Bucolic Uneasiness: A Comparative Study of Translations and Adaptations of Virgil's Second Eclogue in Early Modern England

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Abstract

Virgil's eclogues, model of the Renaissance pastoral, were commonly translated and adapted for didactic purposes in the period. The second eclogue's homoerotic tone was approached differently and mostly uneasily by the majority of authors. By comparing some of the translations, this paper tries to investigate the various strategies used to balance the instability and ambiguity set between the normalised academic discourses dealing with Virgil's *Bucolics* and their homoerotic language. Finally it is argued that, however disguised as works of art, these poems were read as merely sexual, so that Virgilian same-sex affection was as depraved as any other and needed moral correction.

Any analysis which involves the reception of Virgil's eclogues in the Renaissance seems necessarily to invoke the long, complex and, so far, apparently unfinished discussion about pastoral in that period: its definition, function and composition. Even this list of three issues proves rather challenging, and possibly falls short of the current criticism about this genre. As Paul Alpers puts it:

> Pastoral seems a fairly accessible literary concept; most critics and readers seem to know what they mean by it, and they often seem to have certain works in mind that count as pastorals. But when we look at what has been written about pastoral in the last decades … we find nothing like a coherent account of either its nature or its history … It sometimes seems as if there are as many versions of pastoral as there are critics who write about it. (1982, 437)

This incoherence was, fortunately, not the case of the substantially fewer critics writing in the seventeenth century, so that their appraisal of bucolic poetry in general and Virgil in particular seems oversimplified.[1] And it is precisely this context—early modern critical reception—what becomes the suitable arena for this study, since what is at stake here is not the analysis of the production of pastoral by Renaissance poets, but rather the ways they adopt Virgil as a model for imitation and inspiration.

One of the main purposes of contemporary criticism, exemplified in Louis Adrian Montrose, is to focus on the Elizabethan pastoral, the landmark of pastoralism, as a political genre, and the way it was exploited by Queen Elizabeth in her propagandistic celebration of power. By means of pastoral forms, "the queen and her subjects could pursue their mutual courtship subtly and gracefully" (Montrose 1980, 154). George Puttenham, whose *The Arte of English Poesie* was dedicated to the queen, similarly defines pastoral as a political medium: "the Poet deuised the *Eglogue* … not of purpose to counterfeit or represent the rusticall manner of loues and communication: but vnder the vaile of homely persons, and in rude speeches to insinuate and glaunce at greater matters, and such as perchance had not bene safe to haue beene disclosed in any other sort" (1936, 38). This politicized definition contrasts enormously with the one provided by Rapin in the *Discourse of Pastorals*, translated into

English by Thomas Creech in 1684, almost one century later: "It is the imitation of the Action of a Sheapard, or of one taken under that character" (Creech 1684, 19). His concern is with the idea of the Golden Age, that lost and yearned for time "where the Manners of the first Men were so plain and simple, that we may easily derive both the innocent imployment of Shepherds, and pastoral from them" (Creech 1684, 14-15).

Puttenham's and Rapin's definitions show the changing attitudes towards pastoral forms from a creative point of view, since in both cases the aim of their treatises is to teach courtiers or poets how to write poetry. But this didacticism does not involve any comprehensive analytical approach to the works of the most celebrated bucolic poets, Virgil and Theocritus. The real appraisal of Virgil's work as pastoral creation is to be found, though, in the various translations and adaptations of his work accomplished by several authors, ranging from anonymous schoolmasters to laureate poets of the stature of John Dryden. This diversification asserts the importance of the Roman poet's role in Early Modern England. As William J. Kennedy suggests,

> The Renaissance received Virgil's *oeuvre* through a gigantic maze of commentary that began in antiquity, developed in the Middle Ages, and became more complicated after the invention of print. Medieval commentators regarded Virgil as divinely inspired, a Christian before Christ, because they construed Eclogue 4 as a prophecy for Christ's birth. (1997, 717)

Margaret Tudeau-Clayton (1998, *passim*) surveys Virgil's influence, significance and function within English Renaissance literary culture, and she considers a wide scope of subsidiary matters, such as the role of the Roman poet in the educational curriculum. As Latin functioned as a social difference marker, the schools and universities, usually managed and attended for and by the court, were attracted to probably the major poet of classical Rome. His trans-historical grandeur is celebrated throughout the long Renaissance, and every new translation reinforces his position as artistic model and inspiration.

