

The Whole Eclogue

Sicelides Musae, paulo maiora canamus. non omnes arbusta iuuant humilesque myricae; si canimus siluas, siluae sint consule dignae.	1-3: 3
ultima Cumaei uenit iam carminis aetas. magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo. iam redit et uirgo, redeunt Saturnia regna iam noua progenies caelo demittitur alto.	4-7: 4
tu modo nascenti puero quo ferrea primum desinet ac toto surget gens aurea mundo casta faue Lucina: tuus iam regnat Apollo.	8-10: 3
teque adeo decus hoc aeuī, te consule, inibit, Pollio, et incipient magni procedere menses; te duce, si qua manent sceleris uestigia nostri irrita perpetua soluent formidine terras.	11-14: 4
ille deum uitam accipiet diuisque uidebit permixtos heroas et ipse uidebitur illis, pacatumque reget patriis uirtutibus orbem.	15-17: 3
at tibi prima, puer, nullo munuscula cultu errantes hederas passim cum baccare tellus mixtaque ridenti colocasia fundet acantho. ipsae lacte domum referent distenta capellae ubera, nec magnos metuent armenta leones. ipsa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores. occidet et serpens, et fallax herba ueneni occidet; Assyrium uulgo nascetur amomum.	18-25: 8
at simul heroum laudes et facta parentis iam legere et quae sit poteris cognoscere uirtus, molli paulatim flauescet campus arista, incultisque rubens pendebit sentibus uua, et durae quercus sudabunt roscida mella.	26-30: 5
pauca tamen suberunt priscae uestigia fraudis quae temptare Thetim ratibus, quae cingere muris oppida, quae iubeant telluri infindere sulcos. alter erit tum Tiphys, et altera quae uehat Argo delectos heroas, erunt etiam altera bella, atque iterum ad Troiam magnus mittetur Achilles.	31-36: 6
hinc ubi iam firmata uirum te fecerit aetas, cedet et ipse mari uector, nec nautica pinus mutabit merces: omnis feret omnia tellus. non rastros patietur humus, non uinea falcem; robustus quoque iam tauris iuga soluet arator; nec uarios discet mentiri lana colores, ipse sed in pratis aries iam suaue rubenti murice, iam croceo mutabit uellera luto;	

- sponte sua sandyx pascentes uestiet agnos. 37-45: 9
- talia saecla suis dixerunt 'currere' fuis
 concordēs stabili fatorum numine Parcae.
 adgrederē o magnos, aderit iam tempus, honores
 cara deum suboles, magnum Iouis incrementum.
 aspice conuexo nutantem pondere mundum
 terrasque tractusque maris caelumque profundum.
 aspice uenturo laetantur ut omnia saeclo. 46-52: 7
- O mihi tum longae maneat pars ultima uitae
 spiritus et quantum sat erit tua dicere facta!
 non me carminibus uincet nec Thracius Orpheus
 nec Linus, huic mater quamuis atque huic pater adsit,
 Orphei Calliopea, Lino formosus Apollo.
 Pan etiam Arcadia mecum si iudice certet,
 Pan etiam Arcadia dicat se iudice uictum. 53-59: 7
- incipē, parue puer, risu cognoscere matrem
 (matri longa decem tulerunt fastidia menses);
 incipē, parue puer: qui non risere parenti,
 nec deus hunc mensa, dea nec dignata cubilest. 60-63: 4

The Eclogue Translated

- Sicilian Muses, let us sing slightly greater songs.
 Humble plantings of tamarisk do not serve everyone;
 if we sing woods, let woods be consul-worthy. 1-3: 3
- now the last age of Cumaean song has come.
 The great series of centuries is being born anew.
 now also the maiden returns, Saturn's realms return.
 now a new line is being let down from the deep sky. 4-7: 4
- You, the boy just now being born through whom iron first
 will cease and golden race rise in the whole cosmos,
 constant Lucina, favor: your Apollo already rules. 8-10: 3
- You, too, besides, you as consul, this glory of the age will start,
 Pollio, and the great months begin to advance.
 You as leader, if any traces of our crime remain,
 voided they will free the lands from endless fear. 11-14: 4
- He will take up the gods' life and see with gods
 heroes intermingled and himself be seen by them
 and rule with ancestral virtues a world subdued. 15-17: 3
- But to you, boy, first little gifts with no cultivating ..
 ivy wandering everywhere with baccar and bean
 of Egypt mingled with smiling acanthus .. earth will pour.
 Themselves goats will bring home stretched with milk
 their udders, nor will kine have fear of great lions.
 Themselves for you cradles will pour out soothing flowers.
 The snake will perish and the plant treacherous with venom

