PROTOPLASTIC

1936: born to Kathryn Babcock & John Rowley Van Sickle, nurtured with books, reading, life with gardening, farms, & woods: my father published country weekly newspapers, my mother taught home economics, gardened, sang, played pipe organ & piano. Her mentor at the Wesley Foundation in Urbana, Elizabeth Burt, came from Radcliffe & inspired Kathryn to send my brother Paul and me to Harvard. Her brother Milton's wife, Virginia Derrick, designed for me a prescient bookplate—a woodcut piping Pan,

1951–1954: West High School, Rockford, Illinois—Latin with Anna E.Driebusch. Editor of the school newspaper. Summer of 1953 took part in a paleontological expedition from the Nebraska State Museum at Fort Robinson, Nebraska badlands. Visited colleges in middle west, also Swarthmore, which offered a scholarship for $900. My Classics teachers there would have included Helen North & Martin Ostwald.


1956: /XX aetate mea
Lucretius with Peter Elder. In class by George Eckel Duckworth read eclogues, which he illustrated with their numerical chapels, after Paul Maury. Nequiquam quoniam. In summer worked as stringer for Rockford Morning Star, as my father had done.

1957: Spring term, audited two courses by Norihup Frye & read his new Anatomy of Criticism. That fall, as Classics club president I engineered a hopefully programmatic talk, “Textual Criticism & Literary Criticism,” by Wendell Clausen—visiting but about to be brought by Brower from Amherst, where he had graduated in 1936 summa cum laude in Classics before going on to become an interpreter of English literature a friend of Robert Frost. Senior thesis topic: Coma Berenices—comparing the still neglected Callimachus & Catullus 66—suggested by Zeph Stewart (canny, before the scholarly surge to come), but I fixed on the concept of vates, sought advice from the elusive Arthur Darby Nock: nequiquam quoniam. Erich Segal & I did Latin composition in first class of Michael C. J. Putnam.

1958 SUMMER TO LEARN GERMAN—HORIZONS BEYOND HARVARD
Paris, Rome (Ciampino), Naples & Pompei, Athens & Delphi, Florence, Munich, Vienna: dictionary for her language a graduation gift from Anne Driebusch. Confidence at learning the new language would be a touchstone when it became Italy’s turn.

1958–1959: University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Greek lyric, Latin composition, & history of scholarship with Alexander Turyń, who later used to invite me to lunch each summer during his annual returns to his manuscripts in the Vatican. Fellow graduate student. Sam Abrams, poet & alumnus of Classics at Brooklyn College.

1961–1962: back from Urbana, I found Clausen ensconced—his seminar focused on Axelson’s Unpoetische Wörter in quest for textual surety. Some seminarist haughtily denied significance to mannered word patterns, Provoked, to prove him wrong, I set about marking margins in elegy & epos with manneristic stylemes—abvAB, abvBA.

Assisting Eric Havelock on the Aeneid, when I remarked how dramatically he recited Infandum regina, itubes renovare dolorem, he chortled, “Plato would not have approved.” Bowdoin prize for Latin prose used to purchase from Arthur Freeman (another habitué of Gordon Cairnie’s Grolier bookshop) a Virgil (Giunta 1544) with pirated illustrations by Brandt.

1962–1963: the concept that Virgil wrote eclogues to test the potential for epic in his own times, marshalling diverse forms into a concerted book, first came to me from a poet & Villon scholar, David Kuhn. In unbound green & yellow sheets he gave me an eclogue book—W. Antony. The Arminirm Eclogues with Hexercises for the Eclogues. Its sequence skipped
from III to V, relegating the epic & vatic IIII to an appendix in mannered style. Its impact would shape my work & lead me to have it printed in Rome in 1971.

Dissertation topic: Brower’s influence pointed me to pastoral (Virgil & Theocritus). That topic was taken by Charles Fantazzi, so I heard from Clausen. For a topic thus I turned to eclogue four, notoriously non-Theocritean, but singled out by omission from The Arminarm Eclogues and linked by mannered stylemes with Catullus’ epic (64) for reasons to be determined through further research: paths already explored when employed by Steele Commager to check references for his Horace.

