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A Study of Virgil's Sympathy for Human Suffering in the Aeneid

J. Paul O'Brien
Loyola University Chicago

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A STUDY OF VIRGIL'S SYMPATHY FOR
HUMAN SUFFERING IN THE AENEID

by

J. Paul O'Brien, S.J.

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LIFE

J. Paul O’Brien, S.J., was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on January 21, 1937. He attended St. Teresa Grammar School in Cincinnati, 1943-1951. Subsequently he studied at St. Xavier High School, Cincinnati, 1951-1955, and was graduated in June of 1955.

He entered the Milford Novitiate of the Society of Jesus, Milford, Ohio, in August of 1955. While at Milford, from 1955-1959, he pursued undergraduate courses from Xavier University of Cincinnati. He was transferred to West Baden College, West Baden Springs, Indiana, in 1959. While there he completed undergraduate work and received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Loyola University, Chicago, in June of 1960. During his stay at West Baden College, from 1959-1962, he undertook further graduate courses in philosophy and classical languages. He received the degree of Licentiate in Philosophy from West Baden College in June of 1962.

He is presently teaching at Brebeuf Preparatory School, in Indianapolis, Indiana.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The poetic achievements of "Rome's noblest voice," Publius Virgilius Maro, have been praised for perhaps nothing so much as for their all-pervading human sympathy. Deeper than any technical excellence he achieved in his famous style lay Virgil's central charm: his intense pity and human tenderness. This human tenderness took many forms in his *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid*, but it is most clearly seen in his penetrating insight into human suffering and his deeply personal attitude toward it.

Virgil's great sympathy and compassion for all living things, and most especially for suffering humanity, has never been questioned. It is, indeed, considered his most characteristic trait. Nearly every Virgilian scholar who has written a general study of Virgil comments on his tender sympathy.

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addition, many shorter analyses of selected passages of the poet’s writings have treated various facets of this sympathy. 1 Therefore, it is not our purpose in this thesis to establish the fact of Virgil’s sympathy for human suffering.

Rather, it is our intention to arrive at a clearer perception of Virgil’s sympathetic attitude toward suffering: to see how it was formed in the man and how it found expression in his works. We shall do this by studying briefly the personal life of the poet and the times in which he lived. In this way we can see their influence on the formation of Virgil’s attitude. In the main, however, it will be our task to make a close analysis of the expression of the poet’s sympathy for suffering as found in his works, particularly in his treatment of the human characters and situations in the Aeneid. By linking the biographical and historical influences to a relatively comprehensive investigation of the textual evidence of Virgil’s sympathy for human suffering, we hope to gain a clearer understanding of the poet’s personality. To our knowledge an extensive study of the type we are attempting has not been made before. 5


5 Scholars such as Hahn and Feder (cf. footnote 1) have studied some of the characters in the Aeneid in some of the tragic situations which occur in the epic. But no one study has been made up to now of all tragic characters and events. Moreover, most scholars have treated more directly of concomitant issues such as Virgil’s hatred of war and his use of the elements of tragedy, rather than linking these issues to his instinctual human pity. It is to this latter task that we address ourselves in this thesis.
We have a correlative purpose in our present investigation: to correct the less accurate interpretation of those who see Virgil as a predominantly melancholy poet lacking depth in his portrayal of human life. Such an interpretation is that of no less a critic than Mark Van Doren.  

The question of Virgilian melancholy is intimately connected with the poet's human sympathy. To trace the outlines of Virgil's pity for suffering mankind, as we mean to do, is to discover something vital about his personality. Since melancholy is seen by some to be an outstanding feature of the Virgilian personality, it will be of no little importance to have a clear knowledge of the true nature of the poet's spirit of melancholy.

The term "melancholy," when applied to persons, ordinarily connotes preoccupation with sadness and suggests dejection, dismal feeling, gloominess, and general lack of spirit. It further indicates, in this usage, a trait of sentimentality and weakness. It is our contention that none of these attributes aptly describe Virgil or his poetic works; we hope to justify this contention in our thesis.

Van Doren clearly attaches the above connotation to Virgil's melancholy. The critic begins his essay on the Roman poet's Aeneid with a reference to "Virgil's melancholy epic" in which the poet appears "to hear every sigh, every modulation in each sad voice that speaks." Moreover, he sprinkles the essay

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8 Van Doren, p. 86.
with phrases describing Virgil as "less rather than more real";9 "soft and sad";10 "beautiful and vague";11 rather than "masculine";12 "passive...mournful and musical";13 "the poet of nocturnal tears, at home with weariness and most true when most troubled."14 Van Doren's final evaluation of the poet's melancholic strain is expressed in his comment on the Aeneid as "the saddest of recorded poems," and his following query: "Shall Virgil be put down as a minor genius failing at a major task?"15

In general, Van Doren's criticism on this and other points is "more unsympathetic than understanding."16 The author himself has said in his preface that his book has three "heroes" (those in whom he finds no fault), sovereign among whom is Homer, and many "relative failures," among whom is Virgil.17 He spends two long chapters extolling the merits of the Greek epic poet. This is, perhaps, as it should be. But he proceeds to use Homer as the ultimate criterion

9Ibid., 96.
10Ibid.
11Ibid., 99.
12Ibid., 96, 102. Van Doren considers Virgil's beauty in place of masculinity in his works to be "a sure sign of weakness" (p. 102).
13Ibid., 101.
14Ibid., 108
15Ibid., 107.
17Van Doren, p. xii.
when he treats of Virgil, almost always putting the Roman poet in a bad light.  

Because we cannot admit that Van Doren has formed his judgment "in the most generous perspective available," we must deny its validity. Because the noted commentator's understanding of the poet's personality leaves out one of the latter's most characteristic traits, his sympathy for suffering humanity, we cannot accept his conclusion that Virgil has produced only a "melancholy epic." It is Van Doren's almost exclusive concern to compare Virgil with Homer (a task that is most delicate and demands much circumspection). Perhaps this is the reason for his failure to note Virgil's outstanding sympathy. There is not one reference anywhere in Van Doren's treatment to this specific aspect of the poet's personality.

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18 E.g.: "Virgil was bound to choose a master whom he could imitate, and since his taste was right he chose Homer. For Homer then as now was greatest. With his help, and in his name, Virgil could reinforce his purpose: thread his theme with strength and wash it over with importance. If Homer's presence in the shadows only brings out Virgil's difference, throwing him and his subject into pathetic relief, it is fair to say that Virgil knows the difference, too, and even seeks to accentuate it. Nobody could be more aware than he that the essence of the master is unavailable" (p. 88). Again he states: "Homer is of the greatest because he is even more interesting than prose would be; and that is very interesting, as any reader knows. Virgil is not of the greatest because he is just a little under prose in the power he wields. He avoids prose as something that would hurt his poetry if it came too close; and it would, because his poetry could not stand the comparison" (p. 101).

19 Van Doren, p. xiii.

20 Cf. C. M. Bowra, From Virgil to Milton (London, 1945), pp. 3-6. Prescott, in The Development of Virgil's Art, pp. 225-226, also emphasizes that in comparing the Homeric and Virgilian epics: "It is not a matter of better or worse, but only of difference. The poems must be valued with reference to the time of composition and to the environing conditions which produced them." Van Doren hardly seems to have kept this criterion in mind in his own comparison of Virgil and Homer.
In point of fact, if we want to attribute the quality of melancholy to Virgil, we must first realize that there is another usage of this term, one slightly different from that mentioned above. This more positive element in the term "melancholy" contains the note of pensiveness, thoughtfulness, meditativeness. Stressing the more positive sense, Sellar speaks of Virgil's melancholy as "probably also in a great measure the result of temperament; ... a mood habitual to one who meditated much inwardly on the misery of the world, who was moved by compassion for all sights of sorrow or suffering ... ."22

As Sellar is pointing out here, it was not precisely that the poet was treating of sad themes for their own sake, but rather that he had experienced and reflected upon the misery of mankind, and was moved by compassion at the sight of others' suffering. It is Virgil's compassion, then, which explains why his works are filled with scenes of sorrow. Compassion is the essential ingredient of Virgil's personality which Van Doren fails to take into consideration.

Duff echoes Sellar's sentiments perfectly in his comment:

Virgil's tender melancholy is merged in his profound reflections. He both thought and felt deeply on life. The world viewed strictly from a physical standpoint had always been for him an attraction and a riddle ... . The same mind which struggled under the burden of all this unintelligible world was most sensitively responsive to the suffering of human beings:

22 Sellar, p. 277.
Tears haunt the world; man's fortunes touch man's heart (Aeneid 1.462).

This tenderness is one secret of Virgil's perennial power . . . . His breadth of sympathy gives to him an aspect of modernity. Yet it simply means that he is universal . . . he expressed depths of feeling common to mankind, and while touching chords to which all hearts can respond, he gains his triumph in art by perfection of utterance.

Mackail is of the opinion that ingrained in all Virgil's works is "his own profound tenderness, his intense sympathy with all life. . . . and deepest of all, his majestic sadness, his sense of the wonder and mystery of the world." Any sadness that we find in Virgil is always intimately linked with his sympathy.

Theodor Haecker is perhaps most perceptive of all in his understanding of Virgil's melancholic spirit. His judgment can be seen in his comment on the famous phrase which seems to typify so well the whole spirit of the Aeneid:

sunt lacrimae rerum:

. . . . this was said by a Roman but a few years before the birth of Christ. He was not an old man that he should say it, nor is it a sentimental saying, but an ontological. Neither are they the words of an effeminate or faint-hearted spirit, for Virgil was masculine and brave; they are the language of an incorruptible spirit stating the truth about the structure and elements of existence. An ancient Roman may be accused of many things but certainly not of sentimentality. Although Virgil was surely the most humane, the most sensitive, the gentlest, the most vulnerable, the shyest spirit of all antiquity, he was not sentimental.

This seems to be a more realistic appraisal than any evaluation which considers Virgil weak and effeminate.


24Virgil and His Meaning to the World of Today, p. 65.

25Virgil, Father of the West, p. 97 (emphasis added).
Thus it seems equally reasonable, in referring to Virgil or his works as melancholy, to remember what is included in such an appellation. Probably the most important element, as we have noted, is the poet's reflection upon and sympathetic attitude toward the sufferings of mankind. In this light Keith's observations can be more readily understood:

Melancholy seems to be almost an essential element of enduring greatness. It is found in all the world's greatest writers. . . . And so with the foremost Latin poet, the best representative of what was worthy at Rome, melancholy is generally regarded as an outstanding characteristic. Tennyson epitomizes the general feeling when he speaks of Vergil as "majestic in his sadness at the doubtful doom of human kind." Remove this quality from his poetry and the heart of Vergil is lost. It is no accidental trait but is deep and abiding in the very nature of the poet and the man, and the emphasis is as much upon the man as upon the poet. If Vergil had not been so human, his poetry would have been less melancholy.26

The scholars and critics we have quoted, and many others besides, recognize that it is human to be concerned about suffering, one's own as well as that of others. Human suffering is a reality which cannot be escaped. That a tender feeling of pity for human suffering should be manifest in Virgil's works, then, is not to his discredit, but is rather a sign of his greatness. His spirit of melancholy, if such it must be called, is indicative neither of an essential weakness in his personality nor in the quality of his work.

Rather, as competent scholars have judged, and as we hope to illustrate throughout this thesis, Virgil's spirit of melancholy manifests a deep insight into human suffering and a sincere compassion for such suffering. We can only con-

26 A. L. Keith, "Melancholy in Vergil," Open Court, XXXIX (1925), 715 (emphasis added).
clude that Virgil's sympathetic nature was an integrating and ennobling feature of his personality.

A brief look at Virgil's personal life and the historical period in which he lived and penned his works should be helpful in understanding the poet's personality. Actually there is very little biographical information concerning the poet. All the certain knowledge about his life must be drawn from the poet's own statements, from a few casual remarks by literary figures of his times, from the few short Vitae Virgiliana written in the fourth century and after, and from late scholia. The "Lives" and scholia are not only late in date, but also far from reliable.

With the above reservations in mind, we can accept, with Tenney Frank, the following pertinent information, as culled from the combined sources. Publius Virgilius Maro was born on October 15, 70 B.C., at Andes, near Mantua, located in Cisalpine Gaul. His father belonged to the peasantry; thus the young Virgil was brought up in the country, close to the nature that he grew to love and to reverence. His early education was received at Cremona and at Milan. For higher training Virgil went to Rome, where philosophy, rhetoric, medicine, and mathematics engaged his attention.

He spent his early manhood principally in study, residing on his northern farm until the days of confiscation in 81 B.C. At this time it is probable that he, along with many others, lost his property when Antony's soldiers had

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27 T. Frank, "What Do We Know About Vergil?" CJ, XXIV (October 1930), 3. For a discussion of the background and relative merits of these lives of Virgil, from Suetonius to Donatus, Servius, and Jerome, see pp. 4-8 of this same article, or Frank's book, Vergil: A Biography (Oxford, 1922), pp. v-vi.
to be satisfied by land allotments. Even if Virgil did not personally experience this loss, there is no doubt that the sufferings of his fellow citizens during the military evictions caused him deep anguish. Afterwards Virgil lived chiefly in the South, sometimes in Rome, but mostly at Naples, where he composed the **Georgics**.

He was of a very shy and retiring nature, much preferring the quiet and solitude of life in the country to the pomp and circumstance amid noise and confusion in the city. He never married, and his reputation for a spotlessly pure character won him the epithet of "Parthenias" from the people of Naples.

In appearance Virgil was tall and dark, retaining always the looks of a farmer. His poor health, however, often turned his complexion sallow. Physical suffering was certainly not unknown to him in his all too brief life. And it was exposure to excessive heat that induced an illness which claimed his life at Brundisium in 19 B.C.

The **Aeneid**, over which Virgil had labored so assiduously for the last ten years of his life, was left unfinished at his death. He had intended to devote several more years to its revision. Partly for this reason his deathbed wish was that the manuscript of the **Aeneid** be burned. Fortunately, his wiser friends saved it for posterity.

To fill out the picture somewhat, Frank draws many valid inferences regarding Virgil from the poet's works. He says:

They leave no doubt whatever that he was unusually well-read in Homer, Greek tragedy, Greek philosophy, in Hellenistic poets like Apollonius and Theocritus, in Roman writers from Naevius and Ennius down to Catullus and Lucretius of his own youth, that he read deeply in Roman history, that he had seen much of Italy and had observed with understanding, that he was sensitive to beauty in sound, form, and color, and to all the
charms of Italy's quiet loveliness, that he had a competence that gave him leisure to enjoy all these things as well as to live the life of a poet, and that he had the wisdom to appreciate the excellence of the Augustan regime.28

So far we have taken note of the facts and probabilities concerning Virgil's personal life and his familiarity with the history and literature of his own and previous generations. These have a definite influence upon all of his poetic works. More than anything else, however, it was the terrifying reality and presence of war which affected Virgil so as to color the whole tenor of his work.

Between 133 B.C. and 31 B.C. there were no less than twelve civil wars in Italy. The last major conflict, the battle of Actium in 31 B.C., had such an effect on Virgil that Haecker asserts that "had it not been for Actium, the Aeneid would not have been written."29 Furthermore, Cowles testifies that "the terrifying panorama of brother arrayed against brother, of one battle-ground after another soaked with Roman blood and piled high with Roman corpses," helps to account for "that 'majestic sadness' in the poet which Tennyson was not the first nor the last to notice."30 Cowles goes on:

The confiscations after Phillipi rudely ejected him from his bucolic setting, and his subsequently successful mission to Rome, resulting in the restoration of his home, must have brought his sensitive soul into immediate and sympathetic contact with the inevitable psychology of war-racked people, dumbly hungering for peace, a hunger which was destined not to be satisfied for the next ten weary years, while Octavian was gradually eliminating Antony from the political horizon. That a deep dislike for

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28 "What Do We Know About Vergil?" pp. 3-4.
29 Haecker, p. 27.
30 Cowles, "Vergil's Hatred of War," p. 357.
the monster of war should have settled itself into Vergil's consciousness during those early years would be a logical supposition, had we no evidence to support it.\textsuperscript{31}

Cowles also emphasizes that "human suffering was unquestionably one of the reasons for Vergil's hatred of war."\textsuperscript{32} Virgil fully realized the tremendous toll of human lives, the almost unfathomable depth of human suffering that is the infamous product of any war. To him war was something born in hell.\textsuperscript{33}

Whether or not he was present at Pharsalus as a soldier in Caesar's army,\textsuperscript{34} Vergil certainly viewed war from the standpoint of a suffering civilian, and he saw it as a chaos of horror and muddle. While Virgil may not have been the war correspondent that Caesar proved himself to be, he was nevertheless the poet of "those aspects of war which mean little to the hero or to the general but are well known to the common man."\textsuperscript{35}

In taking stock of Virgil's personal life and background, it seems plain that there were a number of potent influences on the formation of his sympathetic attitude toward suffering. First of all, the poet's shy and retiring

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., 358. The remainder of Cowles' article, pp. 358-374, treats of the textual evidence substantiating his thesis that Virgil possessed a deep and abiding hatred of war. See also G. E. Duckworth, "Vergil and War in the Aeneid," pp. 104-107.

\textsuperscript{32}"Vergil's Hatred of War," p. 370.

\textsuperscript{33}Cf. C. N. Smiley, "Vergil: His Philosophic Background and His Relation to Christianity," CJ, XXVI (June 1931), 673. Smiley points out that of the twelve different adjectives Virgil uses to describe war, "not one is complimentary or has any glamour to touch the imagination. War is mortiferum, horridum, infandum, nefandum, importunum, superbum, dirum, durum, saevum, triste, crulei, and lacrimabile." Cf. also Cowles, "Vergil's Hatred of War," p. 373.

\textsuperscript{34}Tenney Frank supposes this in his biography, pp. 22-25, and Cowles thinks it possible, "Vergil's Hatred of War," p. 357.

\textsuperscript{35}Bowra, From Virgil to Milton, p. 40.
personality, which led him to seek solitude away from the hubbub and superficiality of city-life, certainly must have lent itself to much reflective meditation upon the ordinary distresses of human life, as well as upon the more violent sufferings of war. There is ample testimony, too, to Virgil's great hatred of the wars which were so much a part of his age. It is no wonder that a man of his sensitivities, who had experienced at close hand all the horrors of these cruel civil conflicts, should be so sympathetic toward the great human suffering that was their inevitable consequence.

Another influence on Virgil was the fact that he had lived a good part of his life in the country, close to nature. His great love for the fields, the forests, the flowers, the flocks of animals, and the rustic farmer folk is amply attested in his most perfect work, the Georgics. His very familiarity with the creatures of farm and country helped to instill in Virgil a genuine sympathy, not only for the hardships that are often the lot of the farmer, but also for the sufferings of animals. He was deeply concerned about the latter, from plague-stricken sheep and oxen down to the tiniest indigent ant. It has often been noted that Virgil looked upon animals almost as human beings and therefore "humanized" their suffering in his poetry.

These, then, are some of the influences which combined to produce in Virgil that tender human sympathy which can be found so much in evidence in his writings. By keeping them in mind as we study his works in detail, we hope to gain a fuller appreciation of the personality of the poet. This is

37 Cf. Knight, p. 370.
Though our principal concern in this thesis, as we have indicated, is an analysis of the human characters and situations in the Aeneid, it may be worthwhile to pause for a moment to consider the development of Virgil’s sympathetic attitude in his earlier work, the Georgics. Here there are a number of striking instances of the poet’s characteristic concern for suffering.

Virgil has a vivid description of a vanquished bull, beaten in a struggle with another bull over the favor of his loved one:

nec mos bellantis una stabulare, sed alter victus abit longeque ignotis exsulat oris. multa gemens ignominiam plagasque superbi victoris, tum quos amisit inultus amores, et stabula aspectans regnis excessit avitis: ergo omni cura viris exercet et inter dura iacet pernix instrato saxa cubili frondibus hirsutis et carice pastus acuta, et temptat sese atque irasci in cornua discit arboris obnixus trunco, ventosque lacesit ictibus, et sparsa ad pugnam proludit harena. post ubi collectum robur viresque reflectae, signa movet praecesperque oblitum furtur in hostem: fluctus uti medio coepit cum alnescere ponto, longius ex altoque simum trahit, utque volutus ad terras immane sonat per saxa neque ipso monte minor procumbit, at ina exaequat unda verticibus nigramque alte subjectat harenam.

(Georgics III.224-241)

This is one of the many places in the Georgics where Virgil has "humanized" the animal, attributing to him man-like feelings and emotions. The bull...
first withdraws in shame from the battleground, lamenting the loss of his pride, and more, the loss of his loved one. He sulks for a while, then starts to condition himself in order to avenge his defeat and win back the favor of his beloved. Finally, he is ready for the fight and surges into battle against the foe, rising up like some monstrous roaring wave. The epic simile here emphasizes even more the man-like qualities of the bull. Note, too, that Virgil is here showing concern for a vanquished bull. We shall often have occasion to point out in the Aeneid Virgil's great sympathy for the "underdog."

