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"Stuck in the Middle with You": Virgilian Middles

Whether or not we go along with Servius' division of the Virgilian corpus into an ascending triadic scheme of low (*Eclogues*) to middle (*Georgics*) to high (*Aeneid*),[1] the fact is that the Virgilian poetic career seems both perfect in its shape and almost hermetic from a structural viewpoint. It is hard to imagine how anything could have preceded his pastoral collection, or followed the epic.[2] Within this structural perfection positionality, and in particular centrality, is an important hermeneutic device. This paper combines and revisits, with some minor alterations (including translation of Greek and Latin texts) two of my previous studies of Virgilian middles (Thomas [1983a], [1985]), which together explore the artistic, political and programmatic function of the middle in Virgilian poetry. The latter should be read together with Conte (1992), itself a revised English version of a 1980 Italian study. Also important here is the book of Kyriakidis (1998), which shows the degree to which the centre of the *Aeneid* functions as a prominent site in the narrative. When centres are connected with politics and ideology (the *iuvenis* in the middle of *Ecl.* 1, Octavian in the middle of the temple and of the poem at *Geo.* 3.16, Augustus at Actium in the centre of the shield, even Latinus'

[1] Serv. ad *Buc. prooem.*

[2] I consider nothing from the *Appendix Vergiliana* to be of Virgilian authorship.

augustum tectum in the centre of the *Aeneid*), they give the poem an architectural appearance that seems to me quite original and striking. Virgil's programmatic centres, treated in Thomas (1985), serve as a means of engaging not only the Callimachean poetic aesthetic, but the modification of that aesthetic. Both of these studies show a Virgilian consciousness of the middle as a site of programmatic, political and artistic emphasis.

Pictures in the Middle

The *ecphrasis*, the exposition, that is, of a work of art within poetry, is marked by a feature as enduring as the tradition itself:[3] with varying degrees of precision, the poet was concerned to situate and relate to each other the details appearing in the work. This holds for real as well as "imagined"[4] *ecphrases*.

Later examples of the tradition display the most fastidious attitude toward this practice. So Ovid's Minerva, in contest with Arachne, wove a scene into each of the four corners of her tapestry: *quattuor in partes certamina quattuor addit* (she adds four contests to the four corners, *Met.* 6.85). Appropriately, she surrounded the work with an olive wreath for a border: *circuit extremas oleis pacalibus oras* (101). Arachne responded with a border of flowers and ivy: *ultima pars telae, tenui circumdata limbo, / nexilibus flores hederis habet intertextos* (the edge of the cloth, surrounded by a narrow border, had flowers interwoven with clinging ivy, Ovid, *Met.* 6.127-8). Indeed, from Homer's shield on, it is the edge or border of the work of art that is most consistently defined. The shield begins (*Il.* 18.483) and ends with the Ocean, which serves as boundary

[3] Still the best literary history (and indeed the only comprehensive one) of *ecphrasis* is Friedländer (1912), pp. 1-103. Also, on the traditional nature of such descriptions, cf. Bühler (1960), pp. 85-108.

[4] Kakridis (1963), pp. 7-26 devised the term to distinguish the more complex instances of the tradition. In fact, of course, in that they are poetic constructs, all *ecphrases* are in a sense "imagined." See Laird (1993), pp. 18-19 on the "factual" vs. "fictional" *ecphrasis*, and on the problems connected with the distinction.

both to the account and to the world of the object: ἐν δὲ τίθει ποταμοῖο μέγα σθένος Ὠκεανοῖο / ἄντυγα πὰρ πυμάτην σάκεος πύκα ποιητοῖο (and on it he put the mighty strength of the Ocean's River along the outermost rim of the well-made shield, Homer, *Il.* 18.607-8). The Hesiodic shield ends on the same note (*Asp.* 314-15), and, presumably in part under the influence of these seminal instances of the tradition, subsequent *ecphrases* followed suit.[5]

Relative position is also prominent. Even where no overall structure is intended or can be inferred, the poet may define features or details in his description in relationship to other details. We thereby acquire an image of vignettes, if not of the entire structure. On Homer's shield armies surround cities (τὴν δ' ἑτέρην πόλιν **ἀμφὶ** δύω στρατοὶ ἥατο λαῶν, **around** the other city there lay two armies of men, *Il.* 18.509), reapers are in distinct groups, and are followed by children (τρεῖς δ' ἄρ' ἀμαλλοδετῆρες ἐφέστασαν· αὐτὰρ ὄπισθε / παῖδες δραγμεύοντες..., (and three sheaf-binders stood **near**, and **behind** them children gathering grain . . ., 554-5), the vineyard is **encompassed** by a ditch (ἀμφὶ δὲ κυανέην κάπετον, 564), a youth plays the lyre in the **middle** of a group (τοῖσιν δ' **ἐν μέσσοισι** πάις φόρμιγγι λιγείῃ / ἱμερόεν κιθάριζε, 569-70), a pasture, river and reed-bed all lie **adjacent** (νομόνδε / **πὰρ** ποταμὸν κελάδοντα, **παρὰ** ῥοδανὸν δονακῆα, 575-6) – and so it goes on. We have confined ourselves to selective examples from a single *ecphrasis*, but they are sufficient to demonstrate that the poet writing in this tradition has a concern for defining structure and relative position in the arrangement of the individual vignettes of his work of art.[6]

[5] Theocritus' cup has a lip of ivy (τῷ ποτὶ μὲν χείλη μαρύεται ὑψόθι κισσός (ivy trails along its lip above, 1.29), while Jason's mantle in the *Argonautica* has purple borders (ἄκρα δὲ πορφυρέη πάντῃ πέλεν (it was all purple at the ends, 1.728). So the last element of Europa's basket: χρυσείου ταλάροιο περίσκεπε χείλια ταρσοῖς (it [the peacock] covered the lip of the golden basket with its feathers, Mosch. *Eur.* 61) [cf. Bühler art. (1960) p. 108 note 2]. Finally, Virgil's cup: *et nobis idem Alcimedon duo pocula fecit / et molli circum est ansas amplexus acantho*, *Ecl.* 3.44-5.

[6] Examples, again selective, from other authors: μέγας λῖς, **ἀμφὶ** δὲ κάπροι / δοιοί (a great lion and two boars on either side), Hes. *Asp.* 172-3; **παρὰ** δὲ Δεῖμός τε Φόβος τε / ἔστασαν (beside him stood Terror and Fear), *Asp.* 195-6; **πὰρ** δ' Ἀχλὺς εἱστήκει (beside them stood Darkness), *Asp.* 264; **παρὰ** δ' εὔπυργος πόλις ἀνδρῶν (beside a well-

Within this general structural awareness, a specific position is clearly of potential significance – the centre. The centre of an object, in effect, defines, or permits visual reconstruction of, the work of art. The extended *ecphrasis* deals in two types of centrality: the middle of the entire work, and that of groups or scenes which form a part of the whole. For both types there is an introductory, formulaic tag: ἐν μέσσῳ (ἐν μέσσοις) and *in medio*. The second type of medial reference (the central object of a group within the work) occurs frequently in the larger ecphrases;[7] however, the history of the medial object of the entire work is more complex, and it is this type which will concern us.

