

PASCHALIS M. (editor)

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Marco Fantuzzi

**The Importance of Being *boukolos*:
ps.-Theocr. 20**



The protagonist of the ps.-Theocritean *Id.* 20 is a *boukolos* who has tried to kiss the urban *hetaira*¹ Eunica and failed. His name will be never revealed: indeed throughout the poem the professions (and usual environments) of both characters will be more relevant than their identities. The story of the *boukolos*' failed sexual advance occupies fewer than two lines in his account, while the author's undivided attention is otherwise devoted to describing Eunica's reactions to his overtures, and the *boukolos*' resentment of being rejected. Almost twenty lines go to a retrospective account of Eunica's speech of refusal (1-18, which begins with a mention of her name, and ends with her being labelled *κακὰ ... ἑταίρα* in 18), her disgusted look of scorn, and the anger her reactions stirred up in the *boukolos*, who consequently delivers an accomplished *renuntiatio amoris*. The *boukolos*' advance evidently took place in the past (even Eunica's speech of refusal is framed by *verba dicendi* in past tenses), whereas the second part of the poem (19-43) is set in the present, which fictionally coincides with the occasion of performance: the protagonist stages an apostrophe to his fellow-shepherds (*ποιμένες, εἶπατέ μοι τὸ κρήγυον*, "shepherds, tell me true", 19), who play the role of

¹ She will explicitly be called *κακὰ ... ἑταίρα* ("vile courtesan") at 18, with a disdainful openness which – understandably – is very rare in erotic poetry, though of course the beloveds of the Hellenistic erotic poets would have, at least in some cases, been *hetairas* (see however Cameron 1995, Appendix C). In Asclep. *AP* 5.162.3 = *HE* 844, another of the few passages to be found, where, if the ms. is not emended, an erotic poet calls *ἑταίρα* the object of his passion, the term marks the climax of the author's indignation against her.

sympathetic audience / judges during the peroration he delivers about his right to see his affection for Eunica reciprocated.

The main intertextual models of the poem are Theocr. 3, 6, and 11, since the *boukolos* speaks most often in a voice which recalls, though usually reverses in tone, the erotic desperation of Polyphemus or the goatherd of Theocr. 3. The situation, for instance, that prompts the story – the *boukolos*' desire to kiss Eunica – resembles the wish the Cyclops pronounces in Theocr. 11.54-56: “alack that my mother bore me not with gills, that so I might have dived down to you and kissed your hand, if you will not let me kiss your mouth” (τὰν χέρα τεῦς ἐφίλησα, / αἶ μὴ τὸ στόμα λῆς). The reaction of Eunica, who at 5 of Ps.-Theocr. 20 declares that the *boukolos* would not kiss her even in his dreams (μὴ τύγε μευ κύσσης τὸ καλὸν στόμα μηδ' ἐν ὄνειροις), may also be reminiscent of the Cyclops of Theocr. 11.22-24 who, confusing dreams with reality, believes that Galatea visited him only in his sleep, and was always ready to run away the moment he awoke (φοιτῆς δ' αὖθ' οὕτως ὄκκα γλυκὺς ὕπνος ἔχη με, / οἴχη δ' εὐθὺς ἰοῖσ' ὄκκα γλυκὺς ὕπνος ἀνῆ με, / φεύγεις δ' ὥσπερ οἷς πολὶὸν λύκον ἀθρήσασα; “why thus, when sweet sleep holds me, do you straight approach, and when sweet sleep leaves me, are you gone forthwith, flying, as the ewe flies when she sees the grey wolf?”). Even the self-deluded Cyclops, however, doubts he will ever be able to approach Galatea, since he is at least partially aware of the separation of his world from the sea where his beloved dwells. At any rate, even if it were the case that he could be born as a fish, he knows that he would still never be permitted to kiss her mouth, but would content himself with kissing her hand. Completely different are the pretensions of our *boukolos*, who unabashedly targets Eunica's mouth and seethes with indignation when he is refused.

After all, when Eunica mockingly rejects his advances – she “snorts” (μυχθίζοισα), and “laughs at”, or (more improbably) “speaks to” him² σεσαρός “grinning” (13-15), just as the taunting Eros who mistreats the poet in Meleager, *AP* 5.179.3-4 = *HE* 4030-31 τί μάταια γελαῖς καὶ σιμὰ σεσηρώς /

² μέγ' ἔλεξεν is the mss' text of 15, which is hardly tenable; μ' ἐγέλαξεν Iunt. and Cal.

μυχθίζεις; “why do you laugh so sillily, and snort and grin, turning up your nose?”³ –, the *boukolos* nearly flies off the handle with anger, and expresses his fury in explicitly anti-erotic language. Indeed 15-18,

... ἔμοι δ' ἄφαρ ἔξεσεν αἶμα,
καὶ χροὰ φοινίχθην ὑπὸ τῷ λγεος ὡς ῥόδον ἔρσα.
χὰ μὲν ἔβα με λιποῖσα, φέρω δ' ὑποκάρδιον ὄργάν,
ὅττι με τὸν χαριέντα κακὰ μωμήσαθ' ἑταίρα,

straight my blood boiled, and at the smart I crimsoned as a rose with dew.
And she went off and left me; but beneath my heart I nurse my wrath that
this vile courtesan should slight the pretty fellow that I am.

constitute a real *tour de force* combining texts on ὀργή and texts on the symptoms of love. In line 15 ἔξεσεν αἶμα reflects a widespread ancient interpretation of ὀργή (cf. 17) as ζέσις αἵματος.⁴ So far, however, it has gone unacknowledged that our author quotes precisely the same verse-ending, ἔξεσεν αἶμα, which Aristotle, *Eth.Nic.* 3.1116b24ff. ascribes to Homer⁵ – though the phrase appears nowhere in our Homeric texts. On the other hand, χροὰ φοινίχθην (16) radically refunctionalizes the topos of the blush provoked by *pudor*, usually female and in erotic contexts (see especially the phrase used by Apollonius to describe the symptoms of Medea’s love for Jason when she assents to Chalciope’s call to help him (3.725): φοινίχθη δ’ ἄμυδις καλὸν χροὰ, “all over her beautiful face grew flushed”),⁶ or more generically the erotic image of the flush of youthful beauty.⁷ The phrase φέρω δ’

³ Cf. also ps.-Plato, *AP* 6.1.1-2 = *FGE* 604-5 and Theocr. 7.19

⁴ Cf. Renehan 1963.

⁵ “The spirit of anger (θυμός), too, men reckon as courage, and they who act emboldered by anger ... are supposed to be courageous, because the courageous also are high-spirited; ... hence Homer writes: ‘he put strength in their spirit’ (conflation of *Il.* 14.151 + 16.529) ... and ‘his blood boiled’ (ἔξεσεν αἶμα): for all such symptoms seem to indicate an excitement and impulse of the spirit”.

⁶ See also, e.g. Chaeremon, *TrGF* 71F1.3-4; Callim. *Ait.* fr. 80.10; Catull. 65.24; Ovid. *Am.* 2.5.34 and *Trist.* 4.3.70; adesp. *AP* 9.362.14.

