

VIRGIL THE EUROPEAN

Presidential Address, delivered to the Virgil Society
on 22nd February 1964

by Michael Grant, C.B.E., M.A., Litt.D., F.S.A.

It is indeed a great honour to have been elected President of the Virgil Society, and I appreciate this very particularly. I feel especially privileged to succeed Sir John Lockwood - whom I nowadays see in a different capacity, as chairman of Northern Ireland's equivalent of the Robbins Committee. I can only hope that my contribution will not be too unworthy of him and of other distinguished past presidents.

Virgil was profoundly aware of a historical division between Europe and Asia, and of the Trojan War as a symbol of that division and an event in its history. When Juno denies that the war was her fault, she explicitly describes it as a struggle between the two continents:

quae causa fuit, consurgere in arma
Europamque Asiamque et foedera solvere furto.

(Aen. X, 90-1)

"What was the reason why Europe and Asia violated their pact of peace by an act of treachery and rose up in arms?"

Earlier, too, the war had been seen in the same terms, when Ilioneus told Latinus of the hates by which the continents of Europe and Asia were impelled to clash with each other.

quibus actus uterque
Europae atque Asiae fatis concurrerit orbis.

(Aen. VII, 223-4)*

This is not the place to tell how and when this idea of the continents had come into being. But it is extremely clear that the wars of the Greeks against the Persians had been the decisive factor. Aeschylus in his Persae repeatedly equates the Persians with Asia, and Herodotus, in the very first sentence of his Histories, deliberately asserts, as the main theme of his work, the identification of the Persian Wars with the millennial struggle between Europe and Asia. It is an attitude which he attributes, in origin, to the Persians, for it is they, he says, who "claim Asia for their own"; Europe and the Hellenic race they hold to be separate from them.

Herodotus also maintains that the mythological heroines Io and Europa (note the name) had symbolised earlier stages of this same rivalry between Europe and Asia - and also particularly Helen; and indeed that the Trojan war was itself a struggle between Europe and Asia (I,4). And Thucydides, too, sees it in the same light as a first example of pan-Hellenic collective action (I,3). Yet the Iliad,

* For other identifications of Troy with Asia see Aen. II, 557; III, 1; XI, 268; XII, 15.

although describing Troy's Carian allies as speaking barbarian tongues (Il., II, 867), does not really see the war as a struggle of Europe against Asia; perhaps its attitude is closer to the findings of archaeology which suggest it was rather a fight between two coalitions both straddling the Europe-Asia borders. Yet Hesiod refers to 'Panhellenes' as opposed to 'dark men', and already from the time of the Hesiodic poems Panhellenic feelings were beginning to run with increasing strength. As Herodotus implies (I, 6), it was probably the sixth century aggressions of the Lydian Croesus against the Greeks which helped to define the conception of a millennial inter-continental struggle, since the frontier which Croesus established corresponded for a short time with the boundary between Europe and Asia, thus emphasising the gulf between the two; and so already at the beginning of the fifth century Hecataeus had explicitly divided Europe from Asia, with fateful results.

Once the point had been established, the continental antithesis was recalled to the attention of the Greeks again and again. Xenophon is conscious of it in 396 and 366 B.C. (Hell., III, 4.3, VIII, 1.34) and later in the fourth century Isocrates was never tired of making the same point; while a marble relief in the Villino Chigi at Rome represents the forces of Alexander the Great and Darius III, at the battle of Arbela, by personifications of Europe and Asia respectively. The contrast was, of course, geographical and political. But quite early on, too, it was made, as attempted political contrasts often are made if you can manage it, into a moral contrast as well. The whole atmosphere of Aeschylus' *Persae* owes a great deal to the un-Hellenic and un-European barbaric luxury and brutal perfidious authoritarianism of the Asiatics: in other words, he stresses the inferiority of Asia to Europe.

