

VERGIL IN EXILE

The substance of a paper read to the Virgil Society
on 17th February 1962

by A.J.Gossage, M.A., Ph.D.

The word "exile" is not used here in a strictly formal sense: that is to say, Vergil was not banished by a formal decree, never underwent deportatio or relegatio, and never suffered aquae et ignis interdictio. But there are degrees of exile, ranging from compulsory banishment, or enforced removal from one's native land, to a prolonged voluntary absence.

In the Greek world one's attachment to one's polis implied more than a simple physical habitation in a particular place. Travel was common enough, but the spiritual environment of the city was something that was always necessary, because it was that which gave the individual his stability in society. The Roman too stood near the Greek in feelings of this sort, for although the world was larger by the time of Augustus, and horizons, in all senses, had become broader, the individual was still firmly anchored to his spiritual home, which in most cases was also his physical home.

Together with this strong attachment of the Greek or Roman to his native soil one must bear in mind the many physical hazards to which the individual was exposed. Besides the Greek ostracism, the Roman relegatio and deportatio and other forms of exile officially imposed on political or criminal offenders, many people, from the earliest times, were compelled by such circumstances as war and poverty to leave their native lands. These often lived under oppression, as the Eretrians in the plain of Ecbatana, in the heart of the Persian Empire. Such were the displaced persons of antiquity, and there were many other groups who were forced to leave their homes and live elsewhere. In addition, groups or individuals went to live abroad more or less voluntarily - perhaps because they were unable to fulfil their most important needs in their own cities or because new lands called them to greater wealth and better opportunities. Thus the Greeks and Romans both sent out colonies - but the group-attachment and the elaborate precautions taken by the leaders to ensure divine protection in the deepest sense evidently prevented feelings of disorientation in these cases, and there was also still a strong tie connecting Rome and her colonies, and frequently an even stronger one connecting a Greek apoikia with the metropolis - (Thuc.i,38,3). Individuals on the other hand, whether they travelled for the sake of enquiry, like Xenophanes, Herodotus and Anaxagoras, and never returned to live in the city of their birth, or whether they were dissatisfied with the men of their own generation, such as Euripides, and went into voluntary exile, at least for a time, must surely have felt the nostalgia for something lost, and perhaps their intellectual pursuits enabled them to regain a sense of stability.

In later Hellenistic and Roman times tracts were composed from a philosophic point of view de exilio, suggesting helpful attitudes of mind towards this sort of misfortune. Men of powerful intellect, like Thucydides, might

turn their exile to good account by reliving in their historical works their most vivid experiences and by analysing the moral values of their contemporaries in the hope of discovering a lesson from which other men might learn. A similar thing was done by Polybius and even - to a lesser extent - by Xenophon, while Stoics and others who lived under the Roman Empire, for example C. Musonius Rufus and Dion of Prusa, treated the matter philosophically but in a different manner and in a different literary genre.

The spiritual suffering or disorientation caused by exile, in all senses of the word, is sometimes alleviated by being expressed in a work of art or in a fantasy that takes on a mythological or even a mystical and religious aspect, or the fantasy may actually constitute the subject-matter of a work of art. One might adduce Dante and Dostoevsky as examples of this process. The suggestion to be made in this paper is that Vergil likewise expressed a strong sense of exile in his poetry, and that most of his poetry is in fact coloured by his own inner experience.

The basic biographical facts about Vergil, as we learn them from the ancient Lives, are fairly easy to follow: He was born of humble parentage in 70 B.C. at Andes, near Mantua. He was educated at Cremona and then Milan and then Rome, where he attended the leading teachers of the day to learn rhetoric. But he eventually turned to philosophy and poetry, and these were his main interests throughout the rest of his life. Politically, this was a most unstable period in Rome, and the violence of the civil war must have been utterly repugnant to the sensibility of a man like Vergil; but when territory in the neighbourhood of Cremona and his own town Mantua was distributed in 42 B.C. to veterans of the civil war, he experienced at close quarters the uncompromising rigour of the Roman imperium. What actually happened to him is uncertain, and this is not the place to attempt to answer such questions as: "Did Vergil recover his paternal estate and lose it again?" or "Was he actually beaten up by one of the soldiers to whom part of that estate had been allotted?" It is, of course, easy to misinterpret what one finds in the Eclogues in accordance with a preconceived picture of the situation, but for the present purpose one might reasonably assume that Vergil was evicted, perhaps not without incident, from his home near Mantua, and that what he experienced during this short period of his life affected his whole spiritual orientation and left its mark on his poetry. This is clear in the 1st and 9th Eclogues; but much of the Georgics and the Aeneid can be seen as equal proof of what he experienced and continued to experience as a result of his eviction.

