

A NEW STUDY OF THE GEORGICS

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IN A RECENT WELCOME BOOK one of the greatest and most neglected of Latin poems is discussed at book length by one of the most sensitive and lucid of Latin scholars.¹ All who know and admire Wilkinson's previous books on Horace and Ovid and his *Golden Latin Artistry* will be glad to find here the same sort of excellence: careful scholarship, great readability, shrewd verbal and stylistic analysis, sober common sense. Wilkinson has no thesis, no original interpretation, but simply a concern to do justice to a work whose importance, so far as the English-speaking world is concerned, has been almost equalled by its neglect. His is the first full length treatment of the *Georgics* since Sellar's three chapters (106 pages) of almost a century ago (first edition 1876; no substantial change was made in the second edition). Wilkinson's book is particularly welcome to me as it contains a careful and generous criticism of my own chapter on the *Georgics* (*Virgil* 1963).²

The book's ten chapters and appendixes cover all aspects of the poem as well as of its political and literary milieu: Virgil's life up to the time of its composition (Chapters II, III), the poem's "composition and structure" (IV), the Aristaeus Epyllion (V), the poem's philosophical-moral-religious and "political and social" ideas (VI, VII), its style ("Poetic approach and Art," VIII), its "Agricultural lore" (IX), and its later influence (X). Seven appendixes discuss the scholarly literature and special *Streitfragen*:

¹L. P. Wilkinson, *The Georgics of Virgil: A Critical Survey* (Cambridge: University Press; Toronto: Macmillan of Canada). 1969. Pp. xii, 364.

²The following abbreviations of the titles of modern works have been used in this review-article: Burck, *Hermes* 1929—E. Burck, "Die Komposition von Virgils Georgika," *Hermes* 64 (1929) 279–321; *ibid.*, Review 1959—review of Richter, *Georgics* 1957, *Gnomon* 31 (1959) 224–238; Klingner, *VG* 1963—F. Klingner, *Virgils Georgica* (Zürich 1963); Klingner, *Virgil* 1967—F. Klingner, *Virgil: Bucolica, Georgica, Aeneis* (Zürich 1967); Mynors, *Virgil* 1969—R. B. A. Mynors, *Publi Virgili Maronis Opera* (Oxford 1969); Otis, *Virgil* 1963—Brooks Otis, *Virgil: a study in civilized poetry* (Oxford 1963); *ibid.*, Review 1969—review of Klingner, *Virgil* 1967, *Gnomon* 41 (1969) 554–574; Richter, *Georgics* 1957—Will Richter, *P. Virgilius Maro: Georgica* (Munich 1957); Wilkinson, *Virgil* 1963—L. P. Wilkinson, *Golden Latin Artistry* (Cambridge 1963).

It should be added that this review-article was written during and immediately after a graduate course in the *Georgics* (University of North Carolina, first semester, 1970–1971) for which Wilkinson's book was required reading. The students in that course (W. W. Briggs, G. B. Constantinople, H. B. Evans Jr., K. G. Harrison, C. Kelley, K. Rankin, E. Rutledge, S. Scully, and R. C. Zartarian) made many useful observations and suggestions, though the responsibility for opinions here expressed is naturally mine. The course revealed, among other things, the great utility of Wilkinson's book for both teachers and students of the poem.

the poem's structure, "numerical schematism," the proem of Book 3, the Aristaeus Epyllion, "chiastic" motif patterns in the *Aristaeus*, and the scholarly treatment of its agricultural lore and later influence. As in Wilkinson's *Ovid*, some notes are put at the bottom of each page, others (mostly references to scholarly books and articles) at the end of the volume. There is also a full bibliography, and indexes of proper names and passages cited, but not, unfortunately, a general topical index.

All reviews, of course, have to be selective in their criticism if they are not to be intolerably superficial. Wilkinson is very interesting on the *Eclogues* (which he discusses in the context of Virgil's earlier life and career), especially in his treatment of Eclogue 4 (he thinks the "child" was the unborn offspring of Antony and Octavia), of 5 (he definitely holds Daphnis to be Julius Caesar), and of the style and versification of the poems. On a number of points, as I see it, he is in fair agreement with Klingner (whose 1967 *Virgil* he does not seem to have seen) and with my own views, though, of course, there is nothing at all like total agreement.³ But the *Eclogues* are not his main subject and I must, therefore, pass them by, as I shall also pass by his interesting and important but on the whole non-controversial chapters on agricultural lore and *Nachleben*. The great point, of course, is what he does with the *Georgics* as a poem, the only finished or completed long poem of Virgil.

When I looked into the literature of the *Georgics* for the purpose of writing a chapter on it in my 1963 *Virgil* I was, I must admit, astounded by the fact, to which Wilkinson properly draws attention, of its virtual neglect by English-speaking scholars. The French and Italians did somewhat better, but on the whole it is fair to say that, as late as 1960, the scholarship of the *Georgics* was pretty much of a German monopoly. But even the Germans did not have anything very striking to say beyond industrious *Quellenforschung* (Jahn particularly), more or less apposite remarks on the artistic "variety" of its arrangement (Kroll), or largely unproductive speculation on its "numerical" patterns (Witte), until Erich Burck's 1929 *Hermes* article on the "construction" of the *Georgics*. This had been preceded by his dissertation (*De Vergilii Georgicon partibus iussivis* [Leipzig 1926]), but it was the *Hermes* article which was decisive. In brief Burck showed (at least as I and most German scholars now think, and as Wilkinson himself thinks, though, as we shall see, he is very reluctant to extrapolate Burck's results beyond their immediately textual significance) that the *Georgics* simply cannot be taken as an ordinary didactic poem based on the usual didactic (systematic) plan, or even as a "poetical"

³For a criticism of Klingner's interpretation of the *Eclogues* see my article "The *Eclogues*: a Reconsideration in the light of Klingner's Book" in *Vergiliana. Recherches sur Virgile (Roma Aeterna III)*, ed. Henri Bardon and Raoul Verdière (Leyden 1971) 246-259.

didactic poem in which a technical subject matter is interspersed by occasional poetic "digressions" or variegated by occasional departures from the strictly didactic order. The great point of Burck's article and dissertation was that Virgil's ordering and selection of data (his use of Hesiod, Aratus, Varro, Theophrastus, etc.) was Virgilian through and through, and that the transitions and digressions were, so to speak, all of a piece, and constituted a unified poem that was only ostensibly or superficially didactic. Burck was later corrected or criticized in detail (especially by R. Beutler), but his essential results were accepted in Germany and are incorporated in Büchner's magisterial treatment of the poem in the huge Virgil monograph that he wrote for *Pauly-Wissowa* (1955). At the very same time Will Richter was at work on his 1957 edition of the *Georgics*, which was also determined, in at least its most salient features, by Burck's work (cf. Burck's 1959 review).

All this was the basis of my own and Friedrich Klingner's quite independent treatments (Otis, *Virgil* 1963; Klingner, *VG* 1963). Though these were in many respects quite different, they both attempted to elucidate the poetical and symbolic meaning of the poem in the light of Burck's and Büchner's work. Each, it is important to note, had a quite different aim or intention: Klingner was concerned with the poem *as such*, or in its full poetical integrity; I was mainly concerned to elaborate its bearing on the *Aeneid* and on the development of Virgil's narrative style. My chief intention was to show how the Aristaeus Epyllion was determined by the previous three and a half books of the poem, and how the *Aristaeus*, in both its style and symbolic content, was related to the *Aeneid*. But the two approaches, so far as I at least can see, were broadly similar. The main distinction was that I posited a much more precise and exact symbolism or symbolic scheme than did Klingner, who was content (perhaps rightly) to leave the "symbols" fluid or open and to underline the continuity of the poem as a whole.

