Virgil not only injects his name at an extremely prominent point in his text, but also links that name explicitly with one poetical topic in particular: *pastores*. He provided this overt autograph at the end of one phase of his career; he may have composed the lines in *Aeneid* 12 as a subtler autograph at the end of another. If not, I follow in the footsteps of Nabokov's deluded caricature of a commentator, Dr Charles Kinbote.

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Schmidt in his *Vergil-Probleme*, Göppinger Akademische Beiträge 120 (1983), 317. I am grateful to Richard Thomas of Harvard University for the reference. Perhaps Virgil offers this as evidence for (and a byproduct of) his *ignobile otium*. The 'telestich' is, I believe, corroborated by the presence of *lusi* (functioning metapoetically), and especially by *Ecl*. 1.6 *O Meliboee deus nobis haec* ***otia*** *fecit*. As he playfully recollects that prominent verse, Virgil deepens our appreciation of the circularity he achieves in the last line of the *Georgics* (recapitulating *Ecl*. 1.1). Might the presence of *Caesar* in the sphragis be a clue to the identity of Meliboeus' *deus*?

COLD-BLOODED VIRGIL: BILINGUAL WORDPLAY AT *GEORGICS* 2.483–9

Much recent work on Virgil has focused on the poet's extensive use of significant wordplay.[1] One such example comes in a particularly striking passage at the end of *Georgics* 2, where the poet discusses his preferences for his career. These lines have broad implications for the interpretation of the poem as a whole, and because a full analysis of the passage is tantamount to a complete interpretation of the *Georgics*, I will confine myself to noting the example of wordplay and suggesting a few of the ways in which its presence might influence a fuller interpretation of the poem.

Interrupting the famous 'praises of country life' which end the second book of the *Georgics*, Virgil claims (2.475–82) that his first ambition is to compose inspired verse dealing with cosmology and natural philosophy:[2]

> me uero primum dulces ante omnia Musae,
> quarum sacra fero ingenti percussus amore,
> accipiant caelique uias et sidera monstrent,
> defectus solis uarios lunaeque labores;
> unde tremor terris, qua ui maria alta tumescant
> obicibus ruptis rursusque in se ipsa residant,
> quid tantum Oceano properent se tingere soles
> Hiberni, uel quae tardis mora noctibus obstet. (2.475–82)[3]

Immediately after these lines, the poet admits the possibility that his talents may lie

[1] See in this regard J. J. O'Hara, *True Names: Virgil and the Alexandrian Tradition of Etymological Wordplay* (Ann Arbor, 1996), esp. 1–7 and 57–111, and M. Paschalis, *Virgil's Aeneid: Semantic Relations and Proper Names* (Oxford, 1997), esp. 1–8. The precursor of these studies is G. J. M. Bartelink, *Etymologisering bij Vergilius* (Amsterdam, 1965).

[2] On the finale to Book 2, I find the analysis of Clay largely persuasive; see J. S. Clay, 'The argument of the end of Vergil's second *Georgic*', *Philologus* 120 (1976), 232–45. See also P. R. Hardie, *Virgil's Aeneid: Cosmos and Imperium* (Oxford, 1986), 33–51. For the literary background to these lines and especially their context, the *laudes uitae rusticae*, see G. Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford, 1968), 165–70. The classic study is still F. Klingner, 'Über das Lob des Landlebens in Virgils *Georgica*', *Hermes* 66 (1931), 159–89.

[3] Quotations are taken from Mynors's Oxford text; all translations are my own.

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elsewhere, and he avows as a second choice poetry of the land, that is, poetry of an agricultural or bucolic nature.

> sin has ne possim naturae accedere partis
> frigidus obstiterit circum praecordia sanguis,
> rura mihi et rigui placeant in uallibus amnes,
> flumina amem siluasque inglorius. (2.483–6)

Two things stand out about this passage: Virgil tells us exactly what might cause his talent to turn away from natural philosophy, and he claims as a second choice the option he has already been following for quite some time. In lines 483–4, Virgil gives the condition which might prevent him from writing verse about natural philosophy: 'but if cold blood will have surrounded my consciousness, so that I cannot approach these aspects of nature . . .'. It has long been noted that this couplet draws on Empedocles' formulation *αἷμα γὰρ ἀνθρώποις περικάρδιόν ἐστι νόημα* (fr. 105 Diels–Kranz); accordingly Thomas glosses Virgil's statement with 'if the intellect is unequal to the goal'.[4] Williams sees the inability to write about natural philosophy as 'a disturbing note of deep pessimism'.[5] I suggest, however, that there is little cause to see any pessimism in the poet's devotion to the countryside and its beauty. The fact that Virgil has evoked an Empedoclean formulation is perhaps significant: not only does he acknowledge the possibility that he may not be able to understand natural philosophy, but he cites a natural philosopher's own rationale for such ignorance. Thus he signals that while he may not make the grade according to the standards of the natural philosophers, these are not necessarily his own standards or those of his audience. The apodosis sketches out the alternative: 'may fields please me and chill streams in their valleys; and in my humility may I love the rivers and forests'. As Spofford rightly notes, the poet's description of the beauties of the natural world (and his own response to it) 'leaves one to wonder if analytical understanding is indeed what he desires most'.[6]

