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THE EPISODES IN VIRGIL'S AENEID

BY

JAMES E. BUSCH, C. P.

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VITA

James Edwin Busch, C. P. was born in Chicago, Illinois, June 23, 1916.

After receiving his elementary education at St. Viator's Grammar School, Chicago, Illinois, he entered the Passionist Preparatory Seminary at Normandy, Missouri, in September, 1930. He was graduated from the Preparatory Seminary and entered the Novitiate of the Passionists at Louisville, Kentucky, in June, 1935. After a year at Louisville, Kentucky, he was transferred to Detroit, Michigan, where he studied Philosophy.

In 1939, he finished his three year Philosophy course and received his Bachelor of Arts degree at Detroit, Michigan.

He returned to Chicago, Illinois, to take up his course in Theology, which he finished in Louisville, Kentucky, where he was ordained on August 10, 1942.

At the present time he is teaching at the Passionist Preparatory Seminary in Normandy, Missouri.

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INTRODUCTION

The problem of this thesis is to meet the challenge in the words of G. A. Simcox: "A more penetrating criticism is, that the episodes may be said to overpower the poem (Aeneid)."[1] To accept without question the statement is to take much from the artistic stature of one who has always been placed among the world's greatest poetic artists. On the other hand, simple denial of the statement is no answer to a serious and authoritative opinion. Rather, the statement challenges us to a deeper reading of the Aeneid, especially to determine the full relation of the Virgilian episodes to the artistic unity and structure of the poem as a whole.

Virgil was not an epic poet by imperial appointment or commission. "He was born to write poetry."[2] His boyhood poem entitled Culex is prophetic no less of the Aeneid than of the Bucolics and Georgics. Even then, he was seeking a hero. In early Roman History he found many great names to feed his poetic imagination.[3] As his art matured in the Georgics, he was

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1 G. A. Simcox, History of Latin Literature. 2 volumes, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1890, 1.268.
2 E. K. Rand, The Building of Eternal Rome. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1943, 52.
3 Virgil, Culex. 356.

feeling for the ideal and the heroic in Roman history and in Roman destiny.

The character and reforms of Augustus merged with ideal beginnings of Rome in Virgil's imagination. Aeneas does not "stand for" Augustus. There is suggestion not identification.[4] The social, moral, and religious ideals of Virgil's own age will be sanctioned, motivated, explained in the idealism of his epic. "Virgil was the most typical and most gifted interpreter of the soul of his age."[5] He is given to Augustus, not made by him.

The high moral purpose of Virgil, his artistic broodings on ideal Roman greatness, his earlier poetic efforts - all this suggests to us that so great a poet would not allow his purpose to be lost in episode or to suffer the human beauty of his narrative to cover over the heroic ideal towards which his work was originally intended. At the same time, the challenge thrown to us will make us all the more conscious of the human and poetic beauty in the individual episodes - each an artistic gem so precious that it allures the gaze to a concentration that will forget the crown of which the gem is only a part.

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4 E. K. Rand, 58.
5 M. Rostovtzeff, A History of the Ancient World. 2 volumes, Oxford, New York, 1927, 2.205.

The opening chapter will restate the purpose of Virgil's _Aeneid_, laying special stress on those social and religious reforms, of which the poem is intended to be an instrument. A study of this instrument, the _Aeneid_ as an epic poem, must start from an examination of the principles established by Aristotle for determining the artistic place of the episode in the structure of an epic poem.

Finally, these principles will apply to the _Aeneid_ itself as an artistic unit. Here purpose and structure must be studied in actual, imaginative, artistic fusion. The poem as an epic, the poem as an artistic unity, should be judged by the living, unbroken continuity of poetic vision, the poet's imagination, the soul, the living bond, uniting each episode with the general purpose. Did Virgil achieve that living unity or did he fail in his effort? It will appear that Simcox is mistaken. The answer will meet the challenge accepted.

CHAPTER I

THE STORY OF THE AENEID

The *Aeneid* of Virgil is the epic of imperial Rome, as the Homeric poems are the epic of early Greece. For two hundred years before Virgil, there had been current the legend of the founding of Rome by Aeneas, a Trojan hero of the *Iliad*, son of Venus and Anchises and father of Ascanius or Julus, ancestor of Julius Caesar and Augustus. The *Aeneid* gave this legend final form and sanction, and made it canonical.

The first six books of the poem, after introducing Aeneas and his companions shipwrecked near Sicily and driven to the Carthaginian coast, where they were received at the court of Queen Dido, narrate the hero's escape from burning Troy, his wanderings on sea and shore in search of the divinely appointed but unknown goal, his tarrying at Carthage, the passion of the queen and her fatal despair when divine intervention forces him on, the funeral games in Sicily in honor of Anchises, the visit to the underworld, where the destiny of Rome and the Julian family is made known to him, and his departure from sacred Cumae, near Naples, for the Tiber's mouth. The last six books, the narrative of his troubled alliance with King Latinus of Latium, and of his wars, assisted by the Arcadian King Evander

of primitive Rome, with Latin and Etruscan enemies under Turnus and Mezentius, close with the slaying in single combat by Aeneas of Turnus, his most persistent and spirited foe, and the clearing of the state for the beginnings of Roman greatness.

Virgil's purpose in writing the Aeneid was to create a great poem, that would be representative and commemorative of Rome. Virgil envisaged the Roman Empire as the savior of the times. His theme is the policy of the Empire. He pleads with the people of his day for peace, harmony and godliness,

> pacique imponere morem,
> parcere subjectis et debellare superbos (6.852-853).

He portrays the Empire throughout the Aeneid as the embodiment of a rising generation that would liquidate the depressing financial debts of state and people, secure the frontiers against the ravages of invaders,

> jure omnia bella
> gente sub Assaraci fato ventura resident (9.642-643),

reorganize the political administration on the basis of justice,

> ac totum sub leges mitteret orbem (4.231),

reestablish religion and virtue in public and private life

> hunc socii morem sacrorum, hunc ipse teneto;
> hac casti maneant in religione nepotes (3.409).

The Pax Augusta was to be the fruit of the labors of the Empire. Virgil used the conditions of the past to color his portrait of

the future Golden Age.[1]

The story of the _Aeneid_, therefore, glorifies the times of Augustus. Virgil sings of "arms and the man,"

> Arma virumque cano (1.1).

He tells the story of a hero, but of a hero with a mission, whose deeds with their results eclipse the hero himself,

> multum ille et terris jactatus et alto
> vi superum, saevae memorem Junonis ob iram,
> multa quoque et bello passus, dum conderet urbem
> inferretque deos Latio; genus unde Latinum
> Albanique patres atque altae moenia Romae (1.3-7).

The story is heroic, taking its rise in early days when fact and myth were intermingled, and events wrapped in mystery and grandeur; its leading character was chosen from the heroic days, a man who would be a representative Roman. John Dryden says:

> A heroic poem, truly such, is undoubtedly the greatest work which the soul of man is capable to perform. The design of it is to form the mind to heroic virtue by example. 'Tis conveyed in verse, that it may delight, while it instructs: the action of it is always one, entire and great.[2]

The _Aeneid_ thus opened out to Virgil an opportunity to reveal in a single great poem all the motives which stirred him most as a

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1 J. W. Mackail, _The Aeneid_. Oxford University Press, New York, 1930, lxiii.

2 J. Dryden, _Virgil's Aeneid_. Collier and Son, New York, 1909, 67.

poet. His theme expressed in the heroic mold gave unlimited scope to his genius. The bright light of national pride illumined the dimmed historic past and unrolled before his eyes the vision of faith in his country's future. Life and death and a Roman's destiny, all found place in the birth and growth and maturity of the empire.[3]

The *Aeneid* is an epic poem. Epic is a type of narrative poetry. It deals with a story, a connected series of events. An epic embodies a nation's conception of its own history, or of the events of that history, which it finds most worthy of remembrance. Though the epic is on the heroic plane, it need not therefore be unreal.[4] The ordinary interests, the common emotions and passion, the events of daily life must all be there.

There are two distinct types of epic poetry, the one early, relatively primitive and original, the other late in origin, more artificial and imitative, the result of an attempt to apply the early epic to changed conditions. Thus, the *primitive* epic belongs to an early period of development, and describes heroic adventure and natural scenes, with a vivid simplicity, for love of the story; while the more artificial epic, called the *literary* epic, though more or less similar in form, is less spon-

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3 J. W. Mackail, *The Aeneid*. lxxxvii.
4 J. W. Mackail, *Virgil*. Marshal Jones Co., Boston, 1922, 11.

taneous, belongs to a later epoch of culture, and has some great central idea which is the purpose of the tale. To the former type belong the Homeric poems; to the latter belongs the _Aeneid_.