Ussani pointed out that the second book of the *Aeneid* shows considerable signs of a knowledge of the *Persae*, and the theme of Asian perfidy and luxury is quite often apparent throughout Virgil's work. Perfidy was one of the original troubles of Troy, since a long chain of reprisals had been started when Prima's father Laomedon had cheated the gods of their fee (Virg. Georg. I, 501 f; cf. Her. Od. III, 3, 21 f); and Trojan perfidy reached even more notorious heights in the behaviour of Paris with regard to Helen. Eastern luxury appears in the *Aeneid* on both temporal planes, that of Augustus and that of the first Trojan immigrants. On the shield of Aeneas fashioned by Vulcan, there is the famous contrast between Augustus leading his Italians into battle and Antony with his eastern riches and his eastern wife, too:

hinc ope barbarica variisque Antonius armis ...
regina in mediis patrio uocat agmina sistro.

(Aen. VIII, 685, 696)

But when we turn back to Virgil's Aeneas, there is a curious paradox; for, although he is the revered forerunner, eastern luxury is at first not a perquisite of his enemies but of his own people. Indeed the opponents of the Trojans in the poem are allowed to identify Aeneas himself, and his followers, with this same theme of oriental Asian luxury and effeminacy. Thus when Numanus, the bridegroom of Turnus' sister, wants to be unpleasant about the Trojan invaders he stresses the virile austerity of the Italians, commenting most unfavourably on the other hand upon the Trojans, with their embroidered saffron and gleaming purple and sleeved tunics and ribboned turbans, and slothful habits and love of dancing and unmanly worship of the Great Mother (Aen. IX,

598 ff). In precisely the same spirit Iarbas also, equally hostile to Aeneas, had described him to Jupiter as an oriental bride-ravisher with a eunuch train, wearing a Phrygian cap on his scented hair:

cum semiuiro comitatu
Maeonia mentem mitra crinemque madentem
subnixus.

(Aen. IV, 215 ff)

These, it is true, are hostile witnesses, but they are but applying to Aeneas the famous contrast between virile Italy and the decadent east which Virgil has himself stressed in general terms, in the second Georgic (II, 136-9). And then again, immediately after the prayer of Iarbas, Virgil makes the same point in another way. Jupiter sends Mercury to order Aeneas to leave Carthage, and Aeneas is found wrapped in oriental luxury - not Trojan this time, but still from Asia since the lavish robe which he is wearing is Tyrian purple given him by Dido, and from her too is his sword starred with yellow jasper:

illi stellatus iaspide fulua
ensis erat, Tyrioque ardebat murice laena.

(Aen. IV, 261 f)

Dido, who had given him this eastern splendour, is eternally famous for the ambiguity with which Virgil's equivocal compassion has endowed her. Though apparently not introduced to classical literature before Timaeus, her literary descent from Circe and Calypso is obvious. And yet Virgil has struck off on his own, telling quite a different story from his older or younger contemporaries Varro or Livy or Dionysius of Halicarnassus: transforming her totally into the great magic figure whom the world has never forgotten. Far from being a prototype of that Roman bogey Cleopatra, she is full of noble qualities tragically interwoven into her love - there is no trace in her of the traditional Punic perfidy in which Romans so deeply believed (Cic. Off. I. 38 etc.). Nevertheless, Virgil explicitly adopts the tradition, probably started by Naevius, by which she is the ancestor of Roman-Carthaginian strife through her unknown would-be avenger, Hannibal:

exoriare, aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor!

(Aen. IV, 625)

At the very outset of the Aeneid this theme had been announced (Aen. I, 19 f), and in the very year of Virgil's death a triumph was again being celebrated over Africans (L. Balbus over the Garamantes).

So Dido is not for Aeneas; and she is not, like him, regarded as an ancestor of European history. Virgil separates her from Rome's European future by condemning the jewelled sword and the purple, and by stressing that such luxuries, like Dido herself, are Tyrian and Phoenician. For it had been the Phoenicians, so Persians told Herodotus, who had actually founded the feud which Asia cherished against Europe - long before the Trojans came into it at all - by kidnapping Io from Argos (Herod. I, 1). However tempting Dido's appeal that the two eastern races should unite (Aen. I, 574), and however pathetic her fate, Aeneas by escaping from her achieved, as Sir Maurice Bowra has put it, "both a moral and a physical escape, an escape from foreign rule and from the corrupting influences of the east".