⁷ E.g. Apoll. Rh. 3.121-22; Callim. *HLav.Pall.* 27-28 τὸ δ’ ἔρευθος ἀνέδραμε, πρώϊον οἶαν / ἢ ῥόδον ἢ σίβδας κόκκος ἔχει χροῖάν, “and the fresh flush sprang up, with what, early in the year,

ὑποκάρδιον ὀργάν (17), moreover, exchanges the wound of anger for the wound of love, described most similarly in the cases of the Cyclops of Theocr. 11.15 ἔχθιστον ἔχων ὑποκάρδιον ἔλκος, “having beneath his heart an angry wound”, and the Aphrodite of Bion, *Adon. ep.* 17 φέρει ποτικάρδιον ἔλκος, “has a wound beneath her heart”. The restructuring of the language of erotic symptoms to express the symptoms of anger convincingly endorses the poetics of our poem; it begins as a failed love / sex story, but in these lines reaches a turning point of transformation into an account of the proudly resentful reaction of the protagonist and a full statement of the motivations for his pride.⁸

Indeed the Cyclops of Theocr. 11 had been willing to admit his serious aesthetic limitations, and so to understand why Galatea would inevitably reject him, in a long speech begun with a statement of Galatea’s χάρις (30): γινώσκω, χαρίεσσα κόρα, τίνοσ οὔνεκα φεύγεις, “I know, fair maid, why you run away”, etc. Furthermore, even the Cyclops of Theocr. 6 – who is not the Cyclops himself, but the shepherd Damoetas who speaks in his voice, and seems (pretends / deludes himself?) to be less awkward and more sure of his handsomeness –⁹ is still well aware that this appreciation is just his own (37), while “the others” consider him ugly (34). Quite different therefore is the verbal behaviour of our *boukolos*, who considers himself χαρίεις (18), is aware that the other shepherds consider him καλός (19), and thus believes that he has been unjustly injured by the κακὰ ἑταίρα. Ancient and modern readers may well doubt whether the *boukolos*, described by Eunica as smelling and black (9-10), is truly handsome in everyone’s eyes, but no authorial challenge discredits his awareness of his *rustic* beauty. What we

the rose, or the pomegranate seed, has for a bloom”, implying a comparison of which the ps.-Thocritean ὡς ῥόδον ἔρσθαι might be specifically reminiscent.

⁸ Also Kirstein 2007, 105 and 116 acknowledges that the focus on the feelings of love and pain of the *boukolos* is almost irrelevant, at least in comparison with the models Theocr. 3, 6, and 11.

⁹ On the difference between the Cyclops of Theocr. 11 and the enacting of the role of the Cyclops by the living / contemporary Damoetas in Theocr. 6 cf. Fantuzzi in Fantuzzi & Hunter 2004, 150.

might call a “recovery” of the *boukolos*’ pride via correction of the Cyclops’ discomfiting delusion and humiliation is more evidently at work in the *boukolos*’ statement concerning his own physical attractiveness, at 21-29:

καὶ γὰρ ἐμοὶ τὸ πάροιθεν ἐπάνθην ἀδύ τι κάλλος

 ὡς κισσοῦ ποτὶ πρέμνον, ἐμὰν δ’ ἐπύκαζεν ὑπήναν,
 χαῖται δ’ οἷα σέλινα περὶ κροτάφοισι κέχυντο,
 καὶ λευκὸν τὸ μέτωπον ἐπ’ ὄφρῦσι λάμπε μελαίνας·
 ὄμματά μοι γλαυκᾶς χαροπώτερα πολλὸν Ἀθήνας,
 τὸ στόμα δ’ αὖ πακτᾶς ἀπαλώτερον, ἐκ στομάτων δέ
 ἔρρεέ μοι φωνὰ γλυκερωτέρα ἢ μέλι κηρῶ.
 ἀδύ δέ μοι τὸ μέλισμα, καὶ ἦν σύριγγι μελίσδω,
 κῆν ἀὐλῶ λαλέω, κῆν δῶνακι, κῆν πλαγιαύλῳ.

for once sweetly flowered the beauty on me ... as ivy on a tree, and thickly clad my chin; and like celery, thick curled the hair about my temples, and white shone my forehead over the dark brows. My eyes were brighter far than grey-eyed Athena’s, softer than curd my lips, and from them sweeter flowed the voice than honey from the comb. Sweet is my music whether on the panpipe I play, or on the pipe discourse, or reed, or flute.

This self-description openly recalls Damoetas / the Cyclops’ own boasts about himself in Theocr. 6.34-38 (καὶ γὰρ θην οὐδ’ εἶδος ἔχω κακὸν ὡς με λέγοντι. / ἦ γὰρ πρᾶν ἐς πόντον ἐσέβλεπον, ἧς δὲ γαλάνα, / καὶ καλὰ μὲν τὰ γένεια, καλὰ δέ μευ ἅ μία κῶρα, / ὡς παρ’ ἐμὶν κέκριται, κατεφαίνετο, τῶν δέ τ’ ὀδόντων / λευκοτέραν αὐγὰν Παρίας ὑπέφαινε λίθιο, “for truly I am not ill-favoured, as they say; for of late I looked into the sea, and there was a calm, and fair, as my judgement goes, showed my beard and my one eye, and it reflected the gleam of my teeth whiter than Parian marble”), combined with the eulogy of Galatea’s beauty in Theocr. 11.20-21 (λευκοτέρα πακτᾶς ποτιδεῖν, ἀπαλωτέρα ἄρνός, “whiter than curd to look on, softer than the lamb”). In the latter case, however, the ps.-Theocritean πακτᾶς ἀπαλώτερον is slightly different, and coincides more with Ovid’s rewriting of the Cyclops’ song in *Met.* 13.796 *mollior et cycni plumis et lacte coacto*, “softer than swan’s down and curdled milk” (where the comparison with the swan may be reminiscent of *Ecl.* 7.38 *candidior cycnis*, within the short piece of song of Corydon for Galatea). But to Ovid’s possible re-use of ps.Theocr. 20 we shall return.

What is omitted from the parodic deconstruction of the Cyclops' boasts in Theocritus is no less important than what ps.-Theocr. 20 actually adopts. The re-use in our poem consists, in a way, of a dignified (and dignifying) version of the bathetic Cyclops of Theocritus. Not only do we have no hint, of course (the *boukolos* is not a Cyclops!), of the single eye mentioned in Theocr. 6 (which for any reader would have made the beauty of the Cyclops suspect), but there is also no list of the Cyclops' rural possessions, an element that had strongly contributed to the laughable pastoral monomania of his self-advertisement in Theocr. 11.40-48.