But it is fair to say that we both went beyond Burck and Büchner in a quite similar direction, or tried to show why their analysis of the poem's "unity" or "continuity" was also a key to its images, language, verse, and style, to what may be called its "poetical movement." Neither Burck, Büchner nor Richter had really attempted this. Though they, of course, saw and noted a number of its "poetical" features, they did not really combine their content-analysis with a truly literary-critical one, or they (particularly Büchner) tended to separate their remarks on the poetry from their actual discussion of the separate books and topics.

Wilkinson, however, has not pursued this line of approach, even though he acknowledges some indebtedness to both Klingner and myself and, in part, accepts the findings of Burck. On the one hand he labels the poem as "descriptive," and considers it to be an "accumulation of detailed dis-

cussions [comprising] a great panoramic picture [of which] the framework . . . [is] a didactic treatise" (11). But he adds (14): "there is much more to it than that." There are also "symbolic possibilities," though they may (as Wilkinson thinks) have been exaggerated by the Germans and myself. In addition to agriculture and natural history and "vignettes" of country life and scenery there are, in Wilkinson's words, "religious and philosophic considerations" and "political significance" to be taken into account. "The farmer's life is *sometimes* [my emphasis] taken as typical of all human life and [in the poem] man is brought starkly face to face with the facts of nature and the powers that govern the universe" (15). Wilkinson acknowledges that the "structure" of the poem is *not* determined simply by its agricultural subject-matter or by any of Virgil's sources, but he also thinks that this sort of consideration can be carried too far. "The difficulty is to know where to stop" (72). He quotes with considerable scepticism from Klingner's somewhat sweeping statement about the "functional relationship and reciprocity" of every word, sentence, and verse group in the poem, and thinks that my own "subordination of didactic matter to a subtler plan" can hardly be squared with the passages where Virgil's dependence on his "technical sources" is obvious, or with the simpler explanation that Virgil often strives for variety for its own sake and for no ulterior reasons (73).

This sounds reasonable enough. It is obvious that Wilkinson is trying for a sensible compromise between the "descriptive" and the "symbolic," or between the "descriptive" and "structural" interpretations of the poem (as these may be briefly, if somewhat misleadingly, labelled). The result, however, seems to me to be rather unhappy: Wilkinson's compromise, in fact, tends to obscure the major problems or issues that the poem presents and to dissipate his argument into a number of isolated discussions, each interesting enough in itself but together distracting the reader from the actual poem. After a chapter on structure (IV) for which Wilkinson is indebted to the Germans (Burck, Richter, Klingner) and, in small part, to myself, he seems to forget about structure and to treat the separate topics (especially Virgil's "philosophical ideas" or his "poetical art") in virtual isolation, even though he is also aware—or at least occasionally aware—that Virgil's "ideas" and "art" cannot finally be separated from the "structure" of his poem.

I also find the chapter on "agricultural lore"—useful indeed as it is—a little disconcerting. Wilkinson seems to feel that only a farmer or countryman ought really to write on the *Georgics*—he apologizes for his own urbanism—almost as if Virgil was a sort of Gilbert White or Thoreau or one of the other literary naturalists, whereas it seems to me (and here Wilkinson's own evidence confirms) that Virgil is not really so much of a naturalist or countryman as a poet combining largely bookish and literary

material with his own emotions and ideas. It is doubtless fascinating to speculate on the identity of his trees and birds and on his agriculture, but I cannot see that such speculation greatly helps us to understand the poem. There is, to be sure, a sense of the country in it that undoubtedly reflects Virgil's own feeling for the country, but I cannot see that this is to be found in his "agricultural lore" any more than the specific locale of Virgil's birthplace is to be found in the landscapes of the *Eclogues*. What I am saying, in short, is that Wilkinson, despite his attention to structure, has given us, in fact, highly interesting notes on Virgil's ideas, politics, art, and agricultural science, no two of which quite meet in the living context of the poetry. I find this especially evident in the remarkable chapter on "poetic approach and art" (VIII). Wilkinson shows here the same sensitivity and command of the subject (even the metric) that made his *Golden Latin Ariistry* so interesting and useful, but, alas, he writes only of isolated passages and lines, so that we do not in fact see how Virgil's metric, rhetoric, and poetical "architectonics" really operate in the poem itself. It is all very well to be sceptical about excessive claims for structural or "symbolic" unity, but this is not at all the same thing as assuming disunity from the start, which Wilkinson's very plan—his discussion of the poem by isolated topics—almost forces him to do.

This is why I myself so much prefer Klingner's general approach (whatever may be said of his results), that is, his arrangement of his book after *Virgil's, not his own*, order, or the treatment of each topic as Virgil himself brings it up in the actual context of the poem. Here also it is evident that Wilkinson has not fully understood Klingner (as I think), and certainly not my own chapter on the *Georgics*. The poem is assuredly didactic in form, obviously incorporates a great deal of material from didactic and learned sources (Varro, Theophrastus, Aratus, Nicander, etc.), and certainly abounds in descriptive "vignettes" and passages. No one that I know of—not even myself—ever doubted these indisputable facts. The real question is whether or not these facts determine the essential character and meaning of the poetry. What sort of poetry in fact is it?

Here it seems to me that Wilkinson's most serious mistake (as I see it) consists in his treatment of the "Theodicy" of Book 1. 118–159 and of the Aristaeus episode at the end of Book 4, for these are certainly key or nodal points of the poem. It is clear, of course, that they are not part of the didactic core but are rather "digressions" from that, as are also such famous passages as the praise of Italy and the happy farmer in Book 2 or the sections on *amor* and the plague in Book 3. But the great question at issue is how these "digressions" are related to the didactic core. Are they "intrinsic" to it or are they not? Wilkinson's interpretation of the Theodicy (as setting the "philosophic tone for the *Georgics* as a whole") seems to me to be quite inconsistent with the entire argument of Book 3 and decidedly

so with Books 2 and 4; while in his estimate of the Aristaeus epyllion as simply an *aition* for the *Bougonia* (the reason for Virgil's choice of Orpheus being "a matter of speculation" only), he seems to me simply to wash his hands of the whole question of the *Georgics*' unity, or indeed to assume that there is no unity in any fundamental sense.

Here it is, I think, essential first of all to grasp the general or over-all plan of the *Georgics*, especially the double agreement (in structure and mood) of Books 1 and 3 on the one hand, and Books 2 and 4 on the other. Wilkinson, when he writes directly of the structure, seems to grant this double agreement (74-75), but he does not, so far as I can see, make anything of it. The fact that Books 1 and 3 begin with proems of similar length (42 and 48 lines) and end with long digressions, while 2 and 4 begin with short prologues (8 and 7 lines) and end with short concluding "signatures," is of course quite unimportant in itself, but does suggest a correspondence between the books (1 and 3; 2 and 4) which their respective tones and contents bear out. Books 1 and 3 are gloomy or pessimistic; 2 and 4 are cheerful and optimistic. Furthermore, as all agree, 3 and 4 fall into almost exactly equal halves which treat different subjects (cattle/sheep, bees/Aristaeus), whereas 1 and 2, dealing with a number of inanimate subjects (crops, trees), are not equally divided in the manner of 3 and 4. Wilkinson is aware of all this, but does not, as I see it, register more than awareness. To my argument (and Klingner's) that these differences also go with a decided contrast and similarity of *content*, of ideas and feelings, he presents no decisive reply except indeed to argue (rather weakly as I see it) that the apparent differences do not in fact affect the over-all significance of the Theodicy of Book 1 or the Aristaeus episode of Book 4.