Virgil's poem is not merely a more or less dull reflection of the _Iliad_ and the _Odyssey_. The _Aeneid_ is an epic in its own right, a literary epic clearly distinguishable from the early Greek works of Homer. Three considerations will justify this claim. First, we observe the conscious purpose of the author, namely the glorification of Rome, that is dominant throughout the whole work. The patriotic theme pervades even the episodes and brings them into oneness of the _urbs aeterna_, Rome. There is no question here of the mere telling of a story or recounting isolated events. Secondly, we have the clear dependence upon the literary culture of the past. The _Aeneid_ draws inspiration and matter not only from the _Iliad_ and the _Odyssey_ but from the Cyclic poems and the Homeric Hymns, Apollonius of Rhodes' _Tale of the Argonauts_ and the whole range of Roman historical and poetic literature - Ennius, Naevius, Cato, Varro, Lucretius. All this culture has left its impress on the _Aeneid_, clearly distinguishing it in type from the _Iliad_ and the _Odyssey_. Thirdly, we may note the studied style, the planned development, the deliberate mingling of the old and the new, of legend and history, of natural free emotion and austere feeling -- all

proof of conformity to an artificial form that is the literary epic.[5]

Virgil had won renown by his Georgics and had devoted his entire life to developing his poetic faculty. Every influence had thus come to bear on the production of a great National Poem. The people had strong faith in their national destiny, and expected even greater things of the future. The emperor encouraged the writing of the poem, and the poet himself with his reverence for the Roman religion, with his genius and capabilities and his strong national enthusiasm, was the man for the task.

The greatness of the destinies of Rome was then the main subject of the Aeneid. Virgil connected it with the story of Aeneas, as Naevius and Ennius had done in their Annals.

That Virgil used great care in the selection of characters is evidenced in the way they personalize his theme and embody his purpose. Aeneas was a thoughtful selection, one chosen from among many because of a particular aptness as a medium expressive of the theme of Virgil. The claim of the Caesars to lineal descent from Julus, the son of Aeneas, makes this a most apt choice. Then too, this selection from the legendary past of a

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5 Grant Showerman, "The Aeneid," Encyclopedia Americana 1.175-177.

character associated with the name and places recurring in the great epic of Homer gave him opportunity to place his narrative on the heroic plane and utilize the influence of Greek culture in the cause of Rome. Thus, he could draw out of the past the portrait of an ideal Roman and make him the carrier of his theme.[6]

The meaning of the poem is for Virgil's generation. Roman destiny had not run its course. Its present and future were in the hands of a contemporary generation. Now it was this generation to which Virgil directed the Aeneid.[7] That the people should, by grasping the significance of Rome's history, understand and achieve their mission in the present day - such was his desire.

As an epic, the Aeneid should sing of the feats of heroes, of great deeds in battle and council, and portray a life of valor and adventure; it should, like the great epics before it, the Iliad and the Odyssey, appeal to human interests and create men and women, drawn to the heroic scale and on the heroic plane, and yet embodying the qualities and passions and emotions of actual life.

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6 A. Sidgwick, P. Vergili Maronis Opera. Cambridge University Press, London, 1923, 2 volumes, Vol. 1, 46-47.

7 E. K. Rand, The Magical Art of Virgil. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1931, 27-28.

Finally, the *Aeneid* must possess religious character. The religion of a people is an important element in their private and public life. Augustus realized this and tried to integrate the Roman religion into the Roman state. Hence it was necessary that Virgil stress the role of religion in the *Aeneid*. An epic that would omit such an important element would be lacking in its fundamental data. Moreover, it is quite clear that Virgil was in agreement with Augustus that religion was necessary for a state's wellbeing.[8] "Virgil's *Aeneid* therefore, may be regarded as a literary plea for a renascence of the vanished *religio* and the *virtus prisca et pietas* respectively."[9]

The poet himself viewed Rome as powerful, because of the protection and strength given her by the gods. Juppiter's assurance is one of boundless possessions and sway,

> his ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono;
> imperium sine fine dedi (1.278-279).

Imperial Rome is an achievement brought into being by the providential power that rules the world.[10] Obedience to sovereign law, which is the chief burden of the *Aeneid*, stands out among the diverse elements of Roman life as especially prominent.

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8 C. T. Cruttwell, *History of Roman Literature*. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1910, 266.
9 G. C. Ring, S.J., *Gods of the Gentiles*. The Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, 1938, 304.
10 R. J. Henle S.J., *Fourth Year Latin*. Loyola University Press, Chicago, 1941, 65.

> ab Jove principium generis, Jove Dardana pubes
> gaudet avo, rex ipse Jovis de gente suprema
> (7.219-220).

Thus, the background of the poem is the working of the gods themselves, with Fate ordaining all.

The _Aeneid_ portrays Rome's beginnings and her significance to the world. The fall of Troy, the wanderings of Aeneas, his arrival in Italy, are sketched not only as glorious achievements of the past, but as prophetic of her future. The one great purpose of the poem is to draw inspiration for the present from a contemplation of the past. The poem throughout is one of patriotic emotion. Aeneas is a grave man; he is _pius Aeneas_: "he is a man burdened with one idea."[11] As we said, the whole of the _Aeneid_ is expressive of the oneness of purpose on the part of Virgil. Aeneas is, as it were, the incarnation of this purpose. He is the characterization of Roman greatness and achievement. As such he was accepted by the people of Virgil's generation. In him, they saw their own true character as Roman citizen, their civic duty and national destiny.

The _Imperium Romanum_, which Virgil knew in all its natural grandeur and revealed in the splendor of beauty, is no hazy ideal. Virgil has proven that Rome knew which qualities she lacked and which she possessed. The conscious appreciation of

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11 T. Haecker, _Virgil, Father of the West_. Sheed and Ward, London, 1934, 74.

the significance of the name, Roman, is an historic fact. We have confirmation for this in the frank admission of Grecian superiority in art and philosophy. It was not beneath the true dignity of Rome to admit excellences in other nations, because her pride was in an excellence preeminently her own. Government was the Roman art, government exercised according to a sense of justice to be found in ruler and subject,

> Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento (6.852).

While Rome's government was founded on power, it was the power of authority and law, which might look like force without restriction but at the same time this authority was based on certain dynamic virtues essential to the well-being of a state, "chief of which was pietas, love fulfilling duty, whose political expression is justice."[12] This virtue of pietas was Rome's pride. Unjust force, political corruption, selfish rule, these are denounced by Virgil as contrary to the idea embodied in the name of Rome.

The theme of the Aeneid is Aeneas, "the leader toward the glory of Rome. But the true leader - and this, be it remembered, was Virgil's opinion after a century of civil war - the true leader is not he who makes himself leader, but he who is called

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12 T. Haecker, 75-76.

and dedicated to that end by Fate."[13] Aeneas is a man whose ear is attuned to the dictates of a superior power, guiding the destinies of men; he is a virtuous man; he is _pius Aeneas_, devoted to his duty toward his father, his child, his comrades, and above all towards the gods. His character is instinct with the cardinal Roman virtues. The _Aeneid_ breathes an intensely national spirit, in that it gives such decisive expression to the idea of Rome's mission in the world; her consciousness of imperial destiny; her function as mistress of the nations and the civilizer of mankind. This idea is finely wrought into the entire poem, reaching its climax in 6.847-853:

> excudent alii spirantia mollius aera,
> (credo equidem), vivos ducent de marmore voltus;
> orabunt causas melius, caelique meatus
> describent radio et surgentia sidera dicent:
> tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
> (haec tibi erunt artes) pacique imponere morem,
> parcere subjectis et debellare superbos.

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13 T. Haecker, 80.

CHAPTER II

THE EPISODE IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE EPIC

Virgil was confronted with the difficult task of creating a poem that would restore the forgotten Roman virtues. He accomplished it greatly through his skillful and most effective use of the episode.

Webster's Dictionary defines episode (from ἐπί + εἴσοδος, "coming in besides,") meaning first, the part of a tragedy between two choric songs; secondly, a separate but not unrelated incident introduced in narration, for variety or artistic effect. Aristotle employed the term in these two significations, denoting those parts of a play which are between two choruses, or an incidental narrative, or digression in a poem which the poet has connected with the main plot (Poetics 1452b).[1] In modern times, the term has been used in the latter sense only.

From Aristotle's Poetics we can ascertain two types of episodes, those that are integral to the story and those that are merely decorative. A clear understanding of what Aristotle means by the "episodic" is necessary. Otherwise, a statement as this one from the Poetics, "Of all plots and actions the episodic are the worst," might mislead one into inferring that he dis-

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1 S. H. Butcher, Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art. Macmillan and Co., London, 1923, Translation of Text.

counts the use of episodes. But nothing could be farther from his meaning. By the "episodic," Aristotle means those incidental narratives of independent interest, not organic and integrated with the plot, space-filling and laugh-provoking only. A poem is "episodic" when "the episodes or acts succeed one another without probable or necessary sequence" (Poetics 1451b). Such episodes H. W. Prescott describes as "mere decorative episodes."[2] With the best poets, however, the episodes are not mere appendages, serving merely to swell the size of the work, but they are closely connected with the subject. They are integral parts of the whole and cannot be removed from the Fable (μῦθος) without serious change.

In the fragmentary discussion of the Epic which Aristotle left in his Poetics, he defines the Epic as "that poetic imitation which is narrative in form and employs a single metre"; he tells us that "it should have for its subject a single action, whole and complete" (1459a); that "the beginning and the end must be capable of being brought within a single view" (1459b); that the characters celebrated should be of a lofty type (1449b); and consistently presented (1453b); that in the development both of the plot and of the characters the poem should present permanent truths rather than actual realities (1451b, 1453b).

