

WHAT DOES AENEAS LOOK LIKE?

MARK GRIFFITH

VERGIL'S AENEAS is big, strong, and handsome, a proper epic hero. But we are not told whether he is dark or fair, youthful or grizzled, bearded or clean-shaven, long- or short-haired, burly or slim.¹ How does he dress and speak: like a Homeric warrior, or an Eastern monarch, or a Roman officer? When does he shave, bathe, or change his clothes? Homer tells us such things about his characters; and of course we have come to expect them from our novelists and playwrights. But after twelve books of the *Aeneid*, from which we have gained quite an intimate knowledge of Aeneas' inner feelings, his loyalties, anxieties, loves, and rages, we remain unsure of his physical deportment, the expressions on his face, his gestures and habits. This is obviously not because Vergil lacked the ability to write vivid descriptions: other characters, and various places and nonhuman creatures, too, are deftly, sometimes elaborately described.² But his curiously vague and indeterminate—or even contradictory—portrayal of Aeneas' personal appearance sheds interesting light on his narrative technique, and on his hero's role in the poem.³

In Homer, characters are regularly identified by stock epithets, several of which specify a feature of their appearance or manner (Menelaus' red hair and shaggy chest, Achilles' swift legs, Athena's gray eyes, the Achaeans' long hair, Diomedes' loud voice, etc.); some of them are

I should like to thank E. Downing for several helpful criticisms and suggestions.

1. References to Aeneas' size and personal appearance occur as follows: 1. 588–93; 2. 721–24; 4. 4, 11, (83–85), 141–50, 215–17, (280); 8. 152–68; (10. 565–70); 12. 97–100, (312), (699–703), 938–39; also by implication 7. 167–68, 9. 614–20. For his clothing and armor, see below, nn. 16, 24. In late antiquity, Aeneas is described as “rufum, quadratum, . . . venustum, oculis hilaribus et nigris” (Dares Phrygius 12), and as κονδοειδής, παχύς, εὐστηθος, ἰσχυρός, πυρράκης, πλατόψις, εὐρρινος, λευκός, ἀναφάλας, εὐπώγων (Malalas *Chronogr.* 5, p. 106 Dindorf).

2. See below at nn. 14 and 15. For places, see, e.g., 1. 159–69, 446–93, 6. 237–41; for animals, e.g., 2. 204–27, 5. 84–89.

3. Vergil's lack of interest in minute portrayal of individuals has often been pointed out, e.g., by C. A. Sainte-Beuve, *Étude sur Virgile* (Paris, 1857; repr. Paris, 1891), p. 109; W. Y. Sellar, *Virgil*³ (London, 1908), pp. 361–64, 385–408; R. Heinze, *Virgils epische Technik*³ (Leipzig, 1915), pp. 265–91, esp. p. 283; B. Otis, *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford, 1963), chap. 3: “Subjective Narrative,” esp. pp. 88–92; W. R. Johnson, *Darkness Visible* (Berkeley, 1976), pp. 49–59, 75–88; also A. S. Pease, *P. Vergili Maronis “Aeneidos” Liber Quartus* (Cambridge, Mass., 1935; repr. Darmstadt, 1967), pp. 31–33. But critics have concentrated, naturally enough, on portrayal of *character*, rather than of personal appearance (so Sainte-Beuve's “physionomie,” and Pease's “graphic description . . . of character”). W. Wili, *Virgil* (Munich, 1930), does remark briefly “dass Vergil den Helden kaum beschreibt” (p. 92), and ascribes this to his preference for a *type* or *ideal*, rather than a personal or peculiar individual: “so ist Aeneas Typus des Römers” (pp. 92–93, a phrase taken from Heinze, p. 271). But things are not quite so simple, as we shall see.

singled out for more detailed description.⁴ Their clothing, toilet, and armor are objects of unfailing interest and delight, as are the gifts they exchange, the sacrifices they perform, the wounds they inflict and suffer, and the food they eat. Appearances and gestures are informative and significant: smiles, scowls, and nods; flashing eyes, weak knees, gleaming skin—all are duly recorded. And it is essential to our appreciation of the *Odyssey* that we can visualize its hero throughout in his different states and guises: as the swollen, salt-encrusted, yet leonine, castaway (5. 455–57, 6. 127–37); as the curly-haired, gleaming figure that so impresses Nausicaa (6. 224–37) and arrives before Alcinous clad in robes that she has washed (6. 228, 7. 238); his strength and build revealed—a heavyweight among the Phaeacian lightweights—in the athletics (8. 134–39, 186–93); transformed with divinely perfect attention to detail into an old beggar (13. 429–38), with wrinkled hands and feet (19. 358–60), but still a powerful pair of shoulders under his rags (18. 66–74); his identity proven by the boyhood scar on his thigh (19. 390 ff.); his true regal beauty, bathed and oiled, finally revealed again in the lovely description of 23. 153–64 (repeating some of 6. 224–37).

