The Nightmare of Arcady

The pseudo-Vergilian *Dirae* uniquely places the tradition of curse-poetry in the pastoral world of the *Eclogues*, but in so doing relies heavily on its companion piece the *Lydia* for full contextualization. By emphasizing those pastoral elements partially obscured by the curses of the first and fully deploying the panoply of bucolic themes, in particular the amatory, this second poem completes and foregrounds a curious mix of traditions. Although the relationship between poems of the *Appendix Vergiliana* are far from clear, and in many cases nonexistent, attempts to dissociate the *Dirae* and *Lydia* on stylistic grounds prove inadequate, and thematic elements, jealousy in particular, along with the common setting and referents strongly suggest association as a composite inversion of the first and ninth *Eclogues*.

The *Dirae* and Hellenistic 0Arai&

In her book, *Arae: The Curse Poetry of Antiquity*, Lindsay Watson implicitly defines the 0Arai& as a genre of poem specifically devoted to curses, as distinct from the many a0rai& which occur in passing. These "fully-fledged poetic curses," (56), do not receive a systematic classification, but Watson shows clear commonality in those of the Hellenistic age and their imitators.[1] These are characteristics which the *Dirae* lacks:

> In fact the most characteristic features of the Hellenistic 0Arai& are missing from the *Dirae.* The *Dirae* contains no barrage of outré curses, uttered in the

[1] "The Hellenistic 0Arai& in fact conform to a very elaborate, not to say artificial pattern. … The discussion of Hellenistic curse poetry is based on the following examples: Callimachus' I]bij and Ovid's *Ibis*, an avowed imitation of the Callimachean poem; Moero's 0Arai& 'Curses', known only from the summary of a single episode in Parthenius 0Erwtika_ Paqh&mata 'Tales of Unhappy Love' 27; Theocritus *Idyll* 7.103-14; Euphorion's 0Arai& h2 Pothriokle&pth\j 'Curses or the Cup-stealer' (= frgs. 8 and 9 in Powell's *Collectana Alexandrina*), Xilia&dej '*Chiliades'* and Qra|=c *'Thrax'*, which was conclusively identified as a curse-poem in 1956 by Bartoletti; P. Sorbonn. 2254 which is at least closely related to the Hellenistic 0Arai&," (Watson 81-82). Two quotations will give a fair impression of what Watson finds the most salient characteristics: "The poet execrates his enemy using for the format of the individual imprecation the following pattern: 'may you (he or she) suffer anew the fate associated with a given character of mythology (occasionally, history),'" (Watson 82). and "In formal terms it seems legitimate, therefore, to regard the Hellenistic 0Arai& as constituting a sub-class of catalogue-poetry, a type of composition which was extensively cultivated in that period," (Watson 96-97)

> form of a catalogue, expressed with terseness and willful obscurity. Far from being concise, the *Dirae* is positively diffuse. In contrast with the profusion of curses in the Hellenistic 0Arai&, in the *Dirae* the actual curses, pronounced by the departing *colonus* on his confiscated *agellus*, number only three: (i) infertility, including drought (9-24); (ii) destruction by fire (34-46); (iii) flooding (by the sea, 48-64, rivers 67-70, marsh-water 72-74, rain 76-80). The curses involving flooding are particularly long-winded. Again, the difficulties of the *Dirae* are to be ascribed to the desperate state of the text, and to the poet's ineptitude. There is no question of obscurity deliberately imported by basing the curses on the most recherché legends. Indeed there is not a single mythological allusion in the whole of the poem, (153-4)

While these are all missing from the *Dirae*, they are exemplified by Ovid's *Ibis*.[2] That poem is central to the understanding of Hellenistic curse-poetry, and, by its temporal dissociation from its model, appears to argue for significant generic continuity or revival. For her area of interest, Watson's definitions prove extremely valuable, and yet it remains tempting to compare the *Dirae* to some of these other curse poems, if not formally, then at least thematically. While surely not of the Hellenistic type, the *Dirae* is a poem that is entirely a curse; the distribution of pastoral amatory elements between the *Dirae* and *Lydia*, which I argue are to be treated in tandem, further argues for the first poem's clear presentation as a curse poem. Reminiscences of Lydia and exposition of the shepherdly life, since they would fit awkwardly into the curse, are saved for the second poem, with only enough mention of the girl to explicitly link the two.

The *Dirae* does differ significantly from the Hellenistic 0Arai&, but applying genre so prescriptively as to preempt comparison is extremely rash. It can be objected that thematic elements may be derive more from curses more every-day than literary, which may well be true. In so much as all are curses, however, comparison is legitimate and necessary, and whatever formal differences there may be, the medium privileges other literary curses. The element of the poem that preempts it being a fully literary curse is that its primary referent and contextual frame comes from Vergil's *Eclogues*. In deriving from such quasi-mimetic stock, the *Dirae* must keep

[2] Watson, 79.

its speaker relatively in character to maintain the association, and therefore he cannot indulge in Hellenistic footnotes or recherché comparisons. It is true that there is much meta-literary material in Vergil, yet this is all appropriated by the bucolic setting. Vergil's peers, when they are referenced, are situated in a sort of ambiguous space between the real and fictive, ambiguously conflated with characters of within the fiction. While such sophistication may have been beyond the poet of the *Dirae*, it is by no means necessary for his program and need not be sought out at length.