perish, too; Assyrian balm will be born commonly. 18-25: 8

But as soon as you can read at last the heroes' praise
and parents' deeds and know what manhood is,
with soft beard little-by-little the field will yellow,
on unkempt briars reddening the grape will hang,
and harsh oaks will sweat out dewlike honey. 26-30: 5

Yet a few traces of primeval deceit will survive,
the sort to command trying Thetis with boats, binding towns
with walls, splitting furrows into the earth.
Another Tiphys then will be, another Argo to carry
chosen heroes, there will be even other wars
and great Achilles sent again to Troy. 31-36: 6

Hence when firmed up at last age will have made you a man,
the carrier himself will give up the sea, nor will nautical pine
exchange goods: all the earth will bear every thing.
Soil will not suffer hoes, nor vine the hook;
oaken plowman, too, at last will loose the yokes from bulls;
nor will wool learn to feign variegated colors,
himself, instead, in meadows the ram will change his fleece,
now with sweet reddening purple and now with saffron yellow;
by its own design vermilion will garb the grazing lambs. 37-45: 9

Such as these centuries 'Run!' to their spindles have said
the Parcae concerted in the steady force of the fates.
O approach great honors, soon it will be time,
dear offshoot of gods, great scion of Jove.
Look at the cosmos nodding with its down curved weight,
the lands, the stretches of sea and the sky poured deep.
Look how all rejoice in the century to come. 46-52: 7

O to me then remain the last part of a long life
and breath that will be enough to tell your deeds!
Not me with songs either Thracian Orpheus will defeat
or Linus, though that one mother help and father this,
Orpheus Calliope, Linus handsome Apollo.
Pan even, with Arcadia as judge, if he compete with me,
Pan, even with Arcadia as judge, would tell of his defeat. 53-59: 7

Begin, little boy, by a smile to know your mother
(your mother long discomfort ten months brought);
begin, little boy: whoever does not smile on a parent,
him worthy neither god of board nor goddess deems of bed. 60-
63: 4

Analysis of Rhetoric & Theme

PREAMBLE. (1-17)

Represented as spoken to three different audiences in succession:
Sicilian Muses (1-7),^a Lucina (8-10), Pollio (11-14), & still Pollio,

if not all three at once (15-17).

GROWTH in poetry & for a worthy occasion.

Bucolic Muses challenged 'sing a bit greater'^b (1-3: 3)

& informed of the occasion for growth: (4-7: 4)

'Cumaean song',^c 'great' returns,^d 'new' birth.*

[MYTHOLOGY RENEWED]^e

BIRTH suggests Lucina & *GROWTH* with *REFORM*.^f

'You, Lucina (your Apollo reigns),[†] favor... (8-10: 3)

boy being born,^g by whom... iron / golden'.^h

[NEW MYTH (*birth / growth*) GRAFTED to OLD]

GROWTH suggests Pollio & *REFORM* in *HISTORY*. (11-14: 4)

'You, too, as consul': motif of beginning in time. (11-12)

[NEW MYTH gets notional date, historicity grows].

'You as leader': motif of change through time. (13-14)

[NEW MYTH gets Roman auspices, historicity grows].ⁱ

ADULTHOOD implied by *GROWTH* & *REFORM*. (15-17: 3)

Pollio (Lucina & the Muses?) shown a future moment:

'He will see heroes with gods... & rule':[‡]

[NEW MYTH firmed up: NEW HERO among OLD]

EMBASSY TO THE CHILD. (18-63)

Represented as if spoken to the infant just born
in an effort to motivate his first significant action.^j

PRAISE VIA PROMISED GIFTS: (18-45: 28)

Projected honors fit successive stages of growth by child & age
[NEW MYTH grows to fuller vision of nature & society]

INFANCY & BOYHOOD: bucolic miracles, nature pro- (18-25: 8)
ductive & attractive without work or art.^k

ADOLESCENCE: child grows to literacy (26-30: 5)
with georgic miracles,^l

yet a few traces of the iron age will survive,^m

then another heroic age will come.ⁿ (31-36: 6)

ADULTHOOD: upon full growth of child & golden age, (37-45: 9)
all traces of iron age will cease or
arts be absorbed by bucolic nature.^o

CONFIRMATION AND EXHORTATION: (46-63: 14)

After citing the *Parcae*, renewed address to infant
urging cognizance & appropriate first action.

