Against the backdrop of the bloody Social Wars in the years immediately preceding Vergil's life, the *Aeneid* can be seen as creating a shared identity between the Italian *gentes* and Rome itself. Ethnic identities within Italy play an integral role in the way Virgil shapes Roman nationality in the *Aeneid.* Throughout the second half of the epic these ethnic groups are linked to specific places in the Italian landscape. The ethnic groups of Aeneas' Latium correspond in large part to the Italian allies of the Social War that took place from 91 to 88 B.C. This war was the culmination of a long history of conflict between Rome and the disparate Italian peoples, a history that began arguably with the rebellion against the Etruscan kings around 500 B.C., was characterized by constant skirmishes with the Sabines until their subjugation to Rome in the early third century B.C., and was still markedly tense in the mid-first century when Vergil came of age. Vergil's contribution to this political climate is a grand-scale, sweeping epic that glorifies both Augustus and Rome, but that also has some very nuanced and subtle things to say about Roman and Italian identity. The Rome that rises from the death of Turnus is one with an identity built upon the foundations of plurality and ethnic diversity.

The Italians banded together in 90 B.C., seeking political and economic freedom from Rome, resulting in the Social War, a particularly bloody moment in Rome's history. One has only to reread the lines with which Vergil introduces Turnus' madness to know his feelings on the subject: "Love of the sword linked with criminal madness for war brutalizes" (*Arma amens fremit, arma toro tectisque requirit;/ saevit amor ferri et scelerata insania belli…*).[1] But despite the large scale violence throughout Italy, the war

[1] Verg. *Aen.* 7.460-1, trans. Fred Ahl.

as resolved relatively quickly and with few repercussions, as the Italian peoples found themselves taking the first steps towards enfranchisement and thus a closer tie to the city.

I am currently working on a senior thesis exploring the relationship between Roman and Italian identities. I began with the belief that there must have been an inherent tension, some sort of discord between Roman and Italian, and with the help of Adam Parry and his article "The Two Voices of Virgil's *Aeneid,*" I set out to prove that Vergil was deeply troubled by the rise of Augustan power, a power that would eventually mean the incorporation (and thus extinction) of true Italian local identities into the homogenizing force of Roman imperialism. Unfortunately it did not take me very long to realize that this is a relatively outdated and perhaps romanticized view. Gary Farney, in a recently published book on ancient ethnography, argues that the identity of Rome was one of plurality, made up of separate Italic ethnic groups taking part in the history of the capital.[2] His proof is convincing and detailed; he draws primarily on the evidence of coins, the patterns of popular surnames throughout the Republic, and the rhetoric of politicians like Cicero. He has little to say about literature outside of the realm of orations and legal documents, but I believe the *Aeneid* has a lot to offer to this reading of identity in ancient Italy.

Part of the reason I was so convinced by Adam Parry when I first read his article was the fact that it is based on a very detailed and beautiful close reading. He hones in on the role of the landscape in the lines that describe the Marsic priest Umbro in the Catalogue of Heroes in Book Seven. His final take away from these lines is that the innocence of Italy was irrevocably lost when Rome rose to power. Other scholars have

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[2] Gary D. Farney, "Romans and Italians," in *A Companion to Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean*. Ed. Jeremy McInerney. Wiley Blackwell: 2014, 437-454.

since disputed this conclusion, notably Richard Moorton who wrote an article specifically in response to Parry's. The Umbro passage is in fact not unique in its style, nor in its depth of emotion, as Parry thought. There are a number of other moments in the last six books in which Vergil speaks directly to the landscape, drawing specific geographical locations into the narrative as he does here.

Parry's close identifies the hero Umbro as symbolic of the Marsi people. He draws attention to the strong link between pastoral and epic poetry in these lines and stresses that landscape and geography play an important role in creating meaning in the *Aeneid*. But rather than simply evoking grief at the loss of Italian innocence, this and other similar passages elicit feelings of nostalgia in a way that centers the reader's experience of the foundation of Rome within a primarily Italian landscape and ethnicity. The geography of Italy in the *Aeneid* plays an important role in the poem, to a very different extent than Vergil's epic models. Vergil names Italian cities, lakes, groves, and mountains the way Homer names Greek warriors in battle. His references are all designed to elicit feelings of nostalgia and familiarity from his audience, subtly compelling his Roman readers to share in Italian emotional ties is a politically potent literary technique, especially in the wake of the strife of the Social War.