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2 H. W. Prescott, The Development of Virgil's Art. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1927, 220.

Aristotle's doctrine is clear. The chief principle, and the soul of the epic, is unity of action. There must not be a mechanical piecing together of incidents but a vital union of the parts.

Aristotle insists upon unity in composition. The literary work is conceived as an organic whole, each part must be integral with this whole. Irrelevant matter detracts from the composition. It does not give progress to the story because it has no close-knit unity with the prevailing theme.[3]

It is in light of this principle that a distinction between an integral and a merely decorative episode can be correctly made. If an episode is relevant to the story, then it is an integral part of the story. "Most important of all," says Aristotle, "is the structure of the incidents." This is the same as saying "plot," for by plot he means "the arrangement of incidents." (1450a)

> Unity of plot does not, as some persons think, consist in the unity of the hero. For infinitely various are the incidents in one man's life, which cannot be reduced to unity; and so, too, there are many actions of one man out of which we cannot make one action....But Homer, as in all else is of surpassing merit, here too - whether from art or natural genius - seems to have happily

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3 S. H. Butcher, 281.

> discerned the truth. In composing the Odyssey he did not include all the adventures of Odysseus - such as his wound on Parnassus, or his feigned madness at the mustering of the host - incidents between which there was no necessary or probable connection; but he made the Odyssey, and likewise the Iliad, to centre round an action that in our sense of the word is one. As therefore, in the other imitative arts, the imitation is one when the object imitated is one, so the plot, being an imitation of an action, must imitate one action and that a whole, the structural union of the parts being such that, if any one of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjointed and disturbed. For a thing whose presence or absence makes no visible difference, is not an organic part of the whole. (Poetics 1451a)

Episodes, if they are to have any significance in epic structure, and if they are to be retained, must be structurally integral and thus become an organic part of the whole. If the episodes of an epic are tested by these rules of Aristotle, their author's purpose will become clearly revealed.[4]

Aristotle's teaching on the purpose of an episode, that is its function in epic structure, seems readily apparent. The episode extends the general plan or fable into all its circumstances.

> As for the story, whether the poet takes it ready made or constructs it for himself, he should first sketch its general outline, and then fill in

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4 Richard Heinze, Virgils Epische Technik. Berlin, 1915, 438.

> the episodes and amplify in detail.... In the drama, the episodes are short, but it is these that give extension to Epic poetry. Thus the story of the Odyssey can be stated briefly. A certain man is absent from home for many years; he is jealously watched by Poseidon, and left desolate. Meanwhile his home is in a wretched plight - suitors are wasting his substance and plotting against his son. At length, tempest-lost, he himself arrives; he makes certain persons acquainted with him; he attacks the suitors with his own hand, and is himself preserved while he destroys them. This is the essence of the plot; the rest is episode....Epic poetry has, however, a great - a special - capacity for enlarging its dimensions, and we can see the reason. In Tragedy we cannot imitate several lines of actions carried on at one and the same time; we must confine ourselves to the action on the stage and the part taken by the players. But in epic poetry, owing to the narrative form, many events simultaneously transacted can be presented; and these, if relevent to the subject, add mass and dignity to the poem. (Poetics 1455b, 1459b)

In the next place, it is chiefly for the sake of variety that episodes are introduced into an epic composition. In so long a work they tend to diversify the subject and to relieve the reader by shifting the scene.

> The epic has here an advantage, and one that conduces to grandeur of effect, to diverting the mind of the hearer, and relieving the story with varying episodes. For sameness of incident soon produces satiety.... (Poetics 1459b)

The episodes, moreover, are a professed embellishment and, provided they are naturally introduced and have a sufficient connection with the poem, they are a great ornament to the work. Accordingly, they should be particularly elegant and well-finished. As Aristotle says, the episodes "add dignity to the poem" and they "conduce to grandeur of effect." The place of the episode is a subordinate one. They may be used to secure many and varied literary effects. For instance they may be used as fillers for pauses in the action or to diversify interest by particularization or as retarders to slow down the development that intensified expression may be heightened at the moment of climax, yet these episodes because integrated into the central theme do not destroy the organic unity of the structure. Rather they supply us with detailed particulars concerning the narrative as a whole.

Finally, there is an ethical and an aesthetic significance in the use of the episode. In contrast to lyric poetry, which appeals to the heart alone, epic poetry appeals both to the mind and heart. Epic poetry requires for its emotional response the presentation, as it were, of argument. The episodes serve as arguments; they appeal to the mind and excite admiration. This admiration begets love. And love leads to imitation. These episodes are such as impress the imagination and arouse the sense of the ideal. There is nothing in them that is common and mean.

Wherefore, the episodes have an important ethical significance.

Closely related to the ethical significance of the episode is the question of its aesthetic significance. This, however, is but a phase of a much larger problem. We refer to the question of what is the proper function of the fine arts. The widely accepted, traditional view held that poetry had a moral purpose and the function of the poet was to teach. Homer was considered a great teacher rather than an inspired poet who charmed his listeners with his song. The other view, held by many and put into final and definite form by Aristotle, maintained that poetry was an emotional delight and its end was to give pleasure. Aristotle, as Butcher observes, was the first who attempted to separate the theory of aesthetics from that of morals.

> Aristotle maintains consistently that the end of poetry is a refined pleasure....If the poet fails to produce the proper pleasure, he fails in the specific function of his art. He may be good as a teacher, but as a poet or artist he is bad....
>
> Few of Aristotle's successors followed out this way of thinking; and the prevailing Greek tradition that the primary office of poetry is to convey ethical teaching was carried on through the schools of Greek Rhetoric till it was firmly established in the Roman world.[4]

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4 Butcher, 238-239.

Horace in the Ars Poetica reveals the status of Roman criticism. Although Horace directs attention to the aesthetic side, emphasizing unity of conception (Ars Poetica 1-25), and consistency of character (119-127), nevertheless, differing from Aristotle, he maintains that the poet must "teach" as well as "please"; he must "profit" as well as "amuse" (333).

The episode therefore is highly significant in the structure of the epic. By an extensive variety of carefully selected and relevant episodes, which appeal to the imagination, the intellect and the heart of the reader, the epic poet aesthetically promotes the establishment of a national and ethical character. The episode in itself is not necessary for the plot, but it has great and effective value.

CHAPTER III

THE EPISODE IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE AENEID

Aristotle had laid down the essential structure of an epic, of which Homer was the great exemplar. The epic must possess unity and completeness, not the accidental unity of time or space, but inner unity as of a living organism: complete with beginning, middle and end, but not unwieldy or over-weighted. But it is evident in reading the *Aeneid* that, though called an epic and suggested by Homer and designed essentially along Aristotelian lines, Virgil's masterpiece has lost the character of the primitive epic. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were, as is well known, among the earliest and most famous of a large number of Greek tales. Other nations in the early stages of development also produced similar heroic poems, of which the best known are the *Mahabharata* of India, based on the mythologic legends of the Hindu people; the German stories of the *Nibelungen* and *Gudrun*; the French *Chansons de Geste*, of which the chief is the *Song of Roland*; the Spanish *Poem of the Cid*; and the old English *Beowulf*. These are what are known as primitive epics: stories of battles and hardships, told for the sake of the story. So, the more important difference between the great epic of Rome and the epics of Greece and of other nations, is that the Roman epic tells the story for a purpose and the Greek epic tells the story

for love of the character and incident. It is true, as Henry Nettleship observes, that "incidents not seldom find a place in Virgil's narrative for no other apparent reason than because they or something like them have occurred in Homer."[1] It is also true that Virgil was deeply indebted to his Roman predecessors in epic poetry.

Virgil endeavors to reconcile the traditional epic structure with the feelings and manners of his own artificial age. A. Sidgwick says:

> The originality of Virgil consisted in this, that he combined the beauty and artistic handling of the primitive epic with the patriotic purpose of the annalists....But the real subject of the Aeneid...was Rome. Thus the poet created in Epic, as he had done in Bucolic and Didactic poetry, a new genus, which critics have suitably named the literary epic.[2]

"If Homer," says Voltaire, "is the creator of Virgil, Virgil is certainly the finest of his works."

The Aeneid has in the main all the structural lines of an Aristotelian epic. The action, extending from the fall of Troy to the pacification in Italy, is single, serious, complex and marked by a certain magnitude of grandeur. Virgil does not tell

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1 Henry Nettleship, Lectures and Essays on Subjects Connected with Latin Literature and Scholarship. Oxford University Press, New York, 1885, 121.

2 A. Sidgwick, 1.45.

the whole life of Aeneas, but only that portion of it, which deals with the founding of Rome. Aeneas is a noble character with a great and momentous mission. The story is complete, because everything necessary in the telling, the wandering and the final establishment in Latium, is present. The action of the _Aeneid_ has a beginning, the embarking of Aeneas from Troy; a middle, the series of events and episodes naturally following the setting out from Troy and the founding of the Roman race (Books 1-6: perils on land and sea; Books 7-12: trials of war); and an end, which naturally comes after the war and final victory of Aeneas over Turnus.

