Virgil vs Cicero, Lucretius Theocritus, Plato, & Homer:
Two Programmatic Plots in the First Bucolic [part 1]
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Scholarly opinion found no program to speak of in the first eclogue when I began my studies (Van Sickle 1967). Into the vacuum rushed a vogue that imagined Virgil waiting till eclogue six before branding his entire book Callimachean (Van Sickle 1977, 2000). It came as a relief when I first realized that Virgil had in fact provided a powerful program at the start, taking aim at the seventh idyll (Van Sickle 1975, 1978). Simichidas’ programmatic encounter with Lykidas on a country road became, in Virgil’s revision, Tityrus’ authorizing encounter with a god at Rome, signalling a new bucolic departure built on and against Theocritus. Yet two recent studies go so far as to dismiss the seventh idyll’s role, offering instead reductive and contradictory accounts of Virgil’s opening program. In response, the present paper seeks to build more scrupulously on scholarly history, including several early modern commentators who have largely disappeared from conversation about the Bucolics but also a recent advance (Hunter 1999). I focus attention on an array of features, such as elements of landscape, postures, sorts of musical art, and names, that enjoy traditional and quasi mythic status. I expect to show how Virgil takes and uses these traditional motifs or mythemes to programmatic effect in defining a new poetic myth. His mythemes have analogues, I hope to show, in Theocritus, of course, but also Callimachus, Plato, and Homer as well as Lucretius, and Cicero. Not that I mean merely to demonstrate Virgil’s links to divers authors. My larger goal is to show how he integrates and deploys his literary allusions to create two intertwined programs: a main thrust developed through the eloquent history of Meliboeus, with a response sketched in the stories of Tityrus.

1. Mythemes in Theocritus, Plato, & Homer

Two recent studies have found contrasting programs in the eclogue’s first two lines:¹

Meliboeus:

Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi
siluestrem enui musam meditaris auena.
(“Tityrus, while you lie there at ease under the awning of a spreading beech and practise country songs on a light shepherd’s pipe,...” E. V. Rieu)

¹ Cairns 1999.289; Hubbard, 1998.49-50. I am grateful to both for sharing their work with me.
Tityre, as a proper name in the vocative case, posits a dramatic encounter. The name has seemed a sufficient sign of Theocritus for a vast preponderance of readers. To the neo-Latin poet and professor Eobanus Hessus, the vocative recalled the opening of the first idyll,\(^2\) from which others have also detected echoes in Virgil’s patterns of sound:\(^3\)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{άδυ} & \text{ τι τὸ ψιθύρισμα και} \text{ ἀ πίτυς, αἰπόλε, τήνα,} \\
\text{ά ποτὶ ταῖς παγαῖοι, μελιὸδεται,} \text{ ἀδύ δὲ καὶ τύ συρίσσες:}
\end{align*}
\]

(Sweet somehow rustling music, goatherd, that pine tree makes, the one by the springs, and sweetly you, too, pipe)

(Id. 1.1-3)

These similarities let us infer an initial program. They signal not just a random approach to Theocritus. By matching the poem that stood first in Theocritus’ collections, Virgil signals the start of a new collection;\(^4\) and this implies an idea of the book as a hallmark of tradition.\(^5\)

At the same time, specific departures imply that Virgil’s program must also be revisionary, that he approaches tradition only to get beyond and outdo.\(^6\) Signs of change besiege the mind, each capable of initiating a narrative. Theocritus, for example, opens with a quality of natural sound, which he identifies metaphorically as sweet music and compares with music made by man. This lets us infer that he claimed a local naturalness and sweetness, positioning his art against Homer’s epics, with their opening themes of wrath and travail.\(^7\) Virgil, then, by contrast emphasizes the drama of encounter itself.\(^8\) He shifts the vocative to the head of the verse and makes