Before he escaped, Aeneas had indeed been tainted with this oriental corruption: the Trojans are made to bear a heavy load of guilt, as well as being shown to be on the anti-European side in the age-old struggle of east and west. This creates rather a puzzling situation. For, guilty though Troy is, a large part of the Aeneid's purpose lies in the assertion that Troy has to be on the right side since, through Aeneas, it was the ancestor of imperial Rome itself.

Into the complicated history of Rome's Trojan legend many strands are woven. Long before Rome became imperial the travels of Aeneas in the west had taken shape. The Trojan clan of the Aeneadae were the ruling family at Eryx in Sicily, and perhaps as early as Stesichorus (sixth century B.C.) Aeneas was recorded as landing somewhere in Italy, probably Cumae. Statuettes showing Aeneas carrying Archises from the ruins of Troy come from Veii, very close to Rome - they are probably of the sixth or fifth century B.C.; and then in the fourth century Timaeus was perhaps the first to state distinctly that Rome was founded by Aeneas, who was used, therefore, by the Greeks as the symbol of Rome's supremacy over Latium.

It was quite customary for the Greeks to provide eastern founders for Italian regions or cultures; a famous example is the tradition - whether right or wrong is not the point here - that the Etruscan civilisation was established by Lydian immigrants. Particularly popular, however, was the provision of such founders from that classic and basic source of mythology, the Trojan War, and the epic cycles relating thereto. For instance Odysseus (Ulixes) has manifold Italian associations, and so have other Greeks, such as Diomedes. Nor is Aeneas the only Trojan in this category: his compatriot Antenor is mentioned by Virgil, and given great prominence by Livy as Aeneas' counterpart in their own northern Italy. But the story of Aeneas gained particularly strong roots, helped by the idea that the Penates of Lavinium, to whom the magistrates of Rome performed ancient rituals, were identical with divinities of Samothrace, which had a traditional connection with Troy.

In the third century B.C. Romans increasingly saw advantages in their Trojan legend. For one thing it was essential for their pride to have a part in the epic sagas which were the nucleus of western civilisations: to be associated with them brought Rome into the classical community. Yet when their enemy Pyrrhus of Epirus laid claims to Achilles as an ancestor, it was convenient for the Romans that their tradition placed them on the anti-Greek side. Perhaps this seemed even more convenient in the first Punic War when they found themselves allies of the Sicilians, some of whom themselves included Aeneas among their ancestors, so that they could now be greeted as kinsmen (cf. Zon. VIII, 8, p. 382). And it was then, writing about the war and very conscious of the ancient Punic pressure on Sicily, that the poet Naevius evolved or developed the idea that the Trojan battles were in a wider sense the preface to the Carthaginian struggle, in that they were a sort of divine and mythical dress-rehearsal to Roman imperialism in which Aeneas foreshadowed contemporary defenders of Rome's mission against the alien foe. And so the story was elaborated by Fabius Pictor, who took part in the Second Punic War and wrote in Greek to explain Rome's institutions and policies to the Greeks; and in the mid-second century B.C. Cato the elder in his Origines (Fr. 8 ff Jordan) gave the whole tradition historical solidity and strength. Aeneas, who to Homer was φίλος ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσιν (Il.xx.347) was a suitable patron for pious Rome.

However, by Cato's time Rome's government, as well as its historians, had long become fully alive to the possible political advantages of this Trojan ancestry. For they had by now formed a decided habit of intervening in the Greek world as heirs (and sometimes avenging heirs) of the Trojans. Thus Flaminius, as reconciler of East and West, had been compared with Aeneas; and we find C. Livius Salinator in 190 B.C. making a special visit to Troy to receive deputations there (Livy XXXVII, 9). Friendships were promised to Hellenistic monarchs by Rome on the condition that the Trojans, being Rome's kinsfolk, were exempted from taxes (Suet. Cl. 25, 3); and the Greeks themselves seem to have taken the initiative in pointing out that descendants of the Trojans had become the conquerors of Macedonia (Plut. Pyth. Orac. 11).