The Homeric shield has no centrepiece, that is, there is no item specified as being central, and the expression ἐν μέσσοισι, although it occurs twice with reference to the middle of groups within the shield,[8] is not applied to any central object.[9] This may be related to the fact that in general this shield defies complete definition. This is not the case with Hesiod; indeed, the first figure mentioned occupies the centre of Heracles' shield: **ἐν μέσσῳ** δ' ἀδάμαντος ἔην Φόβος οὔ τι φατειός. / ἔμπαλιν ὀσσοισιν πυρὶ λαμπομένοισι δεδορκώς (in the middle was Fear

towered city of men), *Asp.* 270; **παρὰ** δε σφισιν ὄρχος / χρύσεος ἦν (beside them was a vine-row in gold), Asp. 296-7; **πὰρ** δε οἱ ἄνδρες / ... νεικείουσ' ἐπέεσσι (beside her men ... contend with words), Theocr. *Id.* 1.33-5; **ἀμφὶ** δε νιν δύ' ἀλώπεκες (about him two foxes) 48; ἀπύργωτος δ' ἔτι Θήβη / κεῖτο **πέλας** (Thebes still untowered lay near), Apoll. *Argon.* 1.736-7; *haec* ***inter*** *tumidi late maris ibat imago / aurea* (among these moved far and wide a golden likeness of the swollen sea), Virg. *Aen.* 8.671-2, *et* ***circum*** *argento clari delphines* (and round about clear silver dolphins), 673.

[7] Cf. Hom. *Il.* 18.507 κεῖτο δ' ἄρ' **ἐν μέσσοισι** δύω χρυσοῖο τάλαντα (and two talents of gold lay in the midst); 569-70 τοῖσιν δ' ἐν μέσσοισι πάις φόρμιγγι λιγείῃ / ἱμερόεν κιθάριζε (and in their midst a boy played pleasingly on a clear-voiced lyre); Hes. *Asp.* 201-2, ἐν δ' ἄρα **μέσσῳ** / ἱμερόεν κιθάριζε Διὸς καὶ Λητοῦς υἱός (and in their midst the son of Zeus and Leto played the lyre pleasingly); [209-10] πολλοί γε μὲν **ἀμ μέσον** αὐτοῦ / δελφῖνες (and in the midst were many dolphins); Virg. *Aen.* 8.696 *regina* ***in mediis*** *patrio vocat agmina sistro* (and in the midst is the queen calling her hosts with her native sistrum), 700 *saevit* ***medio in*** *certamine Mavors* (in the midst of the contest rages Mars).

[8] *Il.* 18.507, 569.

[9] Whitman (1958), p. 205 claims that the sun, moon, and stars are at the centre of the shield (with the activities of man between them and the Ocean); while this is logically probable, it is not specified in the text.

made of adamant, unspeakable, staring backwards with fire-glowing eyes) (*Asp.* 144-5). So too Apollonius[10] refers to the centre of Jason's mantle, although only to the fact that it is of a solid colour, not to its containing any pictorial detail:[11] δὴ γάρ τοι **μέσσῃ** μὲν ἐρευθήεσσα τέτυκτο, / ἄκρα δὲ πορφυρέῃ πάντῃ πέλεν (for indeed the middle was fashioned of red, and its edges were purple throughout, *Argon.* 1.727-8). As in the case of the Hesiodic *ecphrasis*, this detail is specified at the outset.

The Virgilian *ecphrasis* displays a change in attitude toward this feature, specifically a heightening of interest in the structural importance of the central object. This change is possibly a symptom of the Alexandrian stress on the importance of τέχνη, but it occurred, I am certain, without the aid of any actual Hellenistic model.[12] The cups of the third *Eclogue*, the modest beginnings of Virgil's interest in *ecphrasis*, are dominated by their centrepieces:

M. *pocula ponam*
fagina, caelatum divini opus Alcimedontis,
lenta quibus torno facili superaddita vitis
diffusos hedera vestit pallente corymbos.
in medio *duo signa, Conon et – quis fuit alter,* 40
descripsit radio totum qui gentibus orbem,
tempora quae messor, quae curvus arator haberet?
necdum illis labra admovi, sed condita servo.

[10] Between the archaic and Hellenistic periods there is one instance of an *ecphrasis* with a medial object. The first shield of Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, which receives only a brief description, has the moon as its centrepiece:

ἔχει δ' ὑπέρφρον σῆμ' ἐπ' ἀσπίδος τόδε,
φλέγονθ' ὑπ' ἄστροις οὐρανὸν τετυγμένον·
λαμπρὰ δὲ πανσέληνος ***ἐν μέσῳ*** *σάκει,*
πρέσβιστον ἄστρων, νυκτὸς ὀφθαλμός, πρέπει·
Septem 387-90

On his shield he has this arrogant sign: a well-wrought heaven ablaze with stars; and in the middle of his shield there shines the bright full moon, most honoured of the stars, eye of night.

[11] The most recent examination of Apollonius' *ecphrasis* is Shapiro (1980), pp. 263-86.

[12] Indeed the surviving examples of the tradition in Hellenistic literature show no real divergence from their archaic models.

D. *et nobis idem Alcimedon duo pocula fecit*
et molli circum est ansas amplexus acantho, 45
Orpheaque ***in medio*** *posuit silvasque sequentis;*
necdum illis labra admovi, sed condita servo.
si ad vitulam spectas, nihil est quod pocula laudes.
Ecl. 3.36-48

M. I shall wager beechen cups, the engraved work of divine Alcimedon, on which a pliant vine added with effortless chisel clothes the scattered berry-clusters with pale ivy. **In the middle** two figures, Conon and – who was the second, who marked out with his rod for mankind the whole heaven, what seasons the reaper, what ones the bent-over ploughman should keep? Not yet have I touched my lips to them, but I keep them stored away.

D. The same Alcimedon also made two cups for us, and he surrounded the handles with soft acanthus, and placed Orpheus **in the middle** and the woods following him. Nor yet have I touched my lips to them, but I keep them stored away. But if you take a look at the calf, you will have no praise for the cups.

In both the rival cups' centrality is stressed; the first has Conon and Aratus[13] at its centre, the second Orpheus. Theocritus' cup, it should be noted, has no item in the middle.[14] But there is a further development with Virgil. The medial reference itself appears in the centre of the passage: Menalcas has the phrase *in medio* midway through his description of the cup (40), but he is capped by Damoetas, for whom *in medio* occurs at the medial caesura in the central line of his five-line response (46). So the work of art and the poem or passage in which it appears visually mirror each other; the poem in a sense *is* the object.

Virgil was not to limit the technique to *Eclogue* 3. The great shield of Aeneas, answer to that of Achilles and the most perfect Roman *ecphrasis*,

[13] So I read *quis fuit alter?* Here see Ross (1975), p. 24.

[14] As often Virgil has conflated his sources here. The notion of an exquisitely finished cup as a prize in a singing contest is, of course, Theocritean–as is the reference to a trim of acanthus: *et molli circum est ansas amplexus acantho* (he connected their handles with tender acanthus), 45 [cf. Theocr., *Id.* 1.55, παντᾷ δ' ἀμφὶ δέπας περιπέπταται ὑγρὸς ἄκανθος (everywhere about the cup is spread pliant acanthus)]. However, Virgil has incorporated into his description an emphasis on centrality, absent from the Theocritean lines.

for all its individuality is in form completely traditional. Like the shield of *Iliad* 18, it contains centrepieces of separate vignettes,[15] but unlike that shield, and in line with the new practice, Virgil's shield also holds an overall centrepiece, the battle of Actium:

in medio *classis aeratas, Actia bella,*
cernere erat, totumque instructo Marte videres
fervere Leucaten auroque effulgere fluctus.
Aen. 8.675-7

In the middle one could spy bronze fleets, the wars of Actium, and you could have seen all of Leucas boiling with battle lines drawn, and waves gleaming with gold.

Critics since Servius Auctus have asked only one question of *in medio*: *utrum clipeo an mari?* By analogy with the instances in the third *Eclogue*, and, I think, following sense, we should answer, along with Heyne and Wagner and Forbiger, "of the shield,"[16] although, of course, the reference could be to both. Perhaps surprisingly, what critics and commentators have not noticed is that these lines occur in the exact centre of the description of the shield (49 lines preceding them, 51 following). As was the case with the third *Eclogue*, but on a much grander scale, the central item, along with its formulaic referent (*in medio*), is placed in the centre of the passage. *Ut pictura poesis*: once again the poem visually reflects the work it describes.

