

THE STRUCTURE OF VERGIL'S *ECLOGUES*

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ABSTRACT

The structure of Vergil's *Eclogues* has been much discussed and various models have been proposed to describe the different ways in which the poems are linked to each other. Two general types of models have been proposed. That of the concentric or recessive panel is well known, but somewhat deficient in that it ignores the inner dynamism of the collection. Models that take these dynamic aspects into account do so at the cost of some of the advantages of considering the concentric panel. This article proposes a new model to describe the structure of Vergil's *Eclogues*, based on a synthesis of existing models and relevant criticism, one that not only describes the simple thematic correspondences between individual poems, or plots the development of themes through the collection, but also attempts to express the different levels of closeness of correspondence between individual poems and groups of poems in the collection.

Introduction

'Vergil is a poet of labyrinthine intricacy'¹ and the complex and multi-levelled structure of his *Eclogues* is belied by an apparently easy-flowing surface structure. A close examination of the poems gradually reveals the complicated network of links between the poems of the collection: certain characters appear in more than one poem, some poems share similar settings or dramatic action, poems correspond in terms of their Greek predecessors or in their content or themes, and several poems refer directly or indirectly to other poems in the collection. Since the ten *Eclogues* were originally published as one book, most probably in the same order as we have them now,² it can be assumed that the specific placement of each poem in the book contributes to the aesthetic whole

¹ W. Clausen, *A Commentary on Vergil: Eclogues* (Oxford 1994) xxi.

² Clausen (note 1) xxi-xxii; A. Perutelli, 'Bucolics' (tr. N. Horsfall) in N. Horsfall, *A Companion to the Study of Vergil* (Leiden 1995) 27-62 at 31-33; and T.K. Hubbard, 'Allusive artistry and Vergil's revisionary program: *Eclogues* 1-3', *MD* 34 (1995) 37-67.

and any study of the book, or of any individual poem in the book, must of necessity take these structural details into account.

Studies in the structure of the *Eclogues* have been periodically popular, but since the publication of Van Sickle's *The Design of Vergil's 'Bucolics'* in 1978, very little has been published on the subject. This article will attempt to reopen the conversation and suggest a model which describes the relationship between the poems, the nature of these relationships and their relative importance.

The paper is divided into two unequal parts. The first part discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the various structural models of the *Eclogues* that have been proposed and the considerations on which they are based. The discussion commences with the most basic structural connections, those between any two poems, and progresses to the consideration of the poems in groups of three or four. An attempt to create a complete model for the *Eclogues* was made by Maury in 1944,³ who saw in the book a symmetry around *Eclogue* 5 consisting of pairs of poems: Poems 1 and 9, 2 and 8, 3 and 7, 4 and 6. His symmetric model, although not complete, indicates the most striking and probably the most important aspect of the structure of the *Eclogues* and has formed the basis of the work done by Virgilian scholars throughout the next four decades.⁴ The two most important additions made to the model of Maury are those of Duckworth (1963),⁵ who clusters the poems in groups of three (1-3, 4-6 and 7-9), and

³ P. Maury, 'Le secret de Vergile et l'architecture des *Bucoliques*', *Lettres d'humanité* 3 (1944) 71-147.

⁴ E.L. Brown, *Numeri Vergiliani: Studies in the Eclogues and Georgics of Vergil* (Bruxelles 1963); M.L. Clarke, 'Vergil and the Golden Section', *CR* 14 (1964) 44-45; A. Dallzell, 'Structural patterns and proportions in Vergil's *Aeneid* by George E. Duckworth', *Phoenix* 17 (1963) 314-16; H. Dettmer, *Horace: A Study in Structure* (Zürich & New York 1983); G.E. Duckworth, *Structural Patterns and Proportions in Virgil's Aeneid* (Michigan 1963); G. le Grelle, 'Le premier livre des *Géorgiques*, poème pythagoricien', *LEC* 17 (1949) 139-235; B. Otis, *Vergil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford 1964); M.J.C. Putnam, *Virgil's Pastoral Art* (Princeton 1970); L. Richardson, *Poetical Theory in Republican Rome* (New York 1978); N. Rudd, *Lines of Enquiry. Studies in Latin Poetry* (Cambridge 1976) repr. as 'Architecture. Theories about Virgil's *Eclogues*', in P. Hardie (ed.), *Virgil: Critical Assessments of Classical Authors*. Vol. 1 (London & New York 1999) 91-115; O. Skutsch, 'Symmetry and sense in the *Eclogues*', *HSCP* 73 (1969) 153-69; J.B. Van Sickle, *The Design of Vergil's Bucolics* (Rome 1978).

⁵ The original idea to see the poems arranged in groups of three seems to have been that of E. Hahn, 'The characters in the *Eclogues*', *TAPA* 75 (1944) 196-241. However, the article only touches on the triadic structure of the collection as 'a digression on the arrangement of the *Eclogues*' (p. 239) and, since his main

the models of Otis (1964) and Van Sickle (1978),⁶ which argue that the book, read from beginning to end, shows a dynamic development of themes and motives and de-emphasises any static model, such as those of Maury and Duckworth.⁷ The second part of the paper will attempt to combine the various models into a new model which not only retains the strong points of earlier models and eliminates their weaknesses, but also takes into account various links between poems that have not been stressed by the authors of these models.

A word of caution, however, is in order. The structural model of the *Eclogues* proposed in the paper does not attempt to reflect the intention of the author or the processes by which he composed his poetry. It aims only to visualise the structure of the collection as a coherent whole and delineate the various unique links between the poems in the book. The goal is to integrate the various structural models applied to the *Eclogues* and improve on these, in order to create a model which would adequately describe the structure of the book and, hopefully, suggest new avenues of enquiry.

Eclogues 1 and 9

Maury's most important contribution was to show that, based on their themes, the individual *Eclogues* can be paired symmetrically around the fifth poem, that is, Poem 1 corresponds to 9, 2 to 8, 3 to 7 and 4 to 6. This type of structure, which has also been identified in the works of Catullus, Horace, and Tibullus⁸ is usually referred to as a concentric arrangement or

argument relates in fact to the characters in the *Eclogues*, little discussion is devoted to developing a model to describe the structure of the book.

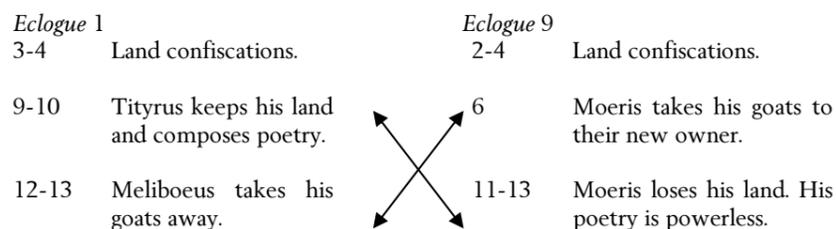
⁶ Otis (note 4) 105-43, as well as his 'The *Eclogues*. A reconsideration in the light of Klinger's book', in H. Bardon & R. Verdière (edd.), *Vergiliana* (Leiden 1971) 246-59 and Van Sickle (note 4) 29-32.