It is not known where Vergil lived immediately after the events of 42 B.C. He may have been in Rome, he may have travelled, and he certainly went to S. Italy. The Eclogues were published about 37 B.C. and the Georgics about 30 B.C. By the late thirties B.C. - that is to say, perhaps after his 35th year and certainly before he was 40 - he had settled in Pausilypon, overlooking the bay of Naples. This was his home for the rest of his life, and although he was travelling in Greece when he contracted the illness from which he shortly afterwards died, in 19 B.C., there is no reason to believe that he would have returned to live anywhere else after he had completed his travels. He must have been in Rome from time to time, but his home was no longer in or near Mantua.

One other biographical detail that should be mentioned is that Vergil composed the Georgics under the patronage and at the instigation of Maecenas - (Georg.iii,41). Augustus certainly showed interest in the Aeneid. But

although they may have treated him well and inspired his admiration - and the admiration expressed for Augustus in the Aeneid is probably not insincere - it does not necessarily follow that they excited any feelings of affection or were regarded as intimate friends. It would, in fact, be possible to belong to a literary coterie under patronage from an influential nobleman and to meet with great success as a poet without experiencing any close spiritual contact with other members of the coterie.

The poems of the Appendix Vergiliana belong generally to the earlier years of the poet's life, and a few of the Eclogues were probably composed before the distribution of land in 42 B.C., but the great bulk of Vergil's work was composed after that date. If it is assumed that Vergil was compelled by political and military circumstances to leave his native place and that he never returned to live there, it was in exile, in a special but important sense, that most of his work was composed.

The ten poems of the Eclogues, as they now stand, do not appear in the chronological sequence of their composition. Poems ii and iii were composed before v, and all these before i. Without discussing in detail the order of composition beyond this point, one might assert that the arrangement of the poems in their present order is deliberate, and that Vergil had a purpose in putting first a poem that was not composed first. The other three poems mentioned (ii,iii and v) may well have been composed before 42 B.C., but Ecl. i was not. The first five lines of Ecl. i state the theme of the poem and, in a sense, of the whole collection of Eclogues and even for the whole of Vergil's subsequent work. This may sound an extravagant claim, but it is not to be taken absolutely literally. The theme is not immediately apparent in the Georgics, but it lurks not far below the surface. As for the Aeneid, the correspondence is clear at once in Aen.i,2 (cf. Ecl.i,3-4).

The immediate business of Ecl. i is the pathetic contrast between Tityrus, still living his life of peace in the countryside, and Meliboeus forced to leave his fatherland. It has sometimes been said that Tityrus represents Vergil himself, happy in the assurance given him by Octavian that his land would not be confiscated for distribution; it has also been said that Menalcas in Ecl.ix represents Vergil, the unhappy man expelled from his family estate. But whatever the correct historical interpretation of the events behind these two poems may be, it is clear that a personal experience is being recorded, perhaps not quite as it actually occurred. Both Tityrus and Meliboeus in the first Eclogue may perhaps represent Vergil, but not both of them physically. Tityrus is addressed as fortunate senex in ll.46 and 51, and Vergil could hardly describe himself as senex when he was still only about 30. That, however, is not the point. Meliboeus represents the reality of exile (nos patriam fugimus - l.4) and Tityrus the old established order of life in the peaceful countryside (tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra). (Even the word umbra has a typically Vergilian vagueness, suggestive of the uita umbratilis.) One is the harsh reality and the other the serenity and peace that Vergil had known in his childhood and had now lost irrevocably. They form two aspects of Vergil himself and constitute a conflict in his spirit between the inevitability to which he must orientate himself and the ever-present memories of a happier and more peaceful world.