There are no stock descriptive epithets for the characters of Apollonius' *Argonautica*; and he is generally more sparing and selective in his depictions of their physical appearance and gestures. A few heroes and minor characters are singled out, especially the more ornamental or grotesque;⁵ but it is above all the features of youthfulness and beauty, and the symptoms of strong emotion, that are brought into prominence: Hypsipyle's blushes (1. 790–92); Cyzicus' youthful bloom (1. 972, 2. 40–47; cf. 1. 1230, 1237–39, 2. 779, 3. 519–20); the Argonauts' cheeks pale with fear (1. 1216); Aeëtes' angry gaze (3. 371; cf. 4. 1436–37); Dionysus' excited flush (4. 432–33); the Nymphs longingly eyeing the Fleece (4. 1143–48). And naturally enough the most developed and intensive sequence of descriptions involves Jason and Medea, the young pair whose physical beauty and fluctuating emotions provide the main climaxes of the poem. In the catalog of heroes, Jason is not himself described.⁶ It is in Book 3 that he is first brought vividly before our eyes, just as he appears to Medea, dazzling, bashful, and strong.⁷ His emotions are rarely and

4. E.g., Thersites (*Il.* 2. 216–24, 265–69); Odysseus, according to Priam, Helen, and Antenor (*Il.* 3. 193–98, 210–24); Paris (3. 16–20, 31–55, 391–94, 528–38, 6. 504–14, perhaps followed by Archilochus frag. 114 West); Aphrodite (*Il.* 3. 396–97); Penelope (*Od.* 18. 188–210, 19. 204–9). Homer's Aeneas, however, remains physically nondescript: see n. 35 below, and G. K. Galinsky, *Aeneas, Sicily, and Rome* (Princeton, 1969), pp. 11–18, 36–43.

5. The two boxers, Amycus and Polydeuces (2. 25–47); the decrepit Phineus (2. 197–205, 301–2); the panting sons of Boreas (2. 430–31); the rowers, resembling sweating oxen (2. 662–68); Apollo (2. 676–79, 682); the ghost of Sthenelus (2. 918–20); Aphrodite (1. 740–43, 3. 43–50, 81–82, 106); Eros (3. 119–22; cf. 132–41, 149–50, 156–57); Aeëtes (3. 371, 1225–32); Apsyrtus' robe (4. 423–29, 471–81, with Dionysus and Ariadne, 4. 432–33); Nereids, resembling maidens playing (4. 948–50); goddesses' clothes (4. 1347–50); the brazen Talus (4. 1645–48, 1676–88). This list is, I think, fairly complete.

6. Only his cloak (1. 721–67), an *ecphrasis* in the approved epic—and Hellenistic—manner.

7. His beauty is mentioned or described at 3. 441–43, 451–58, 919–25, 956–59, 1017–24, 1140–41, 1203–6, 1282–83; then later 4. 172–73, 177–81; his magical strength, only newly and temporarily acquired with the help of Medea's drugs, at 3. 1256–64, 1282–83, 1350–53.

imperfectly revealed to us—perhaps he has few?⁸ But Medea's feelings are only too apparent throughout.⁹ Her beauty and clothing—or lack of it—are more significant for what they tell us about her state of mind than for their measurable effect on Jason's affections (3. 646, 686, 829–35, 1017–24) or for their intrinsic interest.

Catullus' technique in his little epic (*Carm.* 64) is not unlike Apollonius': some picturesque, rococo details of minor characters, especially divinities;¹⁰ frequent mention of lovers' eyes, sobs, hair-color, and embraces;¹¹ and elaborate, almost obsessive, concern for Ariadne's disheveled clothing.¹²

Vergil, as disciple both of Homer and of the neoterics, had a broad range of narrative and descriptive techniques to choose from. Yet his manner is distinctly different from any of his predecessors'. Not only are the stock descriptive epithets missing, but also most of the superficial indications of emotion and attitude.¹³ He prefers to describe the internal states of his characters (fear, love, fury, amazement, indecision), often in abstract terms or through metaphor and simile, rather than their physical reactions or symptoms (smiling, glaring, blushing, blanching, sweating, trembling, smiting the thigh, pacing back and forth); yet he is enough of a traditional epic poet—and neoteric—to highlight his narrative with a dozen or so vivid descriptions of exalted or picturesque individuals.¹⁴ Sometimes just one or two apt details are sufficient (the singer, Iopas, 1. 740–41 "cithara crinitus Iopas/personat aurata"; Apollo disguised as old Butes, 9. 650–51; the doctor, Iapyx, 12. 400–401 "ille retorto/Paeonium in morem senior succinctus amictu"). In one area especially, traditional epic decorum is maintained: Olympians, as they

8. Anxiety, 3. 422; love (?), 3. 1017–24 (although the smile and lowered gaze are rather non-committal; cf. 1. 784, 3. 422, 4. 1315); new confidence, 3. 1350–53.

9. See 3. 287–89, 297–98, 646, 672, 686–87, 724–26, 755–65, 829–35, 867–68, 951–55, 962–71, 1008–14, 1018–24, 1063–68, 1118–19, 1159–61; 4. 16–19, 26–29, 34–46, 695, 727–29, 749–50, 1661–72.

10. 64. 12–18, Nereids (including Thetis, 28); 98, Theseus; 193–94, Eumenides; 254–64, Bacchantes; 305–19, the Parcae; 350–51, grieving Trojan mothers; 353–55, Achilles slaughtering Trojans like a reaper; 363–64, 369–70, Polyxena; 390–91, Bacchus.

11. 64. 60–70, 86, 91–93, 100, 131, 332. Thus the distinction in style between Catullus' elegiac-lyric and epic worlds is not as sharp as might be expected: see further below, n. 19.

12. 64. 60–70, 128–29 (cf. 162–63).