\(^2\) Hessus 1528; cf. on the convention of naming in first lines, Clausen 1994. 34.
\(^3\) E.g., Skutsch 1956.193-201; Pöschl 1964.10; and now Hubbard 1998.48.
\(^4\) Cf., e.g., Clausen 1994.29, n. 1.
\(^5\) Cf., e.g., idem xxiv; cf. Farrell 1991.17: “Vergil uses allusion to create his own vision of that [literary] history, to make the past anew, to call into being a tradition to which he wishes to be heir.”
\(^6\) Cf. the warning that too exclusive focus on similarity “is simply to close one’s eyes to the ironic element made possible by allusion”: Farrell 1991.10.
\(^7\) For philosophical and poetological ramifications of sweetness, see Hunter 1999.70-71.
\(^8\) Cf. e.g., Wright 1983.108: Virgil “has inverted his Greek model...insisting on the primacy of the human singer”; “we are told at once of the Theocritean model but are expected to notice an important difference.”
it a proper name; and he employs the pronoun, tu, to begin a sketch of the character that triggers emphatic contrast. This emphasis on a drama of encounter positions Virgil against the esthetic focus of the idyll; and such a difference signals a literary relationship. But if promotion on the erotic scale might seem to imply progress in tradition, intensified drama, sharpening disparity between two characters, must imply increased tension, if not anxiety, about approaching the tradition itself as represented by Tityrus, the Theocritean sign. To develop this implication we need to review what Tityros meant in Theocritus. Only then can we properly weigh how Virgil staged his approach to Theocritus by inventing the intense opening figure of Meliboeus for an explosive drama in his own mind.

Virgil’s initial Tityre led such Renaissance commentators as Antonio Mancinelli and Petrus Ramus to the seventh idyll as well as the third. Ramus considered the seventh most relevant to Virgil’s context because its Tityros was a master of bucolic song. The song of Tityros in idyll 7 also struck Lodovico de la Cerda because it closed with language similar to the opening of idyll 1:

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...τυ δ' ὑπὸ δρυμῶν ἢ ὑπὸ πεύκας
ἀδῷ μελισσόμενος κατεκέκλισο, θείε Κομάτα.
(...and you under oaks or under fir trees
sweetly making music would recline, godlike Komatas)
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(Id. 7.88-89)

Such strong cross-reference suggests that Tityros in the seventh idyll must fulfill an important programmatic function, at least for readers who expect such marked links to signal programs. Theocritus gives Tityros’ song the motif of “making sweet music,” and he makes it the climax of an apostrophe that expresses longing for an ideal poetry from a mythic past. The “contrary to fact wish that Komatas were alive to sing” caps, in Richard Hunter’s

So Hubbard 1998.49-50, seeing a sign of literary progression in what he calls a “dynamic of erotic succession”; yet other differences make the implied new status seem less simply improved: on Tityrus’ age and religious obligations, poor land, as ironizing Virgil’s revision of the genre, see Van Sickle 1978.119-120; cf. the study of contrasts in Theocritus by Segal, 1981.176-209.

Ramus 1572: nomen tamen est sumptum è Theocriti Idyllio tertio, aut potius sexto: ubi Tityrus pro rustici carminis peritissimo adhibetur. Mancinelli 1544.

La Cerda 1619.

Cf. the magisterial analysis of Theocritean cross-reference by Segal 1981, especially the mythopoetic interplay of idylls 1 and 7, 180-83.
words, a poetic “foundation myth.” Evidently we are expected to relate such myths by metonymy to Theocritus’ own art.

The programmatic implications grow when we place the myth in context. The fullest context is the idyll’s narrative framework, where Theocritus makes his fictional emissary Simichidas tell of journeying from the city to the harvest feast that gives the poem its name. The narrator reports meeting en route the emblematic goatherd Lykidas and how they exchanged both songs and banter about poetics. The motifs of journeying, the encounter, and the metapoetic banter define Theocritus’ program against both Hesiod and Homer. In a similar vein, apostrophes and challenges to Homer, both explicit and implicit, bring the narrative to its close.

At the heart of this programmatic framework, the apostrophe to Komatas caps the sketch of a desired performance by Tityros, which Hunter describes as a song narrated “in indirect speech [that] goes back to Homer’s account of the songs of Demodokos in Odyssey 8.” Tityros’ song, then, would revise the climactic myth of the first idyll (Daphnis’ struggle with love) and match it against a myth formed in the seventh idyll: mythic goatherds imprisoned by harsh masters but saved by the Muses’ sweet nectar. Together the pairing of poetic limitation and vindication recapitulates complementary strands in Theocritean poetics. It underlines what Charles Segal has called “the importance of Idylls 1 and 7 for creating the mythical foundation of his poetics of pastoral.” Hunter writes that the goatherds’ salvation is a “foundation myth for ‘aipolic’ poetry, as Daphnis is the founding hero of...

Hunter 1999.140, 175-76.

“Only an awareness of the actual context ... allows the reader to appreciate the connection Virgil is making,” Thomas 1986.176; cf. the corrective to Thomas for earlier ignoring context by Van Sickle 1980.91-95.


