There would be no difficulty at all if Virgil had written:

> incultus molli flauescet campus arista
> paulatimque rubens pendebit sentibus uua
>
> uncultivated fields will yellowen with silky crops
> and, gradually, reddening clusters of grapes will hang
> from thorn bushes.

The loss of one golden line (29) is compensated for by the gain of another (28), we no longer have the Golden Age anomalously represented by a normal seasonal event, and the redundancy of *incultis* is removed. The hypothesized error must have occurred very early, since the lines are quoted by Lactantius (*Div. inst.* 7.24.11) in the form in which we have them; and it is admittedly difficult to see how the error could have arisen, unless the combination *paulatim … pendebit* was faulted by someone who did not realize that the adverb refers to the onset of a process. But scholars have found difficulty with the traditional ordering of the immediately preceding lines,[2] and E. Courtney has pressed the case for a similar transposition at *Aen.* 7.179–80.[3]

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[2] J.F. Mountford and A.Y. Campbell, 'Virgil, *Ecl.* IV, 23', *CR* 52 (1938), 54–6, with references.

[3] E. Courtney, 'The formation of the text of Virgil', *BICS* 28 (1981), 22; he points out that at *G.* 2.145–6 one of the Virgilian manuscripts (P) has a similar error to the one which I am hypothesizing here, although that error (for which see Geymonat's edition) is admittedly much easier because of the homoeoarchon of *hinc*. I am most grateful to Professor Courtney for drawing my attention to the parallel.

VIRGIL'S ACQUISITIVE BEES

In Mem. J. Butrica

In *Georgics* 4.158–83, Virgil describes his bees' division of labour and likens it to that of the Cyclopes as they fashion Jupiter's thunderbolts. The simile concludes:

> Non aliter, si parua licet componere magnis,
> Cecropias innatus apes amor urget habendi 177
> munere quamque suo.

Faultless though they stand in our manuscripts, lines 177–8 have raised questions of syntactical coherence and relevancy which together may cause us to ask whether Virgil actually said that *amor habendi*, 'love of having', drives or motivates the Cecropian bees.[1]

[1] A longer version of this note was accepted for presentation at the May 2007 Annual Meeting of the Classical Association of Canada, in St John's, Newfoundland, in a special session of

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In his paper 'How textual conjectures are made',[2] Professor Nisbet relates how he was led initially to doubt the veracity of the manuscript tradition by a perplexing syntactical question, namely the precise relation of *munere quamque suo* to the sentence's main clause. His doubts increased, he says, when he noticed Conington's 'evident embarrassment' in explaining that *munere suo* 'seems a modal ablative, belonging not to anything expressed in the sentence, but to the notion of working implied in *non aliter urget*'. Conington (we might add) hardly needed to point out that gerundial *habendi* is insufficiently *energetic* to serve as referent for that modal ablative: '… love of having drives the Cecropian bees, each with its own duty *sc*. in *having*' (!). Bothered too by a question of relevancy, since *amor habendi* did not appear to be truly relevant to the immediate topic of the bees' labour, Nisbet contemplated changing *habendi* to *agendi*, only to discover, in consulting Geymonat's critical apparatus, that *agendi* had been considered by Peerlkamp.

Evoking the busyness that we associate proverbially with bees, *agendi* will readily accommodate modal *munere … suo*, and the fact that two eminent critics have thought of it independently may be said to enhance its plausibility. Yet *agere* is not quite the equivalent of *laborare*, just as 'busyness' is not quite the same thing as 'labour', and it is the bees' commitment to *labor*, 'labour' or 'toil' (184, *labor omnibus unus*) which clearly marks them as belonging to the Age of Iron, in which *labor omnia uicit* | *improbus* (1.145–6).[3] In short, *amor … agendi* may be judged a little bland.[4]

The bees' *labor* consists ultimately in their creation of honey. Their elaborate division of tasks, their complex social system – everything tends towards that end; and in pursuing it, Virgil says, they will often sacrifice their own lives, tearing their wings as they wander among the rocks (203–4), so great is their love of flowers and the glory of generating honey: *tantus amor florum et generandi gloria mellis* (205). In the Age of Saturn, honey was simply there for the taking, a gift from the heavens, like dew, but Jupiter put an end to that easy access, shaking off honey from the leaves at the same time that he took away fire, put poison in snakes, and brought about the other disagreeable features of his Age. The acquisition of honey now required toil, *labor*.

papers on Latin poetry honouring the late James Butrica, Professor of Classics at Memorial University, after his untimely death in July 2006. Unfortunately, and regrettably, I missed that meeting in St John's and now offer as belated *hommage* these thoughts on Virgil's text, remembering especially Prof. Butrica's exacting and exemplary work in Latin textual studies. My thanks are owed to Prof. Tana Allen, organizer of the 2007 meeting, and to the members of her programme committee. For helpful criticism of an earlier draft of the present note, I must thank *CQ*'s anonymous reader; it should not be assumed that s(he) necessarily agrees with my conclusions. And let me also thank Dr Rhiannon Ash for her editorial guidance and good suggestions.

