

# Publius Vergilius Maro/ “Vergil” (Virgil) 70-19 B.C.



William Blake (British, 1757–1827)  
The Pastorals of Virgil, Eclogue I: The  
Blasted Tree and The Shepherd Chases Away  
a Wolf, 1821 Wood engravings  
Gift of The Print Club of Cleveland 1934.146



Vergil and the Muses, mosaic, Tunisia

## ***Fourth (“Messianic”) Eclogue (excerpts)***

Muses of Sicily, essay we now  
a somewhat loftier task! Not all men love  
coppice or lowly tamarisk: sing we woods,  
woods worthy of a Consul let them be.  
Now the last age by Cumae's Sibyl sung  
has come and gone, and the majestic roll  
of circling centuries begins anew:  
justice returns, returns old Saturn's reign,  
with a new breed of men sent down from heaven.  
Only do thou, at the boy's birth in whom  
the iron shall cease, the golden race arise,  
befriend him, chaste Lucina; 'tis thine own  
Apollo reigns. And in thy consulate,  
this glorious age, O Pollio\*, shall begin,  
and the months enter on their mighty march.  
Under thy guidance, whatso tracks remain  
of our old wickedness, once done away,  
shall free the earth from never-ceasing fear.  
He shall receive the life of gods, and see  
heroes with gods commingling, and himself  
be seen of them, and with his father's worth  
reign o'er a world at peace. . . .  
yet shall there lurk within of ancient wrong  
some traces, bidding tempt the deep with ships,  
gird towns with walls, with furrows cleave the earth . . .  
new wars too shall arise, and once again  
some great Achilles to some Troy be sent.  
Then, when the mellowing years have made thee man,  
no more shall mariner sail, nor pine-tree bark  
ply traffic on the sea, but every land  
shall all things bear alike. . . .

Assume thy greatness, for the time draws nigh,  
dear child of gods, great progeny of Jove!. . . .

Begin to greet thy mother with a smile,  
o baby-boy! (*Translation, J.B. Greenough*)

*ECLOGUES (“Bucolics”), 10 pastoral poems,  
composed 45-37 B.C.*

[\*ASINIUS POLLIO, consul, 40 B.C.]



From Vergil MSS Vat. lat. 3225 and 3867