Hunter 1999.173. Hunter then documents numerous appropriations of Homeric language in the song itself. Demodokos’ themes were contention between Odysseus and Achilles, Hephaistos trapping Aphrodite in bed with Ares, and the episode of the wooden horse. The latter makes Odysseus rather than Achilles crucial to Greek victory at Troy. It thus is programmatic for the Odyssey, revising and upstaging the Iliad.

Segal 1981.20, cf. also his detailed comparison of the two idylls, 180-84.
In keeping with the foundational import of Tityros’ song, its climax in the apostrophe to Komatas plays a unique part in the idyll’s structure.20 “The direct address to Komatas in 83-89,” writes Hunter, “fuses Tityros’ song with a personal intrusion by Lykidas (or Lykidas/Theocritus) into that song.”21 In other words, the apostrophe is a burst of metapoetic longing that might be felt to stem from any of the voices represented or implied. Hunter’s insight wonderfully stimulates imagination. Yet surely he would adjust his formula to respect the fact that Lykidas’ song itself is contained in the outer narrative by Simichidas.22 Thus any of the narrators involved here — [Theocritus] Simichidas, Lykidas, or Tityros — might be imagined as transported into an outburst of metapoetic longing for Komatas.

Not only do the voices fuse but each conveys a story of some vicissitude followed by calm in a reclining pose. Tityros’ apostrophe to Komatas imagines the mythic goatherd imprisoned by a master,23 but then freed and reclining (κατεκέκλιομ) under “oaks and firs,” which, notes Hunter, is “not just a locus amoenus, but an epic juxtaposition (cf. II. 11.494, 23.328) in keeping with the general style of the song.”24 In turn, Lykidas’ song projected his own freedom.

Hunter 1999.175-76, adding (p. 178), “Oaks which grieved for Daphnis (74) now offer shade for the performance of peaceful bucolic song: thus is Lykidas’ own emotional catharsis plotted through song.” Yet Lykidas’ song would be not strictly “bucolic” but “aipolic,” in Hunter’s own terms.

Ramus 1572 rightly referred to Tityros in Id. 7 as rustici carminis peritissimus. Attention to context corrects the critics’ tendency to write Tityrus off: e.g., Cairns 1999 and Hubbard’s “little more than a name,” 1998.49, as if naming were not part of the game.


How to relate bucolic personae, e.g., Simichidas, to Theocritus (not to mention Meliboeus and Tityrus to Virgil) is a vexed problem in need of theoretical discipline: see Hunter 1999.146; Michelazzo 1987.459a and Perkell 1990.52, seconded by Van Sickle 1990.56-57.

“The ‘object of desire’ is, of course, always the lover’s ‘master,’” notes Hunter 1999.167, remarking the root anax- (master) that links the erstwhile lover of Lykidas and the captor of Komatas; for the trees, cf. next note

Hunter 1999.173; Hunter then documents numerous appropriations of Homeric language in the song itself; cf. Segal 1981.204: “Not only is there a Homeric echo (Iliad 23, 328), but this is the only place in the bucolic idyls where the πεύκη occurs, a tree which Theocritus remarks for its height elsewhere (ὑψηλάι πεύκαι, 22, 40).” By contrast the musicians in the first idyll moved to sit on a
once his lover left, to lie back and celebrate, reclining by the fire (πάρ ἑπρὶ κεκλιμένος, 7.66) and listening to Tityros sing. Finally, as the framing narrative of Simichidas verges to its close, Theocritus makes Simichidas tell how Lykidas swerved leftwards and took another way (ἀποκλίνας ἐπ᾽ ἄριστερά, 7.130), but how Simichidas with his companions reached the festival: ἀδειὰς σχοίνου χαμενίων ἐκλίνθημες (we reclined on sweet rush beds along the ground, 7.133: a line emphatic for its four words and spondaic ending).

Theocritus thus represents as realized in the idyll’s frame what was only an envisioned ideal for the goatherds in the nested songs. He brings reclining from the background of goatherds’ foundational mythology (“aipolic”) to the foreground, which he has characterized as bucolic through Simichidas and which now crystallizes his new foundation in bucolic art. At this climactic moment, he recasts the motif of reclining in language that makes a powerful epic juxtaposition: “There is an echo of Od. 5.462-3 (Odysseus reaches the safety of Phaeacia) ὄ δ᾽ ἐκ ποταμοῦ λιασθείς ἑκκολίδες [having turned from the river he lay down on rush].” From this Hunter draws a programmatic inference for the whole idyll: “Odysseus is the epic traveler par excellence and the echo positions T.’s ‘epic journey’ against Homer.”