Other strands of thought and feeling often link up with this central conflict in Vergil's mind. Already in the Eclogues there is the concern

with his own development and his final mission as a poet. There is also a longing for political peace in the Roman world at large, which he must have shared with many of his contemporaries. These and several other important themes produce a complex which one might call "Arcadia" or "Sicily". The 18th century ideal of Arcadia gives a distorted picture of shepherds and shepherdesses living a life of ease and enjoying the pleasures of poetry, music, and love. This picture no doubt owes much to Vergil's presentation in the Eclogues but it omits much, too. The real Arcadia, in the heart of the Peloponnese, was and still is a land of mountains where a subsistence can be wrung out of the barren soil under the burning and exhausting heat of the sun only with much toil. Vergil knew this too, and the Georgics hint at similar conditions in some districts of Italy. But whereas the Georgics insist on labor, the Eclogues sing of amor. It is true that if one looks in the right places in the right mountain valleys in Arcadia and in Italy one can still find an amazing peace and contentment in the midst of toil. The peace and the toil are two aspects of one thing, and there is an important sense in which "Arcadia" does mean peace, both political peace and peace of mind. Consequently, the Arcadian scene is filled with emotional and spiritual meaning for Vergil, and the picture he gives is of a place in the countryside where life is undisturbed and peaceful and reasonably contented. Other characteristics of this place are the abundance of flowers, of honey and other produce, the joys of love and of seeing children and young men and women thrive, the softness of the evening shadows and the delight in poetry and song. Sometimes death or deceit appears, to be lamented or shunned, but in any case the whole image develops by distortion and exaggeration into a Golden Age in the reign of Saturn.¹ Thus the reality is far transcended to satisfy the troubled spirit; for into the reality of contentment another reality has abruptly and violently intruded - another complex, which one might call "Imperial Rome". This other complex brings other sorts of activity: ambition, strife, haud mollia iussa (Georg.iii,41), bewilderment, and the need to seek divine encouragement in the face of uncertainty. Yet there are things that one can admire in the concept of Imperial Rome, even if one is never fully convinced and reconciled. Octavian can, at a certain cost, bring about peace and order to a world of war and disorder.

The terms "Arcadia" and "Rome" will be used further in this paper to refer respectively to the complexes that have just been described. Broadly speaking, one of the mainsprings of Vergil's poetic inspiration is the inner need for the peace and security of Arcadia at conflict with the outer, practical need to come to terms with Imperial Rome. Whatever Vergil may have felt initially, this is what was brought about in him by his experience of the civil war and his own peculiar form of exile. In Ecl.iv there is an attempt to express the conflict and actually to reconcile the Imperial theme with the Arcadian Golden Age. The child would bring political peace and prosperity, in which Rome and Arcadia could exist side by side as satisfactorily as the herds and lions in the Eclogue itself (1.22). The child

1. For a recent discussion of the Golden Age in Vergil, cf. Inez Scott Ryberg, Transactions of the American Philological Association lxxxix, 1958, pp.112-131.

thus appears as a symbol of rebirth and integration. Vergil would be the poet of the new era, and his powers would not be dimmed by comparison with Orpheus, Linus, Apollo, and the poet of Arcadia, Pan (ll.53-9).