If, however, the facts just adduced do seem to indicate some scheme or principle of arrangement in the whole poem (not of course an all-inclusive scheme), then we should on *a priori* grounds at least be rightly sceptical of hypotheses that assume disunity from the start (such as, e.g., Bayet's thesis that Book 1 was written separately in 39-38 B.C., before Varro's *Rerum Rusticarum* appeared in 37-36, and was later supplemented by the other three books),⁴ or of theories which regard the *Aristaeus* as merely exterior or supplementary to the whole poem. If Virgil had planned the

⁴Cf. Wilkinson 56 f. His statement "We may doubt therefore whether the book [i.e., 1] as we have it was completed without knowledge of Varro's work (or at least of his First Book)" seems curiously tentative. On this cf. especially Burck's dissertation (*De Vergilii Georgicon partibus iussivis* [Leipzig 1926] 8-12, 16-21). There can really be no doubt at all about Virgil's use of Varro in *Georgics* 1. It is perfectly true that his major use of Varro is in Book 3, just as Theophrastus (or works influenced by Theophrastus) was his major source for Book 2. Virgil, as Burck clearly shows, was very selective in his use and combination of sources, but there is no doubt that he used Varro in his accounts of both the threshing floor and the plough in Book 1.

basic contrasts and similarities of the four books (as he seems to have done) it is very unlikely that pivotal portions of them would have no relation to the plan. It is obvious, of course, that no one could write a long poem at once, and there is no reason to doubt the ancient evidence that Virgil did in fact write it very slowly over some nine years or so. But it does seem almost self-evident that he paid a good deal of attention to the poem as a whole, that he had time for a most extensive revising and harmonizing of the *whole*, as well as the *parts*: thus the proem of Book 1 may be late (29 B.C. or so), as many think, but it is quite clear that he intended both Books 1 and 3 to begin with preludes of similar length (one addressed to Augustus, the other to Maecenas). The poem in other words was thought through in detail and in gross. Unlike the *Aeneid*, it was a highly finished work. It is of course conceivable that the whole *Aristaeus* is a later substitute for *laudes Galli* (as Servius stated and Wilkinson does not believe) or that (as Wilkinson *does* believe) it is a mere *aition*, not otherwise related to the previous content. But to one who notes the correspondences and differences between the books, and the evident design that lies behind them, it is difficult indeed to suppose that Virgil would tack on an essentially unrelated epilogue to the very end of so highly finished a poem. However, we cannot really resolve such a question until we look more particularly at the structure and content and poetic style of the different books.

I cannot of course hope to analyse them here in enough detail to make my point as convincing as I should like. It is perhaps understandable that Wilkinson was not convinced by Klingner or myself. Klingner seems to me to have left a number of vague edges or *aporiae*, and in a sense to have fudged the meaning of decisive points like the *Theodicy* or the *Aristaeus*, whereas I am only too conscious of my own ellipses, or, more exactly, of my concentration on the symbolic schema (as I saw it) rather than on the actual didactic poem itself. Let me try to make the main issues a little clearer at least by discussing Book 1 in some detail and then drawing some conclusions from the rest of the poem.

The first book begins with four and a half lines of definition: the topics (crops, vine, cattle, bees) of the four books are succinctly stated. There follow thirty seven and a half (5–42) lines of invocation which constitute in fact one very long sentence, almost evenly divided between twelve agricultural gods (Sun, Moon, Bacchus, Ceres, Fauns, Dryads, Neptune, Aristaeus, Pan, Minerva, Triptolemus, Silvanus) and Caesar (Octavian). Despite a parenthetic *adsis* (18) addressed to Pan, the *da facilem cursum* etc. of lines 40–42 is the real conclusion of the whole prayer—that for whose performance all the gods are invoked. But the direct reference of 40–42 is to Caesar, as the very last words *et votis iam nunc adsuesce vocari* clearly show. Caesar and Virgil are particularly linked: they share the task

of guiding the lost farmers who are the special objects of their sympathy:

ignarosque viae mecum miseratus agrestis.

All the other gods have special functions and locales: Caesar's are as yet unknown, but the clear indication is that he will become or consent to become the patron of the land and the crops (27), the divine friend of the farmer. Thus the connection of this invocation with the peroration of the book (498 f.) seems to be fully intended. There Caesar is urged to show his Roman sensibility, and Virgil begs the *Indigetes*, with Romulus and Vesta, to let him become the young saviour of the world, if indeed the horrors of the time will not discourage him or do not sour his taste for any more human triumphs. The other gods have, as ever, their normal or natural rôles, but Caesar is the saviour of his age, the one man who can rectify a terrible abnormality, or take pity on a lost humanity.

The question therefore is whether the Caesarean beginning and ending bear any relation to the book which they enclose. Are they extrinsic additions simply stuck on in the year 29 B.C. when the poem was otherwise complete, or are they integral parts of the book? Only an analysis of the whole book can supply an answer.

A generation of scholarly work on the major divisions of the book has led to a measure of consensus: lines 43–203 deal with the farmer's *work* (ploughing, sowing, harvesting, and so forth); 204–350 deal with his *calendar*; 351–514 deal with signs or indications of approaching fair weather, storm, or civil catastrophe. Burck, Review 1959 (224–238), has shown clearly enough the reason for putting the second major division at line 350 rather than 310, as Richter did. Division I (43–203) represents the Hesiodic "Works," Division II (204–350) the Hesiodic "Days," the Farmer's Almanack. That this embraces also lines 311–350 is clear from the words

hoc metuens caeli mensis et sidera serva

[335]

and from the very fact that lines 338–350 describe a "fixed" feast, the Ambarvalia or Ceres festival of harvest time. But lines 311 ff. are also transitional: the emphasis is on the unexpectedness and unseasonal character of the storms, even though they are also spoken of as predicted by the planets Saturn and Mercury. Lines 338–350 form an obvious clausula or end-piece, but the unseasonal weather that is not simply part of the regular or normal almanack is also prepared for.

The peculiar structure of the book is thus quite evident. The first two sections (43–350) are clearly Hesiodic ("Works" and "Days"). The third (351–514) is not a proper part of Hesiod's *Works and Days*, and is in fact based on Aratus' *Diosemeiai* or "Weather Signs," and indeed much more closely or literally based on it than the preceding sections are based on

Hesiod. The reason for the divergence from Hesiod is, partly at least, to be found in the structure of the section. It takes its *signa* or weather signs in an order which is the exact reverse of Aratus' order, or proceeds from the non-astronomical signs (especially the behaviour of animals and birds) to the astronomical and, most of all, to the moon and sun. Virgil has clearly reserved the sun for the climax (not, as in Aratus, the beginning) of his Weather Signs. After the non-astronomical portion of the section (351–423)—it ends with the happy crows, *ovantes gutture corvi*—he begins again, as it were, with the obvious verses of transition:

*si vero solem ad rapidum lunasque sequentis
ordine respicies, numquam te crastina fallat
hora neque insidiis noctis capiere serенаe.*

This transitional section is, however, very short (ten lines, 427–437) and he proceeds once more:

*sol quoque et exorians et cum se condet in undas
signa dabit: solem certissima signa sequentur.*

[438–439]

The ensuing passage (440–463) is mainly devoted to signs of storm or foul weather (440–457), and has only five and a half lines on good weather.

