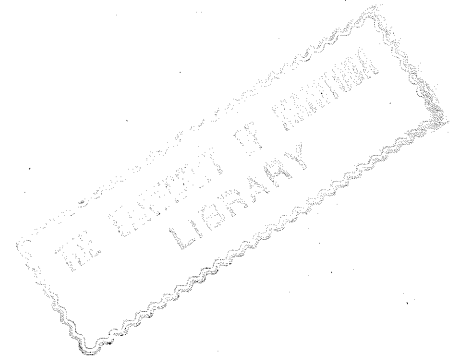


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PARALLEL SCENES OF HOMER AND
VIRGIL COMPARED WITH REGARD
TO NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

BY

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INTRODUCTION

"Il suffit," writes Sainte-Beuve in his Étude sur Virgile "d'ouvrir les premiers livres de l'Énéide pour voir combien Virgile a emprunté d'Homère, combien il l'a imité à chaque pas." It is the purpose of this study to select from the Aeneid certain passages which bear evidence of such "borrowing", to set them side by side with the parent passages from Homer, and, examining the two from the standpoint of narrative technique, to discover the degree of indebtedness of the Latin poet to his Greek master.

It is almost certain that the centuries which have intervened between the Iliad and Odyssey and the Aeneid will have brought about changes in outlook, in sense of values, in sensitiveness, which cannot but effect changes in the manner of telling a story. The gods of Olympus, such potent forces in the moulding of human destiny, have acquired a more dignified status. Nationality is a new and strong force to be reckoned with. The whole fabric of human life has a new pattern. Virgil, writing of an age long dead, is likely to infuse into his work something of the spirit of his own time, something of the genius of

Italy, something of his own personality. The chapters which follow are an attempt to discover to what extent he has adopted the narrative methods of Homer, and to what extent he has evolved methods of his own, more nearly suited to his purposes.

Since the present thesis is limited to a consideration of narrative technique, many purely poetic aspects of the two epics will not be touched. Moreover, as the writer has, unfortunately, no knowledge of Greek, the Iliad and Odyssey have been, of necessity, studied in translation. For this reason it seems best to quote in translation from all three poems. References will be made to pages of the Iliad and Odyssey, in the prose translations of Lang, Leaf and Myers and Butcher and Lang respectively, and to lines of the Aeneid, in the Latin edition of A. Sidgwick.

While fully acknowledging Virgil's considerable debt to Apollonius of Rhodes, Euripides, Ennius and others, the writer considered that the scope of the present study would be broad enough if it were limited to comparison with Homer only.

The scenes chosen for comparison have been selected on the basis, not only of their similarities, but also of their respective bearing on the plot structure of each

epic, considered as a whole. They are by no means incidental or occurring at random, but are generally vital links in the general structure. Thus Virgil's debt to Homer is organic as well as episodic, a major, not a minor, debt. Comparison of the two encounters with the Cyclops will seek to illustrate Virgil's ability to adapt an important incident of his model to dimensions suited to its modest importance in his own poem. Study of the respective treatments of the love-story motif will show how he achieves the exactly opposite result. In like manner, examination of each poet's account of the funeral games, the visit to the Underworld, the battle scenes, the raid, and the broken treaty and duel will attempt to demonstrate how Virgil has shaped and moulded his Greek material to the contours of his Roman theme.

In arrangement of scenes, the order used is that followed in the Aeneid. In regard to the Homeric poems this arrangement, with the exception of the funeral games, deals first with the selections from the Odyssey, second with those from the Iliad.

In the consideration of each pair of parallel scenes, the same general plan will be followed. First, the placing of each in the action-pattern of the epic will be noted, with attention to its narrative purpose and the means by