Vergil begins Book VII with a specific geographical reference, easily pinpointed on a map. He writes,

> *Tu quoque litoribus nostris, Aeneia nutrix,*
> *aeternam moriens famam, Caieta, dedisti;*
> *et nunc servat honos sedem tuus ossaque nomen*
> *Hesperia in magna, siqua est ea gloria, signat.*

> You too gave to our coasts, Caieta, nurse of Aeneas,
> Undying fame when you died, thanks to rumour. For here in the mighty
> Twilight Land, your name still marks your bones, you ennoble

This site even today – if that's in itself any glory.

These first four lines of the book contain an apostrophe to Caieta, Aeneas' nurse, whose tomb supposedly stood on a promontory in the south of Latium. Her name can still be heard in the modern Italian town situated there, Gaeta. The connection between Caieta and the Aeneas myth is attested in Dionysius of Halicarnassus as well. He mentions the site in passing, while listing a number of places along the Italian coast named after Aeneas' fallen comrades.[3] At first glance, Vergil's apostrophe to Caieta seems unconnected to the greater themes of ethnic identity in the Iliadic books of the *Aeneid*. The town of Caieta played no part in the Social or Civil Wars, and in fact William Smith reports in his *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography* that the town itself did not become at all significant until the 9th century A.D.[4] The absence of any ethnic or political note to this geographic reference, however, is significant.

The six final books of the *Aeneid*, so highly political, begin with a politically neutral place and a thus unifying statement of nationality. The *litoribus nostris* of line one creates an immediate sense of concord, perhaps even suggesting a shared natural ownership of the land. *Litoribus* also echoes the *litora* of the very first lines of the epic,[5] thus connecting this very precise geographical pause in the plot to the overall narrative goal of the epic- Aeneas' arrival in Italy. The implied identity of *nostris* is of course Roman, and the use of the pronoun here strengthens the relationship between author and reader. The reader's first glimpse real glimpse of Italy comes from a contemporary Roman's point of view. The tone of the passage, mournful at the loss of a beloved

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[3] Dionysius of Halicarnassus 1.53.3

[4] William Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, "Caieta," London: 1854.

[5] *Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris/ Italiam, fato profugus, Laviniaque venit/* ***litora****…*

companion, will be echoed at later points in reference to specific locations in Italy tied into ethnic identities.

This is the main argument of Adam Parry's article "The Two Voices of Virgil's *Aeneid*," first published in 1963, in which he focuses on a specific moment in the Catalogue of Ships at the end of Book VII. One of the men in the catalogue is Umbro, a Marsian, priest and medicine man; while he appears only briefly, the language Vergil uses to describe him in lines 750 through 760 is indeed remarkable.

> *Quin et Marruvia venit de gente sacerdos*
> *fronde super galeam et felici comptus oliva*
> *Archippi regis missu, fortissimus Umbro,*
> *vipereo generi et graviter spirantibus hydris*
> *spargere qui somnos cantuque manuque solebat,*
> *mulcebatque iras et morsus arte levabat.*
> *sed non Dardaniae medicari cuspidis ictum*
> *evaluit neque eum iuvere in vulnera cantus*
> *somniferi et Marsis qaesitae montibus herbae.*
> *te nemus Angitiae, vitrea te Fucinus unda*
> *te liquidi flevere lacus.*

> Even a priest from Marruvium came, trimly kempt with an olive
> Garland over his helmet, symbolic of fruitful fulfillment.
> Ordered to war by his ruler, Archippus, the utterly fearless
> Umbro's more usual species of contact was serpents: aquatic
> Venomous snakes. He could charm them to sleep with a touch or by singing,
> Calm down their anger, alleviate bites with his curative powers.
> Yet he had no power to heal himself from the strike of a Dardan
> Spear; his hypnotic songs, and his herbs culled high on the Marsi's
> Hillsides were no help at all when applied to his wounds in the battle.
> Anguish for you choked the woods of Angitia, glassy Fucinus
> Rippled lament, lakes wept you with tears.