⁷ More recent work on the structure of the *Eclogues* has focussed more on the chronological questions regarding the composition of individual poems. M. Meulder, 'Virgile n'a t-il pas écrit la IVe Bucolique à la fin de 39 av. J.-C.?', *Latomus* 55 (1996) 815-28 and G.S. Korzeniowski, 'The Clausula-Type *et mihi Damon* and the chronology of Virgil's *Eclogues*', *Sileno* 25 (1999) 115-36. Studies regarding the structure, after Van Sickle (1978), have not produced a new structural model, but contributed by indicating hidden structural markers in the texts, supporting the existing models. Most notable is S. Lindahl, 'Die Anordnung in den Hirtengedichten Vergils', *C&M* 45 (1994) 161-78 and H. Seng, *Vergils Eklogenbuch: Aufbau, Chronologie und Zahlenverhältnisse* (Hildesheim 1999).

⁸ Much of the work was done some time ago and has to some extent been incorporated into commentaries. The seminal studies for Catullus are: H. Dettmer,

'recessed panel.'⁹ The first and ninth poems share the theme of land confiscations, the second and eighth contain love songs, the third and seventh contain amoebaeon singing contests and Poems 4 and 6 are paired because these poems are comparatively less pastoral in that they are about cosmological themes and are not sung by shepherds (the singer in *Eclogue* 4 is not determined and the largest part of *Eclogue* 6 is sung by the mythological Silenus).¹⁰

The similar subject matter and general setting of Poems 1 and 9 provide an obvious link between the poems, but there are certain problems regarding the position of the poems in the book. The first major problem is that the two poems are placed almost at the furthest extremities of the collection. If the two poems were intended to be read as a pair, the temporal gap, that is, the time that elapses between reading Poem 1 and Poem 9, if the collection is read sequentially, would need to be bridged.¹¹ The author accomplishes this by not only touching on the same themes in the ninth poem as he does in the first and doing so in more or less the same order, but also with a variety of subtle verbal repetitions.



'Design in the Catullan corpus: a preliminary study', *CW* 81 (1988) 371-81 and P.Y. Forsyth, 'The fearful symmetry of Catullus' polymetrics', *CW* 86 (1993) 492-95. For the arrangement of Horace's *Sermones* Book 1, see C.A. van Rooy, 'The arrangement and structure of Satires in Horace's *Sermones*, Book 1, with more special reference to Satires 1-4', *AClass* 11 (1968) 32-72; 'Arrangement and structure of the Satires in Horace's *Sermones*, Book 1: Satires 5 and 6', *AClass* 13 (1970) 45-60 and Dettmer (note 4). For Tibullus, the seminal study remains that of R.J. Littlewood, 'The symbolic structure of Tibullus Book I', *Latomus* 29 (1970) 661-69 with the improvements of B.B. Powell, 'The ordering of Tibullus Book 1', *CP* 69 (1974) 107-12 and H. Dettmer, 'The arrangement of Tibullus Books I and II', *Philologus* 124 (1980) 68-82.

⁹ Richardson (note 4).

¹⁰ Incidentally, these are also the only two *Eclogues* that do not contain the name of a shepherd in the opening line.

¹¹ An anonymous referee keenly remarked that it is extremely difficult to read a book roll in any other way.

16-17	Meliboeus fails to interpret the omen of the lightning-struck oak.	14-16	Moeris recognises the omen of the crow in the ilex.
45	'Tityrus, let your cattle graze.'	23	'Tityrus, let your goats feed.'
73	<i>insere nunc, Meliboee, pios, pone ordine vitis.</i>	50	<i>insere, Daphni, pios; carpent tua poma nepotes.</i>
77	<i>carmina nullo canam</i>	66	<i>desine plura ... cum venerit ipse (i.e. Menalcas), canemus.</i>

The numerous verbal echoes not only remind the listener that the themes of the first poem are being reworked, but also create a scheme whereby the poet can compare similar settings and characters. Both poems describe the plight of farmers during the land redistributions following the civil war, but the first poem focusses more on those who did not lose their land (represented by Tityrus in *E. 1*) and in the other, on those who were removed from their holdings. In the first poem Meliboeus, who has been dispossessed, asks the questions and tells Tityrus how fortunate he is to retain his land. Most of the poem dwells on the good fortune of Tityrus. In the ninth, Lycidas poses questions to the dispossessed Menalcas and in this poem the fate of the dispossessed receives attention.

The poems can also be compared on other levels: the theme of the power and powerlessness of poetry is especially noticeable in the ninth (9.11-13). The power of omens is touched upon in both poems (1.16-17 and 9.14-16): in the first an omen is disregarded to the detriment of Meliboeus and in the other it is acted upon and, as a result, the lives of Moeris and Menalcas are saved. The theme of *otium* is also prevalent and is developed against the backdrop of the timeless setting of pastoral poetry where the singers have time to practise their music in the shade.

The close correspondence of the poems on multiple levels has a striking effect: by describing the same thing in the same terms in two different contexts, the poet evokes different emotions. The passage from the ninth poem provides a striking example:

Tityre, dum redeo (brevis est via) pasce capellas, (E. 9.23)

Tityrus, until I return (it won't be long) let the goats graze,
This echoes a line from the first poem:

pascite ut ante boves, pueri, submitte tauros. (E. 1.45)

Let your cattle graze, boys, raise your bulls.

In the extract from the first *Eclogue* the *puer* in Rome addresses Tityrus (or the group Tityrus represents) when he pleads his case in the capital. In the extract from the ninth, Lycidas is quoting from a song which Moeris sang on his way to Amaryllis, before the whole rural landscape was turned upside down by the land redistributions. The emotional impact of the words lies in their particular context. The *puer* in Rome promises Tityrus a return to his rustic lifestyle and gives the reason for Tityrus' optimism about the future. The song Lycidas quotes reminds the dispossessed Moeris that he will never return to the rustic life he once knew.

Similarly, two other passages can be compared:

*... his nos consevimus agros
insere nunc, Meliboee, piros; pone ordine vites.* (E. 1.72-73)

... for them we have tilled the land
Graft your pears, Meliboeus; plant your vineyards.

insere, Daphni, piros; carpent tua poma nepotes. (E. 9.50)

Graft your pears, Daphnis; your grandchildren will pluck them.