The echo thus remarked creates what Thomas Hubbard would call a dynamic of literary succession. It invites us to reflect on similarity and difference between Simichidas and Odysseus and to savor the paradoxes that tease and quicken the mind: it confirms the hints throughout of positioning bench under an elm near oaks:

δὲν ὑπὸ τὰν πτελέαν ἐσθώμεθα τῷ τε Πριήνῳ καὶ τὰν κρανίδων κατεναντίον, ἄπερ ὁ θάκος τήνος ὁ ποιμενικὸς καὶ ταὶ δρυὲς.

(There beneath the elm let us sit down just in front of Priapus and the springs, where are the bench that one, the shepherds’, and the oaks.)

Id. 1.21-23

25 Cf., also symposial, πίνω δ᾽ ἐν δορὶ κεκλιμένος, , Archilochus 2 West.


27 Cf. above, n. 24.

28 Ibid.; cf. p. 199, “Simichidas’ Odyssey is also over.”


“against Homer,” which tell us that Theocritus is engaged in making a variant version of epic. It was, then, from a whole context of programmatic positioning that the fused voices of Tityros, Lykidas, Simichidas and Theocritus projected the crucial apostrophe to Komatas, with its echo of Homeric “oaks and firs” and its melding of foundational motifs in a plot of adventure and repose.

The motif of reclining as a mark of adventure's end suggests yet another literary succession for Theocritus. Plato's Phaedrus was important for idyll seven and “in the history of literary presentation of landscape,” writes Hunter, noting that Theocritus like Plato employs the “stylised countryside to illuminate literary experience,” also that both poetry and philosophy engage with the problem of love's power. Likewise, Christopher Rowe remarks Plato's use of stylized rural motifs for his philosophical investigation of love. Plato treats with irony his hero's whole erotic-philosophic venture from the ordinary urban settings of dialogue to the stylized country where the exchange with Phaidros takes place. He imagines Socrates arriving and remarking the conventional features of the location. The artful progress concludes with Socrates assuming a recumbent posture (κατακλινέντι). Emphasizing its conventionality, Plato makes him ostentatiously call the position a σχήμα. The word has multiple meanings that fit Plato's context and ours: posture, but also pretense or pose, and also conventional figure, as in rhetoric or dance (cf. LSJ).

On the idylls as “a transformation of epic, a shortened version of the grand form with accompanying deformation in subject matter (elevation of common characters and deflation of heroic ones) and in style (the use of serious language with comic or parodic intent),” see Gutzwiller 1991.10.

Hunter 1999.14-17; cf. the thorough-going study of pastoral analogy in Phaedrus by Gutzwiller 1991.73-79; and “far from representing country matters, it uses country matters to represent a new kind of art,” Van Sickle 1967.493, also Putnam 1975.170.

Ibid; cf. for irony in regard to Phaedrus, below, n. 44.


κατακλινέντι τὴν κεφαλὴν παγκάλως ἔχειν (just right to rest one's head upon,” Rowe: 230c) and ἀφικόμενος ἐγὼ μὲν μοι δοκῶ κατακείσεσθαι, οὐ δὲ ἐν ὑποίῳ σχῆματι οἷς ῥάστα ἀναγνώρισθαι, τούθεν ἐλόμενος ἀναγίγνωσκε (“Now that we've got here, I think that I'm going to lie down for the present, and you choose whatever pose you think easiest for reading,” Rowe: 230e).
2. Two Mythic Plots Cross: Venture & Repose

Virgil, then, had good reason to begin as he did. Adapting moments that were defining for Theocritean poetics, he set out to create a new foundational mythology. This would authorize his own new venture and even promote it over Theocritus. The motif of reclining links Tityrus to the plot of venture and repose as we have seen it in idyll 7, the Phaedrus, and the Odyssey. Yet Simichidas, Socrates, and Odysseus each moved through a single plot involving successive moments: first the venture, then the repose. Virgil innovates by juxtaposing two plots and making them intersect at different stages of their development. He imagines Meliboeus just forced into flight coming upon Tityrus already ensconced. The plots thus cross but also clash, opening questions about their respective futures and pasts: Meliboeus venturing forth (because of what, with what prospect of future repose?) but Tityrus resting (after what adventure that secured repose?). Both both plots demand attention if we hope to grasp the innovative power and range of Virgil’s program.