1963–1965: Fulbright (La Sapienza, Rome), supported by Commager, who wrote to the Fulbright commission that I would easily learn Italian. Clausen told me to seek out Scevola Mariotti, who was to become a friend, but would find too radical my heritage from Brower & Frye. He soon referred me to a scholar more open to interpretive innovation.

Bruno Gentili, founding editor of Quaderni Urbanitati di Cultura Classica, who published many of my articles & inspired me to edit a series. For him later I would edit Froma Zeitlin’s densely theoretical reading of the Seven Against Thebes. Gentili took to heart Havelock’s Preface to Plato & his emphasis on orality in Greek culture, also tracing oral & folk tradition in Italy.

At the library of the American Academy I plunged into research & at Libreria Einaudi met Joyce Lussu & began to get some taste of cultural currents in Rome.


1969: “Is Theocritus a Version of Pastoral?” Modern Language Notes 84 (1969) 942-946. {As a post-doctoral fellow in Gilman hall, the Humanities Center, Johns Hopkins, I developed friendship with Richard Macksey, who also fostered interest in old scholarly books. Obiit 2019}


“The Fourth Pastoral Poems of Virgil & Theocritus,” Atti dell’ Arcadia 3.V.1 (Roma 1970) 82-97. [Venue suggested by Mariotti, a fellow of the Arcadian academy, as was another new friend from the Hopkins, Charles Singleton—in Arcadia Crisippo Dafneo.]

“Poetica Teocritea,” Quaderni Urbanitati di Cultura Classica 9 (1970) 82-97 {toward metapoetic reading under Gentili’s aegis, offended Gregorio Serra, then a leading Theocritean.}

PRIOR PARADIGM RECLAIMED: EPOS IN THREE KINDS—BUCOLIC//HEROIC: MIDDLE IN BETWEEN

[As a post-doctoral fellow at the Hopkins, I was invited by Henry Rowell to review Rosenmeyer for AJP. My developing critique of ‘pastoral’ theory primed me to revive the gabinetto verde; but it reminded me, albeit in a dismissive footnote, that bucolic was classified by Quintilian among the epic—writers of epos, along with Apollonius.

Epos as a genre with sub-genres—the concept confirmed Kuhn’s intuition that Virgil’s eclogues were an experiment in epic & helped to account for the dialogue with Catullus 64 & Lucretius that research had documented but not well understood in eclogue four.
1977: “Virgil’s Sixth Eclogue & the Poetics of Middle Style,” *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 2 (1977) 107-08. [First theoretical clarification that Virgil pitched *e6* in middle epos, which helped to account for the seemingly confused allusions to Lucretius, Catullus, Hesiod, Apollonius, Euphorion (Gallus)—pitched above bucolic epos (*syracosio versu*) & beneath heroic epos (*reges et proelia*). First of a long series of collaborations with the congenial & quirky John Pinsent & later his widow at *LCM*.]  
“ET GALLVS CANTAVIT: a Review Article,” *Classical Journal* 72 (1976-1977) 327-333. [Title noted on an inscription in some cloister, but never found again.]  

**ALL ECLOGUES WOVEN INTO BOOK, THEME VOLUMES ALSO EDITED**  
1979: the new papyrus fragment of Cornelius Gallus prompted my articles & APA panel. Anne Driebusch dies 26/12/79.  
*Augustan Poetry Books*, edited (*Arethusa* 3): “The Bookroll & Some Conventions of the Poetic Book,” 5-42. [Often picked up by scholars outside the classical field.]  
Johs Hopkins Society of Scholars [my election sponsored by Richard Macksey.]  
1982: Fulbright Professor for the Virgil Bimillennium (La Sapienza). [Ten lectures published as *Poesia e Potere: Il Mito Virgiliano* (LaTerza, 1986)]  
Alfredo Morelli, a student of my friend Vincenzo Tandoi, attended all ten talks & survived to become an expert on epigram.  
1983: “Strutture interne di singole egloghe nel libro bucolico di Virgilio,” *Maia* 35 (1983) 205-212. [Published here by Francesco Della Corte since much longer than the space he had allotted me in the *Enciclopeda Virgiliana*.]


1986: {L a. m.}

*Poesia e potere. Il mito Virgilio* (Roma: Laterza); the Fulbright lectures for the Bimillennium.

Bruno Gentili persuaded Giorgio LaTerza to publish these dense meditations.