In each of these instances, then, we see that Virgil created the practice[17] of referring to the medial item in the middle of the actual

[15] Few of the numerous recent studies of the shield (for bibliography, see Williams [1981], p. 11; Fowler [1991], p. 25; Putnam [1998], p. 234 note1) deal with this *ecphrasis* in terms of the linguistic and dictional tradition to which it belongs–essentially my concern.

[16] Conington appears to have misread Forbiger, ascribing to him the view that *in medio* refers to the sea.

[17] It is worth mentioning a possible instance of this feature which may have influenced Virgil. In Catullus 64, at the centre of Ariadne's soliloquy (36 lines from the beginning and 35 from the end), the deserted heroine turns from her own plight to consider the progress of the departing Theseus: *ille autem prope iam mediis versatur in undis* (he is tossed almost in the middle of the sea, 167). Imaginary or not, the tapestry and its contents

description, and that this practice establishes an approximation between the work of art and the poem in which it appears, a mise-en-scène involving elision of the gap between the two media. A further example of this, somewhat different in nature, occurs in the proem of *Georgics* 3. Virgil here describes, in ecphrastic style, the *templum* he is to build – a metaphorical construct standing for a future poetic project of epic proportions. Whether or not the reference is specifically to the *Aeneid* (which I believe to be the case) need not concern us here. This temple, which itself appears in the centre of the *Georgics*, will have as its own centrepiece the triumphant Octavian:[18] ***in medio*** *mihi Caesar erit templumque tenebit* (I will put Caesar **in the middle** and he will occupy the temple, *Geo.* 3.16).[19]

Once elsewhere in the corpus of Virgil there is a description of a temple. The palace of Picus (*Aen.* 7.170-91) is twice referred to as a temple (*hoc illis curia templum*, 174; *tali . . . templo*, 192). It may be no accident that this structure, purely by line counting, is situated at the exact centre of Virgil's epic, and that in it also there is a centrally placed figure, Latinus: *ille intra tecta vocari / imperat et solio* ***medius*** *consedit avito* (he ordered that they be brought within the building and he sat in the middle on his ancestral throne, *Aen.* 7.168-9).

It is, I think, with certain expectations that we turn to Virgil's other developed *ecphrasis*, the description of the murals in Dido's temple (*Aen.* 1.466-93). Replete with scenes from the siege and fall of Troy,[20] it is

(unlike the psychology of the protagonists) will have been quite simple: on one side Ariadne looking out to sea [*Thesea cedentem celeri cum classe tuetur* (she watches Theseus leaving on his swift ship), 53] - with Dionysus subsequently visiting her; on the other Aegeus, also looking seaward [*cum primum infecti conspexit lintea veli* (when first he saw the canvass of the dark sail), 243]. Between the two Theseus: *mediis versatur in undis*. In that this instance appears in a speech, rather than in the description of the work of art, it is perhaps qualitatively distinct from the Virgilian examples. Nevertheless, the coincidence does seem worth mentioning.

[18] It may not be merely playful to point out that Octavian (*iuvenem*) occupies the centre of the central line (42) of the First *Eclogue*.

[19] On this see Thomas (2001), pp. 45-9.

[20] Again, relative position is noted (although this is less pervasive, since the layout of the murals is linear, and therefore needs little elaboration): *Pergama circum*, 466; *nec procul hinc*, 469; *parte alia*, 474. Also, as with other *ecphrases*, there is a central item to

unique in the tradition of *ecphrasis*: only here is the onlooker (in this case Aeneas) actually a part of the work of art which he observes: *se quoque principibus permixtum agnovit Achivis* (he also recognised himself mingling with the Greek leaders, 1.488).[21]

Like the shield, this work also has a three-line central element, at least one which in the description is centrally positioned (13 lines precede it, 12 follow):[22]

> *interea ad templum non aequae Palladis ibant*
> *crinibus Iliades passis peplumque ferebant*
> *suppliciter, tristes et tunsae pectora palmis.*
> 479-81

Meanwhile to the temple of partial Pallas Trojan women were going with hair disordered, and they were carrying the *peplum* in suppliant fashion and in their grief beat their breasts with their hands.

At first sight disappointing, and in a way that should arouse our suspicions. On these murals are battle scenes involving Achilles, the night raid on the camp of Rhesus, the death of Troilus, Hector's body despoiled and ransomed, Aeneas himself, Memnon, and Penthesilea with her Amazons. Yet in the very centre, in the place of honour, comes the adaptation of, or rather reference to, a brief scene from *Iliad* 6 Hector's injunction that the women of Troy attempt to appease Athena with the gift of a πέπλος (*Il.* 6.263-311). In Virgil's adaptation there is no prominent character (Hector's part is not referred to), and in this, as in general importance, it appears distinct from the vignettes that surround it. R. D. Williams, in an article on the murals,[23] perhaps understandably, has little to say on these lines. One word should alert us: *peplum*. Elsewhere in

one of the individual vignettes: *Penthesilea furens mediisque in milibus ardet* (Penthesilea blazes in rage in the midst of her host, 491).

[21] Ben Tipping points out to me that Hannibal sees himself on his own shield at Sil., *Pun.* 2.426-31, part of the *ecphrasis* of that poem, with its serial narration of the story of Dido (406-25), of whom both poets make Hannibal the *ultor*.

[22] Perhaps more important, four scenes precede this one (Greeks fleeing, Achilles routing Trojans, attack on Rhesus, death of Troilus) and four follow it (Hector ransomed, Aeneas, Memnon, Amazons).

[23] Williams (1960), pp. 145-51.

Latin it occurs twice in Plautus,[24] in the *Ciris* (21), and in Statius (*Theb.* 10.56), with reference either to the robe of Athena or of Juno.[25] Servius is strict about the meaning: *peplum proprie est palla picta feminea Minervae consecrata . . . hodie tamen multi abutuntur hoc nomine* (strictly speaking a *peplum* is a woman's cloak with designs on it, dedicated to Minerva . . . today, however, many people use the term wrongly, *ad Aen.* 1.480).[26]

In referring to this *peplum* Virgil, I believe, invites us to recall the literary history of the word, and the associations it necessarily conjures up. At the centre of his *ecphrasis* he has placed an object which itself would traditionally contain ecphrastic scenes. This is certainly true of the πέπλος of Athena (cf. Servius' *picta*) and is even implicit in the language of Virgil's Homeric "source":

> *ἔνθ' ἔσαν οἱ πέπλοι* ***παμποίκιλα*** *ἔργα γυναικῶν*
> *Σιδονίων....*
> ---
> *τῶν ἕν' ἀειραμένη Ἑκάβη φέρε δῶρον Ἀθήνῃ,*
> *ὃς κάλλιστος ἔην* ***ποικίλμασιν*** *ἠδὲ μέγιστος,*
> *ἀστὴρ δ' ὡς ἀπέλαμπεν.*
> *Il.* 6.289-90, 293-5

There were placed *peploi*, the intricate work of Sidonian women . . . And Hecuba lifted one of them up and brought it as a gift for Athena, the one which was most beautiful in its intricacy and the largest, and shone like a star.

The Homeric text does not elaborate, but this is the language of *ecphrasis* – which will not have escaped Virgil's notice. Indeed, in *Iliad* 3 Helen is at work weaving precisely the objects which Virgil was to place on Dido's mural:

> *ἡ δὲ μέγαν ἱστὸν ὕφαινε,*
> *δίπλακα πορφυρέην, πολέας δ' ἐνέπασσεν ἀέθλους*
> *Τρώων θ' ἱπποδάμων καὶ Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων.*
> *Il.* 3.125-7

[24] *Merc.* 67, fr. dub. et susp. 3 Lindsay (*ap.* Serv. ad *Aen.* 1.480).
[25] On this see Lyne (1978a), pp. 109-10.
[26] For its subsequent use merely for 'upper garment' see Manil. 5.392 (s.v. *OLD*).