The first clues to Meliboeus’ plot come from his opening words. Although they draw from Theocritus motifs that portray Tityrus as a figure of bucolic myth, the Latin implies a particular background in the speaker. The mytheme of reclining, for example, acquires an ironic twist. Recubans is a “rather unusual verb,” notes Clausen, “here perhaps with a connotation of luxurious ease”; and he cites from Cicero’s De oratore an ironical snippet, which is even more pertinent if read in full (3.63):

“(Cyrenaic philosophy personified)” in hortulis quiescet suis, ubi uult, ubi etiam recubans molliter et delicate nos auocat a rostris, a iudiciis, a curia, fortasse sapienter, hac praesertim re publica.

“(Cyrenaic philosophy” will rest in its little gardens, where it wants to be, where also lolling softly and precisely it beckons us away from the rostra, from the courts, from the senate house, perhaps sagely, especially in view of the present state of public affairs.)

To picture Tityrus as “lolling” makes him resemble the otiose philosopher, but also implies in Meliboeus an ambivalence like that of Cicero himself. In traditional Roman fashion, it prefers public involvement to leisure yet betrays awareness of the parlous state of affairs in the late republic. Such awareness foreshadows the history that will unfold in Meliboeus’ subsequent words. The contemporary situation in Rome begins to loom as an index of literary succession and a factor in programmatic change.

Clausen 1994.34, also adducing “Prop. 3.3.1 ‘molli recubans Heliconis in umbra’ [lolling in Helicon’s soft shade]”; for the “ideological purpose” of the ecphrasis, see Putnam 1975.171.

Cf. ubi uult and ludere quae uellem, the boast of Tityrus, B. 1.10.
Virgil also transfers the motif of the sheltering tree from Komatas to Tityrus, again with differences that color the profile of Meliboeus. Patulae suggests a tree of spreading habit, which has precedents not in Theocritus, but in late republican Rome, in Plato, and in Homer. It occurs in Varro’s practical advice for summer pasturage, to drive flocks sub umbriferas rupes et arbores patulas (beneath shade-giving crags and spreading trees: RR. 2.2.11). But the spreading tree also occurred in the De oratore, as Fulvio Orsini and Petrus Ramus remarked. Cicero contrived his setting in express allusion to the Phaedrus. He placed the dialogue under a plane tree with spreading branches (patulis ramis, 1.7.28) and he underlined the artifice by making his speaker opine that Plato’s tree grew less from the nearby streamlet than from the power of Plato’s speech (Platonis oratione creuisse). “Very spreading and tall” (Rowe) was how Plato had pictured his tree; and the stylized rural motifs he arrayed with it included grass, running water, breezes, and a shrine. His selection reflected the fashion in such “ideal poetic landscapes” but also their association with inspiration and prophetic vision.

The motif of the spreading branches had not recommended itself to Theocritus. He varied arboreal shelter with such species as poplar and elm, 38

Cf. rupes at B. 1.56, 76; and for the structuring role of rupes in the Bucolics, Van Sickle, 1995.16-17.

Ramus 1572 ad loc.; and Orcini 1567 ad loc.; cf. the discussion by Berg 1974.118-120.

πλάτανος αὐτὴ μὰλ’ ἀμφιλαφής τε καὶ ψηλή (230b).

Cf. the like array of motifs in Lucretius’ version of the familiar locus, which he designs as the antithesis of luxury:

cum tamen inter se prostrati in gramine molli
propter aquae riuum sub ramis arboris altae
non magnis opibus iucunde corpora curant.

(when however stretched out among themselves on soft turf
next to a stream of water beneath the branches of a tall tree
with no great resources sweetly they refresh their bodies.

DRN 2.29-31 (cf.5.1392-94)

Here ramis and altae together suggest Plato’s ἀμφιλαφής τε καὶ ψηλή, as opposed to the emphasis on spreading habit alone in Cicero and Virgil. For Putnam 1975.171, Lucretius’ ephrasis “is no literal landscape” but “a model of mind, a conscious metamorphosis of the Theocritean landscape into a symbol of philosophical stance.”

Rowe 1986,135-141; cf. above, n. 32. On the geographical grounding of such mythic topics, see Buxton 1994,80-113; cf. their presence in Callimachus, fr. 229 (Branchos and the founding of Apollo’s temple in a grove by a double spring).