Although curses are valid material for Theocritus, the *Dirae* appears to take its primary devotional inspiration from *Ecl.* 9 line 6, expanding upon the aside of Moeris.[3] Since Vergil is the primary source, his eschewal of expanded curses of Idyll 2 and Watson's example of 7.103-114 gives a partial explanation of the poet of the *Dirae* not drawing in more Hellenistic elements.[4] Curse poetry of the Hellenistic type, however, was readily at hand, depending on the date of composition perhaps even Ovid's *Ibis*, but perhaps not otherwise integrated into the pastoral genre. The poet likely co-opted this tradition into his pastoral setting without full knowledge of their original compatibility.

One of the most common and important features of curses is the *lex talionis*, the principle, which figures in almost all areas of human existence in which punitive action can be taken or desired, that there is a certain parity for the wrong to be avenged and the penalty inflicted upon the target.[5] While not unique to curses or curse-poetry, it is integral to the *Dirae* and deployed in more rigid form than first appears, as becomes evident from a psychological reading of the *Dirae* and *Lydia*. The straight-forward application of the *lex talionis* would be for the offending soldier to have the land taken from him in similar fashion. Instead, the rustic

[3] Fraenkel 153.
[4] Watson 135-7
[5] Watson 42.

expatriate of the *Dirae* does not directly curse his usurper, but the lands taken, and these either destroy that land or deprive the soldier of all their benefits. Further confiscation would require a renewal of civil-strife, and never emerges even as a prospect in the poem. It is difficult to attribute this omission to the speaker's benevolence, since many of the curses called down upon the land seem cataclysmic enough to effect others. The poet, whenever he may have written, could have also recognized the stability of the Augustan age or not wish to have to treat civil-war at length.[6] Perhaps, when the imprecator calls upon the sea to rise up and flood his former farm, he recognizes the Augustan settlement may be more stable than even the natural order. These explanations, however, argue more from what is not in the text than what is, and it is difficult to imagine the rustic who calls upon destructive natural forces balking at the idea of a few more drops of citizen blood. Therefore, while the *lex talionis* plays a part in this curse, the failure to impose the imprecator's circumstance upon the new owner argues shows that Lycurgus cannot be the primary target of the curse. Rather, the *lex talionis* is rather abstractly applied to the world as a whole, as the imprecator invidiously denies the existence the things of which he is deprived.

The first line of the *Dirae* here gives powerful evidence as to its nature. The speaker labels the poem *cycneas voces*, the song of a dying swan, and thereby admits being powerless with his second word. This is not wholly unexpected in a curse, for the ability to take action would seem to obviate the need for magic, but this line of reasoning actually becomes fairly ambivalent. Power over a person is alleged to increase the efficacy, the signal example being parents cursing children.[7] It seems, however, that the difference in power makes such a sacred

[6] Conte, in "Latin Literature: A History" p. 431 sums up the *communis opinio*: "This slight hexameter work seems to be a variation on the theme of the land confiscations, which is well known – and was a popular literary subject at Rome – on account of Virgil's *Bucolics*. … Stylistically, the two poems appear to have een composed within the Augustan age".

[7] Watson, 26, citing Plato, Plutarch, and Stobaeus. The examples do not seem to deal with power per-se, but rather the specific relationship. Doubtless, there are many other such institutions, but I would argue that the effectiveness

relationship a minefield of impiety and this, rather than a contest of rights, is the key for making the curse a viable option. The word *cycneas* also serves to empower the curse through its association with death.[8] Not actually wasting away or threatening suicide, the speaker must be hyperbolic in this claim. His desperation emerges from linking his powerlessness with death.[9] The idea of the speaker's death is picked up near the end, "rura valete iterum tuque, optima Lydia, salve / sive eris et si non mecum morieris utrumque," (95-6). This context seems more amatory and the invocation in the next line, "extremum carmen recovemus, Battare, avena," calls forth the final *adunata* and conclusion. This death also makes for association with the *Lydia* (126-7), which showcases a more languishing and elegiac sort of death, unrealized as always. The speaker never dwells on this for long, but in the more immediate context here, recasts it metaphorical and moves back to his curses and *adunata*.

A more interesting and psychological interpretation of the poem's unusual target and ambivalence, however, is that the imprecator is overwhelmed with jealousy. His curses are as much a reflection of his fixation on what he has lost as a punishment of the soldier. In most curse-poetry, the offending party is addressed in the second person, and the *Dirae* starts out thus, yet from the twenty-fifth line until the end, the primary addressee is the land itself, with the very poem ending not with Lycurgus' loss, but "gaudia semper enim tua me meminisse licebit," (103).[10] The contrast between the first twenty-four lines and the bulk of the poem is underscored by the focalization on Lycurgus that ends the first of the three curses. The invoked infertility of the fields which the imprecator calls down is, of all the maledictions, the one which most directly

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of curses depends on violation of mystical/magical concepts such as piety which are strongly influenced but not equivalent to power structures..

