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I. The *Aeneid* as a Trilogy

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Among the most characteristic features of Vergil's art are his desire for variety, symmetry, and balance, and his interest in parallels and contrasts; these are seen in his arrangement of the *Eclogues*¹ and in the structural organization of the *Georgics*,² but are perhaps best displayed in the complex structure of the *Aeneid*. The relation of the different books to each other has long been the subject of intensive study, and scholars agree that the arrangement of the books is the result of deliberate design on the part of the poet. Since Vergil arranged his epic material in a prose outline before he began to write,³ the architecture of the *Aeneid* as a whole undoubtedly occupied his attention from the very first, and it need therefore occasion little surprise if readers today find not merely one structural pattern but two or three which overlap and enrich each other.

Vergil's love of variety appears in the alternating rhythm running throughout the poem — the contrast between the more tragic and serious

¹ See G. E. Duckworth, "The Architecture of the *Aeneid*," *AJP* 75 (1954) 2-5, and bibliography there cited; the correspondence of *Ecl.* I and IX, II and VIII, etc., centering around V seems correct, but a division of the poems into two halves is favored by W. Port, "Die Anordnung in Gedichtbüchern augusteischer Zeit," *Philologus* 81 (1925-26) 287 f. and by C. Becker, "Virgils Eklogenbuch," *Hermes* 83 (1955) 317 ff. Cf. discussion and bibliography in K. Büchner, *P. Vergilius Maro. Der Dichter der Römer* (Stuttgart 1956) cols. 236 f.

² See Duckworth (above, note 1) 2, note 6, for bibliography; cf. Büchner (above, note 1) cols. 243-45.

³ *Vita Donati* 23 (ed. C. Hardie, Oxford 1954).

nature of the even-numbered books and the lighter tone of those with odd numbers. This alternation has been considered the basic division of the *Aeneid* by some scholars⁴ and has been viewed in various ways: Conway says that Vergil's achievement "was to combine in alternation the methods and motives of epic poetry with those of Greek tragedy";⁵ Stadler looks upon the even-numbered books as books of depth, dealing chiefly with the hero, his mission, and Fate, the other books being books of breadth, more concerned with other characters and events.⁶ Both Conway and Stadler seem correct and their views are complementary; the books of greatest tragedy and deepest significance are certainly those with even numbers, and this fact is of the utmost importance for our understanding of Vergil's arrangement of the epic as a whole.

The most obvious division of the *Aeneid* is that into two parts — the journey from Troy to Latium (I–VI) and Aeneas' adventures and victories after his arrival (VII–XII); many thus look upon the first half as a Roman "Odyssey" of wanderings and the second half as a Roman "Iliad" of battles. Vergil's reference in 7.44 f. to the remainder of the poem as a *maior rerum ordo*, a *maius opus*, has accentuated the twofold division of the epic. The two halves of the poem are closely related, however, in spite of the many differences in subject matter. We may look upon the *Aeneid* as composed of two parallel panels, with an alternating rise and fall of tension and with each book of the second panel balancing that of the first; e.g., I and VII (Juno and the storm; Juno and the war); II and VIII (both more important books: Destruction of Troy; Birth of Rome); III and IX (both interludes: one of wandering, the other at the Trojan camp); IV and X (again important books: Tragedy of Love; Tragedy of War), etc. The various parallels and contrasts in these corresponding books, which are surprisingly numerous, have been discussed elsewhere.⁷

⁴ Cf. R. S. Conway, "The Architecture of the Epic," *Harvard Lectures on the Vergilian Age* (Cambridge, Mass. 1928) 141: "the contrast of the grave and the less grave; of a sense of tension and a sense of leisure. . . . This is the real division of the *Aeneid*." See T. W. Stadler, *Vergils Aeneis. Eine poetische Betrachtung* (Einsiedeln 1942) 17–43; Stadler terms the even-numbered books systolic, the others diastolic.