ψυκτενὶ...αὐτῆς (7.135-36, cf. 7.8). Cf. Callimachus, Ἰμύλης 6.25-28, καλὸν ἄλος...δὲν δέσμων ἀμφιλαφής (fair grove wide spread with trees, cf. ἀμφιλαφής, Phaedrus 230b)...| ἐν πτέρυς, ἐν μεγάλαι πτελέα ἔσον, ἐν δὲ καὶ ὀχναὶ, | ἐν δὲ καλὰ γλυκύμαλα...ὕδωρ (in it were pine, great elms, and in it pears, and in...
which are more lofty than wide, or the mythic oaks and firs of Komatas (with their Homeric resonance). He also employed the pine variously, not for shade, but for its sound (1.1), as a support for a feckless singer (3.38), and for its cones (5.49).

Virgil’s patulae thus lacked the authority of Theocritus, but it prompted Orsini to look, not only to Cicero and Moschus, but to Homer’s τανύφυλλος (with out-stretching foliage). Homer used the adjective only four times and in two complementary contexts: of an olive tree (ἔλαια) over the harbor’s head where Odysseus arrived in Ithaca (Od. 13.102, 396) and of the olive tree the hero had fashioned into his bed at home (23.190, 195). A lively process of comparing ensues, positioning against Odysseus both Tityrus’ secured repose with Amaryllis and the odyssey still of Meliboeus to tell. In fine, the motif of out-stretched foliage by-passes Theocritus for Cicero, Plato and Homer. It gives Virgil’s opening voice a broad reach -- Greek and Latin, cultural and generic. The implied literary ecosystem can hardly be reduced to the merely bucolic precinct of a mannerist dependent on Theocritus.

Developing the motif of shade, Virgil assigns Meliboeus a further literary trace that opens yet another multiple succession. Sub tegmine recalls and revises Lucretius, Cicero, and the style of older Latin epic.

Cf. by contrast, κεῖσε γε πάρ κείνη ποιμενία πίτυ (lay by that shepherds pine), Leonidas 86.4 G.-P. (A.Pl. (A) 230), cited by Gutzwiller 1991.74; also Myrinus, ἕνδιος ὄνοποτῆς σκειρᾶν ὑπὸ τῶν πίτυν εὑδε (“wine-drinker at noon-tide, sleeps under the shady pine,” Gow=Page Philip 2570 = A.P. 7.103.3).

By metathesis, patulae recalls πτελέα which recalls πλάτανος, which in turn recalls the author of the Phaedrus.

Which was Gutzwiller’s view of Virgil, faulted by Van Sickle 1999.16-17.

their pictures of the wider physical world, Virgil positions his cover of one tree. Ramus classified tegmen as synecdoche of the class for one of its instances, generis pro specie, where Greeks often referred concretely to the shady tree or grove. As a trope of literary relationship, tegmen may thus suggest the slightness of bucolic as opposed to more expansive modes of epic in Latin, but also a certain abstractness, if not theoretical and rhetorical mannerism, as opposed to more naturalistic poetics among the Greeks.

Virgil next attributes the cover to a specific tree, which implies further literary revision. Like Theocritus, he avoids Plato’s choice, despite the plane’s rich literary background and development. A plane tree, along with a spring at a sacred site, had figured as a place of prophecy in epic: a “handsome plane” over the Achaian altars by a spring at Aulis. In this setting a serpent destroyed eight fledglings and a mother bird, which Kalchas interpreted as the years before the Achaeans could take Troy. After Plato, Philitas, to whom Theocritus deferred in the seventh idyll, would locate his own singing about love under a plane; Moschus, as Orsini noted, would make a fisherman envision sweet sleep with the echo of streams under a thick-leaved plane, and Meleager in an epigram that played against the Phaedrus would envision the plane as a refuge from love.

E.g. ἐν νέμει ὁσεμέτι (in shady grove, II. 11.480); ἄλογος ὑπὸ σκιερὸν (beneath shady grove, Od. 20.278); ὑπὸ σκιερῆ κεκλιμένου πλατάνῳ (reclining beneath shady plane, A.P. 103.3); ἑύοσκιον ἄλογος (well-shading grove, Id. 7.8).

Kalēi ὑπὸ πλαντανίστωτοι, οἶθεν ρέεν ἀγλαὸν ὑδωρ, II. 2.307.

See Hunter 1999 on Idd. 3.40-51 and 7.3-4, 10-11, 40.

Cf. Hermesianax on Philitas:
Οἴσθαι δὲ καὶ τὸν ἀιδόν, ὅν Εὐρυτέλῳ πολῖται
Κῶι κάφεισιν στήριν ὑπὸ πλατάνῳ
Βιττίδα μολπάζοντα θοῦν... (Powell 7.75-77)

Where the statue represents the subject of the poet’s work. Plane trees occur some twelve times in the epigrams of the Greek anthology.