[8] Watson, 27-30. "Belief in the capacity of the dying to pronounce a potent curse spilled over into the conviction that an a0ra& can still be effective after the death of the person who uttered it," (27).

[9] Watson, 38.

[10] Watson 83, n. 114

affects the usurper, in that he does not receive the produce and profit of the land, to which the rustic charm must be taken as secondary, at least for the soldier. With the fields already made, hopefully, fruitless and therefore of no practical value, line twenty-four, "dulcia non oculis, non auribus ulla ferantur," completes the exclusion of Lycurgus from the land's pleasures. There is little else to be added to the curse that has any direct bearing upon the soldier himself, and since the poet completely avoids *ad hominem* malediction, the poem could easily end here so far as its purported purpose goes.

The bulk of the poem is devoted to destruction of the land itself, going well beyond punishing the offender. With this focus, the poet shows the imprecator's fixation is not so much redressing his wrong or revenge, but denying and destroying what he can no longer enjoy in an unfocused fit of jealous rage. It is this overriding jealousy which occasions the primary divergence between the *Dirae* and Watson's Hellenistic `0Arai&`. As already seen, the mythological exempla of doom comprise the bulk of most curse-poems, and these are completely lacking in the *Dirae*. Paradigmatically, Ovid's *Ibis* does not focus on the exile of his malefactor, as a typical couplet, "noxia mille modis lacerabitur umbra, tuasque / Aeacus in poenas ingeniosus erit," (185-6), shows. Such exempla, by detailed description, often either collapse the exemplary into the intended victim or shift the focalization to the example instead of its object.[11] For poems in which the primary effect is an outpouring of anger, this is perfectly functional. The poet of the *Dirae*, however, in focusing on the jealousy of the disposed *colonus* would dilute his character with these examples. The result of the curses is the utter negation of all that is good in the land; his own exclusion from these delights continues to be paramount in the imprecator's mind.

[11] Watson, 85.

It could be objected that application of curses to the land rather than Lycurgus still allows for mythological *exempla*, with any number of sacked cities, ravaged fields, and naturally obliterated mythic landscapes substituted for the paradigmatic wrongdoers. Even some Lucretian scene of natural destruction could be invoked as a literary exemplum.[12] However, in not making use of these, the poet retains the imprecator's semi-mimetic character and monomaniacal focus upon his former property itself, since such precedents would overpower that land in the same way mythic characters often make a stronger showing than the actual victim. Therefore, the speaker's affect is dramatically enhanced while he is distanced from the self-consciously literary cursers of the Hellenistic poems.[13] This also accounts nicely for the smaller number of curses and their greater individual length. Many mythic *exempla* have the same result, and without the specific referent supplied by the stories, repetition of the effects would lose much of its interest. Furthermore, since the land itself, along with its foliage, (the goats the *colonus* apparently keeps are spared), are the object, and clearly cannot be shipwrecked or suffer many of the more intricate or psychological fates seen in the *Ibis* and others, the variety of curses is severely limited and it is no wonder that the *Dirae* has so few. Contrary to Watson's dismissal of the *Dirae*, the clarification of this difference allows the poem to be read more closely with that genre, since the primary deviations from her criteria can all be traced back to the single and thematically dominant depiction of jealousy.

The *Dirae* lacks only those elements of Hellenistic `0Arai&` which clash with its Vergilian derivation. The setting, as will be seen, is of primary importance to this and its

[12] Van der Graaf, 136, claims *discordia*, citing Lucretius 6.366, yet this seems insufficient for allusion. Similarly, his reference of *Lydia* 104 (1) to Lucretius 4.1192 and 126 (23) to Lucretius 4.924, which seems as if they could come from many amatory sources, are perhaps over-worked.

[13] In the *Lydia* too, where the speaker thinks of the philanderings of Jove, (123-130), he expresses fear lest the god try the same with his girl. Even in that poem the mythological exempla are carefully backgrounded to the speaker's obsession with his own lands and girl.

companion poem, and that curse-poetry is brought in as a secondary element in order to reinterpret the primary referent in no way denies its relevance. Rather, the overtly literary references omitted by the poet of the *Dirae* emphasize the heavy characterization of his character and bid the reader examine him and his Vergilian anti-types more closely.

The Pastoral Patterning of the *Dirae*

That the *Eclogues* must antedate the *Dirae* and *Lydia* will emerge clearly from close reading. References between the works are fully evident, and, while the *Eclogues* easily stand on their own, most content in the pseudo-Vergilian works depends upon the former for significance. The discussion of the *Eclogues* therefore will not aim at their ultimate significance, but interpret them only so far as they provide material referenced or reworked by the poet of the *Dirae* and *Lydia*. Beyond issues of setting, inherited and appropriated bucolic themes, and direct allusion, the attitudes of Vergil's characters in the first and ninth *Eclogues* show our pseudo-Vergil making a stark contrast.