It is clear that the solar *signa* are arranged in much the same way as the non-astronomical *signa*, with storm *signa* preceding the favourable weather *signa* but taking up much more space and much more emphatically described. Thus lines 350–392 deal exclusively with storm *signa*, and, while lines 393–423 (31 as opposed to 43 lines) deal ostensibly with good weather, this is done either by simply negating a bad weather sign (395–400)—saying what does not appear—or by emphasizing what is apparently but not actually pessimistic (the owl, sea-birds, Nisus and Scylla [401–409]), or by speculating on the reasons for premonitory bird cries (good or bad), as with the crows of lines 417–422. We do end (422–423) on a cheerful note, but the cheerful or favourable *signa* are but a feeble contrast to the steadily accumulating woe (the contrast of storm and *Ambarvalia* in lines 310–350 illustrates the same contrast-principle, and of course reinforces it).

The arrangement of content (emphatic bad signs followed by unemphatic good signs) is, however, reinforced and given its full poetic value, so to speak, by the architecture of the verse. The long series of non-astronomical signs is arranged in two parts, culminating respectively at lines 392 and 423. To these the sun is opposed in a series of obviously mounting contrasts: *si vero* (424), *sol quoque* (438), *sin* (454), and the culminating *at si* (458), which apparently indicates a happy contrast to the preceding bad weather signs but actually leads into the *denique* of line 461

through which the final climax of the whole book is prepared:

*denique, quid Vesper serus vehat, unde serenas
ventus agat nubes, quid cogitet umidus Auster,
sol tibi signa dabit. solem quis dicere falsum
audeat? ille etiam caecos instare tumultus
saepe monet fraudemque et operta tumescere bella.*

The final climax has been carefully designed: the very variation of good and bad signs is itself part of it. The storm motif is raised and dropped, but always with increasing emphasis at each repetition so that its final crescendo will be fully climactic. Everything leads up to the so-called "digression" on the sun as social or political prophet, on the signs that accompany Caesar's assassination, or the miserable plight of Rome and its disturbed hope for a saviour.

It is thus impossible to take lines 463–514 as a mere "digression" unrelated to all that precedes. It is furthermore impossible to break the digression itself into separate parts or to read any of its lines (e.g., 458–503, or 503–504) as interpolations. All, as Klingner has ably shown, is part of one whole that moves irresistibly to the climactic image of the helpless charioteer at the very end. The unnatural signs of lines 465–488 conclude with

*non alias caelo ceciderunt plura sereno
fulgura nec diri totiens arsere cometae*

and already call for the clinching *ergo* of 489:

*ergo inter sese paribus concurrere telis
Romanas acies iterum videre Philippi.*

The *iterum* is then taken up by the *bis* of line 491: the Thracian fields being twice enriched by Roman blood (*Haemi pinguescere campos*). This leads inevitably into the *scilicet* of line 493: *scilicet et tempus veniet*, etc. Indeed the time will come when the farmer ploughing this rich land will strike the bones and rust-eaten helmets of Roman dead. But this (497) is simply not a possible conclusion for a book, even though it may sound like one. The tale of horror calls for prayer, a desperate appeal to the gods who have all along been present in the book. So the storm of lines 311–337 was followed by the *in primis venerare deos* of line 338, the account of tillage in lines 43–99 by the prayer for dry winters and wet summers at line 100. And the prayer has to invoke Octavian, the new Caesar: he cannot be left out without depriving the whole plan (498 f.) of both its sense and its plainly designed crescendo. The mention of Caesar and his uncertain divinity passes naturally to the reason for his uncertainty: can he care for human triumphs when there is so much evil (*quippe ubi*, etc. [505])? The tale of woe thus moves to its natural conclusion in the great simile of the

charioteer. The climactic *variatio* of weal and woe continues to the very end, and it is, as anticipated, the woe that prevails.

The question then is not one of the unity of the third section of the book (351–514) but of its relation to the two preceding or “Hesiodic” sections. They have described the normal life of the *colonus*, the hardness of his work in ploughing, sowing, and harvesting—his *labor* and *egestas*—and the divine arrangement of his year: the father Jupiter has designed the heavens and seasons to constitute his almanack, his infallible guide. But he cannot count on any such divine normality. The unexpected breaks in: the sun which determines the very course of his normal year predicts also the civil disorder which deprives him of all honour (*non ullus aratro/dignus honos*), beats his ploughshares into swords, and drives him from his own fields.

Nor is this merely a sudden reversal, an unexpected contradiction of the Hesiodic norm. Virgil repeats his Hesiodic motifs in the very midst of the new or Aratean-Roman section. The plough that gleamed in the furrow (46), the rich field that twice over answered to his spring and winter ploughing, as well as the rust (*robigo*) that ate his grain stalks (150–151), the rakes (94) with which he broke the dead clods (*glæbas inertis*), all appear in lines 491 ff., but in a horrible new guise: it is now bones that are ploughed, helmets that rust, graves that are broken up! The struggling boatman that concluded the first section (199–204) reappears as the struggling charioteer who can no longer control the forces over which he has been set, and is himself carried off by his own horses (*fertur equis auriga*).

When we look at the whole book from this perspective it becomes, I think, apparent that the theodicy of the first section—the disappearance of the golden age considered as a deliberate result of Jove’s concern for mankind, his way of providing the incentives for men to discover the arts of civilization—is anything but complete. All other accounts of the iron age (e.g., those of Horace and Ovid) treated it pejoratively: along with the plough and the arts of civilization came also greed, violence, and war. Man was being punished for his sins, not stimulated for his own good. Lucretius, to be sure, had discarded divine Providence and had seen civilization as a sort of progress, even if also as a hopeless struggle against the eventual deterioration of all complex substances. But was Virgil giving us simply an optimistic and providential version of Lucretius, seeing only a beneficent design in the fatal degeneration of all things (*sic omnia fatis in peius ruere* [199–200])? So Wilkinson suggests, but at the cost, as I see it, of disregarding the whole structure and design of the book.

The book, first of all, is essentially pessimistic. The relative pessimism of Books 1 and 3 is as necessary to the whole poem’s order and meaning as is the relative optimism of Books 2 and 4. The account of the farmer’s work in Section I (43–203) is itself pessimistic: the emphasis of lines 43–98

(ploughing and preparing different kinds of soil) is on the harshness and difficulty of *labor*: man is a *durum genus*; the very variety of nature is a source of constant work—of ploughing, manuring, rotating the crops, breaking the clods, burning the stubble, etc. The same is true of the irrigation and drainage described in lines 100–117: the farmer may pray for wet summers and dry winters, but what he must in fact do is irrigate and drain, or himself supply what the climate or weather does not. Even so—even when he has prepared the land as well as he can—there are all sorts of pests to be watched for, such as destructive birds and weeds. All this prepares us for the digression that begins with line 121:

*pater ipse colendi
haud facilem esse viam voluit*

But the theodicy that emerges is not left to itself. The climactic lines 145–146

*labor omnia vicit
improbis et duris urgens in rebus egestas*

are followed by an account of Ceres' institution of agriculture with the plough: it is a necessary consequence of the failure of natural spontaneity—no more free acorns or arbutus berries. But soon the *new* crops also are affected: *mox et frumentis labor additus*; and *labor*, here at least, is equated with the rust that eats their stalks, the pernicious thistle, all the destructive weeds! Work, the ruthless struggle with a host of enemies, is the only recourse. Otherwise back to the acorns (*concussaue famem in silvis solabere quercu* [159])! With this obvious *Ausklang* the theodicy passage (118–159) comes to an end.

What follows (160–203) is likewise pessimistic: the hard task of constructing the farmer's weapons (he must actually *make* his own plough); the enemies of the threshing floor; the hopelessness of getting a good crop without the most laborious selection of seeds. Everything in nature is designed to exacerbate the farmer's struggle, a struggle not with a good or "normal" environment but with one constantly and progressively going to the bad. The simile in lines 199–203 is an obvious *Schlussfigur* (to use Klingner's term) designed to mark the close of the "Works" section.