The meter is balanced and unhurried, simulating the rhythm of his chanting, and the imagery is superb, from the olive garland crowning the line as it does Umbro's head (*fronde super galeam et felici comptus oliva,* 7.751), to the use of the verb *spargo* with its

connotations of dampness in conjunction with the water snakes of line 753.[6] *Spargo* is used one other time in the *Aeneid*, at 4.486, when Dido describes the process of her fictitious Massylian priestess in drugging a dragon, and Horsfall notes that it also recalls the Medea myth, with her own version of serpentine sedation.[7] The alliteration in line 753 of *spargere…somnos…solebat* mimics the sibilant sound of snakes; Horsfall sees the use of alliteration here as a "soothing," suggestion of the drugs that Umbro might use to charm his vipers.[8]

Adam Parry singles out the last two lines of this passage for his close reading: "*Te nemus Angitia, vitrea te Fucinus unda,/ Te liquidi flevere lacus."* The sound of the lines is unmistakably mournful, full of 'n's and 'l's that create a sad and liquid sound that mirrors the weeping of the trees and waters.[9] The repetition of '*te*' adds pathos to the direct address, which breaks off in the last line at the fourth foot caesura in a climactic moment of grief, as if the poet, or the landscape of Italy, could not continue because of overwhelming emotions. These lines are a type of pathetic fallacy, where the land mirrors the emotions not of any particular character but of the author himself, or a persona that he has created. Parry argues that Vergil feels profoundly the loss of the purity of an Italy untouched by Rome or Aeneas. Umbro, a relatively unimportant character for plot development, symbolizes the Marsi people and, as Parry explains, "to Virgil this people represented the original Italian stock…Proud, independent, with local traditions hallowed by the names they had given to the countryside, they succumbed inevitably to the

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[6] Horsfall 489.
[7] Horsfall 490.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Michael C. J. Putnam, *Virgil's Aeneid: Interpretation and Influence* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 1995),123.

expansion of Roman power."[10] Michael Putnam remarks that in the Umbro passage there is a "pastoral lament embedded within" the hyper epic catalogue of heroes; he writes that with the death of Umbro "a major manifestation of the vigor of the countryside of Italy seems diminished."[11] Umbro the snake charmer and medicine man exemplifies the unity between man and nature that is ruptured with the arrival of the Trojans in Italy.

This sympathy for the Italians and glorification of the landscape pervade the second half of the *Aeneid*, but Parry's reading of the Umbro scene as a lamentation of the loss of "human and heroic values" is slightly misguided.[12] He writes that the importance in the places named in the Umbro passage lies in the fact that "[t]hey are the true victims of Aeneas' war, and in saying that they weep, Virgil calls on us to weep for what to his mind made an earlier Italy fresh and true."[13] But the Italy of Latinus and Evander is by no means a Golden Age society; take for instance, the characters of Mezentius and Camilla, the impious warrior and the man hunter, as evidence that Italy pre-Aeneas is not quite as innocent as Parry would like to believe.

Lake Fucinus, the grove of Angitia, and Marruvium, are more than simply markers of Italian purity. Marruvium was the capitol of the Marsi, Lake Fucinus the geographical center of the region, and the grove of Angitia one of the most important religious sites. Even the name of the king of the Marsi, mentioned only in passing recalls an important Marsic site. Archippe was supposedly an ancient city that sat on the edge of Lake Fucinus, until it was engulfed by the lake itself.[14] The Marsi, apart from

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[10] Parry 68.
[11] Putnam 124.
[12] Parry 69.
[13] Parry 68.
[14] Smith, 'Marsi;' Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 3.12

representing the "original Italian stock," as Parry says were also among the most dedicated of the Italian peoples to take part in the Social War. One of the main leaders and instigators of the war was a Marsian, Pomaedius Silo, and the Romans themselves seem to have referred to this war the "Marsic War."[15] The Social War was roughly divided along two main lines of allies, with the Marsi and their neighbors (including the Picentes, Peligni, and Vestini) forming one group and the Samnites (with the support of the Lucanians, Apulians and other southern ethnic groups) forming the other. The Marsi held the upper hand in almost every battle with the Romans from 91 through 89 B.C., and they held out even after all their allies had accepted the terms of enfranchisement. Finally made to submit through sheer force of number, the Marsi became Roman citizens and lost their nationhood, but not their culture.

