

sundered.

This sense of balance pervades the whole of the Georgics. Take the passage on the farmer's implements in Book I (160-175). After 2 lines of introduction Virgil briefly mentions in 7 lines the ploughshare, the wagons, dredges, drags, rakes, wicker baskets, hurdles and winnowing fans. The remaining 7 lines he gives to the plough itself, which is the most important implement of them all; but though he could with some advantage to his reader have explained its making in even greater detail, he has refrained from upsetting the balance even of a small section of his poem by expanding a topic beyond what he considered appropriate to its importance.

On a larger scale, the first part of the third book provides an interesting example. After his panegyric of Octavian, Virgil settles down to the details of stock farming (49 ff.). But notice how he controls his material by alternating passages of approximately 20 lines with others of approximately 30 lines. To the choice of cattle for breeding he gives 23 lines; to the choice of horses 31 lines; then as an interlude 20 lines describe chariot races; we return to the care and tending of horses with 34 lines; the care of calves with 22 lines, and the care of colts with 30. This is the kind of balance which is conscious and deliberate without being crudely mechanical. It arises, I believe, from Virgil's innate sense of form; and from the point of view of the reader it is invaluable in assisting him to sense the progress and sequence of the poem. Virgil does not demand that his reader should grasp and encompass too great a bulk of didactic material without a pause; and while he varies the length of his successive sections, he creates the impression of harmony and proportion between them.

In this paper I have tried only to show how the sense of balance and form has operated in the general plan and in some of the details of Virgil's poem. The design is nobly conceived and the separate members are moulded by a fine and consistent sense of proportion. A poem, it is true, depends for its greatness on something more than structural features; and just as a noble design in a building is not compatible with trivial or poor materials, so a great poem like the Georgics must needs be fashioned from the choicest language and the subtlest rhythms. But the proper examination of the individual stones which have been used in Virgil's structure is a theme which would demand much more than a single lecture. For today, I shall be satisfied if I have left you with the conviction that if we read Virgil in a spirit of humble enquiry and with a sympathetic receptivity, he will always have much to teach us about the finer and more subtle points of literary technique in which he proved himself, in the Georgics no less than in the Aeneid, to be one of the world's greatest masters.

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ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF VIRGIL.

A lecture delivered to the Virgil Society

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by F. Robertson

'The Eclogues look at us with enigmatic eyes' says Franz Skutsch: and it is principally in the Eclogues that we find ourselves taking refuge in some kind of allegorising in order to give cogent meaning to otherwise mellifluous but baffling poems. But allegory as a critical tool has been set to work on the Georgics and the Aeneid too: and the 'allegorisers' - to use an ugly word for an unattractive concept - range in time from Servius in the 4th century to Herrmann and many others in the 20th. The nature of allegory too varies wildly - from mystical/religious interpretations and moralising to historical and personal allusion. It

would therefore be impossible within the scope of one lecture to give an adequate survey of all the types and instances of allegory to be found in the history of Virgilian scholarship - and I cannot pretend to regret this enforced limitation on my subject matter. What I propose to do is firstly to review the background against which allegorical interpretation was first applied to Virgil; and secondly to discuss some instances of a particular kind of allegory - which we might roughly call 'historical' - and its plausibility.

The Greek word *ἀλληγορία* is a chameleon, and capable of very broad interpretation: it simply means saying one thing and meaning another; and it could reasonably be applied to a mere metaphor. (The Greeks in fact did not use the term, but spoke of *ὑπόνοιαι* or underlying meanings.) The standard example of deliberate allegory in Greek is the poem of Alcaeus which is generally interpreted as referring to contemporary politics through the metaphor of the Ship of State -

ἄσυννέτημι τῶν ἀνέμων στάσιν

a poem which Horace (*Odes*, i.14) has transformed, without making it quite clear whether he retains the allegory or not, into

O navis, referent in mare te novi
fluctus. o quid agis? fortiter occupa
portum. nonne vides ut
nudum remigio latus...

But the Alcaeus poem is a black swan, a lonely example in classical Greek poetry. The only real examples of deliberate allegory are Plato's myths, which are allegory of a special kind, to which Plato has the graciousness to provide a key - as in the famous allegory of the Cave - and these are in a sense extended similes.

Allegory really occurs extensively in Greek only as a method of interpretation and not of composition: and of course it begins with Homer who was after all *πάτερ και ἡγεμὼν τῆς σοφίας* — if not the beginning of wisdom at least a father and guide in the pursuit of wisdom. The early philosophers sought to win support for their physical theories of the universe by reference to the Homeric poems and so to recruit the widespread regard for Homer in the service of philosophy. Such interpretation, which occurs in the fifth century, consisted mainly in physical equations such as Zeus = ether, Hera = air, Hephaestos = fire: (when Homer talks of Hephaestos fighting with the river Scamander it does indeed look like a simple allegory - fire fights with water). Thus the physical philosophers explained the story of Hera being bound by Zeus to two anvils as the description of a physical phenomenon: Hera, the air, is bound by Zeus, the upper air, to earth and sea, the two anvils. In this way the philosophers might enlist the help of the poets: and indeed it was easier for them to ignore earlier philosophers than to ignore the poets who, because of their prime place in Greek education were regarded as the divinely wise and inspired teachers of mankind. We may usefully compare the attitude of the Middle Ages to Virgil, which is so delightfully described by Comparetti in 'Virgil in the Middle Ages': such was their respect for the wisdom not to say clairvoyance of the master poet that they naturally looked for all kinds of hidden meanings in his poetry.