The *Dirae* has far more than a debt to Vergil's first *Eclogue*; cannot exist without it. The openings of both pseudo-Vergilian poems evoke and reinterpret the plight of the displaced rustic, replacing Meliboean resignation with blustering envy. The *Dirae*'s first word and its speaker demand to be read against this *Eclogue*, as it opens with the enigmatic vocative *Battare*, in similarity of sound and metrical equivalency cannot but recall Vergil's Tityrus:

> Battare, cycneas repetamus carmine voces;
> divisas iterum sedes et rura canamus,
> rura quibus diras indiximus, impia vota.
> ante lupos rapient haedi, vituli ante leones,
> delphini fugient pisces, aquilae ante columbas
> et conversa retro rerum Discordia gliscet,
> multa prius fient quam non mea libera avena
> montibus et silvis dicat tua facta Lycurge. (1-8)

While the rest of the line is more spondaic, as befits such an ill-omened work, the emphatic position of such an aurally similar name must be programmatic. As to the further meaning of the name, only tentative suggestions can be made, and the lack of a solid actual or allusive identity of this sort increases the reader's reliance on the name's sound.[14] Such direct mimicry of the opening pushes this line beyond being a simple allusion and appropriates Vergil's world for the rest of the work.

The opening, especially the first two lines, of this *Eclogue* is prime material for allusion and reinterpretation in the *Dirae*.

> M: Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi
> silvestrem tenui Musam meditaris avena;
> nos patriae finis et dulcia linquimus arva.
> nos patriam fugimus; tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra
> formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas. (...)
> M: Non equidem invideo, mirror magis: undique totis
> usque adeo turbatur agris, (1-12)

Meliboeus begins by directly contrasting his sad lot with Tityrus' good fortune, and this comparison underlies all that he says throughout the poem. The men's conversation meanders naturally, the first eighteen lines establishing the two characters' situation and prompting Meliboeus to ask how Tityrus kept his land. From lines nineteen to forty-five provide a vague account of Tityrus' activities, with a good deal of pastoral reminiscence mixed in. The topic then shifts from the past to the goat-herds' respective futures, returning to the mode of contrast that began the work. The *Dirae*, rather, by suppressing the mimetic dialog and assimilating the second character to the speaker's viewpoint concentrates on the negative aspects, and the middle

[14] Van der Graaf's commentary begins "Since the days of Scaliger the most extravagant theories have been offered concerning the identity of Battarus. Battarus was held to be a tree, a river, a hill or even a villa, until in 1792 Jacos discovered that Battarus was a man, a shepherd," (12). He wisely rejects the connection with stammering, `battari0zein`. The most interesting theory is connecting him with the Maenads, `bassari9dej`, expelled by Lycurgus, the Thracian tyrant with whom he is most wont to identify as the figure alluded to by this poem's Lycurgus. (11-17).

of the poem's concentration on the land, seemingly forgetting about Lycurgus entirely, provides a chilling inversion of the *Eclogue*'s nostalgia.

Perhaps the most important point for contrast of the Vergilian and pseudo-Vergilian is that Meliboeus, although indignant, is relatively free from envy. Meliboeus returns to Tityrus' good fortune in the fourth line and this imbalanced comparison heightens the emotional mood while initially seeming to indicate resentment towards his friend, thereby reinforcing its lack or disavowal in line 11. Vergil creates tension as to whether jealousy will engender strife, but nothing in the poem indicates its actual presence, as the amiable ending shows. Rather than envy, the syntactic break in line four shows Meliboeus' fondness for the life he leaves behind, the sort of life he wishes Tityrus to continue to enjoy in his stead. The mindset of the *Dirae*'s speaker could not be more different. That poem's situation is more dire, as Battarus also seems to share the speaker's misfortune. He is repeatedly addressed, and besides this refrain aligning the poem with magical incantations, it also provides a minimal link with the dialog-form of the *Eclogues* and their mimetic style. Battarus may be silent the invocation of the *Eclogues* leaves the reader to wonder until the end whether he too will speak.

Using the same theme of the displaced *colonus,* the ninth *Eclogue* must also be seen as influence and source for the *Dirae*. Like the first, this poem also lays considerable stress on pastoral continuity. As with Meliboeus and Tityrus, Moeris discusses his ills with Lycidas, and the two likewise fall into reminiscences with the expatriate renouncing bucolic song:

> Omnia fert aetas, animum quoque. saepe ego longos
> cantando puerum memini me condere soles.
> nunc oblita mihi tot carmina, vox quoque Moerim
> iam fugit ipsa: lupi Moerim videre priores.
> sed tamen ista satis referet tibi saepe Menalcas. (51-55).

Moeris also does not immediately foreswear such song: “Desine plura, puer, et quod nunc instat agamus; / carmina tum melius, cum venerit ipse, canemus,” (66-67). Moeris shows essentially the same attitude as Meliboeus, with just a bit of defiance in an opening exclamatory curse, “quod nec vertat bene,” (6), which due to its brevity is to be taken as one of Watson’s incidental curses, here adding to the light mimetic effect rather than evoking or indicating magical thinking. Of primary importance to this analysis is that this second Vergilian refugee in no way begrudges those who stay behind the pastoral life he once shared with them, but seems to take consolation in the fact that others will continue to enjoy it, almost as if in his place.