His work is generally divided into three groups, each corresponding to a determined style, which progresses in difficulty, importance and expressive quality. Thus the minor eclogue, or pastoral, is followed by the georgic and this, in turn, by the highest literary style, the epic. Each of these styles is rendered into the *Bucolics*, *Georgics* and the *Aeneid* respectively. However, although the three works were commonly published together, the *Bucolics*, whose baser style and language was more suitable for didactic purposes, were often published in isolation. What follows is a comparative study of the most commonly published translations available from the period stretching roughly from 1572 to 1700. Among them, both those used as didactic material for schools, or as a demonstration of sheer literary achievement in the hands of able English poets, are dealt with.

Virgil's eclogues prove rather interesting in terms of the moral issues they present and the way these are revisited in the translations. Early modern English scholars and poets had to face an aspect of his work, which somehow deterred them from an absolutely comfortable critical position. Whereas Eclogue 4 might be considered an allegory of Christ's birth, the second Eclogue celebrates homosexual desire between two shepherds, Corydon, the speaker, and Alexis, the invisible addressee.[2] The allegorical readings and commentaries of Virgil's *Bucolics* appeared soon after Virgil's death, and the middle Ages witnessed an important revival of his work, which was adapted to, interpreted as, and commented on a Christian perspective (obviously this implied an erasure of the homoerotic nuances). This tradition is received unchanged in the Renaissance and the same-sex tone of the second eclogue is equally read as an allegory of friendship. Nevertheless, this particular poem, like Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, continuously challenges the traditional unsexing or heteronormativity

of the great literary and moral icons. The artistic expectations of the scholarly audience are somewhat frustrated when coping with certain human relationships which, in the case of Virgil, did not imply any autobiographical interaction, but rather followed a tradition started with the *Idylls* of Theocritus. But the equation of self-representation and correspondence between poet and speaker was at times literally understood in that period, so that some devices were needed to avoid misunderstanding, misinterpretation or, indeed, deception.

The second eclogue is never discarded in the translations, but each poet or translator who approaches the text is repeatedly shocked by Corydon's amorous complaint and acts accordingly. This bucolic uneasiness is articulated by means of several strategies: recalling of allegorical classical commentaries, grammatical or semantic modifications or, simply, silence, when the topic goes unnoticed.

The numerous commentaries, in Latin and English, written on the *Bucolics* offer an important insight into the ways commentators cope with its homoerotic theme. For practical purposes, the translations available will be divided into three groups, each attending to a particular period of the long Renaissance: sixteenth-century, early seventeenth-century and Restoration translations.

1. The Sixteenth Century: Idle Fleming and Queer Barnfield

In the last quarter of the sixteenth century Abraham Fleming published two translations of the *Eclogues*, the first in 1575 and the last, together with the *Georgics*, in 1589, signed as A.F. Both seemed addressed to the same audience and have a clear didactic purpose. Thus in the long epistle dedicatory to Maister Peter Osborne, esq., included in the 1575 version, Fleming humbly justifies his decision to translate the poems:

> I addressed my penne to wade through that worke … which labour I attempted, partly for my priuate practise (vsing it as a preseruatiue against idleness, rather then a preparatiue to gaine and profit) & partly for the benefite of young learners of the latine tongue. (Fleming 1575, A.ij.)