Furthermore, the specialized rural imagery to which the *boukolos* also resorts, in view of the precedent of Cyclops' own adulation for Galatea, is varied and elevated at least once by reference to the paradigmatically γλαυκή Athena, a warrior-like goddess. The γλαυκότης ("grey-eyedness") of Athena serves as a term of comparison for the χαροπά ("bright") eyes of our *boukolos* (25), and χαροπά eyes were considered a trait of the especially ἀνδρεῖος ("virile") person, according to the tenets of ancient physiognomy (cf. ps.-Aristotle, *Physiogn.* 807b1-2 and 812b.4-6;¹⁰ the epithet had been usual for the eyes of the lions from Homer onwards). This might be a most pointed self-appreciation. It is difficult to ascertain whether 7-8 (ὡς τρυφερὸν καλέεις, ὡς κωτίλα ῥήματα φράσδεις / ὡς μαλακὸν τὸ γένειον ἔχεις, ὡς ἀδέα χαίταν, "how softly you address me, how winsome your speech, how silky your beard, how sweet your hairs!") really belonged to Eunica's derogatory speech, and are not spurious (they have been often suspected, and were excised lastly by Gow). If we trust their authenticity we might consider them ironic, but in this case "they consort so ill with the angry exclamation in 6 and the plain statement in 9 that even this author may be given the benefit of the doubt".¹¹ They should more likely be interpreted as a kind of taunt directed at the *boukolos*' exceedingly female sweet-

¹⁰ Respectively: "(the characteristics of the brave man are ...) a bright eye (ὄμμα χαροπὸν), neither too wide opened etc." and "those whose eyes are grey or whitish are cowardly ... but those whose eyes are not grey but bright (χαροποί) are stout-hearted (εὐψυχοί)".

¹¹ Gow 1952, vol. 2: 365.

ness, and therefore a charge that he is a hyper-delicate *pathicus*¹² – it is certainly difficult to fit these lines into the psychology of Eunica’s preceding words, which accuse the *boukolos* of being coarsely graceless, but in the heat of her derogatory rebuke she may have opted for piling blame upon blame, rather than pursuing the thread of her own logic. In remarking about the χαροπότης of his eyes, the *boukolos* might thus be attempting to rebut Eunica’s taunt. Likewise, the cowherd’s aesthetic self-appraisal concludes with a boast about the sweetness, i.e. melodiousness of his voice, which through powerful legitimizing model(s) would specifically refute Eunica’s charge concerning his delicate = (in her perspective) effeminate voice (τρυφερὸν καλέεις, 7 already quoted above). Indeed, in 21-22, the *boukolos*’ statement about the down that covers his cheeks might be “correcting” Eunica’s remark (8) about the (excessive) μαλακότης of his γένειον; furthermore, and more certainly, in 28 ἀδὺ δέ μοι τὸ μέλισμα, καὶ ἦν σύριγγι μελίσδω, κτλ., “sweet is my music whether on the panpipe I play, etc.”, the sweet voice which had been derogatorily labelled as effeminate by Eunica (7) not only turns out to be a point of pride in light of the ideal of musical sweetness traditional in bucolic poetry,¹³ but also is close, and may perhaps allude, to the self-definition of the poet’s voice in Bion’s programmatic piece on bucolic-erotic poetry:¹⁴ fr. 9.10-11 ἦν δ’ αὖτ’ ἐς τὸν Ἔρωτα καὶ ἐς Λυκίδαν τι μελίσδω, / καὶ τόκα μοι χαίροισα διὰ στόματος ῥέει αὐδά, “but if again for Eros and Lycidas I make some song, then words flow happily from my lips”. The *boukolos* would thus justify the sweetness of which Eunica charges his voice, and present it as the necessary sweetness of natural melodiousness.

The fact that a bucolic-erotic poetics also precisely characterizes ps.-Theocr. 20, and the relative rarity of μελίζειν / μελίσδειν,¹⁵ make plausible

¹² As supposed by White 1979, 117-21.

¹³ Cf. Theocr. 1.1-2, 1.146-48, 7.82, etc.

¹⁴ Cf. Fantuzzi in Fantuzzi & Hunter 2004, 181-82.

¹⁵ The iunctura σύριγγι μελίσδων can also be found in ps.-Plato *AP* 9.823.3 = *FGE* 632 and ps.-Theocr. *AP* 6.177.1 (= *HE* 3398, 2.1 Gow).

that its author had Bion in mind. Another clue to the possible use of Bion, or at least of the “modern” pastoral *Realien* of Bion’s age, as a dignifying correction of the Theocritean Cyclops, can be found in the details of our own *boukolos*’ musical talents: 28-29 ἄδῦ δέ μοι τὸ μέλισμα, καὶ ἦν σύριγγι μελίσδω, / κῆν ἀύλῳ λαλέω, κῆν δώνακι, κῆν πλαγιαύλω (quoted above) may have originated in the Cyclops’ claim about his ability to pipe (Theocr. 11.38 συρίσδεν δ’ ὡς οὔτις ἐπίσταμαι ὧδε Κυκλώπων / τίν, τὸ φίλον γλυκύμαλον, ἀμᾶ κῆμαντὸν αἰίδων, “and I can pipe as no other Cyclops here, as often in the depths of night I sing of you, my seet honey-apple, and of myself”), but certainly rewrites the brief Theocritean hint at the Cyclops’ awkward piping / singing in more correct and more dignified spirits. Strangely, Theocritus’ Cyclops had “sung” and “piped” at the same time (συρίσδεν ... αἰίδων) – hardly possible in reality!¹⁶ The *boukolos*, on the other hand, not only shows off his technical expertise in 28-29 in his pedantic distinction between the melic song accompanied by the *syrinx* (μελίσδω) and recitative poetry accompanied by the *aulos* (λαλέω),¹⁷ but also parades his mastery of the whole panoply of bucolic instruments,¹⁸ including among them even the cross-pipe (πλαγίαιλος), which was unknown to Theocritus and seems first to appear in Bion, fr. 10.7 and Philod. *AP* 11.34(= 6 Sider).5 = *GPh* 3292 (in Longus 1.4.3 and 4.26.2 both *syrinx* and *plagios aulos* have become the typical instruments of shepherds).

Last but not least, the Cyclops in Theocr. 11.77-78 had stated that πολλαὶ συμπαΐσδεν με κόραι τὰν νύκτα κέλονται, / κιχλίζοντι δὲ πᾶσαι, ἐπεὶ κ’ αὐταῖς ὑπακούσω, “many girls bid me spend the night in the sport with them, and they titter all when I give hear to them”. But apart from the objective improbability of such widespread female attention to the Cyclops, his

¹⁶ As remarked by Gow 1952, vol. 2: 215.

¹⁷ Unusually on the wrong track appears to be Meineke (1856) 335 “λαλέω ... permire de tibiae cantu dictum est”, because the verb has precisely to express the more recitative than singing performance accompanied by the *aulos*.

