

## Abstract for 2009 FIEC Congress

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**Preferred Panel:** Greek and Roman Epic

**Title of the paper:** "The Name of Aeneas and the End of the *Aeneid*"

**Length:** 20 minutes

### Content outline:

The end of Virgil's *Aeneid* is constantly attracting scholars' attention, mainly due to the way Aeneas is depicted there. It was often noted that towards the end of the poem Aeneas and Turnus change their roles in respect to their Homeric prototypes: former becomes "Achilles", whereas the latter takes Hector's part. The final killing scene is maintaining these roles, Aeneas' *ira* being a direct parallel to Achilles' *menis*. It is sometimes argued, though, that Aeneas' fierceness reflects some inner traits of his own character. It was once cautiously suggested (Du Quesnay) that the epithet *terribilis* (12, 947) might refer to the etymology of hero's name from Greek *ainos* "terrible, grievous", thus stressing the inherent nature of his wrath. I would argue that at the end of the *Aeneid* we are indeed dealing with a subtle hint at the semantics of Aeneas' name, but this allusion is contained within the expression *saevi ... doloris* (12, 945) that is parallel to Greek *ainon... akhos* used in Greek epic exactly when the name of Aphrodite's son is explained (*H. Aphr* 198–199). I would try to prove it by analyzing the Greek use of this epic formula both before and after Virgil and by comparing it with the use of *saevus* and *dolor* within the *Aeneid*. I would like to suggest that some changes in further poetic usage (both Greek and Latin) might be due to Virgil's treatment of the formula.

If this comparison is true, then the allusion to Aeneas name is even more telling as the second part of the Greek prototype, *akhos*, was the acknowledged *etymon* for Achilles' name. Thus, on the level of etymological interplay *saevus dolor* of Aeneas makes him simultaneously *both* "Achilles" and himself.

This etymological wordplay casts additional light upon the way Virgil wished to present his hero at the very end of the poem. It is the more suggestive as we come across the only other instance of the same formula at the very beginning in application to Juno (1, 25). It turns out that the goddess puts an end to her "savage grief" by dealing with Juppiter on exterminating everything left of Troy, whereas the last leader of Trojans soothes his pain by savagely killing (in accordance with his own and Achilles' name) the new incarnation of Hector.