13. In addition to Sellar, Heinze, Otis, and Johnson, already cited, see, e.g., V. Pöschl, *The Art of Vergil*, trans. G. Seligson (Ann Arbor, 1962), pp. 62–69, 93–103. In some respects, as Johnson points out, the differences between Vergil and Homer correspond to those between the Old Testament and Homer described by E. Auerbach in chap. 1 of *Mimesis*, trans. W. Trask (Princeton, 1953); see, too, R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York, 1981), chap. 6: "Characterization and the Art of Reticence," pp. 114–30, and further pp. 147–54.

14. The bedraggled ghost of Hector (2. 270–80); Iulus surrounded by divine flame (2. 681–86); the Harpies (3. 214–18, 225–34); Scylla (3. 424–28, 431–32); the gaunt Achaemenides (3. 590–95); Fama, eerily personified (4. 174–88); Atlas, half human, half mountain (4. 246–51); Aestes (5. 37–41); the two boxers, Dares and Entellus (5. 375–77, 421–32, after Apollonius 2. 25–47); the Sibyl (6. 46–50); Charon (6. 298–304); the statue of Pegasus, half bird, half king? (7. 187–91); Allecto as Fury and as old woman (7. 328–29, 415–19); Camilla—more her speed and lightness of foot than her actual appearance (7. 814–17, 11. 573–79, 648–54, 803–4); Tiberinus (8. 32–34); the Cyclopes (8. 424–38; cf. 617–25); Latinus crowned (12. 162–64) and mourning (12. 609–11). It may be observed that these are for the most part minor characters in the poem, and that they generally are based on, or allude to, one single predecessor in the tradition (e.g., one character or episode in Homer or Apollonius). See further p. 318 below, and Mann's remark about "Romanfiguren im pittoresken Sinn" (quoted below, n. 40).

arrive and don or doff disguises, are generally given brief descriptions, as befits their decorative or awesome presence.¹⁵

Throughout the poem, clothes and armor are necessarily mentioned with some frequency, as the military and courtly context requires. Vergil displays and elicits less relish than Homer for superficial detail and aristocratic ornament; most of his descriptions of weapons and armor are a matter of routine, and remain unspecific and unmemorable.¹⁶ The exceptions, those individuals whose arms and clothing are more vividly described, may be seen as proving the rule: so, for example, Aventinus (7. 655–69) relieves the monotony of the list of Italian champions, and provides an obtrusive and appropriately Homeric flavor; in the same list, Lausus' exceptional beauty (7. 649–50; cf. 10. 433–35) prepares us for his gallant and pathetic death, and for Aeneas' sympathetic behavior; so, too, with Pallas.¹⁷

There is no lack of violence, drama, and pathos on the battlefields of the *Aeneid*. But, as has often been remarked, the mechanics of battle, the anatomical details of wounding and killing, are generally less fully described than in Homer. Blood, misery, and pain are everywhere; but they are for the most part less localized and particular. Again, there are vivid exceptions,¹⁸ and the painful, dignified end of the terrible Mezentius is a pictorial masterpiece (10. 833–38, 844–45, 856–57, 868–69, 898–908). On the whole, however, Vergil takes care not to stimulate that archaic Greek delight in physical prowess, that sensual thrill at the human body's contortions and lacerations enjoyed by Homer's audience. Turnus and Aeneas in full cry are deadly and awesome, but not *exciting* as Hector, Diomedes, and Achilles can be.

15. Venus (1. 314–20, 336–37, 402–5; 2. 589–93); Mercury (4. 556–59; cf. 238–39, 242, 253–59—and Apollonius 2. 676 ff.); Apollo (9. 650–51; cf. 4. 141–50); Iris (4. 700–702).

16. Aeneas' armor and weapons: 2. 671–72, 3. 466–69 (Helenus' gifts), 4. 261–64, 646–47, 8. 447–49, 617–731 (shield), 10. 270–75 (helmet, crest, shield, like Sirius), 10. 638–40 ("Dardanian"), 12. 167, 430–34, 441–42, 887–88, 919–24; and cf. 8. 552–53 (his horse covered with a golden-clawed lionskin). Other Trojans' arms: 2. 389–95, 412, 422–24 (Greek disguise); 3. 596–97; 2. 509–11, 518–19 (Priam); 5. 553–59, 570–72 (Iulus and the young riders). Other warriors: 7. 664–69, cf. 598, 656 (Aventinus); 10. 495–99, cf. 12. 941–47 (Pallas' belt); 9. 359–66 (Euryalus' spoils); 10. 719–31 (Acron); 10. 833–38, 844–45, 856–57, 868–69 (Mezentius); 11. 641–47 (Herminius). Turnus: 7. 783–92, 9. 49–50, 11. 486–97, 12. 87–94, 164–65, 941–44 (all in all, a more vivid series of pictures than Aeneas'); plus the descriptive details of 7. 473, 12. 219–21, 926–27, 950–52. In general, of course, armor depersonalizes its wearer (cf. Hector and Astyanax at *Il.* 6. 466–502); and the frequent mention of Aeneas' arms in the later books (often with quite sinister overtones, as at 8. 620–23, 10. 270–75, 12. 919–24) turns him into an increasingly harsh and threatening figure. The same might be said of Achilles in Books 19–22 of the *Iliad*: but then we have Books 23 and 24 in which we see him reconciled with humanity, his friends, his enemies, and himself. We are shown no such process for Aeneas: see further n. 24 below.

