in their posture, in a similar way to the sets of two demons seen on the South Italian vases and the two Dirae beside Jupiter's throne. But it is also likely that two demons appear so prominently here because both heroes are about to die. Moreover, it may well be the case that the gesture the demons perform indicates they have a role to play that goes beyond mere symbolism. In that case they, like Vergil's Dira, would be not just symbols of impending death but active participants in it. They may act in some way to bring about death or accelerate it.<sup>35</sup> That is, like Valkyries, they probably select their victims, act upon them in some way, and lead them to the Underworld after death.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>31</sup>Trendall and Cambitoglou (above, n. 14) 2.487, no. 17, pl. 173.1. Cf. the loutrophoros by the Underworld painter which depicts the madness of Lycurgus, who is similarly tormented by a menacing Fury (*ibid.*, 2.535, no. 297, pl. 200).

<sup>32</sup>Trendall and Webster (above, n. 10) 88.

<sup>33</sup>G. Körte, *I rilievi delle urne etrusche* (Berlin 1890-1916) 2.33-35, pl. XIX, no. 1.

<sup>34</sup>Small (above, n. 27) 41-42, 123-124, 182, and pl. 20b.

<sup>35</sup>Cf. De Marinis (above, n. 30).

<sup>36</sup>For the comparison of Vanth with Valkyries (and others), see R. Enking, "Culsú und Vanth," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 58 (1943) 48 ff. See too Richardson (above, n. 30); however, a Valkyrie does not simply appear at death in order to lead the victim away, as she suggests, but actively does Odin's work in choosing her victim. The name itself means "chooser of the slain": cf. H. R. E. Davidson, *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe* (Harmondsworth 1964) 62: "It seems that from



In the first section we saw that the Paestan vases lend support to the view that the Dirae of Book 12 are Allecto, Megaera, and Tisiphone in a different role from that which appears in Books 6 and 7. In this second section we have seen that, apart from anything else, the female demons in the South Italian and Etruscan iconography have roles not unlike those in the *Aeneid*. The usual caveat applies, that there is no necessary connection between all of these. Nevertheless, we can at least state with some confidence that, although Vergil's demons operate in un-Aeschylean ways, their roles appear largely to be in keeping with the wider Italian cultural context.

### III APPEARANCES

A brief word on the form that Vergil's demons take. The thing that distinguishes the trio is their consistently terrifying and hideous aspect. Their characteristic weapons are snakes (6.570 ff.; 7.329, 346 ff., 450, 561; 12.847-848), torches (6.607; 7.337, 456-457), the whip (6.570 ff.; 7.336, 451), and Gorgonean venom (7.341, cf. 445 ff.), but their very appearance and the sounds that they make are also a key part of their terror (6.570 ff., 607; 7.446 ff.; 12.861 ff.). It is worth noting that for the most part their weaponry is typical of that seen in the iconography of South Italy and Etruria.<sup>37</sup> With some notable exceptions, however, both Etruscan Vanth and the South Italian Fury-figures are characterised by menacing weaponry but a comparatively innocuous visage.<sup>38</sup> The hideous aspect that characterises Vergil's demons is different from that of Aeschylus' loathsome creatures but their effect is much the same.<sup>39</sup> In typical fashion Vergil has

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early times the heathen Germans believed in fierce female spirits doing the commands of the war god, stirring up disorder, taking part in battle, seizing and perhaps even devouring the slain . . . . Waelcyrge 'chooser of the slain' is given [sc., in Old English word lists] as the Old English equivalent for the names of furies: Erinyes, Tisiphone, and Allecto."

<sup>37</sup>The Etruscans may have had (or were perceived as having) a particular interest in the use of torches and snakes as weapons which extended beyond their iconography. Livy describes three different actions: 4.33.2 and 5.7.2-3, the Etruscans fighting with torches at Fidenae and Veii; and 7.17.3, Romans fighting Faliscans and Tarquinians whose priests attack them (note *incessu furiali*; cf. *Aen.* 7.415) with snakes and blazing torches causing a panic amongst the Romans. Cf. Tacitus *Annals* 14.30.1. Turnus' use of the torch (9.69 ff.), following his infection by Allecto, may therefore have a wider significance.

<sup>38</sup>For one prominent exception, see above, n. 22.

<sup>39</sup>The Furies that pursue Orestes in *Choephoroi* and *Eumenides* are hideous because of their darkness, their tangle of snakes, the fact that blood drips from their eyes (*Cho.* 1048 ff.). In addition, a foul ooze drips from their eyes and they snore with a terrible breath (*Eum.* 51 ff.). Euripides' Furies have many of the same attributes but his are winged (*Or.* 256 ff.; *IT* 285 ff.) whereas those of Aeschylus are unwinged (*Eum.* 51 ff.).

drawn on a number of different traditions in order to maximise the terror that drives Turnus into war in the beginning and then helps to defeat him in the end.<sup>40</sup>

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