⁵ R. S. Conway, "Vergil's Creative Art," *Proc. Brit. Acad.* 17 (1931) 25; this seems more satisfactory than Conway's earlier statement (above, note 4, *ibid.*) that "the books with odd numbers show what we may call the lighter or Odyssean type; the books with the even numbers reflect the graver colour of the Iliad." But the more tragic nature of the even-numbered books should not lead us to assume, as does W. F. J. Knight, "Integration of Plot in the *Aeneid*," *Vergilius* 6 (1940) 20, that "there are thus six tragedies in the *Aeneid*." Cf., however, Knight, *Roman Vergil* (London 1944) 135–37.

⁶ Stadler (above, note 4) 18–20, 40–43. Cf. also Büchner (above, note 1) col. 419.

⁷ See Duckworth (above, note 1) 11–14; the analysis of the *Aeneid* presented there

In addition to the alternation of books, with the even-numbered books of a more serious and tragic content, and a division into two halves, with many parallels and contrasts between the corresponding books of each half, Vergil has developed another structural arrangement of the poem, a tripartite division into three groups of four books each, and in this way he counteracts the somewhat artificial division of the work into two halves. To many readers this arrangement may appear less obvious,⁸ but it seems equally significant as a part of Vergil's overall plan for the *Aeneid*.

In a recent paper on Horace and Vergil I pointed out that Horace's six Roman Odes have a curious structural interlocking, that two different arrangements of the odes are possible and seem equally valid.⁹ I termed these A and B; according to arrangement A we have a tripartite division, with the central poems III and IV, the longest and most significant poems of the cycle, framed by I-II and V-VI;¹⁰ according to arrangement B the six odes fall into two groups, with parallels between the poems of the first half and those of the second half; in this connection I wrote as follows: "This arrangement of the six odes is not unlike the structural parallelism in the *Aeneid*, which falls into two halves, the books of the second half corresponding in numerous respects to those in the first half."¹¹

Just as Horace planned his six odes in an intricate double arrangement, so Vergil, I am convinced, had two similar structural plans for the twelve books of his *Aeneid*: one, the obvious division into two halves (with corresponding books in each half, a feature less apparent), and the other (likewise less obvious), a tripartite division, with the central and important core of the poem (V-VIII) framed by I-IV and IX-XII; this

is an expansion and development of the theory expressed by Conway (above, note 4) 139-41. For a different interpretation of the two halves of the *Aeneid*, see J. Perret, *Virgile, l'homme et l'oeuvre* (Paris 1952) 111-20, and the criticism by Duckworth, *ibid.* 7-10.

⁸ The tendency in most secondary schools to read only *Aeneid* I-VI or parts therefrom, and the publication of numerous school editions containing only the first six books have, of course, accentuated the twofold division and made it more difficult for the average reader to see that Vergil has developed an alternate tripartite arrangement.

⁹ See G. E. Duckworth, "*Animae Dimidium Meae*: Two Poets of Rome," *TAPA* 87 (1956) 281-316, esp. 300-302.

¹⁰ In the *Carmen Saeculare* the two sets of prayers, each composed of six stanzas, have the important message in stanzas 3 and 4, which are likewise framed by 1-2 and 5-6; see Duckworth (above, note 9) 309.

¹¹ Duckworth (above, note 9) 301, note 69.

latter resembles what, in speaking of the Roman Odes, I called Arrangement A.¹²

This tripartite division of the *Aeneid* is not new; it has been stressed by Stadler and Pöschl, who speak of the change from dark to light and back to dark,¹³ and, more recently, by Büchner, who analyzes the three parts as follows: I–IV, Aeneas in Carthage; V–VIII, arrival in Latium and preparation for battle; IX–XII, the conflict itself.¹⁴ Camps speaks of “an underlying division of the poem into three main portions, the episodes of Aeneas’ story which have Dido and Turnus for secondary heroes standing one on either side of a large central section wherein the wider significance of the story is expounded.”¹⁵ Camps’ statement provides an excellent summary of Vergil’s division of the poem into three sections, but he, as well as Stadler, Pöschl, and Büchner, has failed to point out the full implications of the tripartite arrangement for Vergil’s use of epic and tragic material; also, these writers have not noticed the relation between Vergil’s procedure and that of Horace in the Roman Odes and the *Carmen Saeculare*.