The fact that these possibilities have been stated in conditional form is important, since it implies that Virgil is still in the process of finding his poetic arena. We do not at this point in the text have an explicit rejection of one kind of poetry, nor a firm claim to another. The significance of representing his poetic programme and allegiances as unformed, or at least still malleable, is perhaps that Virgil wants us to see his role as poet as evolving through contact with his subject-matter.[7] For all its self-conscious citation of earlier literature, his pastoral and didactic poetry is cast less as a response to literary tradition than as an evolving response to the natural world itself. The reverie on the beauty of the landscape effects the poet's change of heart.

The conditional syntax also alerts us to the possibility that the next lines will fulfil the condition in one way or the other. Virgil follows his conditional with three apostrophes of increasing complexity:

[4] Thomas on 2.483–4 (p. 252).

[5] G. Williams, *Figures of Thought in Roman Poetry* (New Haven, 1980), 251.

[6] E. W. Spofford, *The Social Poetry of the Georgics* (New York, 1981), 48–9.

[7] Mynors on 2.475 (p. 166) sees that the depiction of country life (2.495–540) which follows our passage has gained an intensity absent from the earlier such discussion (2.458–74): '[Virgil] repeats the idyllic picture of country life in more detail and with a new depth and brilliance, greatly strengthened by our sense that he is now himself deeply committed'. See also Williams (n. 2), 616–19. As Clay (n. 2), 241–2 suggests, 2.495–502 represent not the farmer but the poet; I would maintain that the lines still constitute a kind of praise of country life.

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o ubi campi
Spercheosque et uirginibus bacchata Lacaenis
Taygeta! o qui me gelidis conuallibus Haemi
sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbra! (2.486–9)

The first two are addresses to specific places in Greece: 'Oh where are the fields of Spercheus and Taygetus danced upon by Spartan maidens!' The third, however, is more remarkable; here the poet does not name a place directly, but rather wishes 'If only someone would set me down in the cool vale of Haemus and cover me with the abundant shade of boughs!'[8]

This last apostrophe contains our example of wordplay: in line 484 Virgil introduces the possibility of 'cold blood around my consciousness' (*frigidus . . . circum praecordia sanguis*), and in 488–9 he wishes for someone to 'set me down in the cool vale of Haemus'.

sin has ne possim naturae accedere partis
frigidus obstiterit circum praecordia *sanguis,*
rura mihi et rigui placeant in uallibus amnes,
flumina amem siluasque inglorius. o ubi campi
Spercheosque et uirginibus bacchata Lacaenis
Taygeta! o qui me *gelidis* conuallibus *Haemi*
sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbra! (2.483–9)

But if *cold blood* will have surrounded my consciousness so that I cannot approach these aspects of nature, may fields please me and chill streams in their valleys; and in my humility may I love the rivers and forests. Oh where are the fields of Spercheus and Taygetus danced upon by Spartan maidens! Oh if only someone would set me down in *the cool vale of Haemus* and cover me with the abundant shade of boughs!

Roman poets were fond of punning on the stem *haem-*, in Haemus and other names, suggesting as it does *haima*, the Greek word for blood.[9] So also is *gelidus* virtually synonymous with *frigidus.*[10] The seat of Virgil's consciousness, his *praecordia*, is now replaced by his whole person (*me*). To the best of my knowledge the wordplay in this passage has not been noted. It does not fit any of O'Hara's categories precisely except, of course, that *sanguis* and *Haemi* do both occupy line end.[11]

If Virgil is set down in the cool environs (the surrounding *conualles*) of 'the blood mountain', then we might also say that his consciousness has been surrounded by cold blood. Since our pun comes in the form of a wish, it is logical to understand this as Virgil's way of asserting his preference for bucolic and georgic verse rather than that of

[8] For the syntax of this expression, as well as that immediately before it, see Mynors on 2.486–7 and 488 (pp. 167–9).

[9] For clear examples of the association of the stem *haem-* with blood, see Verg. *G.* 1.491–2; Ov., *Ars Am.* 2.135–6, *Met.* 7.314–15; and Lucan, *B.C.* 5.3, 7.174–6, 7.853–9. Other examples are less certain, but the following arguably exploit the same association: Verg. *Aen.* 9.685; Hor. *Carm.* 1.37.18–20; Prop. 1.15.20, 2.1.63, 2.8.21–2, 2.8.38; Ov. *Met.* 11.409, 12.80–1; and Lucan, *B.C.* 1.680, 7.825.