¹⁸ The “summary cumulation” of bucolic elements is not foreign already to Theocritus: cf. Saïd 1997.

specification τὰν νύκτα (77) immediately leads the reader to suspect that this notion, along with Galatea's alleged night-time teasing at 22-24 ("why thus, when sweet sleep holds me, do you straight approach, and when sweet sleep leaves me, are gone forthwith flying, etc."),¹⁹ is another fantasy entertained by the Cyclops. These fantasies also cast heavy doubt on the Cyclops' final statement δῆλον ὅτ' ἐν τᾷ γᾶ κήγών τις φαίνομαι ἤμεν, "it is plain that on land I too am somebody" (79). Readers may or may not be distrustful of the handsomeness or sexual appeal of the *boukolos* as well; but he, at least, instead of causing uncomfortable suspicion about whether he is confusing his dreams with reality, projects a self-awareness that makes his claim about the favour he enjoys from other women (30-31) much more credible: "urban women" (τὰ δ' ἀστικά, 31: the collective / derogatory neuter must be acknowledged) refuse his kiss, because of their urban arrogance, whereas "all" the women who live "in the mountains" love him (πᾶσαι; the alleged admirers of the Cyclops were simply πολλὰ). I do not at all agree that this is "an empty boast, because women are not found on mountains".²⁰ Mountains had been the pastoral environment *par excellence* from *HHom.* 5.54-55 and Theocr. 3.2, 7.51, 87, and 92, [8].2 onwards, and considering the ps.-Theocritean bucolic poems' substantial indifference to "realistic" pastoral features, the specification κατ' ὄρεα may have less to do with a possible lack of "realism" regarding women who dwell in the mountains than with the concrete intention of stressing the *boukolos*' awareness of his pastoral world's autonomy from the urban environment, and the reassuring primacy the former has for him. As for Vergil, he too integrates the rustic setting much more fully into the argument of his poem than Theocritus had done: "apparently ... as Corydon had been describing the delights of his rustic world in his effort to win over Alexis, those scenes had worked their calming ef-

¹⁹ On which see Hunter 1999, 231: "the Cyclops' dreams are full of Galateia, but he does not understand dreaming, and imagines that she comes ashore the moment he falls asleep and retreats to the water as soon as he wakes up".

²⁰ Cf. Giangrande 1987, 179 n. 7.

fect on him until he reached the point where he could turn to formal renunciation of his beloved and so fulfil his original purpose”.²¹

Indeed the emphasis on this separation is a rather new feature, unattested in the bucolic poems of Theocritus:²² the only poem that introduces some hints of a distinction between rustic and urban, Theocr. 7 (see 2 ἐκ πόλιος, “from the town”; 24-25 τινος ἀστῶν λανὸν ἔπι θρώσκεις, “you speed to some townsman’s winepress”), is also a poem that shows, through the experience of the city poet Simichidas, who finally becomes invested a pastoral poet, that the borders between city and countryside are easily blurred. The city / countryside opposition of *Id.* 20 is also peculiar, because it appears to have a mainly professional value, i.e. to stress the distinction between the *boukolos* and the urban Eunice as much as possible: indeed, in contrast with other erotic idylls, where the rural environment plays an important role (3, 6, 11, and [27]), our poem focuses exclusively on the erotic vicissitudes and psychology of the protagonist, and features no interest at all in the description of the bucolic scenery.²³

In conclusion, while the Cyclops of Theocr. 11 even dreams of leaving his environment to pursue Galatea by becoming some sort of aquatic creature (or at least by learning how to swim, 54-62), and although his statement about the night-time availability of his female fans also recalls the improbability of his erotic success (even within his own terrestrial environment), no hint of such a lack of self-awareness surfaces in the psychology of the shepherd of ps.-Theocr. 20. It is not only that “the incompatibility of land and sea ... is replaced by the antipathy of town and country”,²⁴ but that the protagonist of our poem is proud of being a

²¹ Cf. Du Quesnay 1979, 56.

²² Cf., e.g., Reinhardt 1988, 145. As remarked by Fritzsche 1870, II.106: “ruris autem et urbis differentia ... nusquam apud Theocritum verbis tam plenis invidiae significatur qualibus hic noster utitur v. 4 et 44”.

²³ As already remarked by Kirstein 2007, 103.

²⁴ Cf. Coleman 1977, 107; see also Du Quesnay 1979, 52.

boukolos. This pride is his main way of recovering his self-esteem, and ridding himself of the humiliation suffered at the hands of Eunica.

An important instance in which our *boukolos* shows that he has effectively recovered from sexual disappointment also occurs at the end of our poem, through the “correction” of another awkward and unsuccessful lover featured in Theocritus’ bucolic poems (34-43):

οὐκ ἔγνω δ’ ὅτι Κύπρις ἐπ’ ἀνέρι μῆνατο βούτα
καὶ Φρυγίους ἐνόμεισεν ἐν ὄρεσι, καὶ τὸν Ἄδωνιν
ἐν δρυμοῖσι φίλασε καὶ ἐν δρυμοῖσιν ἔκλαυσεν.
Ἐνδυμίων δὲ τίς ἦν; οὐ βουκόλος; ὃν γε Σελάνα
βουκολέοντα φίλασεν, ἀπ’ Οὐλύμπω δὲ μολοῖσα
Λάτμιον ἄν νάπος ἦλθε, καὶ εἰς ὀμά παιδί κάθευδε.
καὶ τὴν, Ῥέα, κλαίεις τὸν βουκόλον. οὐχὶ δὲ καὶ τὴν,
ὦ Κρονίδα, διὰ παῖδα βοηνόμον ὄρνις ἐπλάγχθη;
Εὐνίκα δὲ μόνα τὸν βουκόλον οὐκ ἐφίλασεν,
ἅ Κυβέλας κρέσσων καὶ Κύπριδος ἠδὲ Σελάνας.

nor knows she that Cypris lost her wits for a neatherd and tended herds upon the hills of Phrygia, and loved Adonis in the thickets, and in the thickets mourned him. Who was Endymion? was not he a neatherd, whom Selene loved as he tended his kine, and came from Olympus through the glades of Latmus to lie with her darling? And Rhea too mourns for her neatherd. And did not you, Zeus, for a herding lad take a wandering bird’s shape? Yet Eunica alone would not kiss the neatherd, but is greater than Cybele and Cypris and Selene.

Towards the end of his long and ineffectual *komos* for Amaryllis in Theocr. 3, a rustic prediction provokes a sudden surge of optimism in the protagonist goatherd: he now hopes that Amaryllis will soon emerge from her cave-house (37-39), and he will finally catch at least a glimpse of her. He lists a series of *exempla* of mythical requited loves, which is intended both to encourage himself and to persuade Amaryllis to think that, if she were to yield to his love, she would find herself in fine and prestigious company. The list includes Hippomenes / Atalanta; Melampus / Pe(i)rò; Adonis / Aphrodite; Endymion / Selene and Iasion / Demeter. Indeed this company seems fine and encouraging, and all the more so since its cast is familiar; all of the stories the goatherd tells have to do with the pastoral or, more broadly, the rustic world (that is, Amaryllis and the goatherd’s world), and the goatherd regularly focuses on this substantial familiarity. But these paradigms of fulfilled love in Theocr. 3 all share another feature as well: in all of them the

fulfilment of love precedes unhappy or even fearful consequences. There thus appears to be another selection-principle at work, whose frightening implications seem unacknowledged by the goatherd – the more the *exempla* look familiar and encouraging, the more they actually alarm on account of their unhappy endings.²⁵