Charles Roué, S.J., the editor of the Delphini Edition of Virgil's Works, has excellently analyzed the _Aeneid_ according to Aristotelian structure. The fable of the _Aeneid_ is the action, he says, amplified in detail and adorned with relevant episodes. The exordium includes the eleven opening lines of the poem. The complication is the body of the poem up to the duel of Aeneas with Turnus. The solution begins with the duel in Book Twelve. The characters are noble, meant to excite admiration and lead to imitation. The thought is deep and profound, expressed in a diction that hardly requires comment.[3]

3 Charles Roué, S.J., _P. Vergilii Maronis Opera_. Delphini Edition, 1811, 161-162.

Its sustained dignity and eminence bespeak Virgil as the "wielder of the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of man."

If we prescind from differences for the moment, the characteristics both of the primitive and literary epic are, in the large, identical. They both have a uniform metre, simplicity of construction, unity of action, and the use of episode. Both have a great and noble subject, with dignified and serious treatment. The events are chiefly under superhuman control. Unity of action is more important than unity of hero. The poet is tranquil and never in a hurry. In order to bring the maximum of concentrated interest to his readers, his effective device is a varied and delightful use of the episode.

Virgil had his story. It was his task to tell it in such a way as to realize the purpose for writing it. He recognized the value of the episode. He knew that the handling of it could be effective only if it were relevant and integral to the story. The episode is an incidental narrative or digression in a poem which the poet has connected with the main plot.

Though Virgil brings much of Homer and others to his readers, he never forgets his main purpose, to impress men with the greatness of Rome, with her life of virtue and with the divine

protection which ever guided her.[4] As Sellar says: "The idea which underlies the whole action of the poem is that of the great part played by Rome in the history of the world, that part being from of old determined by divine decree, and carried out through the virtue of her sons."[5]

Do the episodes "overpower the poem"? Does Virgil himself lose sight of his central idea in the elaboration of the episodes or does he allow us to forget this controlling purpose in the wealth and beauty of the story conveyed through the episodes? For the sake of bringing out the objection that was made by Simcox that the episodes seem to overpower the story, we have listed all the episodes, or at least what we call episodes, in an appendix.[6] The complete Aeneid contains about 12,000 lines and about half of the poem, 6,000 lines, is taken up with the episodes. We cannot discuss all the episodes. A few leading episodes will be considered to prove those virtues which we like to regard as fundamental in the Roman mentality and character.

Certainly, the keynote of the poem is struck in the last line of the proem:

> tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem
> (1.33).

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4 A. Sidgwick, 1.46-47.
5 W. Y. Sellar, "Virgil," Encyclopedia Britannica. 9th edition 24.253.
6 cfr. Appendix: List of Episodes.

The foundation of Rome and its greatness are decreed in the fates as Juno knows:

> audierat, Tyrias olim quae verteret arces;
> hinc populum late regem belloque superbum
> venturum excidio Libyae: sic volvere Parcas
> (20-22).

The virtue of the founder is also there indicated:

> insignem pietate virum tot adire labores
> (10).

Aeneas, <u>fato profugus</u> (2), will be buffeted on sea and land and will endure much in war before he brings his gods to Latium whence came the Latin race, the lords of Alba, and the walls of lofty Rome. Virgil's own proem not only states the central theme - Rome's fated foundation through the fateful steadfastness of Aeneas, but also suggests the many episodes that will demonstrate how hard it all was to realize:

> multum ille et terris jactatus et alto
> vi superum...
> multa quoque et bello passus (3-5).

The proem reveals a great artist at work.

The first great episode of the <u>Aeneid</u> serves to fashion in our imagination the greatness of Rome, destined in fate to rule the world and to suggest the steadfastness of "great-souled Aeneas", the instrument of fate. The storm at sea in the First Book is Juno's wish, but the work of Aeolus. Juno is mindful of the fated greatness of the <u>gens inimica</u> (67), sailing for

Italy with the gods of Troy. Neptune calms the sea. Venus reminds Jupiter of his promise that the Romans would spring from the Trojans:

> Romanos ductores...
> qui mare, qui terras omnes dicione tenerent
> (235-236).

That promise had consoled Venus in the fall of Troy, <u>fatis contraria fata rependens</u> (239). Jupiter's majestic reply further reveals the scroll of fate. The great-souled Aeneas, <u>magnanimum Aenean</u> (260), will establish Lavinium; Ascanius will move the seat of power to Alba Longa. Romulus will give a new name to people and city. Jupiter promises the Romans:

> his ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono;
> imperium sine fine dedi (278-279).

Even Juno will change to better counsels, <u>consilia in melius referet</u> (281) and will cherish <u>Romanos rerum dominos</u> (282). It is so decreed: <u>sic placitum</u> (282). Finally, Jupiter sees the greatness of Augustus and the dawn of the <u>pax Augusta</u>.

The Dido episode with its dramatic power could stand alone as a tragedy. The incident includes verses 297-756 of Book One and all of Book Four. Books Two and Three, as far as Dido and the action are concerned, are a mere interlude or lengthy digression. In the Dido episode, we might expect to find an episode overpowering the poem. Critical examination is necessary. The initiative is from Jupiter sending Mercury to

Carthage to dispose the Phoenicians and their queen to welcome the shipwrecked Trojans.

Dido might otherwise bar them from Carthage, <u>ne fati nescia Dido</u> (299). Shrouded in mist by Venus, Aeneas and Achates see in Dido's temple the pictorial representation of the Trojan war. The sight is comforting, for fame will dismiss all tears,

> sunt hic etiam sua praemia laudi;
> sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.
> solve metus; feret haec aliquam tibi fama salutem
> (461-463).

After the speech of Ilioneus conciliates Dido to the pious race, <u>parce pio generi</u> (526), Aeneas steps forth from the cloud and commends Dido to the gods and her own conscience,

> di tibi, si qua pios respectant numina, si quid
> usquam justitiae est et mens sibi conscia recti,
> praemia digna ferant (603-605).

Dido sees in Aeneas one driven by the fates, and in this one like to herself:

> me quoque...fortuna
> non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco
> (628-630).

While Dido prepares a banquet, Venus, who is conscious of Juno's hatred (662-668), dreads the outcome of Juno's hospitality at this critical hour of fortune (671). So she sends Cupid in the guise of Ascanius to chain fast the heart of Dido with love for Aeneas. During the banquet, Dido asks Aeneas for his full story.

In Book Two, Aeneas tells with poetic beauty and dramatic power the story of Troy's fall,[7] _Troiae supremum laborem_ (11). Though the episode fascinates in itself, it is kept always under the control of the poet's main purpose. Laocoon might have discovered the Grecian stratagem of the wooden horse,

> si fata deum, si mens non laeva fuisset
> (54).

Cassandra's lips spoke impending doom, _fatis aperit Cassandra futuris ora_ (246-247), but a god's command made her always to be unbelieved, _dei iussu non umquam credita Teucris_ (247). Troy was doomed by the gods: _dis aliter visum_ (428). Priam was the victim of fate (554). Not Helen or Paris but the relentless gods cause the fall of Troy:

> divum inclementia, divum,
> has evertit opes sternitque a culmine Trojam
> (602-603).

Aeneas is preserved for a different fate. The ghost of Hector bids him flee (293-295). In the terrible battle and destruction, he might have perished, _si fata fuissent_ (433). Amid fire and foes, he has divine guidance: _ducente deo, flammam inter et hostis_ (632). He is given a divine sign that persuades Anchises to follow Aeneas and leave Troy (690-703). Creusa is

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7 R. S. Conway, _Harvard Lectures on the Vergilian Age._ Cambridge, 1928, 135.
J. W. Mackail, _Latin Literature._ John Murray, London, 1927, 100.

lost forever. The lord of Olympus does not permit her to go with Aeneas. The shade of Creusa reminds Aeneas of his future happy lot:

> terram Hesperiam
> illic res laetae regnumque et regia coniunx
> parta tibi (781-784).

So ends the episode of the Fall of Troy. Can it be said that Virgil leaves us unmindful of the main purpose of the poem?

Book Three tells of the wanderings of Aeneas and his little band. Leaving behind Troy, overthrown by the gods, visum superis (2), the little fleet spreads its sails to fate, dare fatis vela (7). The episode tells of Aeneas, who is exsul in altum (11). Divine portents had driven the Trojans off Thrace (59). At Delos the oracle of Apollo tells them to seek their first home: prima tellus...antiquam exquirite matrem (95-96). Because Anchises interprets the oracle incorrectly, the Trojans settle at Crete, but the household gods point to Hesperia, to Italy. Anchises, then, remembers an unheeded prophecy of Cassandra (165-183). Celaeno, the Harpy, recalls this prophecy to Aeneas and foretells fulfillment after much trial:

> Italiam cursu petitis
> ante datam cingetis moenibus urbem
> dira fames nostraeque injuria caedis
> (253-256).

Finally, the great prophecy of Helenus confirms all this and directs the future course of Aeneas to the town of Cumae and

its inspired prophetess. (374, sq.) Aeneas departs from his kinsfolk with the words:

> vivite: felices, quibus est fortuna peracta
> iam sua: nos alia ex aliis in fata vocamur
> (493-494).

