

Copyright © 2004 Richard S. Caldwell

ISBN 1-58510-077-3

Book Team:

Publisher: *Ron Pullins*

Production Manager: *Melissa Wood*

Editorial Manager: *Cynthia Zawulich*

Marketing Manager: *Melissa Massello*

Cover and inside illustrations by Merle Mainelli Poulton

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

This book is published by Focus Publishing, R. Pullins & Company, Inc., PO Box 369, Newburyport MA 01950. All rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, by photocopying, recording, or by any other means, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	vii
The Aeneid and the Homeric Poems	xv
The Life of Vergil	xxi
Names in the Aeneid	xxi
Translator's Note	xxii
THE AENEID	
Book 1	1
Book 2	21
Book 3	41
Book 4	61
Book 5	79
Book 6	99
Book 7	121
Book 8	141
Book 9	159
Book 10	177
Book 11	197
Book 12	217
APPENDIX A: GODS, PEOPLE, AND PLACES	237
APPENDIX B: FURTHER READINGS	239
GLOSSARY	241

INTRODUCTION

The *Aeneid* is an epic poem about the events leading up to the founding of Rome, written at the time many centuries later when Rome had conquered not only the known world but also the internal divisions and factions which had threatened for decades to tear Rome apart. It was the beginning of a new world, a remarkable new era in history, a time (or so it seemed) of universal peace and progress under the unified imperial government of Caesar Augustus. At the end of the *Aeneid* Rome does not yet exist, but Vergil's story of events that took place in a mythical time over a thousand years before, in a form which consciously recalls the the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the great Homeric epics of seven centuries before, is, among other things, his praise and appraisal of the unique period in which he lived.

The story begins with a mythic event that is never mentioned in the *Aeneid*. Jupiter has just learned the worst news he could possibly hear, that there was somewhere in the world a woman who was destined to bear a son who would be greater than his father. Jupiter, like the Romans, had conquered the world. He had defeated the Titans, the preceding generation of his own family and previous rulers of the universe, and he was destined to defeat all future opponents and rivals. He had become the unquestioned and omnipotent emperor of gods and men, with no apparent limits on his power and freedom. For the Greeks, who invented this story, which then (like most of Greek myth) was adopted by the Romans, the ultimate expression of the sky-god's position was his sexual capabilities. The nature of his freedom and power is found in his relentless campaign to fill the world with the great heroes of myth, his illegitimate children. But then came the ominous news that some woman would have a son greater than his father. If Jupiter is to continue to rule, he must discover the name of that woman and *he must give her up*. Otherwise he will be overthrown by his son, just as he overthrew his father Saturn and Saturn overthrew his father Uranus. In other words, Jupiter can continue to rule only by recognizing that he is not omnipotent, that a limit is imposed upon the very activity which defines him.

That woman is the goddess Thetis, and Zeus now forces her, against her will, to marry the mortal Peleus. The son of Peleus and Thetis, the son who will be greater than his father, is Achilles, greatest of the Greek heroes who fought and conquered Troy. At the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, one of the greatest social occasions of Greco-Roman myth, attended by gods and mortals alike, the goddess Eris (Discord) rolled a golden apple inscribed "for the fairest" in front of the assembled goddesses. A beauty contest followed, in which the final competitors were Venus, Juno, and Minerva (the same three goddesses who are most important in the events of the *Aeneid*). The judge was the Trojan shepherd and prince Paris, and he chose Venus because she promised him the most beautiful woman in the world if he did so. This woman was Helen, wife of King Menelaus of Sparta, and eventually Paris and Helen ran off together to Troy. Menelaus and his brother Agamemnon, King of Mycenae, assembled a great Greek army to sail to Troy and recover the stolen wife.

The Trojan War lasted ten years and ended with a Greek victory and the destruction of Troy. The king of Troy at this time was Priam, and two of his many children were Paris and Hector, greatest of the Trojan warriors. Homer's *Iliad* is about a few months in the last year of this war (the name *Iliad* means "the Trojan matter"), and culminates in the great battle between Achilles and Hector, the death of Hector, and Achilles' grudging decision to return the body of Hector to his father Priam for burial. The actual end of the war was the subject of other Greek epics which have not survived (the fullest surviving account is Book Two of the *Aeneid*). After the war the Greek leaders encountered many difficulties in their attempts to return home. Homer's other great epic, the *Odyssey*, is entirely concerned with one of these returns, Odysseus's ten years of adventures and wandering from Troy to his home on the island Ithaca.