The 1589 version is dedicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the dedicatory, ripe with epideictic formulae, focuses on the potential usefulness of the translation as a celebratory medium: "The principall occasion of writing these Pastoralls was the maiestie of Iulius Caesar and Augustus his sonne" (Fleming 1589, A2). The didactic purpose is less emphasised in this introduction and Fleming recalls the former 1575 translation when he acknowledges that the *Bucolics* have been "translated by me into English verse, in a familiar phrase, and fitted to the conceipts of weake Grammarians" (Fleming 1589, A2).

In the light of these dedicatory letters, it seems that the context of the reception of the work determines its aim, and even nature. Whereas the 1575 version is more concerned with teaching in a courtly medium, the latter, following the Christian tradition, stresses the supposedly allegorical programme of the eclogues. Nevertheless, Fleming's premeditated attitude in the translation process is made most clear in his humble statement developed in the epistle dedicatory to the 1575 version quoted above. Working in the translation did not imply any attempt to profit, but rather it prevented him from idleness. It is rather surprising that Fleming insists on this idea—clearly absent in the other version—when addressing someone whose position in society, as can be deduced from his name, title and address formula, undoubtedly signalled at the court: "to the Right Worshipfull Maister Peter Osborne, Esquier, A fauourer and furtherer of learning" (Fleming 1575, A.ij.). As Robert Matz explains, "(a)long with an increasing interest in education, the nobility demonstrated a concern to avoid idle time" (2000, 49), because idleness was, as Elyot put it, the "mother and roots of all vices" (in Matz 2000, 49). Fleming's relevant deployment of the term is articulated in a twofold

way: as fulfilment of the expectations of the patron, and probable target context of the work and, most importantly, as a means to contextualise and make more accessible the understanding of the extravagant topic of Virgil's second eclogue.

The 1575 courtly version of the translation introduces the following argument, which explains and justifies Corydon's love:

> Corydon a Shepheard, being intangled with the loue of the Lad Alexis, doth let nothing passe without tryall, which might belong to the wynning of the Lads wyll, and the getting of his loue: But when he perceaueth that hee preuayleth neuer a whyt, neyther by complainte, neither by fayre and smooth talke, neyther yet with bribes, nor gyftes, remembering himselfe, and acknowledging his madnesse, he purposeth with himself to goe to his home, and to looke better to his household, which he had left for a while, that by daylie labour, he might shake the wearysomnesse of his vnluckie loue, which commonly breedeth of idlenesse. By Corydon also (if we geue credite to Donate) is meant Virgil, by Alexis is vnderstood Alexander the Lad of Pollio, whome he gaue to Corydon afterward for a gyft. (Fleming 1575, 4)

Fleming's use of language and style seems somewhat familiar. Words like "lad" or expressions such as "hee preuayleth neuer a whyt" simplify the usual scholarly tone of this kind of prolegomenon, so that it recalls the young students referred to in the prefatory letter. Besides, the homoerotic topic is gracefully skipped with the help of two ideas: madness and idleness. Although both terms appear in the Virgilian original, there are meaningful differences. On the one hand, Virgil's Corydon is a shepherd, but not a householder and, even if he goes temporarily mad, the cause is not his idleness, but his unrequited passion. On the other hand, Fleming's shepherd looks more contemporary and courtly-like since he not only owns a house, but also his love is provoked by vicious idleness. Daily labour will shake his unlucky love probably for ever, although both in the original and the translation, the last line reads: "another shalt thou finde, if this Alexis thee disdaine" (Fleming 1575, 6). Finally, an allegorical reading is also possible, since Corydon stands for Virgil himself and Alexis for Polio's son.[3] And this is the point where love and friendship melt.