The lines are so similar that even after reading all the poems in between (Poems 2-8), the echo still rings clearly. Here, the poet follows a more complex course. The first extract is spoken by Meliboeus. After most of the poem, up to this point, has described the fortune of Tityrus, Meliboeus' speech (1.64-78) describes the plight of those who have been dispossessed. Just as Meliboeus' words, in the memorable opening lines 3 and 4 of this *Eclogue*, starkly delineate Tityrus' good fortune by juxtaposing it with the catastrophe he has suffered, his words in lines 72-73 show what a 'fortunate old man' (1.46) Tityrus is to be able to keep his land. In the extract from the ninth poem – where both the singers are dispossessed landowners – Lycidas recites verses to Moeris from one of Moeris' songs. The former optimistic prediction of Moeris' song – that Daphnis' grandchildren will still live on the land – becomes, in this new context, where both the shepherds face an uncertain future, a bitter reflection on the magnitude of their loss.

Eclogues 2 and 8

The parallelism that exists between the second and eighth poems is not so pronounced as in the pairing discussed above. However, the fact that these two poems consist almost completely of love songs (one song in the second and two in the eighth) is sufficient reason to create a strong link between the poems.

Apart from these formal correspondences, the poems are also thematically linked: all three songs are about *Amor* (love personified) and someone who has lost his or her loved one. As with the subject of land confiscations in the first and ninth poems, the poet here also exploits parallelisms to explore various aspects of the theme. The three lovers featured in the two poems find themselves in more or less the same situation, but each handles it differently. Corydon laments his situation, blames his rusticity and comes to the conclusion that it is better to busy himself with daily chores and wait for another Alexis. The lover of Damon's song in the eighth *Eclogue* also laments the loss, but finds a solution of sorts in wishing the world away and by committing suicide and, finally, the lover in Alpheisiboeus' song, the most practical of the three, attempts to coax the beloved back with magic and ritual.

Here certain repetitions of sounds marking a correspondence between the poems should also be noted. Although they are not as pronounced as the similarities between the first and the ninth *Eclogues*, the opening lines of both poems reveal interesting similarities:

Formosum pastor Corydon ardebat Alexin, (E. 2.1)

Pastorum Musam Damonis et Alpheisiboei, (E. 8.1)

Both verse lines use the repetition of 'm', 'o' and 'a' sounds in successive opening spondees to create a tranquil pastoral scene. These two opening lines together with that of *Eclogue 3* are the only poems that have the names of two shepherds in the first line and these two lines, together with 6.67, provide the only examples in the *Eclogues* where the epithet *pastor* is applied to a named character. To be sure, these parallels on their own are not strong enough to link the two poems as a structural pair, but reinforce the correspondence established by the similarity of content and theme.

Eclogues 3 and 7

As was the case with *Eclogues 2 and 8*, the chief correspondence between the third and the seventh poems lies in the structural similarities: both

poems consist mainly of amoebaeon singing contests: in the third, between Menalcas and Damoetas and in the seventh, between Menalcas and Mopsus. The fact that the same type of event occurs in both poems is enough to pair the poems just as Poems 1 and 9 or 2 and 8 are paired.

As with the pairing of the first and ninth poems, the temporal problem regarding the audience's attention span also exists in this case. The first three poems of the collection are much more typical of pastoral than the following three poems (4-6), which explore themes not generally associated with pastoral poetry before Vergil. However, by ending the first triad of poems with the typical pastoral event of the amoebaeon singing contest and returning to the same setting at the start of the third triad in the seventh poem, the audience is effectively drawn back into the strictly pastoral setting of *Eclogue* 3.

Further structural correspondences between the two poems can also be discerned: the singing contests, for instance, take up 48 lines in both poems and both are introduced by a third party with more or less the same words (cf. 3.58-59 and 7.18-19). However, as was the case in the pairings discussed above, it seems that here, too, formal correspondences serve to highlight both the similarities and differences between the two poems. The respective introductions to the contests differ: the third poem starts with a bickering between the two antagonists, which ends only when a third person, Palaemon, enters the scene and organises the contest. In the seventh, the contest is introduced by Meliboeus, and it turns out to be a retelling of a previous contest, just as the love songs in the eighth poem are told and Moeris and Lycidas quote from previous songs in the ninth. This technique of narrative that embeds remembered singing was noted in the parallel Poems 1 and 9, where echoes of previous poems, direct quotations from other shepherds and the recurrence of certain actions served to compare the themes found in the first poem in the pair to those in the second.

Eclogues 4 and 6

On the surface neither the sixth *Eclogue* with its dedication and the lengthy song of Silenus nor the fourth *Eclogue* seem completely at home in a collection of pastoral poetry.¹² The subjects are, despite Apollo's warning to the contrary at the opening of the sixth poem, more 'epic' and grander

¹² Clausen (note 1) 126 and 175, goes as far as to assert that *Eclogue* 4 was not originally conceived as an *Eclogue* (hence the brief apology prefixing the poem) and reminds us that Silenus of *Eclogue* 6 is not to be found in Theocritus nor limited to Vergil's pastoral frame of reference.

than what one would usually expect from poets in a pastoral landscape: the fourth poem prophesies the dawn of a new Golden Age, while the largest part of the sixth *Eclogue* consists of a conglomerate of *epyllia* relating the mythic history of the world. This is where the deficiency of the static model of Maury manifests itself most clearly: his pairing of Poems 1 and 9, 2 and 8, etc. provides a good explanation of how the themes are treated and enhances understanding of the structure of the book as a whole, but it fails to show the development of ideas from the beginning to the end of the book.

To some extent the *Eclogues* is a book of two halves. The very fact that the themes and topics of Poems 1-3 are readdressed in reverse order in Poems 7-9 calls for some turning-point in the middle. Moreover, the poet seems to have intended the book to fall into two halves by inserting a second programmatic introduction at the beginning of the sixth poem. The collection, as we have it, does indeed progress smoothly and seamlessly from beginning to end and the central Poems 4-6 fit in so naturally that it is hard to imagine the collection without them. The grouping of these three poems also balances the other two clusters: 1-3 and 7-9. The advantages of dividing the book into groups of three poems will be considered below; here we shall focus on the correspondences between Poems 4 and 6.

Thematically or structurally *Eclogues* 4 and 6 do not have as much in common as the pairs discussed above, yet, as is the case with the other pairs, the audience is informed about the relationship of these two poems through a verbal echo in the respective opening lines.

Sicelides Musae, paulo *maiora canamus*.
non omnis arbusta iuvant humilesque myricae;
si canimus silvas, silvae sint consule dignae. (E. 4.1-3)

Sicilian Muses, let us sing something slightly grander, the orchard and humble tamarisk does not please everyone. If we shall sing of the woods, the woods should please a consul.