She was weaving a great web, a double mantle of purple, and on it she worked many contests of the horse-taming Trojans and bronze-armoured Greeks.

To return to the πέπλος, one parallel will suffice, a contemporary description of the robe at Athens; the chorus of Euripides' *Hecuba* is considering its captive fate in Athens, where it will be put to work fashioning the *peplos* of Athena:

> *ἢ Παλλάδος ἐν πόλει*
> *τὰς καλλιδίφρους Ἀθα-*
> *ναίας ἐν κροκέῳ* ***πέπλῳ***
> *ζεύξομαι ἆρα πώλους ἐν*
> ***δαιδαλέαισι ποικίλλουσ'***
> *ἀνθοκρόκοισι πήναις, ἢ*
> *Τιτάνων γενεὰν*
> *τὰν Ζεὺς ἀμφιπύρῳ κοιμί-*
> *ζει φλογμῷ Κρονίδας;*
> Eur. *Hec.* 466-74[27]

Or shall I in the city of Pallas yoke the fair-charioted mares of Athena on the saffron *peplos*, embroidering them with flower-worked threads, or the race of the Titans, which Zeus the son of Kronos quieted with double-flashing thunderbolt?

Euripides' diction in describing the robe of Athena is close to that used of the πέπλος in *Iliad* 6. This parallel is further evidence that Virgil could have seen in the Homeric lines the suggestion of an ecphrastic robe.[28]

[27] Cf. also Helen's weaving (*Od.* 15.104-8) where the language is that of *Il.* 6.289-95. Also the tapestry in Theocr., *Id.* 15: Πραξινόα πόταγ' ὧδε. τὰ ποικίλα πρᾶτον ἄθρησον. / λεπτὰ καὶ ὡς χαρίεντα· θεῶν περονάματα φασεῖς (Come here, Praxinoa. Look first at the tapestries so fine and graceful. Cloaks of the gods, you could say, 78-9). For the densest concentration of such diction, cf. Manetho, *Aposter.* 2.319-27.

[28] A final detail is worth mentioning. If, as I believe we should, we are to trust the evidence of Horace, *Odes* 1.3.67 ([*Vergilium*] *finibus Atticis / reddas incolumem precor* [Bring, Virgil, safe to Attic shores, I pray]), then there can be little doubt that Virgil, like the character in his epic, himself stood and marvelled at temple reliefs – those on the Parthenon. Ms. J. Heskel reminds me that the central panel on the east frieze is now agreed to represent the delivery of Athena's *peplos*.

For Virgil another, more purely Roman, line of development is important. The poet of the *Ciris* has his *recusatio*:

> *sed [sc. te venerarer] magno intexens, si fas est dicere, peplo,*
> *qualis Erectheis olim portatur Athenis,*
> *debita cum castae solvuntur vota Minervae*
> *tardaque confecto redeunt quinquennia lustro,*
> *cum levis alterno Zephyrus concrebuit Euro* 25
> *et prono gravidum provexit pondere currum.*
> *felix illa dies, felix et dicitur annus,*
> *felices qui talem annum videre diemque.*
> *ergo Palladiae texuntur in ordine pugnae,*
> *magna Giganteis ornantur pepla tropaeis,*
> *horrida sanguineo pinguntur proelia cocco,*
> *additur aurata deiectus cuspide Typhon,*
> *qui prius Ossaeis conscendens aethera saxis*
> *Emathio celsum duplicabat vertice Olympum.*
> *Cir.* 21-34

But I would honour you by weaving a story into a great *peplum*, if it is lawful to say so, one such as is carried in Erechthean Athens when vows are paid to chaste Minerva and the five-year festival slowly returns as the lustrum is closed out, when the light West wind intensifies against the rival East, and carries on the car, heavy with its leaning weight. That day is called happy, happy is called the year, happy they who have seen such a year and such a day. So in order are woven the battles of Pallas, the great *pepla* are adorned with the trophies of the Giants, and dire battles are depicted with blood-red crimson. Typhon is added, hurled down by the golden spear, he who previously while climbing to heaven by the rocks of Ossa tried to double the height of lofty Olympus by adding Pelion's peak.

R.O.A.M. Lyne has pointed to the awkwardness of this image in the *Ciris*:[29]

> A peplos embroidered with the martial deeds of Athena (29-34) would most naturally symbolise a laudatory epic . . . But he [the poet] cannot [intend this], of course, for he has in mind only a philosophical poem, with (in effect) Memmius-type dedication and addresses (36-41); anyway Messalla does not seem to have performed

[29] Lyne (1978a), p. 109.

> any suitable deeds yet (12f. n.). Why has the poet worked so hard to develop a long and intricate image which is not quite appropriate?
>
> I think the answer is that this attractive ecphrasis was already available; it has been borrowed. So often [in the *Ciris*] we are to explain ill-at-ease phrases as borrowings . . . An ecphrasis on a piece of art suggests an epyllion-, at least neoteric, source (cf. most immediately the tapestry in Catull. LXIV). I think the source is Calvus' *Io*, which as more than one scholar has already seen very probably shapes a later episode in our poem. Calvus, narrating the fate of Io priestess of Juno, could well have included, in an account of a religious procession in honour of that goddess, a description of a robe, of a πέπλος in fact, to be offered to her: for which, cf. Sil. 7.76 f, Stat. *Theb.* 10.56, Paus. 5.16.2., Deubner, *Attische Feste*.[30]

The extensive quotation is justified, I feel, for it convincingly suggests that Calvus, member of the neoteric triumvirate and a favoured antecedent of Virgil, presented in his epyllion an ecphrasis, much in the style of Catullus 64, of a *peplum*.[30]

If so, then the early history of the word in Latin is as follows: twice in Plautus, in Calvus, and at *Aen.* 1.480 – which is to say that Virgil used it under the influence of Calvus and that he therefore expected us to recall the context in which it appeared in Calvus. When Virgil made the Homeric *peplum* the centrepiece of Dido's murals, he was not presenting an anticlimactic adaptation of a minor scene from the *Iliad*, but rather producing a subtle act of literary virtuosity, unique in the tradition of artistic *ecphrasis*. At the centre of the murals we find a work of art within a work of art within a poem, the poetic ancestor (but one remove from it and somewhat more restrained) of Pannini's *Imaginary Gallery of Ancient Roman Art*.[31]

[30] The obvious discrepancy that for Calvus the *peplum* (unlike the one in the *Ciris*) will have been Juno's is reasonably accounted for by Lyne (1978a), pp. 109-10: "Our poet of course talks of a robe for *Athena* -but what more natural than that the learned Calvus should have taken the opportunity to digress, describing the Juno-robe, to a description of the more famous but analogous offering that was made to Athena?".

[31] See Fowler (1991), p. 33, note 53.

Programmes in the middle

Cum canerem reges et proelia . . . The best-known *recusatio* in Roman poetry,[32] situated in the middle of the *Eclogues*, might also be considered, when tested against the rest of Virgil's career, the most problematic. Were it not for the fact of the *Aeneid*, had Virgil's production been limited to the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, the adaptation of the preface to Callimachus' *Aetia* which appears at the outset of *Eclogue* 6 would be read and applied much as we read and apply Horace, *Odes* 1.6 or Propertius 3.1 – as a more or less pure profession of Alexandrian literary principles,[33] consonant with the poet's actual work. And, of course, if we confine ourselves to the *Eclogues*, we observe the complete harmony between manifesto and practice: an eclectic book of poetry, tied generically to Theocritean pastoral, but ranging beyond that author in its intent and particularly in the influences it admits – to name just two prominent pairs, Hesiod and Callimachus himself on the Greek side, Calvus and Gallus on the Latin. Nor is the apparent source always the sole one: so *Eclogue* 2, ostensibly Virgil's adaptation of Theocritus' treatment of Polyphemus and Galatea (*Idyll* 11), contains reference to other Theocritean poems-reference as specific as any in Virgil's poetry.[34] *Eclogue* 6 itself is the most eclectic in this matter; whatever one believes about the nature of Silenus' song (as representing various genres from Hesiod to Gallus, as constituting a

[32] The phenomenon is now sufficiently well-known that bibliography is scarcely necessary; still the most exhaustive treatment is that of Wimmel (1960), *passim*.