1988: “The First Hellenistic Epigrams At Rome,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies University of London* Supplement 51 (1988) 143-156, for the Colloquium honoring the eightieth birthday of Otto Skutsch (December 1986) [He & I both refined Maury's eclogue numerology. I first met Skutsch when he visited Harvard; later I used to visit him & Gillian in their bungalow behind the cemetery at Goldier's Green in London.]


1990: “Response to a Georgics Reader Bemused by the Bucolics,” *Vergilius* 36 (1990) 56-64 (to another disciple of Zeph Stewart's, Christine Perkell). Divorce from Giulia Battaglia, marriage to Gail Levin.

1991: {L a. m.}


*Anthropology and Roman Culture*, Maurizio Bettini (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), edited and translated from Italian. [After this, the Hopkins press asked me to translate Biagio Conte's history of Latin literature, but I felt that it needed more strenuous editorial intervention than he would accept. My mistake to miss this challenge.]


Dissertation on fourth eclogue at last published by Gregory Nagy.

BUCOLIC EPOS IN RETROSPECT: TAKING STOCK


1996: {LX a. m.}

Visiting professor in the spring—University of Tennessee, Chattanooga (*Omeros*), Sewanee (pastoral), Vanderbilt (eclogues). In fall, moved to 249 East 32nd street.


[“Tweaking Gian Biagio Conte for misprison of elegy in eclogue ten”]

“Theorists Neglect Virgil’s First Reception: Theatrical Propaganda & the Bucolics Performed” (Classical Association of Great Britain, Coventry, April 2003)


2006: [LXX a m.]


Rev. of Ettore Cingano, ed. *Tra pandellenismo e tradizioni locali: generi poetici e storiografia* (Edizioni dell’Orso, 2010), BMCR 11.62 (2011)


[Shepherded to print by Dick Macksey, who had published my exploratory essays in *MLN* when I was a post-doc at the Hopkins.]

Sicelidas@gmail.com  5 of 10  John B. Van Sickle
**PARADIGMS: PASTORAL VS BUCOLIC EPOS: ECLOGUES CYCLED INTO BOOK**

**TWO CYCLES IN ONE WEAVE:**

[MELIBOEUS 1 TITYRUS I<III, IV, V, VI> VII, VIII, VIII, IX]

“Silenus between Cycles in Virgil’s Book of Bucolic Epos” [Inaugurating series on eclogues at Ohio State.]
“Breve rilievo filologico-critico di JVS” [seminario allo Statale di Milano]


“bucolics,” 1.211.
“Dameots,” 1.332–33.
“Damon,” 1.333.
“Melibeous,” 2.808–09. [Needs supplement at least for *Melibeous* in Calpurnius, Dante’s eclogues, Chaucer, & Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*]
“Mopsus,” idem, 2.842.
“Tityrus,” idem, 3.1275–77 [amply supplemented by Ziolkowski].

2016: [LXX a. m.]
[No clue that this eclogue caps & integrates the book, like Rumpf.]
[Returns to emphasize how Virgil pitched the sixth eclogue as middle range of *epos* & emphasize that the etiological *epos* by Euphorion, “Origin of the Grynean Grove,” featured a *Mopsus* defeating Homeric *Calchas* (translated by Cornelius Gallus): then *Mopsus* featured in e5 as a pushy youngster herding old *Menales* from bucolic shade to an epic cave.

2018: “Pimping Pastoral: Mantuan versus Maro for Schools,” accounting for 1500s reception of Mantuan’s ten eclogues—*Adulescentia*— in the schools of France (Badius Ascensius), Germany (Luther), England (Shakespeare) in preparation for publishing my verse translation & commentary for *I Tatti Renaissance Texts*.
Projected essays faulting the representative anecdotes marring recent studies of eclogues oblivious to both *liber* & *epos*—reverting to chit-chat about eclogues in isolation, even to chronology of their composition, unmindful of book poetics, ignoring these fifty years of scholarly argument

**PARERGON: ARCHILochUS: NEW EROTIC EPODE FROM COLONcE**

Martin West sent a copy of the Cologne Epode to Luigi Enrico Rossi & we looked at it together in that crowded penthouse library at Via Aventina, 25. It prompted a lively diversion.

Sicelidas@gmail.com  6 of 10  John B. Van Sickle

Pursuing Book Poetics: An Unknown Renaissance Program Book.