Prima Syracosio dignata est ludere versu
nostra, neque erubuit silvas habitare, Thalia
cum canerem reges et proelia, Cynthius aurem
vellit, et admonuit: ... (E. 6.1-4)

At first my Thalia deigned to play with Syracusan verses and was not ashamed to dwell in the woods. But when I intended to sing of kings and wars, Cynthius grabbed me by the ear and warned: ...

The pairing of these poems is indicated, uniquely in the *Eclogues*, through verbal echoes in the opening lines: the *Sicelides Musae* from the fourth poem is echoed by *Syracosio ... versu* in the sixth, the 'greater things' of which the poet promises to sing in 4 echoes as 'kings and wars' in the *recusatio* of Poem 6, and even the *myricae* of 4.2 reappears in 6.10.¹³ The rest of *Eclogue* 6 also displays echoes from the fourth *Eclogue*: the *Saturnia regna* from 4.37-45 features in 6.41, and the second Heroic Age and second voyage of the Argo described in 4.31-36, reappear in 6.43-44. An interesting parallel occurs in the final lines of the poems: the fourth poem concludes with a request to the *puer* to greet his mother with a smile. This mother-child relationship is mirrored in the sixth poem in Silenus' songs about Scylla, the daughter of Nisus, and the banquet Philomela presented to Tereus, though these examples represent the darker side of parent-child relationships.

This pairing is unique in the collection in that the subject matter and themes do not correspond. Where the other pairs of poems shared the same dramatic action, i.e. singing contests, love songs, etc., these two poems seem almost diametrically opposed – one looks prophetically to the future and the other relates a mythical past. The static model of the 'recessed panel', according to which the arrangement of the poems has been explained by Maury, does not fully reflect these aspects.

A dynamic perspective of the *Eclogues*, that is, a perspective that emphasises the development of the themes from the first half to the second half of the collection, has also been suggested.¹⁴ A model based on such a perspective presents a better explanation of the central positions of the comparatively less pastoral *Eclogues* 4 and 6, which can be regarded as a climax encircling the poem about the deification of Daphnis, as well as the placement of the programmatic introduction at the beginning of 6, which introduces the second half of the book. This model, which sees the division of the collection into two halves (1-5 and 6-10) as the primary structural feature, has found widespread support and will be discussed below.

Eclogue 6 is the first poem (if the collection is read from beginning to end) that correlates with a poem in the first half, making it the poem which establishes the pattern of the 'recessive panel' in the collection. The strong verbal echoes in the first lines thus serve to establish the link between poems 6 and 4, which is important since poem 6 also introduces

¹³ The verbal repetitions linking poems 1 and 9 do not occur in the opening lines, as the opening five lines of the first poem serve also as an introduction to the whole book.

¹⁴ Specifically Otis (note 4), Rudd (note 4) and Van Sickle (note 4).

the new direction the development of the themes in the collection takes in its second part.

The audience is subtly prepared for the turnaround in the middle of the collection. The first striking 'backward glance' in the collection occurs in Poem 5, lines 85 and 86, in which the opening words of *Eclogues* 2 and 3, respectively, are quoted. These two lines are incidentally the geometric centre of the collection (5.85 is the 414th hexameter of the book which contains 828 in all).¹⁵ The next 'backward glance' occurs in the epic themes named in the opening of Poem 6, which refer back to similar themes in Poem 4. And, lastly, we learn at the end of the Poem 6 (82-84), that the song of Silenus is actually a song originally sung by Apollo. These backward glances suggest a pattern that is developed further in subsequent pairings in the collection: the poems from the latter half of the collection revisit themes from their counterparts in the first half, but mostly relate past events (such as the contest in Poem 7, the songs in Poem 8 and the numerous quotations from other poets in Poem 9.) The central panel therefore serves as a fundamental transition from the optimistic look at the future in the first half to the pessimistic look at the past in the second half.

Otis (1964) presented an excellent exposition and explanation of the dynamic relationship between poems 4 and 6.¹⁶ He showed how the song of Silenus follows a general mythic chronology in that it starts at the creation, moves on through the Golden Age, past the fall of man and the flood (Prometheus and Pyrrha), the Heroic Age up to and including the horrible stories of parent-child relationships. The fourth poem also describes events in a chronological order inverse to that of the sixth. As the *puer* grows older the world reverts back to the Golden Age. At first while the *puer* is still in his cradle, the untilled soil produces 'small gifts'

¹⁵ The geometry is subject to a textual qualification. There is a textual problem concerning the existence of a refrain in the song of Alphesiboeus in *Eclogue* 8 (8.76). This song obviously parallels the song of Damon from the first half of the same poem and in fact mirrors that song structurally with the exception of this extra refrain. The best MSS give 8.76, but no corresponding refrain in the first song, which leaves three editorial solutions: (1) the missing refrain is added to the first song as 8.28a, (2) the text of the better MSS is adopted and the songs remain slightly asymmetrical, and (3) the refrain from the eighth poem is deleted, i.e. 8.76. The last seems to be the correct solution, following the arguments of O. Skutsch, 'The singing matches in Virgil and Theocritus and the design of Virgil's book of *Eclogues*, *BICS* 18 (1971) 26-29 at 26, and Clausen (note 1) 248. The geometry works out exactly only if line 76 of *Eclogue* 8 is deleted. Taking the *Eclogues* to consist of 829 lines, following the best MSS, makes 5.86 the central verse line and adding 8.28a the lines 5.85-86 the final lines of the first half.

¹⁶ Otis (note 4) 138-39.

(4.18-25); then, when the child can read of the heroic deeds of his father (4.26-27), a second Heroic Age will dawn with a second Tiphys, a second Argo and a repeat of the Trojan War (4.28-36) and in adulthood the *puer* will enjoy all the fruits of the Golden Age (4.37-45). This return to the Golden Age is an apt conclusion to the first part of the book. The optimism Otis¹⁷ sees permeating the bucolic landscape in the first four poems culminates here in the prophecy of a new world order and a second Golden Age.

The pairing of the *Eclogues* as discussed above seems to be an undeniable element of the structure of the book and may even be considered the most distinctive feature of the collection. However, this model on its own, as we saw, fails to describe some important aspects of the collection. Firstly, the pairs of poems are represented as proportional to each other; but the nature of the relation between Poems 4 and 6, which do not share the same themes or even dramatic action, is not described by this model. Secondly, placing Poem 5 in the elevated position of central turning-point neglects the important prooemium of the sixth poem, which neatly divides the collection into two halves. And, lastly, the model does not explain exactly how the tenth poem fits into the design of the collection: the links between Poems 5 and 10, the two remaining poems, are not as distinct as those between the other pairs and it can be argued that Poem 10 links equally well with other poems in the collection.¹⁸

¹⁷ Otis (note 4) 215-16.

