

The Wine of Maron

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—*In Memory of Edward Kennard Rand*

In a series of articles on the significance of certain assumed examples of symbolism in Vergil's *Eclogues*¹ the writer has leaned heavily on some aspects of the political events in Italy of the years 39/38 B.C. as explanations of the meaning which Vergil seems to have read into the Sicilian folktale of Polyphemus and Galatea. Various reflections of the erotic motifs from Theocritus' treatment of this tale are introduced by the poet, if I am right, in the fanciful background of contemporary poets who, in the guise of shepherds, engage in song contests in the third and also in the seventh pastoral.

The fictional "wooing" of these bucolic figures in the humorous presentation of Theocritus was correlated by the poet with the attempts made by Octavian to "woo" both Antony and Sextus Pompey in the difficult years 40–38. During that period two efforts were made by Octavian to win over his opponents—first by the Peace of Brundisium and secondly by the Peace of Misenum. My contention is that the third, second and first pastorals should be dated a year or two later than the fourth *Eclogue* (40 B.C.)—not earlier as is generally held.²

¹ John J. H. Savage, "The Art of the Third *Eclogue* of Vergil (55–111)," *TAPA* 89 (1958) 142–58 (hereafter cited as *Art III*); "The Art of the Second *Eclogue* of Vergil," *TAPA* 91 (1960) 353–75 (cited as *Art II*); "The Cyclops, the Sibyl and the Poet," *TAPA* 93 (1962) 410–42 (cited as *The Cyclops*); "The Art of the Seventh *Eclogue* of Vergil," *TAPA* 94 (1963) 248–67 (cited as *Art VII*).

² There has been considerable controversy on the dates of *Ecl.* 1, 2, 3 and 5. My conviction that these poems—along with the seventh—should be dated *after* 40, the accepted date for the fourth pastoral, is basic for the acceptance of the hypotheses assumed in the four articles cited in note 1 (cf. *Art VII* 251). The poet was much concerned with the aftermath of two futile treaties, Brundisium in 40 and Misenum in 39. Tityrus in *Ecl.* 1 was a "servus publicus." See L. Halkin, *Les Esclaves publics chez les Romains* (Brussels 1897) 15–16. It is likely that the poet played on his *praenomen* "Publius."

The question now arises: Was Vergil conditioned, as we would say, by the experiences of his own childhood and family background to an unusual interest in the legends associated with the giant Cyclops whose wooing of the gentle sea nymph Galatea furnished a congenial theme for generations of poets? Vergil, as we shall see, was fascinated by the incident, first delineated by the most famous of these poets in his report of the presentation to Odysseus of casks of wine of unusual potency from his host Maron, a priest of Apollo in the land of Ismarus (*Odys.* 9.193–99).³

Were there any other motifs other than those of literary origin which induced Vergil to use the folktale of Polyphemus and Galatea as a background for much of his *Bucolics*? Modern literary critics tend to stress subconscious drives in their attempts to fathom the secrets of the work of any creative artist. Maro, the *cognomen* of Vergil, is well attested. This *cognomen* should surely have had interesting implications for a poet who, throughout his epic, made free use of hundreds of historical and fictional names and set them in the appropriate framework of his *Aeneid*.⁴ In the only place where the poet uses his own name in his work he refers to himself as “Vergilius” (*Geo.* 4.563). The ancient MSS of the poet’s three major works present us with his full name, P. Vergilius Maro.

PROLOGUE AT ISMARA

Homer tells of the encounter at Ismarus in Thrace of Odysseus with “Maron, son of Evanthes, priest of Apollo,” who presented the Greek hero as a token of gratitude with “a dozen jars of sweet, unmixed wine, a drink fit for the gods” (*Odys.* 9.203–205). When Odysseus finally landed on the coast of Sicily where

³ The text from this passage in the *Odyssey* is given below, p. 391.

⁴ Cf. Catherine Saunders, “Sources of the Names of Trojans and Latins in Vergil’s *Aeneid*,” *TAPA* 71 (1940) 537–55. In a scene of robust irony Vergil (*Aen.* 11.640–45) introduces an Argive soldier named Catillus who strikes down a giant named Herminius “to whom wounds were no terror.” The ancient commentators saw here an excerpt from Roman history (*de historia Romana est*). He was a comrade of Horatius Cocles at the celebrated fight against the Etruscans at the *pons Sublicius*. The irony consists in creating as the opponent of Herminius one whose name was identified with one of the founders of Tibur (cf. *Aen.* 7.672). Horace frequently refers to this town as his favorite spot for retirement (*Ode* 1.7.13–14). Moreover Cocles is represented on the shield of Aeneas (*Aen.* 8.650). The eleventh *Aeneid* in fact shows other “Horatian” traits. The prayer of Aruns to the Apollo of Mount Soracte is an echo of Horace’s Soractian *Ode* 1.9.

Polyphemus the giant shepherd had his den, he filled a large goat-skin container with this wine before he faced the Cyclops. After three potions of this delicious drink the monster fell into a profound stupor which gave Odysseus and his followers an occasion to blind him with a huge pole of olive wood. The rest of the story is a familiar one.

Vergil in retailing the Sicilian adventures of Aeneas refers indirectly to this story, in the tale told by Achaemenides, *comes infelicis Ulixi* (*Aen.* 3.612–54). Because of its importance to him Vergil uses the motif of Polyphemus *vinoque sepultus* (630) from the account of Odysseus' encounter with the Cyclops to which Achaemenides had been a witness. In this way the poet has managed to introduce the topic of the draught of wine taken from the store of twelve jars presented to Odysseus by Maron, priest of Apollo at Ismarus, as related by Homer. By the creation of a fictional character named Achaemenides, Vergil preserves in his epic an aspect of this legend which had become dear to him.

If the poet was aware of the literary associations of an excellent vintage of wine from the territory around Mount Ismarus in Thrace, did he consciously associate the fictional creation of Homer with what he believed was the original form of his own *cognomen*, Maro? In his address to Maecenas in the second *Georgic* (37–38) the poet emphasizes the traditional association of that land with the vine:

iuvat Ismara Baccho
conserere atque olea magnum vestire Taburnum.

The author of a poem in the Tibullan corpus (3.7.56–57) briefly summarizes in his eulogy of Messala this Ismarian incident among the adventures of Odysseus. This writer relates the Greek hero's encounter with Polyphemus, whose complete discomfiture is brought about by his overindulgence in Maronean wine:

cessit et Aetnaeae Neptunius incola rupis
victa Maroneo foedatus lumina Baccho.

It is true that the verses cited from the second *Georgic* are not definite enough to justify with certainty the conclusion that both poet and patron were conscious of the fictional implications of the origin of Ismarian wine. The poet seems to transfer to the Ismarian land his own eagerness to celebrate its special vintage.

It is interesting to notice in these verses the customary reserve of the poet: what he allegedly felt was of import to him personally is balanced by a reference to an Italian scene. The culture of the olive in the Campanian region of Mt. Taburnus complements the topic of the cultivation of the vine in a region in Thrace.

The artistic balance delineated by the poet between the Ismarian region noted for its wine in which the poet was interested and the great Mount Taburnus "clothed with the olive" needs to be discussed in greater detail. Vergil in his dedication of this book of the *Georgics* to Maecenas (O decus, o famae merito pars maxima nostrae, 2.40) has many reflections of Lucretius' great work with its dedication to his patron Memmius. In the three verses which precede the references to the Ismarian land and Mount Taburnus there is a general address to the farmer (36):

agricolae, fructusque feros mollite colendo.

This verse has a striking similarity to a passage in Lucretius (5.1368-69) where the poet depicts the beginning of agriculture:

temptabant fructusque feros mansuescere terram
cernebant indulgendo blandeque colendo.