Further voyaging takes them to the very shores of Italy, but the end was not yet. Anchises dies, and after this supreme trial, hic labor extremus (714), Aeneas is driven by the god to Dido's shores,

> hinc me digressum vestris deus appulit oris
> (715).

Thus, Aeneas ends the story of his long wanderings (716-718). The long episode of the wanderings of Aeneas begins with the purposes of the gods in the destruction of Troy and the determined exile of Aeneas and his band. It closes with the allusion to the fata divum. The ultimate goal of the poem has been the very soul of all the wanderings of Aeneas.

And now the climactic book of the Dido episode, Book Four. Dido's love was the strongest temptation to Aeneas, the greatest obstacle to his mission.[8] Unquestionably, the romantic beauty of Dido's fatal attachment gives to this book an independent interest of its own, but the poet does succeed in working it into the essential unity of the poem. At the outset,

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8 R. Heinze, Virgils Epische Technik, Berlin, 1915, 439.

Dido recognizes Aeneas as sprung from the gods, genus esse deorum (12). Dido's heroic purpose to save her falling spirit from the infidelity to the memory of Sychaeus is subtly changed by the sisterly advice of Anna. The latter suggests that the Trojans have come through favoring gods and Juno's aid,

> dis equidem auspicibus reor et Junone secunda (45);

and she points out the advantage of an alliance,

> quam tu urbem, soror, hanc cernes, quae surgere regna coniugio tali! (47-48).

Anna's counsel fanned the love of Dido, brought hope and removed any lingering doubt or shame.

The fateful union of Dido and Aeneas in the cave is the day of death and the cause of evil,

> ille dies primus leti primusque malorum
> causa fuit (169-170).

Fame, swiftest of all evils, spreads fact and fiction through the realm of Dido. King Jarbas, devout to Jupiter, appeals to him. The god turned attention to the royal city and to the lovers, oblitos famae melioris amantis (220-222). Mercury is sent to Aeneas to recall him to his senses by reminding him why Venus had obtained his preservation to found cities and empire. The glory of Aeneas himself, and more, the glory of Ascanius, is at stake. Let Aeneas set sail,

> navigat: haec summa est: hic nostri nuntius esto (237).

Aeneas is aghast at the message delivered literally by Mercury. Torn with uncertainty, he makes silent plans for departure (293-294). But Fame was ahead of him. Dido knew and Dido upbraided him for his perfidy. Only the warning of Jupiter, held Aeneas steadfast,

> ille Jovis monitis immota tenebat
> lumina (331-332).

The Trojan appeals to the fates (340-341), to the loved country calling, <u>Italiam</u>...<u>hic amor haec patria est</u> (346-347), to the warnings of the ghost of Anchises and to the rights of young Ascanius, and to the command of Jupiter (358-359). He begs Dido not to torment herself or him because <u>Italiam non sponte sequor</u> (361).

Dido vents her outraged feelings but to no avail (394-396). Through Anna she prays and pleads for delay (438-440). The will of Aeneas is steadfast; tears are vain,

> mens immota manet, lacrimae volvuntur inanes
> (449).

Dido recognizes her own doom, <u>infelix fatis exterrita Dido</u> (450). With the unconscious aid of her sister, she prepares to die. Meanwhile Aeneas gets a final warning to be gone. When Dido saw the Trojan fleet departing, she spoke her prophecy of revenge even in face of her recognition of fate. Let Aeneas be hated by the Tyrians; let there be no truce between the

nations,

> exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor
> (625).

Then Dido falls upon the funeral pyre, her own sword through her breast. Juno's power can only hasten the difficult death of the queen of Carthage, whose alliance with Aeneas she had schemed against the fates. The hard reality of Aeneas' departure remains explained only as the work of the gods. To other things, Fate was calling the father of Rome. The episode in its ending has no meaning at all except in connection with the central purpose of the poem.[9] The greatest obstacle to his mission has been met and overcome,

> Interea medium Aeneas jam classe tenebat
> certus iter (5.1).

Dido's story is forever part of tantae molis.

It will be permitted to deal with Book Five more briefly. Here we have the episode of the funeral games for the anniversary of Anchises' death. Mark the early allusion to Fate in the address of Aeneas to his dead father,

> non licuit fines Italos fataliaque arva
> nec tecum Ausonium, quicumque est, quaerere Thybrim
> (82-83).

The thought of fate and fortune is kept even in the games.

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9 R. Heinze, 440.

Each one of the games is told in an episode. Let the boat-race go to those to whom Neptune has granted it (195); Nisus loses the foot-race through the malice of _inimica fortuna_ (356). In the boxing match, Dares is urged to yield to heaven's decree (466-467). In archery Acestes is victor by omen of heaven (533-534).

Fortune changed, _fortuna fidem mutata novavit_ (604), as we see in the episode of the burning of the ships. Juno sends Iris among the Trojans. Assuming human form, Iris incites the women, torn with love for the Sicilian land now reached, to burn the ships of Aeneas (655). Too late is the machination of Juno discovered (679). Much damage is done to the ships, but the prayer of Aeneas to Jupiter brings rain to quench the fire. The bitter blow causes Aeneas to waver in purpose (700-702). He is recalled to strength and fortitude by Nautes (709-711). Aeneas weighs the wise counsels of Nautes.

The episode of Anchises' apparition occurs when Anchises counsels Aeneas to take only the bravest hearts to Italy, _lectos iuvenes, fortissima corda_ (729). He invites Aeneas to come with the Sibyl's care to visit him in Elysium. There he will learn,

> tum genus omne tuum et quae dentur moenia disces
> (737).

Preparations are made to set sail for Italy. Venus, realizing that Juno's hate has not changed despite Fate or Jupiter's

command,

> nec Jovis imperio fatisque infracta quiescit (784),

asks Neptune to assist the Trojans to the Laurentine Tiber, _si dant ea moenia Parcae_ (798). Neptune promises that Aeneas shall come safely to Avernus, though one life will be lost, and given for many,

> unus erit tantum amissum quem gurgite quaeres;
> unum pro multis dabitur caput (814-815).

The tragic episode of Palinurus follows. Faithful Palinurus, overcome by Somnus, falls overboard, and the ship aimlessly but securely reaches port. The games are over and many of the ships are lost, but Aeneas is closer than ever to his goal. The burning of the ships was the last heavy trial of Aeneas. Again, the intrinsic interest of the first part of Book Five has not prevented the poet from carrying on his story. The hate of Juno, seen in the burning of the ships, is the threat of unity.[10] Related to this is the intervention of Jupiter (rain), of Venus (plea), and of Neptune - all concurring with Fate.

The whole of Book Six may be considered an episode. It is the story of Aeneas' descent to the Underworld. The book opens with _pius Aeneas_ (9) seeking first the oracle of Apollo, as the

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10 R. Heinze, 339.

shade of Anchises has ordered him (5.735). The prayer of Aeneas to Phoebus reveals his sense of the high destiny awaiting him - the fortune of Troy lies behind. He asks the prophetess of Apollo to grant to the Teucrians to rest in Latium with their gods. Confidently he asks:

> non indebita posco
> regna meis fatis (66-67).

The Cumean Sibyl sees past, present and future as she replies:

> O tandem magnis pelagi defuncte periclis
> (sed terrae graviora manent), in regna Lavini
> Dardanidae venient (mitte hanc de pectore curam);

she exhorts Aeneas to fortitude and perseverance:

> tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito
> (83-97).

Aeneas asks to see his father. He may, but he must first procure the golden bough _aureus ramus_ (137), if the fates allow it to him - _si te fata vocant_ (147). The birds of Venus _geminae columbae_..._maternas adgnovit avis_ (190-193) direct Aeneas to the golden bough, which he plucks and carries to the Sibyl.

After due sacrifices, Aeneas enters the cave of the underworld. The episode of the halls of Dis reveals all dark secrets - Hell, Grief, Care, Age, Fear, Death, Sleep, Guilty Joys, War, Dreams. Monsters are seen: Centaurs, Gorgons, Harpies. The waters of Acheron are guarded by Charon; the throngs line the shore.

tendebantque manus ripae ulterioris amore
(314).

Aeneas meets and comforts the shade of Palinurus. In the Mourning Fields, Lugentes Campi (441), Aeneas encounters the shade of Dido. He reiterates his unwillingness to leave her shores,

invitus, regina, tuo de litore cessi (460),

attributes it to the jussa deum (461). Though scorned by Dido, he is amazed at her unjust doom and follows her with his tears, casu concussus iniquo...miseratur euntem (475-476).

The episode of Tartarus then occurs. Aeneas hears the screams of the tormented as the Sibyl recounts their crimes. The voice of Phlegas sounds the warning:

discite justitiam moniti et non temnere deos
(620).

As the Sibyl urges haste to complete their journey, they enter the groves of the blessed,

devenere locos laetos et amoena virecta
Fortunatorum Nemorum sedesque beatas
(639).

This episode introduces the reader to all the faithful priests, the heroic lovers of country, poets, teachers and servants of mankind. Orpheus is here; and Teucer's genus antiquum (648), Ilus, Dardanus. Finally, they come to Anchises. Affectionate greetings are exchanged. Anchises explains the unnumbered throng of spirits, awaiting purification and the waters of Lethe

before again assuming mortal bodies. From among these, Anchises points out to Aeneas:

> nunc age, Dardaniam prolem quae deinde sequatur
> gloria, qui maneant Itala de gente nepotes
> (756-758).

