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Re-creating the Canon: Augustan Poetry and the Alexandrian Past

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> A genre revived is different from its first avatar, and different also from what it would be if works of its type "just were not written" for a while.
>
> —ALASTAIR FOWLER, "The Life and Death of Literary Forms"

1

Of the surviving corpus of Latin literature, there is only one work that has always been considered canonical, in any sense of the word, and that is Virgil's *Aeneid*. It is canonical in that it has been, since the poet's death in 19 B.C., a school text and thus a part of the literary vocabulary of all educated people; it is canonical in T. S. Eliot's refined and delicate definition of the "classic" in exhibiting an extraordinary range of sympathies and sensibilities in a pure and elegant diction; and it is canonical in what might be called the ancient sense (although the word "canon" was not applied to literature until the eighteenth century) as an epic poem of broad scale and heroic subject, the highest and most important of all literary genres.[1]

In its historical context, the *Aeneid* is part of a much larger literary development, what seems (at least in retrospect) to have been a deliberate attempt to create a Roman national literature to rival the artistic monuments of classical and archaic Greece. Even before it was completed, Virgil's poem was greeted as a Roman equivalent of the Homeric epics.[2] Horace, too, explicitly saw himself as a new classic. In introducing his first three

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[bo]oks of *Odes*, he expressed the hope that his work might rival that of the great lyric poets of archaic Greece, particularly Sappho and Alcaeus, and, in book 4 (published much later), he saw himself as a Roman Pindar. The elegist Propertius, who began his poetic career as a writer of love poetry, scornful of the public and official society of Rome, came at the end of his life to describe himself as the poet of early Roman cult and custom and, in the last poem of his last book, composed an obituary for Cornelia, an aristocratic connection of the emperor himself. These three poets, Virgil, Horace, and Propertius, take very different approaches to their subjects, and opinions of their attitudes to Augustus and Augustan Rome differ considerably. But their shared concern with serious themes is evident, as is their shared desire to write something large and significant. And at least two of them were consciously re-creating for Rome the classical literature of early Greece.

The impetus for their grand undertaking is not hard to find. In 31 B.C., in the battle of Actium, Octavian (not yet Augustus) defeated Antony, Cleopatra, and the forces of Eastern barbarism; in August of 29 B.C., he returned to Rome in triumph, closed the gates of war, brought an end to a century of social upheaval and civil war, and set about his radical restoration of Roman society. Whatever the poets thought about the Augustan regime, the end of civil war was obviously a major event and worthy of poetic recognition; and it was during the decade following Actium that the *Aeneid* and the *Odes* were composed. Indeed, the literary and social developments of that decade share certain paradoxical qualities. While establishing a monarchy and totally reorganizing the structure of Roman government and society, Augustus loudly proclaimed his restoration of republican government and his desire for a return to the manners and morals of early Rome. Similarly, Virgil and Horace made their adherence to the poetic forms of archaic Greece immediately apparent, but they, too, totally altered the nature of the forms they professed to emulate.

Endowed with the wisdom of two thousand years of hindsight, we find it easy to think of the development of Augustan poetry as natural and somehow inexorable: all three poets progressed, as they matured, from slighter forms to more ambitious ones, from private to public themes. No contemporary of theirs, however, would have seen that progression as natural. According to the literary theory of the third-century B.C. Alexandrian poet-scholar Callimachus of Cyrene, dominant in Rome from the time of Catullus and his friends (the so-called new poets or neoterics), an unbridgeable gap separated the small, elegant, learned forms of poetry (including both pastoral and didactic) from the large, turgid, and sloppy genre of epic. In the opening of *Eclogue* 6, Virgil adapted one of Callimachus' statements to his own poem: "When I was trying to sing of kings and battles, Cynthian Apollo plucked my ear and said: 'A shepherd, Tityrus, should feed his sheep fat but speak a slender song' " (*Eclogues* 6. 3–5). It is not easy to understand how that poet came to write the *Aeneid*.

The Augustan poets' seemingly conscious emulation of the canonical works of early Greek literature suggests an avenue of explanation not often tried: to see the background to the *Aeneid* and the *Odes* in formal terms, concentrating on questions of poetic genre. For ancient poets the choice of a genre had far-reaching implications. Early in the second century A.D., the younger Pliny described a literary recitation: "I have just heard Vergilius Romanus reading to a small audience a comedy which was so skilfully modelled on the lines of the Old Comedy that one day it may serve as a model itself."[3] According to the theory implicit here and in other passages, the goal of poetry is not to be original but to follow a model so closely that the new work might be taken for the old. The truly successful poet was one who imitated his *exemplar* so faithfully that he became an *exemplar* himself.

Horace also conceived the choice of a model in generic terms: "If I am unable and unwilling to preserve the established manners and styles of works, why should I be called a poet?" (*Ars poetica* 86–87). What is more, in the Augustan period virtually every poetic work announces an explicit model—classical, Hellenistic, or archaic Roman. We cannot escape the idea that this is a highly derivative literature, modeling itself closely on the genres and, occasionally, the specific poetic works of another culture. It is striking, however, that the texts themselves convey no such impression of slavish dependency. This contrast is both curious and significant, and we need to understand its causes to explain the revival of high-style literature in Augustus' reign. I shall first describe some of the formal differences between the Augustan classics and their archaic Greek models and then examine them not only in the context of Augustan and pre-Augustan theories of poetic genre but also in relation to the origins of Augustan poetry in Alexandrian literature of the third century B.C. Finally, to demonstrate the importance and pervasiveness of the extremely formal Alexandrian categories of genre, I shall consider the Alexandrian classification of literature and the origins of the literary canon itself. Only then can we understand the boldness and significance of the Augustan literary revival.[4]

2

It is clear on formal grounds alone that the *Aeneid* is a singularly un-Homeric epic. The Roman epic, unlike the Homeric poems, is a

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literary composition, not an oral-formulaic narrative. Its style, to use Brooks Otis' terms, is subjective rather than objective.[5] Virgil's epic constantly emphasizes the presence of the poet as interpreter, from its initial *cano*, "I sing"—replacing the Homeric request to the Muse—to its constant emphases on relations between the mythic subject and the events of the poet's own day. In the more technical aspects of genre, moreover, the *Aeneid* is also extremely different from the Homeric paradigm. For instance, book 4 of the poem has often been called a tragedy, and it functions as one not merely because of its subject matter but because it displays numerous characteristics of tragic form. It is divided into episodes; it concentrates, to a much greater degree than the rest of the *Aeneid*, on direct speech; it even ends with a version of the *deus ex machina*. In its emphasis on the psychology of Dido, it bears a close resemblance both to Euripidean tragedy—particularly the *Medea* and the *Hippolytus*—and to Hellenistic rather than archaic epic. Virgil's Dido is kin to Apollonius of Rhodes' Medea and Hypsipyle. What is more, by referring to the theater and to the subjects of Euripidean tragedy, Virgil deliberately points out to the reader that he is mixing tragedy with epic.[6]

The Dido episode provides another, smaller example of Virgil's curious mixture of archaic and postclassical elements in the *Aeneid*. At the very end of book 1, during the banquet which Dido gives for Aeneas, the minstrel Iopas—Virgil's equivalent to the Odyssean Demodocus—performs for the guests before Aeneas is asked to recount the adventures which brought him to Troy. In the equivalent situation in the *Odyssey*, Demodocus had sung of heroic and mythological topics, but Iopas sings of cosmogony and cosmology:

> hic canit errantem lunam solisque labores,
> unde hominum genus et pecudes, unde imber et ignes,
> Arcturum pluviasque Hyadas geminosque Triones,
> quid tantum Oceano properent se tinguere soles
> hiberni, vel quae tardis mora noctibus obstet.
> [*Aeneid* 1. 742–46]

> [He sings of the wandering moon and the labors of the sun,
> the source of men and cattle, of rain and fire,
> Arcturus and the rainy Hyades and the twin Wains,
> why the winter suns so hurry to quench themselves in the ocean,
> or what the delay that holds up the slow nights.]