Moschus, Ποιηματ. 1.1-2 Gow: αὐτὰρ ἔμοι ἱλικίας ἁπάντων ὑπὸ πλατάνῳ βαθυφύλλῳ, οἷς παραγόμενοι τὸν ἐγγύθην ἄχον ἀκούειν (but may I have sweet sleep beneath a deep-leaved plane and love to hear the nearby echo of the spring).

Meleager 13.7-8 G.-P. (=AP 7.196): ὁφρα φυγών τὸν Ἑρωτα μεσσιμβρινὸν ὑπὸν ἄγρεύσοι | ἐνθάδ υπὸ σκιερῆς κεκλιμένος πλατάνῳ (So that fleeing Love I may hunt out midday sleep | there stretched out beneath a shady plane tree): cf. frigus captatis opacum, B. 1.52. These motifs as well as the echoing of cicadas led Antonio La Penna to find a link to Phaedrus 229-230: Maia 6 (1952) 93, a suggestion rejected by Gow-Page ad loc. They might better have remarked the importance of sight in love for both Plato, Phaedrus (250-251), and Meleager, e.g., the Miusicus sequence, 99-109 G.-P., especially the following: τὰ καὶ καφοῖ οифιί αἶματα, ναὶ μά τὸν ϕαιδρόν ἐπισκόπιον (And your eyes babbling even to the blind, by your beaming brow: 108.3-4 G.-P. =AP 12.159). Gow and Page call ϕαιδρόν ἐπισκόπιον “apparently unique (and very surprising),” since
Despite, or perhaps because of, this prominence in tradition, the plane tree did not commend itself to Virgil. Like Theocritus, he avoided the commonplace, only to differ from Theocritus by making one tree a hallmark — fagus (beech). As a trope of literary succession, this choice of a signature tree gives Virgil's project a detail that is authentically Italic yet might add to Tityrus' mythic aura. Beech suggested the victuals of an earlier age, so Servius; and Ramus added that Pliny called beech the sweetest of nuts (N.H. 16.13).

Moreover, fagus, through its cognate φηγος, draws literary dimensions from Greek. Orsini compared οκτεραν δ' ιπο φαιγόν (beneath shady oak, Id. 12.8). There in a simile Theocritus defined not a locus of song but a traveler's retreat from the scorching sun. This would add a further point of comparison for any "epic journey" by Virgil's characters, whether Tityrus home safe like Theocritus' traveler or the lack of a haven for Meliboeus.

Φηγος also suggested Pan, as Coleman remarks. Pan was immanent the brow is normally "knitted in frowning" (LSJ) rather than "beaming." The virtual oxymoron follows the metaphor of "eyes that would sing to even the deaf" and underlines the visual impact of this brow, "bright, beaming, joyful," thus spurring love through sight, as did the "beaming boy" for whom Plato's dialogue was named.

Platanus occurs only twice elsewhere in Virgil: et steriles platani malos gessere ualentis (G. 2.70); iamque ministrantem platanum potantibus umbras (G. 4.146), which reflects the tree's tradition other than in Theocritus and the Bucolics.

So described, e.g., by Hubbard 1998.41-42, n. 14. But Hubbard contrasts the "spreading habit of Mediterranean beech trees" with pines that are "tall, narrow, low-branching" as if unaware of "a familiar object in the scenery of central and southern Italy," the "parasol pine (Pinus pinea)," which famously spreads a high, attractively branching umbrella: Sargeaunt 1920.101-02, and cf. the shady pines in Myrinus cited above, n. 45. Hubbard also seems unaware that beeches when not solitary grow in dense groves, where elongated trunks stretch up to tall, narrow tops (cf. B. 2.3: densas umbrosa cacumina fagos; for the symbolic function of beech in the Bucolics, see Van Sickle 1978.248, sv. '"beech'...matter of Tityran mode...cf. 'bark'; bucolic, symbols of; siluae.