Alongside physical allegory we also find, in 5th century Greece and later, moral allegorising of Homer. The gods represent human qualities: Athene = skill, Ares = violence, Aphrodite = passion. Hermes represents logos or skill in argument: and so when Hermes cedes the victory to Leto, etymology helps us to the notion that words give way before Lethe - forgetfulness. And so the apologists who wish to defend Homer against the charge of impiety levelled by Xenophanes can explain the stories as allegories about moral qualities and not really about gods at all.

It is a short step from this to the allegorising of Stoics like Antisthenes - the kind of moralising from Homer which we find in Horace, Epistles 1.2.

Troiani belli scriptorem, Max'me Lolli,
dum tu declamas Romae, Praeneste relegi:
qui quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
planius ac melius Chrysippo et Crantore dicit.

.....
rursus quid virtus et quid sapientia possit
utile proposuit nobis exemplar Ulixen... (HOR. Epp. 1.2.1-4, 17-18).

Antisthenes saw Odysseus as a model of endurance and virtue, a model for all stoics to emulate: the lotus represents pleasure, the Cyclops savagery, Scylla shamelessness, Charybdis gluttony, the Sirens flattery. This type of interpretation has some affinities with the modern search for symbols and images in poetry.

The Stoics in fact had a long tradition of allegorical interpretation and Cicero (N.D.1.41) criticizes the method of Chrysippus. Chrysippus, he says, tries to fit the stories of Orpheus, Musaeus, Hesiod and Homer to his own statements about the gods so that the most ancient poets might appear to have been stoics without suspecting it;

volt Orphei Musaei Hesiodi Homerique fabellas accommodare ad ea quae ipse primo libro de deis immortalibus dixerat, ut etiam veterissimi poetae qui haec ne suspicati quidem sint, Stoici fuisse videantur.
This allegorical method was taken over by Alexandrian Jews of whom our greatest extant representative is Philo, who lived in the 1st century of our era, and whose influence on all succeeding patristic writers was immense. Philo's philosophy was founded on the belief that Greek philosophy - all the doctrines of Plato, Aristotle and Pythagoras - was not only consistent with the Hebrew Scriptures, but actually had its origins in the sacred books and was in a sense merely borrowed from them: on this basis he constructed his philosophy by widely and ruthlessly allegorising the scriptures to produce from them the discoveries of Greek philosophy. One of his books, for instance, is called an 'Allegorical commentary on Genesis'. There is no reason to believe that Philo was the first to explain the scriptures in this way, but in any event the Jewish mind was much more prone to mysticism than the more rationalistic Greek; and some of the Old Testament books, like the Book of Job, may in fact be allegorical: that, fortunately, hardly concerns us at the moment. It is certainly true that Philo's method gained momentum and was adopted by the Christian church as an instrument of policy: he abused it himself and certainly the early fathers from Clement and Origen to St. Augustine made very broad and deliberate use of allegorical interpretation whether (as in the case of some Homeric allegorists) as an instrument of apologetics - to reconcile some of the apparent severity and cruelty of the ancient God of the Old Testament with the conception of a gracious and loving Father in the New - or as an instrument of higher interpretation, as a clue to the deeper meanings of the scripture.

The Christian Fathers believed the Old Testament to be an inspired pre-figuration of the New, and not merely in broad outlines but in details of fact. Just as surely as the prophets foretold the coming of the Messiah in symbolic language, so the very actions of the patriarchs prefigured what was to happen in the New Testament. Augustine says just this in the De Doctrina Christiana, III, xxii.32: *Omnia quae in Veteris Testamenti libris gesta continentur, non solum proprie, sed etiam figurate accipienda sunt.*

I shall illustrate with just two curious but quite typical examples. The Song of Songs 4.2 reads as follows: 'Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are shorn.' The Song has been interpreted as an allegory in which Christ addresses his beloved, the church. Augustine carries this a stage further so that the teeth of the beloved are the Saints:

Et tamen nescio quomodo suavius intueor sanctos cum eos quasi dentes Ecclesiae video praecidere ab erroribus homines.

'I like to think of the saints as the teeth of the church, cutting

men off from error.'

