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The agricultural life as a heroic ideal in Homer and Virgil

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COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

THE AGRICULTURAL LIFE AS A HEROIC IDEAL IN HOMER AND VIRGIL

by

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A Dissertation submitted to the
Program in the Humanities
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

By definition the life of the hero is distinct from that of the common man. In the two greatest epic poets of antiquity, Homer and Virgil, heroes appear as larger-than-life warriors who live in a world that seems very far away from the real one. Yet in conveying the world of epic poetry to his listeners or readers, the effective poet must attempt to bridge the "epic distance"[1] between the worlds of the hero and the audience. Although the poet must convince the listener that his heroes are superior, he must also make the listener feel a bond of similarity with them, so as to avoid a sense of alienation. Furthermore, as I shall attempt to demonstrate is the case with Homer and Virgil, the poet will want to impress upon his audience that they too, in some small way, can attain a type of heroism in their own lives. Since one of the primary functions of epic poetry, especially in an oral culture, is to promulgate the values of society, it follows that these poetic values must have a meaning and application for the audience.

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[1]For the use of this term see James Redfield, Nature and Culture in the "Iliad": The Tragedy of Hector (Chicago 1975), pp. 36-37.

It will be the purpose of this dissertation to show how Homer and Virgil used the ideal of the agricultural life to define for their audiences a type of heroism attainable by the common man. While both poets clearly admired the traditional concept of the hero as a man of valor, they also show an appreciation for the fortitude of the common farmer in his struggle to live a productive life. Both poets express their admiration for the farmer in heroic terms and thereby elevate the agricultural life to a heroic status.

The subject of agriculture in heroic epic poetry has been the object of very little scholarly attention, despite the fact that the Iliad, Odyssey, and Aeneid make frequent reference to the life of the farmer. The Iliad and the Odyssey are usually viewed as if they depicted an almost completely different world from that of Hesiod's Works and Days, a didactic work on farming that is roughly contemporary with the Homeric poems. Although the Georgics by necessity has been studied in terms of the topic of agriculture, few scholars have examined the connections between the agricultural and the heroic worlds to be found in that work and also in the Aeneid, which shares so many themes with the Georgics. It is my hope that by examining the nature of and the purpose behind the epic theme of the agricultural life, we can gain a more complete understanding of Homer, Virgil, and their worlds. Neither Homer nor

Virgil was interested simply in portraying an archaic, heroic world that was not relevant to their audiences. Both poets sought not only to portray the glory of days gone by, but also to show how any man could attain a measure of heroic glory by virtuous living.

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In this dissertation I shall use the following texts for the Iliad, Odyssey, Georgics, Aeneid, and the De Rerum Natura of Lucretius:

Allen, Thomas W. and D.B. Monro, eds. Homeri Opera^{2}, I-IV. Oxford: Clarendon, 1917-19.

Bailey, Cyril., ed. T. Lucreti Cari De Rerum Natura Libri Sex. Oxford: Clarendon, 1947.

Mynors, R.A.B., ed. P. Vergili Maronis Opera. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969.

I have also made use of the following translations:

Copley, Frank O., trans. The Aeneid. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

Copley, Frank O., trans. The Nature of Things. New York: Norton, 1977.

Fairclough, H. Rushton, trans. and ed. Virgil, I: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935.

Lattimore, Richmond, trans. The Iliad of Homer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.

Lattimore, Richmond, trans. The Odyssey of Homer. New York: Harper and Row, 1967.

All references to books of the Iliad will be made with upper-case roman numerals, to the Odyssey with lower-case.

CHAPTER TWO
POETRY AND SOCIETY IN HOMER

If we are to say that Homer presented the common man with the possibility of attaining heroism through the labors of everyday life, we must first show that the Homeric audience would have included men of the working class, and further that the poet would have wanted to direct a message to that group. The relationship between the poet and his audience has been one of the most frequently examined aspects of the Homeric question in recent years. The view that Homer as an oral poet must have composed his poetry with careful attention to the nature of his audience has gained widespread acceptance. James Redfield, among others, has stressed the importance of understanding the relationship between the poet and his listeners in order to learn about the culture of the Homeric period:

> In telling a story the poet employs and persuades us to certain assumptions about the sources and conditions of action. He thus (in effect) takes a view of culture. And further: since he is telling his story to an audience, the meaning he conveys must be a meaning <u>to them</u>. So we can go on to ask: What sort of audience would have found this story meaningful? Here (and only here) we

reach culture itself.[1]

Redfield's confidence in using the Homeric poems as a guide to understanding the culture of Homer's time rather than of a Dark Age or even earlier period gains credibility when one considers the Homeric poems in the light of anthropological studies of oral poetic societies in modern times. Students of oral poets in our own age have emphasized the creativity of these artists. The oral poem is not simply a fixed song to be transmitted verbatim, but rather an improvisational performance intended to have a meaning for its contemporary audience. In Lord's words, "each performance is an original."[2] Similarly Walter Ong sees a very close relationship between the oral poem and the culture contemporary with the poet's performance:

> ...oral societies live very much in a present which keeps itself in equilibrium by sloughing off memories which no longer have present relevance ...oral traditions reflect a society's present cultural values.[3]

Ong's conclusion is supported by comparative evidence from

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[1]James Redfield, Nature and Culture in the Iliad: The Tragedy of Hector (Chicago 1975), p. 23.

[2]A.B. Lord, The Singer of Tales (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), p. 100.

[3]Walter Ong, Orality and Literacy (London 1982), pp. 46-48. For a similar view see Ruth Finnegan, Oral Poetry (Cambridge 1977), pp. 28-29.

many oral poetic societies. Goody and Watt found that the oral poems of the Tiv of Nigeria and the Gonja of Ghana showed tremendous adaptability to changing conditions during a period of only two generations.[4] Likewise Albert Lord's study of the Novi Pazar and Radloff's work with the Kirghiz Akyn suggest that the oral poet of each generation adapts his poem to his own generation.[5]

The strong evidence from other cultures suggesting the originality and improvisation of the oral poet cannot be reconciled with Kirk's theory of a "monumental composition" followed by essentially verbatim reproduction of the poem by oral poets of subsequent generations.[6] Instead the conclusion of Ian Morris "that the Iliad and the Odyssey were constantly changing until a moment when each was fossilized into writing" seems appropriate.[7] Morris further claims that:

> the comparative evidence makes it seem very

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[4]See J.R. Goody and I. Watt, "The Consequences of Literacy," pp. 27-84 in J.R. Goody, ed., Literacy in Traditional Societies (Cambridge 1968), pp. 31-33; Ian Morris, "The Use and Abuse of Homer," CA 5 (1986) 87.

[5]Lord (1960), 27; W. Radloff, Proben der Volksliteratur der nördlichen türkischen Stämme, V (St. Petersburg 1885) xviii-xix.

[6]G.S. Kirk, The Songs of Homer (Cambridge 1962), pp. 301-04. See Morris' argument against Kirk on this ground, Morris (1986), p. 85.

[7]Morris (1986), p. 82.

> probable--indeed, almost certain--that the institutions and modes of thought in the poems were ultimately derived from the world in which Homer and his audiences lived, and are not memories of vanished cultures of five hundred, four hundred, or even one hundred years earlier.[8]

If Morris is indeed correct, it follows that we can better understand Homer's purpose in writing the Iliad and the Odyssey by learning more about the nature of his audience.

HOMERIC SOCIETY

The dynamic period in which the Homeric poems evolved has been called by Chester Starr the "Age of Revolution" and by Anthony Snodgrass the "Age of Experiment."[9] By the time that the Iliad and the Odyssey reached their more or less final form, which I, following Janko, will consider to have been sometime during the latter half of the eighth century, the Aegean world was evolving from obscure, underpopulated, and vagrant herding tribes into more prosperous and settled agricultural communities.[10] Pollen counts and model

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[8]Morris (1986), p. 82.

[9]Chester Starr, The Origins of Greek Civilization (New York 1961); Anthony Snodgrass, Archaic Greece: The Age of Experiment (Berkeley 1980).

[10]Richard Janko, Homer, Hesiod, and the Hymns: Diachronic Development in Epic Diction (Cambridge 1982), p. 231, gives 750-725 and 743-713 as absolute dates for the Iliad and the Odyssey respectively. For the nature of the change from nomadic to stationary agricultural communities, see Snodgrass (1980), pp. 20-36.

granaries found in tombs of the late ninth and eighth centuries suggest that arable farming was beginning to replace herding as the primary means of subsistence. This change, as we shall discuss later in more detail, is evident in the poems of Homer and Hesiod, as Snodgrass notes:

> Again, in several passages of Homer the 'stock-rearing' stratum is overlaid by a thinner, and probably later, stratum of arable farming: the clearest instances are given in the formulaic phrases found in the Odyssey, 'barley-meal, the marrow of mankind' and the generic phrase 'bread eating' to denote civilized humanity as distinct from gods and savages. Most explicit of all is the message conveyed in Hesiod's Works and Days, composed probably at a date close to 700 B.C. It is a poetic manual of arable farming which shows awareness of its wider economic and social implications, yet reverts to a fairly rudimentary level of instruction in husbandry--a combination which suggests an uneven spread of experience, and thus a moment when the decisive concentration on arable farming was in the process of diffusion across Greece.[11]

With the growth of agriculture, land began to replace herds as the significant medium of wealth and so later would become the criterion for citizenship in the polis.

Anthropologists have found that the emergence of plough societies from herding societies allows for an increase in the economic stratification of societies.[12] As some families become more successful than others, wealthy,

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[11]Snodgrass (1980), p. 36, who also discusses the pollen counts and model granaries found in excavations. See also Walter Donlan, "Reciprocities in Homer," CW 75 (1982) 173.

[12]See Robert Adams, The Evolution of Urban Society (Chicago 1966), pp. 45-46; Morris (1986), p. 110.

charismatic leaders emerge whom anthropologists call "Big Men."[13] The main duty of the Big Man toward his followers is to act as a supervisor of work and a distributer of wealth, particularly through gift-giving. He must be able to: 1) be a great provider from accumulated wealth; 2) protect the community through military leadership and prowess; and 3) persuade followers through oratory. Since the ultimate power of the Big Man rests with his ability to maintain a loyal following, his authority is ultimately precarious. It is basically the wealth of the Big Man that secures his power; but this wealth must be spent to earn prestige. In the words of Morton Fried, "Now we know that such persons [Big Men] were rich for what they dispensed and not for what they hoarded."[14] Thus the Big Man is constantly forced to destroy his base of power. Although he can recoup his losses to some extent by taxing his people, he must not be seen as taking with one hand while giving with the other. It must also be remembered that there is usually no sense of intrinsic authority residing in the Big

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[13]See M.D. Sahlins, "Poor Man, Rich Man, Big-Man, Chief: Political Types in Melanesia and Polynesia," CSSH 5 (1963) 285-303. On the concept applied to Homer, see Bjorn Qviller, "The Dynamics of the Homeric Society," SO 56 (1981) 116-20; Donlan (1982), pp. 140-41 and (1985), pp. 303-05.

[14]The Evolution of Political Society (New York 1967), p. 118. Note that in the Iliad Achilles justifies his refusal to do battle on the grounds that Agamemnon has hoarded the spoils of battle (I. 122-68).

Man. There are always potential challenges to his authority, while there is no assurance of hereditary accession to his "office" by his son.

Both Bjorn Qviller and Walter Donlan have applied the anthropological concept of the Big Man better to understand the basileus in Homer. A comparison between the Big Man and the Homeric basileus appears to be particularly apt when dealing with the Odyssey. One of the major themes of the Odyssey is the fragility of the power of the King and the potential for usurpation of his position without regard to his living son. Ithaca was filled with minor basileis who, although essentially independent, were willing to accept the temporary leadership of Odysseus while his forceful personality was present. But with the removal of Odysseus, there arose a struggle to secure his power.[15] Antinous, one of the leaders of the suitors, grants that Telemachus has the "right" of inheritance to the throne, but he hopes that this will not occur (i. 386-87). The suitors who are vying for kingship are willing to go so far as to kill Telemachus by treachery in order to achieve their goal. Although they

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[15]See Donlan (1982), p. 152 and n. 27; Peter W. Rose, "Class Ambivalence in the Odyssey," Historia 24 (1975) 132. Most scholars now agree that basileus often means nobleman rather than king. See Robert Drews, Basileus: The Evidence for Kingship in Geometric Greece (New Haven 1983), pp. 105-08; Fritz Gschnitzer, "Basileus: Ein terminologischer Beitrag zur Frühgeschichte des Königtums bei den Griechen," Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft 11 (1965) 99-112.

are afraid to kill Telemachus openly, they have apparently had little fear of public outcry against their destruction of his household. They only become frightened when Telemachus calls a public assembly. Donlan points out that the apparent absence of any assembly for twenty years "indicates that normal peaceful life did not require centralized decision making."[14]

The concept of the Big Man sheds a special light on the anger and despair felt by Telemachus. Since the essentials of chieftainship are wealth and prestige, which is basically dependent on wealth, Telemachus sees the dissipation of his resources as essentially a destruction of his potential to be king (i. 376-78; ii. 48-79 and 130-44). It is for this reason that he is eager to have his mother marry and so remove the burden of the suitors (i. 249-51). Athena tells him to have Penelope married and to be sure not to let her take any property from the household so as to enrich her new husband (xv. 19-21). Although the suitors are not in danger of destroying Telemachus' livelihood, they are removing the redistributable wealth that is the source of his power

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[14]Donlan (1982), p. 152 n. 27. Donlan continues the footnote: "Finally, the admission that the struggle for political power was being played-out at the top, with the people in a passive role, tells us that political authority was fragmented among the smaller social units of the Ithacan chiefdom."

base.[17] It was the vast wealth of Odysseus, which Homer often alludes to, that made him such a powerful ruler.

Wealth distribution, which Sahlins described as "chieftainship said in economics," appears to have been almost as vital in Homeric as in anthropological societies.[18] Donlan, in his study of gift-giving in Homer observed that "unstinting generosity...is both visible proof of rank and wealth and a source of prestige."[19] On one level this generosity is seen simply in the king's equitable distribution of the harvest and supervision of labor as seen on the shield of Achilles (XVIII. 550-60) and in Odysseus' simile of the just king (xix. 109-14).[20] But the generosity of the basileus to his people occurs on a more personal level as a reward or incentive for a follower. Eumaeus shows what a slave might expect from his master:

> ...the gods have stopped the homeward voyage of
> that one
> who cared greatly for me, and granted me such

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[17]Donlan (1982), p. 153 n. 29, notes on Odyssey xiv. 13-20 that the suitors slay only the male hogs, that is the distributable wealth of the household, rather than any of the breeding sows, so that the livelihood of the oikos is not threatened. On the wealth of Odysseus as a source of power for Telemachus, see Finley (1977), pp. 51-53.

[18]Sahlins (1968), p. 95.

[19]Donlan (1982), p. 156. See also Finley (1977), pp. 61-66; Qviller (1981), pp. 113-14.

[20]See similarly VI. 195; IX. 975; XII.313; XX. 184; and vi. 9-10.

possessions
as a good-natured lord (wanax) grants to the thrall
(oikeus) of his house; a home
of his own, and a plot of land, and a wife much
sought after,
when the man accomplishes much work and god speeds the
labor
as he has sped for me the labor to which I am
given. (xiv. 61-66)

In this passage Eumaeus speaks of Odysseus' past generosity in terms that show it as the acceptable norm, or perhaps ideal relationship, between master and slave.[21] There is no suggestion that Odysseus' kindness is radically unusual. Later Eumaeus speaks of his master's love for him (xix. 147). This should not surprise us, since we learn that Eumaeus was raised almost as a son by Anticleia (xv. 365) in much the same manner that Penelope raised Melantho as a child (xviii. 322-23). From past examples in Ithaca Odysseus' promise not only to reward Eumaeus and Philoetius, but to make them virtual family members is quite natural:

if by my hand the god overmasters the lordly
suitors,
then I shall get wives for you both, and grant you
possessions
and houses built next to mine, and think of you in
the future
always as companions of Telemachus, and his brothers.
(xxi. 213-16)

While the special circumstances and the outstanding nature

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[21]See also ii. 46-47 and 234; iv. 688-93; v. 7-12; xv. 488-92; xviii. 322-23; and xix. 109-14.

of Odysseus' kindness might suggest that the promised reward is rather exceptional, it is equally clear that the basileus would go to great lengths to reward his followers. Furthermore anthropologists have found that primitive societies often see political and personal allegiance in terms of kinship.[22]

In the absence of Odysseus, most of the servants have sided with the young suitors, who apparently care well for their followers (xv. 330). Even Philoetius has strongly considered going to the oikos of another king:

> ...But here is a problem that the heart deep within me
> has long resolved. While the son is here, it would be cowardly
> to take my cattle with me and go to another district
> and alien men; and yet it grows worse to stay here,
> and as one set in charge of other men's cattle, and suffer hardships.
> And long ago I would have escaped from here, and gone to
> some other powerful king, since this is no longer endurable;
> yet still I think of that luckless man, how he may come back
> and all throughout the house may cause the suitors to scatter. (xx. 217-25)

Philoetius is indeed unusual in his determination to be loyal to the memory of Odysseus. As Qviller notes, he is probably a "typical representative of the nameless multitude

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[22]Donlan (1985), p. 300 applies the findings of J. Pitt-Rivers, "The Kith and the Kin," in Jack Goody, ed., The Character of Kinship (Cambridge 1973), who notes (p. 90) that "non-kin amity loves to masquerade as kinship."

who reacted to increased demands from above by demonstrating that defection was a possibility.[aa] Earlier in the Odyssey Mentor had scolded the Ithacans for not standing behind their king, who had been so kind to them (ii. 229-41). The typical response of Odysseus' retainers seems to have been "What has he done for me lately?" We must be aware that the Homeric basileus was constantly forced to pay attention to his relationship with his followers. A few passages in the Iliad show that the kings themselves were aware of the precarious nature of their hold over the people. Sarpedon's famous speech to Glaucus shows that he too felt the importance of maintaining the right image before his people:

> Glaukos, why is it you and I are honoured before others
> with pride of place, the choice meats and the filled
> wine cups
> in Lykia, and all men look on us as if we were
> immortals,
> and we are appointed a great piece of land by the banks
> of Xanthos,
> good land, orchard and vineyard, and ploughland for the
> planting of wheat?
> Therefore it is our duty in the forefront of the
> Lykians
> to take our stand, and bear our part of the blazing of
> battle,
> so that a man of the close-armoured Lykians may say of
> us:
> "Indeed, these are no ignoble men who are lords of
> Lykia,
> these kings of ours, who feed upon the fat sheep
> appointed
> and drink the exquisite sweet wine, since indeed there
> is strength

[aa] Qviller (1981), p. 128; Qviller also cites Hesiod, Erga 263, 320, and 356.

> of valour in them, since they fight in the forefront of the Lykians."[24] (XII. 310-21)

Clearly the Homeric basileus, like the Big Man, was forced to be on guard constantly to maintain an aura of power as well as a reputation for generosity. The king was always aware that he could lose followers if he proved either too weak or to greedy.

In summary then we can say that the Homeric basileus was a powerful local chieftain who relied upon his military prowess, charisma, and personal largess to maintain his following. The king was constantly challenged by lesser nobles, like the suitors in the Odyssey, who could attract dissatisfied followers of the basileus. The position of the basileus was further weakened by the necessity of giving away his power base, that is his wealth. Thus the Homeric basileus was basically on a self-destructive course that would lead to the oligarchies of the early eighth and the seventh centuries.[25]

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[24]For the political implications of this speech, see J. V. Luce, "The Polis in Homer and Hesiod," Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy 78, C (1978) 11; see also pp. 12-13.

[25]On the oligarchic revolution and the self-destructive generosity of the kings, see: A. R. Burn, The World of Hesiod: A Study of the Greek Middle Ages (900-700) B.C. (New York 1966), pp. 105-8; Qviller (1981), pp. 133-45; Antony Andrewes, The Greek Tyrants (London 1956); Rose (1975), p. 132.

POETRY AND SOCIETY IN HOMER

The words of Odysseus to the Achaean malcontents in the Iliad very aptly show the monarchical bias in the Homeric poems:

> Surely not all of the Achaians can be kings here.
> Lordship for many is no good thing. Let there be one ruler,
> one king, to whom the son of devious-devising Kronos
> gives the sceptre and the right of judgement, to watch over his people. (II. 203-06)

Homer grants the basileus divine legitimacy; and it is this approval that causes the people prosperity (xix. 109-14). The land ruled by the just king always prospers. Thus he deserves the "choice meats and filled wine cups" (XII. 311).