In 1589 Fleming, writing for a seemingly different audience, prefaces his translation of the second eclogue with this argument:

> Corydon a shepheard unreasonably in love with a passing faire youth named Alexis, and seeking him up and downe in waylesse woods and places void of passage, rehearseth all things which might or could obtaine love and liking; wherewithall when he saw he could doo no good, nor any whit prevaile, at length he falleth to persuasion, giving himself counsell and advise to keepe a measure in love, least it grow into foolish outrage. By Alexis is meant a youth called Alexander, and by Corydon is vnderstood Virgill. (Fleming 1589, 4)

Fourteen years later, the same author approaches Virgil's text quite differently. This shorter introductory argument, characterised by a more learned language, proves rather flat in comparison to the former. The whole plot spins around measure, repression of passion and self-control. No reference to idleness appears, but rather a celebration of witty intellectual achievements. Corydon is "unreasonably" in love with Alexis. Unreason proves an abnormal state of mind and can develop into outrage. But it is his self-realization and self-persuasion, two strategies of self-control, what moderate his foolish excess. Love for a boy develops, then, from a fragile mind. Besides, the first lines of both versions—Corydon's famous declaration of love—show subtle nuances:

1575: The Shepheard Corydon dearely lou'de the boy Alexis, braue,
        His Masters ioye, yet had he not that he dyd hope to haue. (4)
1589: The Shepherd Corydon loued sore Alexis faire [that youth]
        His lords delight, and yet he had not that which he did hope. (4)

In both cases, the Latin *ardebat* (burned with love) is here translated as "dearly love", or the less passionate "loved sore". The beauty of Alexis, which is essential in Virgil ("Formosum Alexin" l.1) (1632, 4), is only present in the second version, which seems grammatically and formally more accurate than the previous one, where "fair" is changed into "brave". All these changes and subtleties neutralise, as it were, the bold complaint of the frustrated and despaired shepherd.

Thus, the terms 'despair' and 'foolishness' are automatically associated with Corydon's state of mind, which is a sheer reflection of a quasi-pathological psyche. The limits between accepted and celebrated country life and instances of a legitimised homoeroticism are blurred in pastoral and in its interpretation. But the discussion of the deployment of pastoral to convey a double reading is at stake when analysing one of the best known examples English literature offers of a failure to determine the limits imposed between genre itself and early modern normalised sexuality. Even if it is not a direct translation of Virgil's *Bucolics*, Richard Barnfield's *The Affectionate Shepheard* (1594), reinterprets the eclogue's homosocial links. The opening verses of this eclogue are the clearest example of an unambiguous discourse on same-sex affection:

If it be sinne to love a sweet-fac'd Boy,
(Whose amber locks trust up in golden tramels
Dangle adowne his lovely cheekes with ioy,
When pearle and flowers his faire haire enamels)
If it be sinne to love a lovely Lad;
Of then sinne I, for whom my love is sad.
(Barnfield 1594, Aiij)

The social and cultural implications of these lines are still under debate. Even if this poet has not attracted much attention, his work seems undoubtedly essential to understand the context where all discourses dealing with the instability of this early modern masculinity were negotiated. However, the possibility of fitting these homoerotic stances to an all-male educational or social establishment should be questioned if the responses to this supposedly accepted discourse are to be noticed.[4] Barnfield's pastoral proved a non-normalised genre according to the response that the poet itself acknowledges in the introduction to his *Cynthia*, published one year later, 1595. In this new collection Barnfield recalls these critiques ("faults") and provides a few sentences as justification for his writing:

Some there were, that did interpret *The affectionate Shepheard*, otherwise then (in truth) I meant, touching the subject thereof, to wit, the love of a Shepheard to a boy; a fault, the which I will not excuse, because I never made. Onely this, I will unshaddow my conceit: being nothing else, but an imitation of *Virgill*, in the second Eglogue of *Alexis*. (Barnfield 1595, 3)

A problem, thus, arises, when trying to accommodate Barnfield's declarations of same-sex love to the context where these lines would be read, probably that of *the Inns of Court* (Smith 1994, *passim*). Nevertheless, the above paragraph seems extremely ambiguous

or at least somewhat platitudinous. If, as it is known in these intellectually cultivated institutions, Virgil's second eclogue deals with the love of Corydon for Alexis, there should be no need to justify this fact.