A few verses later Lucretius gives a picturesque description of the cultivation of olives in a mountainous region. The intense labor of the olive grower causes the woods to retreat into the upper regions resulting in *vineta laeta* (1372) and in a landscape in which the olive trees form "a silvery green belt" running round the mountain: *atque olearum / caerula distinguens inter plaga currere posset* (1373-74). The poet's fascination when viewing the varied colors of this cultivated area is noted (1376-77): *vides vario distincto lepore / omnia*.

Now we are prepared to appreciate the Lucretian echoes in Vergil's brief description of the olive groves which gird Mount Taburnus like a garment (*olea vestire Taburnum*). The mention of this particular region may well have more significance than meets the eye. Did Maecenas have large estates in that hilly countryside near the junction of the rivers Volturnus and Calore in Samnium?⁵

⁵ Maecenas met the party described by Horace (*Serm.* 1.5.27) at Tarracina. This fact might suggest that he arrived there by sea from his estates further south.

Vergil's conscious echoes of Lucretius in the prooemium of the second *Georgic* would seem to indicate that the poet's high regard for Maecenas as a patron was on the same level as Lucretius' estimate of Memmius. The personal note of invitation or solicitation appears in the initial part of the dedication: tuque ades, inceptumque una decurre laborem (39). This reverential "ades" is repeated at the end of this address (44-45):

ades et primi lege litoris oram:
in manibus terrae.

Obviously it is hoped that Maecenas will, like a Muse, partake (*una decurre laborem*) in the proposed work on agriculture. The divinity Bacchus is called upon to share in the *carmen* at the beginning of this book (*canam . . . tecum*) on the cultivation of plants, especially the care of the vine and the olive (2-3). Bacchus Lenaeus fills the part assigned to Venus in the introductory verses of Lucretius. Bacchus is addressed twice as "pater Lenaeus"—god of the wine-press. He is invited to come and, along with the poet, press the new grapes *mecum dereptis crura cothurnis* (7-8).

The phrases *decurre laborem* and *primi lege litoris oram* are intentionally introduced by Vergil as a compliment to the literary activities of his patron. Both the poet and his patron make use of the metaphorical language of sea-faring. Seneca (*Epist.* 19.8-9) cites some fragmentary phrases from a work of Maecenas (his *Prometheus?*): *ipsa enim altitudo attonat summa, contrahes vela, terram lege*.⁶ The keynote phrase in this address to Maecenas is *iuvat Ismara Baccho*. Following this personal note the poet dutifully compliments his patron by injecting some appropriate phrases from Maecenas' own contribution to literature. That Vergil's real inspiration should be "Pater Lenaeus" would be conceded by Maecenas. Was not Dionysus, according to tradition, the father of Maron (cf. Eur. *Cycl.* 143)?

THE REVERIE OF PUBLIUS VERGILIUS MARO

The subject of the second book is really brought to a conclusion in verses 455-57 where the *culpa*e of Bacchus are visually represented in the scene familiar to the poet either from report or more

⁶ The fragments of Maecenas have been edited and discussed by Paulus Lunderstedt, "De Maecenatis fragmentis" (*Comm. Philologae Ienenses* 9.1.1-119). See especially p. 27 for the fragments cited here.

likely from his own observation of the West Pediment of the temple of Zeus at Olympia:⁷

Bacchus et ad culpam causas dedit; ille furentis
Centauros leto domuit, Rhoetumque Pholumque
et magno Hylaeum Lapithis cratere minantem.

At this point Vergil chose to introduce his long "reverie" in striking contrast to the picture of the intemperate monsters at the wedding feast of Pirithous. He portrays in this passage the idealistic life of the country folk before they were exposed to the ills of civilization with the political and legal machinations that accompany life centered around the *insanum forum* (502).

The very personal lines (486–89) which highlight this "reverie" have a connotation which can only be understood if we concede that the poet is here fully conscious of the mythical history of his own family. With Emily Dickinson a "reverie" was the result of the conjunction of a bee and a prairie. Vergil posits in the second *Georgic* a model vineyard and olive grove without an ostensible bee—this industrious insect is introduced later by the poet to round out his picture of rural life. The poet gives expression to his personal longing for a Shangri-La in terms, as we shall see, of his own legendary past which proceeds from the Homeric fictional land where Maron, priest of Apollo, gave aid to Odysseus. The land of his dreams lay in the plains where the river Spercheos flows, where Taygeta's heights are the refuge of Spartan Bacchantes and where the glens around Mount Haemus in Thrace furnish an ideal shade:

flumina amem silvasque inglorius. O ubi campi
Spercheosque et virginibus bacchata Lacaenis
Taygeta! O qui me gelidis convallibus Haemi
sistat et ingenti ramorum protegat umbra!

⁷ The subjects of the two pediments are suggested by the three verses (on the *mêlée* of the Centaurs and Lapithae) in the second *Georgic* (455–57) immediately preceding the "reverie" and the contents of the prologue to the third *Georgic* (1–39), especially: Hippodameque umeroque Pelops insignis eburno / acer equis (7–8). Between these delineations of the East and West Pediments the poet has in his dream-vision given us in poetic language a glimpse of the interior of the famed temple of Zeus. In a picture of the ideal golden age (see below, note 23) Vergil portrays the varied works of the *Hôrai* (*Geo.* 2.513–21) and the gentle influence of the *Charites* (523–24) on domestic life. Behind the huge statue of Zeus in the temple at Olympia were representations of the Seasons and the Graces (Paus. 5.11.7; cf. E. A. Gardner, *Handbook of Greek Sculpture* [London 1897] 2.307). In Vergil's poetic temple Caesar is placed "in medio" corresponding to the famed Zeus of Olympia.

Has the poet selected at random certain localities in the Peloponnesus, in central Greece, and in Thrace as ideal spots to live in careless ease? He would naturally have been interested in what Herodotus (7.227) relates about a certain Lacedemonian named Maron and his brother Alpheus (cf. Paus. 3.12.9 with Frazer's note), who were said to have distinguished themselves in the valiant army of Leonidas at the battle of Thermopylae. It is significant that the river Spercheos flows into the valley which leads to the site of this battle. The bodies of Alpheus and Maron would have been interred with the rest of the fallen Spartans in this neighborhood as recorded in the famous epitaph of Simonides. This part of Vergil's reverie and the poet's reflections on it will be discussed later on in this paper.

The second part of the reverie introduces us to Mount Taygeta in the Peloponnesus. Alpheus is an important river which has its source in the foothills of this mountain and flows by Elis and Olympia into the Ionian Sea. Eventually this river mingles, according to a familiar legend, with the waters of the spring named after the nymph Arethusa in Syracuse. In fact, as we shall point out later, the poet shows a special preference for Arethusa for two reasons: first because of her association with Alpheus, brother of Maron, and secondly because she was regarded as half sister of the Pleiades (=Vergiliae). Again we are to assume that Vergil chose to use the neuter plural form "Taygeta" of the mountain ranges which would include the ultimate source of the river Alpheus but would also suggest one of the seven sister Pleiades whom he names elsewhere as Taygete (*Geo.* 4.232).

The poet is still in his dream world at the beginning of the third *Georgic*. Too soon realism will come with the onslaught of death and disease in the animal kingdom. We have been forewarned early in this book that the poet will not treat the trite (*vulgata*, 4) subject of Pelops and Hippodamia. This is precisely the story depicted in the East Pediment of the temple of Zeus at Olympia. Vergil by indirection here as in the *Culex* (30-36) gives us a hint of the special meaning he wishes to attach to his creation of a fictional temple—not on the banks of the Alpheus but on his native Mincius. His model was undoubtedly the famous temple at Olympia. The poet was conscious—we are still after all in the magic land of reverie—of his fictional association with the brother of Maron, the individual hero and/or the river divinity Alpheus.