It is clear that the Iliad and the Odyssey promulgated the values of kingship in the eighth century. Ian Morris has suggested that this attempt at promoting the monarchical viewpoint was the main purpose behind the codification and the writing down of the Iliad. During the social upheaval of the eighth century the elite seized upon epic poetry as a force for inculcating its values to the people. Morris holds that:

> Poetry was being exploited to serve as an ideological tool to legitimize elite domination, presenting it as natural and unchangeable. This, the poet is saying, is how it was in the Heroic Age; this, he is implying, is how it should be now....Very few images could legitimize the

> dominance of the aristoi as well as that of the society of the Heroic Age.[86]

Likewise Jesper Svenbro has seen the Homeric poems as an attempt to exercise aristocratic "contrôle social" over the audience.[87] From Homer's description of bards in the Iliad and Odyssey, Svenbro draws important conclusions on the relationship between poetry and politics in the poems. The ideal poet is Demodocus at the court of Alcinous, who sings worthy songs and is, as his name implies, pleasing to the people. In contrast to Demodocus is Phemius, the negative example of what a poet should be, who abandons his master to serve the interests of the suitors. For singing songs of the death of Odysseus, he nearly loses his life when the master returns (xxii. 330-53). Homer was certainly aware that it is the poet who functions as the ultimate communicator of values in an oral society.[88] Oral poetry can either be the instrument of preserving the status quo, as in the Iliad and the Odyssey, or social reform, as in

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[86]Morris (1986), p. 125; for a complete discussion of the evidence, see pp. 121-29.

[87]Jesper Svenbro, La parole et le marbre: aux origines de la poétique grecque (Lund 1976), pp. 16-35. See also the review by Staffan Fogelmark in Gnomon 50 (1978) 113-24.

[88]See Thalmann (1984), pp. 113-15; Eric Havelock, Preface to Plato (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), p. 100. On the role of the poet as a communicator of values in anthropological societies, see Finnegan (1977), pp. 242-43. Homer tells us that Agamemnon left a poet more or less in charge at Argos when he left for Troy (Odyssey iii. 267-68).

Hesiod's Works and Days.

There would be little point in promoting the cause of the basileus only in the presence of an aristocratic audience. While the example of Demodocus' song at the banquet of Alcinous shows that oral poetry was on some occasions performed for an audience comprised of the nobility, most scholars have agreed that the lower classes were part of the Homeric audience.[29] Kirk has noted that the so-called basileus of the late Dark Age, like the anthropological Big Man, was simply a community chief who, unlike the Mycenaean wanax, could not have afforded to maintain a court singer.[30] Instead, Kirk concluded that settings from everyday life were probably the most common sites of performance for the Homeric poems:

> the singer would often and easily find an audience in town or village, after the day's work was done, whether in someone's house or in the market-place or in a tavern. This has been so in most places and at most periods in which oral heroic poetry has flourished. The heroic epic seems always to have quickly found, and then to have retained, a large popular audience which often, indeed, becomes the main support of the generality of singers. There may be an important aristocratic audience as well, as in the Odyssey and in the courts of the early Middle Ages--and it was presumably for a primarily aristocratic audience that heroic and aristocratic poetry was normally in the first instance composed. It rapidly

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[29]See Thalmann (1984), p. 119; Svenbro (1976), pp. 42-43; Kirk (1962), pp. 274-81.

[30]Kirk (1962), pp. 274-75.

> extended its audience, though; for in a Heroic Age or its immediate successor there is usually not enough organized social resentment to prejudice the people against the actions and ideals of the heroic class.[31]

Thalman has suggested that the poems were performed at aristocratic dinner parties, religious festivals, and popular meeting places, with the result that all levels of society would have been familiar with the poems.[32] Eumaeus' description of the poet as a dêmioergos (xvii. 381-86), like the carpenter or physician, would surely accord with the view that epic poetry was an entertainment shared by all the social classes. Scholars have also pointed out that Demodocus must be summoned by Alcinous from town, where we would assume he entertains the common folk (viii. 43-44).[33]

If we assume that Homer's poetry was often performed before a cross section of social classes, as we are almost forced to do in view of the nature of Homeric society, we come to a very important question: How did Homer make his aristocratic, heroic poetry relevant to his audience? Homer was faced with the difficult challenge of portraying a magnificent world of the past that was intended to be a

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[31]Kirk (1962), p. 278.

[32]Thalmann (1984), p. 119.

[33]See Thalmann (1984), p. 131; Kirk (1962), p. 278; and Wolfgang Schadewaldt, Von Homers Welt und Werk[3] (Stuttgart 1959), p. 67.

social model for his listeners. Yet many aspects of this Heroic world no longer existed, nor were recollected by the listener. Redfield explains this poetic difficulty in the following way:

> These heroes inhabit a world different from that of Homer's audience. They use bronze weapons, not iron; they ride into battle on chariots from which they dismount to do their actual fighting; they do not eat fish; they are illiterate....Thus the heroes talk freely with the gods; they encounter monsters, speaking rivers, and giants; their corpses can be magically transported and protected from decay....All these features combine to establish an epic distance, to remind the audience that the story is not about their world.[34]

The necessity of this "epic distancing" is clear if the poem is to be interesting and inspiring to the audience. The heroic world must be different from the real world. And yet as both Redfield and Donlan have pointed out, the poet must also build upon the values and assumptions of his own culture.[35] In effect, the poet must build a bridge between the real world and the imaginary one. The audience must feel that they have much in common with the epic characters, while at the same time they must see them as superior and different.

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[34]Redfield (1975), pp. 36-37.

[35]Redfield (1975), pp. 23 and 79; Donlan (1986), p. 120, says that "in trying to describe the world of the heroes, Homer had to build upon the shared assumptions of his own culture, embellishing them in collectively established ways, to create an alternative reality."

Although, as we have noted, the Homeric poems possess a strong aristocratic bias, there are many places throughout the works where Homer deals with the common man in a sympathetic way. Homer's apparent concern with the poor in the Odyssey has caused Peter Rose to observe that "the world of Odysseus is not after all so very far from the world of Hesiod."[34] On several occasions Odysseus, both at the palace of Alcinous and as a beggar in Ithaca, comments on the pain of a stomach that is not filled (vi. 133-34; vii. 215-221; xv. 343-34; xvii. 236-39, 468-76). In most of these passages the hero also comments on the pitiful social station of the beggar. We even find a concern with slaves, as seen in the sympathetic treatment of Eumaeus and Philoetius, whom Homer portrays heroically helping their master. However, the most common way in which Homer seems to speak to the everyday worker in his audience is in the similes and digressions, especially in the Shield of Achilles, concerning farming and other occupations. It will be the purpose of the next two chapters to show how Homer spoke to the average man through the agricultural similes and digressions, and in so doing offered him a small share of the glory of the heroic world.

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[34]Rose (1975), pp. 144-45.

CHAPTER THREE
AGRICULTURE IN THE ILIAD

In the second chapter we saw that Homer directed his poems to an audience that included a substantial portion of common agricultural laborers. For that reason we theorized that Homer would have felt it necessary to bridge the epic distance between the heroic world and the lives of his audience. One of the ways that Homer seems to speak directly to the life experience of his audience is through similes and other digressions that interrupt the narrative. Studies on the language and subject matter of these similes suggest that they almost certainly developed comparatively late in the evolution of the Iliad and the Odyssey and so would seem to be specifically invented for Homer's contemporary audience. Therefore, several scholars have suggested quite plausibly that these digressions should be attributed to Homer himself or his immediate predecessors.

While short comparisons, like hôs leôn may well have originated in the second millennium, linguistic studies have shown that the developed simile as a class should be considered as occurring relatively late in the epic

tradition.[1] In his Grammaire homérique (Paris 1942) Pierre Chantraine included a list of forms which he considered "récente." George Shipp noted that a significantly high proportion of these forms occurred in the extended similes as well as in other digressionary material.[2] Most scholars have accepted Shipp's conclusion that the similes are later developments than the narrative they adorn. Many scholars have also observed that the similes often contain unheroic subject material that is dateable to Homer's own century.[3] Of special concern to us is the very great number of extended similes that deal with farming. A full quarter of the more than two hundred extended similes in the Iliad are concerned with some aspect of farming.[4] These range from

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[1]On the probable early use of the short simile, see George Shipp, Studies in the Language of Homer[2] (Cambridge 1972), p. 211; T.B.L. Webster, From Mycenae to Homer (New York 1959), p. 235; D.J.N. Lee, The Similes of the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" Compared (Melbourne 1964), p. 30.

[2]G.P. Shipp, Studies in the Language of Homer (London 1953), p. 18 and passim. See also G.S. Kirk, "Objective Dating Criteria in Homer," MH 17 (1960) 189-205 and The Songs of Homer (Cambridge 1962), pp. 201-03.

[3]See Arthur Platt, "Homer's Similes," Journal of Philology 24 (1895-1896) 28-38; Hermann Fränkel, Die homerischen Gleichnisse (Göttingen 1921), pp. 99-103; Paul Cauer, Grundfragen der Homerkritik[3], II (Leipzig 1923), p. 477; Wolfgang Schadewaldt, Von Homers Welt und Werk[3] (Stuttgart 1959), pp. 130-54, esp. p. 138; Webster (1959), pp. 222-23; Shipp (1972), pp. 212-13.

[4]For a list of these similes see my Appendix. Lee (1964), pp. 50-73, provides both a list of all the similes in the order of their occurrence and a classification by subject matter. William C. Scott, The Oral Nature of the

ploughing, to cultivation of vineyards and herds, to fighting off predators from domestic animals. It should be noted that these similes are almost always extended (only two are short) and are therefore almost certainly late. A high percentage of these also show late linguistic forms.[3] When one adds to the agricultural similes those dealing with non-agrarian, but also non-military, labor, one finds another dozen similes concerned with everyday work. (I exclude from consideration those similes concerned with the making of ships, chariots, etc.) Thus a sizeable number, about 35%, of the extended, and therefore probably late, similes refer to common labor.

It is, of course, difficult to establish specifically what scholars mean by "late" either regarding the linguistics or the subject matter of the similes. Because Shipp implied that a substantial number of Chantraine's "récent" forms should be regarded as post-Homeric, he regarded most of the similes as interpolations.[4] D.J.N. Lee, following Shipp's work, argued that the similes were interpolations based on the theory that they could be

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Homeric Simile (Leiden 1974), pp. 191-205, provides another excellent classification along somewhat different lines.

[3]See Shipp (1972), pp. 231-45, on the first five books of the Iliad.

[4]Shipp (1972), p. 221. That the similes are interpolations seems implied, although it is nowhere clearly stated in Shipp's first edition (1953).

excised form the text without damage to the narrative, the so-called "detachability theory."[7] Several scholars, including Chantraine himself, have opposed the view that "late" forms are necessarily post-Homeric.[8] Kirk argued that only "organic Atticisms" should be regarded as post-Homeric. He concluded that the description "late" with reference to Homeric language should only suggest that a linguistic form came into use during the period of approximately 800-650.

Contrary to Shipp and Lee, Kirk has argued that the lateness of the similes may be good evidence that they were the product of Homer himself:

> I believe that the elaboration and careful placing of many of the developed similes must be due to the monumental composer himself, and cannot be random procedure (or anything like it) or be derived from the older and shorter poems upon which Homer drew, and many of which must have been worked as episodes into the texture of the monumental version.[9]

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[7]See Lee (1964), pp. 28-31. See also Shipp (1972), p. 215. Carroll Moulton, "Similes in the Iliad," Hermes 103 (1974) 384, effectively refutes Lee by noting that the long simile by its nature must be detachable and so cannot be considered as an interpolation on that ground. See also Moulton, Similes in the Homeric Poems (Göttingen 1977), p. 18.

[8]See Chantraine's review of Shipp (1953) in Revue de Philologie 29 (1955) 73; Webster (1959), p. 211; Kirk (1962), pp. 202-03; Moulton (1974), p. 384.

[9]Kirk (1976), p. 6; see similarly Kirk (1962), pp. 202-03, who contends that if post-Homeric poets were fond of interpolating similes there should be more of them in the Odyssey, which is usually considered later than the Iliad.

Webster, too, concluded that the "similes, ancient, expanded, and new, must be the work of the last poet."[10] More recently, Richard Janko, who believes that the Iliad and the Odyssey became fixed during the last half of the eighth century, attributed the similes to Homer's own originality:

> In a tradition that consists of oral improvisations, rather then memorization, it is inevitable that, in those fields where the tradition hands down no ready made diction, the improvisor will draw on the only other diction he knows, that of the vernacular. The pre-Homeric stages of this tradition must have been of this nature, and the findings of Shipp that advance forms of various sorts are concentrated in Homer's similes and other digressions (without which the monumental epics would lack so much) suggest that this was true of Homer also.[11]

In addition to demonstrating the poet's skill in combining the traditional with the contemporary, the simile also expresses some of the central themes of the Iliad and so should be attributed to a monumental composer rather than subsequent interpolators.

If we are to say that the similes in the Iliad and the Odyssey were the work of Homer and/or the poets not long before the final composition of these poems, we will, of

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[10]Webster (1959), p. 227.

[11]Richard Janko, Homer, Hesiod, and the Hymns: Diachronic Development in Epic Diction (Cambridge 1982), p. 16.

course, seek to determine why the similes were used at all, and why they focus on non-heroic topics. First of all, it is clear that the similes have their own intrinsic artistic merit without regard to the narrative they adorn. But it is our purpose to examine the function of the similes within the context of the entire poems. Eustathius in the eleventh century called the similes hedusmata, a side dressing, for the poem, and assigned to them four functions: auxesis (amplification), energeia (vivification), sapheineia (clarification), poikilia (variety).[12] Eustathius' four categorizations of the simile can be summarized into the two main functions that modern scholars have attributed to the simile: illustration and variety.

There can be no doubt that a central aim of the similes is to illustrate, vivify, and visualize a moment in the narrative of the poem, in Kirk's words, "to vivify the actions of armies or individuals, or of deities....to crystallize, in a sphere close to the listener's own understanding, a sight or a sound or a state of mind...."[13] In many cases the simile is able to express far more vividly than a description what the poet wishes his audience to visualize:

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[12]See Eustathius p. 176, 20 ff., p. 253, 26 ff., p. 1065, 29 ff. See also the discussion of Samuel E. Bassett, "The Function of the Homeric Similes," TAPA 23 (1921) 133.

[13]Kirk (1962), pp. 345-46.

> [Gorgythion] bent drooping his head to one side, as a garden poppy
> bends beneath the weight of its yield and the rains of springtime;
> so his head bent slack to one side beneath the helm's weight. (VIII. 306-08)

In the comparison of the head and the poppy, we see what many German scholars, especially around the turn of the century, called the Vergleichungspunkt, the single point of comparison that Homer wished to make.[14] While Fränkel accepted the validity of the single Vergleichungspunkt with regard to the short similes, he argued also that the simile often describes, explains, and interprets the broader picture of the entire situation of the narrative.[15] In addition to illustration, which must certainly have been the original intention of the simile, the function of the simile most often noted is "to give relief from the harshness and potential monotony of warfare by suddenly actualizing a quite different and often peaceful, even domestic, scene."[16] The most popular explanation of the function of the simile

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[14]See Georg August Finsler, Homer[2] (Leipzig 1913), p. 329; Franz Krupp, Die homerischen Gleichnisse (Zweibrüchen 1883); K.F. Ameis, Anhang zu Homers "Ilias" (Leipzig 1877), passim.

[15]Fränkel (1921), pp. 1-16, 98-106. So also Michael Coffey, "The Function of the Homeric Simile," AJP 78 (1957) 113-32.

[16]Kirk (1962), pp. 346-47.

has been to relieve the monotony of the warfare found in the narrative of the Iliad.[17] The validity of this view is clearly indicated by several points of evidence. First of all, the Iliad, a poem of war, has about four times as many similes as the Odyssey. The variety inherent in the Odyssey, which Paul Cauer called "ein großes Gleichnis,"[18] makes the similes less necessary. Furthermore, the similes tend to be grouped in the battle scenes of the Iliad more than in the non-martial passages; about three-fourths of the extended similes occur in scenes of battle.[19] While we cannot be certain to what extent the Homeric audience would have felt the need for "relief" from the passages of warfare that sometimes seem monotonous to the modern reader, recent work showing that Homer attempted to vary the depiction of the traditional topoi of the battle narrative, like arming scenes, suggests that the similes and the brief biographical sketches that punctuate the battles are intended for

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[17]See especially C.M. Bowra, Tradition and Design in the Iliad (Oxford 1930), pp. 114-28.

[18]Paul Cauer, Grundfragen der Homerkritik³, II (Leipzig 1923), p. 477.

[19]For the figures, see Bowra (1930), p. 123. See also Carroll Moulton, "Similes in the Iliad," Hermes 102 (1974) 382-83, who comments that, while the Iliad and the Aeneid have roughly the same amount of warfare, only one-half of the extended similes in the Aeneid occur during battles.

variety.[20]

Some scholars, while they grant that variety is an essential function of the Homeric simile, suggest that there is also a thematic intent behind the extensive use of peaceful similes in the violent passages of the Iliad. While a great many of the similes in battle are of a violent nature, like the lion similes, there are also a great many that show peaceful idyllic scenes.[21] William C. Scott in his studies of the similes found that at the height of the violence in the Iliad "Homer surprisingly describes the fighting of Achilles with many images of peace."[22] Scott hypothesized that the violent lion similes of the Iliad followed traditional practice, while the peaceful similes were in general representative of "an undercurrent of peace opposing the narrative of war" made all the more effective by the contrasts.[23] Similarly, D.H. Porter, in his "Violent

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[20]See J. Armstrong, "The Arming Motif in the Iliad," AJP 79 (1958) 337-54; J.A. Russo, "Homer Against his Tradition," Arion 7 (1967) 275-95.

[21]Kirk (1962), p. 347, has noted that although the lion and similar similes are violent, they are part of the non-military world and "depend upon violence in a peaceful context. In these cases the intention is less to relieve a surfeit of horrors than to emphasize and colour the rage, determination or invincibility of a great hero."

[22]Scott (1974), p. 116. He cites as examples XX. 403, XX. 495, XXI. 257 and 282, XXII. 162 and 317.

[23]Scott (1974), p. 117. So also Kirk (1962), pp. 346-47.

Juxtaposition in the Similes of the Iliad," suggested that "in the similes of this poem Homer repeatedly and deliberately jars us by the clashing juxtaposition of the lovely with the ugly, the productive with the destructive, the gentle with the violent, the peaceful with the warlike."[24] Similarly, Homer uses the short biographical sketches of the minor heroes who are killed in battle to show the tragedy of death.[25]

There can be no doubt that many of Homer's peaceful similes impress by contrast the modern reader, and probably the ancient listener, with the horror and the darker side of war and the heroic code. But this pacifist sentiment is found only in some of Homer's similes. Many of the similes are themselves violent and frightening. In Schadewalt's words, the world of the similes is "kein Garten Eden."[26] More than anything else the similes are Homer's pictures of his own world. They are intended to give a completeness to

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[24]D.H. Porter, "Violent Juxtaposition in the Similes of the Iliad," CJ 68 (1972) 18.

[25]On the biographical sketches of the minor heroes, see Seth Schein, The Mortal Hero (Berkeley 1984), pp. 72-73; Jasper Griffin, Homer on Life and Death (Oxford 1980), p. 143; H. Fränkel, Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy (translated from the German by Moses Hadas and James Willis) (New York 1951), p. 37. For a study that goes so far as to consider the Iliad as a pacifist manifesto, see Simone Weil, The "Iliad" or the Poem of Force (translated from the French by M. McCarthy) (Wallingford, Penn., 1957).

[26]Wolfgang Schadewalt, Von Homers Welt und Werk3 (Stuttgart 1959), p. 144.

the Iliadic world view and help the listener feel integrated with the narrative. So Fränkel:

> The numerous similes supply insights into the natural world picture of the poet which deviates sharply from the artificial one of the narrative. Alongside the heroic subject we have here a complementary pendant in the everyday world; alongside the peculiar and unusual event, its foil in the customary and familiar....[The poet] adds something of his own and places himself in a man-to-man relationship with the hearer. He enters the domain of his own time and ordinary experience, in order to set the ancient things forth with greater clarity and fullness.[87]

By bridging the epic distance the similes allowed the listener to perceive the heroic world via his own experiences. Fränkel noted for example that the lion hunt, which is the subject of so many similes, was probably a rare and exhilarating experience for the Homeric listener. Thus the evocation of this experience would have conveyed feelings most like those of the Iliadic warrior in a life and death struggle.[88] Paul Cauer went even further by suggesting that the similes were used to convey what war meant to a society unused to it. He linked the similes to the "Wandlung des Hörerkreises" from aristocratic warriors to the common folk, that we have already discussed in our

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[87]Fränkel (1951), p. 40. For a similar view, see Schein (1984), p. 140; Redfield (1975), p. 186.

[88]Fränkel (1921), p. 98.

second chapter:[89]

> Der Dichter, und wohl schon manche Generation seiner letzen Vorgänger, gehörten nicht mehr zu den Vornehmen; ihre Zuhörer waren Bauern und Hirten, Jäger und Fischer, Handwerker, mühsam Erwerbende. In deren Erfahrungsbereich, in ihren Leiden und Freuden, Gefahren, Mühen, Erfolgen suchte der Vortragende einen Stützpunkt, so oft er sich bot, um hinüber zu der fernen Welt des Heroentums die Brücke zu schlagen.