In Ecl. vi the song of Silenus is not at all easy to understand in its deepest significance, but here again the central Arcadian theme is clearly discernible. After the Creation there follows a Golden Age - the Saturnia regna of l.41 - and then corruption. A tone of restlessness is introduced in the words erras (l.52), errabunda (l.58), and errantem (l.64), not the peaceful browsing described by the same word errare in l.9, but the restlessness of a mind that knows no peace and seeks a new refuge. The poem ends in the restoration of the pastoral world, and evening brings home the sheep to the fold. This is the evening of Arcadia once more. The Golden Age image appears also in Ecl.viii,52ff., where the longing for peace is expressed in terms similar to those of Ecl.iv: "let the wolf now of his own accord flee from the lamb" (but notice that dissociation is not the same as reconciliation!), "let hard oaks bear golden fruit...." The ninth Eclogue expresses the poet's disillusionment at the ruin of his Arcadian world and conceals much unexpressed bitterness; the tragic view of the world gives its bewildered judgment in l.5: quoniam fors omnia uersat. By this time Vergil has already recognised the force that he must somehow contend with, in Rome and the violence of Rome's wars. Poetry has no power among the weapons of war, he says (Ecl.ix,11-13); and yet poetry is a solace (l.18). He must have known this well from his own experience. There is not space enough to discuss the tenth Eclogue in detail, but it should be mentioned that there is a note of sad regret in several passages in this poem, especially in the peaceful ending with its quiet evening scene. There Vergil ends the book; but it is not the end of Arcadia.

Labor and durus are key-words in the Georgics. Men are a durum genus (Georg.i,63), and Vergil has to face this reality. In a famous passage in the first Georgics there is a reference again to the prosperity of the Golden Age, followed by an account of the system of life under Jupiter's regime, in which

labor omnia uicit
improbus et duris urgens in rebus egestas (145-6).

Then the poet describes the ways in which men may understand the pattern imposed by Jupiter and gain a livelihood under such conditions. The Golden Age promised in Ecl.iv never returned, after all, and men must adapt themselves to the toils of existence on the earth as it is, and so must Vergil himself, as their interpreter. But the poem suddenly bursts out (Georg.i, 463ff.) into an impassioned complaint about the state of the world, distracted as it is by war. Here is the reality of Imperial Rome seen in its worst aspect, and Vergil gives us a terrifying picture in these lines. It is the antithesis of the Golden Age. "Right and wrong are inverted....the plough does not receive its due honour..." (ll.505-7), and saeuit toto Mars impius orbe (511).

In the second Georgics Vergil seems to have realised that he must try to accept the situation as it is, and he begins manfully enough. He explains to Maecenas the purpose and limitations of his poem and says (ll.45-6) that he will not detain him carmine ficto - with a song of fancy. He clearly loves his subject now, and in ll.140-76 there is a magnificent passage in praise of Italy. In this there are several references to places near his new home at

Pausilypon, which indicates a more settled outlook on life. In ll.167ff. he praises the great heroes of Rome for the first time, ending with Octavian. Here we can mark a progress away from Arcadia in the direction of acceptance, and Imperial Rome has taken on a new aspect - the grimness has given way to glory. But towards the end of the poem the mood changes. We do not know the reason for this, but it may be that a liking for Imperial Rome had dawned upon Vergil during a peaceful episode in the thirties B.C., which vanished when war flared up again. At any rate, the last 85 lines of the second Georgics are composed in quite a different mood. First of all (l.458) there is the cry: O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint, agricolas! Tityrus, the Arcadian in Ecl.i, was fortunate senex. The word fortunatus is deliberately chosen; it is generally used by Vergil to describe either those who have won great glory in battle or those who live a settled life of peace and moderate prosperity, whether in this world or after death.¹ After the exclamation O fortunatos...agricolas! Vergil continues, in Georgics ii, with a description of the life that could be lived in the countryside if it were realised. All the toil, the labor that characterizes the Georgics, suddenly disappears, and there follows a beautiful Arcadian picture closely reminiscent of the fourth Eclogue. The earth produces an easy livelihood now - facilem uictum in l.460, in sharp contrast to the unremitting toil and the pressing poverty of Georg.i, 145-6 - and wool is pure and free from artificial dyes, as in Ecl.iv,42. But the most important thing of all is the peace and security of this Golden Age, and its honesty - at secura quies et nescia fallere uita (l.467). The poem continues with personal reflections. If Vergil is prevented by "the chill blood round his heart" (l.484) from studying astronomy and cosmology, he would prefer to enjoy the countryside and be inglorius (486). This failure of spirit and preference for peace and obscurity occurs again in other passages of the Georgics (e.g. at the end of Georg.iv) and can even be detected in the Aeneid. Next follows a description of the harsh realities of Imperial Rome that the pastoral world avoids, with its discordia, purpura regum, ferrea iura (ll.495ff.); and there is a poignant reference to the exile leaving the well-known places of his own home (511-12). Then again the happy pastoral life is depicted (513-40), and the Golden Age atmosphere is confirmed in the simple but effective line (538):

aureus hanc uitam in terris Saturnus agebat.