According to Pausanias (5.10.6) there was a marble figure representing the river Alpheus at the extreme corner of the East Pediment on the left as one enters the shrine.⁸ Pausanias also informs us (3.12.8–9) that a *hieron* was erected in Sparta in honor of the two brothers, Alpheus and Maron, who fell at Thermopylae. If the identification by Pausanias of the figure in the East Pediment as Alpheus is correct, then one can imagine Vergil himself standing in admiration before this temple and being fascinated by the representation of the lithe male figure of Alpheus. Under such circumstances P. Vergilius Maro might have pointed to this reclining form of Alpheus and exclaimed with Baudelaire: “mon semblable, mon frère!”

Publius Vergilius Maro was committed therefore to an extravaganza at the beginning of the third *Georgic* wherein the river Mincius of his childhood served as the locale for a visionary Olympic carnival beside the river Alpheus (*Alpheum linquens*, 19). Since Maron was connected in legend with his brother Alpheus, the poet's mind was immediately influenced by reminiscences of the art and poetry which were identified with the great festival. He promises to bring the Greek Muses back with him to his native Mantua (11). The famous works of art at Olympia are recalled. First in order is the scene in the East Pediment of the temple of Zeus—the chariot race in which Pelops outwitted Oenomaus in the contest for the hand of Hippodamia (7–8). We have already noted the brief description in the second book (455–57) of the scene of the drunken brawl between the Centaurs and the Lapithae at the marriage feast given by Pirithous. Vergil has therefore presented sketches of the stories recorded in *both* pediments in one of the most famous of Greek temples, built beside the river Alpheus. The scenes were especially pertinent to the poet because of his unexpressed but conscious identification of *his* legendary past with the folk tales associated with Alpheus, the brother of Maron.

The poet's fanciful correlation of Alpheus with Mincius, the

⁸ The identification of this figure as Alpheus, although asserted by Pausanias, has been disputed by some modern critics. J. G. Frazer (*Pausanias' Description of Greece* [1913] 3.510) referring to the two figures “Alpheos” and “Kladeos” states that they were probably “merely human spectators of the scene.” See also J. Wiesner, *RE* 35 (1938) 92, s.v. “Olympia (Zeustempel).” The opening verses in the third *Georgic* are addressed to Pales, to *pastor ab Amphryso* (cf. *The Cyclops* 425) and to the streams of Mount Lycaeus through which the Alpheus flows, *amnesque Lycaei*.

river of his childhood memories, inspired him to look for poetic connotations in legends associated with the river which was already famous for its connection with the great Olympic festival. Mount Taygeta, the source of the river Alpheus, would have brought to mind the name of one of the seven Pleiades, Taygete. Vergil had already approached one of these legends in the opening lines of the tenth *Eclogue* (1-7):

extremum hunc, Arethusa, mihi concede laborem. . . .
sic tibi, cum fluctus subterlabere Sicanos,
Doris amara suam non intermisceat undam,
incipere.

The poet, we might say, had a love affair with fair Arethusa (*flavum caput*, *Geo.* 4.352). She was associated with the Pleiades as half sister, having a common father Atlas. In the fourth *Georgic* Arethusa is one of the nymphs who hold court in the undersea manse of Cyrene, the mother of Aristaeus. She announces the approach of Aristaeus to his mother. Vergil still lingered with fondness on this folktale when later he related the approach of the Trojans to the island of Ortygia (Syracuse) in the third *Aeneid* (694-96):

Alpheum fama est huc Elidis amnem
occultas egisse vias subter mare, qui nunc
ore, Arethusa, tuo Siculis confunditur undis.⁹

Arethusa, although not one of the original seven Pleiades, is fondly mentioned here for her fictional union with Alpheus whom we have learnt to know from the Herodotean story as the brother of Maron.

The Pleiad Taygete as well as her half-sister Arethusa appear conspicuously in the fourth *Georgic*. The poet is conscious of their

⁹ The note of the ancient commentators on the next verse (*iussi numina magna loci veneramur*) shows how Servius and his source Donatus were puzzled by its unexpectedness: *Vel ab Achaemenide, vel ab Heleno, vel ab Anchise, vel ab oraculis. et quaeritur, quae numina, vel quare non dixerit; et utrum Alpheum an Arethusam intellegi voluerit.* Here is surely—as the late Professor Rand would have said—the voice of Aelius Donatus himself. See the *editio Harvardiana*, Vol. III (Oxford 1965) for a clear juxtaposition of the notes of the two commentators, the excerptor Servius and his source Donatus. The concluding query is one that we would now approve, knowing Vergil's partiality for both Arethusa and Alpheus. The poet himself has an inner urge (*iussus*) to visit a place enshrined with memories of *numina* dear to him (694-97).

fictional association with his *nomen*, since the Greek Pleiades were known as "Vergiliae" in the Latin tradition. The Pleiad shows "her comely face" in the heavens at the time of the gathering of honey (*Geo.* 4.231–235):

his gravidos cogunt fetus, duo tempora messis,
Taygete simul os terris ostendit honestum
Pleias et Oceani spretos pede reppulit amnis,
aut eadem sidus fugiens ubi Piscis aquosi. . . .

Vergil shows evident partiality for Taygete in this felicitous passage. His preference can be traced to his conscious awareness of what was uppermost in his reverie in the second *Georgic*: there is an evident syndrome here in which the theme of Alpheus-Maron is linked emotionally with a preferred Pleiad—one of his mythical *Vergiliae*.

A contributory factor to the poet's playful association of his *nomen* with the star-cluster *Vergiliae* may have been the coincidence that his birth date (Oct. 15) roughly coincided with the "cosmical setting" of the Pleiades about November 9. His picture of Taygete spurning with her feet the streams of the Ocean appealed to the poetic imagination of Ovid so that he followed the pattern set by Vergil's "reppulit": Quotiensque repellit / ver hiemem Piscique Aries succedit aquoso (*Metam.* 10.164–65).¹⁰ Since the

¹⁰ Ovid was also intrigued by the Vergilian phrase "Piscis aquosus" which he here incorporates into his picture of the metamorphosis of the youthful Hyacinthus after his accidental death at the hands of Apollo. Ovid was born March 20 (i.e. between the Zodiacal sign of Pisces and Aries) and in this passage seems to be equating the experiences of Hyacinthus with his misadventures with Apollo (Augustus) and especially Apollo's wish to restore him to life (202–3). I will venture to suggest here that Propertius may have been humorously suggested by the Vergilian phrase "Piscis aquosus." We are not certain about the precise date of Propertius' birth but his overwhelming devotion to motifs associated with the sea needs more than a casual explanation. The *tutela* of Pisces was Neptune (Manil. 2.447); cf. W. R. Nethercut, "Ille parum cauti pectoris egit opus," *TAPA* 92 (1961) 389–90, especially 390 (statistics of water symbolism in Propertius).

The personal symbolism implied in the fable of Hyacinthus finds its parallel in Ovid's clear acceptance of the significance for him to be found in the myth of Hippolytus in the fifteenth book (cf. 495–96) of his epic of transformations. The folktale of Hyacinthus occurs in the tenth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. As has been shown so clearly by D. F. Bauer ("The Function of Pygmalion in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid," *TAPA* 93 [1962] 12) this story serves as part of a framework in that book for the central theme of Pygmalion. Bauer has brilliantly shown the paramount importance of this theme for its author. It was intended to reveal Ovid's personal pride in his own creative art. Ovid in his expression of admiration for the personal symbolism implied in Vergil's line on Taygete—one of the "Vergiliae"—introduces his personal

fourth *Georgic* was intended for the eyes and ears of Maecenas (4.2) one might be tempted to see in Vergil's preference for Taygete a humorous reflection of a folktale familiar to the Etruscan *equus*. The story is told by Ovid (*Metam.* 15.532–39). When a *Tyrrhenus arator* suddenly sees a *fatalis glaeba* move of its own accord before his plough, he is likely to report that he has seen the prophet Tages. Contemporary readers of Ovid and Vergil may very well have seen an association between the Etruscan divinity Tages springing from the ground and Taygete showing her comely face to the *earth* and spurning the Ocean with her feet. The humor, if such it be, may have been further enhanced by the reference to the mysterious—and astronomically incorrect—*Piscis aquosus*. Was there some facetiousness intended here also?