The use of the similes as a bridge between the worlds of the hero and the common man lies at the root of their two major functions that we have discussed, variety and illustration. It is because the reader or hearer of the poems is no longer a heroic warrior that the similes are needed to make the military world more relevant to his own. By linking the disparate world of the listener to the heroic world, Homer makes him feel, in a sense, heroic. The similes, and especially the biographical sketches of fallen warriors, make the hearer share in the world of the hero, since he learns that the hero shares aspects of his own life experience. Furthermore, as we have already stated, Homer sometimes uses the digressions in order to show that the common life is worthy of praise and is therefore, in a sense, heroic.

In order to illustrate how Homer uses the similes and other digressions to give glory to the common life of the

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[89]Cauer (1921), p. 477.

farmer, let us examine specific instances of these digressions in books eleven through thirteen, three of the most violent books in the Iliad.

An examination of Books 11-13 provides many instances of agricultural similes used to provide stark contrasts with the violent scenes that they illustrate. Thirteen agricultural similes occur within the narrative of these books (see Appendix). There are also three similes of other types of work, two of woodcutting and one of a widow weighing wool, "working to earn a pitiful wage for her children" (XII. 435). Of the agricultural similes four, one of which is short, describe lions. Although these similes are violent, their focus in not so much upon the savagery of the predator but the sufferings of its victims:[30]

> ...the Trojans...stampeded like cattle
> when a lion, coming upon them in the dim night, has terrified
> the whole herd, while for a single one sheer death is emerging.
> First the lion breaks her neck caught fast in the strong teeth,
> then gulps down the blood and all the guts that are inward;
> so Atreus' son, powerful Agamemnon, went after them
> killing ever the last of the men; and they fled in terror. (XI. 171-78)
>
> But the two Aiantes in the fury of their fierce war strength
> as two lions catch up a goat from the guard of rip-fanged
> hounds, and carry it into the density of the

[30]Porter (1972), pp. 12-13.

> underbrush,
> holding it high from the ground in the crook of their
> jaws, so the lordly
> two Aiantes lifted Imbrios high and stripped him
> of his armour.... (XIII. 197-202)

In a similar way Antilochus writhes and gasps like an ox bound by herdsmen (XIII. 571). In these cases the sufferings of the victim in battle is made more poignant by associating it with animals that are suffering. Perhaps even more poignant are those similes in which war is directly compared with peaceful farming scenes. Greeks and Trojans cut men down like two lines of reapers working together in the field (XI. 67-71). Arrows rebound from Menelaus' armor like chickpeas bouncing up from a threshing floor (XIII. 588). The two Aiantes fight like two oxen yoked together (XIII. 703-08).

It is not in the similes alone that the world of peaceful agriculture is contrasted with that of battle. On several occasions Homer reminds us that his warriors led productive working lives before the Trojan War began. The Iliad often gives us biographical information about a warrior just before or after he is killed in order to lend pathos to his death. As Fränkel noted, "even to the undistinguished warriors who are included only to succumb to their betters, the poet often gives words which endow the victim with a personality and make his tragedy felt....All these comments are calm and factual in expression; but

though they are not emotional in language they are so in effect."[31] Not infrequently these sketches portray the victim as a farmer. Although, of course, the heroes are usually portrayed as landed gentry, they are still workers.[32] The listener finds that the dying warrior is a man much like himself. Thus it is not only the destruction of a productive life that makes the death poignant to the hearer, but also the sympathy that the hearer is able to feel for the hero with whom he can identify.

THE SHIELD OF ACHILLES

Certainly the most famous evocation of the joys of an agricultural lifestyle is the description of the Shield of Achilles. Several scholars have noted the similarity between the subject matter of the Shield and the similes.[33] In the Shield we find scenes commonly described in the similes: ploughing, reaping, working in the vineyards, lion hunts, shepherding. And yet there are also scenes on the Shield that are rarely, if ever, described in Homeric

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[31] See above footnote 25. See also Fränkel (1962), p. 37.

[32] For examples of heroes engaged in physical labor in the Iliad and the Odyssey, see Bjorn Qviller, "The Dynamics of Homeric Society," SO 66 (1981) 199.

[33] See, e.g., Scott (1974), p. 118; W. Marg, Homer über die Dichtung: Der Schild des Achilleus (Münster 1971), p. 34; Webster (1959), pp. 213-14, 222; Schein (1984), pp. 140-41. Webster, pp. 213-14, suggests that the language of the Shield, like the similes, should be considered late.

similes: feasts, court disputes, war, dancing. Although the Shield focuses more on the joys of daily life, as the similes do, it is remarkable for encompassing an overview of the entire realm of the Homeric world. It is perhaps in the Shield more than anywhere else that Homer bridges the epic distance between the heroic world and the common man.

Modern scholarship regarding the Shield began with Lessing, who called the Shield an Inbegriff, a comprehension, of all life experience.[34] Like the similes the Shield complements the one-sided view of life usually found in the Iliad. So Marg:

> Wie die Gleichnisse gern wie durch kleine Fenster ein einfaches, alltägliches, friedliches Leben in den Heroenkampf hereinschauen lassen, so sieht es hier wie durch weit geöffnete Türen herein. Aber dort sind die Ausschnitte doch zufällig und unendlich verschieden, hier beziehungsreich ausgewählt und zu einem repräsentierenden Kreis geordnet.[35]

As a door to the real world of the Homeric audience, the Shield depicts scenes of both peace and violence. Yet war and other aspects of human strife are necessarily represented as being part of the overall picture of the

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[34]Lessing, in a footnote to Laocoön, chapter 18.

[35]Marg (1971), p. 34.

world.[36] The peacefulness of the Shield, however, is what must attract our attention the most, because it is so unusual. As Taplin has noted, the Shield is unique in its expression of pacifism, since ecphraseis portrayed on arms in Greek literature are always designed to evoke a sense of fear.[37] Moreover, like many of the similes, the Shield is surrounded and juxtaposed with violence, and so the peaceful scenes depicted on it receive even greater prominence.

The major focus of the Shield is the pleasure and productivity of the agricultural lifestyle:

> [Hephaestus] made upon it a soft field, the pride
> of the tilled land,
> wide and triple-ploughed, with many ploughmen upon it
> who wheeled their teams at the turn and drove them in
> either direction.
> And as these making their turn would reach the end-
> strip of the field,
> a man would come up to them at this point and hand
> them a flagon
> of honey-sweet wine, and they would turn again to the
> furrows
> in their haste to come again to the end-strip of the
> deep field. (XVIII. 541-47)

Similarly, there are joyful reapers of grain (551ff) and harvesters of the "kind, sweet" grape (566ff). Even children and adolescents join happily in the work. In a

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[36]See Marg (1971), pp. 34 and 38; Oivind Andersen, "Some Thoughts on the Shield of Achilles," SO 51 (1976) 8; Oliver Taplin, "The Shield of Achilles Within the Iliad," G&R 27 (1980) 12.

[37]Taplin (1980), pp. 1-2.

simile Homer also describes the potter at work (599-601), and he spends many lines describing the master craftsman, Hephaestus, at his labor (410-78). In these passages the life of the worker is idealized. The ploughmen are rewarded with wine; and Homer does not mention their sweat, as Hesiod would have done.[38] The central impression one gets from the Shield is a view of what the warrior, especially in this passage Achilles, must give up to follow the heroic code.[39] The central function of the Shield is to place the heroic world in a broader perspective than it appears elsewhere in the Iliad, in a sense to bridge the epic distance. In the Shield Homer is able not only to give glory to the warrior, by showing how great his sacrifice is, but also to praise the life of the common man, who is also deemed worthy of song. There can be no doubt that the warrior's life is the more glorious of the two. Yet we must also see that the peaceful life is not only praised by Homer but also given implicit divine approval since it is part of Hephaestus' creation.[40]

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[38]Marg (1971), p. 36, aptly points out the difference here between Hesiod and Homer in depicting the pleasure inherent in work.

[39]Cedric Whitman, Homer and the Heroic Tradition (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), p. 205; R.L. Arrigon, "Symbolism in the Shield of Achilles," CB 36 (1960) 49-50; Andersen (1976), p. 7; Taplin (1980), p. 12.

[40]Marg (1971), p. 38, has noted that the Shield ought to be given special attention, since it is divinely created.

In the Shield the joys of the common life appear as an attractive way of life, to some extent preferable to the transient glory of the hero. Homer's praise of the peaceful farming life in no way diminishes the glory of the heroic life. Rather, it shows the tremendous and ennobling sacrifice that is required of the Homeric warrior, who often gives up a happy and peaceful life to attain glory. Homer is in no way questioning the worth of "the speaker of words and the doer of deeds." Yet he does place before his more pedestrian audience the darker, tragic side of that heroic world and, by implication, shows the advantages of their own.

Members of the Homeric audience were constantly reminded in the poems of the differences between themselves and the Homeric heroes. These men who could lift twice as much as any men of their own day were far superior to themselves. But Homer does not allow this superiority to assert itself to too great a degree. He is also careful to show both the weaknesses in the heroic code and the joys of the common life. It is in the Odyssey, as we shall see in our next chapter, that Homer further bridges the gap between the legendary hero and the common man.

CHAPTER FOUR
HEROES AND FARMERS IN THE ODYSSEY

Although there are many instances in the Iliad where the poet successfully bridges the epic distance between the heroic world and the life of his audience, it is in the Odyssey that these two worlds move the most closely together.[1] Although the aristocratic bias of the Iliad is retained in the Odyssey, the poet develops a broader view of the hero as a person. Odysseus appears not simply in the roles expected of the Iliadic warrior but also as a servant, beggar, craftsman, farmer, father, husband, and lover. Moreover, in the Odyssey there is a special interest in the servants of Odysseus and their relationships with each other, which has no counterpart in the Iliad.[2] Homer shows the loyal servants of Odysseus in a gracious light, and at

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[1]For this view see, e.g., Paul Cauer, Grundfragen der Homerkritik³ (Leipzig 1923), pp. 47 and 549; Cedric Whitman, Homer and the Heroic Tradition (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), p. 287; G.S. Kirk, The Songs of Homer (Cambridge 1962), pp. 366-67.

[2]See Norman Austin, Archery at the Dark of the Moon (Berkeley 1975), p. 165; Douglass J. Stewart, The Disguised Guest: Rank, Role, and Identity in the "Odyssey" (Cranbury, N.J., 1976), p. 164. On the interest in the lower classes displayed in the Odyssey, see Peter Rose, "Class Ambivalence in the Odyssey," Historia 24 (1975) 129-49.

times these characters seem almost to become equals with their masters. The servants Eumaeus and Philoetius become heroic in fighting for their masters, who in turn appear in a very unheroic and anti-traditional light in some cases, although their inward arete is never eclipsed. Simply put, heroes and their servants seem to be much more alike in the Odyssey than in the Iliad.

The servant who is characterized with the greatest care in the Odyssey is Eumaeus. The swineherd is a major character in the second half of the poem. Homer's lengthy delineation of Eumaeus' character has not, however, been praised by all commentators on the Odyssey. Kirk calls book 14 "tedious" and the "least satisfactory, poetically and dramatically" of any of the books in either the Iliad or the Odyssey, because of its "flagging tempo."[3] Furthermore, Kirk maintains that the characterization of Eumaeus does not stand out, in contrast to many of the secondary characters of the Iliad.[4] Like Kirk, Howard Clarke finds that the "pace of the poem flattens noticeably," in the first few books devoted to Odysseus' return to Ithaca.[5] Clarke is even less generous to Eumaeus: "the time and space given to

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[3]Kirk (1962), pp. 162 and 360.

[4]Kirk (1962), pp. 162 and 366.

[5]Howard W. Clarke, The Art of the "Odyssey" (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1967), p. 73.

the garrulous Eumaeus seems disproportionate, and the whole episode is not marked by any compensating rustic charm."[6]

There are, however, some commentators that show a greater appreciation of the Eumaeus episode. In one of the very few studies that examine in depth Odysseus' stay with Eumaeus, Gilbert Rose suggests that Homer's lengthy description of the scenes is the poet's "exploration of character and the relationships between characters."[7] Out of the friendship that rekindles between an unknown master and his servant, Odysseus will be able to rebuild his kingdom. Like Rose, Cedric Whitman sees Homer's characterization of Eumaeus as extremely effective:

> We learn the character of Eumaeus from his defense of the stranger from the dogs, from his manner of putting food before a guest, from his tears at the sight of Telemachus, from his strict obedience to orders, from his sedulous care of the swine, and a hundred other touches. Here is no characterization by reference to a single formulaic norm. The poet is interested both in Eumaeus and in his total context; he wants to fill him out.[8]

W.J. Woodhouse noted that "the characterization of Eumaeus during the first days in which he is one of the foreground

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[6]Clarke (1967), p. 73. Clarke also finds Eumaeus and Philoetius "convenient blanks."

[7]Gilbert P. Rose, "The Swineherd and the Beggar," Phoenix 34 (1980) 285-97, quotation p. 285. Similarly, see Austin (1975), pp. 164-68, 203-04.

[8]Whitman (1958), p. 292.

figures is lifelike to a degree that evinces the poet's special interest."[9]

There can be little doubt that Homer has not wasted his many lines given to the careful delineation of Eumaeus. The swineherd is indeed carefully sketched for the reader, not only by his words and actions, but also by how he is esteemed by Odysseus, Telemachus, and the poet himself. It need hardly be stated that Eumaeus is pious to the gods and loyal to his master. His respect for Odysseus is so great that he is hesitant even to pronounce the name of his absent master (xiv. 122-47).[10] He is very cautious and shrewd, as his suspicions of the beggar's hopeful news illustrate (xiv. 131-32, 166, and 386-89). As Rose states, "such skepticism over good news is clearly an aspect of intelligence in the Odyssey, which we find also in Odysseus, Penelope, and Telemachus."[11] Eumaeus' suspicions stem, at least in part, from an awareness of his own past gullibility in welcoming strangers who had brought false encouraging

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[9]W.J. Woodhouse, The Composition of Homer's "Odyssey" (Oxford 1930), p. 196. Woodhouse compares Homer's depiction of Eumaeus and Philoetius with Euripides' interest in the lower classes. Austin (1975), p. 165, also praises the characterization of Eumaeus, claiming that he is more fully delineated than several of the lesser heroes of the Iliad.

[10]See Austin (1975), pp. 12-13, for perceptive comments on the Homeric importance of words in this passage; see also p. 204.

[11]Rose (1980), p. 289.

news in the past (xiv. 378-85). He does not want to raise either his own hopes or those of Penelope, who has also been hurt before (xiv. 122-30). Although Eumaeus does not believe Odysseus, he is still able to sympathize with a man who has fallen on hard times, especially one who has suffered a reversal from good to bad fortune, as the beggar claims has happened to him (191ff).

Eumaeus also displays a crusty and gruff peasant humor. His gentle sarcasm is evident in his reply to Odysseus' suggestion that he be thrown off a cliff if his stories are untrue:

> That would be virtuous of me, my friend, and good reputation
> would be mine among men, for present alike and hereafter,
> if first I led you into my shelter, there entertained you
> as guest, then murdered you and ravished the dear life from you.
> Then cheerfully I could go and pray to Zeus, son of Kronos. (xiv. 402-06)

Eumaeus similarly exhibits a rustic surliness in his contempt of the idle attendants of the suitors, when Odysseus expresses a desire to go to the palace:

> ...For nothing like you are the serving men who work for them,
> but young men, and well dressed in mantles and tunics, always
> with neat oiled heads and handsome faces. These are the
> people who serve under the suitors, and their well-polished tables.... (xv. 330-33)

Eumaeus is also brave enough to chastise one of the suitors, Antinous, by contrasting the latter's noble appearance with his ignoble conduct (xvii. 381-91),[12] a theme that Odysseus also uses elsewhere (viii. 166-85). The dichotomy between nobility of appearance and of action is illustrated again, in an ironic manner, by Antinous, who calls Eumaeus and Philoetius "bumpkins" (ephêmeroi, xxi. 85), when they cry over the initiation of the contest with the bow. Eumaeus is similarly abused when he delivers the bow to Odysseus (xxi. 361).

In contrast to the "noble" suitors and their lackeys, it is Eumaeus and Philoetius who will fight valiantly in defense of their master and so acquire heroic status.[13] In book 21 Odysseus cautiously asks the two if they would fight in defense of their master, if he should return. When Philoetius boldly prays to Zeus that he would fight and Eumaeus echoes the resolution (xxi. 210-04), Odysseus recognizes their "infallible temper" (205) and praises them for being his only two devoted followers. He swears to reward them and make them friends and brothers of Telemachus, if their plot is successful (213-16). The

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[12]It is in the following words of Eumaeus that he voices his famous praise of the poet as demioergos. Compare also xvii. 518-21.

[13]See C.M. Bowra, Homer (London 1972), p. 136.

servants are armed (xxii. 103-04), and they acquit themselves well in the fight. Fittingly, they capture Melanthius, in order to put him to an ignominious death (173ff), then kill two men each (268-85). Eumaeus is slightly wounded in one of the encounters. Philoetius, in a boast reminiscent of the Iliad, vaunts over his victim Ktessipus.

Eumaeus' relationship with Telemachus further ennobles the brave and valiant swineherd. In Odysseus' absence Eumaeus has become the father, older brother, and mentor of Telemachus, who so often expresses his own lack of identity. While Eumaeus is always aware that Telemachus is his master, for Eumaeus expresses fear of his disapproval (xvii. 187-89), he has been forced by the physical absences of Laertes and Odysseus, and by the lack of assertiveness of Penelope and Telemachus, to take a dominant role in the government of Odysseus' estate. There is, in effect, a vacuum of authority in Ithaca that Eumaeus and the other servants try to fill as best they can, as Norman Austin perceptively notes:

> Eurykleia and Eumaios, in particular, have dramatic parts to play precisely because of their masters' abdication. It is the servants, not the masters, who retain some vestige of order in the face of general anarchy. While the one does what he can to preserve the estate the other plays her parallel part in the domestic economy of the

palace.[14]

But Eumaeus has been far more than a tenant proprietor. He has, to a great extent, become a surrogate for Odysseus. Eumaeus had always been seen somewhat as a member of the family. He was raised in the palace with Odysseus' younger sister (xv. 363-65) and so, as Rose notes, is "in that attenuated sense his younger brother."[15] Rose also claims that êtheîos (xiv. 147), which Eumaeus uses to describe Odysseus, usually suggests in Homeric epic the subordination of a younger brother to an older one. Telemachus certainly sees Eumaeus as an uncle or a surrogate father. He frequently calls Eumaeus atta, which is usually translated father, although it is more exactly a term of respect for an older man respected as a mentor or foster-father.[16] The relationship between Telemachus and Eumaeus is much like

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[14]Austin (1975), pp. 165-66, see also pp. 167-68.

[15]Rose (1980), p. 287. This passage shows that Eumaeus is younger than Odysseus and so should not be considered "old" as he is by some commentators, e.g., Von der Mühll (1940), column 736.

[16]On atta see Heinrich Ebeling, Lexicon Homericum (Hildesheim 1963, reprint of first ed., Stuttgart: Teubner, 1885), p. 192; Pierre Chantraine, Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque (Paris 1968-1977), p. 135; Eustathius, p. 777. 54. According to Rose (1980), p. 296 n. 28, atta "is used only by Telemachus and of Eumaeus in the Odyssey; in the Iliad Achilles (9. 607) and Menelaus (17. 561) apply it to Phoenix." Rose affirms the statements of Eustathius and Chantraine that atta is used by young men addressing a foster-father.

that between Achilles and Phoenix, who is called atta by his student. In both relationships it is clear that the younger man is technically superior in authority to his atta. Telemachus gently, but threateningly, orders Eumaeus, whom he calls atta, to follow his orders in delivering the bow to the suitors (xxi. 369). Likewise Achilles calls Phoenix atta when he scolds him for what he perceives as siding with Agamemnon (IX. 607). Here too Achilles threatens his atta. Their relationship will be severed if the old man persists in trying to persuade Achilles to rejoin the battle. In both these cases we see that the term atta is used by a young man to address someone whom he respects as a father, but who is technically inferior in rank to himself. It is clear that the poet makes a special effort to underscore Eumaeus' role as a surrogate father for Telemachus. In xiv. 174-77, Eumaeus shows a father's concern for Telemachus' risky journey:

> But now I grieve unforgettingly for Telemachus,
> the son
> born to Odysseus. The gods made him grow like a young
> tree,
> and I thought he would be among the men one not
> inferior
> to his dear father, admirable for build and beauty.

Rose notes that these words could easily be spoken by a father, and finds them reminiscent of Penelope's anxiety

over Telemachus' trip (iv. 703-10, 817-23).[17] The brief simile of 175 is also reminiscent of Odysseus' curious comparison of Nausicaa and the palm at Delos (vi. 162-68). Certainly both comparisons are appropriate to a father admiring a child. When Telemachus returns in a scene that "makes it clear that Eumaeus is the nearest thing Telemachus has to a father," it is the swineherd who takes the role proper to Odysseus:[18]

> ...Amazed, the swineherd started
> up, and the vessels, where he had been busily mixing
> the bright wine, fell from his hand. He came up to
> meet his master,
> and kissed his head, and kissed too his beautiful
> shining
> eyes, and both his hands, and the swelling tear fell
> from him.
> And as a father, with heart full of love, welcomes his
> only
> and grown son, for whose sake he has undergone many
> hardships
> when he comes back in the tenth year from a distant
> country,
> so now the noble swineherd, clinging fast to
> godlike
> Telemachos, kissed him even as if he had escaped
> dying,
> and in a burst of weeping he spoke to him in winged
> words:
> `You have come, Telemachos, sweet light; I thought I
> would never
> see you again, when you had gone in the ship to
> Pylos.
> But come now into the house, dear child, so that I can
> pleasure
> my heart with looking at you again when you are
> inside....' (xvi. 12-26)

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[17]Rose (1980), p. 295.