More elaborate is the allegorical preface of Prudentius to the Psychomachia (he appends similar prefaces to the Apotheosis, Hamartigenia and the two books Contra Symmachum). Genesis 14 and 15 describe how Lot, after being captured by enemy kings, is rescued by Abraham with 318 servants: When Abraham returns triumphant he is given bread and wine by Melchisedec: and presently Sarah presents him with a child. So our soul (Sarah) will not produce legitimate progeny, i.e. good thoughts and deeds, until it is victorious with the aid of Christ (the 318 servants) over evil thoughts: and after this victory comes the eucharist (the bread and wine from Melchisedec). Christ is represented by the mystical number 318 (in Greek numerals ΤΙΗ; T was taken to represent the cross, because of the form of the letter, IH were of course the initial letters of 'Ἰησοῦς in Greek). The allegorical approach was so central in Christian theology that at the time when Prudentius wrote, at the end of the 4th century, he found allegory a natural vehicle. His Psychomachia has the distinction of being the first completely allegorical poem, without any human actors, in European literature. Prudentius was not however a great originator but he merely reflected the spirit of the age and the Psychomachia has had an influence on literature and art out of all proportion to its merit. It is a poem in Virgilian epic style about the battle in the soul between Virtus and Vices, which was in fact a fairly common theme stemming particularly from Seneca and the great North African priest Tertullian. This is the first of the flood of allegories of personification which appealed to the Middle Ages. The main characteristic of this type of allegory is that the characters are personifications: where the Greek philosophers had sought a general truth in old stories about the gods, Prudentius and his like told a general truth by means of personified abstractions. The foundations of this type of allegory really go back to a Roman habit of personification, a habit exemplified by their building temples to abstract figures like Libertas. Plautus introduces his Trinummus with the characters Luxuria and Inopia: and Horace has some vivid personifications like Cura riding pillion

post equitem sedet atra Cura:

and pallida Mors which knocks on every door. But classical writers were not prone to allegory, although they knew of allegory as a figure of speech they had learned at the grammar schools. The 4th century A.D., however, perhaps because of the church, was far different: and as the Middle Ages advanced, so the taste for allegory grew until we even find Ovid allegorised. Prudentius was a product of his age, and C.S. Lewis in The Allegory of Love stresses the fact that personified allegory was as natural to the pagan Claudian as to the Christian poet: it was just the 4th century way of thinking. Now Servius, Macrobius and Donatus, our Virgilian commentators, also belonged to the 4th century; and while I do not wish to attach too much significance to this fact, we are bound to feel that this is one argument against our too ready acceptance of what these commentators say about allegory in Virgil: we should do well to bear in mind what C.S. Lewis says (Allegory of Love, p.62) 'when allegory becomes a man's natural mode of expression it is inevitable that he will find more and more allegory in the ancient authors whom he respects.'

Servius was in fact very conservative in this matter - thereby fitting one half of Housman's famous aphorism about critics: 'it may be true that all good critics are conservative' for he explicitly rejects allegory in the Eclogues except in connection with the confiscations.

Refutandae enim sunt allegoriae in bucolico carmine nisi cum...ex aliqua agrorum perditorum necessitate descendunt.

Shall we rush in where Servius feared to tread? Our whole consideration of the background in fact leads us a priori to expect not to find any extensive use of allegory by Virgil, and conversely to find allegorical interpretations in commentators of the 4th century and after.

And so, turning to Virgil, I wish to ignore the instances which we certainly find of personified abstractions - like Fama in IV and the well-known gathering of personifications in Hades - Luctus, ultrices Curae, pallentes Morbi, Metus and so on - and the very occasional instances where the gods seem to have an allegorical significance, and concentrate only on the sort of allegory which we find instanced in Servius and which is inferred by many modern critics, at least in the Eclogues. This is allegory of a special kind - we might call it historical allegory - consisting in occult references by Virgil to contemporary persons or events.

This is the kind of allegory which has been widely postulated as underlying the eclogues, from the time of Servius, through a grand climacteric of allegorical interpretations of all kinds in the Middle Ages, to our own day when the extreme view is defended by Leon Hermann in Les masques et les visages dans les Eclogues de Virgile where each personage in the poems is equated with a historical character who is represented by the same persona throughout the collection: another extremist whom I will just mention is J. FitzSimon who in 'The Ten Christian Pastorals of Virgil' finds messages concerning Christianity in all ten eclogues by means of a code in which - very roughly - certain groups of letters can stand for certain other groups, and almost any one letter for any other. The poems were written in cipher, he says, because of official antagonism to Christianity; and all the ancient poets worth their salt had foreknowledge of Christianity, like their Jewish brethren, and wrote such secret messages for posterity: the key which had been handed down from generation to generation was lost until rediscovered by FitzSimon. More moderate writers make less extravagant but almost equally dogmatic statements. Comparetti who is a very careful as well as a captivating writer says: 'Virgil had in fact made use of allegory, as everyone knows, in the Bucolics'; and T.E. Wright in 'Fifty Years of Classical Scholarship' says: 'Their true significance must lie beneath the surface if only we could find the key', and, 'We know that Menalcas in Eclogue 9 is Virgil himself, and other real persons doubtless also masquerade under the fictitious names of Daphnis, Mopsus etc.'