Ps.-Theocr. 20 lists a similar series of *exempla*: Aphrodite / Anchises, Aphrodite / Adonis, Selene / Endymion, Rhea / Attis, Zeus / Ganymede. In comparison with the Theocritean precedent, the pastoral nature of all the characters listed by the *boukolos* is obsessively stressed (βούττα, ἐνόμεισεν, ἐν ὄρεσι, ἐν δρυμοῖσι (bis), βουκόλος, βουκολέοντα, βουκόλον, βοηνόμον), and clearly appears to be much more logically motivated: the Amaryllis of Theocr. 3 belonged to the same environment as the goatherd, since she lived, or at least he supposed her to live, in a house-cave, and had been acquainted with him in the past (see 6-7 τί μ' οὐκέτι ... καλεῖς, “why do you no more ... call me in?”). The goatherd’s emphasis, therefore, on the opportunity / possibility of loving a shepherd seems completely unnecessary and a bit out of place (the rusticity of the goatherd cannot be the real problem for Amaryllis, who is rustic as well). On the contrary, the *boukolos* believes that Eunica despises him *qua* shepherd, and the narrative of his paradigms appears “strategically” most correct.²⁶ Furthermore these paradigms are not meant to show how joyful the requital of gods’ / goddesses’ love for shepherds may be, nor even to entice an unresponsive partner into yielding (indeed the sad endings of Aphrodite’s love for Adonis and of Rhea’s love are explicitly mentioned, 36 and 40), but rather to declare the precise point that loving a shepherd is far from irrational – it must be no accident that in Theocr. 3 it is the mythical shepherds who appear to be in love with goddesses, whereas in our poem the goddesses and Zeus are the phrase subjects who are presented as in love with shepherds.²⁷ In fact, the *boukolos* reaches quite the opposite conclusion, namely that Eunica has been foolish and

²⁵ Cf. Fantuzzi 1995.

²⁶ Cf. Arland 1937, 57.

²⁷ Cf. De Falco 1924, 52.

stubborn not to kiss him (Εὐνίκα δὲ μόνα τὸν βουκόλον οὐκ ἐφίλασεν, / ἄ Κυβέλας κρέσσων καὶ Κύπριδος ἠδὲ Σελάνας, 42-43, quoted above). In conclusion, the selection and emphases in the list of mythological paradigms provided by the goatherd of Theocr. 3 was most probably intended to imply that the goatherd did not have a full mastery of the mythological material or his strategies of argumentation, whereas the *boukolos* of ps.-Theocr. 20 reveals a higher culture in both his argumentative skills and safe control over, as well as “correction” of, the texts comprising his literary knowledge.

Thanks to the same skilful “dramatization of anger”, the two final, cursing lines lead the reader to read retrospectively the entire speech of the *boukolos*, not in the frame of love poetry, but as the dramatization of a love curse (I do not rule out that the author of *Id.* 20 may have had Theocritus’ *Id.* 2 in his mind when he thought up this ending). As soon as the mythological paradigms have furnished a “logical” proof of Eunika’s stubborn *hybris* and “injustice” against the *boukolos*, the most formal “revenge curse”²⁸ of 44-45, which wishes sexual isolation upon her in both environments, rustic and urban (μηκέτι μηδ’ ἄ, Κύπρι, τὸν ἀδέα μήτε κατ’ ἄστν / μήτ’ ἐν ὄρει φιλέοι, μῶνα δ’ ἀνὰ νύκτα καθεύδοι, “never may she either, Cypris, whether in the city or on the hill, kiss her darling, but let her sleep lonely all the night”), even appeals for divine approval / help in inflicting a heavy punishment for the anti-professional quality of Eunika’s unwillingness to kiss the *boukolos* – sleeping alone may be a sad punishment for any woman, but is especially inconvenient for a professional *betaira*! The last hemistich of 45 is probably modelled on the precedent of Sappho’s fr. 168b.4 ἔγω δὲ μόνα κατεύδω, “and I sleep alone”, which is the only other text we know of that focuses on the erotic distress that comes from being lonely in bed,²⁹ to-

²⁸ Revenge curses, well known to us from erotic magic, are most often, as here, curses in which “an angry or aggrieved person, acting much like a plaintiff in a divine court, claims that he or she has suffered an injustice and demands the punishment of the victim. Such curses employ highly emotive language, often malign or accuse the victim, and beg the god to help the practitioner, who is allegedly a victim of injustice” (Faraone 1999, 81).

²⁹ Different is the case of Menander, *Dysc.* 893 or Posidippus, *AP* 5.213.1-2 = *HE* 3066-67, where no emphasis goes to the erotic stress.

gether with its imitation in the ps.-Bionean *Epithalamion for Achilles and Deidamia*, 28-30 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ μούνα, μούνα δὲ σύ, νύμφα, καθεύδεις. / αἱ δύο παρθενικαὶ συνομάλικες, αἱ δύο καλαί, / ἀλλὰ μόναι κατὰ λέκτρα καθεύδομες, κτλ., “but I sleep alone and you alone, maiden. Though both be girls of the like age and both fair, alone in our beds we sleep, etc.”, where the Sapphic memory is also reinforced by the supposedly homoerotic context. Customary practice of magic would have granted the *boukolos*’ formal curse potential potency against its victim; in our ps.-Theocritean poem the allusion to Sappho endows the curse with a surplus of threatening *enargeia*, as the grim suffering already expressed in the model reflects back on the sexual distress of Eunica. The phrase plays once again the reversal of erotic language into language of hatred, which we had seen at work in 15-18. Indignant hatred, rooted in and motivated by the pride of being a *boukolos*, displayed throughout the poem, appears at the end to be an effective way for our protagonist to unburden himself of his sexual frustration.³⁰

One of the few modern analyses on ps.-Theocr. 20 has already recorded the parallelism between the description of Eunica’s reaction to the *boukolos*’ attempt to kiss her and a similar failed erotic advance described by Catullus. Compare 9-11 of our poem:

χείλεά τοι νοσέοντι, χέρεις δέ τοι ἐντὶ μέλαιναι,
καὶ κακὸν ἐξόσδεις. ἀπ’ ἐμεῦ φύγε μὴ με μολύνῃς”.
τοιὰδε μυθίζοισα τρίς εἰς ἔδον ἔπτυσε κόλπον, κτλ.

“... your mouth is ailing, your hands are black, and your smell is foul. Away, lest you defile me”. With such words as these she spat thrice into her bosom, etc.

with Cat. 99.7-10: (after a kiss “stolen” by Catullus from Iuventius)

... simul id factum est, multis diluta labella
guttis abstersisti omnibus articulis
ne quicquam nostro contractum ex ore maneret,

³⁰ As noted by Arland 1937, 55, in our poem “wird die Wirkung erreicht, die Theokrit in 11 verblich gesucht hat: der Liebende befreit sich von seiner Leidenschaft”.

tamquam commictae spurca saliva lupae.³¹

for as soon as it was done, your lips were wet with many tears and you wiped them off with all your fingers in case any infection remained from my mouth, as if it were the disgusting spit of some pissed-on tart.