CONFIRMING by Appeal to *Other Authority*. (46-52: 7)

'Such as these the *Parcae*...' (46-47):

* -Iam noua progenies. became a basic building block in the Augustan, imperial interpretation of the eclogue, seen as alluding to the iconography of the Caesars, between the recently deified Julius and his adoptive son, Octavian.

† Apollo's rule suggests the young Caesar's cult of Apollo: mythology inextricable from ideology.

‡ Joining Lucina and Apollo in myth, as implied in the motif of the 'new line': taken by commentators as further allusion to Caesarian ideology.

praise corroborated as conforming to fate^p
 [NEW MYTHOLOGY gets traditional authority].*

‘Approach great honors... of Jove great increment’:
 import in Roman & mythic terms (48-49)^q
 [NEW MYTHOLOGY linked to chief of old].[†]

‘Look all the cosmos... Look everything rejoices’ (50-52):
 import in naturalistic terms
 [NEW MYTHOLOGY claims universality].

CONFIRMING by appeal to *Own Authority in Poetics*.[‡] (53-59: 7)
 Wish to ‘tell your deeds’ (53-54):
 [NEW MYTH as epic to be, cf. ‘singing greater’].

Such epic would equal old poet-prophets,
 even if aided by gods of poetry (55-57):[†]
 [NEW MYTH in poetics: Virgil new *uates*].

Such epic would even defeat a god of poetry,
 Pan,^s inventor of bucolic tradition (58-59):[†]
 [NEW MYTH displaces old in poetics].

EXHORTING an Appropriate First Action. (60-63: 4)
 ‘Recognize your mother with a smile...
 whoever not... neither god nor goddess...’
 [NEW IDEA of HEROIC ACTION: closing retreat
 to motifs of TRADITIONAL MYTHOLOGY].*

* * *

^a Reasons for taking all seven lines as addressed to the Muses appear in note ‘c’ below. Alternatively, the poet would be supposed to revert to narrative mode, which might reappear briefly at 4.15-17. All the rest takes the form of apostrophe, imaginary address to specific notional, fictional persons, whether Lucina, Pollio, or the newly born child. Although these fictional modes affect the manner of interpretation, tone and gesture, the real recipient remains an assumed audience, in the theater or private recitation if not a reader: its assumed fears and hopes, prejudices, expectations, traditions are reflected in how the poet proceeds and on what he plays.

^b –Sicelides. identifies the point of departure as ‘Theocritean, yet a bit greater’, an implicit theme that immediately becomes explicit, pointing upward in the traditional hierarchy of genres: ‘sing’ raises the possibility that the ultimate aim is epic. The specific program, then, that ‘woods’ be ‘consul-worthy’, points the way of growth through historical and public, Roman materials.

^c If the Muses are still addressed, these lines function rhetorically to justify the challenge, telling them why they must grow and more specifically how: ‘Cumaean song’ continues the definition of poetics, recalling the original appeal that the Muses ‘sing’ but directing them into a very special kind of ‘song’, which points to a level perhaps higher, surely different, than Roman epic: ‘Cumaean’ has been taken most generally as referring to the tradition of Greek oracles in Italy, often influential, recently controversial at Rome, but also as a reference to Hesiod and the prophetic poetry of cosmological myth. The one allusion would be likely to work in popular culture, the other for a more literate elite.

* The motif of ‘fate’ significantly reinforces the new ideological mythology.

† Cf. the idea of a divine presence in human affairs, documented in Chapter one for other eclogues and a key element in Augustan ideology: the role of Jupiter in the *Aeneid*.

‡ Virgil’s highest ambition in poetry, for epic, could only be welcomed by Caesar’s heir.

* Amplifies earlier image of divine-heroic society (4.15-17), anticipates Augustan myth: cf. Horace, *C.* 3.3.9-15, Augustus among the ‘present gods’, not to mention Virgil, *G.* 1.1-42, etc.

