

The poet could rely upon the Roman reader's intuitive recognition of this legal form of repudiation, just as he expected the *flagitatio* of 42 to make its point (v. E. Fraenkel, *JRS* 51 [1961], 49ff. = *Kl. Btrg.* 2 [1964], 120–5).

*Birkbeck College, London*

ROLAND MAYER

#### AN ACROSTIC IN VERGIL (*AENEID* 7. 601–4)?

In any competition for monuments of wasted labour the collection of accidental acrostics in Latin poets published by I. Hilberg<sup>1</sup> would stand a good chance of a prize. But amongst his examples of 'neckische Spiele des Zufalls' (269) is one I am gullible enough to believe may be more significant. In *Aeneid* 7. 601–15 Vergil describes the custom of opening the gates of war in a long anacoluthic sentence, the first four lines of which run:

Mos erat Hesperio in Latio, quem protinus urbes  
Albanæ coluere sacrum, nunc maxima rerum  
Roma colit, cum prima movent in proelia Martem,  
Sive Getis inferre manu lacrimabile bellum...

This may be pure chance; but the consonance with the subject matter is remarkable, and certainly stronger than the parallels Hilberg adduces. Given the impeccable Hellenistic precedents,<sup>2</sup> is it inconceivable that Vergil should have used an acrostic in this way? I await the men in white coats.

*Jesus College, Oxford*

D. P. FOWLER

<sup>1</sup> 'Ist die Ilias Latina von einem Italicus verfasst oder einem Italicus gewidmet?' *WS* 21 (1899), 264–305; 22 (1900), 317–8.

<sup>2</sup> Pease on Cic. *de div.* 2. 111, E. Vogt, 'Das Akrostichon in der griechischen Literatur', *AA* 13 (1966), 80–97 and the literature cited p. 80 n. 1.

#### THE CIVIL STATUS OF CORYDON

There is a suspicion in the minds of a number of Virgil's modern commentators that Corydon, the lover-shepherd of the second *Eclogue*, is himself a slave, and that the *dominus* of his beloved Alexis (who may be the Iollas of line 57) is his master too.<sup>1</sup> It is the purpose of this note to show that the suspicion is baseless.

None of the ancient commentators appears to know of such an interpretation. This should be significant in that they probably shared the poet's assumptions about literary *decorum*. We can gather how Virgil viewed the function of slaves in poetry of an exalted genre by looking at the *Aeneid* and the *Georgics*. The essential considerations were set out by W. E. Heitland in *Agricola* (1921), pp. 218–41. Virgil

<sup>1</sup> These commentators, with or without diffidence, take Corydon to be a slave: Conington (ed. 5, 1898), Perret (1961), Coleman (1977), Williams (1979); Forbiger (ed. 4, 1872) asserted that he is free. The list can be lengthened in favour of servitude: H. J. Rose, *The Eclogues of Virgil* (1942), p. 34; E. W. Leach, *AJP* 87 (1966), 441; M. C. J. Putnam, *Virgil's Pastoral Art* (1970), p. 83; G. Lee, *Greece and Rome* 28 (1981), 10 f.; W. V. Clausen in *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature* ii (1982), p. 307.