The audience of Carthaginian nobles and Trojan sailors are, curiously, most enthusiastic about this song, one not likely to have appealed to their Phaeacian equivalents. The topic of the poem is not archaic but Hellenistic, and it is not only more like Aratus than Hesiod or Homer, it consists of verses taken from Virgil's own *Georgics* (see *Georgics* 2. 475–82). The abstruse learning, the scientific subject, and the self-reference are all un-Homeric and give this passage a very different tone from its model.

The *Aeneid* is also radically different from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* on a much broader scale. Both Homeric epics announce a precise subject at the beginning: the anger of Achilles and its effects, the wanderings and homecoming of Odysseus. Virgil starts by alluding to both of these, "arms and the man," but the direction of his poem rapidly changes. After a very brief summary of the history of Aeneas, he identifies the eventual goal of Aeneas' efforts, "to found a city, bring the gods to Latium, whence the Latin race, the Alban fathers, and the walls of lofty Rome" (*Aeneid* 1. 5–7). The direct linking of myth to history is not only unlike Homer, it has a remarkable affinity with a form popular in Hellenistic times, the *ktisis*, or poem about the founding of a city. The *Aeneid*'s emphasis on causes and connections, the incessant linking of the narrative with the history of Rome in more recent times (through the narrator's presence, divine prophecy, the vision in the underworld, and the scenes on the shield), offsets its Homeric epic framework with a decidedly un-Homeric tone and content.

These characteristics of the *Aeneid* can be found in equal or greater profusion in the other major work of the period, the first three books of Horace's *Odes*, published as a unit in about 23 B.C. In the address in the opening poem to his patron Maecenas, Horace announces his desire:

> quod si me lyricis vatibus inseres,
> sublimi feriam sidera vertice.
> [*Odes* 1. 1. 35–36]

> [If you include me among the lyric bards,
> I shall strike the stars with head on high.]

The "lyric bards" among whom Horace wishes to be included are, of course, the great lyric poets of archaic Greece, notably Sappho and Alcaeus, and the inclusion he requests is to be numbered in the canonical list of those poets compiled in Alexandria in the third century B.C.[7] No more straightforward indication of adherence to a classical model could possibly be imagined; and yet this poem, and these words themselves, contradict that desire. Not only is the meter which Horace uses here Hellenistic rather than classical, but the very phrase "lyricis vatibus" combines a transliterated Greek term with *vates*, a recently resurrected archaic Roman word for "poet." Horace, like Virgil, is combining classical Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman elements in what is in fact a radical transformation of the lyric forms of early Greece.[8]

Horace's alteration of his alleged models is apparent on every level from the individual poem to the entire collection. For example, in one of the poems that seems most closely to follow Alcaeus, the so-called

"Cleopatra Ode" (*Odes* 1. 37), the beginning is like Alcaeus, but the development is very different.[9] Horace starts with a virtual translation of the beginning of Alcaeus' poem celebrating the death of the tyrant Myrsilus:

> Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero
> pulsanda tellus . . .
>
> [*Odes* 1. 37. 1–2]
>
> [Now is the time to drink, now to strike
> the earth with a free foot . . .]

We do not know how Alcaeus' poem progresses after its instructions for celebration, though it was almost certainly—to judge from other fragments—not at all like Horace's conclusion but showed an unselfconscious glee at the downfall of an enemy. Horace, on the other hand, moves from a description of Cleopatra as a monster surrounded by decadent and diseased creatures of the East, to a simile in which she is a dove or rabbit in the snow, pursued by a hawklike Caesar. And by the end of the poem, she has been transformed from a monster to a worthy and honorable enemy, whose death is perhaps not to be greeted with unmixed rejoicing.

Besides Horace's continual departures from his classical models, the *Odes* are filled with variations in tone and mood foreign to the manner of Greek lyric. Book 2 opens with a poem that starts by praising Asinius Pollio for his history of the Roman civil wars and warning him of the dangers of his subject. Horace then offers his own poetic meditation on the same martial theme, in a remarkably elevated style. In the last stanza, however, he addresses his Muse and summons her back to lighter themes, thus revealing that this poem is yet another variation (compare *Odes* 1. 6) on the standard neoteric and elegiac refusal to write an epic poem, a topic thoroughly grounded in Alexandrian, not archaic, poetry.[10] In the "Archytas Ode" (*Odes* 1. 28), what begins as an address, apparently by a passing stranger, to the tomb of the Pythagorean mathematician, abruptly turns out to be a speech by an unburied body at the same site. The famous *Integer vitae* (*Odes* 1. 22) starts as a pious sermon on purity of life but suddenly becomes a poem on the safety of the lover, another elegiac conceit. In general, the allusion or the subject proposed in the opening verses of a Horatian ode is a sure indication that the end will be something quite different. The Greek lyric poems that Horace claims to emulate tended to be strictly bound by the generic conventions of the occasion for which they were composed: an athletic victory, a religious festival, a symposium. Horace uses the expectations aroused by conventional openings as a foil to create something new; his is a thoroughly literary, and heavily ironic, adaptation of models.

The difference between Horace and his Greek predecessors is apparent in more than just individual poems. The early lyric poets, to the best of

our knowledge, wrote individual poems for particular occasions; their works were not assembled into books until centuries later, by the Alexandrian scholars of the third century B.C., and were then arranged according to formal criteria of occasion, subject, and meter.[11] None of those criteria is observed by Horace. He begins book 1 with a series of nine poems in different meters; book 2 alternates between Sapphic and Alcaic stanzas for the first eleven poems; book 3 opens with a series of six poems (the "Roman Odes") on related subjects and in the same meter. The tone and subject of adjacent poems vary considerably: into the series of introductory poems to major political or literary figures of his day (*Odes* 1. 1–4, 6), Horace inserts the slight and witty "Pyrrha Ode" (*Odes* 1. 5), and he makes a similar amatory poem to Asteria (*Odes* 3. 7) follow the "Roman Odes." The sense of structure, pattern, and organization of the *Odes* as a whole and of its individual books is foreign both to the Greek lyric poets and to the compilations of the Hellenistic librarians. When Horace, in the last ode of the collection (*Odes* 3. 30), refers to himself as a poetic *princeps* who has conquered the Aeolic poets and adapted them to Italic measures, he speaks no less than the truth.