A second episode worthy of note is that of the description of the pestilence, covering the last 127 lines of the third book (640-566). Especially significant here is Virgil's account of the plague-stricken ox falling in his tracks:

```
ece autem duro fumans sub vomere taurus
concidit et mixtum spumis vomit ore cruorem
extremasque ciet genitus, it tristis arator
maerentem abiungens fraterna morte iuvencum,
atque opere in medio defixa reliquit aratra.
non umbrae alorum nemorum, non mollia possunt
prata movere animam, non qui per saxa volutus
purior electro campum petit amnis; at ima
solvuntur latera, atque oculos stupor urget inertis
ad terramque fluit devexo pondere cervix.
quid labor aut benefacta iuvant? quid vomere terras
invertere gravis? atque non Massica Bacchi
munera, non illis epulae nocuerae repostae:
frondibus et victu pascuntur simplices herbae,
pocula sunt fontes liquidi atque exercita cursu
flumina, nec somnos abrumpit cura salubris.
(Georgius III.315-330)
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Scarcely could Virgil have painted this picture with more pathetic hues. Note the *tristis arator*, affected in an almost personal way by the death of his work-animal; then, the other ox, *maerentem fraterna morte iuvencum*. The succeeding beautiful lines only intensify Virgil's keen insight into the pathos of death. Though he speaks gently here of the dead ox and stresses almost the beauty of his death, promising *nec somnos abruquit cura salubris*, still one can sense Virgil's intense pity here.

The final and most tragic scene in the *Georgics* is the celebrated Aristaeus episode, in which Virgil tells the touching story of Orpheus and Eurydice (IV.454-527). Orpheus is in bitter anguish over the death of his wife Eurydice, and goes to the Underworld to try to win her back. He is permitted by Proserpine to regain his loved one, on the condition that he lead her out of the Underworld without looking back at her. Pathetically, just on the very brink of daylight, Orpheus forgets and looks back, only to lose Eurydice again, and this time forever. Virgil describes the heartsick Orpheus:

`quid faceret? quo se rapta vis coniuge ferret?`  
`quo fletu manis, quae numina voce moveret?`  
`illa quidem Stygia nabet iam frigida cumba.`  
`septem illum toto perhibet ex ordine mensis`  
`rupe sub aeria deserti ad Strymonis undam`  
`flesse sibi, et gelidis haec evolvisse sub astra`  
`mulcentem tigris et agitata carmine quercus;`  
`qualis populea maerens philomela sub umbra`  
`amissos queritur fetus, quos durus arator`  
`observans nido impluminem detraxit; at illa`  
`flet noctem, ramoque sedens miserabile carmen`  
`integrat, et maestis late loca questibus implet.`  
`nulla Venus, non ulli animum flexeres hymenaei:`  
`solus Hyperboreas glacies Tanaimque nivalem`

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40 This is one reason why it is justly said of Virgil by Bellesort, p. 275: "Chez lui, l'âme et l'art ne se séparent pas."
arvaque Riphaeis numquam viduata pruinis
lustrabat, raptam Eurydicen atque inrita ditis
donum querens; spretaec Ciconum quo munere matres
inter sacra dam nocturnique orgia Bacchi
discerptum latos invenem sparsere per agros.
tum quoque marmorea caput a servio resulsum
gurgite cum medio portans Geagrius Hebrus
volveret, Eurydicen vox ipsa et frigida lingua
a miseram Eurydicien anima fugiente vocabat;
Eurydicen toto referebant fieri

(Georgics IV.504-527)

The beautiful simile of the grieving nightingale and the indescribably
pathetic portrayal of the severed head of Orpheus, floating down the river,
show most powerfully the depth of Virgilian pity in the Georgics.

Prescott discusses the very passages we have considered here, and makes
the following observations: "The concern with human suffering in the episode
of Aristaeus is paralleled throughout the Georgics by constant sympathy with
the pathetic experiences of animals. The vanquished bull in the passage quoted
above and the elaborate account of the pestilence at the end of the third book
are typical examples of Virgil’s quick sensitiveness to suffering. In spite of
the prosy material, the Georgics is a poem of feeling as well as of action.
And it is the strength of the poet’s own feeling that gives it poetic value.”

At this point we must make it clear that, in treating of Virgil’s symp-
pathy for human suffering, we shall not be concerned with the question of his
motivation in his works, especially in the Aeneid, nor with the question of his
originality. We feel that Virgil’s sympathetic attitude was something in-
trinsinc to his personality, and therefore it flowed forth naturally through the

medium of his verses. Though his purpose in the Aeneid, for instance, may well have been to glorify the Roman Emperor and Empire (as is usually supposed),\(^4\) his human sympathy reached far beyond such boundaries as these.\(^5\) Whether some of the content of Virgil's poetry was borrowed or not, all of it is imbued with his unique spirit of pensive melancholy and infinite pity.

As we pursue the considerations in the remaining chapters we shall attempt to analyze carefully the expressions of Virgil's sympathy for human suffering as seen in his portrayal of the more important characters and situations in the Aeneid. In order to give some unity to our endeavor, we shall concentrate upon the two dominant themes of Virgilian pity: his sympathy for the suffering victims of war, and his sympathy for the victims of what we might call the tragic side of human love. The outstanding examples of the latter are, of course, Aeneas and Dido. The other instances of tragic love-relationships (Turnus and Lavinia, Euryalus and his mother, Evander and Pallas, and Mesentius and Lausus) are also intimately connected with the more personal sufferings endured during war-time.

We shall devote a chapter to the epic hero, Aeneas, insofar as he is a tragic figure, exclusive of his relationship with Dido. In a second chapter, we shall study the personal tragedy of Dido, especially her pathetic association with Aeneas. In succeeding chapters we shall discuss the tragic figures

\(^{4}\) One eloquent dissenter to the common opinion is F. Sforza, who claims in his article, "The Problem of Virgil," CR, XLIX (July 1935), 97-106, that Virgil's purpose was not imperialistic, but anti-imperialistic.

\(^{5}\) We shall provide evidence of this later in our textual study.
of the young men in the *Aeneid* (Turnus, Nisus and Euryalus, Pallas, Lausus, and Marcellus), then the tragic figures of the older men (including Anchises, Priam, Latinus, Evander, and Mezentius), and finally the tragic women figures (including Creusa, Andromache, Anna, Amata, Lavinia, Camilla, Juturna, and the mother of Euryalus).

Having completed our study, we shall give a brief retrospect of the salient features of our work. Then, too, we should be in a better position to evaluate our insight into the unique personality of Virgil.
CHAPTER II

AENEAS: TRAGIC FIGURE

Aeneas holds the center of the stage for the greater part of Virgil's epic. As the central personal delineation in the poem, the character of Aeneas has been the subject of controversy as long as there have been readers of Virgil. This criticism has run the gamut from finding in Aeneas a shadowy, insubstantial, puppet figure,1 to considering him as the ideally human and universal man.2 Those who tend toward the latter interpretation seem (to this writer, at least), to be more accurate, since they have made their judgments with the realization that Virgil has created in Aeneas a new and unique type of hero, the Roman epic hero.3

That Virgil's treatment of Aeneas is not the clearest character portrayal in his works may well be true. It may well be that Virgil was not as completely successful in delineating all the features of his epic hero, as Homer had been before him, and as others after him may have been. Moreover, it is quite true that Virgil has depicted Aeneas as a man of destiny, whose struggles are


representative of the foundation of the Roman Empire. But all this is not to say that Virgil has not made Aeneas a human being, with characteristically human feelings and emotions, virtues and faults.4

It is precisely because Aeneas is so human that he is the object of the human sympathy of his creator. More than that, Aeneas is also Virgil's chief spokesman of sympathy throughout the Aeneid.5 Duff has said that, "It is Virgil's own heart that gives to Aeneas his allied piety and pity."6 In this he is echoing Sainte-Beuve who had remarked: "Virgile, comme son héros, a la piété et la pitié, parfois une teinte de tristesse, de mélancholie presque."7 Aeneas the family man, Aeneas the leader, Aeneas the warrior is ever Aeneas the humane and gentle sympathizer.

In this chapter, then, we shall study the character of Aeneas in those instances in which Virgil has made him a tragic figure. We shall also consider those passages in which the poet has emphasized the hero's compassionate spirit.8 By analyzing the reactions of Aeneas to his own and others' tragic experiences, one can begin to gain an insight into the sympathetic heart of

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5 Cf. L. Feder, "Vergil's Tragic Theme," CJ, XLIX (February 1954), 198.


8 Just in passing it is interesting to note that G. Howe, in his article, "The Development of the Character of Aeneas," CJ, XXII (December 1930), 190, considers this trait of tenderness in Aeneas to be one of the signs of the growth and deepening of his character as the story develops.
Virgil. Of Aeneas' tragic love-relationship with Dido we shall speak in a separate chapter.

In the opening scene in Book I of the Aeneid, Aeneas and his fellow Trojans are wandering as refugees from their homeland (1-2). They are bandied about by the will of the gods (3-4). They have suffered horribly in war (5), and now for many years they have been drifting over the seas, completely worn out by the winds and the storms and the lashings of the waves (31-32). Weary and sore, almost without hope, they push on through it all.

Virgil has painted here a picture not unfamiliar to the modern world. Countless European and Asian refugees of both World Wars have experienced the same in their own lives. We, too, who have been more fortunate, have witnessed such tragedies via newspaper photos, films, radio and TV reports. We are all too well-acquainted with the long lines of half-dead humans, haggard, dispirited, lonely; victims of wars they little understood. That this is something of what Virgil saw is evident from his portrayal of the flight of Aeneas and the Trojans. No wonder, then, that to highlight the pathos of the situation, Virgil has Aeneas exclaim:

... 'o terque quaterque beati,
quis ante ora patrum Troiae sub moenibus altis
contigit oppetere! o Danaum fortissime gentis
Tydide! mene Iliacis occubere campis
non potuisse tuaque animam hanc effundere dextra,
saevus ubi Aeacidae telo iacet Hector, ubi ingens
Sarpedon, ubi tot Simois correpta sub undis
scuta virum galesaque et fortia corpora volvit!'
(I.94-101)

Bitter and bloody though death would have been at the fall of Troy, nevertheless it would have been better than endless, painful, frustrating wandering
over the face of the earth. 9 Aeneas tries to comfort his men:

'O socii (neque enim ignari sumus ante malorum),
\[\text{o passi graviora}, \text{dabit deus his quoque finem.}\]
\[\text{vos et Scyllaeam rabiem penitusque sonantis}\]
\[\text{accestis scopulos}, \text{vos et Cyclopa saxa}\]
\[\text{experti; revocate animos maestumque timorem}\]
\[\text{mittite; forsan et haec olim memínisse iuvabit.}\]
\[\text{per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum}\]
\[\text{tendimus in Latium, sedes ubi fata quietas}\]
\[\text{ostendunt; illic fas regna resurgere Troiae.}\]
\[\text{durate, et vosmet rebus servate secundis.}'\]
\[\text{I.198-207}\]

But his heart is not in it, and his real feelings belie his words of confidence:

Talia voce refert curisque ingentibus aeger
\[\text{spem vultu simulat, premit altum corde dolorem.}\]
\[\text{I.208-209}\]

Poignant passages such as these capture perfectly the feelings of downtrodden refugees. They are one indication of the depth of Virgil's understanding of the inner nature of human suffering. Aeneas is deeply concerned for the sufferings of his comrades, and at the same time unable to fathom the riddle of his own suffering. As Cartault has commented: "Le grand mérite d'Enée en prodiguant ces encouragements melancholiques, mais au fond viriles, c'est qu'il n'est pas rassuré lui-même."

A little later in Book I, when Aeneas is conversing with his goddess mother, Venus, in the guise of a young huntress, he seeks her aid and makes himself known to her in lines that are justly famous for their significance:

9 Cowles expresses the same sentiment in his "The Epic Question in Vergil," CJ, XXXVI (December 1940), 135-136.

sum pius Aeneas, raptos qui ex hoste penatis
classa veho mecum, fana super aesthera notus.
(I. 378-379)

W. B. Anderson, in commenting on this passage, points out that sum pius Aeneas is "not a piece of smug complacency," but "a poignant cry wrung from a tortured heart." The epithet pius itself has been the subject of much discussion, but for our purposes here it is well to keep in mind R. G. Austin's comment on its parallel occurrence in Book IV, line 393: "Pius is a complex word, a sensitive symbol of adherence to a personal ideal of devotion, which may nevertheless bring pain and sorrow... the epithet is eloquent of struggle and bewilderment and submission."12

We shall note other occasions where Virgil has succeeded masterfully in putting all the pathos of a situation into a single haunting word. But it is especially interesting to note in this particular case, where the epithet pius is so identified with the epic hero, that Virgil seems to want to emphasize his sympathy for him.

As the story progresses, Aeneas and his faithful companion, Achates, are scouting around the area of Carthage, the domain of Dido, when they come upon her temple to Juno. Here Aeneas is surprised to see a series of frescoes on the facade of the temple, depicting the Trojan war. Virgil then has Aeneas utter what is probably the classic example of the poet's own great sympathetic


spirit, and what might well be considered the innermost theme of the whole
Aeneid:13

... 'quis iam locus' inquit 'Achates,
quae regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?
en Priamus. sunt hic etiam sua praemia laudi;
sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.
solve metus; feret haec aliquam tibi fama salutem.'
(I.459-463)

Men's sorrows and misfortunes do indeed touch men's hearts. Aeneas re-
ognizes that these foreigners, whom he had never seen before, have heard of
the sufferings of his people and have sympathized with them. Through this
presentation can be seen the even more universal sympathy of the poet, reach­
ing out to embrace the sorrow and suffering of all mankind.14

In Book II, Virgil has Aeneas retell the dreadful story of the sack of
Troy. This in itself is certainly a painful task for the saddened hero. The
reader is naturally led to sympathize with Aeneas, as he relates in all their
horrible detail the incidents that were the source of immeasurable grief to
him. Virgil begins to bring out the pathos in the very first words of his
hero's account:

13 G. B. Woodberry, Virgil (New York, 1930), p. 27, calls lacrimae rerum
"almost the other name of the Aeneid." Cf. L. Feder, "Vergil's Tragic Theme,"
pp. 199-202, for a discussion of the various interpretations of sunt lacrimae
rerum.

14 Recall Haecker's comments on lacrimae rerum. He pointed out that Vir­
gil is here uttering an ontological saying, not a sentimental one. He is
"stating the truth about the structure and elements of existence." Virgil the
'infandum, regina, iubes renovare dolorem,
Troianas ut opes et lamentabile regnum
eruerint Danaí, quaeque ipse miserrima vidi
et quorum pars magna fui. quis talia fando
Myrmidonum Dolopumve aut duri miles Ulixi
temperet a lacrimis? et iam nox umida caelo
praecipitat suadentque cadentia sidera somnos,
sed si tantus amor casus cognoscere nostros
et breviter Troiae supremum audire labor,
quamquam animus membrum luctuque refugit
incipiam. . . . (II.3-13)

Notice the words underscored. They are but a few of the many recurrent
words and phrases which are designed to win the sympathy of the reader. They
are also quite revealing of the sympathy of the author. Misera, for ex-
ample, is one of Virgil's most characteristic words. This and other cognates
of miser and misero are found no less than 123 times in the Aeneid alone.15
Laocoon, in his unavailing warning to the Trojans about the wooden Horse,
addresses them as mizeri cives (II.42). In the pathetic scene when the horri-
ble serpents are wringing the life out of Laocoon and his two young sons,
Aeneas speaks of their misero artus (II.215). In bringing the fateful Wooden
Horse into the city, Aeneas refers to the Trojans as nos mizeri (II.215).

A bit later, Aeneas tells of his meeting with Panthus, the priest of
Apollo, who groans in a spirit of despair:

'venit summa dies et ineluctabile tempus
Dardaniae. fuimus Troies, fuit Ilium et ingens
gloria Teucrorum . . . .

(II.324-326)

The striking emphasis on the perfect tense fuimus, fuit has a powerful

293-299.
effect in impressing the reader with the deep internal suffering felt by one
who had lost everything worth fighting for, everything he had held dear. Vir-
gil echoes this feeling in the character of Aeneas himself when the hero cries
out, a few lines later: 'una salus victis mellam sperare salutem.' (II.354).

Virgil gives evidence of his philosophy of war when he has Aeneas describe
some of its horrible effects in speaking of events inside the burning city:

urbe antiqua ruit multos dominata per annos;
plurima perque vias sternuntur inertia passim
corpora perque domos et religiosa deorum
limina. nec soli poenas dant sanguine Teucri;
quondam etiam victis redit in prae cordia virtus
victoresque cadunt Danaei. crudelis ubique
luctus, ubique pavor et plurima mortis imago.
(II.363-369)

Always uppermost in Virgil's mind is the awful misery, grief, and sorrow
of war, never its more glorious aspects. War held no fascination for one
whose prime concern and deepest wish, both for himself and for all men, was
lasting peace.16

Undoubtedly, one of the most difficult of all incidents for Aeneas to
relate is that of the pathetic slaughter of Priam's son, Polites, and then of
the old king of Troy himself. We shall consider this scene in a later chapter,
but we can note here the effect of Priam's death on Aeneas.

At me tum primum saevus circumstetit horror.
obstipui; subiit cari genitoris imago,
ut regem aqueavum crudeli vulnera vidi
vitam exhalantem; subiit deserta Creusa
et direpta domus et parvi casus Iuli.
(II.559-563)

16Cf. F. J. Cowles, "Vergil's Hatred of War," CJ, XXXVI (December 1940),
133-142; G. K. Luckworth, "Vergil and War in the Aeneid," CJ, XLI (December
1945), 104-107; also many others.
Again Virgil, with his perfect understanding of what a man would feel at such a time, shows his concern for the wife and family who depend on the safety of their protecting husband and father. Virgil is indeed "the poet of those aspects of the war" which are "well known to the common man," as Bowra said. For he is constantly showing the effects of war upon women and young people, who are too helpless themselves to take an active part in the fighting.

So Aeneas is worried here about his aged father, Anchises, and about his wife and son. Aeneas does, in fact, lose his father later on, though not directly as a result of the war. And before he ever leaves the stricken city, he has lost his dearly beloved wife. As the fleeing Aeneas, with his father on his back and his son, Iulus, following behind him non passibus aequi, reaches a temporary point of safety, he discovers that his wife is missing:

heu miseró coniúnx fatone creptá Creusa
substitít, erravitne viae seu lasse resedít
incertum; nec post oculis est reddita nostris.
(II.738-740)

Aeneas immediately goes in search of her, back into the perils of the burning city. He looks everywhere amid the horror of confusion and rubble that was once his home. Finally he says:

ausus quin etiam voces iactare per umbram
implevi clamore vias, maestusque Creusan
nequiquam ingeminans, iterumque iterumque vocavi.
(II.768-770)

The pathos of the last line is intensified by the use of nequiquam and the double use of iterumque. The former word is another of Virgil's "lonely words," appearing in the Aeneid no less than thirty-six times.¹⁷ It recurs

¹⁷Cf. Wetmore, p. 317.
often in the sympathetic descriptions of the deaths of men in battle in the later books of the epic.

Aeneas next tells of the appearance of the shade of Creusa, coming to comfort him. When she ceases speaking to him, Aeneas vainly tries to embrace his wife as she slips away from him:

haec ubi dicta dedit, lacrimantem et multa volentem
dicere deseruit, tenuisque recessit in auras.

ter conatus ibi collo dare brachia circum;

ter frustra comprensae manus effugit imago,

par levibus ventis volucrique simillima somno.

(II.790-794)

Virgil's pathetic picture here is reminiscent of a similar one at the end of the Georgics, where Orpheus tries to restrain the shade of his wife, Eurydice (IV.499-502).

A man's loss of his wife is among the deepest of personal tragedies. Virgil indicates that this is true in the case of Aeneas, too. Regardless of the poetic exigencies which demanded Creusa's removal from the scene (so that the full destiny of Aeneas as Rome's progenitor might be realized), Virgil emphasizes the human feelings of his hero. He thereby shows again his own characteristic human sympathy. Knight comments: "The sadness is all the greater because Creusa is not only lost, but forgotten, too. Her part is over; and her memory does not count in Aeneas' later loves. This is one of the places where Virgil spares no suffering, so that the tragedy may be perfect." 18

Aeneas returns by night to his father and surviving companions. The motley, lonely group is ready to be led into exile:

Again Virgil's concern is for the weak and helpless common people. These are the real victims of war. Most of the warriors are killed in battle. It is the common people who must bear the pain of exile.

In Book III Aeneas continues his tale, relating the perils and hardships of the seven long years of wandering at sea. He describes his touching meeting with Andromache, Hector's widow, when he lands for a short time on the Greek peninsula. We shall study this scene in a later chapter.

Aeneas concludes his story by telling of another deep personal tragedy, the death of his father, Anchises, at Drepanum in Sicily. Noteworthy here is the great sadness of Aeneas at the climax of his tale of woe. Virgil wants his readers to sympathize with his hero, who, though assured of fulfillment of his own personal destiny and that of his people, must nevertheless pursue it without the consoling presence of his dear ones. Only his son, Iulus, is now left to Aeneas.

hinc Drepani me portus et inlastabilis ora accipit. hic pelagi tot tempestatibus actus heu, genitorem, omnis curae casusque levamen, amitto Anchisen. hic me, pater optime, fessum deseris, heu, tantis nequiquam erepte periclis! nec vates Helemus, cum multa horrenda moneret, hos mihi praedixit luctus, non dira Celaeno. hic labor extremus, longarum haece meta viarum. (III.707-714)

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Virgil again brings out the pathos of the situation by the use of the underscored words, especially the word *nequiquam*, one of the poet's signposts of sympathy. There is weary resignation registered in the last line, which has been so beautifully rendered by C. Day Lewis: "This was the last agony, the turning point of my long course."

We proceed now to Book V, where Virgil tells of the games held at the grave of Anchises in Sicily. It is during the presentation of prizes after the foot race that he puts into the mouth of Aeneas a sentiment that is most deeply expressive of his own human sympathy. Before bestowing consolation prizes on the two unfortunate losers of the race, Nisus and Salius, Aeneas says: *me liceat casus miserari insontis amici.* (V.350). To commiserate the misfortunes of the innocent is truly characteristic of Aeneas and of Virgil. The fullest significance of this line will be brought out when we study Virgil's championing of the underdog in the battle scenes of the later books.

At the end of Book V Aeneas shows sympathetic sorrow, this time for the tragic death of Palinurus, his helmsman. The Sleep-god had made him drowsy as he guided Aeneas' ship through the night, and the god finally hurled him headlong into the sea:

```latex
... proiecit in undas
praecipitem ac socios nequiquam saepe vocantem;

(V.859-860)
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Note Virgil's trademark again: *nequiquam*. When Aeneas awakes, he immediately senses that the ship is without its helmsman. He brings the ship back on course, while lamenting the loss of Palinurus: *multa gemens casuque animam*

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concussus amici (V.86y).

In Book VI Virgil tells the story of the visit of Aeneas to the Underworld. Here the epic hero comes into contact with many of the departed souls he had known in life. A number of pathetic encounters can be singled out for mention. First he comes upon those who are waiting to be ferried across the river Acheron by Charon:

hoc omnibus turba ad ripas effusa ruebat,
matres atque viri defunctaeque corpora vita
magnanimum heroum, puere immutaeque puellas,
impositique regis inuenes ante ora parentum:
quam multa in silvis autumni frigore primo
lapsa cadunt folia, aut ad terram gurgite ab alto
quam multae glomerantur aves, ubi frigidus annus
trans pontum fugat et terris immittit apricis.
stabant orantes primum transmittere cursum,
tendebantque manus ripae ulterioris amore.
(VI.305-314)

To be noted here are the types of individuals listed: mothers, great-hearted heroes, unwed boys and young maidens, young men set on pyres before the very eyes of their parents. These are just the figures that so often have attracted the sympathy of the poet.21 The infinite pathos of the last line makes it one of Virgil's most sympathetically human expressions, and one which is oft-quoted for that reason. Fletcher, in his excellent commentary on Book VI, remarks: "The pathetic music of this line has been the admiration of all critics and the despair of all translators."22

21 Cf. E. A. Hahn, "Vergil and the Underdog," TAPhA, LVI (1925), 194. Hahn thinks that line 308, which is repeated from Georgics IV.477, is most suggestive of Virgil's compassion for the young, the old, and women, especially mothers.

The object of Aeneas’ descent to the Underworld, of course, was to seek out the shade of his father, Anchises. Virgil has father and son meet and talk with each other in truly poignant passages. Anchises stands surveying the spirits waiting to go up to the light of the world above. He ponders the destinies and fortunes of his own line, when he spies Aeneas approaching him:

isque ubi tendentem adversum per gramina vidit
Aeneas, alacris palmas utrasque tectendit,
effusaeque genis lacrimae et vox excidit ore:
'tenisti tandem, tuaque expectata parenti
vicit iter durum pietas? datur ora tueri,
nate, tua et notas audire et reddere voces?
sic equidem ducebam animo rebarque futurum
tempora dinumerans, nec me mea cura fefellit.
quas ego te terras et quanta per aequora vectum
accipio! quantis iactatum, nate, periclis!
quam metui ne quid Libyae tibi regna nocerent!
(VI.684-694)

Aeneas responds lovingly to his father:

. . . 'tua me, genitor, tua tristis image
saepius occurrunt haec limina tendere adegit;
stant sale Tyrrenho classes. da iungere dextram,
da, genitor, teque amplexu ne subtrahes nostro.'
(VI.695-698)

Virgil then describes the efforts of Aeneas to embrace the shade of his father:

ter conatus ibi collo dare bracchia circum;
ter frustra compressa manus effugit image,
par levibus ventis volucrique simillima somno.
(VI.700-702)

These lines are identical with Virgil’s description of Aeneas and Creusa (II.792-794) and again are reminiscent of the description of Orpheus and Eurydice (Georgics IV.499-502). Fletcher comments: “Mackail notes the repetitions are deliberate. The love of Aeneas for Anchises is his strongest emotion;
his father means more to him than wife or lover."^{23}

Virgil's pius Aeneas is deeply moved by this encounter with his father, whom the hero loves and reverences in death just as in life. Virgil ever shows keen insight into the intimate nature of family relationships.^{24} This is one place among many where he depicts some of the sorrow that is inevitable in every such relationship.

In the second half of the Aeneid, Virgil tells the story of the bitter struggle of the Trojans to win possession of the land that has been destined for them by the gods. During much of their fighting against the Latins under their brave leader, Turnus, Virgil keeps Aeneas in the background and spends more time developing some of his minor characters in the various episodes. We shall consider the more important of these characters and episodes in our later chapters.