¹⁸ Hahn (note 5) 240-41 and see also note 21 below.

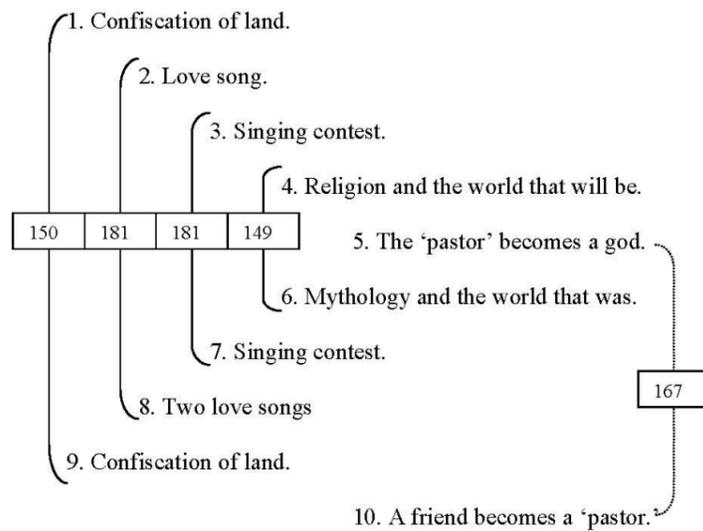


Diagram 1: The symmetrical 'recessed panel'¹⁹

Besides the thematic correspondences, which constitute the chief binding agent for most of the pairs, some critics have also been interested in the numerical correspondences between the poems and have tried to ascertain whether thematic parallels are reinforced by the form. The figures added to Diagram 1 indicate the number of lines in the pairs of poems in

¹⁹ The numerals indicate the combined number of verse lines in each pair. The symmetry of the number of lines in pairs 2~8 and 3~7, viz. 181, occurs only if Clausen's text is used, which omits 8.76; see note 15 above. Maury's article (note 3) was harshly criticised for the importance it attaches to the value of numerical symbolism in the *Eclogues* – Maury felt that 333 was a key number in the composition of the collection. This approach has, however, been taken up by some eminent American Virgilians and should not be dismissed out of hand. Le Grelle 1949 (note 4) did groundbreaking work on numeric analysis in Vergil and he was followed by Duckworth 1963 (note 4) and Brown 1963 (note 4). This approach has been criticised – severely in some cases – and it seems that consensus regarding the validity of the approach has still not been reached. For balanced contemporary criticism, see W.F.J. Knight, *Roman Vergil* (London 1966), Skutsch (note 4) 153-56, especially on this numeric symmetry, and Van Sickle (note 4) 21. This paper will, where it seems necessary or interesting, add numeric considerations.

question and reveal an interesting symmetry. Exactly how much should be made of such numerical indicators remains unclear.²⁰

The place of *Eclogues* 5 and 10

It is very tempting to link the fifth and last poems, especially as all the other poems in the collection are paired, but a closer inspection of the text may lead us to a different conclusion. It is true that certain thematic correspondences between the poems can be found – in Poem 5 the *pastor* becomes a god and in Poem 10 Gallus becomes a *pastor* – but such correspondences and even verbal echoes can be found between the tenth poem and other poems too.²¹ In order to understand why the two poems in question cannot be said to correspond in the same way as the other pairs, the structure of the collection as a whole should be considered.

First, it must be noted that both poems function as a conclusion: the fifth poem ends what Otis described as the ‘relatively forward-looking, peaceful, conciliatory and patriotic in a Julio-Augustan sense’ first half of the collection, with the death and new life of Daphnis; the second, ‘neoteric, ambiguous or polemic’ half of the book concludes with a farewell to pastoral poetry in the last eight lines of Poem 10.²² Moreover, it is certain that the functions of Poems 5 and 10 in the collection differ, whether the ring-composition or the division in two halves is taken as the primary criterion of arrangement. Poem 5 must be a pivot since it cannot be denied that themes from Poems 1, 2 and 3 are revisited in 7, 8 and 9 and the new introduction and dedication in Poem 6 suggest a new beginning.²³ Also, Poem 10, which opens with *Extremum hunc, Arethusa,*

²⁰ The numerical symmetry may seem farfetched, but balancing two sections of 180 odd lines seems hardly more difficult or more obscure than balancing the two amoebaeon singing contests of 48 lines each in *Eclogues* 3 and 7, the two parallel songs in *Eclogue* 8 (see Skutsch [note 4] 153-56) and the 25 line songs of Mopsus and Menalcas in *Eclogue* 5. Skutsch is one former sceptic who has suggested some of his own numerological analyses; cf. his ‘The original form of the second *Eclogue*’, *HSCP* 74 (1970) 95-99 at 95-96, especially n. 1 on p. 95.

²¹ The following list has been compiled mostly from Van Sickle (note 4) 192; Clausen (note 1); and R. Coleman, *Virgil: Eclogues* (Cambridge 1977): 10.1~4.1; 10.9-10~5.59; 10.10~8.18; 10.14-15~8.22; 10.17~2.34; 10.17~5.45; 10.24-27~6.14ff.; 10.28~2.68; 10.29~8.49-50; 10.31-33~7.1-5; 10.39~2.47; 10.46~1.3-4; 10.50-51~5.14; 10.63~8.58; 10.65~1.64-66; 10.70-72~3.13 and 10.71~2.72.

²² Otis (note 4) 130-31.

²³ See Clausen (note 1) xxii-xxv for a discussion of the detail that supports seeing a structural division at the end of Poem 5.

mihi concede laborem ('Grant me, Arethusa, this final undertaking') and ends with a general farewell to pastoral poetry, serves as a conclusion to the whole collection, a function which the fifth poem cannot, by definition, have.