We have seen how the poet pursued his reverie in one direction, that of the Spartan maids who roamed Mount Taygeta in wild abandon. This fancied refuge of the poet led to a fusion for him of two familial themes uppermost in his mind. There was first the recognition of the significance for P. Vergilius Maro of Maron, brother of Alpheus—the name also of a river which had its source in Mount Taygeta, and on whose banks the great temple of Zeus stood with its sculptured figure of Alpheus in the East Pediment. Next there were the collateral themes suggested by the conscious correlation of the river Alpheus with Arethusa, a half-sister of the Pleiades or Vergiliae. The Mount Taygeta of the reverie suggested Taygete, one of the seven Pleiades who, as we have noted, was given preferential treatment by the poet.

One other of these sisters is projected into our vision in what appears to be once more the poet's conception of an imaginary personal relationship. In an astronomical passage in the first *Georgic* the seven sisters are linked together as "Atlantides" (221), but when their setting is described only Maia is mentioned: *multi ante occasum Maiae coepere* (225). The poet is referring to the various times chosen by the farmer to plant his seeds. If some of the *vitae* of Vergil are correct in stating that the name of the poet's mother was Maia or Magia,¹¹ it may be possible to

identification of his birth star with the tragic story of Hyacinthus. On the "Vergiliae" see H. Gundel, *RE* A15 (1955) 1014, s.v.; Ernout-Meillet, *Dict. Etym.* s.v. "Vergiliae."

¹¹ The name of Vergil's mother was Magia or Maia (Servius), Magia Polla (Probus), Maia (Vita Gudiana I and Noricensis). Cf. *Vitae Vergilianae*, ed. J. Brummer

assume that here too he was consciously linking up with his family background one more of those seven charming sisters (*os honestum*, of Taygete), daughters of Atlas.¹²

(Leipzig 1912); *Vitae Vergilianae antiquae*, ed. C. Hardie (Oxford 1954). See also M. L. Gordon, "The Family of Vergil," *JRS* 24 (1934) 1 ff.: Maro and Evanthes names of two freedmen at Milan. Cf. H. Petersen, *TAPA* 93 (1963) 352, note 18.

The poet in his description of the interrelationship between the families of Aeneas and of Evander-Pallas (*Aen.* 8.138–41) emphasizes the connection of both with the Pleiades or Vergiliae. This was a more interesting association from the poet's point of view (see below, note 13). Where Aeneas is depicted as raging like a madman after the death of Pallas, with whom he felt like the poet a common kinship, his sanguinary assaults included a human sacrifice—perhaps a recollection of the hideous crime at Perusia (Suet. *Aug.* 15) in 40/41—and a merciless attack on two Rutulians named Magus and Haemonides (10.521–41). Because in describing the slaying of a scion of Haemon he shows a direct reminiscence—which is discussed below—of a phrase from the reverie of the poet (*Geo.* 2.489), there seems little doubt that Vergil has constructed in the tragic deaths of Magus and Haemonides what might be called an "anti-reverie." Magus pleads for mercy (524–29) in terms that suggest that here the poet speaks in the person of one whose name reflects a familial associate—actually in the person of the poet's grandfather on his mother's side, Magus. Hence the significance of the phrases in Magus' plea: *per patrios Manes et spes surgentis Iuli* (cf. *Aen.* 4.274; 6.364) and *hanc animam serves gnatoque patrique*. The attack of Aeneas on Haemonides, *Phoebe Triviaeque sacerdos* (537), has all the elements also of an ironic display of bitterness against all that the poet stood for. The Sibyl was called in the sixth *Aeneid* (35) "Phoebe Triviaeque sacerdos." The phrase in the tenth book is intended to be a reflex of the Golden Age predicted by the Sibyl. The name Haemonides is certainly intended to call to mind the end of the poet's reverie of happiness in the second *Georgic* (488–89):

o qui me gelidis convallibus Haemi
sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbra!

In the tenth *Aeneid* we have a criticism of this reverie, an "anti-reverie" in which the poet intimates that this Golden Age has been blacked out in the persons of Magus and Haemonides. On this recollection of a phrase from his reverie the poet has stamped his personal note when he represents Aeneas standing over the body of his slaughtered victim, "wrapping him in mighty darkness" (Fairclough), *ingentique umbra tegit* (cf. Page's note on this verse 541). In connection with this subject an interesting observation has been made by L. A. MacKay, "Hero and Theme in the *Aeneid*," *TAPA* 94 (1963) 160, that the Roman epic is in a sense "a serious parody" of the Homeric poems, somewhat in the manner of Joyce or Kazantzakis. The parody here, if such it be, is of *Iliad* 13.425 where Idomeneus strives to cover one of the Trojans "with black night" (*erebennê nykti*). Vergil's "ingenti umbra" is a strange phrase for death. It naturally describes a real shadow.

¹² According to a fairly authoritative life of the poet by Aelius Donatus, Vergil's father was in the service of a certain *viator* named Magus, whom he served so well that he became his son-in-law and heir to his business of selling wood lands and caring for bee-hives. In the metrical life by Focas, Magius was the name of his grandfather on his mother's side: *mater Polla fuit Magii non infima proles*. (See the preceding note for the editions.) The information given by Focas seems to be confirmed by an inscription (*CIL* V 4046) transcribed by R. S. Conway, *Harvard Lectures on the Vergilian Age* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1928) 21. This monument, according to Conway, was "erected by a member of the gens of Vergil's mother, namely, Publius

Has Vergil gone beyond his identification of himself and his art with the Pleiades and extended this fancy to equate the Pleiades with the Greek word for wood pigeon, *peleiades*? This derived meaning is found as early as Hesiod (*Astronomia*, Fr. 177 Rzach).

At the conclusion of the *Georgics* the poet in an epilogue of eight verses gives his stamp of approval to his pastoral poems by citing the first verse of the first *Eclogue*. What is more important, he treats us to a sort of colophon, giving the time and place of composition and uniquely the *nomen* of the author (*Geo.* 4.563–64):

illo Vergilium me tempore dulcis alebat
Parthenope. . . .

In the first pastoral, unless I am mistaken, the poet gives us a clue to what appears to be an extension of his imaginary, but very personal identification of himself and his art with the Pleiades who are now metamorphosed into “palumbes” or “peleiades.” Here Meliboeus sings of the sorrows of the evicted shepherds in the presence of Tityrus (Vergil) who can look forward to the enjoyment of his little estate with the pleasant prospect of reclining at ease in the shade while listening to the hum of bees and the cooings of his doves. On this note Meliboeus closes his enviable picture, using the significant phrase, *tua cura*, signifying Tityrus’ delight in the sounds of his own treasured doves (*Ecl.* 1.57–58). Are they not related in his mind to the Vergiliae (Pleiades-Peleiades)?

nec tamen interea raucae, tua cura, palumbes,
nec gemere aerea cessabit turtur ab ulmo.

Magius.” Since “Magius” is a gentile name, the daughter of a man of that name would be called “Magia,” a more authentic form than the “Maia” of mediaeval tradition. Both Probus and Focas give us information on her full name “Polla Magia.” It is noteworthy that when the poet projects some of the names of the “Vergiliae” (Maia, Taygete) into the mythical origins of the female side of his family, he is at the same time adding honor to his father Vergilius.

Later when Vergil transforms one of these sisters, Celaeno, into a harbinger of war and famine (*Aen.* 3.211–12) he is seemingly advising the reader that his celebration of war in the later books of his epic is *against* his better nature (see note 11). As is well known the poet forsakes this personal approach in *Aen.* 7.122–23 in order to conform more or less to an epic tradition (cf. H. T. Rowell, “The Scholium on Naevius in *Parisinus Latinus* 7930,” *AJP* 78 [1957] 1–22). Vergil may well have been playing on the etymology of the name “Celaeno” as derived from the Greek *kelainos*, “dark, gloomy.” He had precedents for such play on words in the works of Hesiod (cf. Cora Angier, “Verbal Patterns in Hesiod’s *Theogony*,” *HSCP* 68 [1964] 334).