These 85 lines at the end of the poem are among the finest that Vergil ever composed. They form an Eclogue, or at least a bucolic episode, in themselves, and are absolutely convincing in their poetic intensity. This is the world which the poet knows best and loves best, to which he must return, at least in his memory and his imagination, to encourage his spirit when it quails before the concept of Imperial Rome. In the second Georgics, therefore, there is an acceptance of Rome to begin with, and a fusion of the Imperial concept - or at least of certain aspects of it - with the lost world of Arcadia, in the fine description of Italy; but at the end of the poem these two concepts are found to be incompatible after all; other, more hateful, aspects of Rome appear and are put in the strongest contrast to the Golden Age

1. E.g. Aen. vi,638-9 (Elysium), Aen.xi,252 (Italy before the coming of the Trojans). See further: Francis A.Sullivan,S.J., "Some Virgilian Beautitudes", American Journal of Philology lxxxii,1961,394-405.

of Saturnus and the picture of peace in Arcadia. This incompatibility was always in Vergil's mind; although Rome sometimes assumes the upper hand, Arcadia is the symbol of his deepest feelings. The inconsistency of Georgics ii, like that of some of the Eclogues, is found again in the Aeneid.

In the introduction to Book iii of the Georgics a new suggestion of compromise occurs. Vergil now realises that he must eventually fall in with the ways of Rome and describe the achievements of Caesar. As a self-conscious poet he must integrate his poetry with the Imperial task, and there are hints of epic poetry to come - but not yet. At l.40 he returns to the "woods of the Dryads" to execute the haud mollia iussa of Maecenas. In this book little else is said about Rome, but Vergil is happy enough in describing the rearing of cattle and flocks and herds. The familiar pastoral scenes are constantly in view, and almost as much loving care is devoted to the animals as is to the bees in Georgics iv. One has only to look at iii,291-3 to understand what Vergil's feelings were when he was writing this book.

In addition to the obvious Arcadian associations of bees and honey, Book iv contains two passages of importance for the present theme. The first is the description of rural contentment in ll.116-48. Vergil says that if he had the space he would write about gardens and smallholdings at greater length. As it is, his picture of the old Corycian, content with a few acres of unclaimed land, is absolutely convincing. This old man lived in peace, and regum aequabat opes animis (l32). The concept may owe something to popular philosophies of the day, but the whole passage, with its fine poetry and its love of flowers, is essentially another variation on the theme of Arcadia. It recalls for Vergil the peace that he had known in his own countryside near Mantua. Secondly, the final episode, containing the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, deserves special mention. The beauty and profundity of feeling in this episode were never surpassed by anything that Vergil subsequently wrote. Behind the myths, here told with such intensity, lies his own experience of losing an essential part of his spiritual self, that which inspired his finest poetry and could only be recaptured by contact with Arcadia and the Golden Age of his imagination. The receding image of Eurydice is the finest, loveliest, and most elaborate of all Vergil's receding feminine figures - by which is meant the supernatural appearance of Venus in Aeneid i, Creusa in Aen.ii, Dido in Aen.vi, and Juturna in Aen.xii, who all depart at a time of great spiritual crisis, when they are most desperately needed. These figures are an extension of the Arcadia image, or perhaps develop out of a special aspect of it, and represent in their own way the striving to recapture something long since lost and only to be recalled in the stirrings of the poetic imagination.¹

The Aeneid is often said to contain two serious weaknesses, the alleged failure of Aeneas as an epic hero, and the alleged lack of interest in the second half of the poem. Despite these weaknesses - if weaknesses they really