I do not know whether the similarities between the two passages really “should make it plain that Catullus could have taken the *Idyll* of Theocritus as an important ingredient in the composition of poem 99”.³² Without making bold chronological assumptions, the two passages may represent independent variations on an erotic motif (rejection of the unwanted kiss), but their parallelism and the isolation of these two instances of the motif favour the widespread idea that ps.-Theocr. 20 belongs to an age not far from the 1st cent. B.C.³³ After all, the *renuntiatio amoris* is another motif which strongly connects ps.-Theocr. 20 to the thesaurus of *topoi* of Latin elegy belonging to the same age – especially, as we will see, the elegiac-pastoral *Ecl.* 2 by Vergil.³⁴

Indeed Virgil’s *Ecl.* 2 is another bucolic poem where we can detect a reuse of the model of the Theocritean Cyclops. This model undergoes a restructuring in a way that is similar, at least in part, to that of ps.-Theocr. 20. Corydon, the protagonist of the second *Eclogue* of Virgil, whose wooing-song for Alexis frequently and openly reshapes the phrases and circum-

³¹ Cf. Khan 1967, 615-18.

³² Cf. Khan 1967, 618.

³³ This is after all the chronology for ps.-Theocr. 20 favoured by all modern scholars. The fact that the first four lines of the poem appear in *AP* 9.136 following six hexameters by Cyrus of Panopolis, 5th cent. AD, led Ahrens 1874, 598 to ascribe the poem to Cyrus. But, though puzzling, the presence of the incipit of the poem in the *AP* has not been considered a safe evidence for chronology by the later scholars: see already Hiller 1888, 71-73. The poem has been ascribed to Moschus (Heinsius 1604, 294) or Bion (Meineke 1856, 330), or, more frequently, either Bion or a younger contemporary of Bion, because the reference to Rhea / Attis in 40 might point to Asia Minor, of which Bion was native, and to Bion may also refer other common elements of the phrasing and the style: cf. Wilamowitz 1906, 81; Legrand 1927, 41; Arland 1937, 54; Trovati 2001, 41.

³⁴ Cf. Du Quesnay 1979, 60-61.

stances of Theocritus' Cyclops,³⁵ speaks from beginning to (the very Cyclopean) end of the pains of unrequitable love, recalling much more the desperation of the Cyclops than the proud resentment of the *boukolos* in ps.-Theocr. 20. However, the fact that an ordinary rustic character replaces in Vergil's *Eclogue* the Theocritean "monster in love", but nevertheless still speaks the monster's words, is a basic point of contact with the ps.-Theocritean reshaping of Theocr. 11.

Once the monstrous features of the Cyclops are cancelled out, the opposition between his terrestrial environment and Galatea's sea environment no longer holds. The protagonists of both ps.-Theocr. 20 and of *Ecl.* 2 are instead rejected, or believe they have been, because they belong to the pastoral world (and so are "rustic") while their beloveds are outsiders to this world.³⁶ We have already discussed how this is the case in ps.-Theocr. 20. In Virgil's *Ecl.* 2, Corydon never says that Alexis belongs to the urban environment, but implies it when he opposes him, as *candidus*, to the rustic *niger* Menalcas (16: possibly reminiscent of ps.-Theocr. 20.9 χέρεις δέ τοι ἐντὶ μέλαιναι, quoted above), and states more than once that Alexis is unaccustomed to the countryside: see 28-30 *O tantum libeat mecum tibi sordida rura / atque humilis habitare casas et figere cervos, / haedorumque gregem viridi compellere hibisco!* "o if you would live with me in our rude fields and lowly cots, shooting the deer, and driving the flock of kids with a green hibiscus switch!"; 34 *nec te paeniteat calamo trivisse labellum*, "nor would you be sorry to have chafed your lip with a reed"; see also Corydon's self-admission in 56 *rusticus es, Corydon*, "Corydon, you are a rustic!". This explicit opposition of city and countryside (which, as we have said, never had a similar emphasis in Theocritus) is also linked, in the case of Corydon, with a bold attempt at

³⁵ Virgil's dependence on Theocr. 11, 3, and 6 is self-evident, and has been often recorded: see, e.g., Arland 1937, 53-54; Galinsky 1965, 162-63; Posch 1969, 31-53; Coleman 1977, 107; Du Quesnay 1979, 43-63; Rumpf 1996, 221-22.

³⁶ Already Coleman 1977, 108 remarks that for the antipathy town / country of *Ecl.* 1 and 2 "Eunica's petulant suitor in *Id.* 20 provides something of a precedent", though the motif is reinforced in Virgil by the elegiac theme of the *dives amator*, the rival Iollas, "for whom there is no pastoral model".

attracting the beloved into rustic-life (exemplified through the practice of hunting, 28-29 quoted above,³⁷ and playing pastoral songs and music, 31-39), as well as, both in the *boukolos* and in Virgil's Corydon, with a kind of pride about belonging to the pastoral world.

This pride usually sounds more emphatic in the former than in the latter, but compare at least ps.-Theocr. 20.31-32:

... τὰ δ' ἄστικά μ' οὐκ ἐφίλασεν,
ἀλλ' ὅτι βουκόλος ἐμμί παρέδραμε, κτλ.

but this thing of the town kissed me not, but, because I am a neatherd,
passed me quickly by and gives no heed.

with *Ecl.* 2.60-62:

... habitarunt di quoque silvas
Dardaniusque Paris. Pallas quas condidit arces
ipsa colat; nobis placeant ante omnia silvae

even the gods have dwelt in the woods, and Dardan Paris. Let Pallas dwell by
herself in the cities she has built; but let my chief delight be the woods,

where the phrase *habitarunt di quoque silvas* seems to summarize the long list of mythological paradigms provided by ps.-Theocr. 20.33-43, while omitting all the names mentioned by the *boukolos* and citing only Paris – curiously enough, Paris had not been named by ps.-Theocr. 20: both this emulative addition and the suppression of the names are perhaps intended together to be complementary to ps.-Theocr. 20.³⁸ In any case, as well as the *boukolos*, “Corydon is not torn between his and Alexis’ world: he remains immanent in the pastoral landscape ... even his most impulsive movement toward the

³⁷ See on this passage, of course to be connected to Gallus’ similar dream, Paschalis 2005, 56-58.

³⁸ Slightly more generic was the interpretation by Posch 1969, 47: (Virgil) “nennt keine Namen. Dagegen erwähnt er im folgenden Vers ausführlich den Dardanius Paris. Das ist höchst verwunderlich. Eher möchte man annehmen, dass Götter namentlich genannt werden. Die befremdende Erwähnung des Paris kann nur so erklärt werden, dass die ganze Stelle eine Nachahmung ist, bei der, wie es bei Nachahmungen oft zu gehen pflegt, manches übernommen wird, manches aber übergangen”.

beloved is, so to speak, a pastoral march on the spot”.³⁹ Thus neither protagonist is ready to “understand” the refusal of his beloved, as opposed to the case of the Cyclops (see above), but each believes the beloved is crazy to despise his rusticity: cf. *Ecl.* 2.60 *quem fugis, a! demens?* “ah, idiot, whom do you flee?”.