The pessimism of the second section (204–350) is much less evident. The days are clearly marked out by the sun and by Jove himself (*ipse pater*) for the farmer's good, for his celestial almanack. But the emphasis on *work* continues, work when the weather keeps the farmer indoors, work even on holidays (when not expressly forbidden), work in the winter evenings (indeed, the winter is the only time when the farmer can relax [299 f.]), work at all possible moments. Nevertheless this section is also ambivalent: quite aside from the brief mention of *genialis hiems* (although *hiems* is also labelled *ignava*), there is the delightful account of peace and relaxation in

the Ambarvalia, the passage which, as we have seen, closes the section, and the sense of the year's providential character (the sun has himself apportioned the temperate zones for humankind) is strongly marked. But clearly this middle section had to be different from the two that surround it: without such *variatio* or occasional relaxation of tone the effectiveness of Virgil's climaxes would have been certainly lost.

Yet there is, I think, more to it than that. The *colonus* is providentially guided. Even his work is in some sense a good. Even his enemies can contribute to his eventual success. But he is clearly not left to himself: the arts of civilization are not simply those that contribute to his progress and wealth. If the bad aspects of civilization are left out of the "theodicy," they clearly emerge in the climactic end of the book:

*fas versum atque nefas: tot bella per orbem,
tam multae scelerum facies, non ullus aratro
dignus honos.*

It is as if Virgil had deliberately separated what Ovid and his predecessors had put together; after talking of the origin of navigation Ovid adds the lines:

*communemque prius ceu lumina solis et auras
cautus humum longo signavit limite messor
nec tantum segetes alimentaue debita dives
poscebatur humus, sed itum est in viscera terrae,
quaque recondiderat Stygiisque admoverat umbris
effodiuntur opes, inritamenta malorum.
iamque nocens ferrum ferroque nocentius aurum
prodierat. prodit bellum quod pugnat utroque* [Met. 1.135-142]

What Virgil does, by separating what Ovid and the rest had united into one bad picture, is to suggest the ambiguity or polarity of civilization. It is not in his eyes devoid of providential significance—he accepts neither Lucretius' nor Hesiod's pessimism—but it has taken a wrong turning. The evil passions of men, especially of Roman historical man, have turned its good into evil; the struggles of the farmer have been defeated, not by nature, but by man. Nor is the whole story just one of *labor* and *egestas*, of struggling against cosmic degeneration and personal poverty. There is, I think, a clear relation of natural (199 f.) and moral deterioration (512-514). The picture of Book 2 is, however, one of natural spontaneity, of which indeed the immense variety of lands and climates is only an expression. But variety in Book 1 is thought of as a harsh condition imposed on man (60-61) from the time of his creation out of Deucalion's stones. But the great line of Book 2

agricola incurvo terram dimovit aratro

[513]

that comes as the decisive contrast to a climactic account of all the varieties

and evils of political and social ambition is an intentional allusion to the farmer of Book 1 (Book 2 is itself not at all concerned with ploughing), and the line is obviously meant to recall 1.494:

agricola incurvo terram molitus aratro

which introduces the gruesome account of the bones and rusted helmets that the ploughshare brings to light. Thus it is clear from the idyllic standpoint of Book 2 that man, when left to himself—when he is not threatened by all the evil conditions of civilization—finds his calling an ideal way of life almost on a par with the contemplative ideal of the philosopher, and productive of very much the same sort of *ataraxia* or *apatheia*. In this sense the civilization of the plough is clearly a very good thing.

But the providentiality of the farmer's life is threatened. Even Jupiter and the other gods are not sufficient to save it. Whether the farmer's work is seen only in its Hesiodic or iron age aspect, or whether it is seen as quasi-Saturnian and idyllic (as in Book 2), it nevertheless is exposed to evils from which it must be saved. Things have gone beyond the point of normal remedy. In a word, a new god is required for a new situation. In this way the natural evils of Book 1 can change into goods, or the work of the farmer will be seen in a quite different light. In any event, we cannot possibly eliminate the evident contrast of the Saturnian world of Book 2 and the Iron Age world of Book 1. But, even though the optimism of Book 2 is an evident counterweight to the pessimism of Book 1, the essential evil and the essential salvation are the same in both.

Such an analysis points, I think, to the real trouble with Wilkinson's book. He does not really grasp the basic movement of the poem. His very separation of "structure," "ideas," and "versification and style" into separate and disconnected chapters is evidence of this. Virgil builds his motifs into the very periods of his architectonic verse, so that a rich variety of moods and topics subserves an essential unity, a gradually emergent climax that is also in some sense a synthesis. All recent work on the sources of these books (such as that of, e.g., Jahn and Richter) indicates the wholesale manner in which Virgil has recast Hesiod, Lucretius, Varro, Aratus, etc., into a quite different order and ensemble. The section on the farmer's work is not concerned with the details of ploughing, sowing, and harvest, except insofar as these subserve a fully Virgilian structure that builds by way of the theodicy to the climactic simile of the struggling boatman. The central "days" section is so arranged as to merge into and anticipate (310–350) the final weather signs section, and the latter itself is arranged (as the reversal of Aratus's order clearly shows) to reach a climactic Roman and Augustan conclusion. The *addition* of Augustus to the agricultural gods of the proem is explained by the unique rôle attributed

to him at the end of the book: Virgil begs the native gods of the country (*di patrii*, *Indigetes*) to give a free hand (*ne prohibete*) to Augustus' restoring work. He can do what they cannot.

I cannot take space to analyse Books 3 and 4 in the same detail. But here also it seems to me that Wilkinson quite underestimates the meaning of their very clearcut structures. It is not simply that the two "climaxes" of Book 3 (the digressions on *amor* and the plague) are intrinsic developments of its two main (and equal) sections (the first on cattle and horses, the second on sheep and goats), but that they in fact pose the problem to which Book 4 is both a contrast and, in some sense, a solution. The way in which the purely agricultural matter of the cattle-horses section—the breeding of brood cows and stallions—leads, *via* the briefer connective section on training (156–208), to the "digression" (209–285) on the terrible and destructive character of sex passion or *amor*, is one of the most remarkable instances of Virgilian art. If we remove the so-called digression, the whole section loses its point and significance, loses the climax that the whole sequence has led us to expect. The same can quite as accurately be said of the second section on the smaller animals: here it is evident that Virgil's concern is not simply with sheep and goats but with their relative passivity and fragility, the constant care that they require. But the danger that confronts them—and it is steadily more apparent that this danger is in fact death—is one that also confronts the larger animals and man himself, just as *amor* is a fate that hangs over most animate beings.

This is why I cannot possibly avoid the conclusion that the bees of the first half of Book 4 are meant to form an almost exact contrast to the big and small animals of Book 3. Virgil's bees lack sex, are indifferent to death, and live only for the hive, the community that is so pointedly likened to a state or *civitas*.⁵ The bee-section is in fact divided into two parts, separated

⁵The structure of the section on the "nature" of the bees (149–227) indicates the Virgilian emphasis: lines 149–196 (to which I would, like Bentley, Richter, and others, append the misplaced lines 203–205) deal with the harmonious *labor* of the bees; 197–209 (omitting 203–205) with their non-sexual method of reproduction; 210–218 with their common patriotism, their devotion to their king; 219–227 with the "divine" meaning of such a way of life. Mynors' paragraphing (as corrected by the transposition of lines 203–205) indicates the climactic structure of the whole passage with the terminal *Ausklänge* or conclusions: 203–205, 208–209, 217–218, and 226–227. The designed correspondence with (and difference from) the *amor* passage of Book 3 (209–283 with the climactic "digression" of 242–283) is (to me) clear. Compare 3.242

omne adeo genus in terris hominumque ferarumque

with 4.197

illum adeo placuisse apibus mirabere morem

and 4.223

hinc pecudes, armenta, viros, genus omne ferarum;

or 3.243 (*amor omnibus idem*) with 4.184 (*omnibus una quies operum, labor omnibus*

by the deliberately unclimactic and digressive account of the Corycian farmer: the first deals with the environment and habits of the bees; the second with their nature, with what determines, and with what conspicuously does *not* determine, their activities. The second is obviously a much more serious or climactic part: the Corycian digression marks, as it were, a shift of tone, a shift from the relative lightness and hollowness of the first part to a much more serious and earnest mixture of morality and philosophy.