[33] I realise I risk oversimplification here, particularly in the case of Propertius. But, in that their disavowal of epic persists, there is at least on the surface a thematic "purity" to the Alexandrianism of these poets. It is this purity that I would see informing Propertius' notorious reference to the *Aeneid* (*cedite Romani scriptores, cedite Grai! / nescio quid maius nascitur Iliade*, 2.34.65-6. – on *maius* see below, note 38). These are lines from which I find it difficult to exclude a degree of irony, if not of antipathy, towards a poem of which, we should remember, Propertius had probably seen next to nothing, but merely knew that it was being written. Such a bare knowledge would be sufficient to alarm even more flexible poets than the Roman Callimachus.

[34] E.g., perhaps the most precise allusions, *Ecl.* 2.25-6. = *Id.* 6.35-6.; *Ecl.* 2.63-4. = *Id.* 10.30-1.

poetic genealogy, etc.),[35] it is clearly densely populated by literary precedent both Greek and Latin. The same may be said of the *Georgics*, a didactic poem whose content and literary range belie its generic affiliations. These three features, multiplicity of reference, the imposition of external reference onto a work ostensibly transforming a direct model, and the frustration of generic expectations, these I consider quintessential features of Alexandrianism, and they are features which permeate the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*.

This, then, by way of background. Various questions already present themselves: is it necessary to see a disjunction between this *recusatio* and the existence of the *Aeneid*? In doing so do we fall prey to anachronism or to the "generic fallacy"?[36] Or does concern in this matter indicate a biographical and overly serious reading of a passage which should merely be seen as a literary conceit, perhaps appropriate to the stance of the *Eclogues*, but no more? I trust that the answers to these questions will emerge as I proceed, but some initial response may be made, particularly to the final query. The depth of Virgil's commitment to Callimacheanism, reflected in the clear harmony between programme and practice, rules out the possibility that his claims in *Eclogue* 6 are merely casual, and I hope I have shown elsewhere that the integration of the *Victoria Berenices* into the proem of *Georgics* 3 is hardly the work of a poet paying lip service to a predecessor.[37] The *Georgics* will matter later, but for now I confine myself to Virgil's epic.

We do, I believe, come to the *Aeneid* at least potentially wondering about the apparent change of affiliation which allowed Virgil to produce an epic poem. And it is Virgil in fact who alerts us to the change. Again,

[35] For various interpretations of the nature of the Song, see, among others, Stewart (1959), pp. 179-205; Elder (1961), pp. 109-25; Ross (1975), pp. 18-38; *passim*.

[36] On the blending or alteration of genres, cf. Kroll (1964), pp. 202-24 (for the term, and for instances of, "Kreuzung der Gattungen"); Rossi (1971), pp. 69-94 (mainly treating Greek, although applicable to both literatures); Zetzel (1983a), pp. 83-105. Whether, in the case of epic, genre blending can ever conceal or transform the essential nature of the poem is, I think, doubtful. Dido may find her origins in tragedy or epyllion, but she ultimately becomes a part of a fabric which maintains its formal integrity. I still intend to treat this topic at a later date.

[37] See Thomas (1983b), *passim*.

the sixth *Eclogue*: *cum canerem reges et proelia* (3) – kings and battles stand as the paradigm for epic, rejected by order of Apollo, just as kings and heroes had for Callimachus (ἢ βασιλ[η . . . [ἢ] . . . ἥρωας, *Aet.* fr. 1.3-5). At the midway point of the *Aeneid*, at the beginning of Book 7, and the beginning of the more truly epic second half of the poem, Virgil delivers an invocation and states a programme, speaking out more fully than at any other time in the poem. Here is what we find: *dicam horrida bella, / dicam acies actosque animis in funera reges* (I shall tell of horrible wars, tell of battle lines and of kings driven to death through anger, *Aen.* 7.41-2). The commentators refer us only to the Sibyl's prophecy, which does indeed look to the war books: *bella, horrida bella, cerno* (6.86). But wars and kings (the latter are absent from the Sibyl's verses), appearing in the centre of a Virgilian poem, and embedded in a programmatic passage, should surely direct us not only to the second half of the *Aeneid*, but also back to *Eclogue* 6. The connection is assured by the parallel positions, by Virgil's use of the first person in both cases (*canerem*; *dicam*), and by the progression from "When I was in the act of singing of kings and battles (I was prevented from so doing)" to "I shall now tell of wars, battle-lines and kings." Two lines later in *Aeneid* 7 comes the clausula to the invocation: *maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo, / maius opus moveo* (a greater subject comes into being for me, I start a greater work, *Aen.* 7.44-45). Again commentators give only a part of the picture, referring us to *Eclogue* 4.5, *magnus ab integro saeclorum nascitur ordo*, a parallel for and precursor to 7.44. But what of 7.45 (*maius opus moveo*)? We should see the necessary parallel four lines earlier in the same fourth *Eclogue*: *paulo maiora canamus!* (Let us sing a somewhat loftier theme.) The poet of the *Eclogues* here offers what amounts to an apology as he embarks on the higher style and subject of the fourth; the position of Pollio demands that he temporarily lay aside the attenuated mode. For the poet of *Aeneid* 7 this seems to have become a permanent stance; in both of the above instances, then, Virgil appears to have reversed the Callimachean programme of the *Eclogues*. And finally, in the words *maius opus moveo* are we not entitled to see a reference to the μέγα βιβλίον of Callimachus (fr. 465), disdained by that poet and by his Roman followers?[38]

[38] Consider Prop. 2.10, announcing an upcoming epic (*dicere castra*, 3), which, of course, will be put off: *surge, anime, ex humili, – iam, carmina, sumite vires; / Pierides magni nunc erit oris opus* (Rise up, my soul, from on low: now, songs, gain strength; Pierians, now will be need of great mouth, 11-12); also 3.3.5: *parvaque tam magnis admoram fontibus ora* (I had already moved my small mouth to the large fountains) (also of epic). On the use of these adjectives in such contexts cf. Thomas (1978), pp. 447-50. Ovid (with the benefit of Virgil's wording at *Aen.* 7.45?) applied the exact phrase to the anti-Callimachean Tragedy (*incipe maius opus*, *Am.* 3.1.24), and in *Tristia* 2 referred, doubtless with some irony, to the *Metamorphoses* as *maius opus* (63), later giving the *Amores* their appropriate designation, *leve opus* (339). These epithets may be common, but they are not casually employed.

In the delayed invocation of *Aeneid* 7, then, in language which seems unmistakeably reminiscent of his earlier programmatic utterances, Virgil appears to be turning his back on those programmes. I am using the terms "seems" and "appears" because I believe that Virgil, at the outset of this book, before the invocation, as perhaps to a lesser extent throughout the poem, has undercut the ethical associations implied by the writing of epic by presenting us with verse which, in the care with which it is produced and in the range of literary tradition to which it refers, is as "Callimachean" in spirit as the opening of Catullus 64 or the Song of Silenus itself.[39] It is in the extent to which such an attitude permeates the whole poem that the *Aeneid* is very much a new sort of epic,[40] and I think Virgil clearly indicates the novelty at this crucial and, for the Callimachean, hazardous juncture of the poem.