17. 8. 585–91, compared to Lucifer; 10. 433–35, compared to Lausus; 11. 39–40, 68–77, compared to a newly plucked flower; and cf. his belt, 10. 495–99, 12. 941–47, so crucial to the ending of the poem. Note also Evander's simple Italian clothes (8. 457–60); Euryalus' fatally glittering spoils (9. 359–66); Acron's scarlet wedding clothes, pathetically inappropriate for battle against Mezentius, stag against lion (10. 719–31); Herminius' blond hair and giant shoulders rashly exposed, unarmored, and then the spear running him through, his body doubled up in agony (11. 641–47); Chloereus' finery tempting Camilla to disaster (11. 768–82). All these have a special point; perhaps only Aventinus could be regarded as merely decorative.

18. E.g., Priam (2. 550–58), Dryops (10. 346–49), Euryalus (10. 431–37), Herminius (11. 646–47), Sacas (12. 651–52). Of course Homer's victims of war are not entirely devoid of pathos and color: see, e.g., S. L. Schein, "The Death of Simoesios: *Il.* 4. 473–489," *Eranos* 74 (1976): 1–5.

Nevertheless, the epic world, largely populated as it is by gods, heroes, and heroines, cannot be stripped of color, flamboyance, and physical beauty, without degenerating into a gray and graceless mediocrity: and even in the *Aeneid* a few young men and women are singled out in ways that recall Apollonius' delicate figures. In several cases (Euryalus, Pallas, Lausus, Camilla), their charming and youthful looks turn out to be too fragile to survive, and end up pathetically ruined and wasted. But the more permanent brilliance of Ascanius-Iulus has much in common with the young Argonauts, contriving to combine, or alternate, the boyish grace of a Hylas with the adolescent vigor of a Jason.¹⁹

As for Vergil's two heroines, in effect they divide between them the attributes and manners of Apollonius' Medea. Lavinia has little to do in the poem, but her decorous coiffure and modest blushes (12. 64–69; cf. 605–6) characterize her as young, inexperienced, and beautiful. Nothing more is required.²⁰ The older and more worldly Dido impresses us very differently: no less beautiful, but more majestic and imposing—with far greater potential for disrupting Aeneas' plans. Dido manifests fewer physical signs of confusion or distress than Medea. Even the details of her appearance are for the most part reserved until late in Book 4: we are told that her hair is fair only when she comes to tear it in grief (4. 589–90), and again as she dies (4. 698–99; cf. 704–5). As we first come to know her, it is her confident and regal manner, her sumptuous apparel, her resemblance to Diana, that mark her out (esp. 1. 697–98, 4. 136–39, 1. 496–504). In the early stages of her love, she acknowledges her confusion in her words (to Anna), and in her actions; but we are not told of pallor or blushes, flashing or misty eyes, bare feet or disheveled hair.²¹ For the most part, her passions are described in metaphorical terms (as a wound, a flame, a sickness).²² Even after she senses betrayal (4. 297), it is mostly through words, tears, and groans, rather than any more pictorially vivid displays, that she reveals her feelings,²³ and even when she is compared to a Bacchant (4. 300–303), it

19. 1. 690, 709–11 (Cupid in disguise), 4. 84, 5. 553–603, 2. 681–86, 10. 132–38; cf. Apollonius' Jason, Cyzicus, Eros, etc. (above, p. 310). Ascanius' age appears to fluctuate during the poem (even more than Telemachus' in the *Odyssey*): he sits in Dido's lap (1. 718, 4. 84), yet leads squadrons of operational cavalry a few weeks later (5. 553–603; cf. 9. 590–671, 4. 156–59). Of Euryalus, Nisus, and Camilla—even of Pallas and Lausus—it might be said that they would be more at home in Catullus' world, or Apollonius', and that they might survive and flourish there: but their talents and virtues are not those required by the war in Latium; cf., too, 1. 474–78 (Troilus), 6. 861–86 (Marcellus).

20. But see now R. O. A. M. Lyne, "Lavinia's Blush," *G & R* 30 (1983): 55–64.

21. Her first reaction, upon Aeneas' revealing himself out of the cloud and addressing her, seems to be a mixture of shock, astonishment, and (already, perhaps) love (1. 613–14 "obstupuit primo aspectu . . . casu deinde viri tanto . . ."); see P. E. Knox, "A Note on *Aeneid* 1. 613," *CP* 79 (1984): 304–5.

22. See further Pöschl, *Art of Vergil*, pp. 60–91, esp. pp. 65, 79–91; and B. M. W. Knox, "The Serpent and the Flame," *AJP* 71 (1950): 379–400.

23. She lowers her gaze (1. 561), stares (1. 717–19), stammers (4. 76), sighs (4. 409), and weeps (4. 30, 413, 437–39, 649); but she keeps her emotions hidden at 4. 477. At 4. 518 her loosened robe and discarded sandal are a matter of ritual, not confusion: see Pease's exhaustive note ad loc. Resemblances have been suggested between Dido and Cleopatra (see Pease, pp. 24–28), but they do not, and could not, extend to their physical appearance or manner. More interesting, perhaps, are the parallels between Dido and Aeneas (e.g., in the Apollo/Diana similes, 1. 496–504/4. 143–50, and in the whirling eyes of 4. 362–64/12. 939).

is the mental and nervous state of both that is described (*animi, incensa, excita, audito, vocat*), not the physical appearance. (Apollonius or Catullus would surely have done otherwise.) It is all the more striking, therefore, when the queen, once so self-assured and self-possessed, rolls her eyes in fury at Aeneas (4. 362–64), and grows pale at the prospect of death (4. 499, 644), her eyes bloodshot, her cheeks mottled (643–44), her gaze futilely seeking the light (688–92).