The imprecator of the *Dirae* will continue to use his *avena* just as Tityrus in the Eclogue, yet the issuing song will not belong to the rustic Muse but is a swan-song designed to destroy the very subject matter of the former. Indeed, our speaker himself used to compose such. Taking *iterum* with *canamus* instead of *divisas* does not imply that previous songs were curses, but rather furthers allows associating the imprecator with the sort of bucolic sung by Tityrus and Meliboeus. The imprecator’s former life as a poetic rustic, implied by the repetitive use of *fistula* and *avena*, is made fully explicit: “at multum nostris cantata libellis, optima silvarum,” (26-27). Such emphatic characterization and the definition of the following poem as *cycneas … voces* and *impia vota* define what follows not as, but dependently against the pastoral.

In the first *Eclogue*, resigned, Meliboeus likewise expresses some indignation at his lot, “impius haec tam culta novalia miles habebit, barbarus has segetes: en quo discordia civis produxit miseros: his nos sonseuimus agros,” (70-72). The is the similar to that of the *Dirae*, but the latter lacks such good-grace and thereby creates some moral ambiguity; the pseudo-Virgilian speaker calls his prayers *impia vota*. This use is unparalleled in Ovid’s *Ibis*, which confined this word and synonyms to the punished malefactors, as in line 400. Ovid’s *vota* are *execrantia* (91),

tristia (105), *lugubria …verba* (97). The belief that they will be carried out, "peragam rata vota sacerdos," (95), has an admittedly weak implication that they are not unjust, yet is supported thoroughly by the context. While words of ill-luck modify them, nothing suggests that Ovid's curses, which are also *dira*, (), are themselves in any way *impia*. Although *impia* could refer to the vengeful nature of the curses themselves, as such spirits as the Furies are sometimes themselves labeled *impia*, Ovid's clear separation of the vengeful and impious, however, shows care avoiding this possible confound, and thus the reader may take the *Dirae* to be avowedly not wholly just.

There are also verbal parallels with many parts of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* which Van der Graaf admirably compiles.(136-140) While many of these, such as *sicca tellure* seem generic enough to not be direct references but the result of self-same subject matter, there are many which must be direct allusion. For instance, he contrasts lines 10-13 with *Eclogue* 3 56-7, "et nunc omnis ager, nunc omnis parturit arbos, / nunc frodent silvae (anaphora of *non* in D of *nunc* in B*);"* (136). Like most of these parallels, the Vergilian scene is inverted. Palaemon and Damoetus are poetically negotiating their ensuing contest. Often, when the author of the *Dirae* picks out pastoral phrases and images for inversion to be the result of his curses, the language is common, but not its use in context.

Patronage or the lack thereof occasions some of the closer parallels between the *Dirae* and Vergil. Line 8, "… dicam tua facta, Lycurge," picks up on *Eclogues* 4.53-4, "o mihi tum longae maneat pars ultima vitae / spiritus et quantum sat erit tua dicere facta!" and 8.7-8, "-en erit umquam / ille dies, mihi cum liceat tua dicere facta?", both in an encomiastic context. The passage in the fourth *Eclogue* is then followed by *adunata*, and the other also has a tinge of unreality; these are quite similar, in negative, to the line from the *Dirae*. *Eclogues* 1 and 9, in

contrasting the fates of similar rustics, can be read in the tradition of Hellenistic encomia as not pitying the dispossessed so much as illustrating the power of some figure's patronage. Meliboeus is unfortunate, but pity does not translate into condemnation of the authorities that allowed it to happen. The rustics themselves, as shown, are fairly resigned. The key change in the *Dirae* is not that it expresses outrage, but that there is no opposite figure. Since Battarus presumably suffers the same expatriation as the imprecator, their plight rather than Octavian's power to help becomes the focus. In this way too is the *Dirae* an inversion on the world of the *Eclogues*. There is no higher authority to appeal to and the *colonus* can only invoke the deaf ear of nature, uttering *impia vota* in an impious world.

Lydia and Sentimentality in the *Dirae*

The imprecator of the *Dirae* mentions his love, Lydia at lines forty-one, eighty-nine, and ninety-four. These are often considered textual problems, and Fraenkel for one wishes to discard them as interpolations, pointing out that they fit awkwardly into the poem, and his conclusion deserves to be quoted at length:

> If my diagnosis of the lines 41 f., 89 f., 95f., and 103 is sound, the conclusion to be drawn from it is obvious. The original Dirae, a wholly masculine poem, did not say anything of a Lydia or any other woman. It is significant that when its poet took over the Virgilian motif (*ecl. 1 4f.) tu Tityre ... formonsam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas,* he neutralized it by banishing the girl and turned it into (30) *nec mihi saepe meum resonabit* (scil. *silva*), *Battare, carmen*. Then at some unknown time in antiquity, a would-be poet got hold of the poem which we call 'Lydia', a work later than the *Dirae* and quite different in character; he thought it would be a good idea to append it to the Dirae. He may have been a pretty foolish man, not foolish enough, however, to overlook the glaring unevenness of the two poems he wanted to glue together. To make up this deficiency he boldly inserted into the Dirae a number of lines, imitating the sentimental style of the Lydia and mentioning the girl as often as possible. The motive that led to this strange fabrication is not far to seek. In Suetonius' catalogue of the early works of Virgil there figures a poem 'Dirae'. The belief that this poem, in all probability our Dirae, was a work of Virgil's may have been considerably older than Suetonius. However that may be, it must have been the belief in the Virgilian authorship of the Dirae that induced our interpolator to incorporate the Lydia into the Dirae. By

> so doing he put a modest specimen of erotic hexameters under the shelter of the greatest name in Roman poetry and thus secured for it immortal fame. One would like to think that it was a good friend or at any rate an admirer of the poet of the Lydia who played this trick on posterity. (Fraenkel, 152-3)

This explanation is far from incredible and may much truth in it, but is neither the most economical or rewarding way to view these two poems.