In his dictionary of ancient geography, William Smith writes that the Marsi were primarily characterized in two ways. The first was as Rome's greatest foe in the Social Wars, and the second was as a mystical race of snake charmers.[16] Vergil focuses on this aspect of Marsic identity, portraying Umbro as priest (*sacerdos*), healer, and snake charmer rather than mighty warrior. He glosses over the role of the Marsi in the Social War itself, placing them in the center of his catalogue with a relatively minor character instead of casting them as one of the main players in the war between Latins and Trojans. The choice to focus purely on the mythical and cultural significance of the Marsi, rather than their part in the Social War goes **h**and in hand with Vergil's desire all for ethnographic inclusion in Roman cultural identity. Lauding the Marsi as great warriors could do nothing but introduce memories of the bloody Social War, which is very clearly

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[15] Smith, 'Marsi.'
[16] See Emma Dench, *From Barbarians to New Men* for more.

not the poet's intention. The *Aeneid* is not an epic that glorifies war, but rather treats it as the source of the *lacrimae rerum*, as Aeneas so poignantly phrases it. As a snake-charmer, however, Umbro is a 'safe' character who can elicit feelings of nostalgia and sympathy in a Roman audience.

Of Umbro, Horsfall notes that, "To a figure of decidedly minor importance, V. denotes remarkable stylistic elaboration, far beyond that in his epic models…"[17] This presents a problem to Horsfall, however, who suggests that "we clearly do not have his final thoughts in the matter…and are necessarily analyzing two drafts, not one." This necessity is predicated on the assumption that the Umbro passage is an anomaly in the text. But Vergil's poetic voice is neither as subversive and pained as Parry would have us believe, nor is his argument as unpolished or unarticulated as Horsfall seems to think. The language of the preceding lines 678 through 690, for instance, contains a similar tone.

> *Nec Praenestinae fundator defuit Urbis,*
> *Volcano genitum percora inter agrestia regem*
> *inventumque focis omnis quem credidit aetas,*
> *Caeculus. hunc legio late comitatur agrestis:*
> *quique altum Praeneste viri quique arva Gabinae*
> *Iunonis gelidumque Anienem et roscida rivis*
> *Hernica saxa colunt, quos dives Anagnia pascis,*
> *quos Amasene pater. non illis omnibus arma*
> *nec clipei currusue sonant; pars maxima glandes*
> *liventis plumbi spargit, pars spicula gestat*
> *bina manu, fuluosque lupi de pelle galeros*
> *tegmen habent capiti; vestigia nuda sinistri*
> *instituere pedis, crudus tegit altera pero.*

> Nor was Praeneste's founder, Caeculus, lost to the muster.
> Every age has believed him a foundling left at a fireside,
> Vulcan's child, and a king among flocking livestock of peasant
> Farmers. A legion of peasants accompanies him from all over:

[17] Horsfall 491.

> Men who live up in Praeneste's heights and in Gabii's farmlands
> (Juno's domain), along ice-cold Anio, Hernician rocklands'
> Dew-trickled rills; those men that you feed on your riches, Anagnia,
> Those, Amasenus, to whom you are father. Not all of these peoples
> Rattled with chariots, shields, real arms. The majority volleys
> Bullets of dark lead slingshot; and some wave a couple of pointed
> Wooden shafts in their hands, and they wear, to give heads some protection,
> Yellowish wolfskin caps. They observe a tradition of keeping
> Soles of the left foot bare and a raw leather shoe on the right foot.

In these lines the poet introduces the figure of Caeculus, mythical founder of Praeneste. In conjunction with Praeneste, Vergil here alludes to the Gabii and the Hernicii, two ancient Italian *gentes*, as well as two important Roman rivers, the Anio and Amasenus. Vergil suppresses the name of this character until four lines into the passage; the reader's attention is instead focused on Praeneste. This city played a significant role, not in the Social, but in the Civil Wars, another painful moment of Rome's recent past. Praeneste is well known as the stronghold turned prison of C. Marius the Younger, perhaps best known for Sulla's bloody massacre of all its prisoners in 82 B.C.[18] This most suggestive geographical citation is balanced, however, by references to the city of Gabii and the Hernicii *gentes*, neither of which played any discernible role in the war. In fact, Smith notes that "in B.C. 54 we find Cicero speaking of Gabii among the towns of Latium which were so poor and decayed that they could hardly take their accustomed part in the sacrifices on the Alban Mount."[19] The Hernicii were subjugated to Rome around 306 B.C. after a failed war, and consequently made into a *praefecturae*, receiving full citizenship rights with the Lex Julia of 90 B.C.[20] Neither of these cities contains the same