In the scale of their undertakings as in their adoption of the major literary genres of classical and archaic Greece, the *Aeneid* and the *Odes* stand alone in Latin literature of the first century B.C. In certain respects, however, they do share significant features with other Augustan poetry. Of the blending of Greek elements—both classical and Hellenistic—with Roman or Italian themes, little need be said; that is characteristic of much Latin poetry from the earliest times until well after the Augustan age and is only to be expected in a literature whose basic impetus had come from another culture.[12] More noteworthy is that they also share with other poetry of their day a concentration on problems of form and genre foreign to most earlier Roman poetry, emphasizing the organization of the poetic book and expanding the poetic genres to include a much wider spectrum of styles and subjects.

The best and the earliest Latin example of the first of these tendencies, the organization of the book, is Virgil's *Liber bucolicon*, the *Eclogues*, completed in about 35 B.C.[13] Like two other works composed in the same period, Horace's *Liber sermonum* and Propertius' *Monobiblos*, the *Eclogues* displays an artful and complex pattern, balancing each poem against those around it and at the same time balancing the beginning and ending poems to enhance the central ones. The *Eclogues* also provides the best example of the second tendency: it is intensely concerned with the nature and function of poetry in an unsettled and rapidly changing society. As a result, although the overt model of his book is Theocritean pastoral poetry, Virgil deliberately extends the concerns and possibilities of that form. Not only does he include poems modeled on Theocritus' nonpastoral poems, he also addresses himself to the concerns of both epic poetry (in *Eclogue* 4) and the new genre of love-elegy (in *Eclogue* 10). Most significant

for poetic theory, however, is *Eclogue* 6. There Virgil begins by adapting the prologue of Callimachus' *Aetia* (see p. 85 above), with its rejection of epic in favor of slighter forms and more elegant poetry. He then proceeds to recount the song of Silenus, which begins from cosmogony and progresses through the romantic myths favored by the Hellenistic poets, to tell of the poetic initiation of Virgil's friend and fellow poet Cornelius Gallus. Gallus is summoned to Mount Helicon, where Apollo and the Muses give him the poetic pipes associated with the poetic heroes of the Hellenistic world—Orpheus, Linus, Hesiod. The goal of *Eclogue* 6, as of the book of the *Eclogues* as a whole, is to demonstrate that within a formal unity—hexameter pastoral poetry—it is possible to create a poetic universe, a poetry which transcends all formal and generic restrictions to encompass all, or at least many, of the varieties of poetic creation.[11]

3

Much of what has been identified in the stylistic manipulations of both the *Aeneid* and the *Odes*, therefore, can be found in a highly developed form in the previous decade and in Virgil's own earlier work. There is, nevertheless, a vast gap between extending the bounds of a slight and nonclassical genre and creating a heroic work on an immense scale. While Virgil and Horace did progress to larger forms, not all poets did. In particular, the elegist Propertius steadfastly chose to remain within the humbler limits of his preferred form. It is not relevant here to discuss in any detail the significance of the formal genre of elegy in Augustan Rome. As in Horace's time, the origin and the primitive connotations of that meter are uncertain (see *Ars poetica* 77–78). It can, however, be safely said that its major period of popularity was in the Hellenistic, not the Classical period, and that its connection with amatory themes was primarily the work of the Roman poets, including Propertius himself.

The *Monobiblos* (Single book), Propertius' earliest work and the first book of his *Elegies*, shows him to be the true heir of Catullus' smaller poems. He is resolutely concerned with his own passion, with his mistress Cynthia, and with his poetry itself. He explicity rejects not only heroic poetry but heroic actions. The elegiac stance, as established in this work for all subsequent elegy, is one of self-absorbed concentration on private affairs and erotic exploits. But by the time Propertius began book 2 of the *Elegies*—written while Virgil and Horace were composing the *Aeneid* and the *Odes*—even the elegist's narrow vision of the nature of his genre had somehow expanded and, by the end of his life, was to expand even further. The opening poem of book 2 is addressed—as are Virgil's *Georgics* and all Horace's early works—to Maecenas, Augustus' chief minister and the day's leading patron of poetry. It is, in proper neoteric and elegiac fashion, a refusal to write an epic about the deeds of the emperor, not on the grounds of political disagreement but of poetic incapacity. Propertius declares that just as Callimachus does not sing of the battles of gods and giants, so his own talent is not suitable for an epic on Caesar: "The sailor tells of winds, the ploughman of bulls; the soldier counts his wounds, the shepherd his flocks; I am concerned with the battles in a narrow bed; each man spends his time on the skill at which he is adept" (*Elegies* 2. 1. 43–46).

Bedroom battles are a stock element in the elegist's vocabulary: they represent the rejection of public affairs in favor of private ones. But before he turned to Maecenas with this disclaimer of poetic incapacity, Propertius had begun the poem in a slightly different vein, one which seems to expand the possibilities of his genre within the limits of his subject. He started the poem, and the book, by imagining his readers' wonder at his apparently limitless poetic variations on the same topic, the overlapping themes of love and love poetry:

> Quaeritis, unde mihi totiens scribantur amores,
> unde meus veniat mollis in ora liber.
> non haec Calliope, non haec mihi cantat Apollo:
> ingenium nobis ipsa puella facit.
> sive illam Cois fulgentem incedere †cogis†,
> hac totum e Coa veste volumen erit;
> seu vidi ad frontem sparsos errare capillos,
> gaudet laudatis ire superba comis;
> sive lyrae carmen digitis percussit eburnis,
> miramur, facilis ut premat arte manus;
> seu cum poscentis somnum declinat ocellos,
> invenio causas mille poeta novas;
> seu nuda erepto mecum luctatur amictu,
> tum vero longas condimus Iliadas;
> seu quidquid fecit, sive est quodcumque locuta,
> maxima de nihilo nascitur historia.
>
> [*Elegies* 2. 1. 1–16]

[You ask the source of my writing loves so often, the source of my book that comes softly to the mouth. It is not Calliope nor Apollo that sings these things to me; my mistress herself creates my talent. If [it pleases] her to walk, gleaming in Coan silks, the whole volume will be cut from that cloth; if I have seen her scattered locks wandering on her brow, she rejoices to go proud of the praises of her hair; if she has struck a song from the lyre with ivory fingers, I marvel how skillfully she controls her supple hands; when she lowers her eyes that demand sleep, I find a thousand new causes as a poet; or if she struggles naked with me, her cloak torn off, then in truth we establish new *Iliads*; whatever she has done, whatever she has said, the greatest history arises from nothing.]

After establishing in the first two couplets the traditional elegiac character of his poetry as a slight form that does not receive the divine afflatus of Apollo or Calliope, Propertius proceeds in the following six couplets to extend the boundaries of his humble genre in a new and different way. Saying that the poet and his mistress compose *Iliads* in bed is significantly different from representing his task as the description of battles in bed; it puts the emphasis less on the events than on the literary form in which they are most commonly found. And in the same way, the final couplet in this quotation suggests that his mistress' slightest word or deed is worthy of recording on a far grander scale, "maxima . . . historia." These two couplets seem to imply that, just as the events of a lover's life are preferable to those of a political or military career (as Propertius himself had argued, for instance, in *Elegies* 1. 6), so too the literary record of those events can in some fashion rival, or perhaps replace, the works or genres in which public events are traditionally inscribed—epic and history.