1. For this aspect of Dido and Eurydice, see M.Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry, pp.193ff.

are - the beauty and profundity of the poetry does not suffer. Vergil never composed his epic about Caesar, after all. Instead, he turned to the legendary past and found a theme that would bring glory to Rome and perhaps symbolize the triumph of Augustus in the figure of its hero - for anyone who wished to interpret it in that way. But the hero chosen, significantly enough, was not the greatest that legend could offer. Aeneas is the man with a quest, the exile in search of a new home. It was that, undoubtedly, which appealed first and foremost to Vergil; by finding a hero in his own spiritual plight he could perhaps discover a way to resolve his dilemma, the dilemma of Rome and Arcadia. In the person of Aeneas he could satisfy both the progressive and forward-looking element in his life, acceptance of Imperial Rome, and the retrogressive, backward-glancing preoccupation with the problems of exile and the satisfaction to be found in images of the Arcadian type.

The success of the first three books depends largely on this inner congruence between the situation and needs of Aeneas and those of Vergil himself. Throughout these books there is bewilderment, hesitation, and the constant need for spiritual guidance and re-assurance. To that extent Vergil can identify himself with his hero. The crux of the matter occurs in Book i, 8-11, and can be expressed in the question: "Why did a man outstanding for his pietas have to suffer so much?" The pietas of Aeneas has been the subject of much comment (often adverse), but its true function in the poem can be understood if these lines are kept in mind and if it is understood that the pietas is part of a problem, as much for Vergil as for Aeneas. The problem is stated more than once in Book i: first when Venus asks Jupiter why Aeneas should suffer so much (ll.231ff.), and what will be the end of his toils (241). At this point, indeed, Aeneas is at a very low ebb of his fortunes. He is not only a refugee from Troy seeking a home, but he has also suffered great loss in the storm, which drove him on to the coast of Libya; and yet he still tries to appear courageous in the presence of his men, although he is despairing himself (209). Venus makes the problem clear when she points out that others have been able to found new homes - new Troys - and have settled in peace (249), but Aeneas has not. She ends with the indignant question: hic pietatis honos? (253). Jupiter answers by revealing the divine purpose behind it all, and even speaks of Caesar and the Pax Romana. Secondly, the problem is stated again by Aeneas himself, when he meets his mother but does not recognise her. Critics have condemned the words sum pius Aeneas (378) as intolerable priggishness; but the tone and context in which they are spoken make all the difference. What is the point of being pius, he asks in effect, patiently carrying out divine orders, when all that comes of it is this exile in which he is Europa atque Asia pulsus (385)? Sum pius Aeneas is not a boast but a bitter complaint. He does not realise the identity of the person to whom he is speaking until she herself has spoken, and then he rebukes her for deluding him with empty appearances (407-8).

The discovery of Carthage serves to emphasize Aeneas' sense of exile. Dido herself was a refugee, but now she experiences the joy of founding a new city. Aeneas' reaction on seeing the building operations is expressed most effectively in one line (437): o fortunati, quorum iam moenia surgunt! It is a cry from the heart, and fortunatus has overtones of association for Vergil, as has already been mentioned. One might devote a whole lecture to the rest of the book, considering only this aspect of it; but all that can be added here is that the sympathy between Dido and Aeneas begins in Book i

and is based on a kinship of feeling in the face of exile.

The superb second book describes a most devastating experience, one which leaves its mark, on those who suffer it, for the rest of their lives. Arcadia is turned upside down, as it were, and everything is full of horror and evil fury on the last night of Troy. Even to describe it afterwards, says Aeneas, brings tears to the eyes. The overthrow of the hero's home is not only described in the narrative but is even foreshadowed by touches here and there such as the violent advent of night, in ll.250-2, and a similar description in l.360. This is the opposite of the gentle, bucolic evening associated with Arcadia. For the rest, there is the bewilderment that has been found in Book i, at a chronologically earlier stage of its development. Perhaps it began with the consciousness that the gods had abandoned Troy, a motif found in several places (e.g. 257,351-2, 402, 602ff.); and yet already the practical uselessness of pietas is suggested in 429-30, while in 536 Priam asks whether there is any pietas left in heaven.