There are, however, a number of places in these books where it is possible to trace the Virgilian sympathy in the character of Aeneas. In Book VIII Virgil depicts Aeneas as tristi turbatus pectora bello (VIII.29). Virgil's hero has no wish to carry on this war with its needless slaughter and suffering on both sides. Peace was what he wanted. King Latinus had been willing to welcome the Trojans, even to make Aeneas his son-in-law (VIII.259-273). But Turnus, inspired by the daemonic Allecto (who was acting under orders of

^{23}Fletcher, pp. 81-82.

^{24}Cf. C. N. Smiley, "Virgil: His Philosophic Background and His Relation to Christianity," C J, XXVI (June 1931), 673; also W. W. Fowler, Aeneas at the Site of Rome (Oxford, 1917), p. 89.
Juno), had marshalled the Rutulian and Latin forces to fight against the Trojans.

Aeneas enlists the aid of King Evander and his gallant Arcadians, among whom is Pallas, Evander’s son, who soon became the favorite of Aeneas. As Fowler has remarked: “In Evander he finds someone to revere, in Pallas someone to love.” But the young hero’s glories in battle are short-lived, for he is no match for the experienced warrior, Turnus; he is slain by the latter’s spear thrust (I.82-89). Noteworthy here is the effect of Pallas’ death on Aeneas, the great sympathy it drew from his heart.

At the beginning of Book XI, Aeneas is preparing for the burial service of his friends, especially Pallas. He is deeply grieved: praecipitans curas turbatque funere mens est (XI.3). Virgil then has Aeneas utter a most pathetic lamentation over the bier of Pallas:

'tene' inquit, 'miserande puer, cum laeta veniret, invิดit Fortuna mibi, ne regna videres nostra neque ad sedes victor veherere paternas? non haec Evandro de te promissa parenti discendens dederam, cum me complexus euntemmitteret in magnum imperium metuensque moneret acris esse viros, cum dura proelia gentes.
et nunc ille quidem spe multum captus inani forae et vota facit cumulatque altaria donis, nos invenit exanimus et nil iam casestibus ullisdebentem vane maestis comitatur honore.
inflex, nati funus crudelis videbis!hi nostri reditus aequatetrique triumphi?haec mea magna fides? at non, Evandre, pudendisvulneribus pulsum aspiciones, nee sospite dirumoptabis nato funus pater. hei mibi, quantumpraesidium, Ausonia, et quantum tu perdies, Iule!' (XI.42-58)

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25 Fowler, Aeneas at the Site of Rome, p.5.
Aeneas then has the bier readied to be sent to Evander and his countrymen. But just before the mournful procession sets out, Aeneas utters one final word of parting:

'nos alias hinc ad lacrimas eadem horrida belli
data vocant; salve aeternum mihi, maxime Palla,
aeternumque vale.' . . .

(XI.96-98)

Notice the choice of pathos-filled words in which Virgil describes the great sorrow of his epic hero. These passages once again indicate the deep human relationships that Virgil has created between his characters, and the corresponding sorrow that is sympathetically shown at their disruption. Virgil's great sympathy is thus channeled through many different streams of human life, as evidenced in the above portrayals of closely associated personalities.

The final example of Aeneas' tender compassion is seen in his touching farewell to his son, Ascanius (Iulus), before he sets out for the critical duel with Turnus. Here Virgil brings out the intimate father-son relationship which has been implicit throughout all the Aeneid.

postquam habiliis lateri clipeus loricaque tergo est,
Ascanium fusis circum complectitur armis
summaque per galeam delibans oscula fatur:
'disce, puer, virtutem ex me verumque laborem,
fortunam ex aliis. nunc te mea dextera bello
defensum dabit et magna inter praemia ducet.
tu facito, mox cum maturaadoleverit aetas,
sic memor et te animo repetentem exempla tuorum
et pater Aeneas et avunculus excitet Hector.'

(XII.432-440)

26 Howe considers this attitude of Aeneas towards Pallas an outstanding example of the trait of tenderness in Aeneas, "The Development of the Character of Aeneas," CJ, XXII (December 1930), 192.

27 Sometimes this relationship has been expressed, e.g., in Book II (569-563), when Aeneas shows concern for his father and son during the burning of Troy.
The picture of the stalwart warrior, Aeneas, kissing his youthful son through the visor of his helmet, is truly an unforgettable one. It is characteristic of the breadth of understanding and depth of human sympathy that pervaded Virgil's personality.

To return for a moment to the death of Pallas and its effect on Aeneas: there is another aspect to be considered here which is of vital importance. The death of Pallas not only aroused the pity of Aeneas, but also stirred up wrath in him towards those who had been responsible for his death. Aeneas thus wreaked vengeance, almost indiscriminately, on his foes (I.517-564).

Near the end of the epic, with Turnus at his mercy, Aeneas spies the sword-belt of Pallas, now worn by the helpless chieftain. Turnus had snatched it from the dead Pallas. Seeing the relic of his friend, Aeneas is enraged and slays the fallen warrior (XII.938-952).

These incidents of the wrath and brutality of Aeneas seem to raise a problem about his character. Such actions are seemingly inconsistent with his usually sympathetic character. The first thing to remember, however, is that these actions were closely connected with Aeneas' great love for Pallas. He felt intense sorrow at Pallas' death and the despoiling of his armor. Moreover, instances of Aeneas' momentary wrath hardly detract from the evidence for the universal sympathy of Virgil himself, or from the consistency of his portrayal of the character of Aeneas.

Virgil has made Aeneas a man in the Aeneid, with characteristic human feelings and emotions, virtues and faults. Just as on most occasions Aeneas acts obediently, virtuously, and sympathetically, so also there are times when
he fails to do so. But, "to err is human." That Aeneas should have lost control of himself on these occasions proves that he was fallible and that he temporarily bowed to obstacles in his path. But that he ultimately overcame and rose above these obstacles only deepens our admiration for his character. There are many instances where Aeneas was sympathetic towards his enemies as well as towards his own people. These far outnumber the two occasions mentioned above.

Thus Virgil has shown sympathy for Aeneas, the hero, but ever the man. He has made Aeneas a suffering hero. As Woodberry has said, Virgil has "over-mastering sympathy with the victim--and Aeneas by his long sufferings is essentially a victim..." Prescott has summed it up even more fully in his comment:

The suffering which Virgil makes Aeneas undergo is mental and spiritual, a kind which the poet himself felt more keenly than physical pain and danger; the loss of home, the bitterness of exile, constantly disappointed expectation, the search for years after an unknown goal--these are the trials of Aeneas. Such mental and spiritual suffering and action admit of description much less easily than the visible outward manifestation of physical strength and courage; they are specially difficult to portray in the hero's own narrative of adventure; the poet counts upon the reader's so vividly transposing himself into the situation of Aeneas that he will experience anew, himself, the feelings that must have stirred Aeneas; upon this, perhaps even more than on the effect of the various adventures, depends the pathos of the wanderings of Aeneas which the poet aims to produce.

28Cf. also Aenid XI.98-121, where, immediately after his expression of grief at the bier of Pallas, Aeneas allows a legation of Latins to carry away the bodies of their dead for proper burial; also Aenid X.821-830, where Aeneas is moved by paternal pity and tenderness after having killed, of necessity, the brave young Lausus.

29Woodberry, Vergil, p. 27.

30Prescott, p. 358.
Glover echoes these sentiments perfectly, saying that the keynote to Aeneas' character "is the full and strong humanity that results from long but victorious knowledge of pain and sorrow."31

Frequently, too, Virgil has expressed his sympathy in the words of his epic hero. Through Aeneas he has spoken out his own infinite pity for men in general, who experience the lacrimae rerum in their daily lives. So it is that something of the personality of the Roman poet is learned from studying the character of Aeneas.

CHAPTER III

DIDO AND AENEAS: TRAGIC LOVERS

The tragic love story of Dido and Aeneas is undoubtedly the most memorable episode in the Aeneid. In this story Virgil rises to his summit of character portrayal. At the same time he gives new outlets to his overflowing human sympathy. Mackail believes that this episode "has, in all ages, been the part of the Aeneid which has outshone, has even in some cases, eclipsed the rest, by its fusion of delicate psychological insight with human sympathy, of splendid eloquence with burning passion."2

Dido is usually considered Virgil's greatest character and most convincing tragic personality. His success in Dido was due chiefly to his power of reading the heart.3 One need only recall St. Augustine's famous outburst in the Confessions: "Deus vita mea, quid miserius flente Didonis mortem quae fiebat amando Aeneam non flente autem mortem meam quae fiebat non amando te!"4 It

1 Cf. C. A. Forbes, who remarks: "Most modern readers agree with ancient saints and sinners that the Dido episode is Virgil's masterpiece of human interest; and Dido and Aeneas have been canonized among the great lovers celebrated in literature, along with Romeo and Juliet, Dante and Beatrice, Abelard and Héloïse." "Tragic Dido," CB, XXIX (March 1953), 51.


4 I.xiii.
is striking testimony to the "power with which Virgil's Dido has held the world entranced."  

Some think that Aeneas, in his relationship with Dido, is shunted to the background and is even portrayed as a villain. Cartault is one commentator who finds fault with Virgil for causing his readers to sympathise with Dido while feeling antipathy towards Aeneas. Yeames, on the other hand, in his analysis of the tragedy of Dido, warns against being led to criticize Aeneas or his creator too severely just because Dido is drawn so sympathetically. The latter interpretation seems more feasible.

It will be our endeavor in this chapter to show that Virgil has, indeed, emphasized the tragedy of Dido, but not completely at the expense of Aeneas. As Rand contends, "The deep emotions and high ideals of Aeneas are, no less than Dido's passion and suffering, a part of Virgil's tragedy." Just as in the last chapter we considered Aeneas as the suffering epic hero, so now we hope to trace the outlines of the tragic episode at Carthage, heartbreaking to Aeneas as it was to Dido.

The episode really begins in Book I with Virgil's recounting of Dido's past sufferings in the words of Venus to her son, Aeneas (I.340-368). She

5 Mackail, p. 91.
9 The immediate purpose of this short biographical sketch is to win the admiration of Aeneas, and it does so.
tells how the happily married Dido was widowed when her brother, Pygmalion, cruelly murdered her husband, Sychaeus. Warned by the phantom image of Sychaeus to flee Phoenicia, Dido escaped, taking with her much of the gold treasure which was the real object of her brother's passion. Eventually she came to the present site of Carthage. Here, with her friends and subjects she was building a new and mighty city. From the very first Dido was no stranger to suffering.

Virgil here and later stresses Dido's devotion to Sychaeus, indicating their great mutual love, magno miserae dilectus amore (I.314). Sellar believes this factor to be the most tragic element in Dido's developing love for Aeneas.¹⁰ Here, too, Virgil emphasizes the resourcefulness of this queen, dux femina facti (I.364), who nevertheless remains ever a woman.

The poet's next sympathetic picture of Dido gives evidence of her generous heart. She is comforting the wandering companions of Aeneas:

'solvite corde metum, Teucri, secludite curas.
res dura et regni novitas me talia cogunt
moliri et late finis custode tueri.
quis genus Aeneadum, quis Troiae nesciat urbem,
virtutesque virosque aut tanti incendia belli?
on obtunsa adeo gestamus pectora Poeni,
nec tam aversus equos Tyria Sol iungit ab urbe.
seu vos Hesperiam magnam Saturniaeque arva
sive Erycis finis regemque optatis Acesten,
auxilio tutos dimittam opibusque iuvabo.
vultis et his mecum pariter considere regnis?
urbem quam statuo, vestra est; subducite navis;
Tros Tyriusque mihi nullo discrimine agetur.
atque utinam rex ipse noto compulsus eodem
adforet Aeneas! equidem per litora certos

Dido's hospitality is unbounded because she offers even the city she is building to these famous Trojan refugees. Here again Virgil arouses the reader's admiration of Dido. Aeneas, too, who has witnessed this act of generosity incognito, is overwhelmed with admiration. He makes himself known to her and utters a gracious speech, in which he shows his gratitude for her compassion. At the same time he reiterates his own and his people's tragic past:

\[ \ldots \text{ 'coram, quem quaeritis, adsum,} \\
\text{Troius Aeneas, Libycis ereptus ab undis.} \\
\text{o sola infandos Troiae miserata labores,} \\
\text{quae nos, reliquias Danaum, terraeque marisque} \\
\text{omnibusque exhaustis iam casibus, omnia egenos,} \\
\text{urbe, domo socias, grates persolvere dignas} \\
\text{non opis est nostrae, Dido, nec quidquid ubique est} \\
\text{gentis Dardaniae, magnum quae sparsa per orbem.} \\
\text{di tibi, si qua pios respectant numina, si quid} \\
\text{usquam iustitia est et mens sibi conscia recti,} \\
\text{praemia digna ferant. quae te tam laeta tulerunt} \\
\text{saecula? qui tanti talem genuere parentes?} \\
\text{in freta dum fluvii current, dum montibus umbrae} \\
\text{lustrabunt convexa, polus dum sidera pascet,} \\
\text{semper honos nomenque tuum laudesque mansibunt,} \\
\text{quae me cumque vocant terrae.' \ldots} \]

(I.595-610)

Especially noteworthy is the beautiful pledge Aeneas makes here. It well bespeaks the sincerity of his feelings.

Dido identifies her own misfortunes with those of Aeneas and his followers (I.628-630). She utters a sentiment which is expressive of Virgil's own sympathetic personality: non ignara mali miseris succerrere disco (I.630).

Dido is already impressed with the dashing figure of Aeneas (I.613), but Venus now steps in to see to it that her admiration ripens into love, passion-
ate love. Venus substitutes her son, Cupid, for Ascanius. In this guise he is to win Dido's favor and enchant her with love for Aeneas (I.657-711). The effectiveness of Cupid's work can be grasped in a pathos-filled narrative passage which follows:

praecipue infelix, pesti devota futurae,
expleri mentem nequit ardescitque tuendo
Phoenissa, et pariter puero donisque movetur.
ille ubi complexi Aeneas colloque pependit
et magnum falsi implevit genitoris amorem,
reginam petit. haec oculis, haec pectore toto
haeret et interdum gremio sovet inscia Dido
insidat quantus miserae deus. at memor ille
matris Acidaliae paulatin ablere Sychaean
incipit et vivo temptat praevertere amore
iam pridem resides animos desuetaque corda.
(I.712-722)

Here is the first use of infelix, the epithet which is almost synonymous with the name of Dido.11 Already Virgil warns us of Dido's tragic doom: pesti devota futurae. He emphasizes, too, her unwitting compliance with the wily Cupid, inscia, causing her to forget her dearly departed Sychaean.

Near the end of Book I Virgil comments: infelix Dido longumque bibebat amorem (I.749). The Book ends with Dido's request that Aeneas tell the details of the fall of his city and the story of his wanderings. This Aeneas does in Books II and III. But the tragic love story which the poet has introduced in the first Book will only reach its climax in Book IV.

Book IV is truly a masterpiece of dramatic art. As an epic tragedy it ranks with the works of the Greek tragedians, particularly Euripides, in intensity, an intensity, moreover, which is maintained from beginning to end of

this most memorable Book of the Aeneid. In the opening scene Virgil presents a picture of the love-stricken Dido:

At regina gravi iamdudum saucia cura
vulnus alit venis et caeco carpitur igni.
multa viri virtus amimo multusque recursat
gentis honos: haerent infixi pectore vultus
verbaque, nec placidam membris dat cura quietem.

(IV.1-5)

Blind passion and lack of peace is the keynote of Dido's tragic love for Aeneas.

Dido admits to Anna, her devoted sister, how much she is attracted by the noble Aeneas (IV.9-30). Yet she feels that to consent to this passion within her would be to violate her chaste widowhood. It would also be to destroy the troth she pledged to her beloved Sychaeus; she would rather be struck dead than have this happen (IV.23-29). Thus Virgil depicts Dido's faithfulness to her husband's memory, which is to be overcome by her own human weakness and the machinations of Juno and Venus.

Anna tells Dido to forget about the past and to enjoy the legitimate happiness that is being offered to her. This only tends to heighten the intensity of the queen's passion:

His dictis impenso animum flammarvit amore
spemque dedit dubiae menti solvitque pudorem.

(IV.54-55)

Virgil shows how Dido's passion grows, feeding on itself and driving her to disaster. Especially apt is the simile he uses to describe Dido's wander-

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13 We will consider Anna's tragedy in a later chapter.
ings about the city:

uritur infelix Dido totaque vagatur
urbe furens, qualis coniecta cerva sagitta
quam procul incautam nemora inter Cresia fixit
pastor agens telis liquitque volatile ferrum
necins; illa fuga silvas saltusque peragrat
Dictaeos; haeret lateri letalis harundo.
(IV.68-73)

Austin comments: "Dido is compared to a wounded deer, taken off its guard, a poor tender creature, innocent of harm, injured by one who did not even know of the wound he had inflicted. Virgil's pity is clear, even though he has just shown Dido as not candid."

Dido is completely absorbed in Aeneas. Distracted from her work, she hangs on each word of her lover:

Iliacosque iterum demens audire labores
exposcit pendetque iterum narrantis ab ore.
(IV.78-79)

When the day is spent, Dido tosses and turns in bed, mooning over her beloved Aeneas:

post ubi digressi, lumenque obscura vicissim
luna premitt suadentque cadentia sidera somnos,
sola domo maeret vacua stratisque relictis
incubat. illum absens absentem auditque videtque,
aut gremio Ascanium genitoris imagine capta
destinet, infandum si fallere possit amorem.
(IV.80-85)

Here Virgil beautifully contrasts the peacefulness of the night with the troubled spirit of Dido. He is building up the pathos of the story by this artful interjection.

Juno and Venus have plotted to have Dido and Aeneas seek shelter from a

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storm in a secluded cave. They do so, and the two lovers take advantage of the situation, giving in to the passion of the moment (IV.160-168). Virgil then makes a significant comment:

ille dies primus leti primusque malorum
dausa fuit; neque enim specia famave movetur
nec iam furtivum Dido meditatur amorem:
coniugium vocat, hoc præstexit nomine culpam.
(IV.169-172)

In a short time Dido has changed from a happy and resourceful ruler into a woman inflamed with a love she at first thought shameful, and now tries to pass off as good and true. This is all part of her tragic downfall.

But it is not only Dido who has changed in this story of tragic love. Aeneas, too, has drunk deeply of love. Prescott observes: "If the emotional effects have been portrayed only in Dido's case, that is in accord with psychological truth and artistic fitness; the heroic progenitor of the Roman people may not reveal on the surface the frenzy of his spiritual experience. The poet lets the fact speak for itself; Aeneas has forgotten his sacred mission; he is building Carthage, not Lavinium. That is proof enough of his devotion to the queen."15

The first turning point in the tragedy is reached when Jove's messenger, Mercury, relays to Aeneas the divine message, rebuking the hero for forgetting his mission and ordering him to leave Carthage and to sail on to Italy. The effect on Aeneas is powerful:

At vero Aeneas aspectu obmutuit amens,
arrectaeque horrore comae et vox faucibus haesit.

ardet abire fuga dulcisque relinquere terras, attonitus tanto monitu imperioque deorum.
heu quid agat? quo nunc reginam ambire furentem
audeat adfatu? quae prima exordia sumat?
atque animum nunc huc celerem nunc dividit illuc
in partisque rapit varias perque omnia versat.
haec alternanti potior sententia visa est;
Mnesthea Sergestumque vocat fortem Serestum,
classem aptent taciti sociosque ad litora cogant,
arma parent et quae rebus sit causa novandis
dissimulant; sese interea, quando ipse Dido
neciat et tantos rumpi non speret amores,
temptaturum aditus et quae mollissima fandi
tempora, quis rebus dexter modus. ocius omnes
imperio laeti parent et iussa facessunt.
(IV.279-295)

Aeneas is dazed and dumbfounded. He is obviously confused about what to do. But already Virgil lets us see duty winning out over personal love.

Dido senses Aeneas' plans and she seeks him out at once. She berates him in a barrage of pathetically impassioned words:

'dissimulare etiam sperasti, perfide, tantum
posse nefas tacitusque mea decedere terra?
nec te noster amor nec te data dextra quondam
nec moritura tenet crudeli funere Dido?
quin etiam hiberno moliris sidere classem
et mediis properas Aquilonibus ire per altum,
crudelis? quid, si non arva aliena domosque
ignotas pateres, et Troia antiqua maneret,
Troia per undosam peteretur classibus aequor?
mene fugis? per ego has lacrimas dextramque tuam te
(quando alid mihi iam miseras nihil ipsa reliqui).
per conubia nostra, per inceptos hymenaeos,
si bene quid de te merui fuit aut tibi quicquam
dulce meum, miserere domus labentis et istam,
oro, si quis adhuc precibus locus, exue mentem.
te propter Libycae gentes Nomadumque tryanni
odere, infensi Tyrii; te propter eundem
extinctus pudor et, qua sola sidere adibam
fama prior, cui me moribundam deseris,—hospes
(hoc solum nomen quoniam de coniuge restat)?
quid moror? an mea Pygmalion dum moenis frater
destruat aut captam ducat Gaetulus Iarbas?
saltem si qua mihi de te suscepta fuissest
To be noted here are the references to moritura Dido (308), mihi misere (315), me moribundam (323), and the pathetically bitter tone of lines 323–324. The feeling expressed in lines 327–330 is one of anguish and despair. Austin comments that, "Dido does not wait for any explanation of what she hears, but at once loses all self-control; in this primitive, passionate aspect of her heart she is so utterly different from Aeneas, and the sufferings of both are the more bitter because of it."17

Aeneas' response is equally pathetic. He attempts to explain to Dido why he must leave (IV.331-363). It is not that his love for her has cooled:

\[
\text{nec me meminisse pigebit Elissa,}
\text{dum memor ipse mei, dum spiritus hos regit artus.}
\]

(IV.335-336)

It is that the inflexible commands of Jove must be obeyed. Aeneas' words in this passage "are heartless words, if they express all that Aeneas feels—an almost condescending esteem instead of the passion on which the two had fed—but they are tragic words for him as well as for her, if they crush deep anguish of spirit."18

Aeneas' feeling is well summed up in the famous closing words of his speech: Italiam non sponte sequor (IV.361). Rand observes: "These last words resume in brief compass the elements of the tragedy that confronts Aeneas:

16Mackail calls this the "single bell-stroke;" cited in Austin, p. 99.
17Austin, p. 97.
18Rand, p. 358. Rand, naturally, stresses the latter interpretation, as does Austin, p. 106.
Italiam--his mission; non sponte--his love; sequor--his resolution.\textsuperscript{19} Glover remarks perceptively:

That Aeneas must go, we see. The sense of the inevitable task to be fulfilled whatever the cost—that also comes from Virgil's heart. The collision of the two lives and the wreckage are of the essence of tragedy; and that Dido's story is tragedy, we saw from the beginning. In every tragedy there is an incomprehensible element—but in this one the part played by the gods is less intelligible than we felt we have a right to expect, for their purpose—the planting of a city in a certain place—seems but little connected with moral issues. Yet for Aeneas there is a moral issue, and it is clear—whether it is intelligible or not duty must be done. \textit{Italiam non sponte sequor—but he follows.}\textsuperscript{20}

Immediately following Aeneas' response, Virgil puts into the mouth of a furious Dido an impassioned speech that reveals all the pent-up emotion of her tragic situation:

\begin{quote}
‘nec tibi diva parent generis nec Dardamus auctor, perfide, sed duris genuit te cautibus harrens Caucasus Hyrcanaeque admorunt ubera tigres. nam quid dissimulo aut quae me ad maiora reservo? num fletu ingemuit nostro? num lumina flexit? num lacrimas victus dedit aut miseratur amantem est? quae quibus anteveram? iam iam nec maxima Iuno nec Saturnius haec oculis pater aspicit aequis. musquam tuta fides. eictum litore, egentem excepit et regni demens in parte locavi. amissam classem, socios a morte reduci (heu furiis incensa feror!); nunc augur Apollo, nunc Lyciae sortes, nunc et Iove missus ab ipso interpres divum fert horrida iussa per auras. scilicet is superis labor est, ea cura quietos sollicitat. neque te teneo neque dicta refello: i, sequere Italiam ventis, pote regna per undas; spero equidem mediis, si quid pia numina possunt, supplicia hausurum scopulis et nomine Dido saepe vocaturum. sequar atris ignibus absens
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{19}Rand, p. 359. Cf. also Pease, p. 313; Yeames, p. 200, calls these words "among the most pathetic of the 'pathetic half-lines.'"

et, cum frigida mors anima seduxerit artus, 
omnia umbra locis adero, dabis, improbe, poenas. 
audiam et haec manis veniet mihi fama sub imos.'
(IV.365-387)

We wonder that such strong love on Dido's part could turn to such jealous
and bitter hatred, or at least seeming hatred. But this, too, is part of the
tragedy of her life, a tragedy which Virgil outlines in great detail and for
which he shows the greatest sympathy. Aeneas, again, is greatly moved by this
speech, but he holds his peace. Austin notes: "Virgil shows Aeneas as a man
puzzled and hurt by the problem of pain, not only the pain that he suffers, but
the pain that he inflicts. . . ."21

Towards Aeneas, too, Virgil shows sympathy here. Though still filled with
love for Dido and sincerely desirous of soothing her great anguish,22 Aeneas
sacrifices his love for the sake of obeying the divine command:

At pius Aeneas, quamquam lenire dolentem
solando cupit et dictis avertere curas,
multa gemens magnosque animum labefactus amore
iussa tamen divum exsequitur classemque revisit.
(IV.393-396)

Great is the sorrow of the unhappy queen, but great, too, is the sacrifice
of her lover. Virgil's use of pius in this context is quite striking. Yeames
keenly observes:

... Aeneas was never more pius than at this difficult moment when all
his sympathies were with Dido and yet he had to turn his back upon her
and close his ears to her plea and that of his own heart; duty has never
achieved a more painful triumph over human inclination; pietas was never
more truly pietas than at this supreme crisis when its two elements of
piety and pity, duty and love, seemed hopelessly irreconcilable. Such
moral conflict is the essence of tragedy, and Aeneas comes out purified

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21 Austin, p. xv.