The two couplets just discussed come at the end of six parallel pairs of verses and serve as their climax before Propertius goes on to defend his refusal to write epic or history on more traditional themes. In one way or another, it seems that the poet is using each of these couplets to allude to a different form of verse, now to be subsumed in his own poetry. The reference to Coan silks in lines 5 and 6 is generally taken as a description only of Cynthia's seductive garb—but in other passages such references contain riddling allusions to Philetas of Cos, a poet whose elegies Propertius elsewhere claims as a model.[15] In the following couplet "laudatis . . . comis" ("praised hair") seems to be a bilingual pun on the Greek *engkomion*, the poetry of praise, an important genre in both archaic and Hellenistic times.[16] The description of Cynthia's musical talents in lines 9 and 10 is an obvious allusion to the genre of lyric. As for the remaining couplet, it is at least curious that "causas" in line 12 is a translation of the Greek *aetia*—the title of the greatest work of the influential Alexandrian poet Callimachus. The list of Cynthia's endearing and inspiring activities thus becomes an oblique and riddling set of poetic genres, beginning from Propertius' own elegy, through encomiastic poetry, lyric, etiological poetry, epic, and history. Propertius is suggesting that love elegy, even though it is a self-absorbed and private poetic form, can be a vehicle for expressing the concerns of far grander forms.

My interpretation of the opening lines of *Elegies* 2. 1 may seem farfetched and hermetic, and it certainly does not admit of definitive proof. Nonetheless, over the course of his career Propertius very clearly did come to show far more concern with larger subjects and to see his poetry on a much grander scale. In the last poem of book 2, he puts his own poetry in the context of other contemporary writing, not least the as yet unfinished *Aeneid*. At the opening of book 3, under the obvious influence of Horace's *Odes*, Propertius produces five related poems, on

his own poetic inspiration and achievements and on his place in Rome, that are clearly intended to match the "Roman Odes" of Horace. And in book 4, he presents an astonishing group of long elegies that leave the topic of his love for Cynthia, in favor of Roman themes, the origins of various Roman customs and cults: a true Roman *Aetia*, based largely on the *Aeneid*.

4

A modern reader endowed with hindsight easily sees the progression in all three Augustan poets, Virgil, Horace, and Propertius, from small forms and subjects to heroic themes and grander genres as natural, the logical maturing of the poetic voice. Certainly, many later writers have appropriated the Virgilian model. In its historical context, however, the progression must have been anything but natural. All three poets, and the poets of the preceding generation, were deeply imbued with the postclassical culture of Alexandria. That city, in the third century B.C., supported a group of poet-scholars—most notably, Callimachus, Theocritus, and Apollonius—whose shared belief was that there was no place at all for the grand heroics of classical Greek poetry, whose goal was elegance and learning, and who despised the familiar forms and subjects as unworthy of a true poet's talents.[17]

A good indication of both their style and poetic theory is given in the conclusion of Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo*. The poet turns aside from his subject to offer an attack on his poetic detractors:

> Jealousy spoke secretly into Apollo's ears: "I do not love the poet who does not sing even so much as the sea." Apollo kicked Envy and said: "Great is the stream of the river of Assyria, but it carries many scourings of earth and much garbage on its water. Bees do not carry water to Demeter from every source but from the spring which comes up pure and unsullied from a holy source, a small libation, the highest bloom." [*Hymn to Apollo* 105–112]

In other words, they preferred quality to quantity, and epic poetry above all was to be shunned. "I hate the cyclical poem," said Callimachus in his *Epigram* 28, "I do not drink from the common well. I despise everything public."[18] To be a true poet, it was considered necessary to drink from a pure spring, to avoid the wagon track and seek the untrodden path. In the passage of Alexandrian poetry that most influenced Roman poets, the preface to his *Aetia*, Callimachus related from the perspective of old age his first encounter with poetry in the person of its presiding deity, Apollo. "When first I set my tablet on my knees, Lycian Apollo said to me '. . . poet, feed your victim as fat as possible but, my friend, keep your Muse slender' " (*Aetia* fragment 1. 21–24). From that memory, the poet

goes on to establish the basic metaphors for the proper attitude of the poet: poetry should be judged by its skill, not by a surveyor's rope; the poet's voice should emulate the sound of the cicada, sweet and small, and not the braying of asses; "it is Zeus' part to thunder, not mine."

Brevity, then, was a desirable characteristic, and not only brevity but the choice of a suitably delicate subject. It was far better to write an exquisite epigram on a trivial or personal theme—and the *Greek Anthology* attests to the popularity of the epigram as a literary form in Alexandria—than to write a turgid and bombastic eulogy of a king. Callimachus eschewed the major literary forms of the classical period and concentrated, as almost all his contemporaries did, on lesser genres—epigram, mime, iamb, elegy—in some cases elevating to literary status forms of expression that had previously existed only in popular culture. Theocritus' pastoral poems and Herodas' mimes are clear examples of this tendency. In fact, the mismatching of singer and song was deliberate: an uncouth shepherd, an urban housewife, or even a Cyclops singing a highly refined poem was intended to amuse the learned audience.

Even when writing of themes that would seem to lend themselves to expansiveness or hyperbole, Callimachus and his friends restrained themselves to a remarkable degree. Instead of an epic, Callimachus wrote an epyllion (now highly fragmentary), the *Hecale*, whose principal subject was Theseus' defeat of the Marathonian bull. In telling, in a fairly short poem, this minor episode of Theseus' life, he managed to devote far less attention to Theseus' heroic exploit than to the thunderstorm which forced the hero to seek refuge in the hut of the old woman Hecale, to a description of her poverty and of the conversation that she and Theseus had that night, and to a very mysterious discussion between two birds in a tree. The conclusion of the poem was not the triumphant return of the hero, but his sadness on returning to Hecale's hut and finding that she had died in the interval, and his establishment of a cult in her honor.

In avoiding heroic exploits, eclipsing narrative, and concentrating on description, humble life, and conversation, the *Hecale* displays the techniques and concerns of Alexandrian poetry. There is a strong tendency, not only in Callimachus, to focus on the childhood or minor exploits of a hero, and that is matched by an interest in the accurate portrayal of unheroic characters—old women, peasants, the petty bourgeoisie of Alexandria, shepherds, farmhands, witches. Jason, the hero of the one extant Alexandrian epic, Apollonius' *Argonautica*, is primarily remarkable for his lack of most of the traditional heroic attributes. As a member of the Museum and hence a functionary of the Ptolemaic court, Callimachus necessarily composed panegyrics on the royal house, but they too tend to be delicate and subtle, not bombastic. The *Victoria*, the recently discovered poem on Berenice's victory (by proxy) at Nemea, features a Pindaric myth on the origins of the Nemean games, founded by Heracles after he killed the Nemean lion; but the poem concentrates on the hero's visit to the hut of a peasant, as does the *Hecale*, and it includes a tale on the invention of the mousetrap, as a delicate counterpoint to the killing of the lion.[19] Similarly, the concluding poem of the *Aetia*, the *Coma Berenices* (Lock of Berenice), dwells not on Ptolemy's expedition to Syria, the occasion for which Berenice dedicates a lock of her hair, but on the lock's grief at being parted from its mistress.