[2] *MD* 26 (1991), 65–91, at 87 = R.G.M. Nisbet, *Collected Papers on Latin Literature*, ed. S.J. Harrison (Oxford, 1995), 338–61, at 358. He refers to the editions of J. Conington and H. Nettleship (London, 1898) and M. Geymonat (Paravia, 1973). See too his review of R.F. Thomas, *Virgil: Georgics*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1988): 'Conington is rightly puzzled by the construction of *munere* …' (*CR* 40 [1990], 262).

[3] Thomas (n. 2), vol. 1, 93, takes this statement to mean: 'Insatiable toil occupied all areas of existence'.

[4] Cf. E. Fantham, in her review of Nisbet (n. 2, 1995): 'N[isbet] has rightly identified *amor … habendi* as corrupt, yet is less convincing with the suggested *amor … agendi*'; see <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/1996/96.03.06.html>.

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The old Aristotelian view, that bees merely collected honey which had fallen from the air, persisted into Roman times, but as Thomas remarks (on 4.1), Virgil 'knew of the realities'. The 'realities' – on which our Honey Marketing Boards rarely dwell – may be summarized bluntly in the words of Trimalchio: *'apes … mel uomunt'*.[5] Extracting nectar from flowers and blossoms, bees swallow and store it in special abdominal sacs, or crops, while their glandular systems release enzymes to start the digestive process of its conversion into honey. Returning to the hive, they regurgitate the mixture, transferring it by trophallaxis to other, waiting workers who undertake further digestions and regurgitations, and other attentions, until the transformed nectar – honey – is ready to be stored in the combs. Of course Virgil will not have known the precise details of such transformation, but he certainly knows that honey is derived from nectar and that bees obtain nectar by feeding on flowers. In lines 163–4,

aliae purissima mella
stipant et liquido distendunt nectare cellas

'honey' and 'nectar' will be synonymous, while at 169 (cited by Thomas), *redolentque thymo fraglantia mella*, we will understand that the 'honey fragrant with thyme' has come from the celebrated thyme nectar. As for their initial consumption of nectar, the bees are said to 'feed' everywhere on arbutus, willow and other plants and flowers (181–3, also cited by Thomas in his comment on 'realities'), and it may be noted that the verb used is not the delicate *libare*, which Lucretius chose for his famous simile in the proem of *DRN* 3, *floriferis ut apes in saltibus omnia libant* (11), but rather the robust *pascere* (181, *pascuntur … passim*), which serves as a nice reminder that the creation of honey depends entirely, from beginning to end, on bees' appetites and digestions.

Returning to line 205, we may conclude, in light of the passages just considered, that the bees' *tantus amor florum* is really their love of feeding on nectar and that their *generandi gloria mellis* is obtained by their digestive (and especially regurgitant) processing of that nectar. We might then guess that in line 177 Virgil may have written:

Cecropias innatus apes amor urget *edendi*

'an inborn love of *eating* – an inborn appetite – drives the Cecropian bees …'. Since the bees' work, their *labor*, is eating, *amor … edendi* will mean, in effect, *amor … laborandi*.[6] The phrase *amor … edendi* is attested at *Aen*. 8.184, *postquam exempta fames et amor compressus edendi*, and at Lucr. 4.869, *(capitur cibus) … ut amorem obturet edendi.* If Virgil did write *edendi* in the present line, its (obviously

[5] Petr. *Sat.* 56.6: *'apes enim ego diuinas bestias puto, quae mel uomunt, etiam si dicuntur illud a Iove afferre'*. On bees' feeding and production of honey, see ch. 3 of K. von Frisch's classic *Aus dem Leben der Bienen*, 10th ed., with M. Lindauer (Berlin, 1993).