Now this is a special kind of allegory. Allegorical criticism of Homer had seen a relationship between the facts of the story told by Homer and the truths of philosophy or of the physical universe: Christian allegory saw a parallelism between actions and sayings of the Old Testament and the events of the New Testament: and Medieval allegory while more widely ranging tended to be abstract allegory which told a general or particular truth by means of personified characters. The Eclogues on the other hand are taken to be a special kind of poems à clef. It has been argued that the loves of shepherds, their rustic banter and musical contest which form the subject-matter of pastoral poetry, were no less barren in 42 B.C. as poetic material than they would be today; that Theocritus' highly successful introduction of vulgar country topics to the scholarly and artificial society of Alexandria could not be emulated by Virgil in Rome; and that Virgil therefore cleverly adapted these poems to his own society, embodying in the simple framework of the Arcadian shepherd-life a skilful but occult commentary on the lives and loves of his own circle of friends. J.S. Phillimore in his extremely interesting and provocative paper 'Pastoral and Allegory' compares Virgil and his Transpadane circle of artistic friends with a group of exiled Scots in London: and just as 16th or 17th century Scots might have written poetry to one another - even, perhaps, Latin poetry - so Virgil, he suggests, wrote his little poems for the benefit of this circle, skilfully weaving with words supplied mostly by Theocritus a web of contemporary allusion to which we - and this, I'm afraid is only too true - lack the detailed knowledge which alone would supply the key. Now this is an attractive theory, and one which we are strongly inclined to accept if only because of the very annoying fact that we cannot seem to understand the meaning of the Eclogues; and that is one thing which scholars cannot bear. Hence Skutsch's vivid phrase, already quoted, that they 'look at us with enigmatic eyes'. And these metaphorical

eyes have fascinated scholars for many years.

It is certainly tempting to look for personal references in the poems, and particularly in those eclogues which to us seem very often to lack point. The third Eclogue, for instance, where Menalcas and Damaetas - as shepherds sometimes do, I suppose - regale one another with what is politely termed 'rustic banter' not unlike the verbal battle between Sarmentus and Cicirrus on Horace's journey to Brundisium, tempts us at least to sympathise with some of the allegorical suggestions in Servius. Menalcas for example (lines 16 sq.) accuses Damaetas of stealing Damon's goat: and Servius preserves the story that Virgil is referring to the theft by Varus of a tragedy written by Virgil - a play, perhaps, on the etymology of τραγωδία, goat-song: and, to quote another example, Virgil's friends may I suppose have seen the joke when Menalcas' ram fell in the river (lines 94-5) 'Don't go too far, sheep: the bank isn't safe: the ram himself is still drying his fleece.'

Parcite oves nimium procedere: non bene ripae
creditur: ipse aries etiam nunc vellera siccatur.

They may possibly have seen the point that, so Servius says, Virgil himself was the aries, who fell in the river when chased off his farm by the centurion Arrio. Horace after all described the Eclogues as facetum - witty, or humorous - as they no doubt are in places.

It is incidentally perhaps worth noticing a possible explanation of how this identification of Virgil with the ram arose. In his preface to the Eclogues Servius mentions the meaning of some of the proper names, including Tityrus - 'Laconum lingua tityrus dicitur aries maior qui gregem anteire consuevit'; and on the very same page in Thilo and Hagen's text, Servius also says 'hoc loco Tityri sub persona Vergilium debemus accipere'. It would have been a simple matter for someone to link the two statements and apply them to the ram in our example: a ram is in fact far from being an appropriate symbol for Virgil if we consider the other references we have to his personal appearance, and his alleged nickname of Virgo: it would be much easier to see a reference to Arrio but the line about the ram in any case is hidden away in a poem which has no overt reference to Virgil or his farm and in a context which gives no clues whatever to help us identify the reference in the way that is suggested.

However, some of the Eclogues would most certainly have added point if we could accept Phillimore's theory and find the keys: or if we could, as Herrmann claims to do, fit the faces to all the enigmatic eyes. Many attempts have been made at 'solving' the Eclogues on these lines and I obviously cannot discuss them in detail at this point. But I should like to put the theory to the test by considering one or two of the poems and the proposed solutions. A useful example for testing is Eclogue V for the reason that it is widely believed to be allegorical, while on the other hand it is not one of Servius' own pet allegories concerned with Virgil's farm. The Eclogue tells of a meeting between the shepherds Menalcas and Mopsus who agree to sing to one another: Mopsus sings a lament for Daphnis - Daphnis is mourned by his mother, who embraces him and rails against the gods and the cruel stars, and also by all Nature. Menalcas in his turn sings of the apotheosis of Daphnis, who looks in wonder at the gate of heaven and the clouds and stars under his feet:

Candidus insuetum miratur limen Olympi
sub pedibusque videt nubes et sidera Daphnis.