The Alexandrian emphasis on smallness, elegance, and slightness at the expense of grand themes in major poetic genres was not preciosity for its own sake: although the poetry was written by and for scholars, it had much larger sources than the bibliothecal context in which it was composed. Since the time of the classical poets, much had changed. Earlier Greek poetry was an intimate part of the life of the city-state, written for its religious occasions and performed by its citizens. But the conquests of Alexander had altered the structure and the boundaries of the Greek world to an astonishing degree. Alexandria, the center of the poetic culture of the new age, was a city that had not even existed at the time of Euripides; it was in Egypt, not in Greece, and was a huge, polyglot community. As immigrants immersed in a new, impersonal, and bureaucratic society, the poets not unreasonably sought out what was small, intimate, and personal in their verses. The heroes of early Greek poetry are larger than life; those of Alexandrian poetry are life-size. They are human, like us; they have a childhood and an old age; they are afraid or in love or caught in a rainstorm. It was simply one way of reducing the world to more manageable dimensions. At the same time, the new world of Alexandria needed a new poetry. To continue writing epics about a mythology that seemed very far away was senseless; it was impossible to recapture either the style or the immediacy of Homer, lyric poetry, or Attic tragedy. The scholar-poets of Alexandria admired the literature of classical Greece; for them Homer was incomparable and inimitable, to be studied—but not to be copied. Far better, then, to find a new voice on a more manageable scale: instead of oral epic, erudite epyllion; instead of lyric, epigram; instead of tragedy, mime. The poets of an urban and unheroic world might long for but could never re-create the grandeur of the past.

From the very beginnings of Latin literature, the Greece that the Romans encountered was not the Greece of Homer or Pindar but the Alexandria of Callimachus—a literature not of heroism but of erudition and ironic urbanity. The early Roman poets did not by any means follow all the strictures of the Alexandrians, but they never entirely ignored them. The first work of Latin literature of which we have any significant fragments, the translation of the *Odyssey* by Livius Andronicus, made use of Alexandrian learning in order to adapt Homer to the Latin language.[20] Early Roman tragedy shows the influence of Hellenistic character portrayal, emphasizing psychological conflicts and irrational emotions. Ennius, the greatest early Roman poet, opens his *Annales* with an account of his very

Callimachean dream on Mount Helicon; but instead of being forbidden by Apollo to write an epic, he encounters the shade of Homer who tells him to go ahead, on the grounds that Ennius is himself the reincarnation of Homer and thus capable of writing epic.[21]

The full force of Callimachean theory, however, did not reach Rome until sometime in the first century B.C., and its clearest manifestation is in the poetry of Catullus, composed in the decade of the 50s. In a highly polemical epigram, he unfavorably compared the unknown poet Volusius' epic *Annales* to his friend Cinna's epyllion on the myth of Zmyrna. The *Zmyrna* had taken nine years to write, but it would be read forever and throughout the world; the *Annales* was huge and rapidly written, and it would soon be used as fish wrappings in its author's hometown.[22] Catullus also understood the wider implications of Callimachus' poetics; but with him and his contemporaries, the reduction of poetry to a manageable size and scope had less to do with the world's increasing complexity than with its increasing disruption and corruption. The rejection of epic, implicit in Catullus' rejection of Caesar's deeds, was combined with the rejection of not only the standard uses of the vocabulary of political life but also the orotund language of Ciceronian rhetoric.[23]

This is not the place to offer a history of Latin poetry in the late Republic, or even of the different perceptions of Callimachean poetics. It is enough to point out that, before Virgil and Horace undertook their major works, no serious poet contemplated composing in the grand style. Catullus' greatest contemporary, Lucretius, was not a devotee of the neoterics' elegant verse, but neither was he the herald of great deeds and heroic manners. His poem *On Nature* is Alexandrian in its very essence: it is a didactic poem, a form beloved of the Alexandrian poets; it is extraordinary in its poetic treatment of a singularly unpoetic subject, another Alexandrian trait; and in its manifold erudition and allusions to the Alexandrian poets themselves, it is clearly a product of Callimachean poetics.[24]

In the approximately twenty-five years that elapsed between the deaths of Catullus and Lucretius and the time when Virgil began the *Aeneid* and Horace, the *Odes*, literary composition seems to have followed the lines laid down by Callimachus and Catullus. Gallus and others continued to produce epyllia and epigrams; Gallus is also said to have "invented" love elegy in the form we know from the poetry of Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid. In the triumviral period, the subjects of poetry seem to have moved, to some extent, away from purely personal topics toward more public themes, but the forms remained small: Virgil wrote pastoral poetry; Horace wrote the *Satires* and *Epodes*; Propertius, the *Monobiblos*. And while all these works show awareness of and concern with the larger events of the day, the tone remains slight and personal, the style, relatively low. The genres chosen are those popular in Alexandria, except for Horace's *Satires*; but that is a deliberately humble form, and Horace, with less than perfect seriousness, denies that it is poetry at all.[25] It is only in what is probably the last work of the triumviral period, Virgil's *Georgics*, that there are intimations of something higher, in the prayer to Augustus in the proem of book 1 and in the promise to write something larger in book 3. But even there the language is veiled, the genre, Alexandrian.

5

If the step from the *Georgics* to the *Aeneid* is gradual in terms of content, it is still huge in terms of poetic form and theoretical orientation. An Alexandrian or neoteric poet could legitimately aspire to be a new Hesiod; he could not aspire to be a new Homer. Strangely enough, however, the explanation for the change from lesser to greater forms, from Alexandrian to classical genres, lies in the literary theories of the Alexandrians themselves. It is here, finally, that the two aspects of a canonical text—its creation and its reception into a literary canon—finally meet, and here it is possible to see the ways in which the very structure of the canon has an influence on subsequent writers.

I have already shown that the Alexandrian poets were consciously concerned with the problems of genre and imitation, but there is considerably more to be said on the subject. For the members of the Museum, in their role as scholars rather than poets, were responsible for the classification of earlier Greek literature and its codification in a list, an actual canon of "chosen" authors.

Our major source for the Alexandrian canon is the rhetorician Quintilian, who compiled in the first chapter of book 10 of his *Institutio oratoria* an annotated list of authors, both Greek and Latin, that the aspiring rhetorician should study in order to develop his vocabulary and style.[26] The list is arranged in parallel sections, one for Greek authors, one for Latin, and it is clear that the Greek section, at least, is much older than Quintilian's time, the first century A.D. It is organized by genre: starting from epic, he proceeds through the various poetic forms from elegy, to iamb, lyric, and, finally, drama and concludes with the three major forms of artistic prose—history, oratory, and philosophy. With slight exceptions resulting from differences between the two literatures, the order in the Latin section is the same.