But the second half of Book 4 marks, of course, a total departure from the didactic and agricultural matter of the preceding three and a half books. It is in fact a double "epyllion" (like Catullus' *Peleus and Thetis*), and its inner core (the *Orpheus and Eurydice*) is obviously designed to constitute its real point or centre. If we assume, as Wilkinson does, that this is no later addition tacked on after Gallus' disgrace and death to take the place of an original laudation of him, can we really believe that it has no other function than that of being an *aition* or embellished explanation of the *bougonia*, the birth of the swarm from the carcass of a dead bullock? To hold that Virgil could ever have designed as careful and climactically structured a work as the *Georgics*—his only finished work of magnitude—to come to a merely digressive or irrelevant conclusion seems to me a denial of what is most Virgilian in both the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid*.

I am not, however, very satisfied with my former account of the *Aristaeus-Orpheus*, nor with that of Klingner or others (e.g., Charles Segal). In this sense Wilkinson was, I think, justified in much of his scepticism. As I now see it, however, the point of the *Aristaeus-Orpheus* must in some sense be its relation to both the bee-section of Book 4 and the whole argument of Book 3. The fact that the bees owe their cooperative labour to the absence of *amor* and their indifference to death—in short to their emphatic

unus). Compare also the introduction of the digression on the plague (*et genus omne neci pecudum dedit, omne ferarum* [3.480]). The difference also between the conception of *labor* here (4.149 f.) and that of Book 1 (*labor improbus*) is quite striking. But, as one of my students (Miss E. Rutledge) has pointed out, the evils of Book 1 are both natural and human (or part of civilization), whereas the evils of Book 3 (*amor, mors*) are *only* natural, fates that embrace man and beast alike, essential elements of their natural makeup and natural environment. But it is clear that the bees are simply collective animals; their own deaths are negated by the immortality of the hive for which they so gladly give up their lives, and they have no *amor* or disruptive passion at all. Obviously, however, the gap between the human or civilized perspective of Books 1 and 2 (the farmer) and the animal or naturalistic perspective of Books 3 and 4 (up to line 280) has to be closed. It is through the prospective destruction of the whole hive or swarm (4.281) that man (Aristaeus, Orpheus, etc.) is reintroduced, both in the form of the civilized arts (agriculture, music) and in the form of personal or humanly felt *amor* and *mors*. And with man Virgil also re-introduces the gods, who had played so significant a rôle in Books 1–2 and had then been withdrawn (the insistence on the contradiction of any theodicy by the plague of Book 3 is as striking as the impersonal pantheism of 4.219–227).

difference from the animals of Book 3—has not I think been taken seriously enough. In my *Virgil* I put the emphasis of the *Aristaeus* on the resurrection of the bees and on the complementary failure of Eurydice's resurrection in the *Orpheus* (or Orpheus' defeat by his own *amor-furor*), thus investing the whole episode with an Augustan moralism that I cannot, on later consideration, feel at all happy about. Klingner saw mainly a contrast of weal and woe or *Heil* (or eternal life) and *Unheil* (or death), the sort of contrast he found throughout the whole poem. This seems to me correct as far as it goes, but hardly more than a vague approximation to the specific meaning that the whole sequence of book and poem would lead us to expect. The fact however that now seems determinative to me is that the *Aristaeus-Orpheus* emphasizes precisely the two things—love and death—that the bee-section leaves out and Book 3 insists upon. It is perfectly true that the *Aristaeus* does give an answer to the eventuality raised at the conclusion of the bee-section:

sed si quem proles subito defecerit omnis

[281]

and that this is led up to by a recital of the dangers (e.g., disease) which affect the hive (251–280). This, as Richter points out, is closely analogous to the conclusion of the sheep-goats section of Book 3, the conclusion that leads into the plague. Nevertheless the analogy is by no means complete: the account of bee-diseases puts its emphasis on cure and quite lacks the gloomy tonality of the analogous sheep-goats passage. Line 281 (*sed si quem*, etc.) comes, in its own context, as a rather abrupt change of mood and subject. Virgil, it seems to me, is saying here that his bee *civitas* is in no sense self-sufficient, that he has not said the last word. The spectres of love and death—which had seemingly been laid by his cheerful account of the bee commonwealth—now once more come to the fore. Furthermore, though his *epyllia*, formally considered, introduce only another species of cure—the *bougonia*—they are not in fact primarily concerned with bees: what stand out are human personalities, Aristaeus himself and above all Orpheus and Eurydice.

That love and death are indeed afflictions of man as well as of the animals was carefully and deliberately stated in Book 3. Hero and Leander are instances of love and its fatal ending. Leander is drowned and Hero—the *moritura puella*—dies in consequence. The plague of Book 3 ends with the death of the human beings who have finally taken contagion from the animals. In Orpheus and Eurydice we see the same thing—the fatality of *amor-furor* and death—in a peculiarly climactic and concentrated way. The *bougonia*, in contrast, seems but a pale compensation. Nor can we press the allegorical resemblance of bee-swarm and human *civitas* to the point of full or even partial equivalence with the starkly un-allegorical tragedy of the human lovers. This, it seems to me, is to belie the dramatic salience of the *Orpheus*.

I would not deny that in some sense Virgil still adheres to the swarm-*civitas* analogy and that he in some sense suggests the resurrection of a dead or dying *civitas*—like the civil-war *civitas* of Book 1, the *civitas* which Augustus re-animated—but the *Orpheus*, nevertheless, cannot I think be restricted to such a frame of reference. It is true that Orpheus failed to recover Eurydice because he could not at the crucial moment control his own passion, and it is possible, I think, that Virgil saw in this a partial moral with a Roman application. But the *bougonia* is still not the thing which sways our own or Virgil's imagination. The real burden of the episode is not resurrection but *amor* and death. Nor would I, like Klingner, look back at this point to the immortality of the bees and of life in general set forth in lines 219–227. This immortality has been in fact cancelled by the total destruction envisaged at line 281, and it is not to be equated with the *bougonia*. It is, furthermore, a collective or social immortality: the bees, unlike human beings, are not concerned with their personal fate or death. The vision of transcendent souls in *Aeneid* 6—to which Klingner turns for elucidation here—is, it seems to me, a product of a later and very much more deeply Augustan synthesis.