[18]Stewart (1976), p. 92. See also Rose (1980), p. 295.

Eumaeus calls Telemachus philon tekos (25) and glukeron phaos (23), the latter of which occurs in Homeric poetry only here and in xvii. 41, where Penelope uses Eumaeus' words exactly (xvi. 23-24=xvii. 41-42).[19] By making Eumaeus use the words of Telemachus' real parent, Homer re-enforces the swineherd's role as a surrogate father.

Homer's willingness to portray the lowly Eumaeus in the role of foster-father and later as a xeinêtos of Telemachus in not so surprising as it might first appear, when one notices the many careful touches that the poet adds to establish Eumaeus' inherent nobility. Eumaeus' hut is described in terms of a palace, with all the attention that is given to the gardens of Alcinous (vii. 112-32) or the home of Odysseus (xvii. 265-68).[20] We learn also from Eumaeus that he was born into a royal family (xv. 403-84). His aristocratic upbringing is shown by his being raised together with Odysseus' younger sister. Von der Mühll regards the romantic tale of Eumaeus as a "heroization" of the swineherd, just as Kirk suggests that this "brilliant digression," the only episode in these books that he

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[19]On the relationship between these two passages see Rose (1980), p. 296.

[20]Some scholars have seen similarities between the descriptions of the homes of Polyphemus and Eumaeus, and also between the characters themselves. See P. Von der Mühll, "Odyssee," in Pauly, Wissowa, eds., RE (Leipzig 1940), supp. VII, column 736; Austin (1975), p. 166.

praises, shows the "heroic qualities that his noble birth promised."[21] This nostalgic passage not only confirms the heroic status of Eumaeus that we see in his military valor, but also gives him a common link with Odysseus, who also tells his woes to the swineherd. Nagler likens the commiserations between Odysseus and Eumaeus to the Iliadic klea andrôn.[22] Although in this case, as so often, Odysseus' tales are untrue, the deeper truth that is perceived by the audience emerges: like Eumaeus, Odysseus has lost the dignity that he had once possessed. Eumaeus' noble status will, to an extent, be returned with the restoration of Odysseus. And it is this restoration that Eumaeus hopes for even more than a return to his own original life as a prince (xiv. 139-47).

Eumaeus' heroic dignity is also shown by his authority to re-instate Odysseus to his throne. Eumaeus acts in a sense as the patron of Odysseus, who speaks to the swineherd as a suppliant (σε πρῶθ' ἱκέτευσα , xvii. 573). Certainly without the welcome and protection of Eumaeus Odysseus' return would have been almost impossible. But Homer represents Eumaeus' actions as extending far beyond simple

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[21]Von der Mühll (1940), column 739; Kirk (1962), pp. 367-68. Likewise Bowra (1972), pp. 77-78, sees the passage as a confirmation of our "high opinion of Eumaeus, who is now a slave but was born a prince and keeps his inborn nobility."

[22]Nagler (1974), p. 127.

hospitality. Eumaeus' treatment of the beggar displays the characteristics of aristocratic xenia.[23] In the preparation for Odysseus, the swineherd reminds one of the Homeric basileus in his role as distributor, not only to Odysseus but to the other servants. In the first meal Eumaeus selects, sacrifices, and serves the pigs to Odysseus (xiv. 72-79). By the second meal Eumaeus' estimation of the beggar has grown to the point that he ironically performs the role of rewarder of his own master.

> ...The swineherd
> stood up to divide the portions, for he was fair minded.
> And separated all the meat into seven portions.
> One he set aside, with a prayer, for the nymphs and Hermes,
> the son of Maia, and the rest he distributed to each man,
> but gave Odysseus in honor the long cuts of the chine's portion
> of the white-toothed pig, and so exalted the heart of his master. (xiv. 432-38)

This reversal in roles between master and servant would have been all the more striking for the Homeric audience we described in our second chapter.

It is also Eumaeus who, without knowing it, grants Odysseus the authority to regain his kingdom. Eumaeus is the first block out of which the new kingdom must be built.

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[23] M.I. Finley, The World of Odysseus (London 1977), pp. 11-12, notes that xenia is essentially the duty of the basileus.

"Odysseus can rebuild his world only out of those prepared by their own knowledgeability to penetrate the disguise, and he begins at the lowest rung with Eumaeus, the swineherd."[84] As Peter Rose has shown, the episode with Odysseus and Eumaeus is a mutual testing. Odysseus will see that Eumaeus can be counted upon as an ally, while Eumaeus will gain a new respect for his master, whom he does not recognize. As Odysseus passes his test, Eumaeus, unknowingly for the most part, grants him the recognition of his office. Nagler has compared Eumaeus' careful seating of Odysseus (xiv. 53-61) with the seating of the basileus in the assembly.[85] Eumaeus further grants Odysseus the rights of kingship by giving him a skeptron as his "guest gift." As Nagler notes "the disguised king modestly asks for a humble ῥόπαλον (17. 195), but the poet reveals its true meaning" by calling it a skeptron a few lines later.[86] Even before learning of Odysseus' true identity Eumaeus acts "almost as if he were treating the beggar as his own anax: Eumaeus pointedly leaves to him the decision as to who should enter the palace first (17. 274-79)."[87] Later it will be Eumaeus, now aware

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[84]Whitman (1958), p. 301. See similarly Austin (1975), p. 225.

[85]Nagler (1974), p. 125.

[86]Ibid.

[87]Rose (1980), p. 292.

of who his master is, that will give Odysseus the bow as his badge of office.

Eumaeus' recognition of Odysseus is reciprocated. A friendship evolves between the two that is rare in Homeric epic, especially considering the different social status of the two.[88] Rose has carefully studied how Homer shows the growing friendship between the two men through the manner in which they address each other. When Odysseus first meets Eumaeus, he calls the swineherd xeine (xiv. 53) then thereafter shifts to a more intimate form of address, phile (115 and 149), "a signal that Eumaeus has moved up a notch in Odysseus' estimation."[89] At the end of Odysseus' tale he says that he has come to the home of an "understanding man" (359). At line 410 and thereafter, with only one exception, Eumaeus is addressed by name in the vocative. Rose sees this as a sign of the beggar's "complete approval and respect for Eumaeus." Rose's view is supported by Odysseus' frequent oath "I wish, Eumaios, you could be as dear to our father/Zeus as you are to me" (xv. 340-41).

Eumaeus' changing mode of addressing Odysseus also shows his growing respect for the beggar. In book 14 Eumaeus addresses the beggar as geron or geraie. In the next book, however, Odysseus is called xeine. Also in this

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[88]See Stewart (1976), pp. 90-91.

[89]Rose (1980), pp. 287-92, quotation p. 288.

book Eumaeus begins to use dual forms for himself and his new friend "in a context which highlights the sense of shared sufferings and mutual understanding (398-400)."[30] Clearly a friendship has arisen between the two in which each sees the other on roughly equal terms. Eumaeus comes to love and respect the beggar, whose identity he does not know, while Odysseus understands his swineherd in a way that had previously been impossible.

Just as Odysseus' address of Eumaeus shows his estimation of the swineherd's virtue, so too the poet's use of epithets and apostrophe appears to demonstrate his high regard for Eumaeus. Homer's peculiar use of formulae in the case of Eumaeus has long perplexed commentators of the Odyssey. Most readers find it curious that Eumaeus is called dios and orchamos andrôn, epithets seemingly inappropriate to a man of humble status. Equally unusual is Homer's use of apostrophe on almost every occasion that the swineherd speaks. This use of apostrophe is unique in the Odyssey and occurs rarely in the Iliad. Again the reader wonders why Homer would address the swineherd in such a personal manner. Homer's use of apostrophe and heroic epithets in the case of Eumaeus has often been explained away as being dictated by the economy of oral poetry and therefore essentially meaningless. Yet Homer's careful

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[30]Rose (1980), p. 292.

display of the virtue of Eumaeus has made some critics suspect that the poet is showing a special fondness and admiration for the "lowly swineherd."

The grammarians called the apparently inappropriate use of heroic epithets for lowly characters katachresis, a misapplication of words. Of course since there are more commoners in the Odyssey than the Iliad, this phenomenon has been observed more often in the former poem. Not only does Homer apply the epithet dios to Eumaeus (e.g. xiv. 48; xvi. 46) but also to Polyphemus (i. 70) and one of Hector's horses (VIII. 185). Eumaeus is also called orchamos andrôn on four occasions (xiv. 22, 121; xv. 351, 389; xvi. 36; xvii. 184; xiv. 22). Likewise, critics have declaimed the epithet potnia mêtêr (xviii. 5) for Irus' mother.[31] Modern critics even before Milman Parry's monumental work with oral poetry attributed these epithets simply to Homer's heroic tradition. Paul Cauer compared these epithets to the German use of Herr and Frau, which originally were designations of titles of nobility, but eventually degenerated into polite designations of any man or woman.[32] Parry went even further by suggesting that the epithets were strictly ornamental

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[31]For these and other examples, see Cauer (1923), pp. 450-51. See also Maurice Bowra, "Style" p. 29 in Alan Wace and Frank Stubbings, eds., A Companion to Homer (London 1962).

[32]Cauer (1923), p. 451.

elements of the Homeric formulae and so had no real meaning in their context.[33] While almost all scholars have now accepted that in many cases the epithets perform no role in description or characterization, some have questioned Parry's belief that all epithets are strictly ornamental and meaningless.

In the case of epithets that are most frequently associated with one character, such as polumêtis Odysseus and Aigisthos dolomêtis, William Whallon claimed that Homer is illustrating a specific attribute of the character described.[34] Adam Parry also concluded that some of the epithets have a special appropriateness, like anax andrôn applied to Agamemnon, and even suggests that the name Agamemnon may have been chosen to go with the epithet instead of the other way around.[35] In a similar way Seth Schein finds a special significance in the epithets of Hector. Hector "of the shining helm," Schein believes, is meant to make the audience think of the pathetic scene in

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[33]See Milman Parry, L'Epithète traditionnelle dans Homère (Paris 1928) and "Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making, I," HSPh 41 (1930) 73-147, esp. 123-24. Both of the works appear in Adam Parry, ed. The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry (Oxford 1971); all of M. Parry's writings in French have been translated into English in this collection.

[34]William Whallon, "The Homeric Epithets," YCS 17 (1961) 100-01.

[35]See Adam Parry, "Language and Characterization in Homer," HSCP 76 (1972) 3-5.

book 6 when Astyanax is frightened by Hector's helmet. Schein also notes appropriately that the Trojans call Hector "tamer of horses," while no Greek ever applies this peaceful epithet to him.[36]

It is clear that Homer did, at least on some occasions, use epithets as an aid to characterization. Therefore, we must not immediately cast aside Eumaeus' epithets of dios and orchamos andrôn as meaningless. In view of Homer's heroization of Eumaeus, it is not impossible that he used dios as a compliment to that character. Likewise, while at first glance it is hard to see a swineherd as a "leader of men," Eumaeus is not an ordinary swineherd. As we have mentioned before, Homer has taken great pains to establish the royalty of Eumaeus' blood and to cast him as surrogate for Odysseus, more appropriately an orchamos andrôn. Eumaeus appears as the anthropologial Big Man for the other swineherds over whom he is in charge.[37]

Another indication of a special relationship between the poet and Eumaeus is the use of apostrophe. Eumaeus is the only character addressed with apostrophe in the Odyssey.

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[36]Seth Schein, The Mortal Hero (Berkeley 1984), pp. 7-8.

[37]Ebeling (1963), p. 80 suggests this reason for the epithet: "... de Eumaeo, qui praefectus est aliis servis." Von der Mühll (1940), column 736, sees the epithet as evidence that Eumaeus "den Sauhirten trotz aller Biotik ins Heroische hebt."

On fifteen occasions the poet speaks directly to Eumaeus, with the following formula in all but one instance: τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφης, Εὔμαιε συβῶτα ."[38] In the Iliad apostrophe occurs with the names of Patroclus (eight times), Menelaus (seven times), Apollo (twice), Melanippus (once), and Achilles (once).[39] Scholars have been divided over whether this striking feature of Homer's poetry was intended by the poet to have a special effect on the audience or whether it is simply a metrical convenience. The ancient scholiasts saw apostrophe as an indication of a special sympathy between the poet and the character so addressed. When Patroclus is apostrophized at XVII. 787, the scholiast writes:[40]

> ἡ ἀποστροφὴ σημαίνει τὸν συναχθόμενον· σοὶ γάρ,
> ὦ Πάτροκλε, τῷ οὕτως ὑπ' Ἀχιλλέως ἀγαπαμένῳ,
> τῷ πᾶν εἰς σωτηρίαν τῶν Ἑλλήνων πραγματευσαμένῳ,
> τῷ Νέστορος φιλοπόνως ἀνασχομένῳ, τῷ Εὐρύπυλον

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[38]xiv. 55, 165, 320, 442, and 507; xv. 325; xvi. 60, 135, and 464; xvii. 272, 311, 380, 512, and 579; xxii. 194. There is a slight alteration of the formula at xv. 325.

[39]For the specific passages for each character, see Elizabeth Block, "The Narrator Speaks: Apostrophe in Homer and Vergil," TAPA 112 (1982) 11. Block does not include the address of Apollo (XV. 365 and XX. 153), presumably because of his divinity. W.B. Stanford, Odyssey (London 1965), in his note on xiv. 55, considers the address of Apollo cited above as apostrophe, however. So also G.W. Nitzsch, "Die Apostrophe in Ilias und Odyssee," Philologus 16 (1860) 153.

[40]Cited from Harmut Erbse, ed. Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem, IV (Berlin 1975), p. 300. See Erbse for citations of other scholia concerning apostrophe.

> φιλοστόργως ἰᾶσαμένῳ, τῷ ὑπὲρ τῶν Ἑλλήνων δακρύσαντι καὶ τὸν σκληρῶς διακείμενον Ἀχιλλέα πείσαντι, τῷ κατὰ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ψυχῆς τὴν ἔξοδον κατορθώσαντι. ταῦτα πάντα ἔνεστιν ἐπαναφέροντας ἐπὶ τὴν ἀποστροφὴν ὁρᾶν τὸ ἐν αὐτῇ περιπαθές.

Some modern scholars have agreed with the scholiast. Hoekstra claimed that "almost everywhere [apostrophe] serves to heighten the pathos of the scene."[41] Adam Parry likewise contends that in the case of Menelaus, Patroclus, and Eumaeus, Homer uses apostrophe with characters who "are represented as unusually sensitive and worthy of the audience's sympathy."[42] Parry supports his contention particularly well in the case of Patroclus, to whom

> is attributed in the poem a distinct character: kind, easily moved to pity, remarkably free from the sort of heroic self-assertion which many...have sought to define for us.[43]

Although Parry also finds that Homer's use of apostrophe is in harmony with Eumaeus' sympathetic characterization, he is less inclined to attribute the apostrophe of Eumaeus to a desire by the poet to show his affection for the swineherd.

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[41] A. Hoekstra, Homeric Modifications of Formulaic Prototypes (Amsterdam 1964), p. 139. For a similar view see Block (1982), pp. 8-9.

[42] Parry (1972), p. 9.

[43] Parry (1972), p. 11. See pp. 16-18 for a similar view of Menelaus.

While he says that Homer's consistent use of the same formula for the apostrophe of Eumaeus seems "little more than a reflex," he does grant that Eumaeus:

> is in many ways remarkably like Menelaus and Patroclus. He is altruistic, loyal, sensitive, vulnerable. And it is plausible that the length at which his character is developed, especially in books 14 and 15, is due to the poet of the Odyssey rather than to tradition, since this elaborate development is not strictly necessary to the fundamental plot of the poem.[44]

Other scholars have been equally cautious in attributing a special meaning to Homer's apostrophe. Merry explains it as "perhaps a touch of tender or friendly feeling."[45] Von der Mühll is less cautious:

> ...für Eumaios allein hat [der Dichter] die epische Formel aufbehalten, wie er den Sauhirten trotz aller Biotek ins Heroische hebt (ὄρχαμος ἀνδρῶν).[46]

Faesi and Ameis similarly attributed Homer's apostrophe to the poet's Gemütlichkeit, while W.J. Woodhouse asks: "Is it pure fancy that hears a lingering note of tenderness in the

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[44]Parry (1972), 20-21, quotation p. 21.

[45]W.W. Merry, Odyssey 13-24 (Oxford 1901), note on xiv. 55. Stewart (1976), p. 95 gives a similarly tentative view.

[46]Von der Mühll (1940), column 736.

cadence of the syllables Εὔμαιε συβῶτα ?"[47]

Despite the Gemütlichkeit that both ancient and modern scholars have claimed to observe in Homer's use of apostrophe, several critics have argued that this stylistic device is used only for metrical convenience. As early as 1860 Nitzsch claimed that Homer's main design for apostrophe was to suit the epic hexameter, although he granted that the technique did show affection in the case of Eumaeus.[48] Stanford went further by claiming that Homer was forced to use apostrophe in the case of Eumaeus to avoid the "disagreeable hiatus" that would have resulted from προσέφη Εὔμαιος ὑφορβός .[49] It cannot be certain whether Homer would have found this hiatus cacophonous. But surely there must have been alternatives for the poet, if such was the case. We notice in xiv. 401 that Homer adapts his formula

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[47]See K.F. Ameis, ed., Odyssee Band 2, Heft 1 (Leipzig 1858) and Anhang zu Homers "Odyssee" (Leipzig 1867); J. U. Faesi, ed., Odyssee, II (Berlin 1850) at xiv. 55. See also Woodhouse (1930), p. 197.

[48]Nitzsch (1860), pp. 151-54.

[49]See Stanford (1965), p. 218: Stanford does not suggest reasons for apostrophe in the Iliad. See also Edwards (1987), p. 37. Merry (1901), note on xiv. 55, suggests the reading above as a viable alternative, apparently not finding the hiatus "disagreeable." To my knowledge no reasonable explanation has been made that would require Homer to use the apostrophe with Patroclus et al. in the Iliad. The explanation that there is no nominative combination of epithet and name for Patroclus is only a weak argument ex silentio. See Hoekstra (1964), p. 139; Parry (1972), p. 13.

to: τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος προσεφώνεε δίος ὑφορβός . In this case Homer seems to show that he is not constrained by tradition to apostrophize Eumaeus. Furthermore, reasons of euphony cannot explain away apostrophes in the case of Patroclus, Menelaus, et al. in the Iliad. If we are to grant a poetic motive to apostrophes in the Iliad, it seems reasonable to do so in the Odyssey as well. Parry concludes that "it blinds us to the poetry to argue that we have in this expression no more than words meaning: 'Eumaeus replied.'" It appears once again, as in the case of the epithets of Eumaeus, that Homer has used his tradition rather than been used by it. To suggest that a phenomenon as striking as the use of apostrophe is only the result of compulsion or habit is to do a grave disservice to the art of Homer.

Whether or not one believes that Homer's use of epithets and apostrophe is meant to be ennobling in the case of Eumaeus, there can be no doubt that Homer portrays the swineherd in a heroic light. To a lesser extent Homer also attempts to show the dignity and worth of others of Odysseus' servants. Philoetius, as we have seen, fights valiantly in the battle between Odysseus and the suitors.[50] Eurynome and Eurycleia also play important roles as

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[50]Philoetius is also called orchamos andron (xx. 185, 254).

custodians of the household and advisors to Penlope.[31] There is even the weak and anonymous maid who provides Odysseus with a favorable omen by piously praying that her master might return (xx. 112-19). The nobility of these servants is particularly striking when contrasted with the disgraceful conduct of others of their cohorts, like Melantho and Melanthius. It seems clear that Homer is attempting to show the dignity of the common and dedicated laborer, even to the point of making him heroic, as in the case of Eumaeus and Philoetius.

ODYSSEUS AND LAERTES

It is perhaps not terribly surprising that Homer's heroic poetry grants heroic elements to common workers. What is more striking is that Homer sometimes shows his heroes in seemingly anti-traditional roles as laborers. Just as the farmer becomes a hero in the Odyssey, so too the hero, such as Odysseus and Laertes, can become a farmer. In several passages of the Odyssey Homer makes it clear that Odysseus and Laertes are not only able to work but that they take pride in their ability to perform useful tasks.