That the canon of authors is arranged by genre is not unreasonable—although it leads, in the Latin list, to the peculiarity of having Ovid appear in three categories and Cicero and Horace, in two each—but Quintilian's definition of genre is strange, at least to modern eyes. Genres, in poetry, are defined by their metrical form alone, not their content. And the definition is quite rigid: when Quintilian lists Horace's *Epodes*, together with some poems of Catullus and Bibaculus, under the rubric "iamb," he feels the need to explain that they are placed there "although an

epodic verse [i.e., one written in a different meter] intervenes" (*Institutio oratoria* 10. 1. 97). Horace's having written the *Epodes* in imitation of the personal, and often invective, poetry of Archilochus and Hipponax only partially makes up for the dactylic verses between the iambs in some poems. The very first subdivision of Quintilian's list, epic, reminds us of how strictly these formal definitions were upheld. Homer, of course, is at the head of the list—but he is followed not only by Hesiod but by the Hellenistic didactic poets Aratus and Nicander and the pastoral poet Theocritus. Although Quintilian describes Theocritus' style as "rustic," there can be no doubt that, by the criteria of the ancient canon, it was rustic epic.[27]

Quintilian also provides evidence about the authorship and the extent of the Alexandrian canon. When he lists Hellenistic poets under the rubric of epic, he remarks that Apollonius "does not come into the order given by the grammarians, because Aristarchus and Aristophanes, the judges of poets, included no one of their own day" (*Institutio oratoria* 10. 1. 55). He later says that this list included only three iambic poets. In other words, it was a selection and not, as has sometimes been thought, a complete list of all early authors—it was explicitly a list of earlier authors, stopping with the fourth century B.C. It was a codification of what was most worthwhile in classical Greek literature: in short, a canon.

We are sadly lacking in evidence about the criteria used by these grammarians in selecting or rejecting authors; some genres seem to have a great many authors, including mediocre ones, while others are extremely sparse. Nor do we know precisely what genres were included or in what order, except that epic is always first and Homer, always first in epic. There is, however, more evidence about the system of classification. Aristophanes and his successor, Aristarchus—better known for their Homeric scholarship—were not the first to make up an ordered list of earlier literature; they were precedetl, as is so often the case, by Callimachus.

Callimachus' *Pinakes* (Tables) was not a selection; it was intended to be a complete list, in 120 books, of all earlier literature, arranged by formal genre and including a brief biography of each author and a list of his works.[28] In effect, the *Pinakes* was a catalog of the holdings of the great library of Alexandria, and in such a context the use of purely formal criteria made perfect sense, not only as an objective and immediately verifiable tool for the location of volumes on the shelf but also because most classical and preclassical poets wrote in only one, or primarily one, metrical genre. By cataloging works formally, therefore, Callimachus could indicate author and subject at one time, in the most economical fashion.

The formal principles of classification, moreover, were carried to considerable lengths. In the lyric section, about which we have the most evidence, Callimachus employed two types of subdivision.[29] In Sappho's case, most of her poems were arranged in books according to meter, except for the wedding songs, which were organized into a single book. Different criteria were necessary for lyric poets who employed more complex metrical systems. Pindar's lyrics were classified by the occasion for which they were composed—paeans, dithyrambs, epinicia, and the like—and the epinicia, the major surviving portion of his works, were further subdivided by the particular festival—Olympian, Pythian, Isthmian, and Nemean—at which the victory was gained. For Pindar's contemporary Simonides, however, a slightly different organization was used: there the epinicia were classified by the event—footrace, chariot race, wrestling—in which the athlete had won his victory.

While the system of classification used by the Alexandrians was not entirely satisfactory in coping with Roman literature (as it would not be for most other literatures), it was eminently suitable for describing the literature of pre-Alexandrian Greece. Its presuppositions deserve to be emphasized: it assumes both that an author composed in only one poetic form and that all the major characteristics of a poetic form—style, diction, subject—are implicit in its meter and/or the occasion for which it was written. Any poem written to celebrate an athletic victory, any poem written for a wedding, any poem written in iambs or epic hexameters should have certain well-defined characteristics, and, we may presume, the quality of any given poem was judged by how well it fulfilled its genre's implicit goals. But if Callimachus shared these presuppositions about earlier literature, it is all too obvious that, in his own poetry, he consistently and deliberately violated them.

I have already pointed out that one of the most striking characteristics of Alexandrian poetry was its tendency to avoid the major classical genres and even to elevate to literary status forms probably not recognized previously as literature at all.[30] But the Alexandrian poets, particularly Callimachus, did more than simply repudiate the literary canon; they repudiated the presuppositions behind it as well. The rule that a poet composes in only one genre was not strictly true at any period: in the archaic age, Solon had written elegies and iambs, and so had Archilochus. Homer himself was believed to have written the comic epic *Margites* in mixed meters along with the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. But Callimachus went considerably further than that. His extant works include the *Hymns*, mostly in hexameters, the *Hecale*, the elegiac *Aetia*, the *Iambs*, a great many epigrams, and a few, highly fragmentary, lyric poems. In the final poem of the book of *Iambs*, moreover, he went so far as to justify his action, defending what the ancient summary of the poem calls *polyeideia* ("writing in many genres") against alleged criticisms of this practice and invoking the somewhat obscure precedent of the fifth-century B.C. poet and tragedian Ion of Chios. In other words, the cataloger deliberately made himself uncatalogable.

Much more important, however, is that Callimachus constantly and consciously removed the connections between the formal characteristics

of a genre and its subject and style. Victory odes were traditionally written in lyric meters; Callimachus has one in elegiacs, one in the *Iambs*. Hymns were traditionally written in Ionic dialect and in hexameters; Callimachus wrote two in Doric and one of those in elegiacs. The *Hecale* has considerable overtones of the language of tragedy rather than epic. Similarly, Callimachus' fellow poet Aratus begins his didactic poem, the *Phaenomena*, as a hymn. This stylistic trait has been christened *Kreuzung der Gattungen* ("blending of genres"), and examples of it are to be found in every Alexandrian poet and in almost every poem.[31]

Callimachus' literary ideas led in many directions. The separation of poetry from its formal occasions and metrical bonds allowed immense versatility and originality. The twin ideas that a poet need not be limited to one genre and that a genre need not be limited by classical strictures on the relationship between meter and subject permitted the poet to develop his own ideas in his own way.[32] Most important, it showed that a great subject need not be dealt with in a grand style, and Callimachus' own political poems—the *Hymn to Zeus*, the *Victoria*, and above all the *Coma Berenices*—show that the goals of panegyric could be achieved more subtly but no less seriously in a smaller voice. So, too, the most important Roman poets made use of the same techniques—Catullus, in his epigrams, a few of his polymetrics, and, more obliquely, his epyllion on the wedding of Peleus and Thetis; Virgil and Horace, in all their early works. The small could easily include the large, at least by implication. I hardly need to add that Callimachean theory could, of course, have less salubrious results: an incessant search for novelty for its own sake, a concentration on obscurity and elegance at the expense of content, a scorn for all that was serious or difficult in poetry. In Greek this led to such minor Callimacheans as Euphorion and Parthenius; in Latin it can be found in some aspects of Ovid's poetry and in the (lost) poems parodied in the pseudo-Virgilian *Culex*.[33]

6

We may return, finally, to the major writers of the Augustan age. Thoroughly schooled in Callimachean poetics, each of them followed the master in different ways, and each broke through the now-empty prohibition on canonical forms. The ultimate import of the Alexandrian definition of genre in strictly formal terms was that genre no longer mattered. The true poet could shape his chosen genre or genres in whatever way he chose; as a poet, his sole obligation was to leave his own stamp on what he wrote, to become the master of tradition, not, as had been the case with the oral poets of early Greece, its vehicle. In Callimachus' day, the prohibition on grand themes and classical forms was necessary for the revitalization of poetry, as it was, for different reasons, in Catullus' day. But as Virgil, Horace, and Propertius came to maturity, circumstances had changed, and there was room for a new Homer, a new Pindar—not mere copies of the old ones, of course, but with the subtlety, complexity, and versatility required of an Alexandrian poet.