Now to details: first, the position of the invocation. It is delayed 36 lines into the narrative, a practice already established in *Georgics* 2, and one which is, I believe, essentially Alexandrian in nature.[41] And who does

[39] Being 'Callimachean' ultimately connotes having a certain view of style, compositional methodology, and so forth, rather than pursuing any particular formal prescription, but I do believe that the opposition to epic was perceived in Rome as a true opposition to a genre, and that Virgil felt compelled to confront that opposition.

[40] On this, see Zetzel (1983a), although, as will become clear, I do not fully agree with his view of the development of Virgil's career.

[41] The *Somnium* of Callimachus (*Aet.* fr. 2) and *Idyll* 22 immediately come to mind. I have thought that the delayed prologues of Menander (e.g. *Aspis*, *Heros*, *Perikeiromene*, [?] *Epitrepontes*) might have some influence on the later history of the phenomenon, particularly since such postponement is not really a feature of archaic poetry, or of fifth-century tragedy. On Menander's practice, cf. Gomme and Sandbach (1973), pp. 20-1, 71, 293-4, 467.

Virgil invoke? Erato, of course. Some commentators point to Apollonius *Argonautica* 3.1, and some even note that the Muse appears in parallel positions in the two poems – at the outset of the second half, but the majority show surprise at Virgil's choice. I. Mariotti[42] has made an attractive suggestion: *imitatio Apolloniana* goes along with the *imitatio Homerica* practiced in the lines preceding the invocation – on which more below. I would concur with this, but put it in a somewhat different way: the Muse of the Hellenistic epic is invoked precisely because at the point where his epic will become particularly traditional or Homeric, Virgil is concerned to avoid the taint deriving from mere Homeric imitation. The very presence of Erato at *Argonautica* 3.1 is sufficient motivation for Virgil's choice.

Mariotti was correct in seeing Homeric imitation in the opening lines of *Aeneid* 7, but the issue is not merely a matter of imitation, and the imitation is by no means simply Homeric. The book opens with the figure of Caieta, through whom Virgil provides a neat link to the end of the previous book. This Caieta, Aeneas' nurse, has her fame ensured by the fact that she gives her name to a port on the coast of Latium:

> *Tu quoque litoribus nostris, Aeneia nutrix,*
> *aeternam moriens famam, Caieta, dedisti;*
> *et nunc servat honos sedem tuus, ossaque nomen*
> *Hesperia in magna, si qua est ea gloria, signat.*
> *Aen.* 7.1-4

You too, Caieta, nurse of Aeneas, through your death gave undying fame to our

[42] Mariotti (1981), pp. 459-66. The author is right to dismiss those who require that Virgil had ἔρως in mind when he invoked Erato (even if Apollonius clearly did: ἐπήρατον οὔνομ' [lovely name], *Argon.* 3.5). Virgil is not tied to the etymology of Apollonius, which as Mariotti notes (p. 462, note 14) is denied by the scholia to that poet, which designate the muse εὑρέτις ὀρχήσεως (inventor of the dance). I follow Nisbet-Hubbard (on *Odes* 1.24.3) in seeing the strict assignation of functions to each of the Muses as essentially a post-Augustan development – certainly neither Prop. 3.3.33 nor Ovid. *Fast.* 4.195 prove the contrary. Cairns (1984a), p. 149 is on firmer ground with Calliope, who was a special Muse for the Augustan poets. For them, Cupid or Venus, or even the *puella* herself, but certainly not Erato, presided over amatory poetry.

shores, and your honour still guards your resting place, and your name marks the place of your bones in great Hesperia, if that is any glory.

The lines are epigrammatic and sepulchral, as has been seen,[43] but they are so in a special way: in short, the book opens with that most intensely Callimachean feature, the *aetion*. Virgil's wording in these lines is traditional. Norden observed that use of the temporal marker, *nunc*, together with the noun *nomen*, is a virtually mandatory feature of aetiological writing,[44] and an instance from Callimachus, with precise Greek equivalents, indicates at least the spiritual provenance of the Virgilian usage: πέτραις αἷς νῦν οὔνομα Παλλατίδες (rocks whose name is still Pallatides, *Hymn* 5.42).[45] It seems to me that the parochial element in Virgil's *aetion* (*litoribus nostris*) is a Hellenistic rather than an archaic or classical Greek feature.[46] Virgil, then, begins a book whose delayed invocation will reject the letter of Callimachean poetics with the Callimachean, or, perhaps better, Alexandrian, feature *par excellence*.

After this opening, the narrative proceeds as the poet takes Aeneas up the Italian coast, past the land of Circe, to the mouth of the Tiber (5-36). In these thirty lines Virgil masterfully combines a number of literary sources, in ways that are far from having been fully appreciated. For Circe the initial impulse is of course Homeric, but it is insufficient merely to refer to Homer, or to note the Virgilian departures from Homer, as critics have done.[47] Most note that Virgil has situated the witch on the mainland, whereas in the *Odyssey*, and even earlier in the *Aeneid*, she is on an island

[43] Cf. Mariotti (1981), pp. 459-60, and the bibliography he provides: Hügi (1952), pp. 57, 75; Buchheit (1963), p. 174 note 4; Barchiesi (1979), pp. 7-11.

[44] On *Aen.* 6.234-5 (*mons*) *qui* ***nunc*** *Misenus ab illo / dicitur aeternumque tenet per saecula nomen*. Norden gives a number of other instances, although Caieta is not among them.

[45] Again, Norden on *Aen.* 6.234. There are similar, although less complete, instances at *Hymn* 4.52, and at Apoll. *Argon.* 2.929; 4.991; 4.1763.

[46] See, for instance, *Aet.* frr. 602, 716 (Pf.); *Hymn* 2.65. Particularly in a poem like the *Aetia* the concerns are local rather than universal. Local concerns are not of course excluded from archaic and classical literature, but there is a tendency for them to be supplanted. Here see Nagy (1979), pp. 8, 140.

[47] E.g. Buchheit (1963), p. 176; Mariotti (1981), p. 460.

(*Aeaeaeque insula Circae*, 3.386).[48] Did Virgil merely forget this earlier reference, or was he being careless, the implication, for instance, of Fordyce? When this poet appears to contradict himself, we should be put on our guard. If we look to the reference in *Aeneid* 3, we find that it is in the mouth of the Homeric prophet, Helenus: a Homeric character promotes a Homeric detail. And what of the Virgilian narrator's version in *Aeneid* 7 – in the West, and on the mainland? He found it in Apollonius, where the polemical insistence suggests that the topic was for that poet a post-Homeric ζήτημα. Aeetes is speaking:

> ... ὅτ' ἐμεῖο κασιγνήτην ἐκόμιζον
> Κίρκην ἑσπερίης εἴσω χθονός, ἐκ δ' ἱκόμεσθα
> ἀκτὴν ἠπείρου Τυρσηνίδος, ἔνθ' ἔτι νῦν περ
> ναιετάει, μάλα πολλὸν ἀπόπροθι Κολχίδος Αἴης.
> Apoll. *Argon.* 3.310-13

. . . when I was bringing my sister Circe into the western land, and we arrived at the shore of the Tyrrhenian mainland where she still lives now, very far from Colchian Aea.

In choosing to follow Apollonius' variant, and to promote it as his own, Virgil has effected a conflation of his sources, and at the same time has thrown his support behind the Hellenistic poet, thereby aligning himself with that poet. If the reader is aware of this, then Erato will hardly come as a surprise when she appears in the invocation.

Virgil next describes Circe as singing and weaving, and in between these activities as burning fragrant cedar-wood:

> *dives inaccessos ubi Solis filia lucos*
> *adsiduo resonat cantu, tectisque superbis*
> *urit odoratam nocturna in lumina cedrum*
> *arguto tenuis percurrens pectine telas.*
> *Aen.* 7.11-14

[48] For variants of Circe's habitat, see the treatment of Lesky (1966), pp. 26-62, with extensive bibliography. His, and most critics', concerns are with the Homeric and immediately related versions, and Virgil is not mentioned.

where the rich daughter of the Sun makes the untrodden groves resound with continual song, and in her lofty halls she burns scented cedar to light up the night, sweeping the slender web with shrill shuttle.