Barnfield does not commit any fault, but his attempt to safeguard himself from accusations proves rather significant. The audience's paradoxical attitude can be understood in two ways: either Barnfield's rewriting of Virgil's eclogue was too sexually committed (see opening verses above), or the Roman author's work was not as easily tolerated as it might seem. Fleming's work probably did not receive a similar response, since he repeated his translation ten years later and no reference to any moral controversy is recorded. The multiple reception of a poem responds to particular circumstances, different physical or ideological contexts whose audiences are subject to varying expectations. Nevertheless, Barnfield's case is unique.

2. Early Seventeenth Century: Educational Puritanism

In 1628 William Lisle Gent., a courtier, publishes his *Virgil's Eclogues Translated into English*. The epistle dedicatory "To the worthy Reader" (2) does not specify any patron—probably not needed by this gentleman—and it clearly focuses on the court. There are no references to school boys or to young learners, but rather an account of the benefit of poetry as moral substitute for "poor" sports and pleasure, common pastime of the nobility and gentry:

> I reserved from sports & pleasure, (especially that bewitching Inticement of Hawkes,) and hawking, which have flowne away with so much of my most pretious time; and wherein the greatest and the best part of the young Nobility & the Gentry of this Land, (by an ill received, and worse continued custome) doe ravl'e out a great part of their goulden dayes, as if the *terminus ad quem*, the end of all their carefull and chargeable education at home and abroad, were onely to make them ripe and fit for the slavish service of Hawkes & Hounds, and other poorer sports and pleasures (whose rare and seldome use is indeed their greatest commendation). (Lisle 1628, 4)

These statements recall the pernicious effect of hunting and hawking, as well as other unspecified and repudiated pleasures and sports. Although hunting was one of the most typical courtly entertainments in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (James I was one of its best practitioners), this critique, voiced by a courtier, asserts a different moral tendency close to Puritanism. This possibility is furthered in the recurrent argument to the eclogue. In a dubiously authoritative commentary Lisle fantasises allegorically and rewrites the eclogue as a plaintive poem where Virgil/Corydon laments Augustus Caesar's preference for the poet Gallus/Alexis. In this way, the famous initial couplet appears even more extravagant, since the translator does not modify it at all, although he includes the adverb "er'st", "long ago": "The Shepheard Corydon er'st dearly lov'd/ His Masters darling, young Alexis faire" (Lisle 1628, 27).

The climax of this moral adaptation is still to come in the "glosse" which accompanies the eclogue. Lisle's unbiased translation of Virgil's poem finishes with these lines: "If still Alexis doe disdaine thy love/Thou shalt some other finde will kinder prove" (Lisle 1628, 31). Again, this insistence on same-sexness should be mitigated with some suitable paraphrasing: "You will still persist in your love to Cornelius Gallus, according as your affection vnto him doth perswade you; but finishing these two more serious workes, they will draw the love and respect of some other worthy, able friend though Gallus doe neglect you" (Lisle 1628, 40).

The ambiguity of the terms friendship, affection and love is semantically tuned to a morally acceptable reading and interpretation of the eclogue which is easily bound to

misunderstandings. Within this same courtly scenario, John Brinsley presents a new translation of the eclogues in 1633. This work shows many similarities to those of Fleming and Lisle in terms of its rejection of idleness and pleasures, the common vices of the young nobility. This time, though, the addressee of the epistle dedicatory is an exemplary youth, the Right Noble and Worthy Knight Sir George Hastings, whose honourable achievements are sycophantically celebrated: "In as much as you (contrary to the course of the greatest part of the flower of the Nobility) have addicted yourself unto your studies, for the good (I trust) both of the Church and Common-wealth, in stead of following the excessive pleasures of the time" (Brinsley 1633, A2).