But it is in the figure of Aeneas himself that the most distinctive and remarkable aspects of Vergil's art of description can be discerned—or rather, not discerned. Aeneas' presence, his words and actions, are more pervasive and constantly determinant of the outcome and nature of the poem than those of any hero of the *Iliad*, perhaps even more than Odysseus' in the *Odyssey*. Yet he remains curiously faceless and indistinct. His standing epithet is *pious*, "dutiful" or "loyal"—no clue here to his appearance. His clothing and armor vary, it seems, from one scene to another, sometimes "Trojan" (or even Greek, when he and his comrades don enemy armor in Book 2), sometimes Tyrian (gifts from Dido), sometimes Italian (gifts from Evander); but seldom are characteristic features of his armor described.²⁴ His handsome face and strong shoulders are apparently only a small part of what captures Dido's heart (1. 613, 4. 4, 11, 83–85);²⁵ it is rather his *virtus* as a whole, and the marvelous stories he has to tell (1. 614 *casu . . . tanto*; 4. 12–14). In 1. 588–93 he emerges from the cloud *deo similis*, and mention is made of his face, shoulders, hair, and eyes, and of his luminous, youthful appearance; but no specific details are given.²⁶

In 2. 721–24 we do get a rare, clear glimpse of him, lionskin over his shoulders, Anchises on his back, Ascanius trotting beside him. The picture immediately characterizes him in relation to father, son, and ruined city, as his strong shoulders and long stride take them out of one world into another. When he goes out to hunt with Dido, he looks like Apollo (*pulcherrimus . . . qualis . . . Apollo*): but in which respects, beyond the arrows on his shoulders, his radiance, and his swiftness? Do the further details of Apollo's appearance there given (4. 141–50), his

24. See above, n. 16. His shield receives its proper *ecphrasis* (8. 617–728); but it has no distinctive character such as Telamonian Ajax's in the *Iliad*, or the Argive champions' in Aeschylus' *Seven*; and the scenes depicted on it, as well as being incomprehensible to Aeneas himself (8. 730), are quite impossible for us to visualize pictorially ourselves: their spatial relationships to one another are left vague, and no attempt is made to "fit" them onto a shield-shape, as is done for Achilles' shield (and, rather more randomly, for Heracles' in the Hesiodic *Aspis*, 139–320). A better symbol or reflection of Aeneas' character and appearance in the later books is his spear, whose tremendous size and efficiency are frequently mentioned, above all in Book 12; but we are never told what wood it is made of, unlike Achilles' (cf. A. Alföldi, "Hasta—Summa Imperii," *AJA* 63 [1960]: 1–27). Perhaps at 8. 552–53 his horse's lionskin covering may suggest the same Herculean associations as the lionskin at 2. 721–24; see V. Buchheit, *Virgil über die Sendung Roms* (Heidelberg, 1963), pp. 116–32.

25. That *armis* (4. 11) means "shoulders," not "weapons," has been sufficiently demonstrated by J. Henry, *Aeneidea*, vol. 2 (London, 1878), pp. 560–65; and cf. 1. 589, 2. 721.

26. *Caesariem* (590) implies, but does not prove, that his hair is fairly long; *iuventae*, since it is specifically mentioned, may suggest a contrast to his usual appearance, or may merely exaggerate it; *purpureum* denotes a "glow" rather than a particular complexion. Ivory, marble, silver, and gold are all mentioned (592–93) more, I think, for their opulence and their familiarity as artists' media than for their visual similarity to Aeneas' flesh and hair. See further R. G. Austin's notes ad loc.

flowing (presumably blond) hair, laurel wreath, and gold headband, belong to Aeneas, too? Probably not; but there is no way to tell. In 4. 261–64 he is found wearing a jasper-starred sword and dyed Tyrian cloak, embroidered with gold, luxurious Eastern garb that perhaps adds to Mercury's scorn. These are Dido's gifts. But are they much different from his normal regalia as a Trojan prince? Let us not forget that he carries with him Priam's crown and Anchises' heirlooms, too (7. 243–48; cf. 1. 647–55, 8. 152–68).²⁷ He *is* an Easterner; and Juno makes Jupiter agree that the Italians will never have their language, dress, or customs corrupted by this new infiltration of Trojans (7. 167–68 *ignota in veste*; 12. 823–25, 835–37).