A recent writer has pointed out the felicitous phrasing of these lines.¹³ The poet by the use of several open "u" sounds has in both verses conveyed the special cooings of the wood pigeon (*palumbis*) and the turtle dove (*turtur*). Elsewhere the poet depicts vividly the actions of a rock dove (*columba*, *Aen.* 5.213-17), driven by fear from its nest in the rocky coverts. Vergil shows real observation in this passage, much admired by Dante (*Inf.* 5.82-84), of the *plausus ingens* of doves when frightened from their nests (see Brooks Otis, *Virgil, a Study in Civilized Poetry* [Oxford 1963] 59-61).

THE WINE OF MARON

Let us now return to the significance of the theme of the reverie in the second *Georgic*, which was chiefly devoted to the cultivation of the vine. In a passage of twenty verses (89-108) Vergil enumerates the choicest wines and the areas in which they are cultivated. His intention is to list wines which could be offered in the palatial homes of the poet's day. Does he mention the wine of literary-historical significance in which he felt a special interest? The wine of the district Maronea (Ismarus) does not enter into this list except indirectly (91):

sunt Thasiae vites, sunt et Mareotides albae.

The island of Thasos lies a short distance southwest of Maronea. Its wines must have been not unlike those of the mainland. The white Mareotic wine is, however, a product of the Egyptian delta and had, it appears, vague connections with the vineyards of Maronea on the coast of Thrace.¹⁴ This was a strong white wine: its quality but not its color was similar to that which Athenaeus (1.33d) states was characteristic of the wine of Ismarus, that is, the region where Odysseus received his gift of wine from

¹³ W. R. Nethercut, "Vergil's Doves," *Classical Bulletin* 41 (1965) 65-68. Propertius refers to the Vergiliae as stars to guide the sailor (1.8.10): et sit iners navita Vergiliis. Gellius equates the Pleiades with the Vergiliae (13.9.4): quas Graeci Pleiadas, nos Vergilias vocamus. Note that in *Aen.* 8.134-42 the pedigrees of Aeneas and Evander are associated by the interested poet with the Pleiades or Vergiliae, Electra and Maia, the children of Atlas (cf. note 11, above). See now my article "Vergil and the Pleiades," *Vergilius* 11 (1965) 1-6.

¹⁴ On "Mareotic wine" see Athen. 1.26b, 33d; Nonnus 1.36; 11.518; 14.99 (Maron son of Seilanos) and *passim*; Oberhummer, *RE* 28 (1931) 1912-13, s.v. "Maroneia" (in Hellenistic times Maroneia was under Egyptian rule). Cf. A. Tomsin, "Virgile et l'Égypte," *L'Antiquité Classique* 22 (1953) 412-18.

Maron. Athenaeus gives the information that this Mareotic wine derived its name from Maron, one of the members of Dionysus' conquering train. This author gives details which make it very likely that the nature of this Egyptian wine had something in common with the description given by Homer of the wine given to Odysseus by Maron.

We are fortunate in having extant a description of the effects of over-indulgence in this Mareotic wine. Horace celebrated the final issue of the campaign against Antony and Cleopatra in the 37th ode of his first book. The enemy is compared to a *fatale monstrum* (21)—a phrase given emphasis by its position at the end of a long tirade of nine verses in which the woman is described in terms of one possessed by delusions as a result of indulgence in Mareotic wine:

mentemque lymphatam Mareotico
redegit in veros timores
Caesar.

Unless I am mistaken, there are undertones here of the effect of the wine of Maron on another *monstrum horrendum*, Polyphemus (*Aen.* 3.658). If Horace intended such a correlation, support may be had from this for my hypothesis that the enemies of Augustus were thought of in terms of the monstrous activities of Sextus Pompey and of Antony against his regime.¹⁵

It is obvious that Vergil will not openly mention the *vinum Maronis* in his list of contemporary wines of excellent quality. That would not be in keeping with the indirection which is the province of the artist. In one passage in the fourth *Georgic*, however, he introduces a direct mention of the wine produced on the shores of "Mella's winding stream" (278), a tributary like his beloved Mincius of the river Po, to which he often refers under its learned name of Eridanus. The poet is describing in detail a meadow flower called "amellus" which is conspicuous along the banks of the river of like name. The roots of this plant when boiled in fragrant wine produce a substance which should be at hand for the bees to feed on (279-80):

huius odorato radices incoque Baccho
pabulaque in foribus plenius appone canistris.

¹⁵ Awareness of the significance of the political events of the years 39/38 is necessary for the understanding of the first three *Bucolics* (see *Art III* and *Art II*).

The fine wine here mentioned is the wine of the country—the only vintage available to the simple peasants who produce fine quality honey.

There is something notable about the position of this seemingly casual reference to a beekeeper's special recipe. The verse 279 devoted to this recipe involving wine grown near the poet's native town is exactly in the center of this fourth *Georgic*. Moreover there are 558 verses in this book, if we exclude the epilogue of eight lines which identifies the author Vergilius by name. The number 558 may have had a special significance for the poet. Elsewhere¹⁶ we have indicated that Vergil in his sixth pastoral seems to have played with the numerical equivalent of "Gallus" (=664). Is he here suggesting another numerical equivalent, this time for Gallus' *nomen* ("Kornêlios"=558)? Was the entire fourth *Georgic* intended to be a tribute to his former friend and patron?

O QUI ME GELIDIS CONVALLIBUS HAEMI SISTAT!

At this point let us look back and estimate how far the poet has gone in his progress through his prospective list of places chosen for his dream-reverie (*Geo.* 2.486–89). After the wish to visit the visionary fields (*campi*) and view the river Spercheos, he names Mount Taygeta, a source of the river Alpheus. The place of his greatest longing he reserves to the end: "O for someone to set me down in the cool glens of Mount Haemus, where mighty trees furnish a pleasant shade!"

We have touched on the poet's imaginary visit (in the preface to the third *Georgic*) to the vale of Alpheus with its association with Maron, brother of the Alpheus who fell with him at Thermopylae, and with still another Maron who bestowed a plentiful supply of excellent wine to Odysseus in the shady groves of the Thracian temple over which he presided as priest of Apollo (and Dionysus?).¹⁷ The mention of Thrace—or the region

¹⁶ Cf. *The Cyclops* 437–39.

¹⁷ The encounter of Odysseus with the Cyclops had a wide vogue in antiquity. Since we are concerned here with the offering of the "Wine of Maron" to that monster, we need only cite the nome by Timotheus entitled "The Cyclops," where the giant Polyphemus drinks twenty measures of this wine "from an ivy cup of wood" (J. M. Edmonds, *Lyra Graeca* 3 [1945] 304–5). Timotheus followed the tradition originating with Homer. The bowl in each case is made of ivy wood. The bowls of Odysseus were probably larger, for he mentions only three cups of this strong sweet "nectar" (9.360). Euripides, *Cyclops* 411–12, is more realistic. Odysseus presents

south of the Haemus range of mountains—suggests the major theme of the fourth *Georgic*, culminating in the death of Orpheus on the shores of the Hebrus river which rises in the region of Mount Haemus. The mention of Haemus denotes Vergil's concept of another dream world, a vision of a cool glade in Thrace, encased in the deep shadows of over-arching trees: *et ingenti ramorum protegat umbra* (489). He has enlarged on Homer's simple description of Maron's Thracian abode. In the *Odyssey* (9.195–201) Odysseus relates the preparations he made as he approached the den of the giant shepherd Polyphemos:

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ κρίνας ἐτάρων δυοκαίδεκ' ἀρίστους
βῆν'· ἀτὰρ αἶγεον ἄσκον ἔχον μέλανος οἴνοιο,
ἡδέας, ὃν μοι ἔδωκε Μάρων, Εὐάνθεος υἱός,
ἱρεὺς Ἀπόλλωνος, ὃς Ἰσμαρον ἀμφιβεβήκει
οὐνεκά μιν σὺν παιδὶ περισχόμεθ' ἡδὲ γυναικὶ
ἄζόμενοι· ὥκει γὰρ ἐν ἄλσει δενδρήεντι
Φοῖβου Ἀπόλλωνος. ὁ δέ μοι πόρην ἀγλαὰ δῶρα.