Furthermore, both Corydon and the *boukolos*, explicitly rejecting the idea that they are ugly, boast of their beauty, with a strong inversion of the Cyclops’ confessed ugliness.⁴⁰ Readers may well doubt the fairness of their judgement, but at least in the case of Corydon we have to acknowledge his intelligent choice at 26 of the term of comparison, Daphnis, another rustic, who despite his paradigmatic beauty might be imagined no less sun-burned than Corydon (cf. 17 *nimum ne crede colori*, “trust not too much to the colour”). Furthermore, within both poems this aesthetic self-appreciation improves the image of “rustic pride” which they are seeking, and does not display an awkwardly downhearted Cyclops.⁴¹ Both herdsmen are for instance far less emphatic about their rural affluence than the Theocritean Cyclops, and both make points more suited to their characters;⁴² but they are also more emphatic than he about their proficiency in song,⁴³ which

³⁹ Cf. Papanghelis 1999, 47.

⁴⁰ Cf. Du Quesnay 1979, 64.

⁴¹ On Virgil’s *Eclogue* see, e.g., La Penna 1963, 484: “il distacco di Teocrito dal suo personaggio, l’ironia caricaturale ... scompaiono: l’atteggiamento di Virgilio è di partecipazione piena alla sofferenza, al pathos del personaggio. Il colore rustico è attenuato: alla tendenza al pathos si unisce un rifiuto, tuttavia non rigoroso, dei particolari troppo umili”; according to Putnam 1970, 118, while taken as a whole Theocr. 11 is warm and sometimes playful, Virgil “even in his wit, seems to maintain a level of thought which often borders on the highly serious”. It is also true, however, that in the stream of the Theocritean model of the Cyclops each example of Corydon’s boasts (possessions, songs, and personal beauty) “has elements of exaggeration bordering on hyperbole, the humorous result is a further epitome of the shepherd’s *rusticitas*” (so Putnam 1970, 96; see already Putnam 1965, 163).

⁴² Cf. Du Quesnay 1979, 65.

⁴³ On *Ecl.* 2 see, e.g., Leach 1966, 434-36: “unlike the song of Polyphemus, Corydon’s love-song is not simply an exposition of nature, but also a glorification of the singer’s own art ... the Cyclops boasts of musical skill, but does not give it first place in his wooing”

lends more dignity to their station – this is especially the case with Corydon, who elevates himself to the level of Amphion!⁴⁴ Last but not least, both the *boukolos* and Corydon justify their pride for their profession by using mythological paradigms of gods who did not deign to love shepherds (ps.-Theocr. 20) or to live in the rustic environment (cf. *Ecl.* 2.60-61 *habitarunt di quoque silvas, Dardaniusque Paris*, quoted above).

The differences between these two poems cannot be understated: the *boukolos* of ps.-Theocr. 20 refuses to take Eunice's refusal seriously, and reacts against her brashly, on the coat-tails of a stance toward *eros* already well-documented in Theocritus (Simichidas, and most probably also Lycidas' songs in *Id.* 7 had provided paradigmatic instances of the rejection of impossible love and of love poetry⁴⁵). Corydon, on the other hand, suffers uninterruptedly because of Alexis' unavailability, just as the Theocritean Cyclops does in respect to Galatea. But in contrast with the Cyclops, who was (without knowing it) capable of seeing the world (and love) only through the filter of his being a shepherd, both ps.-Theocr. 20 and *Ecl.* 2 develop the restricted perspective of the Cyclops' limited view of the world, and transform it into a conscious choice. It is as if these two lovers boldly opt for their pastoral environment in spite of the negative consequences it bears for their erotic success: at all erotic costs, they are more proud to be shepherds than saddened at being rejected.

(434); and Coleman 1977, 108: “what is peculiar to Corydon is that, like the elegists again, his flights of poetry are much more self-centred; moreover they reach their heights in the idealizing contemplation of his beloved countryside, not in praise of the boy Alexis. In this most elegiac of pastorals the Arcadian mood thus comes through strongly”.

⁴⁴ It is true that this “prodigious display of learning is humorously incongruous on the lips of the rustic Corydon” (Du Quesnay 1979, 65), but such a humour may only be a possible effect on the readers, who think of the rustics of everyday life. On the contrary it is structurally suitable for the proud image that Corydon sustains of himself as a *bucolic* rustic, who has a long tradition of singing practice and excellence behind himself. As remarked by Breed 2006, 31, Corydon “might not speak like a herding slave on a Sicilian estate, but he does speak like a shepherd should in pastoral poetry. The inappropriateness of Corydon's speech, the separation between the speaker and his own language, creates its own appropriateness, and it is a specifically generic appropriateness”; see already Putnam 1970, 100.

⁴⁵ Cf. Fantuzzi in Fantuzzi & Hunter 2004, 136-38.

It is tempting to suppose that Ovid was already familiar with the similarity of tone and literary strategies that both underlies and joins the Corydon of Virgil's *Ecl.* 2 and the *boukolos* of ps.-Theocr. 20. It is well known that his rendering of the Cyclops' love affair in *Met.* 13 mainly represents a combined reworking of Theocr. 11 and Vergil's *Ecl.* 2.⁴⁶ In contrast with Theocritus' Cyclops, however, neither Vergil's Corydon nor Ovid's Cyclops uses bumbling dairy-language⁴⁷ for similes that celebrate the beauty of their beloveds, nor does the *boukolos* of ps.-Theocr. 20 when he celebrates his own beauty, though Ovid and ps.-Theocr. 20 present one single exception. And it is striking that the exception made by Ovid fully coincides with the one which is found in ps.-Theocr. 20. Indeed Ovid, *Met.* 13.796 *mollior et cyni plumis et lacte coacto* (already quoted above) looks like a reminiscence of *Ecl.* 7.38 *candidior cynis*, "whiter than the swans" (within a short song of Corydon for Galatea) plus a precise translation of ps.-Theocr. 20.26 *πακτᾶς ἀπαλώτερον*, "softer than curd". It certainly is not as close to Theocr. 11.20 *λευκοτέρα πακτᾶς ποτιδεῖν, ἀπαλωτέρα ἄρνός*, "whiter than curd to look on, softer than the lamb", where the cream cheese had been a term of comparison for whiteness, not for softness as in Ovid and ps.-Theocr. 20. We cannot rule out that Ovid simply manipulates the line of Theocritus, but if ps.-Theocr. 20 already existed (a most plausible hypothesis: see above n. 33), then Ovid might also have accepted the correction of Theocr. 11.20 carried out in ps.-Theocr. 20, apparently including this poem in the same cluster of "Cyclopean" narratives as Virgil's *Ecl.* 2.

The aesthetic achievement of our poem is probably not high, but the fierce condemnations of, e.g., Fritzsche, Legrand, or Gow⁴⁸ fail to appreci-

⁴⁶ Cf. Galinsky 1965, 168-71; Farrell 1992.

⁴⁷ As remarked by Hunter 1999, 230 "cheese ... was proverbially white ... and the Cyclops, being an expert in such matters ... specifically chooses *πακτῆ* ... 'the language of love', is, however, not concerned with realism or truth, and in revealing his dairy expertise the Cyclops proves a bathetic lover".