On three separate occasions, Aeneas or the Trojans at large are described in some detail as effeminate, oily Easterners: 4. 215–17 “ille Paris . . . Maeonia mentum mitra crinemque madentem/subnexus,” 12. 97–100 “. . . semiviri Phrygis . . . crinis/vibratos calido ferro murraque madentis,” 9. 614–20 “vobis picta croco et fulgenti murice vestis . . .” (and cf. 7. 321 *Paris alter*; 361–64). The sneers from Iarbas and Turnus are the only descriptions we are given of Aeneas' hairstyle. How far can we trust them? They correspond precisely to the average Roman's prejudiced stereotype of the obnoxious Easterner.²⁸ Iarbas has never seen Aeneas; Turnus has perhaps seen him only with his helmet on. Can we really believe that Aeneas has been wearing a turban, or cap, throughout the whole *Aeneid* (4. 216, 9. 616)? If not, should we believe that he has curled his hair, or dressed it with myrrh? The accusations of “unmanliness” and of moral similarity to Paris are certainly unfounded: so the suggestion of physical resemblance may be farfetched, too, although we cannot be sure. That he looks like Apollo, fights like a hundred-armed Aegaeon, bears down as large as a mountain, and stands unmoved like an oak tree is guaranteed by the narrator (4. 141–50, 10. 565–70, 12. 699–703, 4. 438–49): nothing effeminate or “Eastern” here. The Trojans exercise naked, like Greeks, not Phrygians (3. 280–82); they row stripped and sweating (5. 132–35, although their officers are more splendidly attired). Here, too, we seem to have sure evidence that Numanus' view of these “Phrygianesses” (9. 614–20) is exaggerated and, in some respects at least, false. And, after we have followed Aeneas through his adventures at Troy, Carthage, and Italy, seen his staunch and irresistible conduct in the field, and heard of his direct connection with Julius and Octavian Caesar, are we to picture to ourselves that the head bared to quell the fighting at 12. 312 has long, Oriental curls and drips with oil? Or are we to imagine rather a short-haired, clean-shaven Roman general, not unlike Julius Caesar himself?²⁹

27. Evander's remarking on Aeneas' close resemblance to Anchises in his youth is an effective moment (8. 152–68): face, eyes, voice, and height all add up. Once again, Aeneas' appearance is recorded as making a certain impression on others, and as demonstrating (to us) his relationship to others; not as an essential or absolute quality of the man himself. (In this case, the relationship is mirrored by that between Ascanius and *his* father; cf. 4. 84 and 4. 328–30.)

28. See, e.g., Pease on 4. 215 and 216.

29. The alternative would inevitably remind the Roman reader of Antony's Eastern ways and of Cleopatra's retinue (cf. Horace *Odes* 1. 37). Comparisons between the figures of Aeneas and Augustus

Vergil does not solve our problem. We have to paint our own picture, or pictures, of his hero, a hero who passes from one world to another: from East to West, from heroic world of Greek fancy to rustic world of Italian prehistory, from Oriental monarchy to the distant beginnings of the (now reborn) Roman Republic. Aeneas is different things to different people in the poem; and if the narrator does not simplify him, or crystallize him, in any one guise, we cannot, and perhaps should not try. The inner man is fixed, if not assertive, of character and purpose;³⁰ the outer man is no more than he has to be, the sum of the perceptions of others. He has no distinctive quirks or scars, no special mannerisms, no unique quality to his beauty. Even his gestures and physical reactions are limited: his hair stands on end at the appearance of Mercury (4. 280); his eyes whirl as he contemplates killing Turnus (12. 938–39); but nowhere in his relationship with Dido does the expression on his face or the movement of his body betray what he is thinking and feeling,³¹ any more than they did to his companions in l. 208–9, where his face is brave despite his inner misgivings (cf. l. 513–18). Dido never really knows what Aeneas thinks or feels or hopes; and in some respects we are not much better informed ourselves.

Perhaps the most telling single example of Vergil's technique of thus omitting objective details that Homer would supply, so that we will not be distracted from the subjective impact of what is happening, comes in Book 12.³² Aeneas is wounded and leaves the battlefield. He is tended by Iapyx, in his doctor's uniform (12. 400–401), and eventually healed, with surreptitious but unmistakable divine help; and so he returns to the fray. Nobody ever knew who shot the arrow that disabled him (12. 318–23)—a nice touch: no Italian can claim the credit.³³ But more extraordinary is the fact that Vergil never tells us *where* on Aeneas' body the arrow strikes. He limps off the field; tries, with the help of Achates, Mnesteus, and Ascanius, to remove the arrow himself; finally entrusts himself to the specialist, and is relieved. The scene incorporates elements from Pandarus' shooting of Menelaus, and of Machaon's work on him (*Il.* 4. 105–219; cf. 11. 504–15, 655 ff.), but

have frequently been made: see Pease, pp. 47–49; and esp. J. C. Drew, *The Allegory of the "Aeneid"* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 76–85; Galinsky, *Aeneas*, pp. 51–53, 165–67 and (?) pl. 124 (the Great Cameo of Paris). See, too, J. Griffin, "Augustan Poetry and the Life of Luxury," *JRS* 66 (1976): 87–104.

30. Like Apollonius' Jason, he is a much more passive hero than his Homeric predecessors, and requires more pushing from others to achieve his great deeds. On the other hand, he is by no means the indecisive, ineffectual adolescent that Jason appears to be: his strength, courage, and determination are his own.

31. See 4. 331–32, 369–70, 390–91, 395, 438–49—although he does weep when he faces Dido in the Underworld (6. 455). At 4. 438–49, it is much debated whose *lacrimae inanes* are falling: probably they are Aeneas' (see Pease's note, with references to the tears of other characters in the poem, too), and the tears are "empty" because they reflect only pain of heart (448), not change of mind (449). Occasionally Aeneas is said to sigh (l. 370, 485); and he weeps quite frequently (some fifteen times; see Pease's references, on 4. 449). At l. 610–12 his joy takes the form of shaking his companions' hands. At 5. 385, in dismay at the burning of the ships, he rends his cloak and stretches out his hands in prayer.