Odysseus is a very skilled craftsman. Homer's detailed description of Odysseus' construction of a raft emphasizes the hero's ability to use his hands (v. 241-62). Similarly,

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[31]See especially xxii. 70ff, where Eurycleia chastises her mistress. See also Woodhouse (1930), p. 196 n. 3.

in the recognition scene between Odysseus and Penelope the hero proudly describes how he constructed his bed from an enormous olive tree (xxiii. 183-204). Even in the blinding of Polyphemus, Odysseus compares his efforts with those of a craftsman (ix. 375-94). Odysseus also seems quite at home as a farmer. We see the hero's love of agriculture in the description of the just king who:

> upholds the way of good government, and the black earth yields him
> barley and wheat, his trees are heavy with fruit, his sheepflocks
> continue to bear young, the sea gives him fish, because of
> his good leadership, and his people prosper under him.
> (xix. 111-14)

Likewise, Odysseus expresses his admiration for Laertes' tending of the garden (xxiv. 245-47). And it is not until Odysseus recalls tenderly how he visited the farm and was given trees by his father that the old man finally accepts his identity (xxiv. 336-44).[55] From Odysseus' reminiscences it is clear that both he and his father took an active role in the management of the royal estate.

The most striking example of Odysseus in the role of agricultural worker comes in his reply to the challenge of

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[55]Whitman (1958), pp. 304-05, notes that Odysseus' childhood memories are "a way of reclaiming his patrimony, his knowledge of the land, and his right to it." See also his n. 41, p. 356.

Eurymachus.[53] The confrontation between Eurymachus and Odysseus is much like the bantering jibes traded back and forth between warriors in the Iliad. In the Iliad, of course, the insults center around the ability and willingness of the warriors to fight. But here the topic is different. Eurymachus challenges Odysseus to become his thes so that he will not have to beg, but the young man implies that Odysseus would be unwilling to work (xviii. 357-64). Coming from one of the suitors, whom Homer is always at great pains to portray as idle, such a challenge is too much for "long-suffering" Odysseus to bear. The beggar retorts with three challenges of his own:

> Eurymachos, I wish there could be a working contest
> between us, in the spring season when the days are
> lengthening,
> out in the meadow, with myself holding a well-curved
> sickle,
> and you one like it, so to test our endurance for
> labor,
> without food, from dawn till dark, with plenty of grass
> for our mowing.
> Or if it were oxen to be driven, those of the best
> sort,
> large ones and ruddy, both well fed with grass, of an
> equal
> age and carrying power, and their strength is not
> contemptible,
> and there were four acres to plow, with the glebe
> giving to the plowshare.
> There you would see if I could carve a continuous
> furrow.
> Or again, if this day the son of Kronos should bring on

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[53]Peter Rose (1975), pp. 143-44, sees this passage as an expression of peasant resentment against greedy and idle aristocratic rulers.

> a battle, and I were given a great shield and two spears,
> and a helmet all of bronze well fitted over my temples,
> so you would see me taking my place as one of the foremost
> fighters, and you could not speak so in scorn of my belly. (xviii. 366-79)

It is significant that Odysseus links agricultural labor with martial valor. Clearly a good worker will be a good fighter and vice versa.[54] This opinion is confirmed by the success in battle of the hardworking Eumaeus and Philoetius against the lazy Melanthius and the suitors.

Like Odysseus, Laertes is portrayed as a farmer. Laertes is a central character in the Odyssey, for, although we do not see him until the last book, he is constantly in the mind of Odysseus, Telemachus, and Penelope. Like his son, Laertes was a hero, and probably a king of Ithaca, before he turned the rule over to his son.[55] But the most vivid image of Laertes is that of a simple gardener. As early as book one we learn that Laertes has completely

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[54]The versatility of the Odyssean hero is seen in a similar passage (viii. 166ff), when Odysseus defends his ability in sports, when challenged by a young Phaeacian nobleman.

[55]Scholars have long pondered why Laertes is not king of Ithaca. Although some have suggested that Laertes is too old, the example of Nestor would seem to contradict such an explanation. In the absence of any better hypothesis, we can only assume the artistic necessity of making Odysseus himself the king. See George Calhoun, "Polity and Society," in Wace and Stubbings (1962), p. 436; Bowra (1972), p. 173.

abandoned the city and remains at his vineyards working diligently:

> ...Laertes...no longer comes to the city
> now, but away by himself on his own land leads a hard life
> with an old woman to look after him, who serves him his victuals
> and drink, at the times when the weariness has befallen his body
> from making his toilsome way on the high ground of his vineyard. (i. 189-93)

Since we are informed that Laertes "no longer comes to the city," it would appear that the country farm had long been his real home. This supposition seems to be confirmed when Odysseus visits the farm, where he had been given fruit trees by his father (xxiv. 336-44). In the passage from book one the description of Laertes is one of a sad, but not necessarily hopeless, man who is devoting himself to his work in order to ease his troubles. By the time we hear Anticleia's description of her husband in book eleven, Laertes has degenerated to the point that he sleeps in the ashes of the fire with the slaves, or even outside in a pile of leaves (xi 190-96).[54] But it is not until Telemachus leaves on his dangerous voyage that Laertes loses all hope; he now refuses to eat or drink (xvi. 138-45).

The most vivid portrait of Laertes' bitter existence is

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[54]One will remember that Odysseus too sleeps in a pile of leaves when he washes ashore on Phaeacia (v. 476ff).

in book 24, where Homer juxtaposes so effectively the old man's immaculate care for the land, with his complete lack of care for himself.[57] Just as Odysseus had found his kingdom in confusion upon his return to Ithaca, so too he finds his father in a terrible state (227-30). He addresses the old man and comments on the contrast between his unkempt body and the well-tended garden:

> Old sir, there is in you no lack of expertness in tending
> your orchard; everything is well cared for, and there is never
> a plant, neither fig tree nor yet grapevine nor olive
> nor pear tree nor leek bed uncared for in your garden.
> But I will also tell you this; do not take it as cause for

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[57]In any study of book 24 one must consider the question of the authenticity of the ending. Both Aristarchus and Aristophanes of Byzantium seem to suggest that the last line of the Odyssey is xxiii. 296, although there has been some disagreement over the exact meaning of their statements. In recent years the most vocal partisan of the attack on the end of the poem has been D.L. Page, who in The Homeric Odyssey (Oxford 1955), pp. 101-36, musters an impressive array of objections to the section's authenticity. Reinhold Merkelbach, Untersuchungen zur "Odyssee" (Munich 1951), pp. 142-55, and Kirk (1962), pp. 204-08, 244-52, express similar reservations. In response there have been several persuasive essays arguing for the authenticity of the ending. See Harmut Erbse, Beiträge zum Verständnis der "Odyssee" (Berlin 1972), pp. 166-244, who devotes a great deal of attention to rebutting alleged linguistic objections to the passage. See also W.B. Stanford, "The Ending of the Odyssey: An Ethical Approach," Hermathena 100 (1965) 5-20; Carroll Moulton, "The End of the Odyssey," GRBS 15 (1974) 153-69; Dorothea Wender, The Last Scenes of the "Odyssey" (Leiden 1978). The most persuasive argument of those who accept the scene is that the audience would have anticipated both a reunion between Odysseus and the father that he so often mentions and an attempt by the families of the suitors to gain revenge on Odysseus.

> anger. You yourself are ill cared for; together with dismal
> old age, which is yours, you are squalid and wear foul clothing upon you. (244-50)

This jarring juxtaposition between the cultivation of the garden and the lack of cultivation of the body is so great that Kirk has seen it as evidence of the spurious nature of the ending of the Odyssey.[58] But the state we find Laertes in is quite what we should expect. The old hero has become much like the servant Eumaeus, although unlike the swineherd he has lost all hope. Both seek to give meaning to their shattered worlds by devoting themselves to the productive, if demanding, rewards of agriculture. It is as if Laertes were vicariously keeping his son alive by tending to the trees that the young Odysseus had been so fond of. Both he and Odysseus had, in better days, spent many happy hours working around the farm.

It is Laertes and Odysseus, incomparable heroes yet also workers in the soil, that give legitimacy to the concept of the farmer's arete that we see in Eumaeus and Philoetius. Whereas in the Iliad the farmers we saw in the Shield and the similes were anonymous, we find that in the Odyssey Homer grants heroic status to simple, but courageous servants. By showing that farmers can be heroes and heroes

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[58]See Kirk (1962), p. 50. For an opposing view see Wender (1978), pp. 52-53.

can be farmers, Homer serves to bridge the epic distance with great success. Homer does not intend to lessen the dignity of the heroic world, but rather to grant a new dignity to the common man--to show him that his work too is worthy of a hero. It is in emphasizing the importance of labor that Homer anticipates Hesiod.[59] But Homer is unlike Hesiod in bestowing upon that labor a dignity and productiveness that the pessimism of the Boeotian poet would not allow. It is, of course, in the nature of epic that the hero become victorious and glorified, yet Homer is able to bestow upon his audience of non-heroes a measure of that same victory and glory, which they can attain through their own daily existence.

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[59]Here, of course, I am following the traditional view that Homer composed his poems before Hesiod. For arguments that Hesiod was the earlier poet, see M.L. West, ed., Hesiod: Theogony (Oxford 1966), pp. 40-48.

CHAPTER FIVE
VIRGIL'S PRAISE OF THE FARMER IN THE GEORGICS

While Homer's praise of the farmer in the heroic poetry of the Iliad seems to have been the poet's response to changing times and a changing audience, Virgil's decision to glorify the agricultural life through the Georgics followed a long-standing tradition. Authors including Cato, Varro, and Horace frequently reminded their readers of the virtues of the traditional Roman farmer. Although these authors never seemed so enamored of the merits of the rustic life that they themselves took up the plough, the praise of the agricultural life was a frequent topos of Roman literature.[1] What was unique about Virgil's praise of the farming life was how he altered the didactic tradition to glorify the farmer and his way of life in heroic terms.

Didactic was one of the few paths left open to the Roman poet who wanted to say something serious in a

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[1]On the Roman attitude towards the agrarian life before and during the time of Virgil, see Gary B. Miles, Virgil's "Georgics": A New Interpretation (Berkeley 1980), pp. 1-63. The Romans were ambivalent about the rustic life. Although writers and especially politicians praised the pristine Roman farmer, one finds as early as Plautus that country folk were already beginning to be seen as bumpkins by their counterparts in the city.

substantial work. Both Homeric poetry and the historical epic of Rome were in sharp conflict with the Hellenistic tradition.[2] Virgil's famous imitation of Callimachus' recusatio to write epic poetry clearly shows that the Roman poet understood the difficulties in writing epic poetry in his own age.[3] The only genre that was both conducive to the extended treatment of a subject and in accord with the Callimachean ideal was didactic poetry in the Hesiodic tradition. This tradition was followed, but also greatly changed, by poets like Nicander in his Georgica and Alexipharmica and Aratus in his Phaenomena. Although these poems were ostensibly didactic, their true purpose was not to teach, but to give pleasure and demonstrate poetic skill.[4] Thus the Hellenistic poets were unlike Hesiod who, especially in the Works and Days, wished to teach his readers about farming and more importantly about ethics, and chose epic verse as the only means of giving a permanence to what he said. Although Hesiod clearly understands his poetry as art, he does not intend to produce art only for

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[2]On the attitude of the Romans toward the various aspects of the epic tradition, see Brooks Otis, Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry (Oxford 1964), pp. 1-40.

[3]Eclogue 6.1-12 borrows from Callimachus Aitia 1.3-5 (Pfeiffer). See Otis (1964), pp. 33-35.

[4]For a recent examination of the poetry of Nicander and Aratus, see A.W. Bulloch, in P.E. Easterling and B.M.W. Knox, eds., The Cambridge History of Classical Literature. I: Greek Literature (Cambridge 1985), pp. 598-604.

the sake of art, as one finds in Hellenistic didactic.[3]

Virgil, like Hesiod, seems to have had a two-fold interest in producing art and in teaching; and it is not easy to determine which goal was foremost in the Roman poet's mind. To Wilkinson and others, the main purpose of the Georgics was to provide pleasure to the reader through the beauty of poetry:

> Seneca said no more than the obvious when he remarked that Virgil was interested in what could be said decentissime, not verissime, and that he wrote not to teach farmers, but to delight readers. The Georgics is, in fact, a crucial example of Coleridge's famous definition of a poem as 'that species of composition which is opposed to works of science by proposing for its immediate object pleasure, not truth....'[4]

But Wilkinson also notes that Virgil's beautiful poetry betrays a serious and even urgent message which is completely atypical of Hellenistic didactic. In his sincere desire to teach, Virgil returns both to the original model of Hesiod and the more recent model of Lucretius. Otis rightly says that Virgil "has something to say and

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[3]Hesiod's invocation to the Muses in Theogony 1-115, shows clearly enough Hesiod's desire to produce art.

[4]L.P. Wilkinson, The "Georgics" of Virgil: A Critical Survey (Cambridge 1969), p. 15. Wilkinson refers to Seneca Ep. 86.15, Coleridge, Biographica Litteraria, ch. 14. See also Wilkinson, in E.J. Kenney and W.V. Clausen, eds., The Cambridge History of Classical Literature, II: Latin Literature (Cambridge 1982), p. 322. For a similar view on Virgil's poetic purpose, see T.E. Page, ed., Bucolica et Georgica (London 1898), pp. xxi-xxii.

summons the seriousness of Hesiod and Lucretius in order to say it."[7] Likewise Klingner speaks of "der hohe Ernst, die innere Notwendigkeit" of Virgil's poetic purpose.[8] The truth of these views is apparent when one encounters the many passages in the Georgics where Virgil speaks with an intensity that must be attributed to the passion he possessed for the messages contained in his poem. Virgil is quite as sincere as Lucretius in his desire to enlighten a world that is beset with many evils:

> quippe ubi fas uersum atque nefas: tot bella per orbem,
> tam multae scelerum facies, non ullus aratro
> dignus honos, squalent abductis arua colonis,
> et curuae rigidum falces conflantur in ensem.
> hinc mouet Euphrates, illinc Germania bellum;
> uicinae ruptis inter se legibus urbes
> arma ferunt; saeuit toto Mars impius orbe,
> ut cum carceribus sese effudere quadrigae,
> addunt in spatia, et frustra retinacula tendens
> fertur equis auriga neque audit currus habenas.
>
> For here are right and wrong inverted; so many wars overrun the world, so many are the shapes of sin; the plough meets not its honour due; our lands, robbed of the tillers, lie waste, and the crooked pruning-hooks are forged in stiff swords. Here Euphrates, there Germany, awakens war; neighbor cities break the leagues that bound them and draw the sword; throughout the world rages the god of unholy strife: even as when from the barriers the chariots stream forth, round after round they speed, and the driver, tugging vainly at the reins, is borne along, and the car heeds

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[7]Otis (1964), p. 146. See also Wilkinson (1969), pp. 14 and 49-54.

[8]Friedrich Klingner, Virgil: Bucolica, Georgica, Aeneis (Zurich 1967), p. 183.

not the curb! (G. 1. 505-14)

Virgil is determined to say something in the Georgics that he regards as fundamentally important for a world that is speeding to destruction like a runaway chariot.

Virgil's didactic intensity in the Georgics is good evidence that the poet was not concerned solely with teaching the mechanics of agriculture. Although recent studies have shown that the practical advice that Virgil gives the farmer is usually accurate and useful, few modern scholars have claimed that Virgil's primary purpose was to teach farmers or would-be farmers how to till the soil.[9] The most persuasive argument against a view that Virgil wrote the Georgics mostly out of an intention to provide an instructional manual is that works better suited to that purpose already existed, such as Cato's De Re Rustica and Varro's Res Rusticae. Although neither the manual of Cato nor that of Varro provides complete and accurate guides for the small farmer, they are both demonstrably superior to the

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[9]Among those who have shown that Virgil's instructions are generally based on an accurate understanding of agriculture are Page (1898), p. xxxvii; John Conington and Henry Nettleship, eds., The Works of Virgil, I: Eclogues and Georgics (London 1898), p. 150; A. German, "On Georgics I," CJ 65 (1970) 263-66. Of course these and other scholars have shown Virgil's advice to be wrong in some instances.

Georgics in terms of practical agricultural advice.[10] When compared with Cato and Varro, Virgil not only neglects important details but also whole topics that his predecessors cover. Furthermore, Virgil also includes a wealth of material that seems intended more to entertain the literati than to teach an audience of farmers.[11]

An alternative to the idea that Virgil was trying to teach agriculture is the possibility that he was trying to promote it. It is well known that the small farmer in Italy was becoming rarer and rarer during Virgil's time.[12] It is possible that Virgil was trying to encourage these farmers and perhaps to convince soldiers released from the armies of civil wars to join the more peaceful ranks of agricultural workers.[13] Virgil may have assumed that with the coming of long-awaited peace soldiers might take up the

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[10]Nicholas Horsfall, in Kenney and Clausen (1982), p. 288, points to some of the weaknesses from a practical standpoint in Varro's manual. Like Varro's work, Cato's De Re Rustica is clearly directed to the large scale farmer rather than the small landholder. But on the practical superiority of both these works to the Georgics, see Jasper Griffin, Virgil (Oxford 1986), pp. 38-41.

[11]See Gretchen Kromer, "The Didactic Tradition in Vergil's Georgics," Ramus 8 (1979) 9; W.E. Heitland, Agricola (Cambridge 1920), pp. 222-23.

[12]For the generally bleak situation of the Italian small farmer during the first century B.C., see Heitland (1920), pp. 174-84, 203-05, and passim.

[13]This theory is supported by Heitland (1920), p. 226; W.Y. Sellar, The Roman Poets of the Augustan Age, Virgil[3] (Oxford 1908), pp. 177 and 185.

plough instead of the sword after receiving small farmsteads in exchange for their support of Octavian. In retrospect such an intention on the part of Virgil would seem to be a lost cause. But during the poet's own time prospects for the state of farmsteading might not have seemed so dismal. In Virgil's younger years he had grown up in an area where small farms were more numerous than anywhere else in Italy.[14] Moreover, the young Virgil would probably have heard from this father, and perhaps grandfather, of the days when Italy was closer to the rustic ideal espoused in the Georgics. It is not unlikely that the poet who longed for a return to the Golden Age in his Fourth Eclogue would have entertained the possibility that Rome could once again be composed of a virtuous, old-fashioned rustic stock.

But even more important than encouraging soldiers and other men to take up the agricultural life was probably Virgil's hope to encourage the upper class of Rome to support Octavian's policy of promoting small-scale agriculture. Virgil would have realized that Octavian's plans could only be effective with the approval of Roman aristocrats. As Heitland points out, while Virgil would not have been gullible enough to think he could persuade the rich to sell their estates and stand behind a plough, these

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[14]See Wilkinson, in Kenney and Clausen (1982), p. 320.

men might be convinced to support a program whereby unemployed soldiers and others could return to the farm.[15] It seems that Virgil would have had both purposes in mind: to encourage the poorer class to farm, and to promote an agricultural policy among the upper class. Such a dual purpose would perhaps account for the apparent dual nature of the audience of the Georgics. Although the work is addressed to ignaros agrestes (1.41) and does have a very special appeal for those who work and love the land, it is also a highly complex work of art that could only have been appreciated fully by a well-educated person.

It is difficult, given our knowledge of the status of agriculture in Virgil's time and more importantly our knowledge of the poet's mind, to be sure that Virgil had these political and social purposes in mind when he wrote the Georgics. But many scholars have suggested that if these purposes did exist they most have been only secondary concerns. The Georgics was clearly not written in order to support a political agenda of agricultural reform. As much as Virgil seems to have loved the agricultural life per se, he has more in mind in writing the Georgics than

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[15]See Heitland (1920), pp. 224-26. See similarly, Jacques Perret, "The Georgics," (trans. from the French by M. Brooks) in Steele Commager, ed., Virgil: A Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1966), p. 37. Perret's brief discussion, pp. 35-38, of Virgil's didactic purpose in the Georgics is extremely insightful.

encouraging people to return to the farm. Although he no doubt hoped, and maybe even expected, that the virtuous small farmer would become more common, he cannot possibly have thought that the clock could be turned back three or four centuries to the days of an early, rustic Rome. Virgil's description of agriculture is idealistic and sometimes unrealistic. At a time when nearly all farm owners possessed slaves, he envisions the farmer who works alone, ipse manu, against terrific odds and who eventually succeeds by means of his unrelenting toil. Virgil's aim in the Georgics, it would appear, is more to praise the agricultural way of life than agriculture itself. What this means is that Virgil loved and respected many values, such as hard work, piety, and patriotism, that he associated with the agricultural life. With the demise of agriculture, Virgil saw too the deterioration of moral values. Perret commented that Virgil saw Rome's urbanization as directly linked with her moral degeneration:

> ...dans un monde où ce sont les valeurs urbaines qui jouissent du plus haut prestige, les campagnes se dépeuplent. Il faudrait que fussent restituées--mais évidemment par un poète ou par un sage--les valeurs de responsabilité, de continuité, de participation cosmique, d'activité démiurgique qui sont essentielles à la vie rurale.[14]

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[14]Jacques Perret, Virgile (Paris 1965), p. 84. See also Perret (1966), p. 38.

Thus a poem like the Georgics was an obvious choice for promoting these values. Virgil's intention was to teach the mores that he valued, by using agricultural poetry as a medium. Perhaps he thought that these values were best learned on the farm, where hard work strengthened a man's character. But the lessons of pietas and labor could also be taught through poetry.