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[18] Seth Kendall, *The Struggle for Roman Citizenship: Romans, Allies, and the Wars of 91-77 B.C.*, (New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2013) 636.
[19] Smith, "Gabii." Cic. *Pro. Planc.* 9
[20] Smith "Hernici."

grim connotations of civil discord as Praeneste – in grouping them together, Vergil attempts to normalize Praeneste, bringing it back into Roman history without any connection to bloody massacres.

Political context aside for the moment, the beauty of this passage lies once again in Vergil's ability simultaneously to memorialize and breathe life into the places he describes. *Roscida*, a word often used in conjunction with faces, creates a sensation of personification in the alliterative *roscida riuis* in line 683. That personification is intensified by the use of direct address in the next line. Vergil speaks directly to the landscape, to the rich city of Anagnia and the river Amesenus, describing the men that Caeculus brings to the war as "*quos dives Anagnia pascis,/ quos Amasene pater.*"[21] The apostrophe is similar to the one he will employ with Umbro about a hundred lines later, even if the emotion here is more subdued. Once again the land is depicted as having a personal and emotional stake in the outcome of the war between the Latins and the Trojans.

Vergil will address the land itself one more time in Book X, this time speaking to his own native Mantua. Lines 198 through 205 introduce Ocnus to the catalogue of Etruscan heroes:

> *Ille etiam patriis agmen ciet Ocnus ab oris,*
> *fatidicae Mantus et Tusci fiius amnis,*
> *qui muros matrisque dedit tibi, Mantua, nomen,*
> *Mantua dives avis, sed non genus omnibus unum:*
> *gens illi triplex, populi sub gente quaterni,*
> *ipsa caput populis, Tusco de sanguine vires.*
> *hinc quoque quingentos in se Mezentius armat,*
> *quos patre Benaco velatus harundine glauca*
> *Mincius infesta ducebat in aequora pinu.*

[21] Verg. *Ae.* 7.684-685.

> There you see Ocnus as well, son of Manto, the seer, and of Tuscan
> Tiber, the river. He's levied a force from the banks of his homeland.
> Mantua: Ocnus endowed you with walls, named you after his mother;
> Mantua, heir to an ancestry rich, but not all of one bloodline.
> Three distinct peoples are there, each people with four distinct cities.
> Mantua heads up their league. Her strength is her blood that's Etruscan.
> Hate of Mezentius arms five hundred from here to oppose him.
> Mantua's river-god, crowned with his father Benacus's grey reeds,
> Sails are their flagship, the *Mincius*, hate hewn into his pine planks.

According to Vergil, Mantua is made up of three different ethic groups (*gens illi triplex*), each one split between four cities. The specifics of the division of Mantua's population is unimportant, but the theme of amalgamation is crucial. Hidden away in this short passage is the key to understanding how exactly Vergil sees Rome. Mantua, his mother-city, is "*dives avis, sed non genus omnibus unum*;" is this not also true of Rome as he depicts her? Rome, too, has a rich and diverse history in its ancestors, and it too is the made up of many different peoples. Finally, the parental quality of the city (cities are of course always female) is emphasized by the etymology that Vergil chooses to share- Manto, Mantua, really is a mother, an image both nurturing and comforting.

In each instance where Vergil speaks directly to the landscape of Italy, whether to the promontory of Caieta, Lake Fucinus, or the cities of Anagnia or Mantua, his use of apostrophe brings these geographical landmarks to life. They become silent characters in the epic with a personal stake in the outcome of the war and in the lives of the men listed in the catalogues. These instances are not, however, uniformly negative or sad, but are more often neutral or positive. Italy does not recede into the background as Rome emerges in the guise of Aeneas and his Trojans, but instead many different ethnic identities play a part in the struggle that will eventually allow Rome to come to be.