32. For this "subjective/objective" contrast, see Otis, *Virgil*, chap. 3, and Auerbach, *Mimesis*, chap. 1, *passim*.

33. From 12. 797 and 815, it eventually emerges that Juturna may have been responsible.

the contrast is absolute. The minutest details of Menelaus' wound are spelled out, vivid and astonishingly sensual, complete with ornate simile (4. 141–47). But not a word is given us about the nature of Aeneas' wound, beyond the fact that it weakens him and slows him down (cf. 12. 746–47). Perhaps anything more particular would be distracting, or might imply some symbolic meaning unwanted by Vergil. Or perhaps the poet's decision not to specify, for example, a thigh-wound for Aeneas at this point (and to transfer Homer's image instead to Lavinia, 12. 67–69!) may be due to his concern not to overemphasize the similarity of roles between his Aeneas and Homer's Menelaus: Aeneas, as the outsider breaking up the anticipated marriage between Lavinia and Turnus, combines elements of Paris with those of the honest, aggrieved Menelaus, just as he combines aspects of the loyal and devoted—but doomed—Hector with those of the bloodthirsty and invulnerable Achilles. Minor characters, with a single referent in the tradition, may be clearly and vividly depicted: but in Aeneas, the multiple allusions, or combinations of roles, require that the picture be less sharply focused.³⁴ Certainly the wounded Aeneas remains a colorless and indistinct figure, especially after the unforgettable Mezentius (10. 833–40).

How then *should* we picture Aeneas? How did Vergil's original audience picture him? No distinct image seems to emerge from earlier literature;³⁵ and in art Aeneas is found in a variety of guises and styles, as Phrygian, Greek, Etruscan, or Roman, with long or short hair, with or without Phrygian cap, with or without beard, with or without clothes.³⁶ Certain postures tend to recur: but Aeneas' own appearance (like that of most archaic heroes) is left to the artist's discretion. So it is unlikely that Vergil's Roman audience will have brought with them to the reading of the poem any clear preconception of what this particular

34. See above, n. 14. In a Pompeian wall-painting, Aeneas' wound is in his thigh (Museo Nazionale, Naples, inv. 9009 = Galinsky, *Aeneas*, pl. 23). Perhaps the artist was influenced by Menelaus' wound in the *Iliad*, or by the references in the *Aeneid* to Aeneas' being slowed down in his pursuit of Turnus later (12. 746–47 *tardata sagitta* / . . . *genua*; but contrast 748 *pede fervidus urget*). In Homer *Il.* 5. 305–10, and in Greek art, Aeneas is wounded by Diomedes in the side or hip: e.g., *ARV*² 192, no. 106 (Kleophrades Painter) = Galinsky, *Aeneas*, pl. 9.

35. In Homer, he is "noble," "strong," "counsel-bringing," and the like, but has no particular physical attributes. Whether he did in, e.g., Stesichorus, we cannot tell. (In the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite*, his father Anchises, whom Aeneas so resembles, according to *Aeneid* 8. 152–68, is "godlike of body" [55] and has a "fine countenance" [183], but no further details are supplied: it is Aphrodite who receives the detailed descriptions, 82–90, 161–65, 171–75.) See further Pease, pp. 11–22, Galinsky, *Aeneas*, pp. 11–18. Of course, apart from the Homeric tradition, in which Aeneas is the next-greatest Trojan hero after Hector, there was another strong pre-Vergilian tradition of Aeneas as companion of Paris in the rape of Helen, and betrayer of Troy to the Greeks: see Galinsky, *Aeneas*, pp. 46–50, for literary and iconographical references. It is to this latter tradition that Dares Phrygius (above, n. 1) belongs.

36. See Pease, p. 40, and his note on 4. 216; A. Sadurska, *Les tables iliaques* (Warsaw, 1964); Galinsky, *Aeneas*, passim, esp. pp. 3–61, 122–40, 166–69, and pls. 1–45, 85–128, 163; N. Horsfall, "Stesichorus at Bovillae?" *JHS* 99 (1979): 26–48; F. Canciani, "Aineias," in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, vol. 1.1 (Zurich, 1981), pp. 381–96, with vol. 1.2 plates. In representations of the abduction of Helen from Sparta by Paris and Aeneas (see above, n. 35), the two Trojans sometimes look similar, sometimes different (e.g., Aeneas bearded and older, Paris clean-shaven); see Galinsky, *Aeneas*, pp. 128–30, and pls. 36a and b, 107–9 (including *ARV*² 458, no. 1, 459, no. 4, both by Makron, and *ARV*² 1287, no. 1).

hero looked like: he could be Homeric or modern, Greek or Phrygian, "father Aeneas" or youthful warrior. It was up to Vergil to specify; and he does not specify.

This means that we, and Vergil's original audience, are required to supply the face, accoutrements, and gestures that we want;³⁷ or to supply none at all, and leave Aeneas faceless and indistinct, a huge and imposing figure, yet able to blend into his changing surroundings and to combine different qualities as needed.³⁸ He is no Odyssean master of disguise and quick changes; yet he manages to identify himself, or be identified by others, now as a Trojan, now almost a Tyrian, now even an Italian. At heart, at least, he seems more Roman than Oriental or Greek—but vestiges of all three surround him, and it is no doubt a mistake to try to strip them all away and disclose the "real" Aeneas underneath. Aeneas is not an "ideal type"³⁹ (of the Roman, or of the new kind of heroism, or even of a divinely driven cipher), so much as the puzzling sum of multiple viewpoints, the object of several gazes and imaginations.