If we accept the idea that Virgil's didactic aim was to inspire his countrymen to return to traditional values of hard work, religious piety, and patriotism, we can explain some of the apparent peculiarities found in the Georgics. Why does this ostensible manual of farming neglect many important aspects of agriculture, while treating extraneous subjects like the Civil Wars, the society of bees, and the story of Aristaeus? The answer, as Klingner points out, is that the total of the work is greater than its parts. The subject of the Georgics is not agriculture but the way of life that agriculture implies:

> In den schlichten Dingen und Verrichtungen, die in den vier Büchern unterweisend berührt sind, offenbart sich ein Bild der Welt und des Daseins überhaupt, wie sie sich der religiös gestimmten Weisheit und der Liebe eines erleuchteten Herzens in ihrer Sinnfülle erschließen.[17]

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[17]Klingner (1967), p. 183. For similar views regarding Virgil's breadth of perspective in the Georgics, see Wilkinson (1969), p. 14; Otis (1964), pp. 145-46; Griffin (1986), p. 45; Miles (1980), p. 72.

Since the Georgics is both a poem about life and about agriculture, we can understand why Virgil would address the poem on the one hand to ignaros agrestes and on the other hand to Maecenas and his coterie.

If we are correct in interpreting Virgil's didactic message, we must next examine how Virgil sought to make the virtues he associated with the agricultural life seem most attractive to his audience.

VIRGIL'S GLORIFICATION OF THE FARMER

In order to promote the values of the agricultural life, Virgil chose to portray the farmer in a heroic light in the Georgics. This was a natural idea, since, as we saw in chapter two, heroic poetry was usually considered a teacher and promoter of values. Virgil's decision to add a heroic element to didactic poetry was also, no doubt, inspired by Lucretius. To Lucretius, Epicureanism presented not only a superior philosophy, but a victory over the evils and fears that plagued the mind of mankind. Compare Lucretius' praise of the Epicurean with Virgil's praise of the farmer:

> sed nil dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere
> edita doctrina sapientum templa serena,
> despicere unde queas alios passimque uidere
> errare atque uiam palantis quaerere uitae
> certare ingenio, contendere nobilitate,
> noctes atque dies niti praestante labore

ad summas emergere opes rerumque potiri.

But nothing is sweeter than to dwell in peace
high in the well-walled temples of the wise,
whence looking down we may see other men
wavering, wandering, seeking a way of life,
with wit against wit, line against noble line,
contending, striving, straining night and day,
to rise to the top of the heap, High Lord of Things.
(DRN 2. 7-13)[18]

fortunatus et ille deos qui nouit agrestis
Panaque Siluanumque senem Nymphasque sorores.
illum non populi fasces, non purpura regum
flexit et infidos agitans discordia fratres,
aut coniurato descendens Dacus ab Histro,
non res Romanae perituraque regna.

Happy too is he who knows the woodland gods, Pan and
old Silvanus and the sister Nymphs! Him no
honours the people give can move, no purple of
kings, no strife rousing brother to break with
brother, no Dacian swooping down from the leagued
Danube, no power of Rome, no kingdoms doomed to
fall. (G. 2. 493-98)

To both Virgil and Lucretius man can emerge victorious over the evils that he inflicts upon himself. To Lucretius the answer lies in learning that there is no necessity for man to fear, to Virgil the answer seems to lie in learning that the world requires and rewards persistent labor.

Virgil's first set of instructions to the farmer portrays agriculture as a science through which man can achieve certain predictable results by following a specified plan. "That field only answers the covetous farmer's prayer, which twice has felt the sun and twice the frost;

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[18]Compare also Lucretius' heroic praise of Epicurus in DRN 1. 62-77.

from it boundless harvests burst the granaries" (1. 47-49). But Virgil, like any farmer, knows that one can follow the proper procedures and lose all his labor through an unanticipated disaster, like a flock of devouring geese or cranes:

> Nec tamen, haec cum sint hominumque boumque labores
> uersando terram experti, nihil improbus anser
> Strymoniaeque grues et amaris intiba fibris
> officiunt aut umbra nocet.
>
> Nor yet, though toiling men and oxen have thus wrought in oft turning the land, does the rascally goose do no mischief, or the Strymonian cranes, or the bitter-fibred succory, nor is the shade of trees harmless. (1. 118-21)

What do these unanticipated and undeserved evils suggest regarding the human condition? Lucretius used a similar passage to suggest that the world was a bitter place, too imperfect to be the result of divine intention:

> et tamen interdum magno quaesita labore
> cum iam per terras frondent atque omnia florent,
> aut nimiis torret fervoribus aetherius sol
> aut subiti perimunt imbres gelidaeque pruinae,
> flabraque uentorum uiolento turbine uexant.
>
> And sometimes, even when we've toiled and strained
> and the world is all in leaf and full of flowers,
> the sun in heaven burns it with fires too high,
> or sudden rains destroy it, or icy frosts,
> or winds with a whistle and wail whirl all away.
> (DRN 5. 213-17)

To the same question concerning the origin of physical evils Hesiod gave the answer that man's problems were due to

divine anger at his transgressions. But Virgil's answer is quite a different one. As Klingner suggests, the Lucretian echo in Virgil's passage appears to be leading to a Lucretian conclusion that the gods have not ordered the world. Instead, Virgil changes course and "nicht Unheil, sondern ein verborgenes Heil findet, die geheimnisvolle Gnade,... das tröstliche Geheimnis der labores."[17] Physical evils are not the result of divine punishment, or even divine indifference; rather they are the paradoxical result of a divine benevolence. Virgil explains

> ...pater ipse colendi
> haud facilem esse uiam uoluit, primusque per artem
> mouit agros, curis acuens mortalia corda,
> nec torpere gravi passus sua regna ueterno.
>
> The great Father himself has willed that the path of husbandry should not be smooth, and he first made art awake the fields, sharpening men's wits by care, nor letting his realm slumber in heavy lethargy.
> (1. 121-24)

Virgil apparently sees problems inherent in the Golden Age, which he praised in the Fourth Eclogue. He knows that vice would be the by-product of the lethargy produced by the Golden Age. The type of the Golden Age man is Orpheus, the poet of a beautiful, but all too shallow and infertile art.

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[17]Klingner (1967), p. 199. Klingner, pp. 198-205, compares the theodicies of Hesiod, Lucretius, and Virgil. See also Wilkinson (1969), pp. 134-36; John Scott Campbell, "The Ambiguity of Progress: Georgics 1. 118-159," Latomus 41 (1982) 566-76.

As Stehle points out, Orpheus' song is produced through instinct, not labor.[80] Orpheus is weak because his success is based on no strength of character. So also a bounty too freely given by nature would make man soft and dull-witted.[81]

In Virgil's theodicy we see that the pater ipse, the Stoic term for the benevolent planner of the universe, made things hard for man so that he could achieve his greatest potential. Were it not for the challenge, there could be no victory. Virgil further stresses the heroic nature of man's challenge by the epic language and meter he uses in the passage.[82] Jupiter does not, like the Hesiodic Zeus, withhold fire from man so that the world will be cold and dark, but rather so that man can find the secret of fire himself through imagination and industry. Man, in effect, becomes his own Prometheus, but in this case with divine

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[80]See Eva M. Stehle, "Virgil's Georgics: The Threat of Sloth," TAPA 104 (1974) 368. One can imagine that Virgil, the poet who spent ten years on the Aeneid would have been acutely aware of the necessity of labor in producing poetry.

[81]For the view that Virgil conceived of the possibility of a new Golden Age characterized by productive labor, see P.A. Johnson, Vergil's Agricultural Golden Age: A Study of the "Georgics," Mnemosyne Suppl. 60 (Leiden 1980); J.J.L. Smolenaars, "Labour in the Golden Age: A Unifying Theme in Vergil's Poems," Mnemosyne 40 (1987) 391-405.

[82]See Karl Büchner, "Der Eingang der Georgica," in Henry Bardon and Raoul Verdière, eds., Vergiliana (Leiden 1971), p. 85. Büchner cites particularly the phrases curis acuere and in mortalia corda, and the alliteration in lines 122-23. Note also the litotes, haud facilem.

approval. Man can do much towards creating a new Golden Age, but it is up to him to produce artes and use them properly.

To demonstrate the wisdom of Jupiter's plan, Virgil continues with the victories of man's effort. The excitement builds with Virgil's repetition of the word tum:

> tum laqueis captare feras et fallere uisco
> inuentum et magnos canibus circumdare saltus;
> atque alius latum funda iam uerberat amnem
> alta petens, pelagoque alius trahit umida lina.
> tum ferri rigor atque argutae lammina serrae
> (nam primi cuneis scindebant fissile lignum),
> tum uariae uenere artes.
>
> Then men found how to snare game in toils, to cheat with bird-lime, and to circle great glades with hounds. And now one lashes a broad stream with casting-net, seeking the depths, and another through the sea trails his dripping drag-net. Then came iron's stiffness and the shrill saw-blade--for early man cleft the splitting wood with wedges; then came divers arts. (1. 139-45)

Virgil's encomium of man's ingenuity rises to a crescendo: labor omnia vicit. But the labor, we find in the next line, is improbus; thus the elation comes to an abrupt halt.

Improbus at the beginning of line 146 is quite jarring. The word invariably calls up negative connotations when it is first sighted. During the last century scholars have been divided over whether or not to interpret improbus as a criticism of labor. Henry claimed that "improbus is always

a term of reprobation, always means simply wicked."[83] So also Altevogt claimed that improbus never has a good sense, and so suggests a negative view of labor, which becomes a term for man's sorrows and problems that result from his agression against nature.[84] To Altevogt, lines 145-46 suggest that man's destiny is ill-fated, that hardship has conquered the potential for joy in life.

A more moderate interpretation of this passage has been made by Otis, who sees labor improbus as suggesting the harsh side of man's struggle to survive:

> It does not seem to me that improbus here can be wholly divested of its harsh and bitter connotations. Work and poverty are extremely unpleasant: Virgil does not deny it....There is, in any event, a fatal shadow on the whole picture: man's 'civilization' has a curse on it.[85]

While the difficulty of man's life is emphasized here, there is also the potential of heroic victory, which can be won by conquering the enemies found in nature and even in oneself. The victory, Otis claims, is shown especially in book two,

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[83]See James Henry, Aeneidea, II (New York 1972, reprint of Dublin 1873-92 ed.), p. 175

[84]Heinrich Altevogt, Labor Improbus: Eine Vergilstudie, Orbis Antiquus 8 (Munich 1952), passim, esp. pp. 6-9. On the view that Virgil is emphasizing the brutality of man's civilization in these lines, see also Miles (1980), pp. 84-87; M.C.J. Putnam, Virgil's Poem of the Earth: Studies in the "Georgics" (Princeton 1979), pp. 34-35.

[85]Otis (1964), p. 157 and n. 1.

where we see nature cooperating with the virtuous farmer.[86]

Within the entire context of the passage Otis' moderation is surely preferable to the pessimistic view of Altevogt and others who focus too much upon the word improbus. Granted the effect of improbus is immensely powerful, but it cannot contradict the passage surrounding it. Lines 121-45 list a grand roll call of man's achievements resulting from the wise and benevolent plan of the pater ipse. Virgil expresses no disapproval of these artes as being "brutal." When interpreting labor improbus within the context of Virgil's theodicy one must agree with the excellent analysis of Büchner:

> ...nach dem stolzen tum variae venere artes muß die Aussage labor omnia vicit improbus letztlich positiv sein. Wenn man, wie es Altevogt versucht hat, verstehen wollte, der Dämon Plage hat von allem Besitz ergriffen, so fragt sich erstens, ob das mit vicit ausgedrückt werden kann, zweitens würde eine solche Aussage zu abrupt nach dem Anfang des Verses kommen, vor allem würde nicht berücksichtigt, daß es um der Sinn der Mühen geht. Es soll nicht gesagt werden, noch einmal, daß unter Juppiter alles mühevoll geworden ist, sondern daß sein Wille die Kultur hervorgebracht hat, daß der Mensch der Schwierigkeiten Herr wird. Das heißt vicit. Es klingt hart, ist aber zu unterstreichen.[87]

If we are to look for another explanation of improbus

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[86]See Otis (1964), pp. 162 and 169.

[87]Büchner (1971), pp. 77-78. Similarly, see Perret (1965), pp. 79-80.

which is in keeping with the context of the passage, the key may be found in the *improbus anser* (119). Surely the placing of *improbus* in lines 119 and 145 is no mistake. It is very likely that the meaning of *improbus* in the former passage will illuminate the latter. What does *improbus* say about the *anser*? Obviously the *anser* is not really evil in a moral sense. He is, after all, only serving in his divinely appointed role as spur to the labor of mankind. *Improbus* here is not morally evil but simply aggravating, annoying, vexing. The *improbus anser* is a problem for man to overcome. So also *labor improbus* represents no mysterious aspect of the human condition. It is quite simply work, work that can be frustrating. Wilkinson is right when he says that *improbus* represents what the farmer would say to describe his toils.[88] Likewise, Campbell points to other instances of *improbus* in the works of Virgil (*A.* 12. 687 and *G.* 1. 388) that carry only a suggestion of enormity or excessiveness, without any moral connotations.[89] This is also the interpretation we find in the commentary of Servius, who suggested "*indefessus, adsiduus, sine moderatione*" as meanings for *improbus*.

We see then in *improbus* that labor is difficult and taxing, sometimes to the point that it seems a virtual

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[88]See Wilkinson (1969), p. 141.

[89]Campbell (1982), p. 573.

curse to the worker. But in the end work, bitterly difficult work, prevails. For the benefit of man, Jupiter has initiated a heroic struggle that is difficult, but not impossible, as human history has shown. It takes all of man's character to defeat the enemies found in nature and in his own lethargy. But the greater the struggle the greater the glory.

The difficulty of this divinely initiated struggle is emphasized throughout the Georgics by recurring references to the continual need for hard labor. These reminders are especially common in the first two books, since they deal with tilling the soil rather than animal husbandry, a slightly less demanding occupation. The necessity for hard labor is the first note struck following the invocation in book one:

> Vere nouo, gelidus canis cum montibus umor
> liquitur et Zephyro putris se glaeba resoluit,
> depresso incipiat iam tum mihi taurus aratro
> ingemere et sulcro attritus splendescere uomer.
>
> In the dawning spring, when icy streams trickle
> from snowy mountains, and the crumbling clod
> breaks at the Zephyr's touch, even then would I
> have my bull groan over the deep-driven plough,
> and the share glisten when rubbed by the furrow.
> (43-46)

Even in seemingly unimportant matters like choosing seed, one must be assiduous in attention to details, since all things in nature have a tendency to regress, like a raft

being rowed against the current of a stream (1. 197-203). Trees and vines also, which might be thought to require little work, must be given careful attention. "On all [vines], be sure, must labour be spent; all must be marshalled into trenches, and tamed with much trouble" (2. 61-62). To grow vines "thrice or four times each year must all your soil be split open, and the clods broken unceasingly with hoe reversed, and all the grove lightened of its foliage" (2. 399-401). The farmer's work is continuous and hard. Even on holidays and in winter he must work, although these are periods of relative ease (1. 259-75). The amount of the farmer's toil is so great that Virgil advises the reader to be content with a small estate, even if he wishes to admire a large one (2. 412-13).[30]

Throughout the Georgics Virgil uses military imagery and vocabulary to impress upon his readers the heroic temper required to win the battle of labor. We find especially in the early sections of book one that Virgil describes the farmer's tasks in martial terms. The successful farmer must work over his fields like a general (exercetque frequens tellurem atque imperat arvis" 1. 99).[31] After sowing the

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[30]According to Servius, Cato quoted this adage to his son. Compare also Hesiod, Erga 643.

[31]Wilkinson (1969), p. 78, translates "keeps at his post exercising the earth, and commands his fields." See also his comments pp. 78ff. Conington also discusses the military language of this line and compares the use of

seed he must attack the field in virtual hand-to-hand combat (comminus arva/insequitur, 104-05). In line 160 Virgil carries the metaphor still further by calling tools the "hardy rustics' weapons" (duris agrestibus arma).[32] It is not simply against the plants and soil that the farmer must do battle. There are enemies like the improbus anser and the army of ravens (e pastu decedens agmine magno/ corvorum increpuit densis exercitus alis, 1. 381-82). Even the winds will do battle with the farmer:

> saepe ego, cum flauis messorem induceret aruis
> agricola et fragili iam stringeret hordea culmo,
> omnia uentorum concurrere proelia uidi,
> quae grauidum late segetem ab radicibus imis
> sublimem expulsam eruerent: ita turbine nigro
> ferret hiems culmumque levem stipulasque uolantis.
> saepe etiam immensum caelo uenit agmen aquarum
> et foedam glomerant tempestatem imbribus atris
> collectae ex alto nubes....
>
> Often, as the farmer was bringing the reaper into his yellow fields and was now stripping the brittle-stalked barley, my own eyes have seen all the winds clash in battle, tearing up the heavy crop far and wide from its deepest roots and tossing it on high; then with its black whirlwind the storm would sweep off the light stalk and the flying stubble. Often, too, there appears in the sky a mighty column of waters, and clouds mustered from on high roll up a murky tempest of black

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subigere in 2. 50. See also his comments on the following lines of Book 1: 104, 125, 155, and 160.

[32]Wilkinson (1969), p. 80, notes Virgil's bold metaphor: "tools were hopla to Greeks, but first here arma to Romans."

showers.... (1. 316-24)[33]

Virgil also uses military imagery for less obvious struggles that the farmer engages in. The vintner must attack (persequitur) the vine with the pruning knife, called with epic dignity "Saturn's crooked knife" (curuo Saturni dente, 2. 406). There are, regrettably, also times when the farmer must literally attack his own animals; when disease has appeared in the flock or herd there is no room for squeamishness (3. 468-69).

The effect of Virgil's martial imagery in describing the "battles" of the farmer is to make them appear not only difficult but heroic. Virgil's martial vocabulary in the Georgics points us toward a broader understanding of the farmer's virtues. As Miles notes:

> Virgil dramatized the difficulty of the farmer's existence and at the same time glorified it...by suggesting that his struggle for survival is like that of the heroic warrior of epic....The farmer was a warrior who attacked his fields in hand-to-hand combat or commanded them with martial discipline. In using those metaphors Virgil was recalling the Roman tradition according to which her military excellence rested on the virtues of the hardy Italian peasantry.[34]

The farmer is like the heroic warrior of Rome's past in his

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[33]On this passage see Conington (1898), loc. cit., pp. 204-05.

[34]Miles (1980), p. 108-09.

persistent determination to defend his way of life against any enemy, including nature, himself, or a foreigner.

The valiant struggle is only one aspect of heroism. The hero must be a victor. As a realist, Virgil places so great an emphasis on the farmer's struggle that his success is occasionally lost sight of. But the promise of success goes hand in hand with the exhortation to labor:

> Toil conquered the world.... (1. 145)
>
> And can men be slow to plant and bestow care? (2. 433)

Virgil is not so idealistic that he believes that every bestowal of hard work will be rewarded. For there is always the example of the farmer who loses his animals to disease despite his best efforts (3. 487ff). But the poet does believe that work will usually, in the end, be rewarded. This is the heroic victory of the farmer.[35]

The perfect example of the victory of hard work over adverse circumstances is the Corycian gardener described at length in book four:

> Corycium uidisse senem, cui pauca relicti
> iugera ruris erant, nec fertilis illa iuuencis
> nec pecori opportuna seges nec commoda Baccho.
> his rarum tamen in dumis olus albaque circum
> lilia verbenasque premens uescumque papauer

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[35]For the view that Virgil possessed an optimistic, but thoroughly realistic attitude of the rewards of labor, see Büchner (1971), p.78; Susan Ford Wiltshire, "Omnibus est Labor: Vergil and the Work of the Classics," CJ 80 (1984) 5.

regum aequabat opes animis, seraque reuertens
nocte domum dapibus mensas onerabat inemptis.
primus uere rosam atque autumno carpere poma,
et cum tristis hiems etiamnum frigore saxa
rumperet et glacie cursus frenaret aquarum,
ille comam mollis iam tondebat hyacinthi
aestatem increpitans seram Zephyrosque morantis.
ergo apibus fetis idem atque examine multo
primus abundare et spumantia cogere pressis
mella favis; illi tiliae atque uberrima tinus,
quotque in flore nouo pomis se fertilis arbos
induerat, totidem autumno matura tenebat.
ille etiam seras in uersum distulit ulmos
eduramque pirum at spinos iam pruna ferenis
iamque ministrantem platanum potantibus umbras.

...I saw an old Corycian, who had a few acres of unclaimed land, and this soil, not rich enough for bullocks' ploughing, unfitted for the flock, and unkindly to the vine. Yet, as he planted herbs here and there among the bushes, with white lilies about, and vervain, and slender poppy, he matched in contentment the wealth of kings, and, returning home in the late evening, would load his board with unbought dainties. He was first to pluck roses in spring and apples in autumn; and when sullen winter was still bursting rocks with the cold, and curbing running waters with ice, he was already culling the soft hyacinth's bloom, chiding laggard summer and the loitering zephyrs. So he, too, was first to be enriched with mother-bees and a plenteous swarm, the first to gather frothing honey from the squeezed comb. Luxuriant were his limes and the wild laurels; and all the fruits his bounteous tree donned in its early bloom, full as many it kept in the ripeness of autumn. He, too, planted out in rows elms far-grown, pear-trees when quite hard, thorns even now bearing plums, and the plane already yielding to drinkers the service of its shade.

