

5504641779

Tanabodee Ratanachuvongs

Virgil

Word Count: 1001

In the era of ancient Roman of the Augustan period, poetry was ascendant. There were many well-known poets such as Quintus Horatius Flaccus (Horace), Sextus Aurelius Propertius, Gaius Julius Hyginus, etc. One of them was Publius Vergilius Maro, or usually called Virgil, who is renowned for three major works of Latin literature, the Eclogues, the Georgics, and the epic Aeneid and also echeloned as one of Rome's greatest poets. His contonbution has greatly influenced Western literature until nowadays like no other poet ever had.

Virgil was born in October 15, 70 BC. His biographical is quite indistinct. There are many derivations and each of them gives different information. For example, the tradition holds that Virgil was born in the village of Andes, near Mantua in Cisalpine Gaul. On the other hands, Scholars suggest Etruscan, Umbrian or even Celtic. Moreover, analysis of his name has led to beliefs that he descended from earlier Roman colonists. The variety of information makes Virgil's biographical tradition remains problematic. His education started at the age of five at Cremona, then Milan, and finally at Rome. He received many fields of knowledge from Greek and Roman authors, especially of the poets and a meticulous inculcation in philosophy and rhetoric. Epicurean Siro, one of

Virgil's teacher, has a considerably effect in his early poetry by Epicurean philosophy but progressively gives way to attitudes more analogous to Stoicism.<sup>1</sup>

His earliest poetry may have survived in a collection of poems was Appendix Vergiliana. However, it has been widely considered counterfeit by the scholars. Eclogues, or sometimes called Bucolics, a collection of 10 pastoral poems composed between 42 and 37 BC was his earliest certain work. Eclogues were based on the Greek poet Theocritus but more unreal and stylized. His second major work was the Georgics, a poem in four books on farming, which was likely published in 29 BC. It was written in didactic form. It is a poem that draws on many antecedent sources and had an influence to many later authors from antiquity to the present.<sup>2</sup> Virgil's splendid work was the Aeneid. It is one of the most significant poems in the history of western literature. The Aeneid can be classified into two parts based on the heterogeneous subject matter. He worked on the Aeneid during 29–19 BC, which was the last eleven years of his life. The epic poem consists of 12 books that limn about the journey of Aeneas to Italy, his battle with the Italian prince Turnus, and the establishment of a city from which Rome would manifest. Books 1-6 were about Aeneas' journey to Latium in Italy and books 7-12 were about the war in Latium<sup>3</sup>. The Aeneid is full of divination about the future of Rome, the act of Augustus, including his progenitor, and the Carthaginian Wars. For western literature, the most remarkably work is the Divine Comedy of Dante. Virgil wrote about himself as Dante's guide through purgatory and hell. Virgil traveled to Greece around 19 BC for emending the Aeneid. After he met Augustus in Athens, he decided to return

---

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia contributors. "Virgil." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 3 Feb. 2013. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virgil>>

<sup>2</sup> W.R. Johnson. *The Essential Aeneid*. 2006. p.68-113

<sup>3</sup> Brooks Otis. *Virgil: A study in civilized poetry*. 1995. p. 215-250

home. He caught a fever while visiting a town near Megara. He died in Brundisium harbor on September 21, 19 BC. His wish was that the poems be burned. However, Augustus ordered Lucius Varius Rufus and Plotius Tucca, Virgil's literary doers, to neglect his wish but instead publishing them. As a result, the text of the Aeneid probably contain imperfection which Virgil was planning to rectify before the publication. However, the only palpable defects are a few lines of verse that are metrically incomplete. There is a theory that Virgil was murdered by Augustus, who was returning to Rome from the East, while he was making his way to Athens by Jean-Yves Maleuvre. However, this theory has not been proved as a fact.<sup>4</sup> Virgil was buried near Naples but there are uncertainties as to the reliability of the so-called Tomb of Virgil in the area.

He was admired by the Romans by two mains rationales. First, because he was reckoned as their own national poet, spokesman of their ideals and achievements. Second, because he seemed to have attained the highest level in his arts such as structure, diction, metre. The Eclogues, Georgics, and all the Aeneid became standard texts in school module. In the middle age, the Aeneid was the central Latin literary text. It was considered as the grand epic of the Latin peoples. It also held religious prominence as it details the origin of a Holy City. Virgil's influence on English literature has been prodigious. Edmund Spenser used Virgil's work as an inspiration for his work, *The Faerie Queene*. Furthermore, John Milton had *The Aeneid* as the archetype for his work, *Paradise Lost*, not only in epic structure and machinery but also in style and diction. Nemesianus, Calpurnius Siculus, and later writers. esteem Virgil as the one who set

---

<sup>4</sup> R. Alden Smith. *Virgil*.2010. p. 104-168

Arcadia as a poetic ideal that still resonates in Western literature and setting the stage for the development of Latin pastoral.<sup>5</sup>

In conclusion, Virgil was a great poet of the ancient period whose works have numerous influences on many modern writers and Western literature, including Latin education. His work was also being used as a text in education. One of his works, the *Aeneid*, indicates the aspiration to his rival, Homer, by treating both the *Iliad*'s warfare themes and the *Odyssey*'s rambling theme. His three major works were *The Eclogues*, *The Georgics*, and *The Aeneid*. He was very talented in poetry in various categories that reflect in his works such as Epic poetry, didactic poetry, and pastoral poetry. It was widely considered as the zenith of Latin literature, as the *Iliad* was seen to be the apex of Greek literature. These things made him famous and still being known by many writers and historians until nowadays.

---

<sup>5</sup> William Lucas Collins. *Virgil*. 1871. p.85-105