But the whole process gained added momentum when Caesar became important, because the Julii claimed descent from Venus, Aeneadam genetrix through her son Anchises. And so the ancient scene of Anchises being carried by his son Aeneas appears on a coin of Caesar of about 50 B.C. Next Augustus, although evasive about the less inspiring features of his adoptive sonship of Julius, nevertheless stressed his role as diui filius, and so also the descent from Aeneas which this gave him. That is why Virgil gives such weight to Ascanius, who as Iulus was the etymological link in the descent:

Iulius a magno demissum nomen Iulo.

(Aen. I, 288)

And so Augustus too became heir to the promises of glory made to Aeneas by Poseidon in the Iliad (Il. XX, 293-308). The legend of the origins of Rome and the legend of the origins of the Julian, now the Augustan, house are conveniently identified: the Trojan-descended Penates and Trojan-descended Augustus are one. Aeneas is not the same as Augustus - Virgil is far too thoughtful a poet for that - and yet there is the strong hint that both had come out of the east to save the west. The solemn phrase of Aeneas' departure from Asia with his divine companions, Penatibus et magnis dis (Aen. III, 12), is deliberately repeated for Augustus at his crowning victory at Actium:

cum patribus populoque, Penatibus et magnis dis.

(Aen. VIII, 679)

And yet, as I pointed out earlier, Troy's reputation, even in Virgil and Horace, was in another sense smirched and suspect, as heir to un-Italian oriental Asiatic luxury and greed. Here is a strange contradiction between two apparently irreconcilable legendary themes, the Asiatic immorality of Troy and the descent from this same Troy of Rome and Augustus himself. Why does Virgil set himself the bold task of blending these contrasted traditions, and how does he reconcile them?

He does it by insisting that the people and descendants of Aeneas will be, not Trojans, but Trojans raised and transformed into new beings. The bracing future ahead of them is foreshadowed when Aeneas, arriving upon the site of Rome, is welcomed by Evander to his dwelling. This early symbol of Italian sovereignty is a humble place, humile tectum, angusti fastigia tecti, very different from the Tyrian splendour of Africa or the luxurious grandeur of Troy; and the moral is pointed by Evander's exhortation that his guest should not scorn such poverty but should scorn wealth instead: aude, hospes contemnere opes (Aen. VIII, 364).

And indeed Aeneas was now ready to receive such injunctions, since his awe-inspiring initiation in the Underworld had brought with it a transfiguration of the old Troy: it is left behind for ever, in spirit as in place. This is the explicit condition upon which Juno brings her hostility to an end - that the Latins of Rome and Italy keep their name, their language and their customs, and that Troy's fall be accepted as final:

sit Romana potens Itala uirtute propago:
occidit, occideritque sinas cum nomine Troia.

(Aen. XII, 827 f)

To this Jupiter agrees: the Trojans shall be an element in the race but shall be absorbed within it.

commixti corpore tantum
subsident Teucri.

(Aen. XII, 835 f)

Now one of the most famous poems of Horace, the third Ode of his third Book, dwells at length upon this successful plea of Juno that the fall of Troy must be accepted and that it must never be revived or rebuilt. Whichever was written first, the references of Virgil and Horace coincide exactly in sentiment. My wrath will cease, says Horace's Juno, and Rome will prosper, provided that a wide sea rage between Troy and Rome - dum longus inter saeuat Ilium Romamque pontus - and provided that the cattle trample over the tomb of Priam and of Paris: dum Priami Paridisque busto insultet armentum (Hor. Od. III, iii, 37, 40 f).