The picture of the “wooded grove” of Phoebus Apollo in Homer is intensified in Vergil's reverie to a far deeper shade (*ingenti ramorum umbra*) in keeping with the poet's personal outburst of emotion expressed in his wish to escape from reality.¹⁸

The significance of the component parts of Vergil's reverie is ascertainable if one concedes the likelihood that the poet was consciously playing on the mythical and personal connotations of his *cognomen*. What of the third choice in the poet's reverie, that of Mount Haemus? Since the region of Ismarus is watered by streams from that mountain range, the poet wished to stress the importance of this locality (“the land of Maron”) as a fitting

Polyphemos with “cup after cup” of the wine of Maron. Whereas Homer reports that Maron was a priest of Apollo, we have evidence that there was an oracle of Dionysus in Ismarus in Thrace (cf. Euripides, *Hecuba* 1267; Macrob. *Sat.* 1.18.1; Sueton. *Aug.* 94). Ennius definitely states that this “*fanum Liberi*” was founded by Maro: *O terra Thraeca / ubi Liberi fanum inclutum / Maro locavit* (*Fab. inc.* Fr. 388 Vahlen). In the modern *Ulysses* portrayed by Joyce the chauvinistic “citizen” acting the part of the ancient Cyclops is much befuddled by an oversupply of the “wine of the country”—Dublin stout.

¹⁸ For inscriptions concerning Maron see Kruse, *RE* 28 (1930) 1911; Roscher, *Lex. Myth.* 2.2382–4. It would be interesting if we could identify the statue of the reclining river god “Maro” reported by Propertius 2.32.14 (*flumina sopito quaeque Marone cadunt*) with the “Marforio” of the Capitoline Museum (cf. H. S. Jones, *Classical Rome* [London 1910] 104). Did Maron's association with the river Alpheus bring about such a transformation?

place of repose from his anxieties. The country of Ismarus was first visited—and sacked—by Odysseus in his *nostos*. The poet is conscious of his mythical association with Maron, priest of Apollo, who was saved on that occasion by the Greek hero. This awareness pervades the discussion of vine culture in the second *Georgic*. The fact too that the potent wine of Maron was the means of overwhelming the giant shepherd Polyphemus in the fiction of Homer served as a spur to the imagination of P. Vergilius Maro at a time when another son of Neptune, Sextus Pompey, was contesting control of the seas around Sicily with Octavian in the years 39 and 38.¹⁹

O UBI CAMPI SPERCHEOSQUE . . .

An early *vita* of Vergil attests to the fact that the *Culex* was written about the poet's twenty-sixth year; that is, if we accept the emendation in the life of the poet by Donatus: "XXVI" instead of the reading of most of the codices "XVI". At a relatively early age, it seems, Vergil was projecting his identity into the mythical past of Maron, brother of Alpheus, who was slain with the other 300 Spartans at Thermopylae. In another aspect, as we saw, the poet identified himself with another Maron whose association with Odysseus elicited the saga of the *vina Maronea* which gave the quietus to the monster Cyclops on Mount Etna. If I am correct, the *scene* of the vision in Vergil's *Culex* is in a region which corresponds to the country in the neighborhood of the river Spercheos, that is, directly north of the site of the famous battle of Thermopylae. The bodies of the Spartan heroes were buried on the battle site. The famous epitaph of Simonides was, no doubt, inscribed on stone or bronze beside the *tumulus* (the *kolônos* of Herodotus 7.225).

The author of the *Culex* introduces his theme by presenting an apology to "Octavius" for the trifling nature of the poem which he is offering him (3-5):

lusimus: haec propter Culicis sint carmina docta,
omnis ut historiae per ludum consonet ordo
notitiaeque ducum voces, licet invidus adsit.

There seems no doubt that the poet intends to weave for his "Gnat"—the term he uses specifies wittily a spider's task (2)—

¹⁹ Cf. *Art II* 356; *Art III* 154.

into his poem in a playful fashion an historical theme, presumably a mock battle scene (*ducum voces, codd.*). This intention is hardly conceivable however in a composition which professes to represent in a highly fanciful form the appearance to a sleeping shepherd of the ghost of a *culex* wandering in the otherworld. The locality where the vision took place is depicted as a deeply shaded spot (*densa umbra*, 157). At this point the poet describes how the aged shepherd is warned of the approach of a huge serpent by the sting of a gnat. The deadly nature of the attack of this monster is depicted in vivid detail (157–181). Then follows the alerting of the shepherd by the gnat's sting and the slaying of the serpent with the aid of a stout branch of a tree.²⁰ After being thus rudely awakened from his noontime nap, the shepherd awaited the approach of evening. The flock is driven into a safe place and the *pastor* proceeds to rest his weary limbs. At this point the poet by indirection gives the exact location of this incident:

iam quatit et biugis oriens Erebois equos Nox
et piger aurata procedit Vesper ab Oeta.²¹

Although the epithet for Nox is purely literary and even eerie (cf. *Odys.* 10.528), the description of the advance of Vesper "from golden Oeta" is intended to give the reader a hint of the exact location of the shepherd's resting place and of his eventual vision of the Gnat, who was compelled by unjust punishment—*fit poena merenti* (229) is ironical—to wander hopelessly in the otherworld. To come back to realism once more, the golden glow of the sunset on Mount Oeta suggests that the shepherd fell into a deep slumber at a point more or less directly east of this mountain. The poet is also careful to give the reader a further clue. Before he was attacked by the monstrous serpent, the shepherd lay down in the dense shade *ad fontem* (157–58):²²

²⁰ The association of the shepherd with a *truncus* and a *serpens* calls our attention to his role as a Heracles with Mount Oeta in the background. Citations are based on the Teubner edition (1910).

²¹ The phrase *piger Vesper* would suggest an evening in summer. The battle of Thermopylae was fought towards the end of July when the moon was full (cf. Stählin, *RE* A10 [1934] 2416, s.v. "Thermopylen").

²² Maternus in his defence of poetry in Tacitus *Dial.* 13 cites Vergil's wish to retire from the *insanum forum* (*Geo.* 2.502) *in illa sacra fontesque*. Tacitus is not referring to the founts of the Muses as A. Gudeman states (*Dialogus de oratoribus* [Boston 1898] note *ad loc.*). Before this work of Tacitus reflections of the Vergilian reverie are found in Propertius 3.5.19–48 (no wish to escape the present—future prospect of

pastor, ut ad fontem densa requievit in umbra,
mitem concepit proiectus membra soporem.

At the conclusion of the vision (381–82) the Gnat makes a plea to the shepherd to revere the *fons* (“fontes” found in some manuscripts) and the surrounding green groves:

tu cole fontem
et viridis nemorum silvas et pascua laetus.