The interpretation of the three sections by Stadler and Pöschl as dark, light, and dark is open to criticism,¹⁶ but points the way to Vergil’s plan for his epic. The *Aeneid* is the story of Aeneas and also the story of the destiny of Rome under Augustus. This last provides the central core of the work (V–VIII) and ends with Book VIII.¹⁷ The first section is

¹² The similarity may be represented as follows:

Odes	1 2		3 4		5 6	
Aeneid	1	2	3	4	5	6
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12

¹³ Stadler (above, note 4) 50–61; V. Pöschl, *Die Dichtkunst Virgils. Bild und Symbol in der Äneis* (Innsbruck 1950) 279 f.; cf. 280: “Dunkel — Licht — Dunkel: dies also ist der Rhythmus, der das Epos in seiner Gesamtheit beherrscht.” J. W. Mackail had earlier pointed out the tripartite division in *The Aeneid* (Oxford 1930) 298: “The traditional and superficial view of the *Aeneid* as falling into two halves may be supplemented and rectified by another view of it as a structure made up of three acts.”

¹⁴ Büchner (above, note 1) col. 418; see also col. 420.

¹⁵ W. A. Camps, “A Note on the Structure of the *Aeneid*,” *CQ* n.s. 4 (1954) 215. Camps, however, does not have the usual tripartite arrangement (I–IV, V–VIII, IX–XII) but divides as follows: I–IV, V–VI and VIII–IX, VII 286–817 and X–XII; he looks upon VII 25–285 as the center of the *Aeneid*, where the references to Aeneas as the man of destiny invite us to look both backward and forward (cf. 214), and accordingly excludes this passage from his analysis. But lines 760–853 of *Aeneid* VI seem more appropriate as the center of the poem; see below. Also, the importance of Turnus in *Aeneid* IX indicates that this book belongs with the final section in which Turnus plays a major role.

¹⁶ Cf. Duckworth (above, note 1) 7, note 24.

¹⁷ This may explain D. L. Drew’s curious statement in *The Allegory of the Aeneid* (Oxford 1927) 60: “The rest of the epic is, in a certain sense, anti-climax.”

the tragedy of Dido, and the third is the tragedy of Turnus. Books I and IV are the Dido books and they enclose II and III, which give the story of Aeneas at Troy and of his wanderings. In like manner, IX and XII are predominantly the Turnus books; Turnus is active in X and XI, and the slaying of Pallas in X is decisive in bringing about his own death, but these two books are primarily devoted to other characters, X to Pallas, Lausus, and Mezentius, XI to Drances and Camilla.

Much has been written about Vergil's use of tragic drama, and Rand has aptly said: "Tragedy is an essential part of Virgil's poem — he was forever joining together what critics would keep asunder."¹⁸ The tripartite division of the *Aeneid* enables us to see more clearly the manner in which Vergil has framed his central message by the two tragedies of Dido and Turnus; both are portrayed most sympathetically and both meet death, not merely because they stand in the way of Aeneas and his mission, but because, in the true spirit of tragic drama, each does the wrong thing and pays the penalty for his action.¹⁹ The two tragedies are not lacking in historical significance, however; just as Dido's death symbolizes the overthrow of Carthage by Rome (cf. the simile of the burning city in 4.669 ff.), so the defeat of Turnus suggests the later union of Romans and Latins and Roman supremacy in Italy.

The threefold division of the *Aeneid* also throws new light upon Vergil's use of epic material, especially that drawn from Homer. In the first and third sections of the poem many Homeric episodes, descriptions, and similes are incorporated into the action, but they are in general short passages (e.g., the story of Polyphemus in III and the breaking of the truce in XII). The epic material in these sections is adapted to the tragic nature of the context and is used primarily for the delineation of character, e.g., Aeneas' rage after the slaying of Pallas in X,²⁰ and in XII the effect of the breaking of the truce on both Turnus and Aeneas.²¹

¹⁸ E. K. Rand, "Virgil the Magician," *CJ* 26 (1930-31) 46; for references on Vergil and tragedy, see Duckworth (above, note 9) 295, note 51; cf. also Knight, "Integration of Plot" (above, note 5) 20-24; *Roman Vergil* (above, note 5) 133-35.