^d The sense of particular, contemporary relevance grows in the image of a turning point in cosmic time, *kairos*, which is being constructed through imitation and revision of Lucretius, who is the nearest Latin representative of Hesiodic tradition, but who devalued the traditional mythology on philosophical grounds.

^e Again, the myth is formed using Lucretian language against Lucretius, also appropriating from Catullus.

^f Figures that will serve to anchor the new myth in established mythology and current history.

^g Rhetorical growth occurs here by interpretation and increment: the culminating motif of the *kairos*, 'new line', gets interpreted and amplified into 'boy being born'.

^h In further rhetorical movement, birth gets taken as a hint of growth, 'boy' as a potential agent: the new myth thus grows by assimilation of traces of the Hesiodic myth of races identified by metals.

ⁱ 'Traces of our crime voided', *-irrita*, a Catullan word reclaimed, providing release from fear, in specific allusion to undoing the evils of civil war.

^j *A captatio benevolentiae*. The topics of persuasion, and the situation, in which attention is lavished on a hero childlike in so many respects, though not a child, whose response is viewed as crucial to future happiness by the speakers, invite comparison with the embassy to Achilles (Homer, *Il.* 9): Achilles, through the Catullan *Wedding*, figures as the antitype to Virgil's new hero.

^k 'Ivy' promising poetry without envy (which *baccar* will ward off), pastoral generosity as goats come home bringing abundant milk without herdsmen's work, noble beasts assimilated, base and deceptive nature ruled out (smiling nature that recalls Lucretius).

^l (25-30) The child growing to read heroes' praises and parental deeds and know what virtue is (assignments named in proper order adds Daniel's fuller Servian commentary, since poets ought to be read first, then historians, then philosophers), grain, grape and honey enact georgic miracles without toil.

^m (31-33: 3) Since the child and new age remain but partly grown, 'a few traces of old deceit' survive.

ⁿ (34-36) Then, the heroic age will recur, as a prelude to the return of the golden age, which had been followed by the heroic age in the decline (assimilation and subordination of the epic of Catullus).

^o Cessation of georgic work taken from Catullus and Lucretius.

^p Bringing to a point the whole appropriation and revision of Lucretius and Catullus: 'fate' revived against Lucretius, revised from Catullus.

^q 'Scion of Jove' recovers language of Theocritus and Homer.

^r Two corresponding, structurally balanced phrases associate poets with divine parents, 'Orpheus Calliope, handsome Apollo Linus', where the symmetry suggests that the epithet for Apollo, *-formosus*, 'fine appearing', be felt by *apo koinou* as applying to Calliope as well: the implicit juxtaposition engenders a further reflection on the figural etymology of this name in Greek; as Propertius put it (3.3.38): 'As I think from her face, it was Calliope', *-ut reor a facie, Calliopea fuit*. Cf. the Latin figural etymology of her name by Lucretius, 6.92-95, 'canny', *-callida*.; also in general, Friedlander, *AJP* (1941) 16-32.

^s Etymologically, the name Pan suggests the Greek *pan*, 'all', cf. the proximity to 'all' at the climax of the previous section (4.52). See also the figural etymology of Pan as goatherd god in Plato, *Crat.* 408.C-D: 'always moves', *-aei polon*., hence *-aipolos*., 'goatherd': the child may be said to panic all nature as Daphnis does in eclogue five, Silenus in eclogue six: M. O. Lee, *-Virgil as Orpheus*., *Orpheus* 11 (1964) 9-18.

^t Revives pastoral mythology, which had been debunked by Lucretius, only to reach beyond it. Not reverting to Sicilian Theocritus but reaching to the bucolic homeland, Arcadia with Pan. For Theocritus as *epikos*, along with Aratus and Apollonius (thus bucolic, didactic and heroic), see Quintilian 10.1.55.

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serves as a motif lending historical concreteness to projected change, but consulship and leadership (11, 13) are bracketed by the motifs of new mythology, ‘descent of new line’ (7) and future monarchical rule (17), which get reinforced especially in the closing image of heroic society (63). Symbols of Roman republican authority have been used to authenticate, as it were, a new conception of order, which Virgil relates to current history yet extends to the future and derives from the past (cf. ‘Saturnian realms return’, 6) through a new and comprehensive myth. The preemptive novelty of the myth may be disguised to a degree by the motif of ‘ancestral’