22 Austin hints, p. 123: "This is what pietas would have him do—for one
aspect of pietas is tenderness to those we love—but he cannot."
from the conflict; by abandoning his sin and his partner in sin he transfigures what seemed a fatal necessity into a moral victory.23

Perfectly fitting, then, is Virgil's remark a bit later, which at once epitomizes this tragedy of love and expresses the poet's deep concern for its victims: improbe Amor, quid non mortalia pectora cogis! (IV.412).

But Dido is not finished yet in her attempts to dissuade Aeneas. She knows that her sister, Anna, can speak to Aeneas. So Dido entreats her to beg Aeneas at least to wait a while before sailing. This is not to prevent him from going eventually, but only to give her time to learn how to bear her loss (IV.416-436). Only Aeneas' strength of purpose overcomes his tears at Anna's entreaty:

... adsiduis hinc atque hinc vocibus heros
tunditur, et magno persentit pectore curas;
mens immota manet, lacrimae volvuntur inanes.
(IV.447-449)

As Knight indicates, there is a great deal of controversy about whose tears are referred to in the passage quoted above. "The structure of the sentence would suggest that they are the tears of Aeneas. But we only know for certain that Dido was weeping. . . . Mainly, of course, they are his tears; but there are moments in the poem when it is well not to be too sure; and there are readers, also, who had better not be too sure at any time; and anyhow they are not his tears only, but hers, too, if we need to think so, and, again if we need to think so, the very fountain of tears of all the

A second turning point in the tragedy is reached when Dido prays for her impending death:

Tum vero infelix fatis exterrita Dido mortem orat; taedet caeli convexa tueri.

(IV.450-451)

Virgil repeats this ominous note a few lines later as Dido, now fully determined to kill herself, makes one last request of her sister: to perform a task the implications of which Anna unfortunately does not suspect:

Ergo ubi concepit furias evicta dolore decrevitque mori, tempus secum ipsa modumque exigit, et maestam dictis adgressa sororem consilium vultu tegit ac spem fronte serenat; 'inveni, germana, viau (gratam sorori) quae mihi reddat sum vel eo me solvat amantem. Oceanus iuxta solemque cadentem ultimus Aethiopum locus est, ubi maximus Atlas axem umero torquet stellis ardentibus at tum: hinc mihi Massylae gentis monstrata sacros, Hesperidum templi custos, epulasque draconis quae dabat et sacros servabat in arbores ramos, spargens unida mella soporiferumque papaver. haec se carminibus promittit solvere mentes quas velit, ast alis duras immittere curas, sistere aquam fluvius et vertere sidera retro, nocturnosque movet manis; mugire videbis

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21 Roman Vergil, p. 205. Rand agrees with Knight, p. 362; Austin, p. 135, prefers to let it remain ambiguous whose tears these are, since really it is probable that all three personages shed them; cf. also Pease, pp. 367-368. In a recent article, "Tears in Aeneis 4.449," CB, XXXVII (January, 1962), pp. 33-34, N. D. Hinton presents cogent arguments for holding that the tears in this passage are truly those of Aeneas, rather than of Anna or Dido, as is usually supposed (cf. C. D. Lewis' translation, The Aeneid of Virgil (London, 1952), p. 85. Hinton notes the parallel between Aeneas' situation here and that of Hercules in Book X (465) with regard to the prayer of Pallas.
sub pedibus terram et descendere montibus ornos.
testor, cara, deos et te, germana tuumque
dulce caput, magicas invitam accingier artis.
tu secreta pyram tecto interiore sub auras
erige, et arma viri thalamo quae fixa reliquit
impius exuviasque omnis lectumque iugalem,
quo perii, superimponas: abole re nefandi
cuncta viri monimenta iuvat monstratque sacerdos.'

(IV.474-498)

Anna is to pile up a funeral pyre, supposedly to do away once and for all
with all the remembrances of Aeneas. But Dido knows well the real purpose of
this pyre: haud ignara futuri (IV.508).

Virgil again emphasises the pathos which surrounds the suffering of the
tormented queen, as he artfully contrasts the peaceful night with the troubled
soul of Dido:

Nox erat et placidum carpebant fessa soporem
corpora per terras, silvaeque et saeva quierant
aequora, cum medio volvuntur sidera lapsu,
cum tacet omnis ager, pecudes pictaeque volucres,
quaeque lacus late liquidos quaeque aspera dumin
rura tenent, somno positae sub nocte silenti.
/lenibant curas et corda oblita laborum/7
&t non infelix anim Phoenissa meque umquam
solvitur in somnos oculisve aut pectore noctem
acquip: ingeminent curae rursusque resurgens
saevit amor magnoque irarum fluctuat aestu.

(IV.522-532)

This pathetic passage, with its striking imagery, is an echo of the
passage we considered earlier (IV.80-85).

Dido has one last struggle with herself, trying to determine what she
ought to do. Finally she decides that, because she has broken the faith she
had vowed to Sychaeus, she must die for it (IV.534-552). As if to confirm the
impression we get of Dido in all these hesitations, Virgil seems to pass judg-
ment on her in his comment in the words of Mercury to Aeneas: varium et mutabile
semper femina (IV.569-570). Dido is always wavering and uncertain. For that reason, Virgil would add, she is the more to be pitied.

Aeneas and his men set sail, but Dido sees them from afar and utters one last furiously pathetic speech, cursing the man who had caused her such happiness and such pain:

quid loquor? aut ubi sum? quae mentem insanias mutat?
infelix Dido, nunc te facta impia tangunt?
tum decuit, cum sceptra dabas, en dextra fidesque,
quem secum patrios aiunt portare penatis,
quem subisse umeris confectum aetate parentem?
non potui abreptum divellere corpus et undis
spargere? non socios, non ipsum absumere ferro
Ascanium patriisque epulandum ponere mensis?
verum ances pugnae fuerat fortuna.—fuisset:
quem metui moritura? faces in castra tulissem
impressamque foros flammis natumque patremque
cum genere extinxem, memet super ipsa dedisse.
(IV.595-606)

Infelix Dido is beside herself with rage and, though about to die, she lays her curse upon Aeneas:

at bello audacis populi vexatus et armis,
finibus extorris, complexu avulsus Iuli
auxilium imploret videatque indigna suorum
funera; nec, cum se sub leges pacis inique
tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur,
se cadat ante diem mediaque inhumatus harena.
haec precor, hanc vocem extremam cum sanguine fundo.
(IV.615-621)

Dido ends by beseeching the gods to cause endless strife for Aeneas' followers and descendants:

tum vos, o Tyrii, stirpem et genus omne futurum
exerceta odios, cinerique haec mittite nostro
munera. nullus amor populis nec foedera sunt.
exoriate aliquis nostris ex ossibus ulter
qui face Dardanios ferroque sequare colonos,
nunc, olim, quocumque dabunt se tempore vires.
litora litoribus contraria, fluctibus undas
The blazing passion of this awful condemnation only makes the reader sympathize the more with the unfortunate woman who was driven to make it. She is truly \textit{infelix} Dido, and perhaps Virgil in this passage is making it clear that she is worthy of pity and compassion, for "she knew not what she was doing."

Having prepared everything for her death, Dido now nears her tragic end. Virgil paints her death scene in vivid colors:

\begin{quote}
\begin{verse}
\textit{at trepida et coeptis immanibus efferas Dido}\\
sanguineam volvens aciem, maculisque trementis\\
interfusa genas et pallida morte futura,\\
interiora domus inrumpit limina et altos\\
conscendit furibunda gradus enseque recludit\\
Dardanum, non hos quaesitum munus in usus.\\
hic, postquam Iliacas vestis notumque cubile conspexit, paulum lacrimis et mente morata incubuitque toro dixitque novissima verba: \\
'dulces exuviae, dum fata densque sinebat, acipite hanc animam meque his exsolvite curis.\\
vixi et quem dederat cursum fortuna peregi, et nunc magna mei sub terras ibit imago.\\
urbem praeclaram statui, mea moenia Tindisi, ulta virum poenas inimico a fratre recepi, feliex, heu niumum felix, si litora tantum numquam Dardanias tetigissent nostra carinae.'\\
dixit, et os impressa toto, 'moriemur inultae, sed moriamur' ait. 'sic, sic iuvat ire sub umbras. hauriat hunc oculis ignem crudelis ab alto Dardanum, et nostrae secum ferat omnia mortis.'\\
dixerat, atque illum media inter talia ferro conlapsam aspicient comites, ensemque cruore spumantem sparsasque manus. \\
\end{verse}
\end{quote}

Here is the climax of the tragedy of Dido and Aeneas. The miserable queen has truly paid a terrible price for the love she could not bear to lose. Glover has well said: "Love for Aeneas after all has mastered her madness, and her
hatred, and it is the dominant note in her death."²⁵

Virgil next portrays the effects of Dido's death on the city and especially on her dear sister, Anna (IV.665-692). The story then reaches its denouement in Juno's sending of the nymph Iris down to conduct the agonized spirit of Dido to the Underworld:

\[
\text{Tum Iuno omnipotens longum miserata dolorem} \\
\text{difficilisque obitus Irim demisit Olympo} \\
\text{quae luctantem animam nemosque resolveret artus.} \\
\text{nam quia nec fate merita nec morte peribat,} \\
\text{sed misera ante diem subitoque accensa furore,} \\
\text{nondum illi flavum Proserpina vertice crinem} \\
\text{abulatorat Stygioque caput dannaverat Orco,} \\
\text{ergo iris croceis per caelum rosvida pennis} \\
\text{mille trahens varios adverso sole colores} \\
\text{devolat et supra caput astitit. 'hunc ego Diti} \\
\text{sacrum iussa fero teque isto corpore solvo.'} \\
\text{sic ait et dextra crines secat: omnis et una} \\
\text{dilapsus calor atque in ventos vita recessit.} \\
\text{(IV.693-705)}
\]

The unhappy Dido, then, so grief-stricken during her final days, meets a premature and tragic end. Virgil leaves the reader with a feeling of overwhelming pity for this poor suffering woman, who is so much a victim of her own uncontrollable passion and the circumstances of destiny.

But the love-relationship between Dido and Aeneas was tragic not only to the queen, but also to the Trojan hero. Virgil reminds us of this fact when, in Book VI, he has Aeneas encounter the shade of Dido in the Underworld. Aeneas has been searching for the shade of his father, Anchises, when he spots the wandering spirit of Dido. There follows a most pathetic scene:

\[
\text{inter quas Phoenissa recens a vulnere Dido} \\
\text{errabat silva in magna; quam Troius heros}
\]

ut primum iuxta stetit agnovitque per umbras
obscuran, qualem primo qui surgere mense
aut videt aut vidisse putat per nubila lunam,
demisit lacrimas dulcique adfatus amore est
'infelix Dido, verus mihi nuntius ergo
venerat extinstam ferroque extrema secutam?
funeris heu tibi causa fui? per sidera iuro,
per superos et si qua fides tellure sub ima est,
invitus, regina, tuo de litore cessi.

sed me iussa deum, quae nunc has ire per umbras,
per loca senta situ cogunt noctemque profundam,
imperiis agere suis; nec credere quivi
nunc tantum tibi me discessu ferre dolorem.
siste gradum teque aspectu ne substrahe nostro.
quem fugis? extremum fate quod te adloquor hoc est!
talibus Aeneas ardentem et torva tuentem
lenibat dictis animum lacrimasque ciebat.
(VI.450-468)

Aeneas is obviously shaken by this unexpected meeting with Dido, and it is
evident that the love and compassion he expresses here is sincere. But now,
added to the sorrow he already feels for his part in Dido's death is the grief
he experiences when she refused to recognize him here in the Underworld:

illa solo fixos oculos aversa tenebat
nec magis incepto vultum sermone movetur
quam si dura silex aut sest Marpesia cautes.
tandem corripuit sese atque inimica refugit
in nemus umbriferum, conium ubi pristinus illi
respondent curis aequatque Sychaeus amore.
nec minus Aeneas casu concussus inique
prosequitur lacrimis longe et miseratur sunt.
(VI.469-476)

Cartault points out that here the roles are reversed; it is now Aeneas who
shows great tenderness and Dido who shows inflexible insensibility.26 The
pathos of the last line is doubly vibrant, for Aeneas now fully realizes that
the tragedy of Dido is truly his own. T. S. Eliot has this to say:

26 Cartault, I, p. 457. Keep in mind Cartault's impression of Aeneas as
an unsympathetic ingrate towards Dido.
... I have always thought the meeting of Aeneas with the shade of Dido, in Book VI, not only one of the most poignant, but one of the most civilized passages in poetry. It is complex in meaning and economical in expression, for it not only tells us about the attitude of Dido—still more important is what it tells us about the attitude of Aeneas. Dido's behaviour appears almost as a projection of Aeneas' own conscience; this, we feel, is the way in which Aeneas' conscience would expect Dido to behave to him. The point, it seems to me, is not that Dido is unforgiving—though it is important that, instead of railing at him, she merely snubs him—perhaps the most telling snub in all poetry: what matters most is, that Aeneas does not forgive himself—and this, significantly, in spite of the fact of which he is well aware, that all that he has done has been in compliance with destiny, or in consequence of the machinations of gods who are themselves, we feel, only instruments of a greater inscrutable power.27

Throughout this chapter we have shown how Virgil builds up the tragedy of Aeneas and Dido, step by step, using foreshadowing and a gradual approach. As Rand points out: "These are the methods characteristic of that peculiarly Virgilian quality, reticence, which is another name for artistic reserve. It is perhaps the most fascinating and distinctive trait of Virgil's personality, one which his reader greets on page after page. . . ."28

The inner plot of this episode is that of a typical Greek tragic drama. Rand notes that the plot,

... brings us face to face with the ancient motive of the Greek drama, the conflict between human will and an over-ruling fate; tragedy lies in the bitter conclusion that the actors, though pursuing right paths, or at least natural paths, run into disaster despite themselves. They cannot be villains, else tragedy would not purge the emotions with the thrill of pity and fear, but merely waken indignation and suggest an obvious remedy—the flaying of the villain. Not that the actors need be spotless. We demand not a triumphant, logical insight into every move in the ethics of the narrative, but pity and fear at the calamities of creatures like ourselves, involved in the play of forces passing their control. Both Aeneas

28Rand, p. 361
and Dido are faitless to an absolute moral standard and their own ideals, but their infidelity is so natural--almost irresistible--that we are ready to condone. 29

Cartault comments on the great art of Virgil in fashioning the fourth Book of the Aeneid: "Si l'Aélide est un poème émotif, si l'intérêt principal que nous y trouvons est la mise en jeu très active de la sensibilité des personnages, le IVe livre en est le livre culminant, le plus caractéristique, celui qui en exprime le plus fortément la nature fondamentale. Nous sommes remués jusqu'au fond du cœur par la peinture d'une passion ardente qui possède, domine, torture celle qui la ressent et ne lui laisse pour y échapper d'autre ressource que le suicide. Cela est tragique." 30

In the tragic love story of Dido and Aeneas, then, Virgil has presented a striking example of his outstanding sympathy and compassion for the victims of love.

29 Ibid., 363.

CHAPTER IV

THE YOUNG MEN OF THE AENEID: TRAGIC FIGURES

Virgil seems to have been especially interested in and sympathetic toward young men. It has often been pointed out that his notable interest in youth was due to his love for them, and to the fact that he, like Augustus, saw in them the hope of Rome's continued greatness. Therefore, it is not surprising that he portrays all the strongest emotions and feelings in the characters of his young men: tenderness, pathos, courage, sympathy, fortitude, woe, devotion to one's country, one's father, and one's gods.

There are a good number of young warriors in the Aeneid whose characters have been sympathetically drawn by the poet. Most of these are in the last six books of the epic, where the majority of the battle scenes occur. E. A. Hahn has commented: "Vergil's grief at the loss of a youth in battle is shown again and again. He has a whole meadow of 'golden boys' cut down in their bloom: Marcellus, Nisus, Euryalus, Pallas, Lausus, even Turnus." Indeed, as the French critic Guillemin points out, "leur raison d'être est avant tout la mélancolie de leur mort."

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3 "Vergil and the Underdog," TAPhA, LVI (1925), 194.
The more prominent among them, especially Pallas, Lausus, and Turnus, we have already mentioned incidentally in earlier chapters. But our concern here is to investigate further Virgil's depiction of these tragic figures (for all of them meet a tragic end), so that we may broaden our understanding of the characteristic Virgilian pity.

We begin with Nisus and Euryalus. These inseparable companions first make their appearance in Book V, where both are entrants in the foot race (one of the funeral games held at the tomb of Anchises). Virgil introduces them in a brief passage naming the contestants in the race:

\[
\text{undique conveniunt Teucri mixtique Sicani} \\
\text{Nisus et Euryalus priemi,} \\
\text{Euryalus forma insignis viridique iuventa,} \\
\text{Nisus amore pio puere. . . .} \\
\text{(V.293-296)}
\]

Already it is evident that the poet is going to have a special concern for these two gallant young men. The striking use of the half-line, together with the emphasis on the youth of the pair and their close friendship, give some inkling of this.

In the race itself, Nisus is in the lead when he unfortunately slips on some blood (\textit{infelix}, V.329) and falls, thus dropping out of competition. But he is not forgetful of his boon companion:

\[
\text{non tamen Euryali, non ille oblitus amorum:} \\
\text{nam sese opposuit Salio per lubrica surgens}
\]

\footnote{Feder finds that Virgil's treatment of these young heroes is an integral part of the development of his tragic theme in the \textit{Aeneid}. Cf. "Vergil's Tragic Theme," \textit{GJ}, XLIX (February 1954), 207.}
ille autem spissa iacuit revolutus harena: 
emicit Euryalus et munere victor amici 
prima tenet, plausuque volat fremituque secundo. 
(V.334-339)

Nisus, too, because of his own persistence and the amusement of Lord Aeneas at his cleverness, gets a prize for his efforts. But this happy event is but a brief prelude to the tragedy that awaits them.

It is in Book IX (176-449) that Virgil relates the dramatic episode of Nisus and Euryalus and their fateful venture into the enemy camp. This episode is justly celebrated for its great pathos and the insight it gives the reader into the human tenderness of the poet.

The two youths, growing tired of their lonesome and boring sentry-duty, impetuously volunteer for a mission that would be dangerous for men twice their age and strength. They will carry a report to Aeneas after passing through the enemy lines. The Trojan elders, with Prince Ascanius, are pleasantly surprised and uplifted at the youths' courageous offer. Aletes, one of the elders, voices their feelings:

'di patrui, quorum semper sub numine Troia est, non tamen omnino Teucros delere paratis, cum talis animos iuvenum et tam certa tuliistis pectora.' . . . .

(IX.247-250)

Nisus and Euryalus are accordingly each given a token present together with promises of even greater glory and precious gifts at the successful completion of their mission. But even as they get ready to leave, Virgil interjects an ominous note. Ascanius had some special commissions to be relayed to his father:
But the message will never reach Aeneas since its bearers are destined to meet disaster.

Nisus and Euryalus arrive undetected at the enemy camp and begin to slaughter the sleeping and drunken Rutulian soldiers. Finally, they cease from their bloody business, but the younger Euryalus, captivated by the shining armor of a slain Rutulian warrior, strips it from his body: haec rapit atque umeris nequiquam fortibus aptat (IX.364). Virgil hints at the impending doom of the young hero with one pathetic word: nequiquam. We have indicated several occasions where the poet uses nequiquam and similar words as signposts of tragic disaster.

As Nisus and Euryalus make their way out of the enemy territory, the glint of the stolen helmet in the moonlight betrays the youths to a band of scouting Rutulians. Nisus escapes temporarily, but Euryalus is soon surrounded. Nisus bravely makes an attempt to rescue his friend, but his deadly spear, which finds its mark in one of the soldiers, only incites the rest to rise up to kill their prisoner. Then Virgil has Nisus rush onto the scene crying:

'me, me, adsum qui feci, in me convertite ferrum, o Rutulii mea fraus omnis, nihil iste nec ausus nec potuit; caelum hoc et conscia sidera testor';
--tantum infelicum nimium dilexit amicum.
(IX.427-430)

Notice Virgil's sympathetic feeling expressed here in the last line. Again he emphasizes the deep bond of friendship existing between the two young men. The emphasis clearly makes their end more tragic.
Misus' words are unavailing and Virgil heightens the pathos of the situation as he goes on to describe the death of Euryalus:

talia dicta dabat, sed viribus enis adactus
transabiit costas et candida pectora rumpit.
volvitur Euryalus leto, pulchrosque per artus
it crur inque umeros cervix conlapsa recumbit:
purpureus veluti cum flos succisus aratro
languescit moriens, lassove papavera collo
demiseré caput pluvia cum forte gravantur.

(IX.431-438)

The exquisite simile used here has often been the subject of comment. Virgil perhaps softens the horror of death, but not the pity of it.

Misus, too, is slain and Virgil pays to the two friends, inseparable in death as in life, the greatest tribute a poet can render:

Fortunati ambo: si quid mea carmina possunt,
nulla dies unquam memor vos eximet aevó,
dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum
accolet imperiumque pater Romanus habebit.

(IX.446-449)

We come now to consider two more young men of similar qualities, but on opposing sides in the war: Pallas and Lausus. Virgil has a most effective short passage in which he sums up each of their merits and fighting efforts, though neither ever met the other in combat:

... hinc Pallas instat et urget,
hinc contra Lausus, nec multum discrepat astas,
egregii forma, sed quis Fortuna negaret
in patrìam reditus. ipsos concurrere passus
haud tamen inter se magni regnator Olympi;
mox illos sua fata manent maiore sub hoste.