¹⁹ Vergil refers specifically to the *culpa* of Dido (4.19 and 172); on Turnus, cf. Duckworth, "Turnus as a Tragic Character," *Vergilius* 4 (1940) 5-17; "Fate and Free Will in Vergil's *Aeneid*," *CJ* 51 (1955-56) 361-63 and (for bibliography) 364, note 27.

²⁰ Cf. Achilles' anger when he goes forth to avenge the death of Patroclus in *Iliad* XXI; in 27 ff. he takes twelve captives alive and then slays Lycaon, rejecting his plea of guest-friendship; so Aeneas (10.517 ff.) takes alive eight captives and rejects the entreaties of Magus, who has offered money if Aeneas will spare his life. The slaying of Magus is therefore more justified than that of Lycaon.

²¹ Cf. *Aeneid* 12.324 ff. and 464 ff.; see Duckworth, "Fate and Free Will" (above, note 19) 364, note 32.

In the central section (V–VIII) Vergil makes a very different use of Homeric material; in each of the books he adapts a lengthy passage:

- V. Funeral games (from *Iliad* XXIII);
- VI. Underworld scene (from *Odyssey* XI);
- VII. Catalogue (from *Iliad* II);
- VIII. Shield (from *Iliad* XVIII).

Here, with the possible exception of the games in V,²² the long episodes are reworked and transformed for the glorification of Rome and its history, the portrayal of ancient Italy, and the greatness of the new age under Augustus who has triumphed over his enemies and introduced a new Golden Age of peace. This adaptation of long Homeric episodes for historical, patriotic, and nationalistic purposes is something unique and appears only in the central section of the poem. One other long episode, the night expedition in IX, is based upon Homer (the *Doloneia* in *Iliad* X), but this may be considered the exception to prove the rule: the story of Nisus and Euryalus, appearing in the opening book of the third part of the poem (the tragedy of Turnus) is itself a miniature tragedy, in which the two characters meet disaster and death as a result of their own actions;²³ this sets the tone of the final section of the *Aeneid*, for at the end of XII Turnus likewise pays the penalty for his own wrong act — the earlier treatment of the body of Pallas.

We are therefore entitled to look upon the *Aeneid* as a trilogy, with each third of the poem divided into four parts, or acts. The two tragedies of Dido and Turnus provide the framework of the second part, which stresses the patriotic and nationalistic themes, and at the very center of this section we find the speech of Anchises with its emphasis on Roman heroes, the achievement of Augustus, and the task of the Roman (6.760-

²² The concluding episode, the *Troiae lusus* in 545–603, strikes a distinctly Roman note; Mackail (above, note 13) 166, calls it “one of those interludes or episodes which connect the epic closely with contemporary history, with the new Empire and the Imperial family.” Actually, the games in V, although suggested by those in *Iliad* XXIII, must be considered Roman and Augustan as well as Homeric; Augustus’ interest in athletic contests, especially boxing, is mentioned by Suetonius (*Aug.* 45), and Vergil’s contemporaries would undoubtedly relate the contests of V to those which they themselves had seen; see L.-A. Constans, *L’Énéide de Virgile. Étude et analyse* (Paris 1938) 170–74.

²³ See Duckworth, “Fate and Free Will” (above, note 19) 359 f.