[At the now (2014) extinct Libreria Rovello of Mario Scognamiglio in Milan (erstwhile haunt of Croce, Einaudi, Spadolini, Eco) I came upon Latina Monumenta Ioannis Casae (Florentiae 1564), which I figured out must be Monsignor Della Casa, then bought & began to study, encouraged by Paul Oskar Kristellar, who directed me to manuscripts from the Ricci archive, being restored for the Vatican, & to look for Casa manuscripts also in Venice, Munich (Pier Vettori’s archive), & the Bodleian.]


Publication & Activity in Divers Areas & Media


Sarah Plimpton New Paintings” (New York: June Kelly Gallery, 1999), with Gail Levin.

The Painterly Visions of Derek Walcott & Donald Hinkson,” Latino(a) Research Review


The Tragedy in Translations,” review of the Broadway revival of Brian Friel's play & account of brief barroom interview with the playwright, published on-line in BMCR (1994).


“This book is joyfully dedicated to my husband, John Babcock Van Sickle, who deserves credit not only for his unflagging interest and enthusiasm, but for his unique contributions which have been collaborative in the best sense. He has supplied remarkable insights at every level, literary acumen, translations, editorial improvements, and above all, good cheer at sharing our home with the Hoppers for so many years.”

Oral History: Taped interviews with Larry Penny, Director of Natural Resources, Town of East Hampton, for the South Fork Natural History Society.

Taped Interview with Cipriana Scelba, long-time head of Fulbright Program for Cultural Exchange between the United States and Italy.
PARADIGMS: PASTORAL VS BUCOLIC EPOS: ECLOGUES CYCLED INTO BOOK

Publisher: W. Antony (David Mus, sc. David Kuhn), The Arminar Eclogues With the Hexercises for the Hedeguies (Roma 1971).

WEB PAGES & DISTANCE LEARNING, APPROACHES TO TEACHING


“Adventure & Discovery Narrative”: Humanities Seminar in the Epic Tradition -- Homer, Odyssey; Petronius, Satyricon; Mark Twain, Huckleberry Finn; Virginia Woolf, To the Lighthouse; Derek Walcott, Omeros.

“Poetics of Nature & Culture”: Humanities Seminar in the Pastoral Tradition -- Theocritus, Virgil, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Dickens, Frost

“Landscape & Livelihood”: Humanities Seminar in the Roots of Ecological Thinking -- Homer, Hesiod, Herodotus, Hippocrates, Aristotle, Lucretius, Virgil, Pliny (Natural History), Augustine.

“Towards Interculturalism in Class,” report of experiments with collaborative and interactive classroom procedures to foster intellectual community while teaching Greco-Roman culture in the Brooklyn College Core Curriculum (forthcoming in Classical World).

“CORE STUDIES 1: Classical Origins of Western Culture. INTER-ACTIVE WORKBOOK. A pedagogic weapon / tool: Inspired and provoked by student difficulties with reading, writing & general acculturation in the basic course in Brooklyn College's Core Curriculum; part of an approach gradually worked out in class, which combines a WORKBOOK with the use of SMALL DISCUSSION GROUPS. The approach also seeks to place the classical experience in an interdisciplinary perspective, making connections “across the Core.”

“Roots of Style: Greek & Latin Elements in English”: taught on occasion as a separate course but also woven into the fabric of all my teaching, to share information about etymology and word formation, instill methods of analysis, encourage practice, and develop awareness of language as a document and instrument of historical change.

“Informatica e Studi Classici: Didattica e Ricerca Fra Mito e Mezzo,” Pontifical Salesian University, Rome (Conference for teachers), University of Genoa (Conference for teachers), University of Torino, University of Palermo.

LECTURING CURRENT & PAST

CAAS & Symposium Cumanum 2017: “Gallus and Vatic Mopsus in Virgil’s Liber Bucolicus

UCSB & USC, 2014 “Illustrating the Bucolics in Graphic Novel Style”

Ohio State, Inaugural to ten lectures on eclogues, Fordham Classics.

CAAS “A Gardner Friendly Guide to Greek & Latin Names of Plants.”