Frankel's argument hinges upon jarring nature of the lines mentioning Lydia, which cannot be wholly denied. Were the poem free from problems, this would be far more powerful. The emendations that Fraenkel includes in his text excepting what he believes to be interpolated greatly increases the readability, but in no way eliminates awkwardness from the work. The manuscript's *tua* in line 40 does appear to make the most awkward of these, line 41, an interpolation. The girl's appearance in the middle of such destructive imagery is disruptive, and the poem flows much better without it.[15] This line's dubious status, however, need not purge the girl from the poem, although it must be admitted that the removal of these lines makes slightly less erratic the invocation of Battarus and reference to the song itself.

Lydia's mention in lines is contextually more natural. How exactly to take "campos audire licebit," (88), is unclear, but removing the address to Lydia makes it no clearer. Fraenkel takes the preceding line's *mihi* with *licebit* and imagines the *colonus* straining to hear the rustling of the fields in the wind, itself not an easy thing to imagine.[16] Most against Fraenkel's excision of lines 89-90 is his solution, and the material he does not remove, also do not fit the tone he wishes to set for the poem. Describing the thing as "wholly masculine" is an extreme overstatement and perhaps relies too much on early twentieth-century ideas of gender to be appropriate. What Fraenkel seems to mean is forceful and not-sentimental, yet the speaker,

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[15] Frankel, 147

[16] Justifying his interpretation, Fraenkel gives " In the woods, where hills have come between him and his farm, he can no longer see the fields, but he will still be able-or so at least he hopes, to hear them (perhaps when a strong wind rushes through the corn). I refuse to apply to this fine thought the test of physical practicability," (150)

lingeringly imagining leaving, bidding the goats to slow, and straining so far to retain some direct impression of the land, as opposed to the violent fury of the preceding curses, do not fit this model, let alone the line 102: “quamvis ignis eris, quamvis aqua, semper amabo,”. Line 103, “gaudia semper enim tua me meminisse licebit,” would not make it into Fraenkel’s text, and his argument that it “betrays a sentimental softness out of harmony with the firm resignation of the preceding line and indeed of the whole poem,” (152) is curiously incongruous.

The interjection bidding goodbye to Lydia in 95-6 is also awkward, yet need not be removed. If it is possible to leave behind the notion of the poem as intrinsically violent and “masculine”, these two interjectory addresses to Lydia, while far from smooth, fit the emotional drift of the poem quite nicely. At line 82, the imprecator ends his curses, and begins to mourn for the land “o male devoti, raptorum crimina, agelli,” and moves into imagining his final departure and the longing for home he will soon feel. Words of departure suit this context, and the increasing sentimentality gives an emotional, though not verbal, bridge to the love he will also leave behind. Denying the emotional shift fully would require removing line 102 also, as no purely violent and anti-sentimental poem could possibly end with *amabo*, and this Fraenkel does not do. This may be because no one has found fault with the line and he himself likes it, but he does not address the issue, although his interpretation would clearly demand ending with the *adunata* of the preceding line. Not excising 102 or 103 gives this penultimate line considerable weight.

If one accepts the emotional drift of the poem argued in the preceding paragraph, the final two lines are critical for thematic unity. At line 98, the imprecator recapitulates in more general form the *adunata* which emphasize the power of his curses. The oppositions, however, are softer the second time around, beginning with *dulcia* and *amara*, and the reader need not dissociate the

speaker's feelings from these contrasts. Indeed, the poem itself is a study in such contrasts, with him wishing to destroy all that has given him joy as he loses it. One line from the end, the *colonus* acknowledges the ambivalence, and perhaps ultimate futility, of his curses: the land cannot at once be fire and water, and this close contrast encapsulates all that has gone before. The final line of the poem, therefore, gives the necessarily unsatisfying conclusion to the poem. The ambivalent urge to destroy what he can no longer have, condensed into a single line, and thus made manifest in its contradiction, gives way to bittersweet remembrance of past *gaudia*. The speaker is not so callous as to wish this destruction upon his girl, and she could be the restraint that keeps him from completely abandoning the sentimental in this poem.

The *Lydia* and the *Dirae*

If Lydia is an original part of the *Dirae*, as I believe, then the *Lydia* is a natural addition, whether or not by the same author. If not, and references to the girl are interpolations, they are either the work of the poet of the *Lydia* or some third party. None of these cases are sufficient to demand the poems be treated separately, particularly since issues of authorial intent become largely theoretical once the actual author is not known. The text, as received, joins the two poems, and lacking other referents, this becomes the most concrete aspect of the poem. Tearing them apart would be akin to separating all the figures in a large mural by painter: legitimate but counter-productive classification. Taken together, the poems complement each other and make fuller use of pastoral and Augustan themes.