The division of the *Eclogues* into halves, as a main structural feature, can also be supported by a curious numeric coincidence between the first and second halves of the book, based on the difference between the number of lines in the first, second, third and fourth poems of each half.²⁴ The difference between the number of lines in the two paired poems, given in the right-hand column adds up to the difference between the number of lines in Poems 5 and 10. Again, how much one should read into such numerical conjuring is debatable.²⁵

poem	number of lines	poem	number of lines	difference
1	83	6	86	3
2	73	7	70	3
3	111	8	108	3
4	63	9	67	4
5	90	10	77	13

Diagram 2: *The Eclogues as comprising two halves*

To see the last poem as primarily a semi-detached finale is tempting as verbal echoes of almost all the poems can be found in it. The greatest correspondences, however, are between the last poem and Poems 2, 5 and 8. Next to the important thematic connection between Daphnis-Caesar in Poem 5 and Gallus-Daphnis in Poem 10, the most important verbal echoes occur in the lamentation of the animals and woods (10.13-15 and 5.27-28) and the echo *divine poeta* (10.17 and 5.45). In his commentary Coleman (1977) notices the verbal connections between the last poem and Poems 2 and 8: 10.17~2.34, 10.28~2.68, 10.39~2.47 and 10.71~2.72; and 10.10~8.18, 10.14-15~8.22, 10.29~8.49-50 and 10.63~8.58.²⁶ These connections and repetitions are not difficult to explain: the themes of unrequited love, jealousy and despondency in Gallus' song are also present in the songs of Corydon (*E.2*) and of Damon and Alpheisiboeus (*E.8*),

²⁴ The idea to consider the difference between the relative sizes, measured in lines between blocks of texts, is discussed by Dettmer (note 4) 7-8.

²⁵ See note 19 above. Again the numbers only fit with the text of Clausen (note 1). The total number of verse lines for the eighth *Eclogue* comes to 108 only if the refrain at 8.76 is deleted; see note 15.

²⁶ For a list of echoes of earlier *Eclogues* found in the tenth poem, see note 21 above.

while the death of Gallus with the accompanying pastoral farewell contains the same dramatic elements as the death of Daphnis in Poem 5.

Triadic model

In both the static and the dynamic analyses postulated above, an important turning-point is evident in or around the fifth poem and the two poems, before and after this turning-point, need to support it. The marking of the halfway stage as in the *Eclogues* and the insertion of a second introduction is repeated by Vergil in his other works: the programmatic pieces at the start of the third *Georgic* and at the opening of the seventh book of the *Aeneid* are well known.²⁷ The same applies to smaller subsections of Vergil's *oeuvre*, for instance the central lines of the two songs in Poem 8 each describe the setting where the singers first fell in love,²⁸ and the reference to Octavian in Poem 1 (or at least to the generous *iuvenis*) comes at line 42, the geometric centre of the poem.²⁹

The interruption of the strictly pastoral setting of Poems 1-3 and 7-9 by three less pastoral poems in 4-6 has led Duckworth to see a division of the book in groups of three poems as a central structural feature: that is, Poems 1-3, Poems 4-6 and Poems 7-9, leaving the last poem to stand alone as a conclusion to the whole collection.³⁰ This division of the book takes many of the main features of the structure into account: (1) the relatively forward-looking poems 1-3 are grouped together and set-off against their thematic counter-parts, Poems 7-9; (2) the model also takes into account that the connection between Poems 4 and 6 differs from the connections between the pairs 1 and 9, 2 and 8 etc.; and (3) it suggests an explanation for the fact that the tenth poem has more verbal and thematic connections with Poems 2, 5 and 8 (noted above), as these poems are the central poems in each of these three groups.³¹

This triadic model and the symmetrical model proposed by Maury are, of course, compatible and a diagrammatic representation makes this clear. The relationship between Poems 4 and 6 is not precluded and the connections between the other pairs, following Maury, now takes the form

²⁷ R.F. Thomas, 'Virgil's ephrastic centerpieces', *HSCP* 87 (1983) 175-84 and G.B. Conte, 'Poems in the middle', *YCS* 29 (1992) 147-59.

²⁸ Otis (note 4) 107-08.

²⁹ Vergil, it seems, refers to this *Eclogue* in the third *Georgic*, line 16: *in medio mihi Caesar erit*.

³⁰ Duckworth (note 4) 4.

³¹ See especially Hahn (note 5) 239-41.

of two parallel panels, 1-3 and 7-9, each with its own central poem and thematically related in an inverse order.

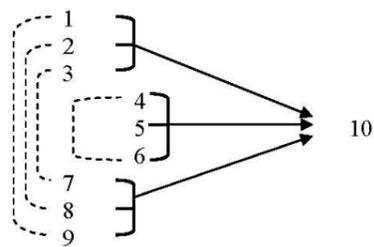


Diagram 3: *The triadic model*

A revised structure of the *Eclogues*

Three approaches to the structure of the *Eclogues* have thus far been discussed:

(1) The model proposed by Maury fits the poems in a 'recessed panel' of pairs, 1 and 9, 2 and 8 etc. spiralling upwards and culminating in the deification of Daphnis in the fifth poem. The model (schematically represented in Diagram 1) provides an overview of an undeniably important feature of the collection, but falls short on two counts: it does not describe the function of the final poem or its place in the collection and it neglects the unique differences between the various pairs of poems.

(2) The triadic model (Diagram 3) improves on the simple 'recessed panel', thereby also differentiating between Poems 4 and 6 and the other pairs in the collection and taking the comparatively closer unity of Poems 1-3 and Poems 7-9 into account. It also comments on the dynamic structure in the book by indicating a relationship between the concluding poem and the central poems of each triad. Most importantly, however, it does not exclude the obvious pairings of the recessed panel.

(3) The third model proposes a division of the collection into two parts, following Otis and Van Sickle.³² This is the simplest way to express the difference between the first and second half of the book, while also taking the turning-point, conclusion and *recusatio* at the beginning of Poem 6 into account. Besides the numeric coincidence shown in Diagram 2, which may or may not be regarded as evidence, it is quite clear that the

³² Otis (note 4) 215-16 and Van Sickle (note 4) 23.

book is, on a certain level, divided into two parts which sheds further light on the function of Poems 5 and 10.³³

All three these models, however, neglect some important aspects of the collection. An important feature of Otis's model is the extent to which the poems are Theocritean.³⁴ He identifies three groups in the collection: Poems 2, 3, 7 and 8 are Theocritean; Poems 5 and 10 are Theocritean with a 'specifically Roman, contemporary bearing', and Poems 1, 4, 6 and 9 are not Theocritean.³⁵ Otis's model does not expressly exclude any of the models discussed so far, but makes an important contribution regarding the nature of the connections between the poems. The arrangement of the poems into pairs in a 'recessed panel' is also reflected in Otis's groupings, as is the unique place of Poems 5 and 10. Otis's identification of the special relationship between Poems 1 and 4 and also between 6 and 9, and his explanation of how these pairings differ from the connections that exist between Poems 2, 3, 7 and 8, is unique and does not feature in the other models.

It seems therefore clear that a simple one-dimensional model of the *Eclogues* fails to give a description that takes all aspects of the structure into account. The static 'recessed panel' certainly describes an important aspect of the structure, but every pair described by this model differs in some unique way from every other pair, whether it is due to the position of the poems in the collection, the Theocritean character of a specific poem, or other factors. Moreover, the fact that a dynamic evolution takes place in the book cannot be ignored – the collection was, after all, intended to be heard (or read) from beginning to end. These dynamic qualities should therefore also be reflected in a structural model of the work without neglecting the aspects emphasised by the static models, which, in turn, also affects the collection's dynamism.