Romulus, son of Mars, even now marked out by his father, stands revealed:

> en hujus, nate, auspiciis illa incluta Roma
> imperium terris, animos aequabit Olympo,
> septemque una sibi muro circumdabit arces
> felix prole virum (781-784).

Aeneas is urged:

> hanc aspice gentem
> Romanosque tuos, hic Caesar et omnis Juli
> progenies (788-790);

he is asked also to behold: hic vir...Augustus Caesar...aurea condet saecula...proferet imperium (791-795).

Rome's destiny is prophesied by Anchises - not in art or astrology but in these fateful words:

> tu regere imperio populos Romane, memento
> (hae tibi erunt artes) pacisque imponere morem,
> parcere subjectis et debellare superbos (851-853).

The soul of Aeneas is fired by Anchises with the love of the future fame:

> incenditque animum famae venientis amore (889).

Anchises reveals to him bella...quae deinde gerenda (890) and the way of victory in each trial,

> quo quemque modo fugiatque feratque laborem (892).

Aeneas and the Sibyl return to the upper world. Aeneas speeds to his ships,

illo viam secat ad naves sociosque, revisit (899).

The hero is ready. The journey through the underworld has allowed pius Aeneas to see the awful penalty of them that contemn the gods and the glory of them that do the right. Unquestionably, the episode of the descent to the Underworld is connected with the episode of the funeral games for the anniversary of the death of Anchises, but the poet brilliantly carried through his general purpose by the splendid vision of Roman grandeur predicted by Anchises to his son and by the consequent moral strengthening of Aeneas as the chosen instrument in the establishment of the Roman Nation.[11] Truly, Aeneas has already been a wanderer tossed by the fates and the seas; further perils on land lie ahead; but future glory is assured if the pietas egregia (770) of Aeneas is preserved.

Throughout Book Six, we find this pietas recalled; it will be seen as a major theme in the following books as the labors of Aeneas work to their appointed end. Surely, the proem to the poem is artistically sustained in the majestic lines of Anchises prophecy. The man of remarkable goodness, insignem pietate virum (1.10), has brought his gods to Latium. The Latin race,

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11 R. Heinze, 441.

the lords of Alba, the walls of lofty Rome (1.7-8), are in the making; and the maker is this same Aeneas, *pius Aeneas* (7.5).

To the Roman *pietas* was a conscientious service to the gods and to man, it was duty to be fulfilled. The word *pius* does not suggest the hero to the English or the American mind. *Pius* almost defies translation into English.[12] The epithet depicts a character as devoted, as tender, as loyal, faithful, just, sympathetic, reverent, obedient. *Pietas* is a cardinal Roman virtue. In the whole Roman mind there are many virtues that are distinctively Roman. The one expression, the word *pietas*, embraces them all. There are virtues like *humanitas*, *gravitas*, *dignitas*, *fortitudo*, *religio*. Yet everyone of these virtues is contained in the concept which Cicero illustrated in many of his writings and expressed by the one word, *pietas*: *pietas erga amicos*, *pietas erga parentes*, *pietas erga cives*, *pietas erga deos* (*Top*. 23, 90).

This virtue characterizes Virgil's hero, who is known first and foremost as *pius Aeneas*. Aeneas was at once accepted and acknowledged by the Roman people as the embodiment of the ideal Roman. His moral qualities constituted the very essence of the Roman character. He was not only a man with a destiny determined by divine decree but he was also a virtuous man, a

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12 C. E. Bennett, *Virgil's Aeneid*. Allen and Bacon, Boston, 1904, xii.

perfect instrument in the hand of destiny.

Rome realized her destiny through the _pietas_ of her sons.[13] The episodes of the last six books of the _Aeneid_ seem to us to illustrate this great Roman virtue. It is true that the episodes of the first six books illustrate this virtue too, e.g. _pietas erga deos_ in Aeneas' scrupulous observance of the decree of Fate in the Dido episode, _jussa tamen divum exsequitur_ (4.396), _pietas erga parentes_ in the episode of the Funeral Games, _salve sancte parens_ (5.80), but in the last six books episodes are apparently introduced to illustrate _pietas_ in a more definite and particular manner, since the episodes portray this virtue not only in the hero but in other characters of the poem. Virgil teaches his hearers that Rome has a great destiny which can be realized only through the virtue of her sons. He establishes fully in the early part of the poem what Rome's destiny is, and in the latter part he tells how it is accomplished. The episodes of the descent to the Underworld emphasize the importance and necessity of _pietas_, for in them we see the awful punishments of those who contemn the gods, and the glory of those who are pious. Only the virtuous realize Rome's true greatness,

famam extendere factis,
hoc virtutus opus (10.469).

The episode of Nisus and Euryalus in the Ninth Book is a

13 cf. footnote 5.

famous episode of friendship. This story so admirably told and so stately makes the Ninth Book memorable. "The Jonathan and David of Virgil's story" meet their deaths in a night attack on the Rutulians. The incident is similar to that related of Diomede and Ulysses, who had gone to spy out the counsels of the Trojans (Iliad 10). Nisus and Euryalus resolve to surprise the Latin camp. Obtaining leave and encouragement from the elders, they attack by night and massacre the sleepers. Retiring at dawn, they are discovered due to the light of the sun reflected on Euryalus' helmet and are pursued by Latin cavalry. Euryalus is caught. Nisus in a vain attempt to save his friend is likewise slain.

Euryalus is the younger of the two friends. He has all the delightful tenderness of youth, showing on his cheeks the signs of earliest manhood,

> Euryalus forma insignis viridique iuventa
> (5.295).

He was a loving son, but his devotion to his mother could not keep him from engaging in a bold exploit with his friend, Nisus.

Virgil was interested in young men. The five characters, to whom he gives prominence, are Ascanius, Pallas, Nisus, Euryalus and Lausus. These are the ideal types of hopeful, ambitious youth, ready to encounter dangers that usually prove too great for them. It is interesting to observe that the

characters in the episode are young persons, Virgil was ever conscious to idealize!

In the episode of the foot-race in Book Five, Euryalus seems but a child. He is in tears over the possibility of losing a race. Then, he is all smiles when he wins, because of the sportsmanlike conduct of Nisus (5.335). He is imprudent. His imprudence precipitates his death and the death of his friend at the hands of the Latins.

Nisus is older than Euryalus. He is famed for his tender love for the boy, Nisus amore pio pueri (5.296). We might take particular note of the use of the adjective, pio. His love for his friend was motivated by pietas. Nisus is bold and ambitious. A plan to sally into an enemy camp springs only from an ambitious soul of a Nisus. He is impetuous and rash but noble. His unique considerateness for a friend and his self-sacrifice are outstanding.

The friendship of Euryalus and Nisus is genuine, his amor unus erat (9.182). Virgil uses this episode to inculcate the beauties of friendship. True friendship has its roots deep in pietas. This virtue alone can explain the absolute self-forgetfulness in Nisus and Euryalus. A description of their love's folly is found in these words of Nisus, spoken before Euryalus and his murderers,

tantum infelicem nimium dilexit amicum
(9.430).

Even in death the two cannot be separated,

tum super exanimum sese proiecit amicum
ibi demum morte quievit (9.445-446).

The poet pauses here in his narrative to confer immortality on these two friends by singing of them in his poem. Virgil is always the teacher and poet. This episode serves the purpose of his poem. For nothing is so fair or so good as the consciousness of a good character,

pulcherrima primum
di moresque dabunt vestri (9.253-254).

The episode is admirably interwoven into the texture and purpose of the main plot. We can say of it what the poet says of the friends: "no age shall ever steal you from remembering time."

At times, we find in a single episode pietas directed to several objects. So, here in this incident of Nisus and Euryalus, we have not only pietas erga amicos but also pietas erga parentes and pietas erga deos. There is a beautiful reference to pietas erga parentes when Julus provides for Euryalus' mother. He says that he shall lavish all the care that he would do for his own mother, were she there,

namque erit ista mihi genetrix nomenque Creusae
solum defuerit (9.297-298).

The mother of Euryalus displays pietas for her son, as she

weeps over him in death:

> hoc mihi de te,
> nate, refers? hoc sum terraque marique secuta?
> figite me, si qua est pietas, in me omnia tela
> conicite, o Rutuli, me primam absumite ferro
> (9.491-494).

Nisus' prayer to the gods to assist him in the rescue of Euryalus reveals _pietas erga deos_. There is a fine thought, expressed by Nisus in the earlier part of the episode, worth our pondering. "Is it the gods, Euryalus, who put this ardent desire in our hearts, (the two friends are planning an invasion of the enemy), or does his own fierce passion become to each man a god?" (9.184-185). This fine thought shows the possibility of mistaking impulse for an intimation of the divine will. We think this varied direction of _pietas_ is valuable. It manifests a thorough exemplification of the virtue which the poet intends to teach through his use of a particular episode.

In our study of _pietas erga amicos_ in the Nisus and Euryalus episode, we mentioned another aspect of the virtue in its relation to parents. _Pietas erga parentes_ was one of the strongest instincts in the Roman people.