[6] Cf. C. Nappa, *Reading After Actium: Vergil's Georgics, Octavian, and Rome* (Ann Arbor, 2005), 180: '… the work of the bees is eating. The dominant equation of the poem so far has been that labor equals sustenance; work is food.' It may be observed that in his likely reworking of Virgil's account of bee warfare (4.67–87), Pliny the Elder (*HN* 11.58) emphasizes the importance of *food* for his bees, since a shortage of *cibus*, he says, will drive them to attack their neighbours*: quod si defecit aliquas aluos cibus, impetum in proximas faciunt rapinae proposito*; Rhiannon Ash kindly alerted me to this Plinian detail.

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early) loss to *habendi* will have resulted from psychological rather than strictly palaeographical confusion: *amor … habendi* was expected, and that is what was copied – and understandably so, for *amor habendi* is not an uncommon phrase, and the bees might well be considered fond of 'having', as morally flawed creatures of an acquisitive age.[7] Virgil characterizes them initially in *Georgics* as *parcae*. 'thrifty' (1.4, *apibus … parcis*), but *parcitas* is not incompatible with an *amor habendi*, and the bees of Book 4 presumably derive satisfaction from stocking up – perhaps 'hoarding' – their supplies of honey for wintertime (156–7). Misgivings about the manuscripts' *amor…habendi* are not prompted by its inappropriateness as apian attribute!

I end with a note on *Cecropias*. The adjective may be simply ornamental, as some have held, but *Cecropius* means 'Athenian', and as applied here to bees it will surely be evocative of the nectar-yielding thyme which flourished on Mount Hymettus. Virgil himself refers to that thyme at 4.270, 'Cecropiumque thymum', while Martial speaks of 'Cecropian honey' (13.24, *Cecropio … melle*), and of the 'noble nectar' sent by a bee, 'ravager of Theseus' Hymettus' (13.104, *Thesei populatrix … Hymetti | …nobile nectar*). It may not be too far-fetched, therefore, to detect in *Cecropia*s a signalling reference to the bees' appetite for nectar, to their 'innate love of eating'.

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[7] Virgil's Evander tells how, as Saturn's reign ended, there came an inferior age, with 'madness of war and love of having', *et belli rabies et amor successit habendi* (*Aen*. 8.327), and *amor habendi* has the same negative connotations for Horace (*Epist*. 1.7.85, *et amore senescit habendi*) and Ovid (*Met*. 1.131, *amor sceleratus habendi*; *Fast*. 1.195, *tempore creuit amor, qui nunc est summus, habendi*; *Ars* 3.541, *nec amor nos tangit habendi*); on the chronology of the phrase's several occurrences, see C.E. Murgia, 'The date of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* 3', *AJPh* 107 (1986), 74–94, at 74–7. For discussion of the bees' alleged *amor habendi*, see e.g. M.C.J. Putnam, *Virgil's Poem of the Earth* (Princeton, 1979), 259 ('… the bees betray what is to Virgil an innate decadence'); D.O. Ross, *Virgil's Elements* (Princeton, 1987), 207 ('… the bees are pressed by an inborn love of possession …'); C.G. Perkell, 'A reading of Virgil's fourth Georgic', *Phoenix* 32 (1978), 211–21 and *The Poet's Truth: a Study of the Poet in Virgil's Georgics* (Berkeley, 1989), 123–9 ('… they seem merely to have replaced sexual *amor* with another sort, that is, passion for gain …', 128). For gentler criticism, see F. Klingner, *Virgils Georgica* (Zurich, 1963), 180, who supposes that, in their love of having, the bees are not individually acquisitive ('wie anders als oft bei den Menschen!'); A.J. Boyle, *The Chaonian Dove: Studies in the Eclogues, Georgics, and Aeneid of Virgil* (Leiden, 1986), 66, n. 62 ('… the bees' *amor habendi* … is directed not to personal aggrandizement but to the enrichment of the whole community …'). Thomas (n. 2), vol. 2, 181, thinks that while a 'critical stance' towards *amor habendi* is 'explicit' at *Aen*. 8. 327 and Ov. *Met.* 1.131 (cited above), 'here the implications are more subtle, but they undoubtedly set the bees' society in the age of Jupiter, and present it as subject to the ethics of that age …'. R.A.B. Mynors, *Virgil. Georgics* (Oxford, 1990), 281 argues that while the 'love of having' is usually considered 'a very bad thing' by the poets, 'who rarely have much themselves', in the case of bees 'this is not so, because it is innate, and is the call of duty'.

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