The first two of these details appear in the description of Circe at *Od.* 10.221-3, but, as many have noted, if we look for cedarwood associated with the Homeric Circe, we will look in vain; for that we must go to that other Homeric temptress, Calypso, who burns cedar and sings at the loom (*Od.* 5.59-62). Again, such rearrangement and conflation of sources is a mark of the *doctus poeta*. In the process Virgil has described Circe at the loom in precisely the words he had used of the nocturnal business of the farmer's wife in *Georgics* 1.294: *arguto coniunx percurrit pectine telas*. Only *coniunx* is replaced, perforce, and it is replaced by *tenuis*, giving us a line which sounds oddly like a metaphor for Alexandrian or neoteric poetic production: *arguto tenuis percurrens pectine telas* (*Aen.* 7.14). Palliation of the upcoming rejection of the thematic component of Callimachus' programme?[49]

The process continues. Virgil treats the sounds which come from the animals transformed by Circe's powers:

> *hinc exaudiri gemitus iraeque leonum*
> *vincla recusantum et sera sub nocte rudentum,*
> *saetigerique sues atque in praesepibus ursi*
> *saevire ac formae magnorum ululare luporum,*
> *quos hominum ex facie dea saeva potentibus herbis*
> *induerat Circe in vultus ac terga ferarum.*
> *Aen.* 7.15-20

from here the angry growling of lions could be heard as they fought against their chains and roared late into the night, and shaggy boars and bears raged in their cages and the shapes of huge wolves howled, which the savage goddess had with powerful drugs changed from human shape into likeness and frames of beasts.

[49] Cf. Hor. *Epist.* 2.12.25, *tenui deducta poemata filo* (poems spun on slender thread); [Virg.] *Culex* 1-2, *ut araneoli tenuem formavimus orsum* (like spiders we have shaped our slender task).

We have lions, swine, bears and wolves, all specifically transformed from the human to their present state. Again we must scrutinise the Homeric text, and even its scholia. At *Od.* 10.218-19 wolves and lions are soothed by Circe, an instance of her ability to charm nature. Distinct from this phenomenon, at 239-40, we find the transformation of Odysseus' men into swine. Virgil, then, has conflated two separate sequences, and it is worth noting that at the same time his swine have attained a Lucretian flavour: *saetigerique sues* (7.17) must recall the only other example of the compound before Virgil: *saetigerisque . . . subus* (*DRN* 5.696). There is an impulse for Virgil's combination of these animals, for later in *Odyssey* 10 Eurylochus refers to Circe, who turns everyone into swine, wolves or lions: ἤ κεν ἅπαντας / ἢ σῦς ἠὲ λύκους ποιήσεται ἠὲ λέοντας (she will turn us all into swine or wolves or lions, 432-3.). The slight inconsistency of the Homeric text seems to have spawned another ζήτημα, for Eustathius here asserts that the witch actually turned men into lions and wolves, and did not merely charm them. This is the interpretation accepted by Virgil. And what on earth are bears doing in Virgil's catalogue? They are absent from the Homeric version of *Odyssey* 10. They do, however, appear in the next book of the *Odyssey*, in a minute *ecphrasis*, as adornments on the belt of Heracles: ἄρκτοι τ' ἀγρότεροί τε σύες χαροποί τε λέοντες (bears and wild boars and fierce lions, *Od.* 11.611). Given the company these bears here keep (swine and lions), and given that the *Nekyia* had so recently been so strongly in Virgil's mind (indeed it is doubtless due to the Homeric Circe's close connection with *Odyssey* 11, and to the fact that she immediately appears at the outset of Book 12, that Virgil was motivated to place her at the beginning of *Aeneid* 7),[50] given both of these facts, it seems reasonable to suggest that Virgil has again conflated his Homeric material – hence the bears.[51] And finally, Apollonius seems once more to be in Virgil's mind. Virgil refers to these

[50] On the connections between Books 6 and 7, see Mariotti (1981), p. 460.

[51] I have also wondered whether Virgil was partly influenced by those other curious bears – the ones absent from Horace's *insulae beatae*: *nec vespertinus circumgemit ursus ovile* (nor does the bear growl around the sheep-fold at night) (*Epod.* 16.51). It is the lion and the wolf, not the bear, that threaten the fold after the Fall, as Virgil (*Ecl.* 4.22) and Horace elsewhere (*Odes* 1.17.9) made clear.

animals as *monstra*, a strong word in Latin, not merely synonymous with *ferae*, and reserved for objects or beings of a truly monstrous and astonishing nature. While there is nothing in the Homeric text which might have prompted this, Apollonius (*Argon.* 4.672-81) mentions no specific animal, but rather spends ten lines describing the monstrous and deformed nature of Circe's victims, comparing them to the earth's primeval creations.

In the closing lines of the vignette, Apollonius comes even more strongly to the fore, and we should keep in mind that the invocation immediately to follow will be addressed to the Apollonian Muse, Erato. Aided by Neptune, Aeneas and his men reach the mouth of the Tiber:

> *hunc inter fluvio Tiberinus amoeno*
> *verticibus rapidis et multa flavus harena*
> *in mare prorumpit.*
>
> *Aen.* 7.30-2

Through the forest the Tiber with fair stream broke out into the sea with swirling eddies and tawny with its load of sand.

N. Horsfall, in a review of Fordyce's commentary,[52] observed in passing that these lines seem to be influenced by Apoll. *Argon.* 2.401: Φᾶσις δινήεις εὐρὺν ῥόον εἰς ἅλα βάλλει (the Phasis swirls and throws its broad stream into the sea.) The reminiscence is, I think, unassailable. Both passages have a situating demonstrative (ἔνθα and *hunc*), Virgil's *verticibus rapidis* answers Apollonius' δινήεις, and ῥόον εἰς ἅλα βάλλει is remarkably close to *in mare prorumpit*. But Apollonius' reference is not the sole source for Virgil. An Ennian fragment, also describing Ostia, and apparently unnoticed, quite clearly matters: *et Tiberis flumen <flavom> vomit in mare salsum* (and the Tiber spews its tawny river into the sea, *Annales* 453 Sk.). Virgil's wording seems to guarantee that he has both predecessors in mind.

This, then, is Virgilian *imitatio* at its best. The display of learned allusion, conflation and correction seems in large part designed to contrast with the invocation which immediately follows, and with the apparent

[52] Horsfall (1979), p. 223.

reversal of the Callimachean programme contained therein. The letter of that programme may have been rejected, but Virgil is at pains to demonstrate that his mode of composition adheres to its spirit. But the fact remains that the poem is an epic, and, moreover, the influence we have been tracing, although multiple, is generically uniform – it is epic influence.[53]

Although much of the *Aeneid* is composed with this sort of allusiveness, it is the case that particularly in the second half much of it is in the nature of epic narrative, and to that extent the poet must be seen as rejecting at least a component of the poetic programme that had dictated the nature of Roman poetry (at least in negative terms) since the middle of the century. Between the reversal which we find from *Eclogue* 6 to *Aeneid* 7 stands the *Georgics*, and it is to that poem that we must turn to examine what can best be termed the "programmatic tension" of a poet looking back to the pure Alexandrianism of the *Eclogues* and forward to the classicism of the new Roman epic.

