

**twins** Twins in Augustan Rome were perceived as an indication of bountiful FERTILITY, a cultural ideology occasionally visible in Virgil's works, for instance in the DEATH of twin goat kids exemplifying a troubled countryside (*E.* 1.14) and twin babies enhancing the value of a slave woman as a prize (*A.* 5.285; see PRIZES). The simultaneous doubleness and sameness of twins was also important in Roman thought. The twins ROMULUS AND REMUS had founded Rome, although the civil wars of the late Republic made their story of fratricide problematic in AUGUSTAN IDEOLOGY (see CIVIL WAR). Rome's political system incorporated twins in the form of two consuls, whose collegiality was viewed as inherently balanced and in diametric opposition to the power of a singular king (see CONSUL; Chart 3).

Virgilian twins reflect all these issues. CATILLUS and CORAS, twin founders of TIBUR, recall Romulus and Remus (*A.* 7.670–76); such pairs may be a repeated pattern in Italic myth. Romulus and Remus themselves appear four times in Virgil (*G.* 2.533; *A.* 1.274, 1.292, 8.631–32). On the strictly divine level, the twin GODS APOLLO and DIANA, who are several times the joint recipient of dedication and PRAYER (*E.* 4.10; *A.* 6.69, 12.198), are also paired through similes describing DIDO and AENEAS (for Dido as Diana, see *A.* 1.498–502; for Aeneas as Apollo, see *A.* 4.143–49). The divine twins known as the Dioscuri (Greek meaning “sons of Zeus”), CASTOR AND POLLUX, are mentioned together once (*A.* 6.121), and Pollux also once on his own (*G.* 3.89). The two sons of Atreus, AGAMEMNON and MENELAUS, are called *gemini Atridae* “twin Atridae” three times although they are not literal twins (*A.* 2.415, 2.500, 8.130), as are the two Scipios in the UNDERWORLD: *geminos, duo fulmina belli, Scipiadas* “twin Scipios, two LIGHTNING bolts of war” (*A.* 6.842–43; see SCIPIO).

Twins also function as part of A.'s potentially fundamental “calculus of One and Two,” a repeated pattern of division and pairing in which duality is disastrous (see REPETITION; Hardie 1993: 62). As identical twins made distinguishable only in death, LARIDES and THYMBER exemplify the concept well (*A.* 10.390–96). They also belong to a wider set of paired brothers in *A.* whose frequently simultaneous deaths (e.g., PANDARUS and BITIAS at *A.* 9.672–755; MAEON and ALCANOR in *A.* 10.335–44) arouse the reader's sympathy. Inverting this trope of brothers fighting and dying side-by-side, *A.* repeatedly features violence against a double or counterpart in “mirror combat,” culminating in Aeneas and TURNUS' duel (see *AENEID*, ENDING OF; Hardie 1993: 58–60).

Biological and metaphorical twins clearly occupy an important place in *A.*, but other sorts of “twins” are also prevalent, for instance paired or identical animals such as SNAKES (*A.* 2.203–4, 7.450, etc.) and DOVES (*A.* 6.190); paired BODY parts such as nostrils (*A.* 4.300) or temples (*A.* 5.416; 9.750); flames (*A.* 8.680; see FIRE); TROY and BUTHROTUM (see Bettini 1997); the GATES OF SLEEP (*A.* 6.893); and the Gates of War (*A.* 7.607; see JANUS).

See also MULTIPLES

#### References

- Bettini, M. 1997. “Ghosts of Exile: Doubles and Nostalgia in Vergil's *parva Troia* (*Aeneid* 3.294ff).” *Classical Antiquity* 16: 8–33.
- Hardie, P. 1993. “Tales of Unity and Division in Imperial Latin Epic.” In *Literary Responses to Civil Discord*, edited by J.H. Molyneux, 57–71. Nottingham: University of Nottingham Press.

DARCY KRASNE