> This relationship is the natural home of the Roman _pietas_. To be pious meant to be 'son,' and lovingly to fulfill the duties of the filial relationship. Love fulfilling duties, or rather the loving fulfillment of duties, this is the meaning of _pietas_.[14]

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14 Theodor Haecker, 62.

Pietas has its source in the family, in that close relationship of son to father and father to son.

In the Tenth Book of the *Aeneid* we have an episode where this *pietas erga parentes* is vividly portrayed (769-832). The incident is pathetic. The poet evidently desired to impress deeply the meaning of *pietas* in the hearts of his listeners.

Lausus is the son in question. His brave love for Mezentius, his father, is exhibited in the filial sacrifice of his life for his father's sake. Mezentius was a tyrant and he was hated by his subjects. They rose up against him and exiled him. He joined the army of the enemy and had fought against Aeneas and his own people. Mezentius and Aeneas are engaged in single combat. Mezentius is wounded, and Lausus looking on, is deeply affected for love of his father,

> ingemuit cari graviter genitoris amore,
> ut vidit, Lausus; lacrimaeque per ora volutae
> (10.788-789).

Utterly oblivious of his inability to cope with so strong and experienced a warrior as Aeneas, the youth blindly plunges into the fight in defense of his father.

Here the poet interrupts the narrative with a fine parenthesis to mark his own concern for this beautiful virtue, *pietas erga parentes*,

> si qua fidem tanto est operi latura vetustas,
> non equidem nec te, iuvenis memorande, silebo
> (10.792-793).

The story has, indeed, grown old and been recognized as a deed of heroism.

Aeneas proved too strong for the youth and in a frenzy, already enraged at being prevented from killing Mezentius, runs his sword through the boy's body, saying to him:

> quo moriture ruis maioraque viribus audes?
> fallit te incautum pietas tua (10.811-812).

Love for his father drove Lausus to his terrible but heroic death. A tender compassion wells forth in the poet's touching description of the death of Lausus.

The tragedy affects *pius Aeneas*. His conduct over the death is reverent and melancholy. He is filled with emotion and moved to pity, as he recalls his own devotion for his father,

> et, mentem patriae strinxit pietatis imago
> (10.824).

Virgil's point of view in turning to the *pietas erga parentes* of his hero is understandable. More important to Virgil than valiant deeds was the act of *pietas*.[15] Aeneas' force rested principally on this virtue. In the episode of the burning of Troy in the Second Book, the *pietas* of Aeneas first comes to light. It is not enough that Aeneas should have carried his father from the burning city on his shoulders; he

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15 R. Heinze, 33.

is pictured as willing to sacrifice wife, children, and even his own life rather than leave his father behind to his merciless enemies (2.431). The greatness of Aeneas lies not in his valor but principally in his _pietas_.

An episode in the Eighth Book (485-519) gives us a true picture of Aeneas as admirable leader of his people. The poet contrasts Aeneas' _pietas erga cives_ with Mezentius' _impietas erga cives_. Aeneas is seen recruiting troops in the territory of King Evander. Evander assures him of the assistance of the Etruscans who rose against their proud brutal king, Mezentius. Mezentius fled to the protection of Turnus and the Rutulians and his people allied themselves with Aeneas. Evander states that the people rose against their king in just resentment, _quos justus in hostem fert dolor_ (8.500).

Historical tradition tells of Mezentius' impiety toward his people. Virgil deftly works over the situation. Mezentius is contemptuous of the gods, _contemptor divum Mezentius_ (7.648). His only deities are his own right hand and spear, _dextra mihi deus et telum_ (10.773). In his fatal encounter with Aeneas, he maintains he has no fear of death, and would not refrain from attacking the gods themselves,

> nec mortem horremus nec divum parcimus ulli
> (10.880).

Mezentius had a hard nature, _asper Mezentius_ (7.648). His

affection for Lausus is the only vulnerable spot in his hard character (10-847).

Aeneas, on the other hand, is a leader of his people, devoted to them, motivated always by a _pietas erga cives_. The episode permits the poet to insist that it is _pietas_ that the people want in their government. The selfish, greedy, _impius_ leader, the dictator, cannot be successful. The people resent impiety, and like the Etruscans soon tire of it. They rise in revolt and put an end to it. The poet describes the people's fury as righteous, and correctly so.

> at fessi tandem cives
> Ergo omnia furiis surrexit Etruria justis
> (8.489, 494).

A sign in the heavens assures Evander and the Etruscans of the nobility and worth of their new leader. King Evander approves, saying, _fatis huc te poscentibus adfers_ (8.477). He is the one on whom Fate smiles, _quem numina poscunt_ (8.512), whom Heaven demands and will have. The people love and long for a leader who is at the same time a lover of the gods and a lover of his family and of his country, because government represents the power of the people concentrated on their choice, and the leader must carry out the ideals of the government. Rome's leaders, therefore, must have _pietas erga cives_.

Another episode, and a major one, illustrative of _pietas erga cives_ is the Camilla episode in Book Eleven. We are intro-

duced to Camilla the masculine heroine at the close of Book Seven, bellatrix...sed proelia virgo dura pati (7.805, 809). In Book Eleven she joins the forces of Turnus, devoted to his cause:

> Turne, sui merito si qua est fiducia forti,
> audeo et Aeneadum promitto occurrere turmae
> solaque Tyrrhenos equites ire obvia contra
> (502-504).

Camilla is the dear one of Diana, Cara mihi ante alias (536), says the goddess of her. Victory after victory comes to the warrior-maiden because of her prowess and skill in warfare. Death takes her while she is in pursuit of Chloreus, who is wearing golden Phrygian armor. Camilla recklessly rages through the ranks with a woman's passion for spoils,

> femineo praedae et spoliorum ardebat amore
> (782).

Arruns, lying in ambush hurls his spear into her body and kills her,

> hasta sub exsertam donec perlata papillam
> haesit virgineumque alte bibit acta cruorem
> (800-801).

The episode inculcates the virtue of pietas erga cives, even to women. Camilla and her troop of Amazons were loyal and devoted to their allies. They were good, representative women both in peace and in war, pacisque bonas bellique ministras (656).

Aeneas learnt early the pietas erga deos. He displays a

constant devotion and service to the gods. He does not follow his own will but the will of fate. "What Olympus must have will surely come to pass, for even before it comes it already is."[16] Aeneas had a mission and he knew it, ego poscor Olympo (6.533). Pietas erga deos, obedience and devotion to the will of the gods, was the greatest virtue of man and was the state virtue of Rome. This virtue demanded patience from the Roman. He must endure, however distant the goal, however frequent the defeat, however adverse men and fortune and the gods. The Dido episode of the Fourth Book might stand alone as a dramatic poem. Its dramatic power threatens to overpower the dignity of structure, just as the moral teaching in the Descent to the Underworld in the Sixth Book threatens to shift the scene to a class room, but when the story seems to slip from Virgil's hand he has his hero remember pietas erga deos and he then fuses all possible disparate elements into unity. Pietas erga deos demands unquestioning obedience. There is an absoluteness in its observance that may offend romantic sentiment but it conforms to the Roman ideal of right in some of its deepest foundations.[17] All that makes against the ideal of patience, obedience and rule is to Virgil impius.

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16 T. Haecker, 69.
17 G. E. Woodberry, Literary Essays. Harcourt, Brace and Howe, New York, 1920, 227.

The Dido episode and the many episodes of the councils of the gods, divine signs and portents, all are manifest revelations of the divine decree of Rome's great destiny. Some gods tried to thwart Rome's founding but other gods assisted in its founding. Nothing could withstand the divine decree. In Book Twelve Juno finally submits and agrees not to oppose Rome's great destiny. This episode of Juno's capitulation is a climactic, definitive recognition of the divine decree:

et nunc cedo quidem pugnasque exosa relinquo (818).

The Aeneid is a masterpiece of creative art. Episodes are many and the guiding thread which runs through all of them is the gradual revelation and unfolding of the divine purpose. The Aeneid once grasped in its main outline manifests an intricate design of cause and effect. We see definite and skillful management of episode on episode, designed primarily to effect continuity and compelling interest. Each episode is closely connected with the subject and points out important consequences or develops hidden causes. Each episode forms a considerable share of the intrigue of the poem. In this way, the episode becomes an integral part of the story; there is a necessary relation of cause and effect, as there must be, if the episode is of any importance to preserve the unity of the poem. Such careful motivation is absolutely essential, lest

the episode in its relation to the action stand as a separate, independent story, having no connection with what preceded or what is to follow. In the _Aeneid_ we find story, artistic grouping of episodes, and a proper unity of design. The poem is lifted into the regions of real poetry by the purpose of the poet, by his consciousness of the central feeling which inspired him of the greatness and high destiny of the nation.

Virgil used his art to awaken the nation's consciousness of long-forgotten ideals. He hoped that the shining qualities of virtue as portrayed in the various episodes of the _Aeneid_ would excite the people's admiration. And since he knew that human beings are so prone to imitate what they so deeply admire, he felt that by thus idealizing and exalting the past that he would draw inspiration for the present. Consequently, he exhausted his art in giving beauty to every line and phrase, to every incident and episode.