(X.433-438)

King Evander's son, Pallas, as we mentioned earlier, was a special favorite of Aeneas. Though young and inexperienced in battle, he rallied his Arcadians

and bravely outmaneuvered the Rutulians, striking down many with his spear and sword (X.362-425). Turnus then appears on the scene to quell the tide of the Arcadian onslaught; he insolently challenges Pallas to single combat. Unable to tolerate the vain strutting of the enemy leader, Pallas sallies forth against him. But both his prayers to Hercules and his efforts are in vain, for he is no match for his mightier opponent. Virgil tells of the death-stroke in poignant language:

Hic Turnus ferro praefixum robur acuto
in Pallanta diu librans iacit atque ita fatur:
'aspice num mage sit nostrum penetrabile telum.'
dixerat; at clipeum, tot ferri terga, tot aeris,
quem pellis totiens obeat circumdata tauri,
vibranti cuspis medium transverterat ictu
loricaeque moras et pectus perforat ingens.
ille rapit calidum frustra de vulnere telum;
una eademque via sanguis animusque sequuntur,
corruit in vulnus (sonitum super arma dedere)
et terram hostilem moriens petit ore cruento.
(X.479-489)

Turnus then strips the armor from the dead Pallas and leaves him to be cared for by his comrades. Virgil comments as they carry away their young master's body:

... at socii multo gemitu lacrimisque
impositum scuto referunt Pallanta frequentes.
o dolor atque decus magnum reditare parenti;
haec te prima dies bello dedit, haec eadem aucter,
cum tamen ingentis Rutulorum linquis aceros!
(X.505-509)

In succeeding passages Virgil describes the effect of Pallas' death on Aeneas, arousing him to seek out Turnus and avenge the cruel death of his young ward. We have already considered this in a previous chapter. We pointed out, too, the poignant speeches of Aeneas about his friend. But at the beginning
of Book XI, Virgil tells of the preparation of the body of Pallas for return to his father and to his people. This is handled with characteristic tenderness. Aeneas orders the body to be laid on its funeral bed:

Haec ubi deflevit, tolli miserabile corpus imperat, et toto lectos ex agmine mittit mille viros qui supremum continentur honorem intersintque patris lacrimis, solacia luctus exigua ingentis, misero sed debita patrei. haud segnes alii cratis et molle feretrum arbuteis texunt virgis et vimine querno exstructosque toros obtentu frondis inumbrant. hic iuvenem agresti sublimem stramine ponunt: qualem virgineo demessum pollice florem seu mollis violae seu languentis hyscinthi, cui neque fulgor adhuc nec dum sua forma recessit, non iam mater alit tellus virisque ministrat.

(XI.59-71)

The pathetic words, pointing out the slight solace this funeral cortage will be to Pallas' sorrowing father, are typical of Virgil's ever-present concern for the close human relationships, especially those between parent and son, that are so tragically broken during time of war. As Conway has well said, "To Vergil the greatest thing in life was the relation between parent and child."7 The beautiful flower-simile Virgil uses here is even more striking than that describing the death of Euryalus.

As the funeral procession slowly winds its way home, even Pallas' great steed, Aethon, mourns for his young master:

post bellator equus positis insignibus Aethon it lacrimans guttisque unectat grandibus ora.

(XI.89-90)

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7"Some Light on the Eclogues at Last," CR, XLV (February, 1931), 33.
Rumor has already reported the death of Pallas to Evander and his people, and grief grips the sorrowing Arcadians and their lord, his father (XI.139-147). The summit of pathos, of course, is reached when the body of the youth is laid before his weeping and groaning father. But rather than consider this passage here, we shall save it for our considerations of the tragedy of Evander in a later chapter.

We pass on now to Virgil's treatment of the character of Lausus, the son of the cruel Etruscan chieftain, Mezentius. Virgil's first mention of him is in the catalogue of the warrior-chieftains in Book VII:

Prīmus init bellum Tyrrehenis asper ab oris
contemptor divum Mezentius armāque armat.
filius huic iuxta Lausus, quo pulchrior alter
non fuit excepto Laurentis corpore Turni;
Lausus, equum domitor debellatorque ferarum,
ducit Agyllina nequiquam ex urbe secutos
mille viros....

(VII.647-653)

Again there is the pathos-filled word, nequiquam. Virgil's description of Lausus here reminds the reader of that of Euryalus, which we noted earlier. The poet's emphasis on the great handsomeness and comeliness of Lausus only makes the tragedy that awaits him more poignant.8

8 W. W. Fowler, in his Virgil's Gathering of the Clans (Oxford, 1913), pp. 42-43, asks why Virgil should have begun the war and the catalogue of warriors with mention of Mezentius and Lausus. He answers: "Mezentius must be made prominent as a bad man, and is placed in the forefront, like a strong word at the beginning of a line, to fix him in the reader's mind. In the coming story much is to be made of these two striking figures; the spoils of the father will be the primitiae of the war for Aeneas, and the death of the boy is to pierce his heart—and the heart, surely, of his poet, too."
It is in Book X that Lausus meets his tragic end. When he sees his father, wounded by the spear of Aeneas and in danger of being slain by the Trojan hero's sword, Lausus is horrified:

\[ \text{ingemuit cari graviter genitoris amore, ut vidit, Lausus, lacrimaeque per ora volutae.} \]
\[ (X.789-790) \]

Virgil here interjects a striking comment:

\[ \text{Hic mortis durae casum tuaque optima facta, si qua fides tanto est operi latura vetustas, non equidem nec te, iuvenis memorande, silebo.} \]
\[ (X.791-793) \]

This can be nothing else than a very personal expression of deep sympathy on the part of the poet, who was truly a "champion of the underdog." Lausus intervenes, just as Aeneas is about to slay Mezentius, and parries the blow. He and his men hold off Aeneas for a while, but then the Trojan hero presses in again towards Lausus and warns him:

\[ '\text{ quo moriture ruis maioraque viribus audes? fallit te incautum pietas tua.'...} \]
\[ (X.811-812) \]

But Lausus continues his defiance and Aeneas is forced to slay him. The tenderness of Virgil is well illustrated in his description of this intensely painful scene:9

\[ \text{... nec minus ille exultat demens, saevas iamque altius irae Dardanio surgunt ductori, extremae Lauso Parcae filia legunt, validum namque exigit ensen per medium Aeneas iuvenem totumque recondit. transit et parmam muro, levia arma minacis. et tunicam molli mater quam neverat auro,} \]

implevitque sinus sanguis; tum vita per auras concessit maesta ad manis corpusque reliquit. (I.512-820)

Again the scene is made more pathetic by the mention of Lausus' tunic, woven by his own mother's hand; also by the sad spirit of the youth passing away to the land of the shadows. Duff comments on this passage: "Aeneas is deeply moved when he slays Lausus in the act of succouring his father. . . . This tenderness [shown in the passage quoted above] dictates lines over which the voice may falter, as Virgil's own voice did; lines that wrung imperial tears or made a bereaved mother swoon . . . 10

But it is in the actions and words of his epic hero that Virgil speaks out the real depth of his sympathy:

at vero ut vultum vidit morientis et ora
ora modis Anchisiades pallerntia miris,
ingemuit miserans graviter dextramque tetendit,
et mentem patriae subit pietatis imago.
'quid tibi nunc, miserande puer, pro laudibus istis,
quid plus Aeneas tanta dabit indole dignum?
arma, quibus laetatus, habe tua; teque parentum
manibus et cineri, si qua est ea cura, remitto.
hoc tamen infelix miseram solabere mortem;
Aeneae magni dextra cadis.' Increpit ulro
cunctantis socios et terra sublevat ipsum
sanguine turpantem comertos de more capillos.
(X.821-832)

Virgil has truly painted this scene with as much human sympathy and compassion as can be put into words. And it is more notable in that this youth was not a Trojan, not a Roman ancestor, but one of the enemy Rutulians. Virgilian pity takes no sides.

Virgil introduces another tragic character in a somewhat indirect manner. In Book VI, when Anchises is consoled by Aeneas' visit to the Underworld, he spreads out before his son the vision of the future glory of Rome. But the poet interjects a tragic note even here. Aeneas inquires about one of the youthful figures he sees in the vision. Anchises then tells of the tragic fate of the youth, Marcellus. He is still another of Virgil's "golden boys":

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tum pater Anchises lacrimis ingressus obortis:
'o nate, ingentem luctum ne quaere tuorum;
ostendent terris hunc tantum fata neque ultra
esse sinent. nimum vobis Romana propago
visa potens, superi, propria haec si dona fuissent.
quantos ille virum magnum Mavortis ad urbem
campus agit gemitus vel quae, Tiberine, videbis
funera, cum tumulum præsterlabere recentem
nec puer Iliaca quisquam de gente Latinos
in tantum spe tollet avos, nec Romula quondam
ullo se tantum tellus iastabit alumnno.
heu pietas, heu prisca fides invictaque bello
dexterae; non illi se quisquam impune tulisset
oviris armato, seu cum pedes iret in hostem
seu spumantis equi foderet calcaribus armos.
heu, miserande puer, si qua fata aspera rumpas,
tu Marcellus eris. manibus date illia plenis,
nec purpureos spargam flores animamque nepotis
his saltam accumulem donis, et fungar inani
munere.'...'
```

(VI.867-886)

This speech is truly pathetic, and it is one more instance of Virgil's expression of sympathy through the words of one of his characters. It was at this point, incidentally, that Octavia is said to have fainted when Virgil read the book to her and Augustus.11 Notice the beautiful pathos of the last

lines, the sorrowful resignation of fungar inani munere.

Perhaps the greatest character in the Aeneid, aside from Aeneas himself and Dido, is the young enemy hero, Turnus. His character, much like that of Aeneas, has been the subject of great controversy. Some consider him a mere foil to Aeneas.12 Others look upon him as the villain of the story and find in him no good at all.13 Still others emphasize the heroic good faith of Turnus in protecting his homeland and his loved ones from what he thought to be marauding invaders.14 No matter which option is made in this matter, there is no doubt that Virgil has painted him as a tragic figure. For he shows for him the same broad sympathy that we have seen in the case of the other young men in the Aeneid.

Virgil first introduces Turnus as the leading suitor for the hand of Lavinia, the daughter of King Latinus. No small factor in his being so favored is the fact that he has the backing of Amata, the queen mother:

.. petit ante alios pulcherrimus omnis
Turnus, avis atavisque potens, quem regia coniunx
adiungi generum miro properabat amore;
      (VII.55-57)

Once again we find Virgil stressing the handsomeness of the hero in order to highlight the tragedy of his later fate. Turnus’ commanding appearance is


again mentioned as he leads the aroused band of Latin and Rutulian defenders out to meet the Trojans:

\[
\text{Ipse inter primos praestantibus corpore Turnus}
\]
\[
\text{vertitur arma tenens et toto vertice supra est.}
\]
\[
\text{(VII.783-784)}
\]

There is no doubt that Turnus is every inch a hero and a mighty warrior. His exploits in battle conclusively prove this fact.\(^{15}\)

His bravery is again attested when the Trojan forces in the besieged fortress are bolstered by the arrival of Aeneas and fresh reinforcements on the scene. But their ships have not yet landed, and Turnus, far from retreating, determines to beat off their landing forces:

\[
\text{Haud tamen audaci Turno fiducia cessit}
\]
\[
\text{litora praecipere et vententis pellere terra.}
\]
\[
\text{ultro animos tollit dictis atque increpat ultro.}
\]
\[
\text{quod votis optastis adest, perfringere dextra.}
\]
\[
\text{in manibus Mars ipse, viri. nunc coningis esto}
\]
\[
\text{quidque suae tectique memor, nunc magna referte}
\]
\[
\text{facta, patrum laudes. ultro occurrarus ad undam}
\]
\[
\text{dum tremedi egressisque labant vestigia prima.}
\]
\[
\text{audentis Fortuna iuvat.}
\]
\[
\text{(X.276-284)}
\]

The Trojans manage to land, and the fighting then begins to rage thick and furious. It is during the ensuing battle that Pallas and Turnus encounter each other. Pallas had prayed to Hercules to grant him success in his duel with the Rutulian hero. At this time Virgil has Jupiter make it clear

\(^{15}\text{Cf. especially the Turnus-led assault on the Trojan fortress, while Aeneas is absent, during which the Rutulian hero is apparently trapped within the walls of the fortress. Not only does he escape unscathed, but leaves behind a heavy toll of Trojan dead (VII.530-318).}\)
to Hercules that this is not to be—that Pallas must die. But he also makes
mention of another significant fact:

'stat sua cuique dies, breve et irreparabile tempus
omnibus est vitae; sed famam extendere factis,
hoc virtutis opus. Troiae sub moenia altis
tot nati sedicere deum, quin occidit una
Sarpedon, mea progenies: etiam sua Turnum
fata vocant metasque dati pervenit ad aevi.'

Thus Virgil forewarns of the doom that is awaiting Turnus. But an even
more striking instance of this occurs when Virgil describes Turnus stripping
the armor from Pallas, after he has slain him:

'quo nunc Turnus ovat spolio gaudatque potitus
nescia mens hominum fata sortisque futurae
et servare modum rebus sublata secundis!
Turno tempus erit magno cum optaverit emptum
intactum Pallanta, et cum spolia ista dieraque
oderit... . . .

(X. 500-505)

Already Virgil shows his concern for the unsuspecting hero, much as he had
done in the case of Euryalus under the same circumstances.

Again and again Turnus proves himself in battle, even as the odds mount
against him. Drances tries to persuade the Latins to make a truce, but Turnus
will have none of it, bravely ready to meet any challenge of Aeneas and the
invading Trojans. No doubt some of this spirit of Turnus is pride and bravado,
and the cruelty of some of his actions cannot be passed over lightly.16 But

fatal weakness was want of self-control; he had none of the temperantia by
which the Roman set such store."
despite his intransigence, his stubbornness, and all the faults in his character (which show that he, like Aeneas, is depicted as a fallible human being) Virgil is able to pity him.

Book XII might well be called the "tragedy of Turnus." For the Book begins with Turnus' vow to fight Aeneas to the bitter end and it ends with his tragic death. In this Book is found the greatest evidence of Virgil's tenderness towards his character.

When Latinus has declared his unwillingness to go along with Turnus any further in the fight against the Trojan forces, Amata assures him that she still would never have Aeneas as a son-in-law; she would rather die than have that happen. In the meantime Lavinia listens to her mother's impassioned words and weeps. Virgil describes the scene and its effect on Turnus:

> accepit vocem lacrimis Lavinia matris
> flagrantis perfusa genas, cui plurimus ignem
> subiecit rubor et caelefacta per ora cucurrit.
> Indum sanguineo veluti violaverit ostro
> si quis ebur, aut mixta rubent ubi lilia multa
> alba rosa: talis virgo dabat ore coloris.
> illum turbat amorigitque in virgine vultus.
> ardet in arma magis. . . .  

This eloquent picture of Turnus' deep love for Lavinia again shows the human side of the Rutulian warrior. It evokes, too, the pity of the reader,

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17 Fowler, *The Death of Turnus*, pp. 40-41, comments: "There seems to be no doubt that Turnus was passionately in love with Lavinia, and that his passion was not prompted by any possible political advantages. Lavinia's own feelings are less obvious, but as far as I can see she also returned his love. She blushed deeply when her mother was entreating Turnus not to fight and declaring that she would not live to see Aeneas her son-in-law; and this blush drew from the poet a beautiful simile, and from Turnus a look of deep passion. . . ." Cf. also E. L. Highbarger, *"The Tragedy of Turnus; A Study of Vergil Aeneid XII,"* CW, XLI (January 19, 1948), 116.
as Virgil intended it should.

Again in a brief vignette, as the Trojans and Latins are about to initiate a treaty prior to the single combat of Aeneas and Turnus, Virgil presents a picture of Turnus different from that in earlier passages:

adjuvat incessu tacito progressus et aram
suppliciter venerans demisso lumine Turnus
tabentesque genae et iuvenali in corpore pallor.

(XII.219-221)

The Latins and Rutulians grew uneasy over this unequal match between their courageous hero, whose strength was nearly spent, and the mighty Aeneas, fresh for the fight (XII.216-218). By stressing this factor, Virgil is giving voice once again to his universal human sympathy.

Before the truce is ever made, the battle breaks out again and Aeneas receives an arrow wound in the leg. This enboldens Turnus and he once again rages over the battlefield, littering his path with dead Trojans. Despite his valor the tide of battle shifts slowly but inevitably to favor the Trojans. It becomes apparent that Turnus must come to meet Aeneas alone to settle the issue once and for all. He even has a premonition of his end as he speaks to his sister, Juturna, the goddess who has been protecting him under the guise of his charioteer, Metiscus:

'o soror, et dudum agnovi, cum prima per artem
foedera turbasti teque haec in bella dedisti,
et nunc nequiquam fallis dea. sed quis Olympo
demissam tantos voluit te ferre labores?
an fratris miser i letum ut crudele videres?
nam quid ago? aut quae iam spondet fortuna salutem?
vidi oculos ante ipsa meos me voce vocantem
Murranum, quo non superat mihi carior alter,
oppetere ingentem atque ingenti vulnere victum.
occidit infelix nostrum ne dedecus Ufens
aspiceret; Teucri potiuntur corpore et armis.
exscindine domos (id rebus defuit unum)
perpetiar, dextra nec Drancis dicta refellam?
terga dabo et Turnum fugientem haec terra videbit?
usque adeone mori miserum est? vos o ahi, Manes,
est boni, quoniam superis aversa voluntas,
sancta ad vos anima atque istius nescia culpae
descendam magnorum haud umquam indignus avorum.
(XII.632-649)

Though he senses death, Turnus is not afraid of it.

Turnus is then told of the tragic death of Amata, who has committed suicide. He is torn inwardly by humiliation, grief, madness, and a tortured, jealous love. He speaks again to his sister:

iam iam fata, soror, superant, absiste morari;
quod deus et quo dura vocat Fortuna sequamur.
stat conferre manum Aeneae, stat, quidquid acerbi est,
morte pati, neque me indecorum, germana, videbis,
plius, hunc, oro, sine me furere ante furarem.'
(XII.676-680)

Turnus resolutely jumps down from his chariot and the fight to the finish with Aeneas begins. Turnus holds his own in the bitter struggle, but Virgil again gives a pathetic glimpse of the ultimate outcome in a vivid scene where Turnus attempts to hurl a huge rock at Aeneas:

ille manu raptum trepida torquebat in hostem
altior insurgens et cursu consitus heros.
sed neque currentem se nec cognoscit eumem
tollentemve manus saxumve immane moventem;
genam labant, gelidus concrevit frigore sanguis.
tum lapis ipse viri vacuum per inane volutus
nec spatium avasit totum neque pertulit ictum.
ac velut in somnis, oculos ubi languida pressit
nocte quies, nequiquam audos extendere cursus
velle videmur et in medias consitibus agri
succidimus--non lingua valet, non corpore notae
sufficiunt vires nec vox aut verba sequuntur;
sic Turmo, quacumque viam virtute petivit,
successum dea dira negat. tum pectore sensus
vertuntur variis; Rutulos aspectat et urbem
cunctaturque metu letumque instare tremescit,
nec quo se eriplat, nec qua vi tendat in hostem,
nec currus usquam fidel amigamve sororem.
(XII.901-913)

Virgil here shows great psychological insight in describing the feelings and reactions of Turnus. He uses the whole scene as an omen of the impending death of the Rutulian hero. The dream-simile is extremely effective in emphasizing the pathetic situation of Turnus. That Virgil should have chosen it is again indicative of his sympathy for his character.

But the height of pathos is reached when Virgil etches the final death-scene itself and, at the same time, concludes the Aeneid. Aeneas has wounded Turnus; he has him at his mercy and is ready to kill him. At this point Turnus pleads with Aeneas in a pitiful speech:

ille humilis supplexque oculos dextramque precantem
protendens 'equidem merui nec deprecor' inquit;
'uter corre tota tua. miser si qua parentis
tangere cura potest, oro (fuit et tibi talis
Anchises genitor) Dauno miserere senecae
et me, seu corpus spoliatum lumine mavis,
redde meis. vicisti et victum tendere palmas
Asonis videre; tua est Lavinia coniunx,
ulterior ne tende odio.' . . .
(XII.930-938)

Turnus' sincerity here is evident. He fully realizes, perhaps for the first time, that he has deserved his fate, that the better man (and the fated

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18 Fowler comments, The Death of Turnus, pp. 152-153: "In the whole range of poetry there is nothing, I think, outside Paradise Lost and the Divina Commedia, so grand as this conclusion to the great poem. Homer is here. Lucretius is here, others perhaps, that we do not know of; Virgil calls in their aid to inspire him, to raise him to the highest level of which ancient poetry was possible. But the result is no amalgam; it is Virgil and Virgil only, perfect in its nobility of diction, rhythm and imagination."
one) has won. He does not ask for his life. He asks only that his father may be spared some grief by having the body of his son returned to him. The reader is led to sympathize with Turnus here. Aeneas himself is made to do so:

... stetit acer in armis
Aeneas volvens oculos dextramque repressit;
et iam iamque magis cunctantem flectere sermo
coeperat. . . .

(XII.938-941)

But then, as we have mentioned, occurs the real tragedy. Turnus had stripped the armor from Pallas, and Aeneas now spies the sword-belt of his dead friend girded upon Turnus. His anger at the sight provokes the death-blow.

... infelix uermo cum apparuit alto
baiteus et notis fulserunt cingula bullis
Pallantis pueri, victum quem vulnere Turnus
straverat atque umeris inimicum insigne gerebat.
ille, oculis postquam saevi monimenta doloris
exuviasque hausit, furios accensus et ina
terribilis: 'tene hinc spoliis indute meorum
eriplare mihi? Pallas te hoc vulnere, Pallas
immolat et poenam acelerato ex sanguine sumit.'
hoc dicens ferrum adverso sub pectore condit
fervidus. aet illi solvuntur frigore membra
vitaque cum gemitu fuit indignata sub umbras.

(XII.941-952)

Every tragic hero must have his tragic flaw. It was Turnus' to have allowed his pride and needless grasping for the spoils of war to overcome him. This now leads to his downfall. As has been observed, "Turnus' end... is wholly due to his own fault—and all the more tragic for that. Now our pity that has been increasing with his increasing woes, is complete, for now he is completely the 'underdog.'"¹⁹

Even here, then, Virgil is sympathetic. It is significant that he ends his epic with the "unwilling life-spirit" of the youthful Turnus, "fleeing to the shades below." As Conway says, "even Turnus, Virgil could not doom without a note of pity, for his violence sprang from his love."20

Again the universality of Virgilian pity is impressed upon us. Knight comments: "It is high praise of Vergil to say that his 'bad' characters earn as much sympathy as his 'good.' He takes us to a world in which 'it would be strange not to forgive,' even the unforgiving, like Dido . . . . This is the work of poetry. It intensifies in beauty and truthfulness both good and evil, and the greatest kinds of poetry prove, by the tragic synthesis, the goodness of the universal whole."21

Note again: Virgil's epic ends with a sympathetic portrayal of the death of the leading enemy warrior, not with the exultation over the triumph of the hero. Cowles remarks: "So, by a sort of magnificent irony, the question 'Why should a good man suffer?' is shifted at the end from the hero whose sufferings have engaged our sympathy to his chief adversary and bitter foe, and thus, by implication, to all humanity."22

Letters comments further: "Thus the Aeneid, that opened with a cry of trumpets, dies away with a sigh. It is appropriate: for in the final analysis

22F. J. Cowles, "The Epic Question in Vergil," CJ, XXXVI (December 1940), 141.
'Roman Virgil' is primarily the poet, not of imperial triumph, but of the theme that last line so inevitably recalls—the theme of humanity—the humanity that looks wistfully beyond Lethe, and stretching its hands to the farther shore, yearns always for the divine shaping of these ends that life leaves so rough-hewn, and often seems to mar."23

Thus the Virgilian sympathy for the suffering of young men, which extends even to enemy heroes, is another proof of the universality of the poet. It shows, too, that Terence's saying: Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto, is indeed true of Virgil.24

23Letters, p. 162.

Virgil's sympathy also extends, in a striking way, to the older male figures of the Aeneid. The most prominent among these are Priam, Latinus, Evander, Mezentius, and Anchises. We have already showed that Virgil stresses the tender relations between father and son. In the case of all but Latinus, this is one of the key factors in the personal tragedies of these characters. The Latin king's tragedy pivots about the sorrowful suicide of his wife, Amata, and the bitter struggle between the Trojans and his own unruly people. The latter are stirred up by Turnus, the jealous lover of his daughter, Lavinia.

Latinus and Priam are similar tragic figures in that both see the terrible turmoil in their crumbling kingdoms. Priam, of course, witnesses the death of his own son; he himself is also the victim of an especially pitiable death.

Evander and Mezentius undergo similar experiences. Both lose their youthful sons, Pallas and Lausus. Evander is made to live on in sorrowful remembrance, while Mezentius is killed at the hand of Aeneas. Towards both of these characters, so different in personality traits and qualities, Virgil shows great sympathy.

Anchises is made to undergo the trials and sufferings of the fall of Troy, as well as the long years of wandering at sea. His death occurs before he ever sees the "promised land," the new kingdom for his son, Aeneas, and his people. And, of course, his separation from Aeneas is the cause of sorrow to
both of them, as we have noted in previous chapters.

First we consider the character of Priam. Virgil makes his tragic story an integral part of Aeneas' account in Book II of the fall of Troy, King Priam's city.

The city is in flames, confusion reigns everywhere, and the gloating Pyrrhus and his merciless Greek soldiers have battered their way into the palace (II.469-505). Virgil then has Aeneas tell of Priam's pathetically heroic reaction:

 urbis uti captae casum convulsaque vidit
 limina tectorum et medium in penetralibus hostem,
 arma diu senior desueta trementibus aevo
 circumdat nequiquam umeris et inutile ferrum
 cingitur, ac densos fertur moriturus in hostis.
 asdibus in mediis nudque sub aestheris axe
 ingens ara fuit iuxtaque veterrima laurus
 incumbens arae atque umbra complexa penatis.
 hic Hecuba et natae nequiquam altaria circum,
 praecipites atra ceu tempestate columbae,
 condensae et divum amplexae simulacra sedebant.
 ipsum autem sumptis Priamum iuvenalibus armis
 ut vidit, 'quae mens tam dira, miserrime coniunx,
 impulit his cingitris? aut quo ruis? inquit.
 'non tali auxilio nec defensoribus istis
 tempus eget; non, si ipse neus munc adforet Hector.
 huc tandem conced; haec ara tuebitur omnis,
 aut moriere simul.' sic ore effata recept
 ad sese et sacra longaevum in sede locavit.
 (II.507-525)

Note again the usage of nequiquam and moriturus. The women huddling around the altar (with Virgil's striking simile) and Hecuba's restraining of Priam present a truly pathetic sight.¹

It is in what follows, however, that we have one of the most pitiful and

heart-rendering scenes not only of the _aeneid_, but perhaps of all tragic literature.  

2 Polites, Priam's son, rushes into the court, wounded and hotly pursued by Pyrrhus. Virgil heightens the agony of the picture:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Ecce autem elapsus Pyrrhi de caede Polites}, \\
&\text{unus natorum Priami, per tela, per hostis} \\
&\text{porticibus longis fugit et vacua atria lustrat} \\
&\text{sauclus, illum ardens infesto vulner Pyrrhus} \\
&\text{inaequitur, iam iamque manu tenet et premit hasta.} \\
&\text{ut tandem ante oculos evasit et ora parentum,} \\
&\text{concidit ac multo vitam cum sanguine fudit.} \\
&\text{his Priamus, quamquam in media iam morte tenetur,} \\
&\text{non tamen abstinuit nec voci irasque pepercit:} \\
&\text{'at tibi pro scelere,' exclamat, 'pro talibus ausis} \\
&\text{di, si qua est caelo pistas quae talia curet,} \\
&\text{persolvant grates dignas et praemia reddant} \\
&\text{debita, qui nati coram me cernere letum} \\
&\text{feciisti et patriones foedasti funere vultus.} \\
&\text{at non illa, satum quo te mentiris, Achilles} \\
&\text{talis in hoste fuit Priamo; sed iura fidesque} \\
&\text{supplicis erueuit corpusque exsanguis sepulcro} \\
&\text{redidit nectore musque in mea regna remisit.'} \\
&\text{sio fatus senior telumque imbellie sine iuctu} \\
&\text{coniectit, rauco quod proximus aere repulsum,} \\
&\text{et summo clipei nequiquam umbone pepandit.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(I.526-546)

Again there is a painful disruption of the tender father-son relationship, as Polites is struck down before the very eyes of his helpless father. The reader sees the last valiant efforts of the old king, as _nequiquam_ warns that Priam has performed his last human act. Aeneas goes on with the grisly tale:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{cui Pyrrhus: 'referes ergo haec et munitus ibis} \\
&\text{Pelidae genitori; illi mea tristia facta} \\
&\text{demenereque Neoptolemus narrare memento.} \\
&\text{nunc morere.' hoc dicens altaria ad ipsa trementem} \\
&\text{traxit et in multo lapsantem sanguine nati,} \\
&\text{iplicuitque comam laeva, dextraque coruscum}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^2\text{Cf. A. Cartault, L'Art de Virgile dans L'Enéide (Paris, 1926), I, p. 195.}\)
extulit as lateri capulo tenus abdidit ensem.
haec finis Priami fatorum hic exitus illum
acrite tulit Troiam incensam et prolapsa videntem
Pergama, tot quondam populis terrisque superbum
regnatorem Asiae. Lacet ingens illore truncus,
avulsamque umeris caput et sine nomine corpus.

(II.547-550)

Here is an especially pitiable picture of the old man. He is dragged
along in the blood of his own son and then brutally beheaded. Furthermore,
all the pathos of the sack of Troy can well be summed up in those last five
lines; the last two lines are almost too horrible for utterance. As Knight
has said, "The suffering is made as keen as genius can make it: it is hardly
less than the agony of King Lear." 3

In Chapter II, we pointed out the immediate effect of this incident on
Aeneas. But we might also indicate here a number of other places in the Aeneid
where pathetic mention is made of Priam. In Book I Aeneas and Achates weep
when they see the fall of Troy (and the death of Priam) depicted on the facade
of Dido's temple of Juno (456-461). As they run their eyes over the various
frescoes, Virgil has Aeneas utter a groan when he sees the figure of Priam
begging Achilles for the body of his son, Hector: 4

tum vero ingentem genitum dat pectore ab ino,
ut spolia, ut currus utque ipsum corpus amici
tendentem manus Priamus conspexit inermis.

(I.485-487)

Again Virgil stresses the grief and helplessness of the aged king.

One more tragic mention is made of Priam in Book III (50), where Virgil


4Recall that Priam had pointed out to Pyrrhus the mercilessness of his
own actions as compared to those of his father, Achilles (II. 540-543).
applies to him the epithet infelix, still another one of the lonely words which so well express the characteristic Virgilian sympathy.5

We turn now to the character of Latinus. Virgil first introduces the Latin king in Book VII:

... rex arva Latinus et urbes
iam senior longa placidas in pace regebat.
hunc Fauno et nympha genitum Laurentiae Marica
accipimus; Fauno Picos pater, isque parentem
te, Saturne, refert, tu sanguinis ultimus auctor.
filius huic fato divum prolesque virilis
nulla fuit, primaque oriens erepta invinta est.
sola domum et tantas servabat filia sedes
iam nata viro, iam plenis mutulis annis.
multi illam magno et Latino totaque petebant
Ausonia... ...

(VII.45-54)

The poet lays stress on the fact that Latinus ruled in peace; also that, although he has lost his sons (an early tragedy in his life), he took great pride in his beautiful daughter, who was the most sought-after bride in his kingdom. Both of these factors are important in the spinning out of his tragic story.

Latinus was perfectly willing to receive Aeneas into his kingdom, even to give him his daughter as his bride. For he believed Aeneas to be the stranger destined to be his future son-in-law according to the oracle he had received (VII.96-103). But the rumor of this kindly welcome quickly spread about the kingdom, finally reaching Turnus, who was the leading suitor of Lavinia. His jealous anger was further stirred by Allecto, so that he was

ready to lead his Rutulians against the Trojans and the Latins. Allecto also brought it about that Ascanius accidentally slew the pet deer of Silvia, a Latin maiden. This aroused the Latins against the Trojans so that now both Rutulians and Latins had common cause against them. They brought their grievances to Latinus, who renounced the reins of government rather than consent to declare war on the Trojans (VII.594-615). Virgil says:

hoc et tum Aeneadis indicere bella Latinus
more iuubebatur tristisque recludere portas.
abstinuit tactu pater aversusque refugit
foeda ministeria, et caecis se condidit umbris.
(VII.616-619)

Latinus then withdraws from the scene for a time, and Juno herself opens the gates of war (VII.620-622). And so the battle rages on, with bloody slaughter on both sides, a war which neither Latinus nor Aeneas wanted, but a war which each was powerless to prevent.

In Book XI Latinus reappears on the scene. He cannot abandon his people, and so he steps back into command, at least temporarily. Virgil describes the king's view of the Latin's plight:

deficit ingenti luctu rex ipse Latinus.
fatalem Aenean manifesto numine ferri
admonet ira deum tumulique ante ora recentes.
(XI.231-233)

The old king is deeply hurt. He had ruled so long in peace; now he sees the ravages of war all around him. Troubled, he summons a council to decide what action to take:

ergo concilium magnum primosque suorum
imperio accitos alta intra limina cogit.
ollı convenere fluunteque ad regia plenis
tecta viis. sedet in mediis et maxima aevo
et primus sceptris haud laeta fronte Latinus.
(XI.234-238)
But little is accomplished as the controversy drags on (XI.239-335). Should they fight or compromise? Brances, a loquacious, if not courageous, elder, berates Turnus as the instigator of all the bitter struggle. Turnus for his part utters a speech of brave defiance of Brances and of the invading Trojans (XI.336-444).

At this point a sentry announces that Aeneas and the Trojans have been advancing all the while toward the citadel. The people panic. Turnus takes advantage of the situation to arouse the Latins and Rutulians to fight again (XI.445-467). Latinus is deeply disturbed and worried over this turn of events:

*conditum ipse pater et magna incepta Latinus desert ac tristi turbatus tempore differt, multaque se incusat qui non acciperit ultro Dardanium Aenean generumque asciverit urbi.*

(XI.469-472)

In Book XII Latinus is unable to keep Turnus from continuing the now hopeless struggle (XII.18-53). Thus Turnus leads the Latins and Rutulians in a last-ditch stand. A bit later, while Aeneas is making a vigorous attack against the Latin fortress, Queen Amata, thinking that her beloved Turnus has been killed, commits suicide. Virgil describes the effect this has upon her long-suffering husband:

*hinc totam infelix vulgatur | fama per urbem demittunt mentes, it scissa veste Latinus coningis attotitus | Tatis urbisque ruina, canitiem immundo | perfusam pulvere turpans.*

(XII.608-611)

Here is described the tragic ruin of Latinus, whose peaceful reign was disrupted by a war which he did not want, who saw his people torn by the horrors
of this war, and who at last lost his wife most sorrowfully. 6

Virgil has depicted in Latinus another tragic figure whose personal suffering is the object of his human sympathy. Latinus holds the stage for only a short while, but it is long enough for the reader to spot the evidences of Virgil's compassion for him.

The Arcadian king Evander was a valued ally of Aeneas in his struggle against the Latins and Rutulians. We have already indicated in previous chapters how he provided Aeneas with fighting men, including his own son, Pallas. The two factors Virgil seems to stress in his sympathetic portrayal of Evander are his old age and his deep love for Pallas.

In Book VIII Virgil has Evander tell Aeneas of the cruel atrocities of Mezentius towards his Etruscan subjects. These atrocities have caused his people to rise up against him and Turnus, and then to seek out Evander himself as their leader in revolt (450-507). But he cannot accept the command, for he tells Aeneas:

sed mihi tarda gelu saeclisque effeta senectus
invidit imperium seraeque ad fortia vires.

(VIII.508-509)

He does, however, give Aeneas some of his crack troops, chief among whom is his son, Pallas. With these men the Trojan hero can take command of the

6Cf. C. Saunders, "The Tragedy of Latinus," CW, XV (October 17, 1921), 17, who points out that the tragedy of Latinus "supplies to the latter half of the Aeneid what the Dido story contributed to the earlier half, and both tragedies follow with perfect naturalness in the wake of a hero whose superhuman singleness of purpose keeps him to the goal set by fate. The Latinus tragedy is more thoroughly wrought into the fabric of the Aeneid than is the episodic Dido story."
native rebels. As Aeneas and his party prepare to set out, Virgil paints a
pathetic (and prophetic) image of the old man and his dearly beloved Pallas:

```
it timor et maior Martis iam apparat imago.
tum pater Euandrus dextram complexus suntis
haeret inexpletus lacrimans ac talius fatur:
I'o mihi praeteritos referat si Iuppiter annos,
qualis eram cum primam aciem Praeneste sub ipsa
stravi scutorumque incendi victor acervos
et regem hac Erulum dextra sub Tartara misi,
nascenti cui tris animas Feronia mater
(horrendum dictu) dederat, terna arma movenda
(ter leto sternandus erat; cui tum tamen omnis
abstulit haec animas dextra et totidem exuit armis):
non ego nunc dulci amplexu divellerer usquam,
pate, tuo, neque finitim0 Mezentius usquam
hulic capiti insultans tot ferro saeva dedisset
funera, tam multis viduasset civibus urbem.
at vos, o superi, et divum tu maxime rector
Iuppiter, Arcadii, quaeo, miserescite regis
et patrias audite preces: si numina vestra
incolullem Pallanta mihi, si fata reservant,
si visurus sum vivo et venturus in unum
vitam oro, patior quemvis durare laborem.
sin aliquem imandum casum, Fortuna, minaris,
nunc, nunc o liceat crudelem abrumperg vitam,
dum curae ambiguae, dum spes incerta futuri,
dum te, care puer; mea sola et seria voluptas,
complext tenee, gravior nee mutius auris
vulneret.' haec genitor digressu dicta supremo
fundebat; famuli conlapsum in tecta ferebant.
(VIII.557-584)
```

Again to be noted are some of Virgil's characteristic words of compassion. The speech is truly prophetic. Terrible tidings will indeed break the heart of the old man and Pallas will be torn from his embrace--forever.

We have already discussed the tragic death of Pallas, but we consider now Virgil's description of its effect on the young hero's father. Herein is found the essence of Evander's tragedy. As the funeral procession bearing the bier of Pallas enters the grieving city, Virgil heightens the pathos of the scene as
Evander rushes out to cling to the body of his son:

at non Euanum potis est vis ulla tenera,
sed venit in medios, feretra Pallante reposto
procubuit super atque haeret lacrimansque gemensque,
et via vix tandem vocis laxata dolore est:

'non haec, o Pallas, dederas promissa parenti.
cautius ut saevo velles te credere Marti!
haud ignarus eram quantum nova gloria in armis
et praedulce decus primo certamine posset.
primitae iuvenis miseras bellique propinquae
dua rudimenta, et nulli exaudita deorum
vota precesque meas! tuque, o sanctissima coniunx,
felix morte tua neque in hunc servata dolorem!
contra ego vivendo vici mea fata, superstit
restarem ut genitor. Tuxum socia arma sectum
obruerent Rutuli telis; animam ipso dedisset
atque haec pompa domum me, non Pallante, referret!

(XI.143-163)

Virgil stresses here the youthful promise to win glory in battle, which Pallas was to win only at the expense of his own life and the grief of his father. When Pallas had first set out with Aeneas, Evander had seemed almost to have sensed impending doom as he spoke to his son for the last time. Now his fears are realized. The anguished old man wishes that he could have died sooner, as his wife had done, or that he could have died in place of his son, so that he could have avoided the sorrow of this event. Evander continues his pathetic speech:

ne vos arguerim, Teucri, nec foedera nec quas
immimas hospitio dextrae; sors ista senectae
debitas erat nostrae. quod si immatura manebat
mors natum caesis Volscorum milibus ante
ducentem in Latium Teucros cecidisse iuvabit.
quin ego non alio digner te funere, Palla,
quam plus Aeneas et quam magni Phryges et quam
Tyrhenique duces, Tyrrehenum exercitus omnis.
magna tropaea ferunt quos dat tua dextera leto;
tu quoque nunc stares immanis truncus in armis
essest par astas et idem si robur ab annis,
Tyrne. sed infelix Teucros quid demoror armis?
Evander will live on in sorrowful remembrance of his beloved Pallas. He asks Aeneas to avenge his son's death, not so much for his own sake, as for the sake of Pallas. He is ever thinking of the boy. Aeneas will indeed kill Turnus and thus win revenge for the death of Pallas, but even such action is small assuagement for a grieving father. In his emphasis on Evander's inexpressible grief lies Virgil's pity for the old man.

Sellar has rightly called Evander, "perhaps the most impressive of the secondary personages in the Aeneid . . . as he appears in the dignity of his simple state in the eighth book, and in the dignity of his great sorrow in the eleventh."\(^7\)

In the character of Mezentius Virgil presents a unique sort of tragic figure. Mezentius is similar to Evander in suffering the loss of a dear son, but it is the striking personality traits with which he is endowed, and the change that takes place in his character, which make him in many ways an even more tragic figure than Evander.

Virgil introduced Mezentius in Book VII in his catalogue of the warring

chieftains (647-648). There he is called *contemtor divum,* the epithet which well fits one so violent and cruel as Mezentius proves himself to be. This factor in his personality, indeed, is part of his personal tragedy. It was Evander himself who gave a vivid description of the cruelty of Mezentius (VIII. 481-493). This may be more than a coincidence.

In Book X Mezentius is raging over the battlefield, slaying Trojan warriors right and left (659-763). As Mezentius is about to kill Orodès, one of the Trojan stalwarts, Virgil has Mezentius cry out: *pars belli haud tenenda, viri, lacet altus Orodès.* (X.737).

But the dying Orodès warns:

ille autem exspirans: 'non me, quicumque es, imulo, victor, nec longum lastabere; te quoque fata prospectunt paria atque saevis max arva tenebis.'

(X.739-741)

Again note Virgil's way of hinting at the impending doom of one of his tragic figures. The same sort of thing he had done in the case of Turnus.

Now Virgil shows Mezentius' reaction to this warning:

*ad quae subridens mixta Mezentius ira:
'unc morere, ast de me divum pater atque hominum rex
viderit,' hoc dicens eduxit corpore telum.*

(X.742-744)

---

8Fr. A. Sullivan, S.J., in his essay "Virgil's Mezentius," in *Classical Essays in Honor of J. A. Kleist, S.J.* (St. Louis, 1946), p. 100, points out that *contemtor divum* is a fixed epithet that Virgil applies to Mezentius six times. What do the words mean? Not an atheist or infidel, as many interpret them, but, to quote Henry, 'the practical under-rater, despiser, contemptor of the gods. . . . The offence of Mezentius consisted neither in denying the existence of the gods, nor in entertaining a mean opinion of the gods, but in manifesting contempt for the gods by an habitual disregard of their commands.'

It is truly ironical that one who held the gods in contempt should admit that only they could determine the time of his death. Thus, Mezentius is saying more than he realizes when he utters this statement. This is the first stage of his imminent downfall.

Virgil goes on describing the havoc that Mezentius wreaks on the Trojans as he strides over the battlefield like some tornado or raging monster:

\[
\text{at vero ingentem quatiens Mezentius bastam turbidus ingreditur campo. quam magnus Orion cum pedes incedit mediī per maxima Nerei stagna viam scindens, umero supereminst undas, aut summis referens annosam mortibus ornum ingrediturque solo et caput inter nubila condit; talis se vastis infert Mezentius armis. (I.762-768)}
\]

But then the warrior chieftain runs into mighty Aeneas. Mezentius hurls his spear at the Trojan hero. He misses Aeneas but kills one of the Trojan's fellow warriors. Aeneas in turn hurls his spear with deadly accuracy, hitting Mezentius in the groin (I.769-736). As Aeneas closes in for the kill, the young son of Mezentius, Lausus, steps in to parry the thrust. He protects his father, but at the expense of his own life. It is in the painful sorrow of Mezentius at the death of Lausus that he reaches the peak of his tragedy.

Virgil first gives us a vivid picture of the wounded chieftain not yet aware of his son's tragic death:

\[
\text{Interea genitor Tiberini ad fluminis undam vulnere siccabat lymphis corpusque levabat arboris acclinis trunco. procul aerea rami
dependet galsa et prato gravia arma quiescunt.
estant lecti circum iuvenes; ipse aeger anhelans colla foveat fusus propexam in pectora barbas; multa super Lauso rogitat, multumque remittit qui revocant mæstique ferant mandata parentis. (I.832-840)}
\]
Mezentius, seemingly so lacking in feeling and emotion, is deeply concerned about the welfare of his son. This is a side of the warrior the reader has not seen before. It is an indication of the change in his character, a change which allows the reader to sympathize with him, as does the poet. Sullivan remarks: "So, as long as Mezentius remained only a 'scorner of the gods,' he would have failed to arouse the 'strong creative power of human passion' and human sympathy in Virgil." But it is when Virgil stresses the fatherliness in Mezentius that "all at once, from a grand but remote figure, Mezentius became a human being. Here at last Virgil felt himself fully at home. He had a special fondness for the pathetic, for scenes that call forth the lacrimae rerum."  

Virgil brings the scene to its tragic climax as Mezentius discovers that Lausus has been killed:

\[
\text{Lausus has Men killed:} \\
\text{at Lausum socii examinem super arma ferebant} \\
\text{flentes, ingentes atque ingenti vulnere victum.} \\
\text{agnovit longe gemitum praesaga mali mens.} \\
\text{canitiam multo deformat pulvere et ambas} \\
\text{ad caelum tendit palmas et corpore inhaeret.} \\
\text{tantaene me tenuit vivendi, nate, voluptas,} \\
\text{ut pro me hostili paterer succedere dextreae,} \\
\text{quem genui? tuane haec genitor per vulnera servor} \\
\text{morte tua vivens? heu, nunc miser mihi demum} \\
\text{exitium infelix; nunc alte vulneras adactum!} \\
\text{idem ego, nate, tuum maculavi crimine nomen,} \\
\text{pulsus ob invidiam solio sceptrisque paternis.} \\
\text{deberam patrisae poenas odiasque meorum:} \\
\text{omnia per mortis animam contem ipse dedissem!} \\
\text{nunc vivo neque adhuc homines lucemque relinquuo.} \\
\text{sed linguam.'...} \\
\text{(x.341-356)}
\]

\[^{10}\text{Sullivan, pp. 104-105.}\]

\[^{11}\text{Ibid., 105.}\]
Again there is a significant change wrought in this *contemptor divum,*
who is made to realize by this deepest of personal tragedies, the greatness
of his crimes against the gods, his country, his people, and most of all,
against this very innocent son of his. Guillemin remarks: "... le remords
de l'âme est d'une délicatesse plus humaine: c'est lui-même et non plus le
destin qu'il accuse; la modération de l'expression relève la sincérité et la
profondeur du sentiment; le regne de la ματάρια est passé; Virgile connaît des
Âmes qui se sentent responsables de leurs actes."\(^{12}\)

Mezentius wishes to die much as Evander, rather than to live on in sorrow
for his son. Sullivan finds in the two preceding passages from the *Aeneid* a
scene that "is unsurpassed for its strong, tender pathos, except, perhaps, in
*Lear,* where the old king storms in with Cordelia in his arms."\(^{13}\)

Mezentius then calls for his war-horse and armor, resolved to re-enter
the fray. Another pathetic insight into the newly discovered gentle side of
Mezentius is had when Virgil describes his little talk with his steed, Rhaebus.\(^{14}\)

\[
\text{haft dejectus equum duci iubet. hoc decus illi,}
\text{hoc solamen erat, bellis hoc victor abibat}
\text{comibus. adloquitur maerentem et talibus infit:}
\text{'Rhaebi, diu, res si qua diu mortalis illa est,}
\text{viximus. aut hodie victor spolia illa cruenta}
\text{et caput Aeneae referes Lausique dolorum}
\text{ultor eris mecum, aut aperit si nulla viam vis,}
\]


\(^{13}\) Sullivan, p. 106.

\(^{14}\) Cf. Sullivan, p. 109. The reader recalls how Pallas' charger, *methon,*
had mourned over the loss of his master (XI.95-90); these again are examples
of the Virgilian "humanizing" of animals, discussed in our introductory chapter.
occumbes pariter; neque enim, fortissime, credo,
Iussa aliena pati et dominos dignabere Teucros."
(X.358-366)

The brief speech is doubly pathetic in that this return to battle against Aeneas will prove fatal to both Mezentius and his trusty Rhaebus. Mezentius goes out to the battlefield. When he sights Aeneas, he calls out to him in challenge:

\[ \ldots \text{'quid me erepto, saevissime, nato terres? haec via sola fuit qua perdere posses:
nec mortem horremus nec divum parcimus ulla.
desine, nam venio moriturus et haec tibi porto done prius.'...} \]

(X.379-382)

Mezentius is prepared to die, but he is also prepared to fight Aeneas to the bitter end. Moriturus indicates once again that the end is near. He hurls his javelins at Aeneas, who fends them off with his stout shield. Finally, Aeneas hurls his deadly spear and strikes the forehead of Mezentius' steed. Rhaebus rears up, throwing Mezentius to the ground, then falls on top of him, pinning the warrior to the ground, where he lies at the mercy of Aeneas:

\[ \text{advolat vaginaque eripit ensen}
et super haec: 'ubi nunc Mezentius acer et illa effera vis animi?' \ldots \]

(X.896-898)

Virgil has Mezentius answer Aeneas in one of the most poignant passages in the Aeneid:

\[ \ldots \text{contra Tyrrhenus ut auras}
suspicient hausit caelum mentemque recepit:
'hostis amare, quid increpitas mortemque minaris?
nullum in caede nefas, nec si ad proelia veni,
nec taceas haec peperit mini foedera Lausus.}
unum hoc per si qua est victis venia hostibus oro:
corpus humo patiare tegi. scio acerba meorum} \]
circumstare odia; hunc, oro, defende furem
et me consortem nati concede sepulcro.'

(1.898-906)

The change in Mezentius is complete. He asks only one thing from Aeneas: that he be buried in the same grave as his dear son, Lausus. As Sullivan comments: "After this dignified appeal no words are spoken; there is the flash of a sword, and the curtain falls. Did Aeneas grant this dying appeal? It is one of Virgil's pregnant silences. Our first sight of Mezentius was by the side of his son; our last view of him, hints Virgil delicately, is by the side of that same son—in the grave."15

Thus, Mezentius the brutal warrior changes into Mezentius the human sufferer, the sorrowing father, the dying warrior. And now he is the object of the tender human sympathy of his poet-creator. As Sullivan once again remarks: "... what poet, except Virgil, would have lavished such pity on a character like Mezentius? For pity him we do and with all our heart. At the book closes and the echoes of war die away, Aeneas is almost forgotten. We find ourselves hoping against hope that this father has at long last found peace by the side of the son he loved so tenderly."16

We move on now to the last of the great fathers of the Aeneid, Anchises, the father of the epic hero himself. Anchises, too, is a unique tragic figure. His tragedy is quite different from those we have treated so far, but it is nonetheless quite real. His sufferings include seeing the downfall of his city,

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid., 112. Cf. also E. A. Hahn, "Vergil and the Underdog," TAPA, LVI (1925), 202-204.
enduring all the hardships of the weary years in exile, and finally being irrevocably separated from Aeneas and the "promised land" by his own death. All of these events draw out the compassion of Virgil for the character of Anchises.

In Book II when Aeneas sees the terrible slaughter of Priam, he is immediately reminded of and concerned about Anchises (560-562). When Aeneas realizes that he must flee the burning city, he at first cannot persuade Anchises to leave with him. But an omen from the gods finally puts an end to his hesitation, and Aeneas picks up the old man and carries him on his strong back out of the city (II.720-722). Virgil's poignant picture here emphasizes both the pathetic helplessness of the aged Anchises and the deep devotion of his son, Aeneas.

In Book III, Aeneas relates the tale of the long years of exile, most of them spent enduring the hardships at sea. Here Virgil depicts Anchises as much more the leader and also the respect Aeneas has for the counsels of his father. But not to be forgotten are the trials and dangers of the seven long years of voyaging. It they were difficult for Aeneas and the younger warriors, the reader can well imagine the added strain they put on Anchises. The poet hints at the sufferings Anchises endured on the journey when Aeneas tells of the death of his beloved father:

hinc Drepani me portus et inaestabilis ora
accipit. hic pelagi tot tempestatibus actus
heu, genitorem, omnis curae casusque levamen,
amitto Anchisen. hic me, pater optime, fessum
deseris, heu, tantis nequiquam crepte periclis!

(III.707-711)
Again there is that pathetic word, _nequiquam_. All in vain was Anchises' survival of all the storms and dangers at sea. For he was to die before reaching the land destined to be the new home of his people. By speaking through the deeply moving words of Aeneas here, Virgil stresses all the more his own sympathy for Anchises.

In Book V Virgil tells of the funeral games in honor of Anchises. Even in death his dear son and his people deeply reverence him. Glover perceptively points out that "while the men celebrate Anchises with game and race, Virgil shows us the women sitting apart and weeping for him (amissum Anchisem flebant, V.614)."

Another item of interest, in this book especially, is the use of striking epithets ascribed to Anchises: _pater Anchises_ (31); _divinus parens_ (47); _magnus Anchises_ (99); _longævus Anchises_ (535). Throughout the rest of the Aeneid, too, Virgil calls him _pater Anchises, sanctus parens Anchises, carus genitor_, etc. Always Virgil's sympathy for old age and for parents is emphasized.

In Book VI, Virgil again mentions the sufferings of Anchises as Aeneas begs the Sibyl to allow him to see his dear father in the Underworld:

_illum ego per flammæ et mille sequentia tela eripui his umeris medioque ex hoste recepi;
ille meum comitatus iter maria omnia mecum atque omnis pelagique minas caelique ferebat,_
_invalidus, viris ultra sortemque senectae._
_quin, ut te supplex paterem et tua limina adirem,
ident orans mandata dabat. _natile patrisque,_

alma, precor, miserere. . . .
(VI.110-117)

Virgil reemphasizes here the age of Anchises and intimacy of the father-
son relationship.

We have already considered in our chapter on Aeneas the poignant meeting
of the epic hero and his father (VI.679-702). It is enough to note here that
this meeting was a deeply moving one for Anchises as well as for Aeneas.

Aeneas then takes leave of his father and, except for an occasional
reference, nothing more is heard of the older man in the remaining chapters
of the epic. Yet his noble spirit lives on in Aeneas, ever recalling the
reader's attention to the bond between father and son.

Thus in Virgil's sympathetic portrayal of the older men in the Aeneid,
all of them loving fathers, lies another facet of his all-embracing human
pity. 18

18 Bellesort has said well that Virgil's fathers are endowed with motherly
CHAPTER VI

THE WOMEN OF THE AENEID: TRAGIC FIGURES

We turn now to another group of tragic characterizations in which Virgil displays his sympathy for the suffering women of the Aeneid. We have already considered Virgil's most tragic character, Dido, whom he compassionated above all others. It is not surprising then that lesser female characters in the epic should also win the sympathy of their creator.1

None of the women we shall consider here play very prominent roles in the story (except perhaps the warrior-maid, Camilla). Yet each, in her own way, suffers a genuine tragedy. In addition to Camilla, we shall note Virgil's pathetic sketches of Creusa, Andromache, Anna, Amata, Lavinia, the unnamed mother of Euryalus, and Juturna.2 All of these women are victims of the bitter sufferings of war involving their own deaths or the deaths of their loved ones. The single common virtue of all is their unswerving devotion to family and to kin.3