853).²⁴ *Aeneid* VI, called "the keystone of the whole poem,"²⁵ has been considered important in the twofold division of the epic; as Prescott says, it "bridges over the two main portions of the poem, the story of the wanderings and the narrative of the war in Latium";²⁶ when we view the poem as a trilogy, we see that Vergil has stressed the importance of VI and especially Anchises' speech by its central position in the second section. In like manner, Eugene O'Neill in his trilogy *Mourning Becomes Electra* emphasized the sea background of the Mannon family and the symbolic motive of the sea as a means of escape and release by placing "the one ship scene at the center of the second play."²⁷

The alternating rhythm of the *Aeneid* and the more serious nature of the even-numbered books take on added significance when we look upon the poem as a trilogy. Conway pointed out that each of the books with even numbers has a culminating point — II and IV in calamity, VI and VIII in revelation, X and XII in triumph.²⁸ This grouping of the serious books has little importance in a twofold arrangement but becomes more meaningful in a tripartite division; the important books in each section of the trilogy are linked together by parallels and contrasts, just as are the corresponding books of each half in the twofold scheme.

Books II and IV are books of tragedy, the one of Troy, the other of Dido and Carthage, and each marks a tragic turning point in the life of Aeneas; II ends with his departure from Troy and the loss of Creusa, IV with his departure from Carthage and the suicide of Dido; in each instance he leaves unwillingly and under divine instruction.^{28a} Books VI and VIII are books of revelation concerning the later history of Rome and are complementary; in VI Anchises describes famous men of legend and history, from the Alban kings to Augustus, founder of the new Golden Age, and in VIII Vergil portrays first the site of Rome²⁹ and then presents on

²⁴ On this passage and its relation to the Roman Odes, see Duckworth (above, note 9) 304-8.

²⁵ Conway (above, note 4) 143; see also F. J. H. Letters, *Virgil* (New York 1946) 122.

²⁶ H. W. Prescott, *The Development of Virgil's Art* (Chicago 1927) 360.

²⁷ E. O'Neill, "Working Notes and Extracts from a Fragmentary Work Diary," reprinted by B. H. Clark, *European Theories of the Drama* (rev. ed., New York 1947) 533. The exact center of the trilogy would be Act Three of "The Hunted"; actually, the ship scene is Act Four.

²⁸ Conway (above, note 5) 25. See also Stadler (above, note 4) 55 f.

^{28a} On this, see B. Fenik, "Parallelism of Theme and Imagery in *Aeneid* II and IV," to appear soon in *AJP*.

²⁹ Vergil describes the site of Rome as he imagines it to have been in the days of Evander, but he also alludes to places which would suggest to the Roman reader the city of his own day and the building program of Augustus; cf. P. Grimal, "La promenade d'Évandre et d'Énée à la lumière des fouilles récentes," *REA* 50 (1948) 348-51.

the shield scenes closely connected with Rome the city, from Romulus and Remus to the triumph of Octavian after his defeat of Antony and Cleopatra.³⁰ Books X and XII are books of victory; at the end of X Aeneas triumphs over Mezentius who, as *contemptor divum*, stands for impiety; at the end of XII Aeneas triumphs over Turnus who, characterized by *violentia*, represents *vis consili expers*; the victory of Aeneas is the victory of *vis temperata* which, as Horace says, is favored by the gods.³¹ The divine element is prominent in both X and XII: X begins with the speeches of Jupiter, Venus, and Juno, and the final reconciliation of Jupiter and Juno takes place at the end of XII, just before the defeat and death of Turnus. Finally, X and XII, like II and IV, are also books of tragedy and death, with XII bringing to a close the tragic story of Turnus, just as IV concludes the tragic tale of Dido.

The trilogy of the *Aeneid* may be outlined as follows, with the significant books of each part linked:

- I. Tragedy of Dido
 - 1
 - 2 Troy. Departure. Loss of Creusa
 - 3
 - 4 Carthage. Departure. Death of Dido
- II. Destiny of Rome
 - 5
 - 6 Future of Roman state
 - 7
 - 8 Future of Rome the city
- III. Tragedy of Turnus
 - 9
 - 10 Aeneas victorious over Mezentius (*impietas*)
 - 11
 - 12 Aeneas victorious over Turnus (*violentia*)

³⁰ It is most appropriate that the visit to the site of Rome in Book VIII is followed by the scenes on the shield of events which later took place in the city; cf. A. Cartault, *L'Art de Virgile dans l'Énéide* (Paris 1926) 634. First we have the empty stage, then the stage is filled in (1) with happenings from early Roman history and (2) with Octavian's triple triumph. Fowler's attempt to find unity in the scenes on the shield by viewing them as escapes of the Roman people from great dangers (W. W. Fowler, *Aeneas at the Site of Rome* [Oxford 1918] 103-6) seems unnecessary; it is Rome the city which provides the unifying factor. Drew (above, note 17) 25 ff., believes that the scenes on the shield suggest the virtues mentioned on the *clupeus aureus* presented to Augustus in 27 B.C.; on this, see Duckworth (above, note 9) 307, note 86.