What is the purpose of this emphatic insistence ascribed to Juno? It used to be said that Horace was protesting against a rumour that Julius Caesar was planning to move the capital from Rome to Troy or Alexandria (Suet. Jul. 79). But that view is now recognised as highly improbable, for what both poets are surely saying is something on the spiritual not the topographical plane: namely that the condition of the success of Troy's colony, Rome, is precisely the abandonment of the bad old features which had been endemic in Asia and the east and which had caused Troy's downfall. There must be no repetition of the luxury and greed which Horace, like Virgil, ascribes to Asiatics (Od. II, xii, 21 f) - the whole of these six Roman Odes is a warning against greed - and which Augustus was trying to suppress by example and legislation (unsuccessful, apparently, but that is not the point). But the warning is moral in a wider sense. The horrors of the Civil Wars just past are seen as a direct heritage and consequence of the original Trojan perfidy: already in the first Georgic, before they had ended, Virgil had cried that Roman life blood had atoned long enough for Laomedon's perjury at Troy (Georg. I, 501 f); and Horace refers to Helen as a mulier pergrina (Od. III, 3, 20), a reference which could not fail to evoke memories of Cleopatra, denounced by Virgil as Antony's Aegyptia coniunx.

But Horace has his own way of making it clear, as Virgil does, that Aeneas had the Messianic role of providing a fresh beginning: for whereas Paris had been the fatalis incestusque iudex, the epithet given to Aeneas in the Secular Hymn of 17 B.C. is exactly the opposite, castus (Carm. Saec. 42) - the man whose righteousness is favoured by the gods, and the man who will give Trojan survivors greater things than Troy: daturus plura relictis. So Aeneas, and now Augustus, are giving a new start, and what is scrapped from old Troy includes not only its

oriental greed and perfidy, but evils nearer home resulting from the Civil Wars - and indeed the evils of the old Roman order itself, the anarchic Republic which Augustus was claiming to renew and replace by a Republic of pristine Italian virtue.

Although so great a poet could never be merely a propagandist, it would be equally idle to suppose that Virgil's hearers and readers were intended to remain oblivious of contemporary great events; and particularly of events in Asia. For what Asiatic Troy had been to Agamemnon, what Persia had been to fifth century Hellas, so Parthia was to the Romans of the Augustan age. Indeed, the very year preceding Virgil's death, while the Aeneid was being written, had witnessed the culmination of all Augustus' efforts to solve the Parthian question. The settlement was, as hindsight tells us, a failure, but it was hailed with every sort of exultation at the time: and Virgil explicitly refers to it, or looks ahead to it, by celebrating the return by the Parthians of the standards captured by them thirty-three years earlier from Crassus. Augustus' coinage commemorates their recovery with the phrase SIGNIS PARTHICIS RECEPTIS, and Virgil too explicitly refers to the event, either in anticipation or after it had happened, when he speaks of demanding the standards back: Parthosque reprecere signa (Aen. VII, 606). So this is another specific way in which Augustus, at the very date when the Aeneid was nearing completion, succeeded Aeneas as reconciler of Europe and Asia.

It was obviously tempting, indeed reasons of internal politics may have made it necessary, for Augustus to have celebrated this diplomatic settlement as a victory. That is why one of the arrangements with Parthia, by which kings of Armenia should be Roman vassals, is roundly described on his coinage as ARMENIA CAPTA, only a little more truthfully than when Antony, after being heavily defeated in Armenia, had inscribed his coinage ARMENIA DEVICTA. On other occasions Augustan moneymen are perhaps a little more polite, putting ARMENIA RECEPTA (not CAPTA), as they had put ASIA RECEPTA after Actium. However, imperial publicists could clearly not be expected to see the millennial dispute between Europe and Asia ending in anything other than a military success. (I expect the Parthian king said the same to his own people when he returned home).

But here again Virgil offers a more subtle, conciliatory note towards Asia. He chooses as the instrument for this idea the goddess who was the very symbol of oriental un-Roman worships, Cybele the Great Mother. Although her image, to allay popular panics, had been brought to Rome in 205-204 B.C. and lodged on the Palatine, she seemed so foreign that Romans were still in Virgil's day not allowed to serve as her priests and attendants (Dion. Hal. Ant. Rom. II, 19). This will not surprise any reader of Catullus' sixty-third poem, in which the utterly un-Roman, orgiastic nature of her cult is startlingly portrayed. Virgil on the other hand places her within the Roman framework as a loved and revered figure. The image, it was said, had only been obtained from Pessinus in the first place by reminding the Phrygians of their kinship with Rome through Aeneas (Herodian I, 11, 3); and Virgil's Aeneas feels very close to her. Enemies such as Numanus sneer at her eastern-style worship, but far more impressive is her kindness in giving Aeneas a forest to make his ships from (Aen. IX, 85 ff) - prosit nostris in montibus ortas (Aen. IX, 92), and on his arrival in Italy her name, identified with Jupiter's mother Rhea, is invoked along with Jupiter himself:

Idaeumque Iouem Phrygiamque ex ordine Matrem
inuocat.

(Aen. VII, 139 f)

And then it is Cybele again who intercedes with Jupiter to save Aeneas' ships (IX, 83 ff), sends her nymphs to give him counsel (X, 219 ff), and is prayed to by him before the battle (X, 252 ff); and finally Anchises in the Underworld

explicitly compares Rome, with her seven hills and worldwide empire, to the Great Mother riding in her chariot through the Phrygian cities:

laeta deum partu, centum complexa nepotes,
omnis caelicolas, omnis supera alta tenentes.

(Aen. VI, 785 f)

Cybele was a neighbour of Augustus on the Palatine, and Virgil is at pains to show that she was a venerable and glorious neighbour, fully integrated into the Roman tradition. But in this conciliatory, liberal gesture he was considerably ahead of the official thought of his time. For it was not until the reign of Claudius that the priesthood of Cybele was opened to Roman citizens, and not until Domitian that her temple and statue join the numerous other deities on the coinage, an exceptional type (not repeated for many years) which coincides, as such types often do, with an anniversary of the temple's foundation, in this case its tercentenary.

So Asian Cybele is brought by Virgil into the Roman European framework, just as the Asian Trojans themselves were transfigured and absorbed into that same picture.

But the problem of Europe versus Asia, in his times, was really a minor problem compared to a far more serious issue within Europe itself: namely, the marked antagonism between the two main living components of Europe, the Greeks and the Romans. Until the Romans became powerful, the Greeks had been Europe - its creators, and its sole creators. Now civilised Europe held two peoples. Gauls, Scythians and the like were not Europeans but outer barbarians whom it was part of Rome's mission to bring within the civilised zone (cf. Dion. Hal. VII, 70). Greece and Rome alone were Europe, and the most complex of all Virgil's reconciliations is concerned with the relation of the Romans to the Greeks. For in this first century B.C., although educated Romans deeply admired Greek culture, there was an abysmal lack of sympathy between the living representatives of the two nations. The dependence of the very occasional Roman litterateur upon an obedient and convenient Greek literary freedman must not be allowed to obscure the fact that most Romans hated the Greeks, and the Greeks hated them. The idea of Rome having 'liberated' the Greeks was hopelessly discredited; and the battle for conciliation waged by Fabius Pictor and Polybius had been completely lost. For in addition to all the grudges of the second century B.C., from Sulla onwards the cities of Greece endured appalling sufferings at Roman hands, and the Romans for their part blamed the Greeks very substantially for giving aid and comfort first to Mithridates, whom they helped to massacre a great many Italians, and then to the pirates whom certain Greeks did, indeed, assist in shattering over a large area Mediterranean communications, security and trade. Such are the reasons why Cicero, who adored Greek culture, relied upon Greek scribes and men of learning, and praised their representatives such as Archias, can devote the Pro Flacco to an exceptionally savage outburst against the characters of contemporary Greeks. Finally, the Greeks had sided, of necessity or voluntarily, with Antony at Actium.

Things could scarcely have been worse. Yet now, in the time of Augustus, when general reconciliation was in the air, it seems to have been fairly widely appreciated that some attempt at a rapprochement between Greece and Rome was one of the most urgent of necessities. Augustus proclaimed it, in the field of religion, by his initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries (in the last year of Virgil's life); and by his special emphasis upon Apollo, who besides possessing an ancient link with the Julian House (Serv. Aen. X, 316) and with Troy (Aen. VI, 56, 69 f) was the dazzling symbol of Hellenism and, through his temple on

the Palatine, the focus of what was intended to be a new Greco-Roman unity. In the field of art, again, there was that extraordinary government-sponsored synthesis of Greece and Rome, that equipoise between Greek form and Roman content which achieved some of its best results in the portrait busts of the ruler himself.