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2 There are a number of other minor personages, as well as references to anonymous women, whom we shall not consider since they have no real significance for our purpose here.

3 Cf. Prescott, p. 469.
The tragedy of Creusa has been treated briefly from Aeneas' point of view, but we may add here a few pertinent comments. Aeneas showed his concern for the welfare of his wife during the siege at Troy (II.562-563, 666-667), a concern which mirrors that of the poet himself.

When Aeneas cannot persuade Anchises to leave the city with Creusa, Ascanius, and himself, he prepares to rejoin the battle in the city. At this point Creusa cries out:

'si peritokus abis, et nos rape in omnia tecum;
sin aliquam expertus sumptis spea ponis in armis,
hanc primum tutare domum. cui parvus Iulus,
cui pater et coniunx quondam tua dicta relinquor?'

(II.675-679)

Notice Virgil's choice of words here: coniunx quondam tua dicta. There is a similar expression in one of Dido's reproaches of Aeneas (IV.324). The pathos here is more gentle than in the case of Dido, but it nevertheless shows the sympathy of Virgil for his character, Creusa.

Creusa was separated from Aeneas amid the bustle and confusion of escape from the burning city. Virgil lets the reader imagine for himself the tragedy of her death in one of his pathetic silences. Then Aeneas, showing the depth of his love for her, returns to the ruined city and searches in vain for Creusa. Her shade appears to him, and it is in the gentle, comforting words which she speaks to her husband that Virgil gives a last pathetic glimpse of Creusa:

'quid tantum insano iuvat indulgere dolori 
gulae coniunx? non haec sine numine divum
eventiunt nec te hinc comitem asportare Creusam
fas, aut ille sinit superi regnator Olympi.
longa tibi exsilia et vastum maris aequor arandum,
et terram Hesperiam venies, ubi Lydius arva
inter opima virum leni fluit agmine Thybris:
illic res laetae regnumque et regia coniunx
parta tibi; lacrimas dilectae pelle Creusae.
non ego Myrmidonum sedes Dolopumve superbas
aspiciam aut Grais servitum matribus ibo,
Dardanis et divae Veneris aurus;
se me magna deum genetrix his detinet oris.
ianque vale et nati serva communi amore.

(II.776-789)

Greusa is resigned to her fate, which she recognizes as the will of the
gods. She even foretells Aeneas' future happiness and that of his bride-to-be,
Lavinia. She finds solace in the fact that she will be no slave to a Greek
master. This solace Greusa tries to impart to her grieving husband. Her last
words express a tender farewell to Aeneas and commend their dear son to his
loving care.

Knight keenly observes: "The sadness is all the greater because Greusa
is not only lost, but forgotten, too. Her part is over; and her memory does
not count in Aeneas' later loves. This is one of the places where Virgil spares
no suffering, so that the tragedy may be perfect. Besides, humanity does for-
get."

Thus Virgil has Creusa dissolve from the scene. But even in this mere
sketch of her character, he has presented a characteristically sympathetic
portrayal.

Andromache, Hector's widow, is depicted in a pathetic meeting with Aeneas
in western Greece, on the latter's journey to Latium, as recorded in Book III.
But even earlier Virgil has given in a very brief passing reference to Andro-
mache in Book II, an instance of his artlessly simple yet penetrating insight

into her character. Aeneas is telling of his hand-to-hand fighting in the passageways of the Trojan fortress. He mentions a secret entrance to the palace, which Andromache has often used:

Limen erat caecaeque foeres et pervius usus
  tectorum inter se Priami, postesque relictii
a tergo, infelix qua se, dum regna manebant,
  saepius Andromache ferre incomitata solebat
  ad soceros et avo puerum Astyanacta trahebat.
  (II.453-457)

The picture is perfectly etched, with the Trojan princess tenderly carrying her dear Astyanax to see his grandparents. Again the lonely word infelix expresses the poet's natural sympathy.

When Aeneas and his wandering exiles land on the western coast of Greece, they hear rumors of Andromache's presence in that land as queen to Helenus, another of Priam's sons, who had been taken captive but was now ruling the territory. Aeneas and Andromache meet shortly:

progredior portu classis et litora linquens,
  sollemnis cum forte dapes et tristia dona
  ante urbem in luco falsi Simoentis ad undam
  libabat cineri Andromache manisque vocabat
  Hectorum ad tumulum, viridi quem caespite inanem
  et geminas, causam lacrimis, sacraverat aras.
  ut me conspexit venientem et Troia circum
  arma amens vidit, magnis exterrita monstris
  deriguit visu in medio, calor ossa reliquit;
  labitur et longo vix tandem tempore fatur:
    'verane te facies, verus mihi muntius adfers,
    nate dea? vivisne? aut, si lux alma recessit,
    Hector ubi est?' dixit, lacrimasque effudit et omnem
    implevit clamore locum. . . .
  (III.300-313)

Even now Andromache cannot forget her beloved Hector; the tragedy of his death remains forever imbedded in her heart. When she sees Aeneas she is visibly shaken; his presence recalls that of her own Hector.
Aeneas manages to calm her and then inquires about her fortunes since leaving Troy. With great sadness Andromache tells of being carried off as captive by Pyrrhus and forced to bear his children. Then when the cruel tyrant grew tired of her, he gave her over to Helenus. She was to be slave-wife to a slave, as she says (III.321-329). Her fate, pathetically, is the very one which Creusa rejoiced at not having to suffer. This is another of Virgil’s artfully simple ways of expressing his tender pity.

Yet, bitter though her tragic past has been, Andromache now has some measure of happiness. She tells Aeneas that Helenus has been made ruler over this territory, after Orestes had avenged himself on Pyrrhus (III.330-343).

Aeneas remains with Helenus and Andromache for several days and receives a prophecy from Helenus about his future journey (III.336-342). Then it comes time for the Trojan hero and his band to depart. In Andromache’s parting words to Ascanius Virgil gives us one last glimpse of her:

\[\text{nec minus Andromache digressu maesta supra,}
\text{fert picturat asuri subtemine vestis}
\text{et Phrygiam Ascanio chlamydem (nec cedit honore)}
\text{textilibusque onerat donis, ac talia fatur:}
\text{accipe et haec, maxum tibi quae monumenta mea rum}
\text{sint, puere, et longum Andromachae testentur amorem,
\text{conungis Hectorae. cape dona extrema tuorum,}
\text{o mihi sola mei super Astyanactis imagingo.}
\text{sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora ferebat;}
\text{et nunc aequali tecum pubesceret aevö.’}
\text{(III.482-491)}

Andromache is deeply moved by this separation. She has seen in Ascanius the image of her own lost son, Astyanax, and she bestows upon him all the tenderness she would have reserved for her son.\(^5\) Again Virgil has heightened the

\(^5\) Cf. F. J. Cowles, "Vergil's Hatred of War," CJ, XXX (February 1934), 370.
pathos of the situation by stressing the strong familial ties that must yield
to the demands of destiny. Prescott comments: "Seldom has Virgil succeeded
better in compelling the sympathy and pity of his readers. ..." In doing
so, he reveals his own abiding sympathy for the human suffering that was so
much a part of Andromache's life. 7

Moving on through the epic, we find our next tragic female figure in Anna,
the beloved sister of Dido. Her tragedy is inextricably bound up with the pa-
thetic death of the unfortunate queen, whose story we considered in Chapter III.
She has often been called an admirable foil to Dido. 8 But more than this, Anna
is at once Dido's confidante, adviser, and message-bearer, emerging in Virgil's
story as "a balanced and dignified person, who, caught in the whirl of spectacu-
lar events, endures nobly her own quiet tragedy, as the lesser characters in any
great tragedy so often do." 9

Dido admitted her love for Aeneas to Anna and sought her sister's advice
(IV.8-30). Anna listens attentively, gives her approval of the love-match,
and expresses the sound possibilities inherent in the circumstances (IV.31-53). 10

6 Prescott, p. 355.
7 Bellesort finds in Andromache a character no less living than Dido her-
self, and, in her own way, as tragic. Cf. Virgile: Son Oeuvre et Son Temps
Cf. also A. S. Pease, ed., Publi Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Quartus (Cam-
9 E. Swallow, "Anna Soror," CW, XLIV (February 1951), 145.
10 Swallow discusses at some length the charge that Anna is thereby the cause
of the whole tragic love affair that follows, pp. 146-147.
The point to note here is the emphasis Virgil places on the closeness of Anna's relations with Dido. This is expressed in the very first words she speaks in answer to the queen: 'o luce magis dilecta sorori' (IV.31). The closeness of their sisterly bond will add to the double tragedy that is to come.\(^\text{11}\)

Further on in the story Anna carries intimate and urgent messages from her desperate sister to Aeneas, trying to persuade him to remain with Dido (IV.416-449). Swallow points out the devotion Anna shows here, bearing with both the difficult nature of her love-stricken sister and with the immovable Aeneas who is subject to insistent divine commands.\(^\text{12}\) Virgil stops to record a brief word of sympathy for Anna:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Talibus orabat, talisque miserrima fletus} \\
\text{fertque refertque soror.} \\
\text{(IV.437-438)}
\end{align*}
\]

Virgil calls her miserrima soror. We have indicated on numerous other occasions the significance of such an epithet.

But, of course, Anna's real tragedy occurs when she discovers that her sister has deceived her and committed suicide. On her way to join Dido she hears the death wail raised. At once she grasps the awful truth:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{audiit examinis trepidoque exterrita cursu} \\
\text{unguibus ora soror foedans et pectora pugnis} \\
\text{per medios ruit, ac morientem nomine clamat:} \\
\text{(IV.672-674)}
\end{align*}
\]

Then Anna emits a pathetic cry of desolation and grief:

\begin{align*}
'hoc illud, germana, fuit? me fraude petebas? \\
hoc rogus iste mihi, hoc ignes araeque parabant?
\end{align*}

\(^{11}\) Dido, too, refers to Anna as cara mihi nutrix (IV.634).

\(^{12}\) Swallow, p. 148.
quid primum deserta querar? comitemne sororem
sprevisti moriens? eadem me ad fata vocasses;
idem ambas ferro dolor atque eadem hora tulisset.
his etiam struxi manibus patriisque vocavi
voce deos, sic te ut posita, crudelis, abesse?

extincti te meque, soror, populumque patresque
Sidonios urbesque tuam. date vulnera lypmis
ablaam et, extremus si quis super halitus errat,
ora legam.' . . .

(Iv.675-685)

Anna's dirge over Dido is conventional, as is her wiping away of the blood and washing the wounds. But not so the glimpse Virgil gives here of Anna's pure human affection. Swallow sums it up beautifully in this comment:

In a sense Anna echoes the tragedy of the queen. She has lived not for herself, but for Dido, as her sister's counselor and mainstay in both word and deed, never failing in either patience or performance. And she had seemed to know her sister through and through. But she made one grave miscalculation: she rested too sure of Dido's emotional resilience, failing to notice that a love ruptured by death, as hers for Sychaeus had been, was something far different from a love ruptured by betrayal and flight. Under that Dido's spirit broke, and in death she has ruined others along with herself. It is in many ways a literal truth that Anna utters when she says extincti te meque, soror. Though she will continue to live, there is for Anna nothing now left in life.13

Thus the characteristic Virgilian sympathy manifests itself in the tragic figure of Anna as in the even more tragic figure of her sister.

Latinus' wife, Amata, loved Turnus deeply and desired him for her son-in-law (VII.56-57). This factor is really the seed of her ultimate ruin. For when Latinus receives Aeneas warmly and even promises Lavinia to him in marriage, Amata is greatly upset and seethes with grief and chagrin at this turn of events (VII.343-345). She pleads with Latinus to no avail. Then the Fury, Allecto, at the bidding of Juno, further stirs up her troubled heart, so that

she raves uncontrollably through the city in a great frenzy, trying to arouse the people against the Trojan foreigners (VII.373-405).

Again Virgil gives an inkling of the tragedy that is soon to befall Amata when he has her call herself infelix Amata (VII.401). Truly she is unfortunate, for she sees her legitimate plans spoiled by a foreigner, whose destiny she cannot be expected to understand. And the scheming Juno takes advantage of her while she is in her confused state of mind.

Amata's actual tragedy takes place in Book XII. Latinus has tried to convince Turnus of the futility of any further fighting against Aeneas and the Trojans. Turnus, however, remains intransigent, and it is here that Virgil has Amata make an impassioned appeal to her beloved Turnus:

At regina nove pugnae conterrata sorte
flebat et ardentea generum moritura tenebat:
'Turne, per has ego te lacrimas, per si quis Amatae
tangit honos animum (spe tu nunc una, semectae
tu requies miserae, decus imperiumque Latini
ter penes, in te omnis dominus inclinata recumbit),
umm oro: desiste manum committere Teucris.
et me, Turne, manent; simul haec invisa relinquam
lumina nec generum Aenean captiva videbo.'
(XII.54-63)

Notice especially Virgil's signpost of sympathy once again: moritura.

Amata begins to realize that she will soon die. The reader is made aware of Virgil's sympathetic concern in his emphasis on the depth of Amata's love for Turnus as the only comfort for her old age. She is resolved to die rather than have anyone but Turnus for her son-in-law.

Virgil's account of Amata's tragic death is particularly empathetic, showing most revealingly his sympathy for her suffering and anguish:

Accidit haec fessis etiam fortuna Latinis,
Concentrated in this short passage are numerous characteristic expressions of sympathy. The whole city is grieved over Amata's unfortunate death. The tragedy of her death is made more acute by the fact that she took her own life not knowing that Turnus was still alive. Thus Amata wins Virgil's pity and compassion.

Lavinia, too, sharing deeply in the tragedies of her father, her mother, and her lover Turnus, is certainly a pathetic character. She is also a very mysterious and shadowy character. Virgil never focuses his attention on her for long and he never has her utter a single word. Yet her role in the story is such that it wins the sympathy of the poet and his readers.

Anchises, in granting Aeneas a vision of his future destiny, had mentioned Lavinia as his son's bride-to-be (VI.764). Lavinia was described by Virgil as very beautiful, the apple of her father's eye, and sought after by countless suitors (VII.52-55). She was informally betrothed to Turnus before Aeneas' arrival on the scene, and, as we have noted earlier,\(^\text{14}\) Lavinia seems to have been genuinely in love with him.

\(^{14}\)Cf. Chapter IV, p. 75, n. 17.
Virgil's first picture of Lavinia with her long hair, headdress, and
coronet ablaze as her father worshipped at the altar, is a portent of the
tragedies that she will unwittingly cause to her people and to her loved ones.
These will, in turn, constitute her own tragedy (VII.71-78). Virgil comments:

namque fore inlustrem fama fatisque canebant
ipsam, sed populo magnum portendere bellum.
(VII.79-80)

This omen is magnified by Virgil through the instrumentality of Juno's
wrathful curse on Lavinia as Aeneas' destined bride:

atque immota manet fatis Lavinia coniunxt:
at trahere atque moras tantis licet addere rebus,
at licet amborum populos excindere regum.
hac gener atque socer coeant mercede suorum:
sanguine Troiano et Rutulo dotabere, virgo,
et Bellona manet te promuba, nec face tantum
Cissis praegnas ignis enixa iugalis;
quin idem Veneri partus suus et Paris alter,
funestaeque iterum recidiva in Pergama taedas.1
(VII.314-321)

The mixed blood of Italians and Trojans is to fill Lavinia's marriage-
cup, and War is to be her bridesmaid. The reader cannot but fear for and symp-
pathize with the young maiden because of the awful fate which awaits her.

Virgil next gives a pathetic little glimpse of Lavinia in Book XI, as
she accompanies her mother and the Latin matrons to the shrine of Athens to
make offerings:

... iuxtaque comes Lavinia virgo,
causa mali tanti, oculos delecta decoros.
(XI.479-480)

The poet consistently refers to Lavinia as virgo, "maiden," and again
emphasizes her tragic part in the war. The glimpse suggested here of Lavinia
with "prettily downcast eyes" draws our immediate sympathy.
It is now in Book XII, so filled with tragedies, that Lavinia reaches the climax of her own deep suffering. Amata had tried to prevent Turnus from going back into battle when the latter had not been moved by Latinus' plea. At this point Virgil very artfully gives another glimpse of the young maiden:

accept vocem lacrimis Lavinia matris
flagrantis perfusa genas, cui plurimus ignem
subiecit rubor et calidacta per ora currit.
Indum sanguineo veluti violaverit ostro
si quis ebur, aut mixta rubent ubi lilia multa
alba rosa: talis virgo debat ore colores.
illum turbat amor in vitæ in virgine vultus.
(XIII.64-70)

The beauty of the simile Virgil uses here is almost unmatched in the Aeneid. Fowler observes: "Once and again Virgil has carried the Homeric simile of fact into the region of feeling and character; the blush reveals Lavinia as she is nowhere else revealed. . . ." The sentiments of the young princess and the reaction of Turnus seem all too pathetically clear.

The poet's picture of Lavinia is in the scene just after Amata has committed suicide. Virgil describes the effect of Amata's death on her daughter:

filia prima manu floras Lavinia crinis
et roseas laniata genas. . . .
(XIII.605-606)

Lavinia's grief is unspeakable as she tears at her flowery tresses and rose-petal cheeks. Here we have another Virgilian touch of tenderness. Cartault has beautifully remarked: "... il est difficile de mieux peindre en moins de mots la grâce virginalle. . . ." Lavinia has loved her mother deeply

---

15 The Death of Turnus (Oxford, 1927), p. 49.
and now, perhaps, she realizes that she had been the indirect cause of her mother's tragic death.

The reader sees no more of Lavinia, though he knows that she has still to suffer the loss of Turnus and the ultimate downfall of her father's city. Virgil has given only fleeting glimpses of Lavinia, and yet they are enough to indicate the nobility of her character. It is this character which wins the compassion of both poet and readers.

Fittingly enough, Virgil's last mention of Lavinia is put into the mouth of Turnus speaking to Aeneas: *tus est Lavinia conjunx* (XII.937). Lavinia will, indeed, become Aeneas' bride and she may find happiness with him. But the tragic sufferings she has endured, much like Andromache, cannot be erased from her mind. The tragedy of her life is what has occupied Virgil in the *Aeneid*.

Since Virgil has so many young men meet tragic ends in his battle-scarred epic, it is natural that he should show the suffering this entails for the mothers of such youths. It is especially fitting that he should single out the character of the mother of Buryalus for special attention, since her son is one of the most memorable figures in the story.

Virgil's first reference to the unnamed mother of Buryalus occurs in Book IX, when Nisus tries to dissuade Buryalus from accompanying him on the dangerous mission he has conceived:

```
neu matri miserae tanti sim causa doloris,
quæ te sola, puer, multis e matribus ausa
persequitur, magni nec moenis curat Æneas.

(XII.216-213)
```

Notice the concern Virgil shows here, mirrored in the solicitude of Nisus,
for the brave mother who loved her son so much as to leave a safe retreat in order to be near him. She alone dared to do this.

Again, when Nisus and Euryalus prepare to depart from the Trojan camp, the latter commends his mother to the care of Ascanius and the elders:

_unum oro: genetrix Priami de gente vetusta est mihi, quam miseram tenui non Ilia tellus mecum excedentem, non moenis regis Acestae. hanc ego nunc ignaram huius quodcumque periculo est inque salutatem linquo (nox et tua testis dextra) quod nequeam lacrimas perferre parentis. at tu, oro, solare inopem et succurre relictas. in casus omnis.' (IX.284-292)

Euryalus (and through him, the poet) compassionates his loving mother, to whom he cannot bear to describe his mission. But he will go forth bravely, comforted by the thought that the leaders of his people will provide for her.

Virgil re-echoes the same compassion in Ascanius' promise to Euryalus to care for his mother:

'sponde digna tuis ingentibus omnia coeptis. namque erit ista mini genetrix nomenque Creusa; solum defuerit, nec partum gratia talem parva manet. casus factum quicumque sequentur, per caput hoc iuro, per quod pater ante solebat: quae tibi polliceor reduci rebusque secundia. haec eadem matrque tuae generique manebunt.' (IX.296-302)

Ascanius will treat her as he would his own dear mother, Creusa. Virgil thus provides a reminder of Ascanius' sadness at his mother's tragic death. Virgilian pity is evident in this pathetic allusion.

But the climax of the mother's tragedy is reached when she learns of the horrible death of Euryalus:

_nuntia Fama ruit matrisque adlabituar auris
Euryali. at subitus miserae calor ossa reliquit, exoussi manibus radii revolutaque pensa. evolat infelix et feimeo ululatu scissa comam muros ament atque agmina cursu prima petit, non illa virum, non illa pericli telorumque memor, caelum dehinc questibus implet: 'hunc ego te, Euryale, aspicio? tune seneeta. mea reguie8, tuitstli
liri'iiiri iOial,
cruaeIri? nee G au tain? per cUla ilisBUll
heu, terra ignota canibus data praeda Latinis alitibusque iaces! nec te, tua funera, mater produxi pressive oculos aut vulnera lavi, veste tegens tibi quam noctes festina diesque urgebam, et tela curas solabar anilis. quo sequar? aut quae nunc artus avulsaque membra et funus lacerum tellus habet? hoc mini 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: aut tu, magne pater divum, miserere, tuoque invisum hoc detrude caput sub Tartara telo, quando aliter nequeo crudelem abrumpere vitam.'

(IX.474-497)

The pathos concentrated in this passage, depicting the grieving words and actions of the mother of Euryalus, is eloquent testimony of Virgil's deepest human sympathy for this mother who is so typical of all such mothers of soldiers. Again the passage is filled with Virgilian tragic touches: miserae matri, infelix, meae senectae, curas anilis, crudelem vitam, to mention but a few. Euryalus will never wear the robe his mother had so lovingly been weaving for him. She cannot even wash his wounds and care for his funeral. She knows

Virgil gives another brief glimpse of the sufferings endured by mothers as they see their sons go off into battle:

stant pavidae in muris matres oculisque sequuntur pulveream mubem et fulgentis aere catervas.

(VIII.592-593)
Cf. also similar passages: VII.518; VIII.556; XI.215-217, 475-476, 877-878; XII.131-133.
not where his body lay. She is left only with his severed head, which had been horribly impaled on a spear by the Rutulians with that of Nisus (II.465-467). Pathos is deeply etched into the few lines of the present scene. Sympathy cannot but follow.

Another of Virgil's memorable tragic figures is the beautiful warrioress, Camilla. Her tragedy occupies a good part of Book VI, and the poet has, perhaps, created in her character the feminine counterpart to Euryalus. Duckworth has called Camilla's story "a tragic epyllion, a little epic."

Fowler agrees that the poet "used all the subtlest resources of his art upon her," magically idealizing the woman in her. Virgil's first mention of Camilla is an unforgettable one, closing the catalogue of the warriors at the end of Book VII:

Hos super advenit Volsca de gente Camilla  
agmen agens equitum at florentis aere catervas, 
bellatrix, non illa colo calathisve Minervae  
serines adsueta manus, sed proelis virgo  
dura pati cursuque pedum praevertere ventos.  
illa vel intactae segetis per summa volaret  
gramina nec teneras cursu laesisset aristas,  
vel mare per medium fluctu suspenda tumenti  
ferret iter celeris nec tingeret securae plantas.  
Illam omnis tectis agrisque effusa inventus  
turbaque miratur matrum et prospectat euntem,  
attonitis inhiens animis ut regius ostro  
velet honos levis uereros, ut fibula crinem  
auro internectat, Lyciam ut ferat ipsa pharetram

18"Virgil and the Tragic Drama," C.J., XXVI (October 1930), 25.

et pastoralem praefixa cuspide myrtum.
(VII.303-317)

Notice the striking image of Camilla's fleetness and agility. She is a queen, leading a crack squadron of cavalry. It is no wonder that she is the marvel of the gathering troops and onlookers.

There is no doubt about Camilla's bravery. She volunteers to lead her mounted brigade single-handed against Aeneas and the Etruscan cavalry, while Turnus might guard the town with the infantry (II.502-506). Turnus is grateful for her courageous offer, readily consents, and then plans an ambush for the Trojan troops who follow behind the cavalry (II.507-519).

As the warriors deploy for battle Virgil interjects a parenthetical note by having the goddess, Diana, tell of Camilla's past history. She speaks to Opis, one of her nymph-attendants:

... graditur bellum ad crudeleram Camilla,
o virgo, et nostris nequiquam cingitur arnis,
cara mihi ante alias, neque enim novus iste Dianae
venit amor subitaque animum dulcedine movit.

(XI.535-538)

Once again there is that Virgilian word, nequiquam. Already it is clear that tragedy awaits Camilla. Virgil again expresses his own infinite pity in the words of Diana. The goddess goes on to tell of Camilla's adventurous girlhood: her father's daring escape from his rebellious people, carrying his infant daughter to safety; his consecration of her to Diana, the patron of the woodland in which Camilla grew up and which she learned to love; her own vow to Diana to remain ever a virgin, a lover only of chastity and the chase (XI.539-584).

As Diana concludes her narrative, Virgil again interjects an ominous note:
... vellem haud correpta fuisset
militia tali conata lacesse Teucros:
cara mihi comitumque foret nunc una mea rum.
verum age, quandoquidem fatis urgetur acerbis,
labere, nympha, polo finisque invise Latinos,
tristis ubi infausto comittitur omne pugna.

A bitter and untimely doom is, indeed, awaiting Camilla, and Diana already
is providing for her revenge on the one who is fated to slay her beloved
Camilla, by sending Opis into the gray with readied arrows (XI.590-592). Diana
further promises to care for Camilla after her death:

post ego nube cava miserandae corpus et arma
inspiliata feram tumulo patriaeque reponam.

Virgil then describes the bloody fighting, with Camilla ever in the vanguard (XI.597-647). He gives a striking picture of the warrior-maid in this
vivid passage:

At medias inter caedes exsultat Ama son
unum exserta latus pugnae, pharetrata Camilla,
et nunc lenta manu spargens hastilla denset,
nunc validam dextra rapit indefessa bipennem,
aureus ex umero sonat arcus et arma Diana e.
illa etiam, si quando in tergum pulsa recessit,
apicula converso fugientia dirigat arcu.

The poet proceeds to tell of the numerous warriors that fall victim to
Camilla's ferocious onslaughts (XI.664-724). But now the end draws near, as
Camilla, much like Euryalus and Turnus, growscovetous of the shining trappings
of an enemy warrior (XI.768-777). Unlike them, she will never possess these
spoils. Virgil describes the scene:

hunc virgo, sive ut templis praefigeret arma
Troia, captivo sive ut se ferret in auro
venatrix, unum ex omni certamine pugnae
caeca sequebatur totumque incauta per agmen
femino praedae et spoliorem ardebat amore
(XI. 753-762)

Her blind, womanly desire for another's finery proves to be Camilla's
tragic flaw. The cowardly Arruns has been waiting for just such a chance to
catch the maiden off-guard, and to slay her (XI. 759-767). Now, as Camilla's
attention is temporarily diverted in pursuing the gaudily caparisoned warrior,
Arruns moves in for the kill. His spear goes whistling through the air and
finds its mark:

 ergo ut missa manu sonitum dedit hasta per auras,
 convertere animos acris oculosque tulere
cuncti ad reginam Volsci. nihil ipsa nec auras
 nec sonitus memor aut venientis ab aesthere teli,
hasta sub exsertam donec perlata papillam
haesit virgineumque alte vivit acta cruorem.
(XI. 799-804)

Arruns flees in fear, like the coward that he is. But he will taste the
avenging arrow of Opis all too soon (XI. 858-867). Virgil goes on to depict the
death scene, another one of his tragic masterpieces:

 illa manu moriens telum trahit, ossa sed inter
 ferreus ad costas alto stat vulnere mucro.
labitur exsanguis, labuntur frigida leta
lumina, purpureus quondam color ora reliquit.
tum sic exspirans Acca ex aequalibus unam
adlocuitur fidam ante alias, quae sola Camillae
quicum partiri curas, atque haec ita fatur:
'hactenus, Acca soror, potuit, nunc vulnus acerbum
conficit, et tenebris nigras facta omnia circum.
effuge et haec Turno mandata novissima perfer:
succedat pugnae Troianaeque arceat urbe.
iamque vale.' simul his dictis linguebat habenas
ad terram non sponte fluens. tum frigida toto
paulatim exsolvit se corpore, lentaque colla
et captum leta posuit caput, arma relinquunt,
vitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras.
(XI. 816-831)
Camilla's last words, spoken to her confidante, Acca (who is much like Anna), are filled with pathos, ending with the piteous "iamque vale."\(^{20}\) She has a patriotic concern for the welfare of the city, even here at her death. Especially noteworthy is the last line of this passage, so beautifully rendered by C. Day Lewis: "And with a moan her protesting spirit fled to the shades."\(^{21}\) This is the identical line Virgil uses to close the Aeneid in describing the death of Turnus (XII.952). He uses it nowhere else. Besides the pathetic touch thus added to the picture, Camilla's moral stature is herein slightly emphasized. The same element is further developed in the following lines:

\[
\begin{align*}
tum vero immensus surgens ferit aurea clamor 
\text{ sidera: delecta crudescit pugnae Camilla;}
\text{ incurrunt densi simul omnis copia Teucrum}
\text{ Tyrrenique duces Euandrique Arcades alae.}
\text{(XI.332-335)}
\end{align*}
\]

With the death of Camilla, the Trojan allies swarm in with renewed vigor, as her own troops grieve over her.

Virgil's own tender sympathy for Camilla is well expressed in the elegy uttered by his character, Opis:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{'heu nimium, virgo, nimium crudele luisti}
\text{ supplicium Teucros conata lacesere bello;}
\text{nec tibi desertae in dumis coluisse Dianam}
\text{ profuit aut nostras umero gessisse pharetras.}
\text{ non tamen indecorum tua te regina reliquit}
\text{ extrema iam in morte, neque hoc sine nomine letum}
\text{ per gentis erit aut famam patieris inuitae.}
\text{ nam quicumque tuum violavit vulnera corpus}
\text{ morte luet merita.'...}
\text{(XI.841-849)}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{20}\)Cf. Cartault, II, 804.

Too cruel was the death of this warrior-maid. But her dying shall ever be famous among all nations and she shall not be unavenged. Thus, the courageous and noble Camilla passes from the scene, but not without winning the deep human sympathy of her poet-creator. Once again it is evident that Virgilian pity takes no sides; just as Virgil has shown special concern for Lausus and Turnus, so here he does so for Camilla.

Finally we consider the character of Juturna, the goddess-sister of Turnus. Virgil's first mention of her is at the time when Juno calls Juturna to her in order to give her a tragic message:

"nympha, decus fluviorum, animo gratissima nostro, scis ut te cunctis unam, quaecumque Latinae magnanimit Iovis ingratum ascendere cubile, praetulerim caelique libens in parte locarim: discete tuum, ne me incuses, Juturna, dolorem. qua visa est Fortuna pati Parcaeque sinebant cedere res Latin, Turnum et tua moenia tesi: nunc iuvenem imparibus video concurreare fatis, Parcaremque dies et vis inimica propinquat. non pugnare aspicere hanc oculius, non foedere possum. tu pro germano si quid praestantius audes, perge; decet. forsas miseris meliora sequantur. vix ea, cum lacrimans oculis Juturna profudit terque quaterque manu pectus percussit honestum."

(XII.142-155)

Pain is in store for Juturna, as Turnus' day of doom approaches. Juno encourages the goddess to do what she can to help her brother, but the effect of the message deeply grieves Juturna. Juno promises whatever assistance she can give. Then she leaves the anguished sister of the Rutulian hero:

... sic exhortata reliquit
incertam et tristi turbatam vulnere mentis.

(XII.159-160)

Juturna recovers her composure and goes about stirring up whatever mis-
chief she can to aid her brother. The Trojans and their allies are about to conclude a truce with Latinus, on that condition that Aeneas engage Turnus in single combat. But Juturna assumes the role of a Latin warrior and foments a whispering campaign to rouse the wavering and irresolute Rutulians and Latins (XII.222-243). This, together with a delusive portent which she contrives, ultimately goad the Latin warriors into renewing the battle (XII.244-281).

Later Aeneas storms through the Rutulian lines to hunt for his quarry, Turnus. Juturna, fearing for her brother's safety, assumes the role of his charioteer, Metisicus. She dodges from the path of the pursuing Aeneas and whisks Turnus away from him—temporarily (XII.464-480).

When she has driven Turnus to a spot far from where Aeneas is fighting, Juturna urges her brother to reenter the battle here, away from the Trojan hero (XII.614-630). But Turnus, in response to his sister, whom he has recognized under her disguise, expresses his determination to defend the city in spite of his threatening doom (XII.632-649).

When Turnus hears of the sad plight of the Latins in the city, and especially of the tragic death of Amata, he is torn with grief and rage, and he rushes back into the city, leaving his sorrowing sister behind:

\[
\text{perque hostis, per tela ruit maestamque sororem deserit ac rapido cursu media agmina rumpit.}
\]

(XII.682-733)

Later, when Turnus is battling Aeneas, Juturna helps her brother in whatever way she can, once returning his sword to him at a critical moment (XII.736-737). But Jupiter finally has Juno send a Fury to the goddess, warning her to stop her attempts to thwart destiny. When she recognizes the ominous
portent, Juturna is grief-stricken:


Here the real tragedy of Juturna takes place. She had, indeed, done all she could to save her brother. But, unfortunately, she must submit to the will of the gods, as her brother also had to do. Virgil emphasizes here Juturna's love for her brother, as she (like other tragic figures we have considered) wishes to give up life itself—in her case immortal life, since she is a goddess—rather than live without her beloved Turnus. Finally, with a mournful sigh, Juturna vanishes into the depths of the river.

The character of Juturna is still another example of Virgil's versatility in portraying tragic women in the Aeneid. He has given us tragic wives in Creusa, Andromache, and Amata; tragic mothers in Andromache and the mother of

22Bellesiort remarks on the bitter sadness of Juturna here, Virgile: Son Œuvre et Son Temps, p. 287.
Euryalus; a tragic daughter and lover in Lavinia; a tragic queen-warrior in Camilla; and tragic sisters in Anna and Juturna. The tragedies of all these characters have their counterpart in the many-faceted Virgilian sympathy.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In the brief ambit of this thesis we have tried to show in what way Virgil is "the poet of human suffering." We first investigated the meager extant information about the Roman poet's personal life. We found that Virgil was a thoughtful and studious man, of a shy and retiring nature, who preferred the solitude of country living to the noise and strife of the city. In the country the poet had time to meditate upon the terrible human sufferings caused by the numerous wars which were so much a part of his age.

But did Virgil's meditation on human suffering move him to the "soft sadness" of despair, as Van Doren suggests? Or did it rather evoke in him a deep human sympathy and compassion for suffering mankind? To answer these questions we turned to Virgil's writings where his attitudes are reflected, and especially to the Aeneid. For it is in his tragic characterizations in the epic poem that we find Virgil speaking to all mankind.

In the Aeneid we noted first the poet's tender compassion reaching out to the tragic victims of war. Included among these were the brave men, young and old, on both sides of the conflict, as well as the mothers and families who were stricken by their deaths. Virgil's sympathy for the victims of the wars of Rome was never better illustrated than in his sketches of victims of the battles in his epic poem: Nisus and Euryalus, the mother of Euryalus, Pallas and Lausus, Evander and Mezentius, and of course, Turnus.

Virgil's sympathy for war-victims is thus one of the two dominant notes
reflecting his all-pervading human pity. The second theme revolves around the tragic victims of disrupted or unrequited love. For with his keen insight into human nature, Virgil knew the pathos and sorrow of shattered love-relationships, and he expressed his sympathy eloquently in the Aeneid. The reader needs only to recall the poet's powerful dramatization of the sorrowful romance of Aeneas and Dido. The sympathy shown by Virgil towards these two central characters in his epic universalizes the pity he felt for all lovers of all time. We found the minor variations of this theme of tragic love illustrated in the poet's characterizations of Turnus and Lavinia, of Pallas and Evander, of Lausus and Mezentius, and of others throughout the epic.

Virgil's message to humanity, then, built upon the two central themes of tragic human suffering in both war and love, was one of deep concern for man's human condition. His pity, even in his epic, took no sides, but reached out to embrace the sufferings of all his brothers in the human family.

Virgilian pity, however, was not melancholy nor sentimental. The Roman poet was realistic and human in his view of suffering man. We have indicated that Virgil did not treat sad themes in his writing merely for their own sake; rather he introduced them to give outlet to the sympathy that welled up within him. To portray normal human beings, caught up in the tragic occurrences of the actual human situation— which is one of inevitable suffering— is perfectly natural and, moreover, admirable.

Virgil is not the "soft and sad" poet of Van Doren, then, but rather the tender and compassionate poet who has impressed readers and critics of every age with the sincerity and humaneness of his writings. And his writings mirror
Cowles, in his article dealing with what he considers to be the "epic
question in Virgil," namely, "Why should a good man suffer?" has this to say:

That this everlasting and epic question should have worried Vergil was
inevitable. Being what he was, a sensitive and human observer of the
world scene, a consistent and sincere sympathizer with the under-dog, a
hater of that "criminal folly" which is war, bowed under a "majestic sad-
ness" which he never lost, it was lacrimae rerum to which he wistfully
tuned his lyre, and rarely is he impressed by the ludibria rerum at which
Tacitus glibly sneers. I find it difficult to subscribe to the doctrine
that the Aeneid is one long miserere or that it is the saddest poem ever
written. There are laughs in the fifth book and there are smiles in others,
often tinged with tears. But the pensive melancholy of most of the great
poem is unmistakable and beyond debate. Fowler's essay into a musical
analogy for the Aeneid is more successful. He calls it, not a miserere,
but "a great fugue, of which the leading subject is the mission of Rome
in the world. . . . This mighty theme pervades the whole poem and, like
the subject of a fugue, enters and reenters from time to time in thrilling
tones.1 That the principal theme of a poem as nationalistic as the
Aeneid should be the mission of Rome is right and inevitable. But that
this booming nationalistic theme should be constantly interwoven with a
philosophical motif is also inevitable, and it is this minor strain, this
recurring melody in the great fugue, which I have called the epic question,
"Why should a good man suffer?"2

Virgil saw, as few men have seen so clearly, how pain and sorrow can "open
the eyes of men to the human world around them, and bring men into sympathy
with one another. In short, they teach men 'humanity.'"3

The really integrating factor, then, in the personality of the Roman poet
was his deeply human sympathy. His greatness as a stylist, his painstaking
craftsmanship in etching the exquisite lines of his epic, his reticent and

2CJ, XXXVI (December, 1940), pp. 134-135.
retiring nature; all these elements of Virgil's personality are unified in the compassionate spirit with which he viewed his fellow human sufferers. Conway has summed up beautifully the theme of our study:

So it was in this common source of human sorrow and human joy that Virgil found the ultimate enigma which for him wrapped the world in mystery. Strange as the contradiction was, he held it to be the key of life. Here, then, we have reached the centre of Vergil's thought. All the sorrow and all the joy of the universe seemed to him to spring from one root, and he accepts--nay, he welcomes--them both. There could be no human affection, so Vergil saw, unless it were such as to make its possessors capable, and capable in equal degrees, both of the most exquisite suffering and of the most exquisite joy. This to him is the fundamental fact of the universe--that all pain and all joy are to be measured simply in terms of human love. And if you ask him his last word upon this mystery, a mystery on which he has pondered year after year, viewing it from both sides, through all his study of life, he will tell you that the Golden Bough is always found in the shadows of the forest, when it is sought in the fulfilment of duty. And while others may turn away from the sight or the thought of those shadows in mere dread or disbelief, Vergil will bid us, like his hero, pluck the bough eagerly and trust it gratefully, to bring us through even darker shadows out into the light beyond; to trust that somewhere, somehow, Death itself is overcome by the power and persistence of Love.¹

Virgil's poetic masterpieces, his Georgics and Aeneid, are the expressions of the same humanistic philosophy of suffering.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by J. Paul O'Brien, S.J. 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.

Date

Matthew E. Creighton, S.J.
Signature of Adviser