⁴⁸ Legrand 1927, 41 defined ps.-Theocr. 20 "une oeuvre sans vie, un exercice littéraire". Fritzsche 1870, II.106 resorted to the usual device of denying the authenticity of dubious works by emphasizing the lack of the features, usually positive, which characterizes the

ate the relevance of this short piece in terms of literary history.⁴⁹ In my opinion the *boukolos*' proud reaction to Eunica's refusal, not less than Corydon's wooing for Alexis, "lends itself to being read as the pastoral genre's aspiration to reduce everything to the terms of its own discourse (which, at the most obvious level, includes the pastoralisation of ideas associated with other generic areas)".⁵⁰ The *boukolos*' refusal to woo his *betaira* while at the same time stating his shepherdly pride is just another, firmer way to impose the pastoral world on the traditional motifs of erotic poetry: it can and ought to be read as the fruit of the same generic aspiration as *Ecl.* 2, and most probably is another instance of the 1st century's purposeful experiments with the overlap of the poetics of eros and pastoral already investigated in Virgil's *Bucolics*, Propertius, Tibullus, as well as in the Greek Bion.⁵¹

The *boukolos*' pride of being rustic, or the lack of authorial irony on the awkwardness / smell / monomania, etc. which on the contrary Theocritus had usually ascribed to his Cyclops or contemporary shepherds, and his neat

works of the denied author: "non est hic expressa ad vivum et spirans ullius hominis natura certa et indoles, non animorum, non morum ulla proprietas: non affectuum eiusmodi notatio ac varietas, qualem vides in idyllio III, ubi inter spemque metumque suspensus fluctuat amator, qui querimoniis suis vel tangit cor lectoris vel exhilarat: umbram potius hic vides pastoris exsanguem, non colorem pastoris suci pleni: delicatulum paene dixerim colonum Gesnerianum, non fortem agri cultorem Theocriteum, qualis est e. gr. Milton idyllii decimi. Nulli hic stimuli, nulli aculei, nulli sales, nulli Veneres, non Gratia vivax, unde prodatur Theocriti ingenium". Gow 1952, vol. 2: 365 concluded his discussion of the chronology of the poems with the dismissive statement: "the question cannot be determined, and in a poem so imitative and of so little merit is of slight importance". On another instance of the same scholarly "syndrome" (late and bad poems would hardly merit serious attention) in Gow's analysis of ps.-Theocr. 23 see Hunter 2002, 100-1.

⁴⁹ Cf. Hunter 2002, 100: "we have so little Greek poetry from the crucial period in the late second and first centuries BC, when the Greek tradition passed to Rome, that anyone even remotely concerned with that transition *must* be interested in (at least) the date of *Idyll* 20".

⁵⁰ Papanghelis 1999, 49.

⁵¹ Forty years ago Fantazzi 1966, 187-91 still investigated the blend of eros and pastoral in Virgil and Tibullus in autochthonous terms through the scanty evidence available on Gallus and Messalla Corvinus. The relevance of Bion in Latin elegiac poetry has been highlighted by Papanghelis 1987, 64-70, and his role in the construction of the Greek and Latin bucolic-erotic poetry by Fantuzzi 2002.

distinction between rural and urban environments, may be supposed to reflect a new metaliterary self-awareness of the bucolic genre. This rustic pride can thus be a metaphor for the self-awareness of the bucolic characters who now conform to a detailed code of behavioral rules and parameters of values – he is fully content to appeal to the aesthetic judgement of the other shepherds (19), and neither pays attention to the limited nature of such a circle (as on the contrary the Cyclops had done even at the best of his self-appreciation: cf. Theocr. 6.37 ὡς παρ’ ἐμὶν κέκριται, “as my judgement goes”),⁵² nor needs confirmation from the outside (it is only his fellow-shepherds whom he questions about his beauty).

Furthermore, the proud opposition of the rustic to the urban sphere in ps.-Theocr. 20 might be read as a new development of the agonistic competition that had always been a specific feature of bucolic poetry – not only agonistic competition in singing between the rustic characters,⁵³ but also an agonistic stance between bucolic poetry and other more “monumental” genres of poetry: see, e.g., the speech of Lycidas in Theocr. 7.45-48, or the *ekphrasis* of the rustic bowl replaced to the Iliadic *ekphrasis* of the shield in Theocr. 1. Ps.-Theocr. 20, however, shows an agonistic metapoetical emphasis which hardly finds parallels in Theocritus:⁵⁴ only in the *Epitaph for Bion* we can see an analogous stress in flanking / opposing Homer and the bucolic poet Bion, as a “different Homer”, but with no less dignity (78-83).⁵⁵

⁵² As remarked by Kirstein 2007, 107 about ps.-Theocr. 20.19-20, “eine (ungewollte) Relativierung des eigenen Schönheitsanspruchs wie in Idyll 11 fehlt”.

⁵³ See, however, Fantuzzi forthcoming.

⁵⁴ Reiske 1765, vol. 1: 221 already supposed a similar metapoetic meaning, as he thought that the author intended to defend his poetical choice from critical attacks: “videtur Poëta perstringere hoc Idyllio aliquos Bucolici carminis contemptores, qui forte sua quadam protervia tumentes, haec ut pueriles nugae deriserunt”.

⁵⁵ ἧ μὲν Τυνδαρέοιο καλὰν ἄεισε θύγατρα / καὶ Θέτιδος μέγαν υἴα καὶ Ἀτρεΐδαν Μενέλαον, / κείνος δ’ οὐ πολέμους, οὐ δάκρυα, Πᾶνα δ’ ἔμελλε / καὶ βούτας ἐλίγαινε καὶ ἀείδων ἐνόμειε / καὶ σύριγγας ἔτευχε καὶ ἄδέα πόρτιν ἄμελγε / καὶ παίδων ἐδίδασκε φιλήματα ..., “one sang the fair daughter of Tyndareus, Thetis’ great son, and Menelaus, son of Atreus. The other’s strains

The Homer of the *Epitaph for Bion* belongs to one sphere of the life (and of poetry), and Bion to another, but they are both poets endowed with equal relevance and right to sublimity. In an age possibly not far off from the date of the *Epitaph for Bion*, the *boukolos*' rustic pride, and his unwillingness to understand how his urban beloved could refrain from accepting his equal dignity, may thus be a metaphor of the achieved autonomy of the bucolic genre, which thanks to its matured literary tradition has finally gained a self-standing dignity that can be opposed to the urban reality, and propose a love poetry modulating urban elegy in new forms.⁵⁶

were not of wars or tears but of Pan; as a neatherd he made music, and tended his cattle as he sang. Panpipes he fashioned, and milked the sweet heifer, taught the kisses of boys ...” Cf. Paschalis 1995. See also Hunter (2006) 117-18, who points also out that this by now traditional, and “generic”, opposition was picked up by Virgil at the head of *Eclogue* 6 – no *reges et proelia* or *tristia bella* for Tityrus – and in the simile with which Moeris expresses sad resignation in *Ecl.* 9.11-13: *sed carmina tantum / nostra ualent, Lycida, tela inter Martia quantum / Chaonias dicunt aquila ueniente columbas*, “but amid the weapons of war, Lycidas, our songs avail as much as, they say, Dodona’s doves when the eagle comes”.

⁵⁶ The English form (and style) of this paper profited from the help of Johanna Hanink. The translations of Theocritus and the minor bucolic poets reproduce or presuppose with modifications the versions by Gow 1952 and 1953.

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