The fact is that, while there is harmony and synthesis in the *Georgics*, there is also contrast and dissonance. The life of man and of nature, like the course of civilization, is tragic and contradictory as well as irenic and harmonious. In Book 1 the farmer is seen as engaged in bitter struggle with a contumacious and degenerating environment: even the civilization by which he conquers the evils of nature is both a moral reaction to natural hardship (and in this sense a theodicy, the gods' reward of human labour and virtue) and a thing that can itself corrupt all good values, can reduce the farmer to misery and the world to violence and chaos. There is no certainty that the gods or even an Octavian can save it or will want to save it. In Book 2 the other or irenic side predominates: nature in its varied spontaneity—and above all in its Italian character of golden mean—offers man the good life, the best of livings. Though he may not appreciate his blessings, both nature and civilization (Rome) are nevertheless seen in a positive, beneficent light. In the last two books the disparate forces or powers of nature are seen from the inside, or within nature itself. The animals of Book 3 are, like men, subject to disruptive *amor* and death. But the animals of Book 4—the bees—are altogether co-operative, immune from *amor*, and indifferent to death. The *civitas* is all that counts. But even the *civitas*—the whole swarm—can be destroyed. The forces which doom it are, once more, passion and death, or passion leading to death. Agriculture and music-poetry—Aristaeus and Orpheus—possess, in one sense, the secret of resurrection, but, in another, they possess also the capacity to lose it, to sacrifice it to destructive passion.

It is even tempting to think that Virgil, in writing the *Orpheus-Eurydice*, had the tragic fate of his beloved Gallus in mind. There is very good reason

to suppose that Virgil himself was the first to invent the fatal backward glance which ruined the hopes of Orpheus.⁶ Could he not have altered an original version, in which, according to the common tradition, Orpheus did indeed save Eurydice (and was therefore inclined to show mercy to Aristaeus), into the present tragedy of *amor-furor*, the tragedy for which Aristaeus makes so slight and unconvincing an atonement? We do not, however, need to indulge in this sort of hypothesis. Virgil had no reason to change his poem—save for the possible omission of an obviously outmoded eulogy—in order to make it conform to the fate of Gallus. The *Georgics* as a whole takes ample account of evil and tragedy; and the final tragedy of Orpheus and Eurydice is but the last sounding of a note that had been introduced in Book 1, had dominated Book 3, and was hardly to be exorcised by the peculiarly passionless and impersonal bees. The co-operative state is of course one aspect of reality—Roman and human as well as animal and natural reality—but it is not the whole.

But what in any event can hardly be denied without total disregard for the poem's unity is the relevance of the *Aristaeus-Orpheus* to the whole work. Had Virgil left us with only the bee commonwealth—the state so conspicuously built on the absence of *amor* and the irrelevance and impotence of death—the force of the pessimistic Books 1 and 3 would have been lost or made absurdly irrelevant. Furthermore, the final re-emergence of man or of human personality had been demanded by the whole tenor of the work.⁷ The harsh and happy lots of the farmers of Books 1 and 2, the

⁶My student H. B. Evans Jr. (above, n. 2) points out that Bowra ("Orpheus and Eurydice," CQ 46 [1952] 113–126) has certainly misinterpreted the only passage (Pl. *Symp.* 179d) that records an unsuccessful result of Orpheus' *catabasis*. Plato says that Orpheus was only shown a phantom Eurydice, not that he brought it back to earth or lost it en route. There is no apparent or obvious connection between Plato and the famous Naples relief, certainly nothing to indicate the backward glance that was in Virgil so fatal. One cannot of course prove Virgil's invention of this incident from the absence of other evidence, but there is in fact no other evidence. Wilkinson seems perturbed by the general neglect of Bowra's article (actually I had discussed it in the voluminous notes that I discarded from the original text of my *Virgil*), but it is difficult to see what it does except to suggest evidence where evidence does not exist. The important point, in any event, is that Virgil either invented or selected a very unusual variation of the myth for an obvious purpose, i.e., to depict an attempt at resurrection that was frustrated by passion.

⁷See above, n. 5. The "gap" between the humanity of Books 1–2 and the "inhumanity" of nature in Books 3–4 (280) is not so much one between man and nature as between man seen as the master and friend of nature and man seen in subjection to it. The bee *civitas* is, in one sense, a replica of the human *civitas*; in another, an inhuman collectivity governed by instinct only (the *labor* is not disturbed by *amor* or a human fear of death). When this is altogether destroyed (281), the very possibility of a *natural* solution to passion and death or of a natural-instinctive "civilization" is removed: only the compensation of human freedom by divine grace, so to speak, can save the situation. That Virgil puts his "solution" into the form of a myth or fantasy is a sign of the leap of thought, the change of venue one might say, which is necessary to bridge the "gap" mentioned above.

destructive and cooperative instincts of the animals of Books 3 and 4, all express or imply the human situation. Both the master-farmer and the master-poet were not only not outside or above nature, they were themselves subject to its primary forces. This is what both Aristaeus and Orpheus finally reveal: the cooperative commonwealth is after all exposed to passion and death. The most marvellous achievements of poetry and agriculture—to which we can add those of politics and government—are tragically limited: resurrection and restoration are possible, but they are always threatened.

But the problem that Wilkinson's book particularly raises is how we can know or "prove" all this. If *we* can call Wilkinson's "descriptive" an inadequate label for the poem, *he* can with some justice retort by pointing to the inadequacy of a simply allegorical or "symbolic" interpretation. The poem is full of concrete images, of agricultural and rural content. We can easily omit or minimize this content by an excess of concentration on what we might call its "symbolic plot" or arrangement. The question is one of where the real emphasis lies, of what in fact constitutes the weight and value of the actual poetry. Neither Klingner nor I myself have, I think, made this clear or, to use other language, shown how the descriptions, the agricultural matter, the borrowings from Hesiod, Varro, Theophrastus, Aratus, Aristotle, and Lucretius were determined or controlled by the "symbolic" unity or plan of the poem, or shown how this plan was intrinsic, rather than additive or extraneous, to the poem's actual content. Wilkinson, as I understand him, does not deny the sort of "plan" to which Burck and his successors have pointed. What he does deny is its importance or cruciality for the comprehension or appreciation of much or most of the poem. What, it seems to me, is required here is a closer consideration not only of gross structure—the poem's major divisions—but of its many separate sections or "paragraphs." To some extent Klingner tried to do this, but only in an incomplete and impressionistic way—by suggestion and example, so to speak, rather than by complete, rigorous, and detailed analysis.

Let me try at least to suggest what such an analysis would be like (I have already partially done this in my discussion of Book 1). One of the admirable features of Mynors' recent text is its paragraphing, its demarcation of the units or sections of the text. Careful consideration of his text has convinced me that he has, with few exceptions, hit upon the right or poetically coherent units (as compared, for example, with the paragraphing or sectioning of Richter).⁸ This is so, as I see it, because these units are

⁸Here Burck and Richter have never been superseded. The analysis of Virgil's sectioning or paragraphing in Klingner's discussion of the *Aeneid*, especially Book 9 (in his 1967 *Virgil*, a book unfortunately either not available or not used by Wilkinson; cf. my 1969 review) was the first decisive or convincing treatment of the subject; but, despite the acuteness of many analyses of passages in his 1963 *VG* (reprinted without change in

dramatically coherent verse-groups that build up to a point or climax. These units, in turn, are the building blocks of longer units, equally climactic or dramatic in structure. While similar "units" or sections can doubtless be found in earlier (Lucretius) or in later (Ovid or Lucan) Latin poets, they are in fact rudimentary or sporadic by comparison with Virgil's. The *Georgics* is particularly or supremely dramatic and climactic. Everything in the *Georgics* contributes to a mounting, a climax-building movement which even outruns the separate books and over-arches the whole. But the movement is not uniformly climactic, or, to speak more exactly, the climaxes themselves are secured by an elaborate series of contrasts, of retardations and accelerations, by an alternation of light and heavy effects, a deliberate chiaroscuro or shift of tonalities. It is only when we see how the content—the agricultural and the didactic portions as well as the nominal digressions—is subordinated to this sort of movement—how Varro, Theophrastus, Aratus, etc., are made to conform to it—that we can reach an understanding of "structure" that is also a guide to the poetry itself.