The end of Book ii and the whole of Book iii portray Aeneas as the refugee seeking a new home. Long wanderings are foretold for him (ii,780), and he sets out with a wretched crowd of fellow-citizens who have survived the destruction of their city. The first twelve lines of Book iii contain the grief and bitterness of real exile. The book is full of unsuccessful settlements, of uncertainty, and prophecies. Somehow Aeneas has enough courage and faith in his destiny to persevere, but by the time he reaches Carthage, dispirited after seven years and further exhausted by the great storm, one can readily appreciate how glad he was to find some sort of peace and comfort. His sojourn in Carthage is another false settlement. These settlements are regarded by Aeneas as potential homes, and in Book iii, and again in v, 631ff., we meet what might be called the "mock Troy" motif: that is to say, a number of Trojans, either some of Aeneas' own party or others who have arrived independently after the sack of Troy, have founded homes in certain places after the image of Troy and even call local landmarks by familiar Trojan names, to make their new homes present a friendly appearance. In these places there is peace and some degree of spiritual reintegration. The "mock Troy" theme thus becomes a substitute for Arcadia. It is not the best Arcadia of the Golden Age, any more than the new settlements are the real Troy, but it is a working substitute. Over 200 lines of Book iii are devoted to an account of Aeneas' meeting with Helenus and Andromache at one of these settlements, Buthrotum. The mock Troy is described with tender feeling (e.g. 301-5,334-6,347-52, 497-9), and the whole episode contains many moving passages, especially the final speech of Aeneas (493-505). The exiles who had found a home at Buthrotum are felices, because they have found rest and peace (uobis parta quies - 495), while Aeneas must still wander.

In the love of Dido and Aeneas there are certain features that may be mentioned in the present context. Love is a bucolic theme and its effects are described in iv,66ff. in bucolic terms. But the command of Jupiter in 227-237 has the effect of showing that the destiny of Aeneas is to be an Imperial, not an Arcadian, character. It is perhaps Vergil's own dilemma as much as that of Aeneas - the reluctance to face up to what Imperial Rome implies, and the yearning for the lost Arcadia. In i,33 already the difficulty is foreseen: tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem; and now in Book iv there is an amplification of the difficulty. Consequently, although Dido is a tragic figure, we must not allow ourselves to be blinded by her tragedy. Aeneas wants to stay

in Carthage. He is actually helping with the foundation of the city (ll.265ff.), and when he is told by a divine message that he must go he experiences a great inner conflict (279ff.). The conflict is clear again in his speech to Dido in ll.333-61. He says, for example, with reference to Italy, hic amor, haec patria est (346); but, significantly, he ends his speech with a contradiction of this: Italiam non sponte sequor (361). What is Dido to believe? Aeneas wants a homeland and a home. He had almost found one in Carthage, but now he must go and face more uncertainties to find what is destined for him. He is torn in the depths of his spirit, but he cannot do otherwise than what is fated. From that point onward in the poem, when he has accepted the idea of his Imperial destiny, he becomes less attractive to us. Vergil now devotes his sympathy to Dido, and most of the rest of the book concerns her tragic situation while Aeneas is preparing to leave. In ll.522-7 there is a beautiful description of a bucolic night; but Dido is now infelix and cannot appreciate the beauty in her spirit (529-31). Behind this scene is Vergil's own situation again - the Arcadian world of beauty, peace and love into which the image of Rome has made its harsh intrusion.

Aeneas still looks back to Dido with affection from time to time, especially in the interview with her ghost in the underworld in Book vi. In Book v he is still the exile, bewildered at the uncertainties of life, but Italy is nearer now. He has made his choice. The great sixth book confirms him in this choice, when he visits the underworld and is initiated into the mystery that is Rome and Rome's glory. After that his acceptance is complete. His pietas has led him by the hard way of suffering to a fuller understanding of the mysteries. It was at Cumae that his initiation began, and Vergil himself lived only a few miles away from the same site. That again is not an accident.