The suggestion that Menalcas is Virgil and Mopsus a poet-friend need not detain us long: the identification of Menalcas with Virgil springs merely from the belief which some people hold that Menalcas = Virgil in other poems, and for the identity of Mopsus we have no real clue beyond the fact that he is younger than Virgil. But what makes this in my view the worst sort of allegorising is the simple fact that the identification of the two shepherds with real persons adds precisely nothing

to our understanding or appreciation of the poem which is an artistic entity without such unnecessary trappings which are merely the result of the allegorising habit: before we make such identifications we need to be convinced not only that Virgil does introduce real persons under fictitious names but that he generally does.

However, the real point of dispute concerns the identity of the dead Daphnis. Servius has his suggestions: many say simpliciter, says Servius, that Virgil is lamenting 'a certain Daphnis' - (I should have said that was a good premise) - but others, he says, assert that he is allegorically referring to Julius Caesar, 'who was killed by Cassius and Brutus with 23 wounds, and hence Virgil says crudeli funere by a cruel death'. In all fairness Servius adds that a cruel death could refer to almost any death.

Others suggest Quintilius Varus, he says. That seems a good list of candidates to begin with: but it is swelled by Donatus' suggestion of Virgil's brother Flaccus (who is only mentioned this once) and by modern pretenders like Catullus, the suggestion of Herrmann. The very number of the candidature makes us dubious, and in fact most suggestions are easily dealt with, like Catullus who died ten years too early and (even more convincing) Quintilius Varus who died ten years too late, after the poem was written: so that we can hardly assume that Servius preserves an authoritative and early tradition at this point.

The most popular identification has been with Caesar, especially by those who still believe that Virgil was first and foremost a political pamphleteer, writing in support of Augustus' régime. But there are in my view insuperable objections to this view. Caesar's mother predeceased him and therefore cannot with any propriety be regarded as embracing his corpse: the counter to this is that Virgil meant the mother of Caesar's gens, namely Venus the Aeneadam genetrix; the allegorical reference, says D.L. Drew, is to the laying of Caesar's body in an imitation temple of Venus mentioned by Suetonius. But the case against Caesar rests on much more: he is described as puer - and Caesar was almost 60 when he died: he is a poet, and Menalcas says that Mopsus sings as well as Daphnis (alias Caesar) did; Mopsus will be another Daphnis - tu nunc eris alter ab illo - surely a bold thing to say if Caesar is meant, unless we become more deeply involved and make Mopsus = Augustus. It is only with great ingenuity that scholars can make the institution of Bacchic revels - attributed to Daphnis in the poem - appropriate to Caesar: Bacchus had elephants in his processions and so had Caesar, says Drew. And surely Virgil was running the risk of unsympathetic laughter if not a reprimand from Augustus himself for representing on Daphnis', i.e. Caesar's epitaph:

Of his beautiful flock the even more beautiful guardian

Formosi pecoris custos formosior ipse

when even his troops were not likely to nominate the bald-headed Caesar for a prize in any beauty contest.

But the decisive argument, after all, is the mere fact that all the resemblances to Caesar have to be sought out with not a little ingenuity: if Virgil wanted to paint Caesar he could surely outline his characteristic features for all the world to recognise, and he would most certainly avoid features which were inappropriate. When Milton borrowed from Virgil, as Virgil had borrowed from Theocritus and the Lament for Bion, to lament Edward King, he did not in all conscience tell us much about his friend, except, allegorically, that they had been at college together

For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and mill.
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the Morn
We drove a-field.....

and that he was drowned, and in the appropriate place,
Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high.....

These facts any reader would glean from Lycidas without recourse to a commentator: and in the end, Virgil's poem makes perfectly good sense if we take him to mean just what he says; that he is lamenting Daphnis, a mythological shepherd. The contemporary reader, between 42 and 40 B.C., might well think of Caesar and his comet and of a possible contemporary apotheosis: there may well be features of Daphnis which particularly encourage thoughts of Caesar: and Virgil in the end may have wished to make oblique reference to Caesar's death, just as in Aeneid V Acestes' arrow which was metamorphosed into a comet can hardly fail to arouse thoughts of Caesar's comet. But Latin literature is full of oblique contemporary references of this kind: and this is very different from saying that the fifth Eclogue is an allegory on Caesar's death, and that Daphnis is Caesar.

The Eclogues concerning Virgil's or his father's farm constitute, as Servius saw, a different problem. Is this special pleading on our part, or are they really different? Eclogue 9 gives quite plain evidence, that the setting is not Sicily but Italy, and that the time is not any time but the time of the confiscations.

Vare, tuum nomen, superet modo Mantua nobis,
Mantua vae miserae nimium vicina Cremonae,
cantantes sublime ferent ad sidera cycni.