Herodotus (7.198–99) gives much information on the many rivers and streams which flow into the Spercheos or the Malian Gulf. One of these streams, the “Phoenix,” becomes part of the Asopus which runs from Mount Oeta to the same gulf. According to Herodotus the Phoenix flows close to the “narrowest place” in Thermopylae. The author of the *Culex*, however, may have been thinking of a *fons* or *fontes* as suggestive of the “Hot Springs” for which Thermopylae was noted. These Springs were sacred to Heracles of Trachis and Mount Oeta. The shepherd by his use of a *validus truncus* (192) in his encounter with the huge serpent evinces Heracleian traits suited to the genius of the place near Mount Oeta where the poet set the scene of this curious little dramatic piece in which *parva animalia*, somewhat like those in the pseudo-Homeric burlesque, play the principal parts. The general parallel between these two burlesque poems by two authors famous for their epics was recognized from an early period. What was not noticed by ancient and modern critics has, if I am right, much more pertinence for this acknowledged parallel. Both poems in fact are burlesques of famous historical incidents: in the one case the Western Greeks faced the Eastern Trojans; in the poem attributed to Vergil we seem to see a fictional fantasy in which the Gnat represents the Greeks (Spartans) and the deadly serpent the invading host of Persians. The locale of one was Homeric Troy under siege; the other was centered around the site of the battle of Thermopylae where in 480

knowing *naturae mores*); Tibullus 2.1 (Golden Age in the country—no personal or social problems). Horace seems to have composed a parody of the same dream-wish of Vergil in the second *Epode*. “Alfius,” the speaker in this poem of Horace, is a “double” for a slippery usurer and for Alpheus brother of Maron. Horace has at least five verbal echoes in this epode of the reverie of his friend P. Vergilius Maro. Maro’s longing to flee to the shades of Mount Haemus seems reflected in what the author of *De Laude Pisonis* writes of the poet: Forsitan illius nemoris latuisset in umbra (233).

a small band of Spartans, which included two who were of special interest to the poet, Alpheus and Maron, fought to the last man against the superior numbers of Xerxes' army. Their bodies were buried on the battlefield.

The poet makes clear his awareness of the difficulty of presenting a fanciful theme in a quasi-historical setting. The verses (3-5) which have troubled the editors indicate his intention to compose a curious medley of comedy (*lusimus*) and history (*historiae*). Vergil makes mention of an historical theme which, by the rhetorical art of *praeteritio*, he dismisses as one of the subjects *not* to be taken into his poem—only to introduce this same theme in the form of an *allegoria*. Among the subjects thus dismissed is also the attack of the giants on the gods in the Phlegrean fields. But he *does*, as we shall see, introduce this topic too under another guise. The poet touches on this subject first (28):

Phlegra, Giganteo sparsa est quae sanguine tellus.

The main subject which he passes over as unsuited to his little poem he describes in some detail (30-34):

urit Ericthonias Oriens non ignibus arces;
non perfossus Athos nec magno vincula ponto
iacta meo quaerent iam sera volumine famam,
non Hellespontus pedibus pulsatus equorum,
Graecia cum timuit venientis undique Persas.

The messenger in the *Persae* of Aeschylus reports (486-87) to queen Atossa details of the route taken after the sacking of Athens (cf. *Culex* 30, above) by the retreating Persians in the region of Boeotia, the land of the Phocceans and the Melian gulf "where the Spercheos waters the plain":

καὶ Δωρίδ' αἶαν, Μηλιᾷ τε κόλπον, οὗ
Σπερχειὸς ἄρδει πεδῖον εὐμενεί ποτῶ.

These two verses are not only reflected in the opening verses of Vergil's reverie in the second *Georgic* (O ubi campi Spercheos-que . . .) but, strange as it may seem, the numbers of the lines are exactly the same in both versions (486-87)! The curious syntax of the Vergilian phrase would seem to suggest that the poet attempted to accommodate his *campi* to the *pedion* of Aeschylus.

The similar numbering in the verses of both poets—allowing or the vagaries of the text traditions—may of course be purely

coincidental.²³ Are there other factors in this tragedy of Aeschylus which might help to throw light on this seeming coincidence and which would at the same time elucidate the principal motif of Vergil's comic epyllion? The attack of the huge serpent on the aged shepherd, as we have noted, is depicted in vivid colors. The poet is aware of the importance of this incident in the economy of the story. In his first choral ode (81–82) Aeschylus compares the Persian army and navy in the act of attacking the Greeks to a deadly dragon flashing from his eyes a dark glare (ed. A. Sidgwick, *OCT*):

κνανοῦν δ' ὄμμασι λεύσσω
φονίου δέργμα δράκοντος.

The author of the *Culex* seems to have chosen to present this comparison of the Persian host to a deadly dragon as a fitting framework for his *allegoria* in which the *culex*, by warning the shepherd of the approaching danger by his sting, served as a savior of the land of Greece (Graecia cum timuit venientis undique Persas, 34). The aged shepherd, therefore, represents *Graecia* at a celebrated historical occasion when she was saved for the moment at Thermopylae by the heroic death of a small band of Spartans. We are prepared now for the next step. If the ancient shepherd

²³ There is another apparent coincidence in the numbering of *Culex* 58 and *Geo.* 2.458 on the topic "O bona pastorum." The 83 verses in Vergil's reverie have been analyzed by G. E. Duckworth, *Structural Patterns and Proportions in Vergil's "Aeneid"* (Ann Arbor 1962) 41. According to the formula for the "Golden Section," one is able to detect an arrangement by major (83) and minor (51) which gives a proportion of .614—very close to the ideal .618. The "Golden Section" seems indeed to be a corollary of the "Golden Age" as the poet himself makes clear towards the end of his long reverie (538): aureus hanc vitam in terris Saturnus agebat.

It has not been noticed that Vergil in his *Georgics* followed a pattern quite parallel to that deciphered by D. F. Bauer in his original contribution, "The Function of Pygmalion in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid," *TAPA* 93 (1962) 18–21, with bibliography stemming from the initial study of G. Le Grelle, S.J., on a similar pattern in the first *Georgic*. In a manner similar to that discovered by Bauer in Ovid's work, there is a very personal section in the third *Georgic* of 55 verses (284–338) which divides the entire *Georgics* into two parts: before 3.284 and after 3.338. This arrangement gives respectively totals of 1339 lines (major) and 786 (minor), resulting in a proportion of .630. (For the technique of this subject see Duckworth, *TAPA* 91 [1960] 184–220.) It seems not to be an accident that the 55 personal verses in Vergil are balanced by a personal epilogue (*Geo.* 4.559–66) of 8 lines, giving us a total of 63. On this number see *The Cyclops* 431, note 31. On *Kornélios*=558 see above, p. 390. A recent study has been made on this subject: E. L. Brown, *Numeri Vergiliani* (Brussels 1963=*Collection Latomus* 63). Note also that author's illuminating discussion on the stars Vergiliae-Peliades in the prologue to the third *Georgic* (pp. 41–51).

in his victory over a deadly enemy (*infestum . . . hostem*, 389) stands for Greece united against the Persian host—especially because of the locale of the dream-vision *ad fontem* and east of Mount Oeta—then we may be prepared to accept a seemingly inevitable corollary. The “*Culex*”, who perished in defence of Greece, represents, unless I am mistaken, the correlate of P. Vergilius Maro, that is Maron, who stands for all the 300 Spartans who died *pro patria* at Thermopylae on the plains of the river Spercheos. Vergil in his vision in the second *Georgic* (486–87) seems to have pointed to the *Culex* as exemplifying the expression of the reverie of his youth.

This very fanciful projection of his self, as the poet has insistently warned us at the beginning of his poem, is to be taken in a mood appropriate to the Greek Muse of Comedy. Are we to assume, moreover, that when both Statius (*ante annos Culicis Maroniani, Silv.* 2.7.73) and Martial (*facundi Culicem Maronis*, 14.185) ascribed the *Culex* to “Maro” that they meant more than meets the eye? Statius linked the *Batrachomyomachia* ascribed to Homer with the *Culex* of “Maro,” both written as preludes *stilo remissiore* (*Silv.* 1, praef.). As the battle of the Frogs (Greeks?) and Mice (Trojans?) furnished a burlesque for the Trojan war, so Vergil’s youthful poem serves as a playful treatment—along with a projection of the poet’s own self as the Spartan hero Maron—of the war of the Persians and Greeks which reached its supreme moment when the Spartans faced the host of Xerxes at Thermopylae in the plains beside the river Spercheos. In this manner we would interpret the first part of the threefold reverie of Publius Vergilius Maro: *O ubi campi Spercheosque . . .*

The *historia* which the poet tells us he will *not* discuss at the very beginning of his comic epyllion, he has thus introduced in a fanciful way which suggests a humorous metamorphosis of himself (Maro-Maron) in the form of a humble Gnat. It is curious to note the legend of the transformation of the daughter of Pythagoras into a fly “*Myia*,” related by Lucian (*Elegy on a Fly*), which has some pertinence here because of its comic associations. In recent times we have a more significant example of such a metamorphosis in one of Ezra Pound’s *Cantos* (83). Pound not only identifies himself with “Brother Wasp,” but like Vergilius Maro in his *Culex* actually follows the Wasp (“*la vespa*” = Ezra?) into the abodes of the dead.