The writers, in their different ways, make the same point. However Roman your patriotism, it was a matter of honour if you were a lyric poet to say you were the descendant of Alcaeus, if you were an elegist of Callimachus, and so on. The contemporary historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus goes much farther when he repeatedly argues that each successive wave of the immigrants who later became Romans actually were Greeks (I, 11, 61, 89, VII, 70). Livy, more subtly, has nothing to say of the Greeks playing a part in Rome's foundation, but instead introduces the story that one of the early kings of Rome was a Greek - Tarquinius Priscus to whom he attributes Corinthian origin (Livy, I, 34): possible evidence of a real migration of Corinthian nobles (driven out by Corinthian tyrants) at a time when, as archaeologists have shown us, Italy was inundated with Corinthian pottery.

Virgil's treatment of the Greeks is a good deal more nuancé. In the first place he does not attempt to palliate the old warlike, hostile tradition by which the Romans have taken vengeance upon the Greeks for the Sack of Troy. The time will come, says Jupiter, when the Trojan race shall lord it over Mycenae and Argos - uictis dominabitur Argis (Aen. I, 285); and Anchises foretells Rome's conquest of Corinth and of the Macedonian King Perseus, who claimed descent from Achilles (Aen. VI, 839). Nor does Virgil resort to any solution nearly so simple as Dionysius' discovery that the Romans really are Greek after all - or as the rival tradition about Aeneas, that he was not a good friend to Priam (Il. XIII, 460; XX, 179-86, 306), and (like Antenor) was guiltless of the Trojan War (Il. XX 297). And yet there is immense warmth and beauty in Virgil's picture of the Greek Evander, who dwelt on the site of future imperial Rome; to many, this eighth book of the Aeneid is as haunting and marvellous as any other part of the poem. One important thing about Evander is that he is an Arcadian, and as Dr. Gossage so rightly noted in a paper to this Society one of the mainsprings of Virgil's poetic inspiration was his inner need for Arcadia's peace and security. Not fandi fictor Ulixes, not perfidious Helen, but this Arcadia was the Hellas which Virgil wanted as an addition and corrective to Rome; these were the Greeks through whom, as the Sibyl prophesied, an unexpected way of salvation would be opened:

uia prima salutis,
quod minime reris, Graia pandetur ab urbe.

(Aen. VI, 96 f).

Evander openly proclaims this Greco-Trojan and Greco-Roman reconciliation by declaring that, Greek though he is, he will never, as long as Aeneas lives, proclaim Troy as vanquished (Aen. VIII, 470 f). And then later, the message of reconciliation is explicitly taken up by one of the actual Greek participants in the Trojan War, Diomedes. Settled now at Argypira in Apulia, he declares to the Italian envoys that he has no further quarrel with Troy since the city has fallen - and that he has forgotten the past and takes no pleasure in it.

nec mihi cum Teucris ullum post eruta bellum
Pergama, nec ueterum memini laetorue malorum.

(Aen. XI, 279 f)

Instead, the emphasis is on partnership between Aeneas and the Greeks, and Virgil deliberately and persistently dwells on those common elements which, despite the bloodthirsty past, could make such a partnership possible. In the first place, a most solemn role in the fateful initiation and (so to speak) Europeanisation of Aeneas is played by Cumae, which was held to be, and probably was, the oldest Greek colony in Italy or Sicily (Str. 243), and was also believed - again perhaps rightly - to have played a decisive part in the Greek influence which was later so apparent to Rome. Furthermore Cumae's Apollo, from whose shrine Aeneas passes to the underworld, was the counterpart and forerunner of the superb Palatine temple of Apollo founded by Augustus:

ipse sedens niueo candentis limine Phoebi.