The courtly environment does not necessarily preclude from a more general educational purpose which, as explained in the title of the work, is "written chiefly for the good of Schooles" (Brinsley 1633, A1). Thus, this academic edition of Virgil's eclogues proves a good example of a practical educational use of them. Brinsley faces the Corydon-Alexis affair in a very simple (if naive) and familiar way by offering the following account of the argument:

> Corydon a shepheard enamored on a youth called Alexis, omitteth nothing which may helpe to allure his childish mind, and to get mutual loue. But when he perceiueth that he doth not any thing preuaile, neither by complaints, nor by [his] faire words, nor yet by his gifts; at length coming to himselfe, and acknowledging his owne folly, he determineth to betake himselfe againe to the discontinued care of his priuate businesse at home: that he may shake off by his accostumed labour, the irkesomnesse of his vnhappy loue, which is wont for most part to come of idlenesse. (Brinsley 1633, 17)

Perhaps intended for young students, or simply avoiding homoeroticism, the editor provides a moralising explanation to Corydon's childish "love/folly". The edition is lavishly annotated and in the marginal notes some remarks are provided, which 'clarify' whatever ambiguities might arise. The word "enamored" is accompanied by this short note: "Being taken or caught with the loue of the lad Alexis [viz. being exceedingly affectioned to him]" (Brinsley 1633, 17). This excessive attraction recalls the complex homosocial relationship simply known as male friendship; but, again, Corydon comes to himself, acknowledges his folly and continues with his anodyne, but unproblematic, "priuate businesse at home" (Brinsley 1633, 17), so that he avoids idleness. Moreover, Brinsley keeps with the tradition of explaining this eclogue as an allegorical rendering of the poet's own life: "... by *Corydon* (if we giue credit to *Donate*) we vnderstand Virgil; by *Alexis*, *Alexander Pollioes* sonne, whom he receiued of him after giuen vnto him freely" (Brinsley 1633, 17).

3. Restoration: Bucolic Criticism

Finally, the end of the century witnesses a certain proliferation of translations as response to the renewed trend of classical revival. Among this group of authors stand John Ogilby and John Dryden, who published their translations in several editions. Ogilby's third edition of 1675, entitled *The Works of Publius Virgilius Maro*, lacks any dedicatory epistle or introduction. As it is customary, the author presents each eclogue with a summary or argument. For the second eclogue he writes:

> Corydon moans how Learned Men are bent
> To Honor those of Place and High Descent:
> But often they like to Alexis prove,
> And nothing but Disdain return for Love. (Ogilby 1675, 13)

Void of erotic references, the argument recalls that of Lisle in 1628 using "Learned Men" instead of the poet Gallus. More than a Puritan discourse, the lines refer to patronage, which seems to have been a vital necessity almost throughout Ogilby's entire life. Whatever the case, another strategy is articulated in order to accommodate and mitigate Corydon's homoerotic desire. However, the end of the century questions and revisits the whole tradition of translations and adaptations from a new and more academic perspective. The incipient Restoration literary theory, mostly borrowed from French sources, provides a less moralized or biased interpretation of the eclogues. A good example of this is the annotations Ogilby inserts at the end of each poem. When referring to Corydon and Alexis, although momentarily forgetting his previous argument, the author writes:

> The subject of Pastorals (saith Scaliger) is various; but the first and eldest, Amatory, as well because Love is Passion by Nature imprinted in all Living Creatures, as because Men and Women promiscuously feeding their Flocks together, were invited by their example: lastly, the Musick of the Wood, the Solitude of the Place, and Quiet of that kind of Life, advanc'd it much. Virgil not willing to omit a Theam so native and universal, feigns Corydon (under which Name he veils himself) to fall in love with Alexis. (Ogilby 1675, 17)

The authoritative voice of famous scholars, like the humanist Julius Caesar Scaliger, imprints a more scientific character to the understanding of erotic pastorals. This type of literary criticism, which begins to be more frequently used in the last decades of the seventeenth century, is not new, as Scaliger or Puttenham himself demonstrate. But, perhaps, the conviction that pastoral is a minor genre, mainly suitable for schools, determines the critical attention paid to it.