We have pointed out that the subject of the giants' onslaught on the gods was one of the themes to be passed over by the poet. But it occurs later in the *Culex* under another aspect. In wandering through the Cimmerian groves the ghost of the Gnat perceives *first* the punishment meted out to the giants Otos and Ephialtes (231–36). These monsters, we are told, had attempted to tear down heaven (*rescindere mundum*, 236). Otos—and presumably Ephialtes—are bound fast with serpents (234–35):

nam vinctus sedet immanis serpentibus Otos
devinctum maestus procul aspiciens Ephialten.

It is surely no coincidence that Ephialtes was the name of the Trachinian who guided the scouts of Xerxes along the path which began at the river Aesopus, through the oak groves so as to intercept Leonidas and his 300 Spartans in the rear (Herod. 7.216–18).²⁴ The reference to the serpents as a mode of punishment for Ephialtes seems to be in keeping with the poet's identification (because of the verses of Aeschylus, *Persae* 81–82, cited above) of the serpent which was slain by the aged *pastor* with the attacking Persian army at Thermopylae. Ephialtes in Tartarus was "hoisted by his own petard"! ²⁵

There remains the huge barrow erected by the sorrowing shepherd for the tiny Gnat "on the borders of a stream hidden under green leafage" (390). The *tumulus*²⁶ turns out to be an altar on which many varieties of flowers are to grow in the future. There seems to be a reflection here of a phrase of Simonides (Frag. 5 D): "For a tomb they have an altar." It is interesting to note that the author of the *Culex* links flowers that suggest Spartan origin with some which are associated with the orient (400–401):

²⁴ The numerous trees in the background of the vision in the *Culex* include "quercus" (134) and "ilex" (140).

²⁵ Dante seems to have read this poem of his guide and teacher. In *Inferno* 31.111 "Fialte" is strangely represented as being tied and held down by cords (cf. C. H. Grandgent, ed., *La Divina Commedia* [Boston 1913], argument to Canto 31).

²⁶ The Spartans were buried where they fell (Herodotus 7.228). Does the "tumulus" of our poem represent the *kolónos* of Herodotus? A *hieron* was erected at Sparta for Alpheus and Maron (Pausanias 3.12.9). A cenotaph or shrine (*mnēma*) was set up for Leonidas with inscriptions (*ibid.* 3.14.11). See the illuminating account in C. M. Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry from Alcman to Simonides*² (Oxford 1961) 346–49. According to Bowra, fragment 5 D of Simonides seems to have been sung at Sparta at the dedication of the shrines.

hic est et Spartica myrtus
atque hyacinthos et hic Cilici crocus editus arvo.

Not without some humor the poet includes *finally* in his offering the flower associated with the legend of Narcissus (cf. Ovid, *Metam.* 3.339–510) who fell in love with his own image. Vergilius Maro is conscious of “burning with the flame of love” for his own shadow—in this case for the reflection of his own personality in Maron, the heroic Spartan. The scene of the myth of Narcissus, son of the river Cephissus, lay apparently along the shores of that river, the source of which was in the mountainous region south of Thermopylae. The words of the poet are therefore doubly ominous (408–409):

non illinc Narcissus abest, cui gloria formae
igne Cupidineo proprios exarsit in artus.

And the poet who is partial to polarization of ideas, to balancing beginnings with endings,²⁷ succeeds in giving the reader a delicate contrast here. The first flower to be grown on the *tumulus* is the rose “blushing with crimson bloom” (Fairclough in the Loeb edition of 1925):

hic et acanthos
et rosa purpureum crescent pudibunda ruborem
et violae omne genus.

We are given to understand the poet’s emulation of the mythical Narcissus is something that he would wish to conceal. The “blushing” rose serves to offset the poet’s feigned embarrassment at his fervid self-love suggested by the last flower to be grown on the cenotaph for a tiny insect, a whimsical correlative for Maron-Marō. The multiple alliteration in the verse delineating the rose shows the poet’s loving artistry at a point where the craftsman felt that he must exercise his utmost skill.²⁸

²⁷ Here is an example of the “Ringkomposition” so common in classical literature; cf. V. Pöschl, *Die Dichtkunst Virgils: Bild und Symbol in der Aeneis* (Innsbruck 1950) 165, note 2; V. Buchheit, *Vergil über die Sendung Roms* (Heidelberg 1963) 81, note 310; *Art III* 157; *Art VII* 250. For the twelfth *Aeneid* see M. G. Southwell, *Vergilius* 10 (1964) 32–39.

²⁸ The brief epitaph on the cenotaph of “parvus Culex” does not reflect any Simonidean model. Rather there is a slight echo here of the elegy of Catullus (101) at the site, topically enough, of his *brother’s* grave. The silence of the final greeting “tacita . . . voce” echoes Catullus’ “mutam . . . cinerem” and “funeris officium vitae pro munere reddit” somewhat suggests “postremo donarem munere mortis” of the older poet.

In our search for the identity of Publius Vergilius Maro we may conclude with what a critic has said of a modern poet: "Half of the poet's mind rejects the escape from life for which the other half longs."²⁹

SUMMARY

All of the three most desirable places depicted in the reverie of Publius Vergilius Maro in the second *Georgic* have been discussed in this paper. There we can detect the mind of the poet reflecting on his own identity in the course of his description of the best methods of vine culture. Because of his preoccupation with the saga associated with the excellent quality of the wine produced in the land of Ismarus, the poet lets his mind wander into pleasant musings on the many fictions linked with his *cognomen* and *nomen*. In a moment of abandon with intent to flee from pressing cares—literary and political—Vergil expresses his ardent wish to escape to three different localities. These are (1) The plains near the river Spercheos; (2) The primitive district of Mount Taygeta; (3) The cool glades with their mighty shade trees in the region of Mount Haemus.

The first and the third places in Vergil's reverie were linked in the poet's mind with either (1) the historical Maron, one of the 300 Spartans who fell at Thermopylae, or (2) the mythical Maron in the region of Ismarus (in the glens of Mt. Haemus) who supplied Odysseus with twelve jars of excellent wine, "dark and sweet," which afterwards was used to good advantage in subduing Polyphemus. In a spirit of light-hearted comedy the poet in his early fantasy correlates the Gnat with a putative ancestor who aroused the aged shepherd (Greece) to face the attack of a monstrous serpent (the mighty host of Xerxes).

There remains the second place chosen by Vergilius Maro as a desirable locality where he would find refuge from pressing anxieties. It is suggested that the poet set the mountain range of Taygeta as a background for delineating two concepts. "Vergiliae" represented the Latin equivalent of the Greek Pleiades. Taygete and Maia were the names of two of these seven sisters.

²⁹ Richard Ellmann, *The Identity of Yeats* (New York 1954) 10. Ellmann is referring to the "Sailing to Byzantium" of Yeats, but this could be said of any poet and of our poet who sailed mentally from Ismarus on the Aegean to Mantua on the Mincius.

The more authoritative *vitae* of the poet state that his mother's name was "Maia" or "Magia." We seem to be entering the area of modern psycho-analysis. Mount Taygeta conveyed one other concept. The river Alpheus had its source in the foothills of this mountain range. Alpheus is not only the eponym for a river but is also the name of a real person, the brother of the Spartan hero Maron.