(Aen. VIII, 720)

And in the city itself Aeneas had seen, in this same book, another powerful religious link between Greece and Rome, the great Altar of Hercules who had designed to visit Evander's home (Aen. VIII, 362 f) - and to marry his daughter (Dion. Hal. Ant. Rom. I, 32, 1). There was no doubt of Hercules' Greek origin, as everyone could see by noting that his ritual remained Greek in character; it was reputed to be the only foreign ritual accepted by Romulus.

With Hercules, Apollo and Cumae as elements in a shared tradition and as religious and cultural intermediaries, Virgil has set the stage for Rome's reconciliation with Greece. It is Anchises who reveals, in what are perhaps the most famous lines in the Aeneid, Virgil's mighty vision of how the two nations will heal the breach in Europe, united to advance the human race, incomplete without each other; the Romans supreme in beneficent government, yet the Greeks also openly recognised as excelling in a great sector of this new composite civilisation, namely all the arts and the things of the mind:

excudent alii spirantia mollius aera
(credo equidem), uiuos ducent de marmore uoltus,
orabunt causas melius, caelique meatus
describent radio et surgentia sidera dicent.

(Aen. VI, 847 ff)

Contrasts of opposing qualities appealed to the ancients, but here Virgil brings the contrasting elements together as complementary, essential ingredients in the same picture. The climax is with the Romans and their rule; for Virgil was no vague cosmopolitan idealist, but a Roman and a nationalist - and a realist. Yet the part reserved for the Greeks was a glorious one, and could mean, or could have meant, a practical working out of the friendship and partnership dreamt of by Fabius Pictor and Polybius.

As always, Virgil was far ahead of his times, and particularly of official thought. The Roman emperors achieved many great things, but a dignified partnership between living Romans and living Greeks was not one of them. Probably Augustus was too much of an Italian to achieve more than the semblance. And then, throughout the centuries which were to follow, information can be

gathered at many periods - fragmentary it is true, yet cogent - indicating that the mutual distaste, indeed hatred, of the Greeks and Romans continued to rage or smoulder. You will remember Juvenal's Graeculus esuriens (3, 78), and on the other side one hears Dio Chrysostom being painfully aware how the Romans still laughed at Greek failings, which they described as typically Greek (Or. XXXVIII, 36 ff). Worse still Plutarch, a man not unsympathetic with Rome, unveils the brutal facts of power when he warns his fellow Greeks against the Roman boot on the neck, the dread chastiser, the axe that severs the neck (Praec. Reip. Ger. 813 f).

It was one of the great disasters of history that Rome bequeathed to the future this split right down Europe beside which all intercontinental strife fades to nothing. Europe was Greece and Rome; they were its two forces, of such very different kinds, and they were basically at odds with one another. When Europe came to have two centres, one at Rome and one at Constantinople, this fatal fission became permanent. For it led by gradual but ineluctable stages to the age-old division between the Greek and Roman churches which has kept a raw frontier raw for centuries. When its leaders met the other day they had not done so for half a millennium. It is quite easy to trace the continuity between the ancient hostility, and that ecclesiastical split down the centre of Europe, and its modern perpetuation in the Iron Curtain that has divided Europe in two in our own day, with boundaries not quite the same (indeed Greece is one of the exceptions) yet inherited from that former fission.

Though Virgil's story is fundamentally one of sadness - sombre endurance of suffering, and harsh destiny - his heartfelt all-pervasive hope was union. He told how through Aeneas, and then Augustus, Europe and Asia were reconciled one with the other, and at the same time he told, even more powerfully, how he hoped that the two great elements in Europe itself, Greece and Rome, might come together. And if he were alive now, and saw that this had not, in the end, happened, he still would not despair, for above all he believed in the lives and the personalities and the wills of human beings. He felt that they are good and not evil, and he believed, he would still believe now, that their goodness would prevail and achieve the Messianic millennium of the fourth Eclogue, in which there shall be no more any savage beasts, or serpents, or poisons. It was not his fault, it was not for want of endeavour on his part, that his own European civilisation has remained at variance within itself ever since.