A profound change now comes upon the poem. Vergil is aware that the situation in Book vii is different from what has gone before. He utters a new invocation to Erato, asking for guidance, and says: dicam horrida bella (vii,41), and maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo, maius opus moueo (44-5). Immediately after this profession he plunges into a description of Italy before the arrival of the Trojans. Once more it is a scene of peace, almost Arcadian. The Trojans are now not exiles but invaders, bringing war; and this fact is suggested with great subtlety in ll.38-9, where the poet says that he will describe the state of Italy, aduena classem cum primum Ausoniis exercitus appulit oris. Aeneas is represented here as an invader with an army and a fleet; it is so different from the first lines of Book i, where he is presented to us as fato profugus, multum...iactatus, and multa...passus, without any mention of comrades but singled out and isolated as a figure of pathos. The sympathy has shifted in Book vii. The exile has accepted the idea of Rome and turned invader. Vergil does not follow him because Aeneas no longer symbolizes his own spiritual need. Consequently, Aeneas becomes cold. It is this basically which makes Aeneas as a character a target for criticism, and this which explains the comparative lack of interest in the second half of the poem. The later books lack the intensity and cohesion of the first four books and the wonderful compelling power of the deep crisis in the sixth.

Many points in the development have had to be omitted here: for example, the more admirable aspects of Rome are extolled in two fine and well-known

passages in Books vi and viii; nor does the change that comes upon the poem occur quite so abruptly or completely as might appear from this brief account. But there is a development. Sympathy for the Trojans and for Aeneas is expressed at times in the second half of the poem, but far more for the young victims of destiny - Pallas, Lausus, Nisus and Euryalus, and Turnus. The last of Vergil's receding feminine figures, and not the least attractive, is Juturna, and she appears to Turnus, not Aeneas, the nominal hero of the poem. Aeneas himself is absent from the poem for the whole of Book ix and part of Book x, a fact commented on by both Venus and Juno in a strange way in the divine council in Book x (ll.25 and 85). Juno, in fact, wishes to keep Aeneas absent, in ignorance of what the Trojans are suffering. Stranger still is the way in which Jupiter, after urging on Aeneas with commands and encouragements in the earlier books, and with reminders of his destiny in Italy, says in x,112-13: rex Iuppiter omnibus idem. fata uiam inuenient. He resigns the responsibility of the whole affair. Had Vergil himself lost interest?

A few of the Arcadian touches in the latter part of the poem must be mentioned here. These indicate what Vergil's deepest feelings were. If Aeneas had changed, Vergil had not. The incident which aroused the first open hostilities between the Trojans and the Italians is described in vii,475ff. Iulus kills the pet stag of a girl, otherwise insignificant, called Silvia. Her name is bucolic, the setting is bucolic, and the tender emotions are bucolic. Here, indeed, is another Arcadian picture into which violence makes a harsh intrusion. If Silvia is a representative of Arcadia, Iulus is certainly a representative of Imperial Rome. This incident repeats for Vergil the situation of his own experience. As so often elsewhere, he relives it in his poetry, and such passages are written with a sincerity and intensity that is unmistakable. They are artistically true. In the same incident the just man, Galaesus, is killed. Galaesus is a name signifying, for Vergil, rural contentment and peace of mind, as is clear from its use in Georgics iv,126. Another land of peace, before the coming of the Trojans, was the kingdom of Evander. This is described in Golden Age language in viii,314ff.,351ff. - and the people themselves are descendants of the Arcadians of Greece. That again is no accident. While Aeneas is at Evander's court there is a bucolic description of the advent of evening (280), and then suddenly (369), at the end of the section, night falls fast "and embraces the earth with sable wings". The curtain comes down, as it were, on this glimpse of peace, and we return to thoughts of war. Again, in Book xi,252, we catch a glimpse of peace, when Diomedes addresses the envoys of Latinus: o fortunatae gentes, Saturnia regna... As elsewhere, this image is contrasted with the new reality of war; and the war is that which Aeneas and the Trojans have brought.

In conclusion, one might suggest that Vergil strove to adjust himself to the world as he found it, with its cruel realities, and sometimes experienced a strange hesitation, a bewilderment, and even a stagnation of spirit in the face of those realities; but he was able to find consolation in the recollection of a land of peace, the Arcadia and the Golden Age that his spirit longed for; this manifests itself throughout his poetry and is the explanation of much that might seem strange or inconsistent. Perhaps it explains why the Aeneid often appears to be an epic failure.