The obvious place to start, at least potentially, is with the middle of the poem, at the outset of the third book, whose opening words (*Te quoque*) Virgil was to recall at the beginning of *Aeneid* 7 (*Tu quoque*).[54] I have recently argued that the partially recovered *Victoria Berenices* of Callimachus, securely situated by P. Parsons at the beginning of *Aetia* 3, helps us to interpret the sense of Virgil's prologue to *Georgics* 3, and that what emerges from the latter, through reference to the *Victoria Berenices* and to other Callimachean material, is Virgil's intention to part ways with Callimachus and with the pursuit of Hellenistic genres and subject matter.[55] Callimachus is referred to explicitly, and in a way suggesting that Italy, and no longer Greece, is to be the new poetic arena: *cuncta mihi Alpheum linquens lucosque Molorchi / cursibus et crudo decernet Graecia caestu* (I will have all Greece leaving the Alpheus and the groves of Molorchus and competing in footraces and with the raw-hide glove,

[53] With the exception of Book 4, this is in general true for most of the *Aeneid*, in a way that does not hold at all for the *Georgics*, for instance.

[54] For this, see Fraenkel (1945), p. 2; for a very useful discussion of *tu* / *te quoque* here and elsewhere, see Merkelbach (1971), pp. 349-51.

[55] See Thomas (1983b).

Geo. 3.19-20). And generically that arena is specified, for the metaphorical temple which is elaborated in the prologue represents, as all agree, a future epic project, and it most naturally represents the *Aeneid*, even if all the details do not fit that poem. Between the rejection of kings and battles in *Eclogue* 6 and the commitment to them in *Aeneid* 7 comes an exquisitely intermediate stage:

> *mox tamen ardentis accingar dicere pugnas*
> *Caesaris et nomen fama tot ferre per annos,*
> *Tithoni prima quot abest ab origine Caesar.*
> *Geo.* 3.46-8

Soon however I will gird myself up to tell of the blazing battles of Caesar and to carry his name in fame down through as many years as Caesar is distant from the distant birth of Tithonus.

Without repeating all the arguments supporting this claim, I would point out that the presence of Callimachus at the outset of *Eclogue* 6 and *Aeneid* 7, as acknowledged in the one case and as demonstrated in the previous pages in the other, does create an expectation that he would have been in Virgil's mind at the mid-point of the *Georgics*; one of the great contributions of the *Victoria Berenices*, and its greatest contribution to Latin studies, is the confirmation of that expectation.

I want now to leave *Georgics* 3 and look also to the other programmatic sections of the poem, which capture the evolving nature of Virgil's career, and which similarly indicate the tension existing in his poetic stance at this stage. First, the delayed invocation to Maecenas at *Georgics* 2.35-46, in extent, as in position, parallel to the invocation of *Aeneid* 7. After addressing the farmers (36), Virgil turns to his patron:

> *tuque ades inceptumque una decurre laborem,*
> *o decus, o famae merito pars maxima nostrae,*
> *Maecenas, pelagoque volans da vela patenti.*
> *Geo.* 2.39-41

And you, approach and run down with me through the work now begun, o my glory, o deservingly the greatest part of our fame, Maecenas, and in flight give your sails to the open sea.

"Come, Maecenas, join me in my task, and set your sails for the open sea." This metaphor clearly stands for large-scale, specifically epic, poetry.[56] Propertius gives the best demonstration; in 3.3 the poet, on the point of composing annalistic epic, is stopped, by Apollo of course, who ends with these words: *alter remus aquas alter tibi radat harenas, / tutus eris: medio maxima turba mari est* (Stay close to the shore, at mid-sea is the greatest turmoil, Prop. 3.3.23-4). So Propertius, the pure Callimachean.[57] Virgil, after his invitation to Maecenas, seems to realise the heresy of his position, for he modifies it immediately:

> *non ego cuncta meis amplecti versibus opto,*
> *non, mihi si linguae centum sint oraque centum,*
> *ferrea vox, ades et primi lege litoris oram;*
> *in manibus terrae.*
>
> *Geo.* 2.42-5

I wish not to embrace everything with my verses, not if I should have a hundred tongues and a hundred mouths, and a voice of iron. Approach, and keep to the very edge of the shore. Dry land is at hand.

The "correct" stance prevails,[58] but it does so in a deliberately produced tension with lines 39-41, a tension which will be confirmed in every other programmatic passage of the poem.[59]

The second prologue of *Georgics* 3 occurs at 284-94, as Virgil turns from the treatment of larger to that of smaller animals. The poet refers to the difficulty of gaining glory through such subjects: *nec sum animi dubius verbis ea vincere magnum / quam sit et angustis hunc addere rebus honorem* (and I have no doubts about how great a task it is to succeed in words here and to add this honour to a narrow subject, *Geo.* 3.289-90).

[56] Here see Wimmel (1960), pp. 222-5; F. Williams on Call. *Hymn* 2.105-13.

[57] For discussion of these lines see Wimmel (1960), p. 257.

[58] In the imitation of *Il.* 2.488-90 Virgil brilliantly alters potentiality [πληθὺν δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω (their multitude I could not tell or name)] to will [*non ego cuncta meis amplecti versibus opto* (I do not want to include everything in my verse)], thereby 'Alexandrianising' the Homeric line.

[59] Among commentators only T.E. Page (on 42-46) seems to have seen any opposition between 39-41 and 42-45, although he does not interpret.

Consequently this lowly theme will be balanced by high style: *nunc, veneranda Pales, magno nunc ore sonandum* (now, reverend Pales, we must sound out with great voice, 294). Mention of Pales in the last line of this invocation ties the passage to the invocation at the beginning of the book, where she appears in the first line; so too, perhaps, does the parallel sound pattern: *magna Pales . . . memorande* (3.1) / *veneranda Pales, magno* (3.294). While there may be, as some feel, an element of humour in this lofty address at line 294, I think that Virgil's purpose is ultimately serious. For Propertius and Ovid, the term *os magnum*, recalling as it does the style rejected by Callimachus [μέγα ψοφέουσαν ἀοιδήν (a great sounding song, *Aet.* fr. 1.19)], constitutes poetic anathema.[60] Admittedly Virgil balances the phrase with his lowly theme (*angustis . . . rebus*), the adjective doubtless recalling the positive Callimachean epithet, στεινοτέρην (*Aet.* fr. 1.28),[61] but, as with the invocation in *Georgics* 2, this combination seems to capture the transitional tension that I am claiming for Virgil in this poem.

Finally, in the preface to *Georgics* 4, as in the above instances, Virgil describes his present task by means of a reshaping of Callimachean or neoteric catchwords: *in tenui labor; at tenuis non gloria si quem / numina laeva sinunt auditque vocatus Apollo* (the toil is in a slender matter; but the glory is not slender, if only the adverse gods permit one and Apollo listens to the call, *Geo.* 4.6-7). Again, the contrast, and again the use of polemical terminology: the theme is *tenuis* (or λεπτός), but the glory to be gained by no means so. And how does Virgil actually introduce his theme?

> *admiranda tibi levium spectacula rerum*
> *magnanimosque duces totiusque ordine gentis*
> *mores et studia et populos et proelia dicam.*
>
> *Geo.* 4.3-5

I shall tell you of miraculous views of a small world, great-hearted leaders and the customs in due order of the whole race, their pursuits, their inhabitants and their battles.

[60] See Thomas (1978), pp. 447-50.

[61] See Wimmel (1960), p. 110.

The verb *dicam*, along with its objects, *duces et populos et proelia*, looks forward to *dicam horrida bella* [*et*] *reges* in *Aeneid* 7, as well as back to the words with which this paper began: *cum canerem reges et proelia*. The high treatment of the attenuated world of the bees in *Georgics* 4 will mediate between the pure Callimacheanism of the *Eclogues* and the rejection of the literal component of that ideology, a rejection which was indispensable in the brief flowering of classicism at Rome. Through a network of external and internal reminiscence and revision, Virgil invites us to observe this process – a process of which he can only have become fully aware as it was under way – and to see mirrored in it the most perfect and complex poetic career in this, and possibly in any, literature.

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