'Varus, if only Mantua is left to us, Mantua alas too near to poor Cremona, swans will raise your name to the stars in song.'

Varus (i.e. Alfenus Varus) was one of the triumvirs who assigned the confiscated lands: and we have a plain appeal to him to leave undisturbed the lands of Mantua which are suffering from their nearness to Cremona which had been on the wrong side in the civil war.

This gives the background to the plain facts told by Moeris: 'a stranger is possessing our holding:' to which Lycidas replies that he had heard that Menalcas had saved all that land by his poetry. That is the sum total of the allegory in the poem, the rest of which is concerned with singing and poetry in conventional pastoral style. The surprising thing is really that the allusion is so clear: the facts are stated unmistakably and quite specifically, with the proper names of Varus and Mantua. There is little doubt that Virgil has the nom de plume Menalcas here: one might almost imagine the pseudonym to be due to Virgil's natural modesty. He mentions his friends by name, but not himself.

Now let us examine Eclogue 1, the sister Eclogue to 9. It is a dialogue between two Italian farmers: Meliboeus who tells us in plain and outspoken terms that he has been driven from his holding by an army veteran; and Tityrus who by contrast is very much at his ease under the spreading beech-tree enjoying undisturbed possession of his land. So much is clear: and without entering into the complicated and very vexed questions which arise from detailed examination of the poem we can look at the identification of these farmers. Servius says explicitly and more than once that Tityrus stands for Virgil, but with the very sensible reservation - hoc loco - at this point: Tityrus represents Virgil only in places and not throughout the poem as a whole. The reservation is very necessary, since Tityrus is an old man whose beard has been growing white (Virgil was 28 when he started the Eclogues); he is (or has been) a slave; and he is in any case of a character very different from Virgil's own: he isn't interested in Meliboeus' plight at all, and it has been well said that Meliboeus himself, who bears no

malice but only sorrow, speaks much more as Virgil's mouthpiece.

I am not envious, but rather surprised: so much upset
is there everywhere in the fields.

non equidem invideo, miror magis: undique totis
usque adeo turbatur agris.

It would be nearer the truth therefore to say that Virgil is both Tityrus and Meliboeus, or, if you prefer it neither. The simplest explanation of the poem is as a dialogue between two representatives of the farmers near Mantua, or for that matter anywhere in Italy, who have been involved in the confiscations. Tityrus has been fortunate and Meliboeus less so, and Virgil has dramatically and sympathetically described the personal heartbreak and suffering involved in such a policy. That this is so is, I think, made clear by the statements of the two farmers when they seem to speak for a class of people: Tityrus uses the plural pueri when quoting the words of Augustus; and Meliboeus even more clearly speaks for all the dispossessed farmers

But we others will go, some to parched Africa, some to
Scythia and chalky Oaxes, some to the Britons on the
edge of the world.

At nos hinc alii sitientis ibimus Afros,
pars Scythiam et rapidum cretae veniamus Oaxen
et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos.

Certainly Virgil has been, according to tradition, personally concerned in these confiscations, but we shall never know the precise details of his case. Some of what he says through the mouth of Tityrus is true of himself, just as Meliboeus too no doubt speaks for the poet: like most writers and, particularly, most young writers, Virgil is being to a certain extent autobiographical: but I have never heard it said that David Copperfield was an allegorical figure because to a certain extent he represented Dickens; and I see no reason for continuing the tradition that Tityrus or Menalcas or anyone else equalled Virgil. There, I think, is the vital point: writers of antiquity were acquainted with the type of allegory where Zeus = ether, Apollo = the sun, the ark = the cross: or for example in Plato's Cave, the images on the wall represent the material things in the world. and it was natural to them when they assumed the Eclogues to be allegorical, to look for the equation which would provide the key: and therefore we find such equations as Tityrus = Virgil, Daphnis = Caesar. Some moderns follow them into the same trap, and M. Herrmann even insists that the one equation, like the key to an atlas gives the key to all the poems in the collection, so that Virgil = Menalcas throughout and so on. There is no clear foundation for such identification of the pastoral characters with Virgil's friends and enemies, and there is the added argument against it that Virgil, when he wishes to, introduces his friends under their own names. No doubt there are veiled allusions to contemporary persons and events, but the most we can honestly do is to note the allusions when we can, with our limited knowledge, trace them: and the path to such allusions is, I firmly believe, a one-way street which is only to be negotiated from the known fact to the literary allusion: we must beware of trying to read the Eclogues with a view to finding out the facts like, for instance, the location of Virgil's farm. The poems are a quicksand of fact, fiction, and reminiscence from Greek literature, and any conclusions we draw from them can never be verified except from known historical facts. Now treating the Eclogues as allegories does I feel lead us into this error and for that reason I should hesitate to call them allegorical at all: but if we do call them allegories let us at any rate be sure what we mean by the term. We are not justified in saying that Eclogue 1 is an allegory in which Tityrus = Virgil, because then we might logically work out equations something like this