At this point it becomes necessary to deal with previous arguments concerning the authorship of these two poems and possible links between them. They have long been known to not be the work of even an immature Vergil.[17] Such attributions have been revived, but remain

[17] Fairclough, 6: "Even as late as 1911 Mackail could say of the *Ciris* together with the *Dirae* and *Lydia*: 'No one in modern times has seriously argued that they are by Virgil himself,'". The later Rand's claim that Vergil could very

untenable. In addition an extremely hazardous biographical reading, Frank's biography of Vergil takes an extremely odd line in denigrating the *Lydia*, which has remained subject to unaccountable scorn: "The poem abounds with conceits that a neurotic and sentimental pupil of Propertius – not too well practiced in verse writing – would be likely to cull from his master.," (131 n.18). Lindsay's 1918 affirmation of it authorship by Valerius Cato, first advanced by Scaliger, has since found little support, and while it is perhaps the only praise to be found for this poem, is rather overstated.[18]

Metrical arguments have the potential to shed some light on authorship, yet as even Van der Graaf admits, "In judging the various statistics, it should be borne in mind that the short length of the Dirae [meaning the *Dirae* and the *Lydia*], namely 183 verses, is not sufficient to supply a reliable mean," (44). The tables he produces, ranging in time from Ennius to Ovid, classifying dactyls and spondees does not appear to show significant enough variation between authors in any particular pattern to establish a chronological tendency.[19] Arguments based on Elision have also been made, particularly by Steele, yet he bases his types of elision on those of Roland and Sturtevant, which are fairly arbitrary classified. Even he, in using them, takes note of the fact that they are highly susceptible to changes in subject-matter.(1-2) Furthermore, arguments which claim to be statistical yet only amount to summation and comparison with no predictive component cannot be rigorous, but only an exercise in arithmetic rationalization. In the 1945 text and commentary of Van der Graaf both are printed as a single poem simply titled

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well be the author of the *Dirae*, yet not the *Lydia*, is appropriately dismissed, although Fairclough's unwillingness to ascribe laudatory verse to Vergil is somewhat extreme, (9-10).

[18] Lindsay, 62: "The *Lydia* is the most careful and finished of poems. We should admire it more if Virgil had never written the *Eclogues*." Attribution to Valerius Cato has had little evidence and generally relies upon overly biographical readings of the text. It has since fallen from favor. .

[19] Van der Graaf, p 51. The figures are rarely if ever an order of magnitude apart, and oscillate far beyond what would conform to the sort of linear tendency imposed upon them. No such calculation would have more than a single significant digit of precision. Arguments categorizing schema in this way also completely ignore the poetic effect and condense what is at the very least two different criteria, effect and time-period, simply into time.

Dirae. The 1966 Oxford edition of the *Appendix Vergiliana* by E.J. Kenney, following the work of A.F. Naeke's edition and the separation first made by Jacobs, tentatively separates them, inserting a bracketed title "<LYDIA>" after line 103 and secondary line numbers beginning from this point. Fraenkel's argument against their conjoinment has already been seen, and thankfully ignores such putatively statistical arguments. Connections between the two are to be sought primarily in themes and context.

Van der Graaf's view that the two poems are actually one is overstated, yet he makes some valid points in countering the tendency to completely dissociate them. He challenges the claims of Jacobs in "Über die Diras des Valerius Cato" of 1792. Van der Graaf attempts to show that lines 82-103 constitute a transition from curses to the amatory material of the *Lydia*: "It appears from these verses that the poet more and more appreciates his beloved Lydia and that his affectionate devotion to Lydia is even stronger than to his fields," (128). He here captures the emotional drift and softening of the poem, but gives too little weight to the return to curses in 97-103 that caps the poem and well functions as an ending.

The main cause of difficulty and reason Van der Graaf adduces to link the two poems comes from a misreading of line 103, "gaudia simper enim tua me meminisse licebit," which he translates: "I shall always remember the joys I tasted with you.".(6-7) In his programmatic interpretation it then becomes a sort of excuse for moving on to love songs, which politely excuses Battarus, who never appears again, from intruding:

> This verse I would paraphrase as follows: 'my own personal joys with Lydia I will remember now with your consent, Bbattarus (*licebit*), whitout being in want of your *revocare*". This may be considered a modest request to Battarus to leave the poet alone with his pangs of love in order to remember the joys tasted with Lydia. (129)

It should also be noted that *meminisse licebit* conforms more naturally to the preceding song than what follows, although future permission is inherently unbounded in this regard. His desire to link the poems has caused him to shift the object of address from the fields, which the previous lines make clear, to Lydia in this line, and this intent does not even emerge from the facing-page translation which he prints, but special pleading. His next issue with Jacobs, the majuscule in the text appears to be valid, but merely removes one reason out of many for separating them and does not argue that they are a single poem. He also takes valid issue with arguments of Naeke, Rothstein, and Enk, attempting to establish the anteriority of the *Lydia* to the *Dirae* by the girl's being younger in the latter poem and some other such overly-determinative chronological arguments.[20] Nevertheless, his argument for the unity of the two poems is almost entirely dependent upon line 103, and thus falls short of the mark.[21] Furthermore, Van der Graaf relies for further interpretation and discussion of authorship on the essay of P. Jahn from 1890 which claims that the *Dirae* must antedate the *Eclogues* which draw upon it.[22]