The three Augustan poets met the challenge of generic freedom in different ways. Horace was in many respects the closest follower of Callimachean *polyeideia*, writing throughout his life in a multitude of forms, hexameter, lyric, and iambic. Propertius chose to emphasize the universality now possible within one genre and allowed his elegy to change and grow from love poetry to the etiological Roman tales of book 4, the closest Roman equivalent to the *Aetia* itself. Virgil, like Propertius, chose to remain constant in his choice of poetic form, the epic hexameter, progressing upward in genre and backward in time from the Alexandrian *Eclogues* to the Hesiodic *Georgics* to the Homeric *Aeneid*. But we are constantly aware that—although from the *Eclogues* one could never expect the *Aeneid*—they are all part of one larger whole, that all three works taken together create a poetic universe united by the mastery of one poetic voice. Each of these poets, in fact, constantly revised himself in such a way that developments unpredictable in advance seem natural by hindsight.[34] And, remarkably, each aimed for canonicity in a new way, through the changes in his works and the blending of genres. Rather than seeking a single niche in a formal list, each poet sought to encompass the range of poetry within a single life, to become a part of the canon by making the canon a part of himself.

Alexandrian formalism and blending of genres had even wider ramifications in terms of style and attitude, in Rome as in Alexandria. Horatian political odes, such as the "Cleopatra Ode," offer a deliberately double perspective: the archaic and bloodthirsty exaltation of an Alcaeus on the one hand, the cosmopolitan Alexandrian sense of shared humanity on the other. Propertius' "Roman Elegies" are never simplemindedly antiquarian or patriotic; they are not the ancient equivalent of Thomas Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome." Instead, a poem like the "Tarpeia Elegy" (*Elegies* 4. 4) makes the primitive Roman traitress as sympathetic as any modern woman smitten with a hapless love. The combination of large and small, old and new, personal and heroic that is found in all good Alexandrian poetry brings with it an essential complexity and doubleness of vision.

Of no poem is a purely formal description less adequate than of the *Aeneid*. The epic does contain, along with its epic scheme, considerable signs of the blending of genres: tragedy in book 4, scientific and philosophical poetry in parts of books 1 and 6, pastoral in 7 and 8, Hellenistic whimsy in the metamorphosis of ships to nymphs in 9, religious hymns in 8, and others elsewhere. But Virgil, to a greater extent than lesser poets, diverts the reader's attention from such purely formal versatility. What is more pervasive than in any other ancient poem, however, is the

sense of ambiguity, the doubleness of vision that is the direct result of the Alexandrian deconstruction of poetic genre.

There is no need to rehearse in detail the elements of the *Aeneid* that contribute to its overwhelming sense of doubt and pathos—the frequent tragic and unnecessary deaths, especially of the young; the constant emphasis on the ignorance of Aeneas contrasted with the knowl- edge of the reader; Aeneas' departure from the underworld through the gate of false dreams; his lack of understanding about the meaning of his shield; and at the poem's end, his yielding to emotion and killing Turnus. At the same time, it would be wrong to underestimate the gen- uinely heroic, Augustan elements—Jupiter's prophecy of eternal empire, the vision of Roman heroes in book 6 and Italian strength in book 7, and, above all, the battle of Actium at the center of Aeneas' shield, with Augustus leading his troops into battle "with the senate and the people, the Penates and the great gods" (*Aeneid* 8. 679). Given the universality implicit in Alexandrian poetics, the emphasis on the small and humble together with the grand and heroic, it is important to recognize that both sides of the poem are necessary, that neither would be possible without the other.

When Augustus returned to Rome in triumph in 29 B.C., he had a great many plans for reform and renewal: the revival of sound morals and religion, the establishment of orderly government at Rome, the enhancement of the grandeur of Rome as an imperial capital. He also directed his attention to literature. Through Maecenas, he cultivated the support and even the friendship of the most talented writers of the day. Varius' *Thyestes*, written for the celebration of his triumph, he rewarded with an immense sum. He established a new library in the temple of Palatine Apollo, the god who was patron of literature and Augustus' own personal divinity. He is said to have encouraged poets to address works to him—but only works on serious subjects. Clearly, Augustus hoped that the splendor and achievements of his reign would be immortalized in literary works of dignity and grandeur.

Augustus was a man of considerable taste and refinement, and it may be that he never really expected Virgil to compose an epic on the civil wars, filled with deeds of heroic valor and featuring Augustus himself as some new Achilles. If that is what he wanted, he never got it, and that is just as well. The classics of Augustan literature match and in some ways even surpass their canonical models. In creating a new type of canon, one in which each author somehow encompasses all the varieties of poetic mode, they reinvented genres that were at once old and new, archaic and Alexandrian, and, in a word, Augustan.

1. My goal in this essay is to suggest an explanation, largely in generic and formal terms, for the high literature of the Augustan age and at the same time to make accessible to students of modern literature some of the less familiar areas of ancient literary history. Since the subject is large and the secondary literature immense, I have tried to give references only to secondary works that have directly influenced my interpretations (where they are at all unusual), to works which provide fuller discussions of the evidence that I have used, and to the ancient works themselves. Most of my references to ancient works will appear parenthetically in the text. All translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own and aim at literalness rather than elegance. I have discussed a number of the topics considered here with many friends and colleagues over several years; my greatest debt is to my wife, Susanna Stambler, who helped me find an argument in an undigested mass of antiquarian details.

For various definitions of "canon," see Alastair Fowler, "Genre and the Literary Canon," *New Literary History* 11 (Autumn 1979): 97–119, an article to which my approach owes a great deal. For T. S. Eliot, see *What Is a Classic?* (London, 1945)—a lecture addressed to the Virgil Society. In dealing with English literature, Eliot's elevation of minor writers—discussed by John Guillory in this volume—is remarkably similar to the Alexandrian literary theory I discuss in this essay. David Ruhnken, in 1768, was the first to use the word "canon" to describe a selective list of literary works; see Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1968–76), 1:207. The ancient terms *engkrino* ("select") in Greek and *recipio* ("receive") in Latin imply the existence of such a list, but no word for it exists.

2. So, Propertius *Elegies* 2. 34. 65–66: "Give way, Roman writers; give way, Greeks! Something bigger than the *Iliad* is being born." Whether this was meant to be completely laudatory is open to question.

3. Pliny *The Letters of the Young Pliny* (Penguin Classics, trans. Betty Radice) 6. 21.

4. Let me note here that I shall say nothing in this essay about the history of ancient drama and its place in the Augustan revival—not because it is not important but because we know virtually nothing about Augustan tragedy. For a tentative reconstuction of some of the features of Augustan tragedy that supports some of my observations here about epic and lyric, see R. J. Tarrant, "Senecan Drama and Its Antecedents," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 82 (1978): 213–63, esp. pp. 258–61.

5. See Brooks Otis, *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford, 1964), esp. pp. 41–96, one of the few works that tries to explain the *Aeneid* through its Alexandrian background.