Virtue is not discussed at length, as we would find in some philosophic or theologic manual. Rather, it is pictured to the mind. Incident after incident display virtue in action. Soon the reader or the hearer admiringly projects himself and desires to live the life of the virtuous. Cleverly, the result in the mind of the poet is attained. The minds of his readers and hearers surrender promptly and easily. For the incidents

in the lives of others are always interesting. We read of what has happened to others and we feel that it has happened or is happening or should be happening to ourselves. The motion picture has no difficulty in getting a willing audience; the imagination is caught and the emotional response breaks down any educational reluctance. Whence the value of these pictures, as agencies of propaganda. Virgil knew human nature well. He had not the motion picture, but he did have action in the episodes. Through them, he made Roman virtue desirable. He discovered the law of human motivation in emulation. Emulation is a most powerful motivating force. And through it the heroic, as actually seen lived in the episode, shall always intrigue mankind.

"The great poetry of the world," writes Gilbert Murray, "especially the poetry of the classical traditions, is ultimately about the human soul; not its mere fortunes, but its doings."[18] Action, incidents in life, make for real poetry. "Men in action are the objects of the fine arts" (Poetics 1448).

The epic poets hardly if ever comment on the behavior of the characters of their story.[19] There is not the psychological ado of the author interpreting for the reader or hearer. The

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18 Gilbert Murray, The Classical Tradition in Poetry. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1930, 165.
19 Gilbert Murray, 191.

incidents speak for themselves and, if they are relevant and serve the purpose of the story-teller, they are most significant. The episodes in epic poetry thus give man a scale to life, a sort of perspective in which man may take a relative measure of himself and of his mortal career.

This is a revealing feature of the part episodes have in realizing the ethical and moral significance of the poem. Virgil searches deep into the invisible things of the spirit for the ideal and he displays it realistically in the episodes. "Rome had no original speculative philosophers but she did possess great practical realistic thinkers, and her greatest was a poet, Virgil."[20]

The episodes in the Aeneid have a meaning for those who read. Virgil enriched the nation's consciousness of its moral worth. An ethical significance shadows every line, "pitying and affirming according to the poet's soul."[21] Action, not thought, is the motive power of life; not what is dreamed of or reasoned or desired, but what is done is what interests; this fastens the eyes, attracts attention, stirs the heart.

The life-like impersonations of Roman ideals, which the episodes of pietas and others like them portray, command the

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20 T. Haecker, 75.
21 G. E. Woodberry, Literary Essays. 233.

reverence of all future times. These episodes produce a state of things which the human imagination, illuminated by conscience and stirred by affection, depict as an object of hope for the better things of life. They display a Roman admiration for courage, endurance, magnanimous bearing and _pietas_. Within their scope are man's activities of war and sea adventure in search of undiscovered lands. They give the fullest range to energetic representation. They sustain by their command the sympathies their interest establishes. They give to the _Aeneid_ all its persuasive power to establish a _Pax Romana_ in the mind and heart of Rome.

CONCLUSION

From all that has been said it seems clear that the episodes do not overpower the poem.

The Aeneid meets every requirement of the epic demanded by Aristotle. It possesses unity and completeness as of a living organism. The characters are noble and virtuous, meant to excite admiration and inspire imitation. The thought is deep and profound, expressed in a diction that is dignified and beautiful. The story is simple, serious, complex, and it is amplified and enriched by relevant episodes.

The splendor of the poem depends not on its episodes but far more on the great manner in which Virgil so elaborated his episodes that they brilliantly inculcate the one central idea of the poem: the great part played by Rome in the history of the world, that part divinely decreed and carried out through the virtue of her sons.

This conclusion is strengthened by certain considerations that may be urged to meet some criticisms of the poem.

Reader-interest changes. In a long poem of a different age, there is much that no longer interests people of today. What may have interested the first readers may not fully interest us, because we may miss something or much of what they knew. Horace's "Roman odes," for instance, have had less vogue in our

times than his other odes for perhaps just this reason. Consequently, a true and adequate criticism of the Aeneid can come only from the reader-interest of ancient times. Virgil had not written his poem for our times but for his times, and we suspect that many critics, and Simcox may be one of them, overlook this.

It may be granted that the episodes of the Aeneid are of very great interest in themselves, and may draw away the attention of an individual reader; but this does not prove that the episodes are not organically parts of the poem. The "play-scene" in Hamlet, for instance, might be so interesting to some reader that he would miss its purpose in the play. So also the portrayal of the difficulties of Rome's founding may prove far more interesting than the mere relation of the fact of its founding, but this does not mean that the episodes are not integral parts of the story. The episodes will always be of interest, because they are the expression of the difficulties, the questionings, the longings that the human mind and heart shall ever experience from one age to another. Seldom does great interest come from the story. Aristotle admitted that, since he himself allows and advises episodes to add grandeur to the poem and to sustain interest, but he insists the episodes must be integral. Wherefore, the fact that the episodes in themselves are interesting, does not mean that they overpower the poem.

This same principle answers the objection that the episodes (or some of them) are better known than the poem. Virgil became a smeared and stained text-book in the hands of school-boys. Episodes would probably be the thing for a school-book. Our anthologies also usually select episodes. Consequently, the episodes have become better known. But does it follow, that because few episodes become more known hundreds of years later that those episodes overpower the poem?

We took up Simcox's challenge and our study of the episodes in the Aeneid has led us to say that the episodes do not overpower the poem. Our study, moreover, has enlightened us on the place and purpose of the episode in the epic structure, and especially in the structure of the Aeneid. Now, the poem places itself with a background and a foreground. Its structural lines come out so significantly that we conclude convinced of these words of Mackail:

> It becomes for us not a mere detached work of art which has been preserved from the past, but a focus of the multiplex human movement, a lamp whose rays stream out over the whole integrated fabric of human life. In a very real sense, it is possible for us to appreciate Shakespeare more, to understand him better, than he was appreciated and understood by his Elizabethan audiences, for whom he was only one among many other popular dramatists. So likewise is it possible for us to appreciate Virgil more,

though he was for them 'the divine poet,' than he was appreciated by those who, in the newly founded Augustan Empire, and amid the memories of the Republic, spoke Latin at Rome.[1]

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1 J. W. Mackail, The Aeneid. lxxviii.

APPENDIX

LIST OF EPISODES IN THE AENEID

Book One

50-80	Cave of the Winds
81-180	The Storm
181-198	Hunting Party
223-296	Venus' consultation with Jupiter over the Providence of Aeneas
297-440	Venus' protection of Aeneas
723-756	Banquet in the halls of Dido

Book Two The Episode of the Fall of Troy

30-56	Wooden Horse of Troy
57-198	Tale of the treachery of Sinon
199-227	Tragic Fate of Laocoon
268-298	Vision of Hector
588-620	Apparition of Venus
680-702	Portent of the tongue of flame
771-791	Ghost of Creusa

Book Three Tale of the Wanderings of Aeneas

209-266	Episode of the Harpies
294-463	Vision of Helenus
588-684	Incidents in the land of the Cyclops

Book Four Dido Episode

90-128	Juno and Venus exchange plans
173-196	_Fama_ at work
198-298	Mission of Mercury

Book Five Episode of the Funeral Games

8-26	Storm at sea
85-103	Apparition of serpent
114-285	Boat race
286-361	Foot race
362-484	Boxing match
485-544	Archery match
604-669	Burning of the ships by Trojan women
724-740	Apparition of shade of Anchises

779-826 Consultation of Venus with Neptune
833-871 Palinurus episode

Book Six — Story of the Descent to the Underworld

14-155 Cumean Sibyl
162-236 Episode of Misenus
268-889 Descent into Dis
- 268-294 Halls of Dis
- 295-383 Shades of unburied dead
- 384-425 Charon and the Golden Bough; Cerberus
- 426-547 Mourning Fields
- 548-624 Tartarus
- 637-889 Groves of the blessed

Book Seven

81-100 Oracle of Faunus
286-474 Allecto Episode
475-505 Stag hunt: proximate cause of conflict
641-817 Pageant of gathering armies

Book Eight

36-83 Apparition of the Tiber god
184-305 Story of Cacus and Hercules
370-453; 522-540 Venus at Vulcan's forge; Shield of Aeneas sent from heaven
560-583 Parting of Pallas and Evander

Book Nine

71-122 An attempt of burning the Trojan ships which are changed into nymphs
176-475 Nisus and Euryalus episode
590-671 Ascanius in battle
672-754 Pandarus and Bitias

Book Ten

1-117 Council of the gods
439-509 Killing of Pallas
575-605 The brothers Lucagus and Liger
606-908 Episodes of the single combats of Aeneas, Mezentius, Lausus

Book Eleven

23-138	Funeral rites
139-181	Burial of Pallas
213-497	Council of Italian princes
498-867	Camilla episode

Book Twelve

134-480	Juturna's assistance to Turnus at bidding of Juno
593-611	Suicide of Amata
623-649	More of Juturna's assistance to Turnus
791-886	Juno's submission to the divine decree of Rome's founding
887-952	Death of Turnus by the hand of Aeneas

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by the Reverend James E. Busch, C.P. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Classical Languages.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

January 22, 1946
Date

James J. Mertz, S.J.
Signature of Adviser