The most vivid of these passages is that from the first book of the *Georgics,* and it is not improbable that Virgil himself introduced this particular play on words. On *G.* 1.491–2, see O'Hara (n. 1), 29 and 265, and Paschalis (n. 1), 116. On *Aen.* 9.685, see O'Hara (n. 1), 221 and Paschalis (n. 1), 329.

[10] See *TLL* s.vv. *frigidus* and *gelidus;* the words occur in very similar environments throughout Latin literature.

[11] On this practice see O'Hara (n. 1), 86–8. H.-C. Günther, 'Tibullus ludens', *Eikasmos* 5 (1994), 251–69, at 255–7 gives some useful Tibullan examples of glosses, some bilingual, that occur at consecutive line ends.

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natural philosophy. The syntax might also be taken as a strong affirmation that his choice has now been made, since we have moved from conditionals to exclamations. Not only was Virgil's initial longing for the poetry of scientific natural philosophy expressed solely in potential terms, but the turn toward pastoral and georgic themes is accomplished not so much through rational contemplation as through an emotional reverie. Virgil's subject-matter has strong affinities with that of Lucretius and other earlier writers, but his relationship to it differs sharply: the beauty and tranquillity inherent in his 'humbler' second choice lead him to a passion for it that he lacked for natural philosophy.[12] Not only do we have an example of Virgilian wordplay here, but also of what Thomas has classified as a reference that corrects the model to which it refers.[13] For the originally negative idea that cold blood around the heart denotes a lack of intellectual capacity has been reinterpreted: the cold blood around this poet's heart is no intellectual sluggishness, but the same coolness that makes the countryside such a suitable setting for poetry.

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[12] See S. Nelson, *God and the Land: The Metaphysics of Farming in Hesiod and Vergil* (Oxford, 1998), 92–4: Virgil wants to be connected with the land, but as a poet, not a farmer. As Putnam suggests, the specific Greek locales mentioned by Virgil at 2.486–9 represent the sources of his poetry; see M. C. J. Putnam, *Virgil's Poem of the Earth: Studies in the Georgics* (Princeton, 1979), 149. The idea that they all evoke a connection with Bacchus is intriguing and certainly helps to tie this 'digression' more closely to viticulture, the dominant topic of Book 2; see G. B. Miles, *Virgil's Georgics: A New Interpretation* (Berkeley, 1980), 153–4. M. O. Lee, *Virgil as Orpheus: A Study of the Georgics* (Albany, 1996), 73 notes that these locales all possess an Orphic colouring, while P. Scazzoso, 'Riflessi misterici nelle "Georgiche" di Virgilio', *Paideia* 11 (1945), 5–28, at 19–20 suggests that they all have links with mystery religions (including those associated with Orpheus and Dionysus).
On *inglorius* in particular see F. Muecke, 'Poetic self-consciousness in *Georgics* II', *Ramus* 8 (1979), 87–107, at 99–100.

[13] See R. F. Thomas, 'Virgil's *Georgics* and the art of reference', *HSCP* 90 (1986), 171–98, at 185–9 (reprinted in R. F. Thomas, *Reading Virgil and his Texts: Studies in Intertextuality* [Ann Arbor, 1999], 114–41, at 127–32).

A NOTE ON VERGIL, *AENEID* 12.941–3*

> infelix umero cum apparuit alto
> balteus, et notis fulserunt cingula bullis
> Pallantis pueri.

Heyne once observed: 'Praeclarum hoc inventum suppeditatum forte erat Maroni a tragicis' (ad loc.). Heyne's note still provides valuable insights into the possible precedents of the 'fatal weapon',[1] but it has not as yet been explained why, after naming

* I wish to thank Sergio Casali, Kirk Freudenburg, and Alison Sharrock for their valuable suggestions.

[1] Cf. chiefly Soph. *Aj.* 1029–33 (Hector tied to Achilles' chariot with the strap given him by Ajax; Ajax kills himself with the sword given to him by Hector); in addition Leont. Schol. (?) *AP* 7.151; 152 (esp. 7–8 *οὕτως ἐξ ἐχθρῶν αὐτοκτόνα πέμπετο δῶρα, / ἐν χάριτος προφάσει μοῖραν ἔχοντα μόρου*). On the decisive role of Pallas' belt (and for extensive bibliography), see G. B. Conte, in *Enc. Virg.* 1.454b–455a, s.v. 'balteo' (1984); A. Barchiesi, *La traccia del modello* (Pisa, 1984), esp. 30–43; A. Traina, in *Enc. Virg.* 5.1, esp. 330–6, s.v. 'Turno' (1990).

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