After the war, some of the Trojan survivors left and found new homes elsewhere. Since in the 8th and 7th century BC many historical Greek colonies were established in southern Italy and Sicily, even some of the mythical Trojan colonists began to appear in this region, like Acestes in Sicily and Aeneas in the area around Rome. Many early Roman historians and poets mention the presence of Aeneas in Italy, and he became the obvious candidate as founder of the Roman race and state, not only because he was an important figure in Greek myth but also, especially, because he was not himself Greek.

Writers since the time of Vergil have pointed out that the *Aeneid* is divided into two halves which clearly imitate the *Odyssey* and *Iliad*. In the first six books, Aeneas, like Odysseus, wanders over sea and land for many years trying to find his way home. Each hero tells the story of his travels at length to a royal woman who falls in love with him, only to be abandoned; both must survive encounters with the Cyclops Polyphemus and the sea-monsters Scylla and Charybdis; both must visit the underworld to seek advice on their return, etc. In the last six books, the main subject is war, as in the *Iliad*, and

here also many specific episodes and elements from the *Iliad* are repeated in the *Aeneid* (for example, the description of the shield acquired for the hero by his mother from the god Vulcan, the several lengthy catalogues of the leaders on both sides, the emphasis on the stolen wife, the final battle between the greatest heroes on each side, etc.).

The force that drives all three epics is conflict. In the *Iliad* conflict is primarily external and its subject is the great war between the Greeks and the Trojans, although occasionally conflict is internal, as when Achilles must decide whether to stay in his tent and sulk (as he has done for most of the poem) or return to battle, or when he swallows his pride and surrenders Hector's body to Priam for burial. In the *Odyssey* there is also external conflict — Odysseus must defeat nasty monsters like the Cyclops, he must eliminate the dozens of suitors who have taken over his home in their pursuit of his wife Penelope, and he must overcome the perils of the sea and shipwreck — but the major conflict is internal, between Odysseus' desire to return home and the opposing wish to give in to the many temptations and temptresses (Calypso, Nausicaa, Circe) he meets.

As a recapitulation of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid* contains all of the forms of conflict found in the earlier epics. Like Odysseus, Aeneas must resist the temptation to stay in Sicily with Acestes or in Carthage with Dido, the foreign woman he has fallen in love with, and he must persevere in his attempt to find a home, a new Troy in Italy. He also escapes from the Cyclops, kills his rival suitor Turnus, and overcomes storms and shipwreck. Like Achilles, Aeneas must lead his army to victory over a great adversary and defeat the leader of the enemy. At one point he even retires to his tent and the Trojans are in imminent danger of defeat, and he then returns to battle and turns the tide of war; the cause of his absence, however, is not injured pride, as in the case of Achilles, but rather a physical wound he has mysteriously suffered.

The *Iliad* is a poem about war, and the *Odyssey* is a poem about a man. Vergil's brilliant achievement was to combine both in a single internal conflict within his hero Aeneas. Success in war is no longer an end in itself, the sole means of heroic validation, as it is for Achilles and the *Iliad*. In the *Aeneid* war is a necessary evil, the means to which Aeneas and his people are forced to turn in order to fulfill their destiny of finding a new home which will eventually become Rome. The conflict is no longer between two opposing forces on the battlefield, but now is fought inside the soul of a man whose human wishes are continually opposed by the destiny he must fulfill. This destiny is to found Rome at whatever cost to himself and others, and war, from the first line of the poem to the great battles of the last four books, symbolizes the demands of a destiny that requires Aeneas to forego the basic human desires for peace, love, and security.

Arma virumque. Arms and a man. The first two words of the *Aeneid* tell the whole story of Aeneas, the story of conflict between destiny and human-

THE AENEID

BOOK ONE

Arms and a man. That is my song, about an exile driven by fate from the shores of Troy to Lavinian lands, thrown about on lands and sea by the power of the gods and the unforgetting anger of cruel Juno. He suffered much in war as well, until he could start a city and bring his gods to Latium, and from this came the Latin race, the Alban fathers, and the walls of high Rome. Muse, tell me why the queen of the gods forced such a good man to undergo so many hardships and endure so many labors. How was her divinity offended? What was she grieving about? How can there be such anger in the minds of the gods? [1-11]

1-11 The opening words of the Aeneid, “Arms and a man,” recall the Iliad and the Odyssey, and predict the great struggle between destiny and humanity in one man, the hero Aeneas (Introduction, p. iv). Aeneas is “thrown about on lands and sea” (Odyssey) and he “suffered much in war as well” (Iliad). Like Odysseus, Aeneas is striving to find his home, but it’s a new home. Troy, his ancestral home on the west coast of Asia Minor, was conquered by Greece in the Trojan War and is lost to him forever (a bitter lesson he learns at the end of Book Two). Now he searches for a new home, and he will gradually discover that his destination is Italy and the place that will eventually be known as Rome (the terms “Lavinian,” “Latium,” and “Alban fathers” all refer to the territory of Rome).