As already seen, the *Dirae* draws heavily upon the world of Vergil's first and ninth *Eclogue*, to give a competing and less idyllic view of Italian land confiscations. The *Lydia* completes that poem both in terms of adding the amatory to this bucolic setting, and countering the *aurea saecla* of Vergil's fourth *Eclogue*. The poems are similar in small-scale structure, with the second beginning with and repeating the partial refrain, "invideo vobis, agri" which corresponds to the repeated address to Battarus of the *Dirae*. The inclusion of a text beginning with *invideo*, even if one perversely denies association with the *Dirae* underscores the previous

[20] Van der Graaf, 129-131
[21] Van der Graaf in concluding and attempting to explain the lack of curses in the "so-called *Lydia*": "Once more we state: the transition from the third part to the fourt is virtually formed by vs 103: Lydia, I will always remember you. This asseveration is in fact followed by memory of Lydia. Therefore the Dirae is one and indivisible," (134).
[22] Van der Graaf 135. This view of Jahn seems to derive partly from the Valerius Cato hypothesis, which Van der Graaf does not ultimately support.

interpretation, and I argue that the *Lydia* draws heavily upon this aspect of the curse. The second poem deftly picks up the emotional-drift and more sentimental ending of the former, and this is the primary thematic link. This second poem clearly involves a displaced rustic of some sort, but does not specify the situation in as much detail as the *Dirae*. This also argues for their being taken together. Further elaboration would be excessive, but necessary if the *Lydia* were to stand alone. Likewise, if the references to the girl in the first poem are genuine, they call out for development and further exposition given only by the other poem.

His rage abating, the imprecator of the *Dirae* gives further thought to the joys of his land, but contextualized by his girl, Lydia. This poem inverts economy of love amidst the sheep given by the second *Eclogue* and *Idyll 11*. The girl in question here is to remain in possession of these joys, and needs no convincing, but it is the singer who lacks them and is, unlike Galatea or Alexis is of a mind to appreciate them, and the speaker desirously imagines in this setting. The sense of upset economy is not simply confined to the lover and beloved, but the speaker appropriates golden-age imagery to show that his situation is not simply unfortunate, but an affront to a sense of cosmic order.

Taken from Theocritus by Vergil is the playful theme of natural pairings, both in amatory and predator-prey relationships, a good example being *Eclogue* 3.81-82. The sad soul of the *Lydia* takes this sort of image and conflates it with the *aurea saecla* at great length. Lines 131-141 contrast his lot with that of the animal kingdom, the members of which he imagines as always having mates at hand:

et mas quicumque est, illi sua femina iuncta
interpellatos numquam ploravit amores
cur non et nobis facilis natura fuisset?
cur ego crudelem patior tam saepe dolorem? (138-41)

No longer is his complaint simply about the *facta* of an impious soldier; all nature is at fault and it's beneficence called into question. The lovelorn lad continues by transferring this figure to the heavens, further aggrandizing his argument and claiming cosmic import for his misfortune: "laedere, caelicolae, potuit vos nostra quid aetas, / condicio nobis vitae quo durior esset?". (154-5) This use of *aetas* here resonates with the following treatment of first sinners to further bring out the idea of the golden age, so present in the *Eclogues* which the poems build upon.

If there is any doubt that the poet attempts to undermine a concept of a new golden age and find fault with the universal order, the end of the poem handily dispels it.

talia caelicolae. numquid minus aurea proles?
ergo quod deus atque heros, cur non minor aetas?
infelix ego, non illo qui tempore natus
quo facilis natura fuit. sors o mea laeva
nascendi miserumque genus, quo sera libido est.
tantam fata meae carnis fecere rapinam,
ut maneam quod vix oculis cognoscere possis. (177-83).

As Van der Graaf has shown, the Vergilian language continues throughout, all previous references demand that the *Lydia* continue to be read against the *Eclogues*.[23] Reading the *Dirae* in conjunction with the *Lydia*, there is no need to undo some of the natural imagery of concord in *Eclogue* 4.18-30. The curses have already accomplished that. The poet rather explicitly claims that the golden age is of the past, the *aurea proles* of the *Lydia* are not to come again as Vergil's *gens aurea* in *Eclogue* 4.9. There are not particularly many verbal allusions to Vergil's work, and quite possibly, for anyone coming after, the mere mention of a golden age, particularly in a Vergilian context, would be more than enough to bring all associations to mind. The author of the *Lydia* need not cleverly invert particular phrases. He rather allows Aurora to seek new loves and history to replay for the gods, (175), but the *Saturnia regna* are not for him, and the world of the *Eclogues* is unbalanced just as with the *Dirae*. As Battarus is also caught in the land

[23] Van der Graaf 139

confiscations, and the rustic pitted starkly against the usurping soldier, so too is the commoner's lot to remain isolated from the golden age enjoyed by those above.

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