³¹ *Odes* 3.4.65-68; cf. Duckworth, "Fate and Free Will" (above, note 19) 361.

This analysis of the tripartite nature of the poem reveals anew the subtle technique of Vergil as a creative artist and the careful attention which he paid to the architecture of the *Aeneid*. The alternating rhythm of the books is a basic feature of the structure, and the even-numbered books are as important in their relations to each other in the tripartite arrangement (II and IV, VI and VIII, X and XII) as in the twofold division (II and VIII, IV and X, VI and XII). The tripartite division is not a substitute for the twofold arrangement but is superimposed upon it; Vergil seems to have thought of his poem as composed both of two halves and three thirds, and the latter arrangement was perhaps a deliberate attempt to avoid too sharp a break into an "Odyssey" of wanderings and an "Iliad" of battles.³²

The analysis of the *Aeneid* as a trilogy also reveals more clearly the manner in which Vergil used both tragic and epic material. The great impact which Greek tragedy made upon him is seen in the way in which his central message of Rome's history and mission is framed by the two tragedies of Dido and Turnus, and the tripartite division may itself be influenced by the structure of the Greek dramatic trilogy.³³ Also, Vergil's use of Homeric episodes in the central portion of the poem differs strikingly from that in the more tragic sections.

Finally, the tripartite division raises again the question of the relation of Vergil and Horace. Parts of the *Aeneid* and especially the end of Book VI are clearly indebted in many respects to the Roman Odes. These six odes may be divided both into halves and into thirds, and the interrelations of the various odes are such that both arrangements seem intentional. Since the twelve books of the *Aeneid* likewise are divided into both halves and thirds, and since Vergil undoubtedly planned the subtle interlocking of the books at the beginning of his work on the *Aeneid*, Horace must have known of his friend's structural plans before

³² Mackail (above, note 13) xlv, condemns the view of the *Aeneid* as falling into two halves and composed of a Latin *Iliad* and a Latin *Odyssey* as a "superficial view (respectable in its antiquity but deplorable in its lack of appreciation)," and says, "with all its debt to both the Homeric poems, it is an organic unity and a masterpiece of creative art."

³³ This last is not a necessary assumption, however. The *Iliad* has three major parts or rhythms: I-VII, the Greeks are still victorious in spite of Achilles' withdrawal; VIII-XVI, the Trojans force the Greeks to the ships and Patroclus is slain; XVII-XXIV, Achilles returns to battle, the Greeks drive back the Trojans, and Achilles slays Hector. The *Odyssey* falls into two halves, but each half has three parts; cf. R. Heinze, *Virgils epische Technik*³ (Berlin 1915) 458, note 3.

he himself composed the Roman Odes. In this case, the complicated structure of the six odes may well derive from that of the *Aeneid*.³⁴

³⁴ The *Ara Pacis* expresses in Roman art what Vergil had expressed in the *Aeneid* and Horace in the Roman Odes; cf. Duckworth (above, note 9) 314 f. It seems hardly accidental that the six friezes in this famous monument likewise have a double arrangement: 1) a tripartite division: two legendary friezes, two of contemporary history, two symbolical friezes; 2) two halves: one Julian (Aeneas, the imperial family, Italia), the other Roman (Romulus, the senate and Roman people, Roma). Each half likewise divides into thirds, with the historical frieze framed by legend and symbol. The structure of the *Aeneid* and the Roman Odes must certainly have been in the mind of the artists as they planned the monument.