(4. 127-46)

Here we see what nature can do for man. The first thing that Virgil notes is that the gardener works under adverse

circumstances; he is old and his land is poor.[36] Yet his table is full with vegetables and honey. The Corycian gardener becomes the ideal of the successful small farmer. But it is important to realize that while Virgil's example may be idealistic, it is not to be taken as unrealistic. Although some scholars have suggested that Virgil portrays the gardener's lot as unattainable,[37] Virgil has taken pains to include reality in his portrait of the gardener. Virgil does not portray the garden as a never-never land, but as a real place that he himself fondly remembers. Of course we cannot necessarily take for granted the factuality of Virgil's "recollection," given the poetic context of the passage. But why would Virgil specifically state that he had seen the gardener if he wanted his reader to view the man as an unreal phenomenon? The gardener is not a Golden Age man who gains a living freely bestowed by nature. He squeezes the honey from his combs (spumantia cogere pressis/ mella fauis, 140-41; it does not drip freely like honey in the Golden Age (cf. 1. 131). He apparently works hard until

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[36]Servius claimed that the gardener, being a Corycian, was to be imagined as one of the former pirates settled by Pompey in Calabria. Therefore, he would have had the further disadvantage of not being familiar with farm work when he acquired his land.

[37]See Eleanor Winsor Leach, "Sedes Apibus: From the Georgics to the Aeneid," Vergilius 23 (1977) 2-16; Christine Godfrey Perkell, "On the Corycian Gardener of Vergil's Fourth Georgic," TAPA 111 (1981) 167-77.

late into the night (seraque reuertens/nocte domum, 132-33). We sense a kindred spirit with the iratus arator, who levelled idle forests to claim land for the plough (2. 207-10). Similarly, our gardener has reclaimed bad land. He even appears somewhat iratus when he chides (increpitans, 138) the winter for lingering too long.

The Corycian gardener receives the material rewards due his labor. But he does not simply represent a material victory over a difficult plot of land; his way of life also represents a victory of the spirit (Regum aequabat opes animis, 132). He has an interest in beauty as well as utility. Part of his joy is in his self-satisfaction and in the quiet moments of rest under the plane trees (146). The Corycian represents the Epicurean ideal of ataraxia that Virgil seems to associate with the agricultural life.[30]

For all farmers there are physical pleasures that are part of his daily and yearly cycle. At night there is relief from the more difficult labors of the day, although there are chores too for after sundown:

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[30]On the Corycian gardener as a philosophical, especially Epicurean, model, see: Erich Burck, "Der korykische Greis in Vergils Georgica (IV 116-48)," in Navicula Chiloniensis: Festschrift für F. Jacoby (Leiden 1956), pp. 156-72; Klingner (1967), pp. 308-10; Christine Godfrey Perkell (1981), pp. 167-77. Perkell, p. 168, goes perhaps too far in saying that "Vergil represents the gardener as pursuing not so much beauty and utility as beauty and uselessness, not so much the simple life as the aesthetic life."

> et quidam seros hiberni ad luminis ignis
> peruigilat ferroque faces inspicat acuto.
> interea longum cantu solata laborem
> arguto coniunx percurrit pectine telas,
> aut dulcis musti Volcano decoquit umorem
> et foliis undam trepedi despumat aëni.
>
> One I know spends wakeful hours by the late blaze of a winter-fire, and with sharp knife points torches; his wife the while solaces with song her long toil, runs the shrill shuttle through the web, or on the fire boils down the sweet juice of must, and skims with leaves the wave of the bubbling cauldron. (1. 291-96)

Winter provides a time when men can enjoy dining, parties, religious festivals and rest (1. 337-50). It is as if the pater ipse had specifically designed a time for the farmer, like the warrior, to recover from his battles in order that he may engage his foe again with renewed vigor. So Klingner notes:

> Der Winter, der dazu einlädt, heißt deshalb genialis [1. 302]: er läßt den Lebensgeist zu seinem Recht kommen, den genius, den man immer dann befriedigt weiß, wenn das Gefühl der Lebensfülle hochsteigt. Nachdem alle die vielen Sorgen und Mühen des Jahres vergegenwärtigt waren, ist hier eigens ihr Ende, ist die Auflösung der Spannung bezeichnet: curas resolvit.[39]

The winter provides man rest from labors, but most importantly rest from the anxiety of his struggle to earn a living (curas resolvit, 302). The farmer's ability to release his cares makes possible what Miles call the

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[39]Klingner (1967), p. 211.

"contemplative side" of Virgil's view of the farmer.[40] In Virgil's great glorification of the farmer in book two, the emphasis on labor recedes, and the farmer is seen as god-like in his peacefulness of spirit, whether or not he realizes his true state:

> O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint,
> agricolas! quibus ipsa procul discordibus armis
> fundit humo facilem uictum iustissima tellus.
> si non ingentem foribus domus alta superbis
> mane salutantum totis vomit aedibus undam,
> nec uarios inhiant pulchra testudine postis
> inlusasque auro uestis Ephyreiaque aera....
> at secura quies et nescia fallere vita,
> dives opum uariorum....
>
> O happy husbandmen! too happy, should they came
> to know their blessings! for whom, far from the
> clash of arms, most righteous Earth, unbidden,
> pours forth from her soil an easy sustenance.
> What though no stately mansion with proud portals
> disgorges at dawn from all its halls a tide of
> visitors, though they never gaze at doors inlaid
> with lovely tortoise-shell or at raiment tricked
> with gold or at bronzes of Ephyra....Yet theirs is
> repose without care, and a life that knows no
> fraud, but is rich in treasures manifold.
>
> (2. 458-64, 467-68)

The farmer is shown as victorious not over nature alone, but over the petty aspects of life itself. While the farmer is no disciple of Epicureanism, he has fulfilled the ideal of that school.

Virgil, however, is not a partisan, only an appreciator of Epicureanism. His philosophic eclecticism sees value too in the Stoic ideal of the individual as a contributer to

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[40]See Miles (1980), pp. 148-56.

society. The farmer not only possesses the serenity of the Epicurean, he also has the sense of duty found in the Stoic. As Virgil continues his panegyric of the farmer he comes to a description of the youth raised upon the soil: patiens operum exiguoque adsueta iuventus (472). This is not only an agricultural but a military ideal. Virgil sees these stalwart youths as the last vestige that justice left on earth (474). Likewise, later in Virgil's panorama of the joys of rural life we find war-games, like wrestling and javelin throwing, listed side-by-side with a grandfather kissing his grandchildren (523-31). "Such a life the old Sabines once lived, such Remus and his brother" (532-33). Virgil praises the rustic manliness that he finds reminiscent of better days gone by--this time not the mythical days of Saturn but the days of Rome's early history.

There is, of course, a very strong link between Virgil's strong feelings of primitivism in the Georgics and his portrayal of the early history of Rome. Two of the central themes of the Georgics, the importance of hard work and the values of a simple lifestyle, are central to the Aeneid as well. It will be the purpose of the next chapter to examine how Virgil praises the virtues of the agricultural life in the Aeneid.

CHAPTER SIX
WORK AND SIMPLICITY IN THE AENEID

On the surface the Aeneid and the Georgics could hardly be more different. There is the contrast between the heroic and the didactic, the past and the present, the great and the small. Yet just as we observed that the Georgics is not so much about farming as about life in its entirety, so too we can readily see that the Aeneid is more than a poetic recasting of a common heroic legend. The Aeneid is, in a sense, every bit as didactic as the Georgics. Aeneas, while cast as a hero, has many of the faults of an ordinary man. The ethical lessons that he learns throughout the course of the Aeneid are those that Virgil felt ought to be learned by every man. Thus it is no coincidence that we encounter in the Aeneid the same themes that we find in the Georgics. Both poems call for hard work and the values inherent in a simple lifestyle.

WORK IN THE AENEID

The importance of work is one of the central themes of the Aeneid. From its beginning the poem focuses directly upon the difficulty of Aeneas' mission to found Rome. Sellar was indeed correct that "the real key-note to the

poem is not the 'Arma virumque cano' with which it opens, but the 'Tantae molis erat Romanum condere gentem' with which the exordium closes.[1] There is not only a recognition of the toil required to found the Roman state but also a wider question: Why must mankind suffer such difficult trials? "Can heaven hold such ill will" (1.11)? What Klingner called "der ratlos verwunderten Frage"[2] is one of the ultimate concerns of mankind. This same question was posed in the Georgics. In Virgil's Georgic theodicy we saw that seeming evils, like the improbus anser, bad weather, and plagues, were actually part of a benevolent, divine plan designed to make man a clever, active, and virtuous being. In the Aeneid also Virgil tries to explain why troubles harass mankind. Aeneas, and by implication any great man, must face difficult foes, like Juno, Dido, and Turnus, as well as contend with his own inner weaknesses.[3] But all these toils and problems are part of a wonderful plan in

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[1]W.Y. Sellar, The Roman Poets of the Augustan Age: Virgil[2] (Oxford 1908), p. 300. On the theme of labor in the Aeneid, see also Susan Ford Wiltshire "Omnibus Est Labor: Vergil and the Work of the Classics," CJ 80 (1984) 1-7; JoAnn Stachniw, "Labor as a Key to the Aeneid," CB 50 (1973-74) 49-53; J.J.L. Smolenaars, "Labour in the Golden Age: A Unifying Theme in Vergil's Poems," Mnemosyne 40 (1987) 391-405.

[2]Friedrich Klingner, Virgil: Bucolica, Georgica, Aeneis (Zurich 1967), p. 385.

[3]On the idea of Aeneas' heroism as essentially an inner struggle, see Brooks Otis, Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry (Oxford 1964), pp. 219-23.

which Aeneas can participate, if he has the will to do so.

Throughout the first four books of the Aeneid, Aeneas is compelled by his pietas, and sometimes even the direct hand of a god, to take the hard rather than the easy path. When Troy is being destroyed, Aeneas must choose safety over death, although he would prefer the latter alternative. As he tells Dido, he would also rather have stayed at Troy and rebuilt the city than ventured out onto the unknown seas:

> me si fata meis paterentur ducere uitam
> auspiciis et sponte mea componere curas,
> urbem Troianam primum dulcisque meorum
> reliquias colerem, Priami tecta alta manerent,
> et recidiua manu posuissem Pergama uictis.
>
> If fate had let me govern my own life
> and heal my troubles in the way I willed,
> I would be living in Troy with what remained
> of my people; Priam's hall would still be
> standing;
> and we, though beaten, had built our walls anew.
> (4. 340-44)

The narrative of book three recounts Aeneas' thwarted attempts to establish new cities wherever he finds a location that seems suitable at the time. Thrace, Delos, and Crete fail to offer Aeneas a home. He visits the kingdoms of Helenus and Dido, but he must go on. Aeneas' voyage is, indeed, longer than that of Odysseus, when we except the latter's lengthy stay with Calypso. According to tradition, Aeneas journeyed for three years before founding Rome; but Virgil changed the length of the trip to seven

years. Heyne suggested that Virgil purposely lengthened the voyage in order to accentuate the hero's hardships.[4] As Aeneas himself tells Dido, "...if I began with first-beginnings,/ and you were free to hear our tale of toil,/ day would lie locked in heaven before the end!" (1. 372-74).

Aeneas' biggest temptation to choose the easier, but less heroic, path is to stay with Dido in Carthage. Here the walls are already rising (1. 437). There are the wealth and luxury of the East, reminiscent of the splendor of Troy itself. And most importantly, there is the temptation of a powerful and alluring woman to a man who has been without a wife for several years. The seductiveness of the Carthaginian queen would have been all the more emphatic to the Roman reader, who would have identified her with the enchanting Egyptian queen Cleopatra.[5] When Mercury comes to stir Aeneas from his lethargy, he brings a summons of toil: "If nothing of promised glory moves your heart,/ and for your own renown you'll spend no toil,/ what of your son?"

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[4]See Christian Gottlob Heyne P. Virgilii Maronis Opera Omnia, VIII, Aeneid 3, Excursus 2 (London 1819), pp. 4144-52. On the chronology of Aeneas' journey, see Richard Heinze, Virgils epische Technik[3] (Stuttgart 1915), pp. 347-50; R.D. Williams, P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Quintus (Oxford 1960), pp. xxviii-xxx. Servius noted that Virgil's chronology contains a discrepancy. At both 1. 755 and 5. 626 we are told that Aeneas has journeyed for seven years, but the latter passage occurs at least one year after the former.

[5]This suggestion has been made by, e.g., Conington (1884), p. xxx; Jacques Perret, Virgile (Paris 1965), p. 110.

(4. 272-74).

By the sixth book Aeneas has grown in his heroism to the point that he gladly undertakes his greatest labor, the trip to Hades, an insanus labor according to the Sybil (6. 135, see also 129). It is after Aeneas emerges from this ultimate challenge that he reaches his true potential as a hero. Although he yet has the difficulties of the war in Latium to undergo, Aeneas knows now that he is the victor.

Throughout the first six books Aeneas makes frequent reference to his past sufferings as a type of labor (e.g., 1. 330, 373, 460, and 597; 2. 362; 3. 145). Many others describe Aeneas' sufferings by using the word labor: Dido (1. 460), the Penates (3. 160), Venus (8. 380), Drances (11. 126), and, of course, the poet (1. 10). Labor, used to express an individual's ordeals is, in fact, a key word in the Odyssean Aeneid.[4] In the second half of the poem, however, there are important changes in Virgil's use of the word labor. In the last six books we find that Aeneas calls his toils labores on only one occasion. In his oath before the duel with Turnus, Aeneas swears by the land for whose sake he has endured so many ordeals (terra.../ quam propter tantos potui perferre labores, 12. 177). And in this speech Aeneas is not so much complaining as making a claim

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[4]On the use of labor to describe Aeneas' sufferings, see Stachniw (1973-74), pp. 49-53.

to his own heroic pietas. Having overcome the perils of the journey to Italy, having emerged unscathed through the horrors of the nekuia, Aeneas now knows that Fate will not allow him to be defeated. It is no longer fitting for him to complain of past burdens. Even his present pains, the battle with the Latins, are only temporary obstacles, since their conclusion is foregone.

Although Aeneas himself ceases to use the word labor to describe his past ordeals, the malevolent characters of the iliadic Aeneid apply the word to their own effort to foil Aeneas' attempt to settle in Italy. Juno associates labor with her own cause on three occasions (7.331, 421, and 559). Turnus twice refers to his fight against Aeneas as labor(es) (11. 510; 12. 635). Latinus also claims that Turnus' warfare has caused him troubles (labores, 12. 33). In all of these instances Turnus and Juno have voluntarily chosen toil, and they have chosen it for evil purposes. Unlike Aeneas, who struggles to follow a path ordained by Fate, Juno and Turnus fight against Fate. Here we have a labor that means struggling, violence, and civil war. This labor is in sharp contrast to that of Aeneas, which brings peace and joy. Aeneas tells Iulus to learn from him verus labor (12. 425), the labor of working for a just and proper goal. This is the type of labor that Virgil advocated in the Georgics, a man's dedication to his farm, his family, the

gods, and his country.

SIMPLICITY IN THE AENEID

Like work, simplicity is a virtue that is central to both the Georgics and the Aeneid.[7] It was only natural that Virgil should have included in his great epic the value of rustic simplicity that he had promoted so strongly in the Georgics as the reason for Rome's greatness. The importance that Virgil attached to the rustic life is seen most clearly in his portrayal of the Italian contribution to Rome. Conscious that the Roman empire was a product of Italian efforts, Virgil, himself not strictly a Roman but a Mantuan, attributed Rome's love of the simple life not to the Trojans but to the native Italians, whom he portrays as valiant, stern, old-fashioned farmers. In order to give glory to his fellow Italians, Virgil relates that the union of the glorious, heroic, and cultured Trojans with the simple, pious Italians was part of a divine plan, granted by Jupiter at the request of Juno, who wished to preserve the language and customs of the Italians (12. 819-28). Perret recognized that the union of the two races yielded a whole stronger than either of its parts:

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[7]On the importance of the idea of simplicity in the Aeneid, see Klingner (1967), p. 516; W.S. Anderson, "Pastor Aeneas: Pastoral Themes in the Aeneid," TAPA 99 (1968) 1-17; Roger A. Hornsby, "The Pastor in the Poetry of Vergil," CJ 63 (1967-68) 145-52; Jasper Griffin, Virgil (Oxford 1986), pp. 66 and 98-99.

> L'accord, en effet, sur lequel se conclura la paix au XII^e livre (v. 187-194, 819-828), prévoit entre Troyens et Italiens l'établissement d'une unité infiniment plus profonde et, en même temps, plus respectueuse de l'originalité des deux peuples que ce qui avait été envisagé d'abord (VII, 228-233, 249-73) lors du débarquement des Troyens.... L'Italie est guerrière (IV, 229-230; X, 87), dure, indomptable (VIII, 315; IX, 603-613 cf. Ge. II, 472)....Les Troyens opposent leur humanité, leur piété, une intelligence supérieure....[8]

Virgil stresses the Italian contribution of simplicitas by juxtaposing the duritia of the West with the luxuria of the East that is seen throughout the epic. Both Troy and Carthage possess a glorious, awe-inspiring culture and material prosperity. But hand in hand with this bounty there is an implicit softness and idleness that does not measure up to the pristine ideals of Rome. Indeed, the same assessment could be made of Virgil's Rome. Ironically, the wealthiest, most extravagant city on earth had been made possible only by the duritia of simpler times. Thus Virgil's attitude towards wealth in the Aeneid is ambivalent at best. Virgil often allows Carthage, Troy, and even Aeneas himself to become associated with the Eastern luxury that the Romans so often decried.[9] On several occasions

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[8]Perret (1965), pp. 111-12. See similarly, R.D. Williams, "The Function of Virgil's Catalogue in Aeneid 7," CQ N.S. 11 (1961) 146-53; Griffin (1986), p. 99.

[9]See Perret (1965), pp. 108-09; Griffin (1986), p. 99.

there are in the Aeneid allusions to a certain luxuriousness, bordering on unmanliness, that is attributed to our hero and his men. Iarbas (4. 215-17), Numanus (9. 598-620), and Turnus (12. 99-100) all cast aspersions on the virility of Aeneas--although one should bear in mind the character of the accusers themselves. Even the poet, as we shall see when discussing book four, hints that Aeneas has succumbed to the enticements of luxury when he lingers in Carthage.

Virgil's negative attitude towards luxuria is also seen in his description of Troy. Aeneas admires the glorious wealth of Troy; but the great city's prosperity could not save it:

> uidi Hecubam centumque nurus Priamumque per aras
> sanguine foedantem quos ipse sacrauerat ignis.
> quinquaginta illi thalami, spes tanta nepotum,
> barbarico postes auro spoliisque superbi
> procubuere....
>
> I saw Hecuba, her hundred daughters: Priam
> fouling with blood the altar flame he'd blessed.
> His fifty rooms, rich hope of a line of sons--
> pillars of Orient gold, girt proud with spoils--
> all fell.[10] (2. 501-05)

Virgil's intent is clear in the Latin words barbarico auro (504), which Copley translates as "Orient gold." Here Virgil implies an opulence that is not appropriate for the civilized world of Rome.

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[10]See also 2. 501-05 and 763-66; 3. 1-3.

In the Carthaginian episode, Virgil is more open in his attack on luxuria. We first see Carthage portrayed in a very positive light. Like the future Rome, Carthage had grown from nothing, through the diligent efforts of the Tyrians:

> miratur molem Aeneas, magalia quondam,
> miratur portas strepitumque et strata uiarum.
> instant ardentes Tyrii: pars ducere muros
> molirique arcem et manibus subuoluere saxa,
> pars optare locum tecto et concludere sulco....
>
> Aeneas was awed: so vast, where once was campground!
> The wonder of gates, and avenues paved, and crowds!
> Working like mad, those Tyrians; some at walls,
> some toiled at forts, surveying, or hauling stone;
> some marked out homesites and drew boundary lines.
> (1. 421-25)

Later in the book Dido herself stresses the duritia of the kingdom. "Our lot is hard, our kingdom new; for this/ our laws are stern, our whole land under guard" (563-64). At the end of book one, however, there is a hint of the negative view of Carthage that will appear in book four. In his description of Dido's great feast for Aeneas there is a suggestion of excess. Here we see Dido lying on a golden couch and entertaining her Trojan guests, who are themselves seated on purple thrones, with two hundred servants to wait upon them.[11]

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[11]Klingner (1967), p. 404, has suggested that Virgil is imitating the Odyssean banquet of the Phaeacians (Odyssey viii). Perhaps Virgil is trying to point out that the ostentatious luxury of the Carthaginians is more appropriate

By the fourth book, Virgil's portrayal of the glorious wealth of Carthage has taken on a different focus. When Dido gives Aeneas a tour of the grand city (74-75), Klingner notes that "die Herrlichkeit der neuen Stadt wird jetzt Mittel eines unseligen Menschen, sein Begehren zu befriedigen, Aeneas zu verführen."[12] Work has now stopped (86-89), and luxury seems to be breeding weakness. The destructive effect of Eastern indulgence is seen also in Aeneas. When Mercury appears to Aeneas, he finds the hero dressed in a Tyrian scarlet cloak, wearing a sword with a jasper handle (261-64). Given this description of our hero's ostentation, Iarbas' aspersions upon Aeneas' manliness are not without some sting (215-18). If Virgil expected his Roman reader to identify Dido with Cleopatra, the identification of Aeneas with Marc Antony would be inevitable at this point in the narrative. Fortunately, Aeneas is saved from his inclination towards dalliance by Mercury's reminder that he is a man more suited for toil than leisure (265-76).