Thomas Mann, when asked why he did not include in *Doktor Faustus* a proper description of its hero, Adrian Leverkühn (whom he acknowledged to be his favorite literary creation), explained that it was because Adrian "had too much to hide, namely the secret of his identity"; only the minor figures in the book, "those appearing far from the center," could be represented in the usual manner of the descriptive novel.⁴⁰

37. Laurence Sterne employs the same technique (much more ostentatiously, however, and to delicious effect) in *Tristram Shandy*; vol. 6, chap. 38. After chap. 37 ends "... never did thy eyes behold, or thy concupiscence covet, anything in this world more concupiscible than Widow Wadman." chap. 38 begins: "To conceive this right,—call for pen and ink—here's paper ready to your hand [a blank page is included in the printed book]—Sit down, Sir, paint her to your mind—as much like your mistress as you can—as unlike your wife as your conscience will let you—'tis all one to me—please but your own fancy in it" [Then, after the blank page] "—Was ever anything in Nature so sweet! so exquisite! . . ." I am grateful to R. Merrill for reminding me of this passage.

38. For his size, see esp. 4. 11, 7. 167–68, 8. 154–63, 12. 701–3; and n.b. 12. 218 (if sound): "tum magis ut propius cernunt non viribus aequis" (or better, *aequos*). Once again, however, we note that this is how Aeneas looks to others (the Rutulians), not an authorial statement of fact; the same is true of the parallel scene in 10. 445–59, where Turnus' *corpus ingens* and *viribus imparibus*, though doubtless objectively real, are presented as seen through the eyes of Pallas.

39. Contrast n. 3 above.

40. "Nach einer abendlichen Vorlesung fragte mich Leonhard Frank, ob mir bei Adrian selbst irgendein Modell vorgeschwebt habe. Ich verneinte . . . Leverkühn sei sozusagen eine Idealgestalt, ein 'Held unserer Zeit,' ein Mensch, der das Leid der Epoche trägt. . . . Dabei, merkwürdigerweise, gab ich ihm kaum ein Aussehen, eine Erscheinung, einen Körper. Die Meinen wollten immer, dass ich ihn beschrieb, dass ich, wenn schon der Narrator nur ein gutes Herz und eine zitternd aufzeichnende Hand bleiben müsse, doch wenigstens seinen und meinen Helden sichtbar machen, physisch individualisieren, anschaulich wandeln lassen sollte. Wie leicht wäre das gewesen! Und wie geheimnisvoll unzulässig, in einem noch nie erfahrenen Sinn unmöglich war es doch wieder! . . . Romanfiguren im pittoresken Sinn durften nur die dem Zentrum fernen Erscheinungen des Buches, alle diese Schildknapp, Schwerdtfeger, Roddes, Schlaginhaufens etc. etc. sein—nicht seine beiden Protagonisten, die zu viel zu verbergen haben, nämlich das Geheimnis ihrer Identität" (*Die Entstehung des "Doktor Faustus"* [Frankfurt am Main, 1976], pp. 739–40).

But two important differences should be noted between Mann and Vergil. First, as Mann acknowledges, his own narrator is far more obtrusively and ironically characterized than Vergil's (Serenus Zeitblom, Ph.D., is indeed the other of the "beiden Protagonisten"), and his limitations and inadequacies as a narrator are constantly and fussily brought to our attention. Second, Mann's Zeitblom *does*

Vergil's hero, too, keeps much hidden from us; and even what he reveals does not always add up. Readers apparently respond in different ways to this difficulty—as, perhaps, they were meant to. Most have not noticed at all, and have not wondered much about Aeneas' looks. Some have simply accepted those details that fit their own assumptions about him, and rejected or ignored all others, so that their "Roman," or "Eastern," Aeneas may persist throughout the poem. Others may feel that the discrepancies and omissions are meant to puzzle us, and that this multiplicity of possibilities, amounting to an implicit denial of certainties, is but another example of Vergil's habit of undermining our ability to apprehend or understand his narrative.⁴¹ Broadly speaking, we may suppose that those whose *Aeneid* adds up and makes sense will formulate out of Vergil's clues a picture of the hero that suits that sense; while those whose *Aeneid* contradicts itself at every turn and defies coherent, positive interpretation will prefer to keep his image elusive, enigmatic, even contradictory. It depends on who we are, and what we are looking for.

*University of California,
Berkeley*

in fact include a description of certain distinctive features of Adrian in chap. 4 (a curious—or impossible?—blend of his two parents' utterly different looks, so meticulously described in chaps. 3 and 4); and Adrian's peculiar laugh is a distinctive and significant mannerism of the hero from his childhood on. His eyes are described at the end of chap. 20, his handwriting at the beginning of chap. 25; and chap. 46 describes the marked changes in his appearance due to agony and age.

41. These three classes of reader reflect, in fact, my own experience over the last few months, as I became aware of the issue; and examples of all three have been found amongst my friends and colleagues who have been kind enough to read earlier versions of this article.