“Quali codici d’amore nella Xa eglogi? Il poeta elegiaco contestualizzato nel Bucolicon liberi Virgilio”

“Heroic Identity Recast: Epic & Pastoral Tradition in Derek Walcott's Omeros”

“Epic Crossings: Echoes of Homer, Virgil, Dante, Joyce, & The African Queen in Derek Walcott's Omeros,”

“Derek Walcott's Omeros & Its Island Background--St Lucia (with slides),”

“Classic Reverberations in Modern America (with slides),”

“Poetry & Prophecy in the Virgil Myth,”

“Poetics of Empowerment in Pastoral: Moses, Hesiod, Theocritus, Virgil, Frost,”

Other venues include The University of California (Los Angeles & San Diego, 1999), University of Havana (1999), CUNY Academy of Arts & Sciences, American Philological Association Annual Meeting (Chicago 1997), Speakers in the Humanities (New York Council for the Humanities), Classical Association of the Atlantic States, & the following institutions: Emory University, 1992, University of Washington (Seattle), Yale University, Nassau Community College; also University of British Columbia & in Italy,
the Universities of Padova, Trieste, Bologna, Roma, Salerno, Genova, Napoli, & Torino; in China, Xi’an, Japan (Kyoto) Ritsumeikan, (Tokyo), Waseda & Musashino Art.


“The myth of Virgil as poet-prophet in Western tradition”: American Academy in Rome (part of a conference on New Approaches To Latin Literature), University of Pisa, University of Pavia, University of Padua, also with consultation on computer use, University of Trieste, also with computer consultation, University of Naples, University of Palermo.

“Il computer nell’area umanistica.” June 1984, at the Universities of Rome & Urbino & IBM Instructional Centers in Novedrate (Milan) & Rome; also in December 1984, for Conference, MONDO CLASSICO: Itinerari di lettura e proposte didattiche, University of Bari.

PANELS & CONFERENCES


Invited to Panel for the 1997 APA Annual Meeting (Chicago): “From Homer to Omeros: Approaches to Derek Walcott’s Omeros and The Odyssey: A Stage Version.”


Invited Panelist, Convegno, Dall’epigramma ellenistico all’elegia romana, Società italiana per lo studio dell’antichità classica, Naples, November 1981.


Invited Panelist for Arethusa Symposium on Virgil, 1980.


Organizer & participant in panels at annual meetings of the American Philological Association:

1971 (pastoral tradition), 1975 (the new Archilochus papyrus), 1977 (Book Rolls & the Structure of the Poetic Book), 1979 (the new Gallus papyrus).

EDITORIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITY

American Academy in Rome: Advisory Council, Classical School; Past-President, Classical Society; Friends of the Library.


Editor of a monograph series, “INSTRVMENTVM LITTERARVM: Latin Literature & its Tradition”: [*publication aided by computer]

Thomas Curley, Senecan Tragedy.

Corresponding Editor, Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica.


Latin Reading Group (voluntary) for graduate students in Medieval Studies & Comparative Literature (CUNY-NYU): Seneca, Tacitus, Ovid, Horace, Virgil, etc. (1979-1985)
EMPLOYMENT

Vanderbilt University: Visiting Professor of Classical Studies (1996).
University of the South, Sewanee: Visiting Professor of Comparative Literature (1996).
University of Tennessee, Chattanooga: Visiting Professor of Humanities (1996).
Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies, Rome: Professor-in-Charge, Visiting Professor (1972-1974).
University of Pennsylvania: Instructor, Assistant Professor (1965-1971): my ideology in philology & politics proved anathema to old-school mind-set in alumni from the Hopkins & Illinois.
Professor of Classics (Brooklyn College, 1979-) & of Classical Studies & of Comparative Literature (Graduate School), The City University of New York.
Associate Professor (1976-1978).

HONORS & AWARDS

Distinguished Teaching Award, Brooklyn College (2002)
Faculty Fellow, Wolfe Institute for the Humanities, Brooklyn College (1998-1999).
Brown Foundation Fellow, University of the South, Sewanee (1996).
Rockefeller Foundation, Bellagio, Lake Como, Italy: Scholar in Residence (1993)
Fulbright Professor for the Virgil Bimillennium, Rome University (1982).
The Johns Hopkins Society of Scholars (elected 1981).
Bowdoin Prize (Graduate, Latin Essay), Harvard University (1962).

[Set in 10 point Times Roman since Palatino Linotype 10 point would occupy thirteen pages]