³³ Lindahl (note 7) found some thematic correspondences between the pairs of poems formed by the division of the book into two halves viz. 1 and 6, 2 and 7, 3 and 8 etc.; see Diagram 2. These thematic correspondences are not nearly as pronounced as those between the pairs of Maury's model.

³⁴ Otis (note 4) 128-31.

³⁵ Here it should be noted that the first *Eclogue* is indeed indebted to Theocritus as has been shown by I.M. Le M. du Quesnay, 'Vergil's first Eclogue', *Proceedings of the Liverpool Latin Seminar* 3 (1981) 29-182, esp. 26-53; B.W. Breed, 'Imitations of originality: Theocritus and Lucretius at the start of the *Eclogues*', *Vergilius* 46 (2000) 3-20, esp. 3-7; and F. Cairns, 'Virgil *Eclogue* 1.1-2: A literary programme?', *HSCP* 99 (1999) 289-93, esp. 290. However, since neither the setting of *Eclogue* 1 nor the theme of the repossession of land which informs it is found in Theocritus in any way, Otis's argument stands.

Duckworth attempted to create a synthesis of the static models by merging the triadic and 'recessed panels'.³⁶ The diagram below is based on his inclusive model, with the addition of the relationships discussed above.

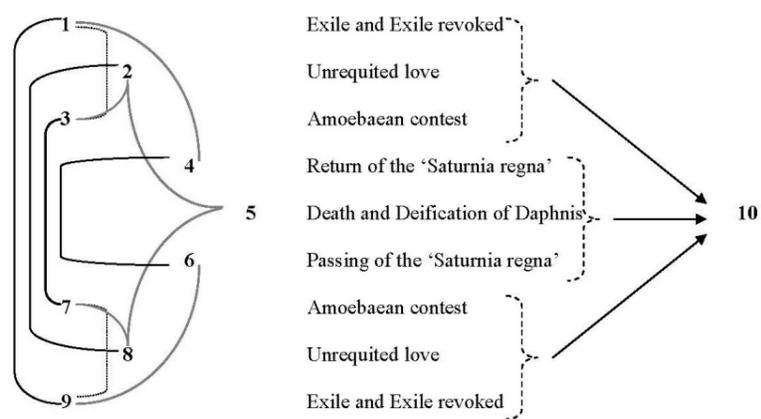


Diagram 4: Synthesis of the various models adapted from Duckworth

This diagram attempts to portray the intricate web of connections between individual *Eclogues* and the relative strength and closeness of these connections. The connections between Poems 1-4 and 6-9, respectively, for instance, are each on a slightly different level, determined by each poem's place in the collection as a whole and on its function in the development of the themes of the work.

The most striking feature of this model is its symmetry. This is hardly surprising as all the structural models discussed above, which were used to assemble this diagram, regard structural symmetry as an important, if not the most important element in the structure.³⁷ Diagram 4 centres not only around the central point of Poem 5, but the importance of the smaller groups of three, each with its own central poem, is also evident. The diagram also clearly shows the grouping of the first four poems and its ties

³⁶ Duckworth (note 4) 4-5.

³⁷ Symmetry as a principle of poetic composition has also been studied from the viewpoint of other fields; see for instance A.V. Voloshinov, 'Symmetry as a superprinciple of science and art', *Leonardo* 29 (1996) 109-13; and D. Washburn, 'Perceptual anthropology: the cultural salience of symmetry', *American Anthropologist* 101 (1999) 547-62.

with the group of Poems 6-9. Again, arranged around the central axis, these poems become clearly delineated units, which effectively reinforce the thematic division of the book into two halves.

Another striking feature of the diagram is the clear illustration of various different possible groupings of the poems. The groups containing two poems and those with three poems are arranged symmetrically around a central point in a very simple and elegant fashion. The three triadic groups each consist of a central composition and two poems flanking it: in the case of the first triad (Poems 1-3) and the last (Poems 7-9), a central love song is flanked by two poems containing dialogues, and the last triad which begins with the amoebaeon contest and ends with the exile theme is a mirror image of the first. The central triad (Poems 4-6) is similar to the other two in the form of its composition, but differs in that the central poem is the one containing the dialogue. The third possible grouping is that of two groups of four, which also easily fits into the pattern. The first group, Poems 1-4, has its own introduction and conclusion (exile in 1 and return of the Golden Age in 4), as has the last group, Poems 6-9. In Poem 6 Silenus looks backwards and relates the mythological journey of man's progress (and degeneration) from the Golden Age; in 9 the two shepherd poets are on their way to town, looking back at their pastoral life and ahead to an uncertain future, and again the groups are arranged to be mirror images around the central axis.

This combination of models, however, still fails to find a suitable way to describe the place of the final poem in the collection. Apart from the fact that the last poem constitutes a conclusion to the entire collection, it also displays, as we have seen, various links with almost all the other poems in the collection and has particularly strong links with the second, fifth and eighth poems, as discussed above. In this way the last poem may also be regarded as a kind of central axis around which the entire collection has been arranged. A more accurate diagrammatic representation of the relationships between the poems should therefore place the last poem in a central position amongst the others. The following representation attempts to rectify this shortcoming and to award the tenth poem its rightful place in a diagrammatic representation of the structure of the book.

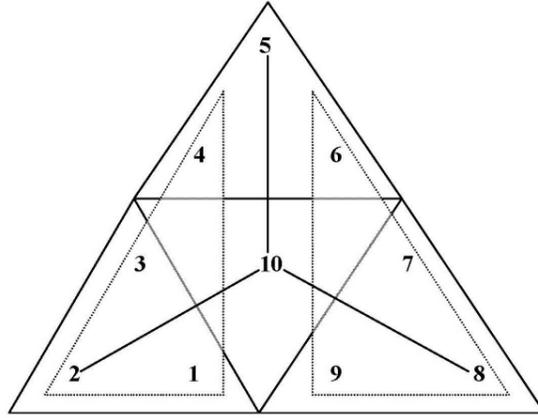


Diagram 5: The Platonic tetractys³⁸ as model of the structure of the Eclogues

The suggestion that the structure of the *Eclogue* can be represented by the *tetractys* is the main thesis of the paper. As noted above, this structural model does not necessarily imply anything about the intentions of the author or about his methods. It is intended merely as an interpretative visualisation of the structure of the book as it has come down to us.