Virgil's critical portrayal of the rich life as seen in the Trojan and Carthaginian episodes is underscored by the poet's generally positive depiction of the simple life throughout the remainder of the poem. Only a few lines

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to a fairyland than an earthly kingdom.

[12]Klingner (1967), p. 442.

after the tragic death of Dido, Aeneas returns to Sicily to seek refuge with Acestes. Though friendly to the Trojans, to whom he is related, Acestes is a tough and rustic character "a-bristle with spears, rough in a bearskin coat" (horridus in iaculis et pelle Libystidis ursae, 5. 37). He welcomes them with "simple gifts" (gaza...agresti, 40).[13] Like Evander, Acestes, who is old and wise, becomes a surrogate father for Aeneas and teaches him the values of a simple and pious lifestyle. In book six, Anchises himself will teach Aeneas the virtues of the simple life, when he shows his son the parade of Roman heroes. Here Aeneas sees and hears of Numa,

> He'll come from little Cures, poor man's land,
> but rise to royal heights. (811-12)

and Regulus,

> ...sower of seed. (844)

It is heroes like these who are able to "make peace man's way of life;/ spare the humble but strike the braggart down" (852-53).

In books seven and eight, when Aeneas finally reaches Italy, Virgil gives his fullest descriptions of the simple farming life. Both books are colored with a love of Italy

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[13]There is irony in Virgil's word choice here, since gaza is a word usually associated with Eastern wealth. See OLD s.v. gaza.

and its peoples. Although the Latins are by necessity the enemies of Aeneas, Virgil portrays these men with an admiration and pathos that is not seen in the Greeks or the Carthaginians. Indeed, in the war between the Latins and the Trojans, as Klingner notes, "Beide Seiten sind mit ehrfürchtiger Liebe angeschaut."[14]

Aeneas first visits Evander, the son of two earth deities, Faunus and the nymph Marica, and the great-grandson of Saturn, the Golden Age ruler. The differences between Latinus and Dido are quickly seen when we examine the description of Latinus' palace. The house is distinctly Roman, in contrast to the Greek-styled palaces of Troy and Carthage.[15] The images of the gods in the palace are Roman: Italus, Sabinus, described as a vintner with his pruning hook, Janus, and Saturn himself. Everywhere there is the evidence of two Roman passions, warfare and religion. There is mention of the fasces (173), curia (173), and patres (176). Latinus is wealthy, but his wealth is shown in terms of generosity. He gives the Trojans three hundred horses with purple caparison and gold armor (275-79). To Aeneas he gives a priceless pair of magical horses bred from Circe's stock (282-83).

Latinus' people are like himself, proud and generous,

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[14]Klingner (1967), p. 515.

[15]See Klingner (1967), p. 505.

though simple. They are farmers, living a bucolic life that Virgil portrays with touches like the pet stag, wreathes of flowers, and clear springs (483-92). When Iulus accidentally disturbs this tranquility, the harsher side of these duri agrestes is seen. Infected by madness, they use a farmer's weapons to attack the Trojans:[14]

> olli (pestis enim tacitis latet aspera siluis)
> improuisi adsunt, hic torre armatus obusto,
> stipitis hic grauidi nodis; quod cuique repertum
> rimanti telum ira facit. uocat agmina Tyrrhus,
> quadrifidam quercum cuneis ut forte coactis
> scindebat rapta spirans immane securi.
>
> They appeared like magic (for in the voiceless woods
> Allecto skulked), one with a blackened stake,
> one with a huge knobbed cudgel: wrath found arms
> in every corner. Tyrrhus mustered the files
> (he had been quartering oak with sledge and wedge;
> with one great roar he'd seized an ax and run).
> (7. 505-10)

Allecto sounds the "shepherd's call" (pastorale signum, 513) and the indomiti agricolae (521) respond. Virgil's early description of the battle is reminiscent of Homer. The Roman poet laments the death of Galaesus,

> dum paci medium se offert, iustissimus unus
> qui fuit Ausoniisque olim ditissimus aruis:
> quinque greges illi balantum, quina redibant
> armenta, et terram centum uertebat aratris.
>
> who ventured to offer peace--the justest man

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[14]On Virgil's depiction of primitive Italian weapons, see Heinze (1915), pp. 201-02; Eduard Fraenkel, "Some Aspects of the Structure of Aeneid VII," JRS 35 (1945) 5.

who lived in Italy, and her richest lord.
He owned five herds of bleating sheep, and five
of cows; a hundred ploughshares tilled his land.
(536-39)

But Virgil reminds us of his own Georgics with two vivid agricultural metaphors of war. Allecto proudly claims that she will "scatter the seed of war" (spargam arma per agros, 551). We are then told in a pathetic passage that is the antithesis of Georgics 1. 506-08 that "The honored plow, the well-loved scythe made way/ for heirloom swords, retempered on the hearth" (636-36).

Throughout his great catalogue of Latin forces in book seven, Virgil again points to the rusticity of the soldiers:

Nec Praenestinae fundator defuit urbis,
Volcano genitum pecora inter agrestia regem
inuentumque focis omnis quem credidit aetas,
Caeculus. hunc legio late comitatur agrestis....
...non illis omnibus arma
nec clipei currusue sonant; pars maxima glandes
liuentis plumbi spargit, pars spicula gestat
bina manu....

Nor did Praeneste's founder stay away--
Caeculus, son of Vulcan, king, but born
by a campfire while the stupid cattle watched
(so all believed). His regiment were peasants--
...Not all had swords and shields,
or rode the rumbling chariot: most were slingers
who hurled grey lumps of lead; some carried darts
two to a hand. (678-81, 685-88)

Et te montosae misere in proelia Nersae,
Vfens, insignem fama et felicibus armis,
horrida praecipue cui gens adsuetaque multo
uenatu nemorum, duris Aequicula glaebis.
armati terram exercent semperque recentis
conuectare iuuat praedas et uiuere rapto.

> You, too, from hilly Nersa came to war,
> Ufens, called "the great" and "lucky warrior."
> His men, Aequiculans, loved to hunt all day
> in the woods: a rough lot from a crabbed land.
> They armed to work the fields; their joy, to rustle
> cattle in endless herds and live by plunder.[17]
> (744-49)

Virgil clearly portrays the men of old Italy as sturdy farmers who are also brave warriors, the very combination that had made Rome great.

Several scholars have rightly noted that Virgil's intent in book seven, especially in the catalogue, is to glorify the non-urban areas of Italy that other writers sometimes scorned:

> Here the most obvious motive in the poet's craft is the wish to move the feeling of his Italian reader as he sees the stately procession of Italian warriors passing before him, or perchance to fill his mind with the pride and pleasure at finding among them the ancient representatives of his own city or district.[18]

Virgil clearly admires the fortitude of these old Italians. But there is also a very real ambivalence in Virgil's

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[17]Compare the description of Ufens and his group with Numanus' description of his tough people (9. 602-13). Klingner (1967), p. 516, compares both passages with Georgics 2. 472: et patiens operum exiguoque adsueta iuventus, "a youth hardened to toil and inured to scanty fare."

[18]W. Warde Fowler, Virgil's Gathering of the Clans (Oxford 1918), p. 27. See similarly, R.D. Williams, "The Function of Virgil's Catalogue in Aeneid 7," CQ N.S. 11 (1961) 146-47; Fraenkel (1945), p. 8.

portrayal of the fierce rustic Latins. Although Virgil's stirring pageant can at first make us forget the negatives of these brave warriors, we must realize that they are ultimately misguided. These are tragic heroes, who allow the fiery Turnus or their own passions to compel them to engage in an unjust, though understandable, war. The Latins are individualistic and primitive, and they possess both the good and the bad traits that are associated with their cultures.[19] In Virgil's portrayal of Evander and the Pallanteans, he shows the virtues of the simple life without the negative features seen in the Latins.

Scholars have questioned the purpose of the eighth book of the Aeneid, in which Aeneas meets Evander. The book has sometimes been seen as rambling and lacking a unified structure.[20] Indeed there is some surface truth to this criticism. Aeneas' stay with Evander is described in great

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[19]Several scholars in recent years have commented on the tragic aspects of the Italian individuality that is subdued in the Aeneid. See, e.g., Otis (1964), p. 329; Michael C.J. Putnam, The Poetry of the "Aeneid" (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), pp. 105-32; Adam Parry, "The Two Voices of Virgil's Aeneid," in Steele Commager, ed., Virgil (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1966), pp. 107-08; Charles F. Saylor, "The Magnificent Fifteen: Vergil's Catalogue of the Latin and Etruscan Forces," CP 59 (1974) 249-57.

[20]See F. Bömer, "Studien zum VIII. Buche der Aeneis," RhM 112 (1944) 319-69; Victor Pöschl, Die Dichtkunst Virgils (Innsbruck 1950), p. 276. For the opposite view, see Otis (1964), pp. 330-42; Klingner (1967), pp. 527-42; Willibald Heilmann, "Aeneas und Euander im achten Buch der Aeneis," Gymnasium 78 (1971) 76.

detail, although nothing really happens to further the action on the first day. There are two seeming digressions, the Hercules-Cacus story and the Arms of Aeneas, that have nothing to do with Aeneas' pupose in visiting Evander, to gain allies in the war with the Latins. There are, however, two themes that tie together all of the threads in the book: the glorification of Italy, and the education of Aeneas.

Both Otis and Putnam have noted structural and thematic parallels between books six and eight.[21] Both books show Aeneas learning important lessons that help him grow as a hero. In Aeneid six, Virgil is taught by his father Anchises; in book eight, Evander assumes the role of tutor and surrogate father.[22] Evander is also the ideal Roman father, who sends his son to learn valor on the battlefield. When Pallas returns dead, his father is consoled that he died a hero's death (11.166-72).[23] Evander is not only a lover of family and honor, he is also fond of the simple

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[21]See Otis (1964), p. 331; Putnam (1965), pp. 121-23. See also G. Karl Galinsky, "The Hercules-Cacus Episode in Aeneid VIII," AJP 87 (1966) 20, who follows Otis.

[22]See Otis (1964), p. 334. Evander and Aeneas are related by a common ancestor Atlas, who, like Hercules and Aeneas, is a symbol of the toiler: see P. McGushin, "Virgil and the Spirit of Endurance," AJP 85 (1964) 225-53, esp. 226.

[23]See Heinze (1915), p. 269 n. 2: "Euander ist der Typus des liebenden Vaters, aber mehr als das Leben seines Sohnes liebt er dessen Ehre."

life. It is the aspect of simplicitas that Virgil stresses most in his portrayal of Evander and the citizenry of Pallanteum.

The rustic simplicity of the Etruscans is seen throughout the book. When Aeneas' men reach Pallanteum they find Evander, Pallas, and the humble Senate (pauperque Senatus, 105) celebrating a religious feast in the fields. Pallas bravely, even somewhat fiercely, challenges Aeneas, but the inner generosity of the young man soon causes him to welcome the Trojans. Aeneas joins the Pallanteans as guest of honor at their feast. He is not clothed in purple or seated on a throne; he sits on a maple seat spread with lion skins, symbolic of the hero Hercules, who figures so prominently in the book.[84] It is also to Hercules that Evander bids Aeneas look as a model. When Evander welcomes Aeneas to his home he says,

> ..."haec...limina uictor
> Alcides subiit, haec illum regia cepit.
> aude, hospes, contemnere opes et te quoque dignum
> finge deo, rebusque ueni non asper egenis."
>
> ..."The great Alcides
> passed this threshold; this palace welcomed him.
> Be bold, my friend: scorn wealth! Earn, even as I,
> a god's esteem: be gracious to the poor!"
> (362-65)

Evander then takes Aeneas inside to a bed made from a pile

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[84]See McGushin (1964), p. 239.

of leaves, spread with a bearhide (368). The "palace" is really only a simple country home. "Evander calls his dwelling sedes, and only uses Regia to point the contrast between Hercules the mighty and the humble reception he submitted to so gladly."[23] The home is described as that of a "poor man" (pauperis, 360-61). Cattle graze here and there around the yard (360).

It is, of course, no accident that Evander uses Hercules as a model for heroic action. Hercules was a brave and pious man who, like Aeneas, eventually came to be considered as a god. He is the symbol of duritia, especially in Stoic thought.[24] Although burdened by the labors of Hera, he never falters. The implications are clear for Aeneas. Although Evander stresses the simple, Stoic side of Hercules when he invites Aeneas into his home, his story of the battle between Hercules and Cacus will provide another aspect of heroic behavior that Aeneas will later follow. Hercules is the divine punisher. Though usually seen by the Stoics as long-suffering, Hercules demonstrates in his destruction of Cacus the proper role of anger. Aeneas must, of course, learn this lesson. Just as Hercules grows fiercely angry when he hears the bellowing of

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[23]W. Warde Fowler, Aeneas at the Site of Rome[2] (Oxford 1918), p. 75. See similarly Heilmann (1971), p. 83.

[24]See McGushin (1964), pp. 234-37.

the cattle stolen by Cacus (218), so too Aeneas will feel ire at seeing the spoils that Turnus has won from Pallas (12. 941-47).[87] Aeneas will become another Hercules when he exacts revenge upon Turnus.

The second purpose of the eighth book is to give glory to Rome by praising its humble origins. Fowler has rightly called eight "the most Roman of all the books."[88] The book begins with the appearance of the deity Tiber, the most Roman of all Italy's rivers, who appears to the Trojans "in full flood/, washing [his] banks and cutting through fertile fields,/ the sky-blue Tiber, river that heaven most loves" (62-64). There follows the sighting of the white sow and her thirty piglets (81-83). Boissier notes that the omen appears in Alba, a town of Latium, which was famed for its swine-rearing.[89] The popularity of this peasant legend is

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[87]On the Hercules-Cacus episode as a foreshadowing of the ending of the Aeneid, see Vinzenz Buchheit, Vergil über die Sendung Roms (Heidelberg 1963), pp. 116-33; Galinsky (1966), pp. 26-37. Galinsky, p. 26, claims that the portrayal of Cacus and Turnus "reveals a resemblance that is far too close to be coincidental." Heilmann (1971), pp. 82-83 n. 9, regards these parallels as unconvincing.

[88]Fowler, Aeneas..., (1918), p. 2.

[89]See Gaston Boissier, The Country of Horace and Virgil, trans. from the French by D. Havelock Fisher (New York 1923), pp. 256-57. Boissier, p. 257, perceptively notes that Virgil's willingness to include the story of the sow in the Aeneid is remarkable in view of the fact that he considered swine too lowly to treat in the Georgics: "We no longer find the same timid precautions in the Aeneid. He did not hesitate to introduce the white sow and her little ones into it, nor did he ask himself what the fastidious

evident in Varro, who tells us that people of his own time claimed to have the legendary sow preserved in brine (De Re Rustica, 2.4.18). Both the legend of the Tiber and the story of the sow are clearly popular legends intended to convey honor to the traditional stories of the farmers around Rome.

Virgil also makes frequent reference to the location of Evander's simple home as the future site of Rome. When Aeneas' men first arrive they see "walls, a fort,/ and homes (now raised to heaven by Roman might,/ then a mere village, Evander's sparse domain)" (8. 98-100). The emphasis is placed on the difference between the then and the now, especially in the different material levels of the two periods.[30] There are many hints of the Rome to come: the pauperque senatus (105), the simple palace of Evander, which reminds the Roman reader of Augustus' simple home,[31] and the altar of Evander (186), suggesting the Ara Maxima of Rome. The land of Evander is truly a glimpse of the noblest characteristics of the Roman empire yet to come:

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would think about it."

[30]See Otis (1964), p. 334.

[31]See, e.g. Otis (1964), 337, who notes Suetonius, Augustus 72, where we learn of the simplicity of Augustus' house. The description of Evander's home would also have reminded the Roman reader of the hut of Romulus, that was said to be still standing in Rome at this time.

> Es ist die Stelle des späteren Rom, aber viel mehr als das: was dem Dichter an Rom gut und recht und wesentlich und göttlich gewollt scheint, ist in dieser Kleinwelt vorgebildet, und zwar nicht nur in Euander und den Seinen und in der Landschaft, sondern in einer geschichtlichen Tiefe, die sich hinter Euander in mehrfachen Gründen auftut.[38]

CONCLUSION

Klingner is indeed correct that the effect of Virgil's portrayal of the primitive virtue of the Pallanteans, and also of the other native Italians, demonstrates to his audience the values that the poet felt had made Rome great. Virgil shows his early Romans as pious farmers, willing to work hard and live simply. Their duritia suits them also for war; they are as willing to fight for their land as they are to till it. These virtues are, of course, those that Virgil praised in the Georgics, in which he attributed piety and simplicity to the rustic life. It is for this reason that the poet promoted agriculture in his great didactic work. But as we observed in the Georgics, so also in the Aeneid, Virgil stresses the agricultural way of life, not the profession itself. To Virgil the life of piety, simplicity, and hard work is a heroism for all to strive for.

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[38]Klingner (1964), p. 534.

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AGRICULTURAL SIMILES IN THE ILIAD
APPENDIX[1]

SOURCE	CONTEXT	POINT OF COMPARISON	CLASSIFICATION
II. 87	nv	swarming bees, cluster of grapes	a
II. 147	nv	wind-swept grain	a
II. 469	v	insects swarming around milk	a
II. 474	v	shepherd separating flocks	a
II. 480	v	chief bull of a herd	a
III. 10	v	mist unwelcome to shepherd	a
III. 60	nv	ax of a ship builder	w
III. 196	v	ram going through flock	a
IV. 275	v	driving sheep to shelter	a
IV. 433	v	sheep waiting to be milked	a
IV. 482	v	poplar cut for wheel	w
V. 87	v	river flooding vineyard	a
V. 136	v	lion wounded by shepherd	a
V. 161	v	lion attacking heifer	a

[1]v = simile within violent context
nv = simile within non-violent context
* = short similes
a = similes involving agriculture
w = similes involving work

V. 499	v	winnowing grain	a
V. 554	v	lions preying on cattle and sheep	a
VIII. 131	v	sheep	a*
VIII. 306	v	garden poppy	a
X. 5	nv	snowfall on ploughland	a
X. 351	v	length of a furrow	a
X. 485	v	lions advancing on herds	a
XI. 67	v	reapers	a
XI. 172	v	cattle stampeded by lion	a
XI. 383	v	bleating goats	a
XI. 548	v	lion driven from oxen	a
XI. 558	v	donkey driven from cornfield	a
XII. 293	v	lion among cattle	a*
XII. 421	v	men quarreling over cornfield	a
XII. 433	v	woman weighing wool	w
XII. 451	v	shepherd carrying wool	a
XIII. 178	v	tree cut by ax	w
XIII. 198	v	two lions catching goat	a
XIII. 389	v	tree sawed down	w
XIII. 492	v	sheep following ram	a
XIII. 571	v	ox bound by herdsmen	a
XIII. 588	v	chickpeas threshed	a
XIII. 703	v	oxen straining to plough	a

XV. 323	v	beasts stampeding cattle or sheep	a
XV. 410	v	carpenter's chalkline	w
XV. 586	v	lion pursuing ox-herder	a
XV. 630	v	lion chasing a herd of cattle	a
XVI. 212	v	stone wall being built	w
XVI. 352	v	wolves attacking a flock	a
XVI. 406	v	men catching fish	w
XVI. 482	v	tree cut for ship	w
XVI. 487	v	bull attacked by lion	a
XVI. 633	v	men cutting lumber	w
XVI. 641	v	flies swarming around milk	a
XVI. 742	v	diver	w*
XVII. 4	v	cow guarding calf	a
XVII. 53	v	olive tree blown over by wind	a
XVII. 61	v	lion snatches cow	a
XVII. 109	v	lion driven from fenced ground	a
XVII. 389	v	ox-hide stretched	w
XVII. 520	v	ox struck down	a
XVII. 547	v	storm stops work and afflicts cattle	a
XVII. 657	v	lion driven from pasture	a
XVII. 742	v	mule pulling log	w
XVIII. 57	nv	tree grown in orchard	a

XVIII. 161	v	herdsman chasing lion	a
XVIII. 438	nv	tree grown in orchard (same as XVIII. 57)	a
XVIII. 600	v	potter testing wheel	w
XX. 495	v	oxen threshing grain	a
XXI. 257	v	man running from flooded irrigation ditch	a
XXI. 282	v	swineherd swept away by stream	a
XXI. 346	v	garden dried by wind	a
XXII. 262	v	enmity between wolves and lambs	a
XXIII. 598	nv	dew softening corn	a
XXIII. 712	nv	rafters locked into place	w
XXIII. 760	nv	woman pulling warp of wool	w
XXIII. 845	nv	ox-herd throws his staff	a
XXIV. 80	nv	fishhook made of ox horn	w