John Dryden translates with this critical mind and his production is less morally concerned. In the argument to the second eclogue, included in the 1697 edition of his *The Works of Virgil*, the poet is more objective and accurate, being his main aim to translate and not adapt the poem to sexist environments:

> The Commentators can by no means agree on the Person of Alexis, but are all of opinion that some Beautiful Youth is meant by him, to whom Virgil here makes Love; in Corydon's Language and Simplicity. His way of Courtship is wholly Pastoral: He complains of the Boys Coyness, recommends himself for his Beauty and Skill in Piping; invites the Youth into the Country, where he promises him the Diversions of the Place; with a suitable Present of Nuts and Appels: But when he finds nothing will prevail, he resolves to quit his troublesome Amour, and betake himself again to his former Business. (Dryden 1697, 48)

This necessarily brief account of Virgil's translations demonstrates the changing attitude towards the reception of classical authors, and how they are imbued of the ideological and moral premises of the specialised context where they are used and read. The first group of authors, courtiers themselves or working for the court, insist on the dichotomy folly/idleness. By emphasising this equation these early modern versions avoid any possibility of homosexual fantasising and frustrate the anxiety of Corydon's desire, which, otherwise, is never truncated but rather encouraged in Virgil. The original Virgilian eclogue is far more homophilic and optimistic than the majority of the translations and commentaries analysed, and this obviously shows a clear uneasiness with the issue of same-sex affection, even if they recall typical masculine and homosocial relationships in the period. The mere transformation of the original text is the best proof of the moral, sexist and homophobic attitude of the

authors and this only confirms that no matter the grandeur and exemplary achievements of Virgil, some of his texts are continuously being subtly and rhetorically denounced and questioned.

NOTES

[1] Alpers lists some of the numerous definitions of pastoral:

> We are told that pastoral 'is a double longing after innocence and happiness'; that its universal idea is the Golden Age; that it is based on the antithesis of Art and Nature; that its fundamental motive is hostility to urban life; that its 'central tenet' is 'the pathetic fallacy'; that it expresses the ideal of *otium*; that it is 'the poetic expression *par excellence* of the cult of aesthetic Platonism' in the Renaissance or of Epicureanism in the Hellenistic world; that it is 'that mode of viewing common experience through the medium of the rural world'. (1982, 437)

[2] Virgil's original opening lines of this second eclogue read:

> Formosum pastor Corydon ardebat Alexin,
> Delicias domini; nec quid speraret habebat. (Virgil 1632, 4)

> The   shepherd   Corydon   was   burning   for   lovely   Alexis, who was his master's love. There was no hope for him.
> (tr. Hughes Fowler 1997, 4)

Virgil's complete Latin works were continuously published in England throughout the Renaissance. There are editions in 1570, 1572, 1580, 1583, 1616, 1632, 1650, 1657, 1658, 1661, 1663, 1664, 1667, 1677, 1679, 1684, 1687, 1688, 1695 and 1696. Many of these editions follow the model of those of the Italian humanist Paolo Manuzio, who edited, annotated and published them in Venice in the second half of the sixteenth century. As it seems, they were very popular and reliable in the period. A Cambridge edition of 1632, with Manuzio's annotations, has been chosen for this analysis.

[3] According to Wendell Clausen, Alexis is the traditional name of a catamite. The extent to which the correlation between the names is real or not is a matter of subsequent interpretation. However, Clausen affirms that "the identification of Alexis as a slave-boy loved by Virgil seems to have been well established by the time of Martial, who however makes Maecenas the donor" (1994, 64).

[4] The discourse of pastoral scenario becomes a sexualised one in so far as it mirrors, as Bruce Smith declares: "the all-male social institutions that nurtured sixteenth- and seventeenth-century males from boyhood to manhood" (1994, 82). Functioning as a rite of passage, the technical knowledge of pastoral in school—part of the Latin training—became an emblem of the metamorphosis from childhood to manhood. Pastoral came 'first' in the academic curricula because it trained writers in the more complex epic, but it also was an analogue of the actual life of resident young students. Being far from the family and in all-male settings, these boys faced and inhabited a world quite similar, in terms of male bonding and lack of women, to Arcadia.

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