The Platonic *tetractys* is a so-called 'triangular figured number' made up by the numbers 1-4 (hence the name) visualised as dots and arranged in descending order. The Pythagoreans arranged numbers, visualised as points in geometrical shapes arriving at square numbers (numbers of which the points can be arranged in a square, e.g. 4, 9, 16, etc.), oblong or rectangular numbers (any non-prime number), triangular numbers, etc.³⁹ The ten points of the *tetractys* can be arranged in the shape of an equilateral triangle. In Pythagorean number symbolism the *tetractys* was considered very important and a certain Aetius (1st century CE) in his *Vetusta Placita* (1.3) says that the Pythagoreans 'were wont to speak as if the greatest oath

³⁸ The arrangement of the poem in the shape of the *tetractys* does not necessarily imply that Vergil intended Pythagorean or Neo-Pythagorean symbolism, though the *tetractys* featured strongly in Pythagorean number theory. For a brief but insightful discussion of the symbol of the *tetractys* in Pythagoreanism, see F.M. Cornford, 'Mysticism and science in the Pythagorean tradition (continued)', CQ 17 (1923) 1-12.

³⁹ See K.S. Guthrie, *The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library* (Michigan 1987) 28-30.

were the Tetrad: “By him that transmitted to our soul the *Tetractys*” etc.⁴⁰ And another doxography, that of Hippolytus (*Philosophumena* 2.9) in the 2nd century CE, ascribes to Pythagoras himself the quote: ‘this sacred *Tetractys* is “the spring having the roots of ever-flowing nature”’.⁴¹ We may remark here that the number ten (the *decad*) was also considered very important by the Pythagoreans and we have testimonies as early as Philolaus⁴² and Aristotle (*Met.* 1.5; 985b 23-986b8) on the importance of the number ten to the Pythagoreans. By 200 CE we know the *decad* stood for ‘eternity’, ‘god’, ‘kosmos’, ‘all’, ‘all perfect’ and ‘key-holding’ among others.⁴³

The greatest advantage of this representation is that it provides a simple exposition of the relationships between the poems. Symmetry, which is the most striking characteristic of the structure of the book, is the main feature of the representation. Along the vertical axis represented by Poems 5 and 10, the two groups of four poems are juxtaposed, which reflects the structural models of Van Sickle and Otis. The triads of poems, following the configuration of Duckworth, make up the corners of the triangle and stand symmetrically around the final Poem 10 in the centre. Lastly, the pairs of poems are placed opposite each other symmetrically around the central axis represented by Poems 5 and 10 so that 1 corresponds to 9, 2 to 8, etc., without, however, placing every pairing on the same level, thereby differentiating between the relative strength of each connection. For instance, the pair comprising Poems 1 and 9, which have much in common and echo each other through various verbal repetitions, is placed closer together than 2 and 8 or 3 and 7, as are Poems 4 and 6, which are also more closely linked than the pairs 2 and 8, 3 and 7. The diagram also portrays the dynamic development that takes place throughout the book:

⁴⁰ Guthrie (note 39) 307-08, quoting the translation of A. Fairbanks, *The First Philosophers of Greece: An Edition and Translation of the Remaining Fragments of the Pre-Socratic Philosophers, Together with a Translation of the More Important Accounts of their Opinions Contained in the Early Epitomes of their Works* (New York 1898). This fragment appears in H. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci. Collegit recensuit prolegomenis indicibusque instruxit Hermannus Diels* (3rd ed. Bern 1958 [Berlin 1879]) 282, who notes that the same is also quoted by Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 1.10.

⁴¹ Guthrie (note 39) 311-12, again translated by Fairbanks (note 40) from Diels (note 40) 556.

⁴² Several quotes from and references to Philolaus are collected in Guthrie (note 39) 171. Those here referred to are from Stobaeus, pseudo-Iamblichus, Theon of Smyrna and Lucian.

⁴³ Guthrie (note 39) 321-22, compiled a useful list of the symbolic meaning of the first ten numbers from an anonymous text, *Theology of Arithmetic*, which was closely based on a work by Iamblichus.

starting with the position assigned to Poem 1, just off-centre to the left.⁴⁴ A continuous (but not necessarily gradual) upward curve can be traced through Poems 3 and 4 until the curve reaches its climax at the turning point of the fifth poem. Lastly, it is to be noted that this structural model, unlike the models previously proposed, depicts the last poem in a much more appropriate location relative to the other poems. Since the final poem shares certain themes with all the other poems and mostly with Poems 2, 5 and 8 (the corners of the triangle in the diagram), it is best visualised in the centre of the collection.

Besides being a simple visual representation of the intricate structure of the *Eclogae*, the structural model also suggests new avenues of enquiry. The Pythagorean practice of visualising numbers in geometrically arranged dots and the fact that the number ten can be arranged in a perfectly symmetrical figure, suggest that the Augustan poetry book may have been arranged with due consideration to this criterion. More work, however, needs to be done on the other collection of ten poems, viz. Horace's *Epodes*, Tibullus 1, etc. The fact that several different logical groupings of the poems of the *Eclogae* are possible provides a hint which warrants further investigation of the structural composition of the *Aeneid*. Though the twelve books of the *Aeneid* surely aim at emulating the 24 books of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, and the size of each book was determined, to some extent, by the size of a scroll at the time, the mathematical properties of the number 12 are also easy to exploit. Twelve divides easily by 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6, which means that the whole book can be symmetrically divided into groups of books in four different ways, viz. halves, thirds, quarters and pairs.

It seems beyond doubt that the Augustan poets (probably under the influence of Vergil) considered the structure of their 'books' or collections very important. Whether these structures also included hidden number symbolism can, however, not yet be conclusively proven.⁴⁵ Likewise, the use of the *tetractys*, with its associated symbolism as a structural model for the *Eclogues*, may suggest that Vergil was a Pythagorean or that he used Neopythagorean material in his work. This structural feature on its own

⁴⁴ Of course Poem 1 might equally well be placed off-centre to the right and the sequence of poems be rearranged to read counter-clockwise. This makes little difference to the basic idea and preference has been given to the current arrangement merely because Latin is read from left to right.

⁴⁵ On this, see the lively discussion of A. Barchiesi, 'Lane-switching and juggles in contemporary interpretations of Roman poetry', *TAPA* 135 (2005) 135-62, esp. 157-60.

does not prove or disprove anything, but supports suggestions based on data collected from different approaches.⁴⁶

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⁴⁶ Most notably the eschatology expounded in *Aeneid* 6 seems to be essentially Pythagorean or Neopythagorean. The most recent bibliography can be found in S.S. Torjussen, "The "Orphic-Pythagorean" eschatology of the Gold Tablets from Thurii and the Sixth Book of Virgil's *Aeneid*", *SO* 83 (2008) 68-83.