the 1967 *Virgil*), he did not apply the same method to the *Georgics*, even though the *Georgics* (in my view) is quite as much or even more susceptible to it. The point of chief importance is that Virgil (in both *Georgics* and *Aeneid*) writes in "paragraphs" or "sections" that build up to a climax-line or conclusion (often a simile) by means of rhetorical devices (often anaphora), connective particles, and the general grammatical-metrical structure. By and large, Mynors' new *Virgil* seems to me to show a finer feeling for such "paragraphs" than any previous edition, though even he is usually following a previous practice. It will, I think, be of the greatest importance for the future study of Virgil to determine the origin or history of this practice. It certainly cannot be derived from the manuscripts, so far at least as I can discover, but in part it may represent a good early tradition. In 2.1-258, for example, the successive paragraphs begin with the following words: *hactenus, principio, quare, sponte sua, nec modus, praeterea, nec vero, sed neque, nunc locus, nunc quo*. The great "digression" of lines 136-176 has a climactically chiasmic arrangement of the bad things that Italy lacks and the good things it possesses, leading into emotional invocations of Italian objects and a series of dramatic *haec's* (*haec* = *Italia*), concluding with a final invocation of Italia itself, the *Saturnia tellus*, and a triumphant assertion of the poet's own *ego* as Hesiodic bard (176). This in turn is led up to by the climactic movement of the preceding passages (note especially lines 83-108, 109-135). The variety of *species* in lines 83-108 (concluding with similes of the multitudinous sands and waters) is succeeded by the variety of lands in lines 109-135, though the special emphasis is on the exotic and dangerous vegetation of Media. The way is prepared for the *sed neque Medorum silvae*, etc., that begins the climactic digression. Virgil, of course, does not achieve his climaxes without retardations and contrasts (otherwise they would be intolerable, or rival the shrill monotony of Lucan). The important point is that there is a continuous *poetical* movement, a series of great *crescendos* of which the "digressions" form the peaks or climaxes. Wilkinson shows some sense of this in his analysis of what he calls "lyrical" passages (cf. especially 190 f.), but he stresses the variety and artfulness of Virgil's metre, rhetoric, and vocabulary rather than the *position* of his metrical cola and sentences in the broad units or sections of the poem. He never seems to ask what the *relation* is between the passages he labels *didactic* and *lyrical* respectively. But I would still emphasize the sensitivity and acuteness of his detailed observations.

We have already seen how Virgil's reversal of the order of Aratus' *Diosemeiai*—the putting of the birds before the celestial signs, the moon and the sun—was essential to his "climactic" emphasis on the sun, and how it enabled him to make the pivotal contrast between the Sun as determiner of the agricultural year and the Sun as prophet of doom. Klingner has indicated how his reversal of the order of Varro's second book (the putting of the larger *before* the smaller animals in *Georgics* 3) made possible the character and climactic force of the whole of Book 3. But we can see the same thing *in parvo* when we compare Arist. *HA* 6.18 with *Georgics* 3.247–283 (especially the pivotal insertion of Hero and Leander between the lines on the *amor* of horses and other animals), or the beginning of Book 2 with Theophr. *Hist. Pl.* 2.1–4, or such descriptive passages as Varro's plough, brood cow (2.5. 7–8), and horse (2.7. 5–6), or, perhaps most of all, Lucretius' plague, with their Virgilian "copies."

What is remarkable about these passages of the *Georgics* is not simply their conversion of the prosaic or didactic to poetry but their subordination of content to an over-all movement of ideas and feelings determined by an emotional-symbolic and *not* by an agricultural-didactic plan. Wilkinson's account (85 f.) of the movement of Book 2, for example, is, so far as it goes, quite accurate and highly suggestive. His emphasis on recurrent themes ("Foreign lands," "Military," etc.) is especially helpful. Yet he does not stop to ask why Virgil adopted his peculiar arrangement here: the theme of *variety* leading into the Italian theme; the deliberately technical discussion of soils; the emphasis on the vine (*vis-à-vis* other trees) and the peculiar interspersing of vignettes (the drawn-up legions, the great oak tree, the blazing olive trees, Spring, the *Compitalia*) throughout the section on the vines; the final digression on the life of the farmer. If these topics are considered in relation to the paragraphing (as indicated by, e.g., Mynors), it seems to me evident that Virgil is not so much interested in soils or plants (even the vine) as in depicting the varied spontaneity of nature (itself of course setting off and accenting the "golden mean" or natural standard that is Italy) and the way in which man can use and enjoy it (by his military arrangement of the vineyard, his choice of supports—oak or olive—his spring planting, his final celebration at harvest time), so that the whole can lead naturally into the grand "digression" at line 458: *o fortunatos nimium*, etc. But we must *also*, as I have indicated, take this book in conjunction with Book 1 (where the *variety* of *labor* and nature is seen from a very different point of view), and both Books 1 and 2 in conjunction with the *amor*, death, and *labor* of Books 3 and 4. It is surely not hard to see how the "breeding" of the first part of Book 3 is transformed by the brief section on the "training" of the big animals into a consideration of *amor* as such, or as the terrible natural force that it is. And so also with the development of the death-theme out of the second half, where the Italian, Libyan, and Scythian shepherds give a

progressively grimmer tone to the whole, so that once again the apparently technical section on the care of the small animals can lead into the digression on the Plague. The difference here between Virgil's and Lucretius' order is striking, a point that Wilkinson neglects or minimizes.

One must, of course, guard against an excess of ingenuity that is determined to find coherence and climactic progress in every phrase and verse group. (Perhaps Klingner can here be accused of a certain exaggeration.) I think that there are many numerical balancings and symmetries in the poem, but I cannot see how the speculations of Le Grelle (though they are, in my view, more soundly based than those of Witte or Magdalena Schmidt) really add to our appreciation of the poetry. A proper analysis of paragraphs or sections, such as Klingner's analysis of the great digression at the end of Book 2 (the structure of the *laus Italiae* [2.136-176] is equally ingenious and climactic), can be very enlightening; a purely mechanical or "numerological" analysis cannot. The main point to be stressed is that the *Georgics* are in fact determined by an emotional-ideological movement which distorts and rearranges the didactic base or content. But we cannot appreciate this (let alone show it) by numerical or mathematical means. Here Wilkinson seems to me to be quite justifiably sceptical.

But it is time to end. Wilkinson's book is, as I have said, full of good things. I am particularly impressed by his chapter (VIII) on Virgil's "Poetic Approach and Art." No one has said as much or written so well on the subject of Virgil's metric; and he is also very good on Virgil's vocabulary and rhetoric. The real difficulty of his book, as I have said, is that the "unity" or poetical meaning of the *Georgics* is so largely lost in what is after all a piece-meal and topical treatment of details and aspects. This also comes out, I think, in his interpretation of the theodicy of Book 1 and the Aristaeus *epyllion*, where his essential error (as I see it) is a failure to put them in context or even to see what their true context is. In one sense, there is warrant for stopping short of a particular thesis or hypothesis about the poem—for trying to remain, so to speak, "above the battle," or to preserve a sort of broad, common-sense perspective from which no one interpretation is preferred to another. But, though such an approach can work for many poems, it does not, I think, work for the *Georgics*. One great merit of Wilkinson's book, however, is that it provides the student with all the material—including in particular an admirable review of previous scholarship and a very complete bibliography—that he requires for making his own assessment and criticism. No serious future reader of the poem can possibly do without it. Many, if not most, of my criticisms are after all oblique indications of its value.

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