V = T

But T is old and a slave
∴ V is old and a slave,

or at any rate V is something else which in the allegory = old and slave. We can only say, with Servius, that Tityrus may equal Virgil at a particular point and in a particular aspect, and that only if we can prove by reference to the facts that this is so. I am reminded of a picture which I carry in my mind from 'The Cloister and the Hearth', of an inn in the Black Forest where a very old servant comes in with the drinks and Charles Reade whimsically says 'enter grisled Ganymede': the whole point of the picture is that the old servant bore absolutely no resemblance to the beautiful youth stolen by Jupiter, except this one point of resemblance that they were both cup-bearers: and such must be our conception of Tityrus as representing Virgil - he does so only when and where we can prove a resemblance.

Of the most famous Eclogue of all - the Messianic Eclogue which centuries of Christian writers took for granted was an inspired prophecy of the birth of Christ - I obviously have no time to speak. But one thing only I will say, that in this case the allegorists are the more hard-headed and in general less fanciful scholars who think the subject of the poem is the Peace of Brundisium. If we are merely concerned with identifying the child whose birth is celebrated in the poem, then we are not allegorising, because Virgil says in no uncertain terms that a child has been born, and so clearly does he say it that we are most reluctant to believe that it is some personified abstraction which smiles up into its mother's face.

Incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem,
matri longa decem tulerunt fastidia menses:
incipere parve puer: qui non risere parenti,
nec deus hunc mensa, dea nec dignata cubili est.
Begin, little child, to recognise your mother with
a smile, after her long suffering: begin, little
child: a child who has not smiled on his parents
is never considered worthy of a god's board or a
goddess's couch.

Whatever special reasons we may have for believing the Eclogues to be largely allegorical, few of us would be willing to look on the Aeneid itself as basically an allegorical poem, as D.L. Drew has argued. I believe the same arguments hold as I have put forward with regard to the Eclogues: we do accept the fact that the Aeneid contains a wealth of contemporary allusion much of which is lost on us because of our lack of historical detail, but surely the subordination of the whole epic to a propagandist theme, as a glorification of Augustus in the person of Aeneas does less than justice to Virgil. That is not how great epics are made.

We are well aware that the Aeneid is the epic of Rome, the story of a nation's spirit and not merely the legend of its founder: Virgil writes in depth, and gathers up his own times in the simple story from a legendary past, in a very complex and delicately woven web. His method, as in the Eclogues, is allusive: and books like Drew's 'Allegory of the Aeneid' perform a useful function in noticing some of the contemporary allusions, or parallels. For example, Drew compares the arrival of Aeneas at the site of Rome (in Book VIII) where Evander is sacrificing to Hercules, with the arrival of Augustus at Rome from Naples in 29 B.C. to celebrate his triumph - an event which was bound to be imprinted very clearly on the memory and imagination of every Roman. He also points out the parallel between Hercules, whose feast is being celebrated,

saevis, hospes Troiane, periclis

servati facimus, meritosque novamus honores. (Aeneid, VIII.188-9)

and Augustus who was given the oak leaves 'ob cives servatos' - a parallel which was fairly commonly drawn at the time. But I find it difficult to follow Drew when he deduces the propagandist purpose of the whole scene and in fact the whole book, namely that just as Hercules is worshipped by these rites, so Augustus ought to be worshipped. The words which Evander uses to defend Hercules must be taken, he says, to apply to Augustus, as a defence of emperor-worship.

'non haec sollemnia nobis,
has ex more dapes, hanc tanti numinis aram
vana superstitione veterumque ignara deorum
imposuit'

'These solemn ceremonies and this ritual feast, this altar of such sanctity, have not been imposed by idle superstition which disregarded the ancient gods.' In other words, having established a parallelism between Augustus and Hercules at this point, Virgil in effect says 'for Hercules read Augustus in what follows': we have yet another equation.

This instance I do not mind overmuch, for Virgil draws many parallels between Augustus and Hercules: but all the dangers of allegorical treatment are apparent in another of Drew's parallels. In Aeneid VIII 268 Evander, talking of the sacrifice to Hercules, says

ex illo celebratus honos laetique minores
servavere diem

'From that time these rites have been practised, and the anniversary joyfully kept by succeeding generations.'

Evander is a contemporary of Hercules, and by saying that succeeding generations - 'minores' - have kept the feast he is guilty of an anachronism: he talks as if he were living in Virgil's day, and in fact, so says Drew, the poet is speaking out of Evander's mouth. Therefore Evander = Virgil: and we have corroborative evidence: Evander is an Arcadian and Virgil is a native of Transpadane Gaul, the Arcadia of the Bucolics: and Evander's fate is the same as Virgil's:

me pulsum patria pelagique extrema sequentem
fortuna omnipotens et ineluctabile fatum
his posuere locis

'Fortune and inevitable fate have set me here, driven from my homeland and following the utmost limits of the sea' for Virgil in the same way had been driven out of his home near Mantua to take refuge in Rome.