6. Note particularly that Dido in her madness is compared to Pentheus or "Orestes driven from the stage" ("scaenis agitatus Orestes" [*Aeneid* 4. 471]), an anachronism that has troubled many critics but should be seen in the context of *Aeneid* 1. 164, where the woods shading Aeneas' landing site are described as a *scaena*, and *Aeneid* 1. 427–29, where the construction of a new theater is among the first things that Aeneas sees in Carthage. It should also be noted that the erotic language of the opening lines of book 4—wounding, fire, poison—was by the time of the *Aeneid* the shared idiom of Hellenistic epic (Apollonius of Rhodes' Medea), early Roman tragedy (Ennius' *Medea*), neoteric epyllion (Catullus' Ariadne), and elegy (Propertius' *Monobiblos*). Whatever associations the reader brought to these lines were in any case not Homeric.

7. See Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 1: 206, and the commentary of R. G. M. Nisbet and Margaret Hubbard (*A Commentary on Horace: Odes* [Oxford, 1970]) on these lines. On the Alexandrian canon, see below, pp. 97–99.

8. On *vates*, see J. K. Newman, *Augustus and the New Poetry* (Brussels, 1967), pp. 99–206. My interpretation here of Horace is scarcely new; I am particularly indebted to David O. Ross, Jr., *Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry: Gallus, Elegy, and Rome* (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 131–52, who gives further references.

9. See the discussion of Horace's odes in the manner of Alcaeus, in Giorgio Pasquali, *Orazio Lirico*, 2d ed. (Florence, 1964), pp. 1–140, and Eduard Fraenkel, *Horace* (Oxford, 1957), pp. 154–78, together with Nisbet and Hubbard's *Commentary*.

10. On this ode, see Fraenkel, *Horace*, pp. 234–39, and Ross, *Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry*, pp. 141–42, with careful comparisons to other similar passages.

11. See A. E. Harvey, "The Classification of Greek Lyric Poetry," *Classical Quarterly*, n.s. 5 (1955): 158–59; Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 1:130 and 183–84; and below, pp. 98–99.

12. On this topic, see, for instance, Wilhelm Kroll, *Studien zum Verständnis der römischen Literatur*, 2d ed. (Darmstadt, 1973), esp. pp. 1–23, and Gordon Willis Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 250–357.

13. There has been much debate recently about the date of the *Eclogues*, whether it is 38 or 35 B.C. For my point that question is irrelevant, although I favor the later date. On the poetic book in antiquity, see Kroll, *Studien zum Verständnis*, pp. 225–46. The Spring 1980 issue of the periodical *Arethusa* (vol. 13) contains five articles and a copious bibliography on the Augustan poetic book.

14. In this account of *Eclogue* 6, I am indebted to Ross, *Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry*, pp. 18–38; but see also my "Gallus, Elegy, and Ross," *Classical Philology* 72 (July 1977): 249–60.

15. See Propertius *Elegies* 3. 1. 1 and 3. 9. 44, and see also Ross, *Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry*, p. 59 n.2.

16. On the *engkomion*, see Harvey, "Classification of Greek Lyric Poetry," pp. 163–64.

17. The basic study of Hellenistic poetry—altered and supplanted in details but not replaced—is Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Hellenistische Dichtung in der Zeit des Kallimachos*, 3d ed. (Zurich, 1973). Two articles useful for the relationship of Roman to Hellenistic poetry are Erich Reitzenstein, "Zur Stiltheorie des Kallimachos," in *Festschrift Richard Reitzenstein* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1931), pp. 23–69, and Wendell Clausen, "Callimachus and Latin Poetry," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 5 (1964): 181–96.

18. I cite Callimachus' works according to the numeration in Pfeiffer's edition, *Callimachus*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1949–53).

19. The major publication of the new fragments is that of P. J. Parsons, "Callimachus: *Victoria Berenices*," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 25 (1977): 1–50. The mousetrap (fragment 177) was connected to the new fragment by Enrico Livrea, "Der Liller Kallimachos und die Mausefallen," *Zeitschrift Für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 34 (1979): 37–42, and "Polittico Callimacheo," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 40 (1980): 21–23.

20. See George A. Sheets, "The Dialect Gloss, Hellenistic Poetics, and Livius Andronicus," *American Journal of Philology* 102 (Winter 1981): 58–78.

21. The soul had also been lodged in the body of a peacock in the interval between its human incarnations. On Ennius' dream, see Otto Skutsch, *Studia Enniana* (London, 1968), pp. 6–9.

22. On this epigram, Catullus 95, see Clausen, "Callimachus and Latin Poetry," pp. 188–91.

23. See Ross, *Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry*, pp. 8–15, for a clear discussion of the question of "political language" in Catullus. For a fuller exposition of the views presented here, see my "Catullus," in *Ancient Writers: Greece and Rome*, ed. T. James Luce, 2 vols. (New York, 1982), 2: 643–67, and "The Poetics of Patronage in the Late First Century B.C.," in *Literary and Artistic Patronage in Ancient Rome*, ed. Barbara K. Gold (Austin, Tex., 1982), pp. 99–101.

24. There is as yet no full study of Lucretius' Alexandrianism, but see E. J. Kenney, "Doctus Lucretius," *Mnemosyne* 23 (1970): 366–92, and Robert D. Brown, "Lucretius and Callimachus," *Illinois Classical Studies* 7, pt. 1 (Spring 1982): 77–97.

25. See Horace *Satires* 1. 4. 39–42.

26. On the canon, see (briefly) Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 1: 203–8, and (in detail) Ludwig Rademacher in *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (1919), s.v. "Kanon."

27. Fowler, in his "Genre and the Literary Canon," is wrong to list pastoral as a separate genre in Quintilian, although he recognizes the nature of the principles involved (see pp. 103 and 104).

28. On the *Pinakes*, see Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 1: 127–34, and Otto Regenbogen in *Real-Encyclopädie* (1950), s.v. "Pinax." The evidence for alphabetic order cited by Pfeiffer in his edition of the fragments is very weak. It will be clear that Callimachus' principles of classification—those favored throughout most of antiquity—were opposed to those of Aristotle, who dismissed the use of metrical criteria (see *Poetics* 1447b).

29. On the classification of lyric, see n. 11 above, and L. E. Rossi, "I Generi letterari e le loro leggi scritte e non scritte nelle letterature classiche," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* (University of London) 18 (1971): 69–94, esp. pp. 75–77.

30. For the subjects of this and the next paragraph, see Kroll, *Studien zum Verständnis*, pp. 202–44, and Rossi, "I Generi letterari," pp. 83–86, two works to which I owe much elsewhere in this essay.

31. With the one caveat that Fowler's definition of genre is not formal enough to suit Alexandrian theory, the characteristics of most Alexandrian poetry are very much like the secondary forms of genre described in his "The Life and Death of Literary Forms," in *New Directions in Literary History*, ed. Ralph Cohen (Baltimore, 1974), pp. 91–92.

32. This is, essentially, the conclusion drawn by Ross, *Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry*, pp. 36–38, from the poetic genealogy of *Eclogue* 6.

33. For this tendency and the parodies of it, see Ross, "The *Culex* and *Moretum* as Post-Augustan Literary Parodies," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 79 (1975): 235–63.

34. It should be noted that in their constant self-revision, as in other characteristics, the Augustans were the heirs of Callimachus, who was the first poet to arrange (and revise for the purpose) his own collected works.