The symbol of all the obstacles he will face is Juno, wife of Jupiter and implacable enemy of the Trojans, and Vergil invokes the Muse to tell him why she is so angry. This invocation of a Muse (or Muses) is required in Greco-Roman epic. There are nine Muses, the daughters of Zeus and Memory, and by Roman times one of them, Calliope, is specifically in charge of epic poetry. As for Juno, the reason she hates most heroes is that most of them are the illegitimate children of her husband Jupiter. Since Aeneas is the son of Venus and the mortal Anchises, she has to find other reasons to oppose him, and these will be recounted in the next paragraph.



Carthage was an ancient city inhabited by settlers from Tyre, far from Italy and the mouths of the Tiber, a rich and warlike city which Juno is said to have preferred over all other lands, even over Samos. Here were her arms and chariot, and even then the goddess hoped that Carthage would rule the world if the Fates allowed. But she had heard that a race would come from Trojan blood to overturn the Tyrian towers, that a people ruling widely and proud in war would come to destroy Libya—this was ordained by the Fates. Juno feared this, and she also remembered the former war she had fought against Troy for her beloved Argives. The causes of her anger, the cruel affronts, were still in her mind: the judgment of Paris, that insult to her scorned beauty, the race she hated, and the honors given to ravished Ganymede. Inflamed by these, she buffeted the Trojans over the whole sea, the remnant left by the Greeks and savage Achilles, and kept them far from Latium. And so they wandered for many years over the ocean, driven on by the Fates. How great a task it was to found the Roman nation! [12-33]

They were scarcely out of sight of Sicily, sailing happily into the deep and rushing through the salty foam, when Juno, nursing the eternal wound in her heart, thought to herself, “Must I admit defeat and give up my plan to keep the Trojan king from Italy? So I am forbidden by the Fates. Wasn’t Pallas able to burn the Argive fleet and sink the men in the sea for the fault and madness of one man, Oileus’ son Ajax? She herself threw Jupiter’s swift fire from the clouds, shattered the ships, and overturned the sea with winds, then carried off Ajax in a whirlwind, breathing out flames from his pierced chest,

12-33 Here are the reasons for Juno’s hostility toward Aeneas and the Trojans.

First, her favorite city was Carthage, a Phoenician colony in North Africa and Rome’s great rival during the three Punic Wars (264-146 BC); she loved this city, Vergil says, even more than the Aegean island Samos, site of a famous sanctuary of Hera from the earliest historical times. Secondly, she had several specific reasons for hating the Trojans. She knew that the Fates (three goddesses whose power over the future surpasses even Jupiter’s) had ordained that Rome, a people descended from Troy, would conquer Carthage (mention of Tyre, the Phoenician city which in legend colonized Carthage, and of Libya, a generic name for North Africa, all refer to Carthage). She remembered the “judgment of Paris” (Introduction, p. ii), the beauty contest between Juno, Minerva, and Venus, in which the Trojan prince Paris had awarded first prize to Venus (the mother of Aeneas), and she was further reminded of her husband’s infidelity by his kidnapping of the young Trojan prince Ganymede, son of Laomedon, to be the “cupbearer” of the gods.

“Savage Achilles” is the greatest warrior of the Greeks who fought against Troy, and the “remnant” left by the Greeks and Achilles is the small band of survivors who accompany Aeneas.

“Argives,” as usual, refers to the Greeks in general; Argos was one of the most important cities in mythological Greece, and Argos is often synonymous with “Mycenae” or “Greece.”

VERGIL'S AENEID

An exciting new prose translation of the epic poem, beautifully **illustrated** by **Merle Mainelli Poulton**, with all the right pedagogical apparatus to make reading this important work a joy for any modern college or high school student. The text is complete with notes, introductory essay, glossary, and an appendix detailing the tabulation of the gods.

Focus Publishing
R. Pullins Company
Newburyport, MA 01950