Criticism of such parallels is too easy, and its sting has been removed by Drew's own prophecy that these likenesses would be 'conjured away by the cold voice of scepticism'. But I must protest at the conclusions which Drew deduces from the equation Evander = Virgil. Since Evander has met Anchises, Aeneas' father, so Virgil must have met Julius Caesar, Augustus' adoptive father, since Augustus = Aeneas. Such mathematical deductions from one basic equation may be logical, but they are not the legitimate weapons of literary criticism. As Sainte-Beuve says of the suggestion that Drances - the orator of the Latins, and a kind of barrack-room lawyer - represents Cicero, 'ici je me révolte'. It may well be that Virgil draws characteristics from Cicero to make up his fictitious character, just as he presents elements of Augustus in Aeneas, and of Cleopatra in Dido. The enunciation of such resemblances helps our appreciation of the characters in the story as it no doubt helped Virgil's Roman readers even more. But we are in no way justified in equating characters or conversely in assuming that every character must have his counterpart in real life: what do we gain by saying that Achates = Agrippa, or, stranger still, that Mnestheus = Maecenas? I will add only one more illustration from Drew which I find amusing, and which at the same time shows how we are tempted to argue in the wrong direction along our one-way street because of a parti pris.

There is a well-known passage in Aeneid IV which some people find strange because of the sentiment it expresses. Dido, when Aeneas is leaving her, says she would have felt much less forlorn if only she had a little Aeneas left behind playing in the court to remind her of his father:

Saltem si qua mihi de te suscepta fuisset
ante fugam suboles, si quis mihi parvulus aula
luderet Aeneas, qui te tamen ore referret,
non equidem omnino capta ac deserta viderer.

The explanation, says Drew, is simple: Sidonia Dido is obviously Scribonia; now Scribonia, as is well known, was divorced by Augustus immediately after their daughter Julia was born. Unfortunately Augustus had wanted a son, and if Julia had been a boy history might have taken a different course just as surely as if Cleopatra's nose had been a bit longer: Augustus might never have divorced Scribonia if only a little Augustus had been playing in the courtyard.

On such threads of gossamer are allegorical theories woven.

THE SHIELD OF AENEAS

Some Elementary Notions ¹

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M.A.

Much ingenuity has been spent on attempts to interpret Virgil's description of the shield of Aeneas (VIII.625-731), but so far not with much success. This lack of success seems to have been largely due to the neglect of certain elementary facts. Perhaps by drawing attention to these facts and their implications I may help to clear the ground.

It is hardly necessary to recall that, whereas the scenes on the shield of Achilles (Iliad XVIII.478-608) are taken from life in peace and war, those on Aeneas' shield concern the history of Rome. Seven scenes are briefly described: 1. The suckling of Romulus and Remus by the she-wolf (630-634); 2. The rape of the Sabine women followed by the making of a treaty between Romans and Sabines (635-641); 3. The punishment of Mettus Fufetius for his treachery (642-645); 4. Porsenna, Horatius Cocles, Cloelia (646-651); 5. Manlius, thanks to the sacred geese, defending the Capitol from the Gauls (652-662); 6. The dance of the Salii, the Lupercalia and other ceremonies (663-666); 7. The Underworld, with Catiline in Tartarus and Cato in Elysium (666-670). These seven scenes take up 41 lines. Four more lines describing the sea with dolphins swimming in it (671-674) provide the setting for an eighth scene (675-728) of 54 lines, longer than all the rest put together - Actium, followed by the triumph of Augustus.

This is a somewhat miscellaneous collection of subjects, and scholars have tried to comfort themselves and us by finding either one unifying theme or a pattern of several themes. Warde Fowler attempts the former. In his commentary on Book VIII (Aeneas at the Site of Rome, Oxford, 1917, pp. 103 ff.), he maintains that we have here scenes 'of escapes from terrible perils, both moral and material, ending with the Battle of Actium, the most wonderful escape of all'. But, as he himself admits, the sixth scene, depicting the dance of the Salii and other ceremonies, does not fit into his scheme, and he can explain its presence only by suggesting that Virgil included it at the request of Augustus (op.cit., p.107). Miss J.R. Bacon, in her article 'Aeneas in Wonderland' (Classical Review liii (1939), pp.97-104), recognizes this difficulty and also others, for example that the theme of narrow escapes accounts 'only by some stretch of the imagination for the Sabines' (p.102). One might say that this is equally true of the Mettus passage. Just as Virgil omits the perils that preceded the treaty with the Sabines, so too he omits the dangerous situation that provoked Tullus to punish Mettus so savagely. Miss Bacon introduces another element, an important one: It is that the scenes 'are, except for Actium, narrow escapes on the site that Aeneas has just seen' (l.c.).