

unlikely for various reasons. See Conington's note ad loc. and Warde Fowler (op. cit., p.109). If I am right in thinking that historical events are here presented by Virgil in strictly chronological order, Cato here must be the younger Cato. Virgil could not refer first to Catiline, and then to the elder Cato.

VERGIL AND THE PRE-GREEK GODS

by Professor T.J. Haarhoff,  
M.A., B.Litt.

W.F. Jackson Knight strikes the right note in the opening lines of the Aeneid 'Juno was ruthless and could not forget her anger' and therefore persistently thwarted Aeneas in carrying out his destined mission - a mission that formed the theme of Vergil's epic. And Knight well translates Vergil's own wondering comment on the legend, and that inevitably formed the framework of the Roman Epic, 'it is hard to believe Gods in Heaven capable of such rancour'. Like Euripides, Vergil accepted the traditional story but changed its meaning. Both poets adopted the Olympian gods established in tradition but criticised them in so far as they were gods made by man in his own image. Vergil's personal beliefs, I think, are found, though incompletely stated, in Aeneid VI. 723 ff.

It is sometimes forgotten that Vergil had a deep regard for those old national deities who had an individual existence in Italy before the Greek gods were equated, sometimes very roughly, with what seemed their Italian counterparts. Mars, for example, was largely concerned with agriculture, before he was given the rôle of Ares. These old Italian deities were regarded by the Romans as spiritual forces of an impersonal kind; this conception of God as spirit was perhaps nearer to Christian thought than the later anthropomorphic gods, as Cyril Bailey once remarked. Compare St. John IV.24: πνεῦμα ὁ Θεός God is Spirit; not a Spirit.

But the brilliantly imaginative representations of the Greek anthropomorphic gods held tremendous advantages for literature and proved irresistible to the artistic mind. Yet Vergil was a philosopher as well as a poet and had in fact in his youth contemplated devoting himself almost entirely to science and philosophy under the guidance of Siro; for I believe Catalepton V is genuinely Vergilian. As a philosopher and a humanist, he objected to the insults offered to Deity by the attribution of primitive human feelings. He criticised the low motives of Juno - which included the bribery of Aeolus - and her alliance with the hellish Fury Allecto (flectere si superos nequeo, Acheronta movebo) - an alliance that may be due to the interpretation of men, because in the end, Vergil's Juno is converted to the Trojan-Italian cause (Aen.XII, 818 ff.).

Now it is interesting to note that when Vergil is deeply moved, he appeals, not to the Greek gods, but to the ancient Italian concepts of the Divine. Such an occasion we find towards the end of Georgic I at a time when renewed clouds of civil war were threatening (about 46 B.C.) and the Roman world was compared, in a fine simile, to a chariot with which the horses had run away -  
ut cum carceribus sese effudere quadrigae  
addunt in spatia, et frustra retinacula tendens  
fertur equis auriga (the agitated weak caesura)  
neque audit currus habenas.

With all the anguish of those who had suffered the horrors of the Civil wars (impia bella) and had begun to hope that the new ruler could at last restore stability, Vergil prays that Octavian - hunc saltem invenem - may be spared, in spite of Rome's past guilt and present confusion, to perform this task. And what deities does he appeal to? (1) to the di patrii, the gods of the fatherland, the ancestral gods; (2) to the Indigetes, a term of which we do not know the details,

but which must refer to something ancient and traditional, belonging to Italy. Aeneas is called 'indigetem' (Aen.794) by Jupiter and described as destined for Heaven and the stars. (3) Romulus, the traditional legendary founder of the urbs aeterna, symbol of Roman rule. (4) Vesta mater, to Vergil the most Roman concept of all, Vesta of the Roman hearth, long before she was equated to Hestia, the symbol of the family and of the State, which is the family writ large and is endowed with the tradition of the Vestal Virgins. This was not a Greek idea. Vesta is so important that she is described as the one who preserves Tuscan Tiber and the Roman Palatine (most ancient of Roman sites) - quae Tuscum Tiberim et Romana Palatia servas (singular, with quae referring to Vesta).

Now the poet who is perhaps nearest to Vergil in his regard for the countryside, is Tibullus. He has a deeply rooted religious feeling for Tellus Mater, as distinct from the Alexandrian attitude of Propertius and Ovid. When he is lying sick at Corcyra, as Luck points out, ('Latin Love - Elegy', p.70) he invokes di patrii where Propertius would have appealed to dique deaeque omnes of the Greek Pantheon. He frequently calls on Pales, Silvanus, Ceres in their Italian context, as Vergil does. He dwells on the typical Italian concept of the Genius, of whom Horace says (Epist.II.2.187) that he goes with us (comes) to influence of destiny (natale -- astrum) and that he is naturae deus humanae - an ascription of high power and an acknowledgement of the spiritual element behind human life. So too, Tibullus uses the Roman Genius in the place of the Alexandrian Graces, a purely Roman conception in the place of Greek convention.

In the attitude to the old Italian ideas of deity there is a certain affinity between Vergil and Tibullus which is related to their deep regard for the Italian countryside and which is contrasted in certain passages to their literary adoption of the Olympian gods. Vergil's thought however is deeper than that of Tibullus; but we cannot go into that now.

#### SERVIUS - COMMENTATOR AND GUIDE

by R.D. Williams, M.A.

Servius' commentary on Virgil is widely used by classical scholarship as a source book for antiquarian information of all sorts - mythology, religion, law, social and political history, geography, philosophy, and so on; and it is invaluable for its citations of ancient authors and authorities which we would not otherwise have. My question is - how reliable, how helpful, is Servius for the understanding of Virgil? If he tells us that saeva Iuno (Aen.1.4) is an archaism for magna Iuno, should we believe him? If he says that finem dedit ore loquendi (Aen.6.76) means 'he defined to her that she should speak it with her lips', do we accept it? If we try to classify his attitudes, to place him in the context of his times and of his personal excellencies and limitations, we shall better be able to see when he is likely to be correct, and when he may be in error; we may be less inclined to unreasonable panegyric or violent denigration of his judgment. In what follows all the examples quoted occur both in the shorter version (S) and the longer version (DS). I do not think the picture would very greatly change if examples were taken from those parts of DS which do not occur in S; but it is no part of my present intention to discuss this complicated relationship.<sup>1</sup>

Let us consider then some of the special attitudes and prejudices of Servius, beginning with the most general and obvious one, that his chief interest is in learning for its own sake. He lived at a time when pedantry was unusually pervasive - we may illustrate this from the qualities admired in