Cf. Sargeaunt 1920.43-45, not to mention the faggeta atop il monte Cimino in upper Latium or the single beeches and groves near Pescasseroli in the Abruzzi.
in the background of the first idyll, so might well be wanted here. Virgil in
the course of the book will emphasize the tradition that Pan invented the
bucolic pipe and he makes a point of assigning Tityrus a pipe, as we shall see
in a moment.\textsuperscript{60} Wright notes, too, that Callimachus imagined Acontius urging
his love on πηγοὶ or πτελεάς,\textsuperscript{61} and Virgil is about to play on this literary
succession. Finally fagus/πηγοὶ suggested a Homeric horizon to a later
Renaissance commentator, Germanus Valens Guellius.\textsuperscript{62} He thought back to
the fighting around Troy (II. 5.693), where a πηγοὶ stood near the Skaian
gate.\textsuperscript{63} The latter succession will resonate with ever greater irony as Virgil's
two plots unfold. From within Meliboeus’ plot, the pasturage of Tityrus
appears isolated and anomalous, even hyperidyllic, against a countryside
beset by barbaric soldiery (cf. B. 1.11-12, 70-72). However, from within
Tityrus’ plot, his haven will appear as part of a landscape secured by mythic
power from Rome;\textsuperscript{64} and this new Roman myth will turn out to have old roots
in Homer and the war at Troy.

4. Mythic Music: Pan’s Pipe

After the mythemes of shelter and posture, Virgil also takes for Tityrus
the prestige of making music. Here the distinctive Latin twist adds still
sharper irony. For “τὸ βουκολικὸν carmen,” as Orsini put it, Virgil substitutes
siluestrem musam. Βουκολικὸν referred to Theocritus’ preeminent type of
herdsman, which was the βοουκόλος (cowherd, Daphnis) with his surrogate
Simichidas.\textsuperscript{65} Siluestris fits Virgil’s pervasive woodland locus for song, as
Ramus remarked.\textsuperscript{66} Yet the adjective also connotes wildness, cf. Orsini’s
gloss, ἀγρία μούσα (uncultivated, of the fields),\textsuperscript{67} which strikes a disparaging
Coleman 1977.71, adding Philemon (Athenaeus 2.52e), which is cited as
Nicander, φηγοὶ Πανὸς ἄγαλμα (oaks delight of Pan, fr. 69), with Propertius,
fagus et Arcadio pinus amica deo (1.18.20), by Wright 1983.109.

\textsuperscript{60} Cf. below, n. 86.
\textsuperscript{61} Wright 1983.149; for other shade in Callimachus, see above, n. .
\textsuperscript{62} Guellius 1575 ad loc.
\textsuperscript{65} Cf. above, n. 39.
\textsuperscript{66} Cf. Ramus 1572 ad loc.; also “Seven times the idea of woods is associated
symbolically with bucolic song” says Wright 1983.109.
\textsuperscript{67} Orsini 1575.ad loc.
note. More ironical still, the phrase carries a reference to Lucretius that has been often remarked and too little weighed as a trope of literary succession with an ambivalent thrust.\(^{68}\)

\[
\text{haec loca capripedes satyros nymphasque tenere}
\]
\[
finitimi fingunt et faunos esse loquuntur
\]
\[
\text{quorum noctiuago strepitu ludoque iocanti}
\]
\[
\text{adfirmant uulgo taciturna silentia rumpi;}
\]
\[
\text{chordarumque sonos fieri dulcisque querellas,}
\]
\[
\text{tibia quas fundit digitis pulsata canentum;}
\]
\[
\text{et genus agricolum late sentiscere, cum Pan}
\]
\[
\text{pinea semiferi capitis uelamina quassans}
\]
\[
\text{unco saepe labro calamos percurrit hiantis,}
\]
\[
\text{fistula siluestrem ne cesset fundere musam.}
\]

(That these places goat-footed satyrs and nymphs keep local folk pretend and imply that fauns there are with whose night-wandering din and jesting play they claim the voiceless silences are often split; and sounds of strings occur and sweet laments the pipe, when struck by fingers of musicians, spills; and far and wide the farmer folk begin to hear, when Pan tossing the piney veils of his half-wild head with bent lip often runs along the breathy reeds, lest the Pan-pipe cease to spill its wildwood muse.)

4.580-589

Merit belongs to Philip Damon for recognizing that such a reference must be fraught with programmatic import.\(^{69}\) Damon argued that where Theocritus opened the first idyll with herdsmen hearkening to nature, Virgil evokes the superstitious hill folk of Lucretius. They impose their mythological conceits on the natural phenomenon of echo. The irony towards Tityrus fits with the other attitudes assigned to Meliboeus and with their source in republican Roman culture. Tropes multiply for literary relationship. Against Theocritus, the Lucretian critique of pastoral myth makes Virgil’s project appear less natural, more self-consciously invented and imposed. But against Lucretius, Virgil rehabilitates the demystified mythology, assigning Tityrus the music of Pan, the pipe’s inventor, and opening the way to further mythologizing in Tityrus’ tie to Rome.

\(^{68}\) Cf., e.g., Van Sickle 1978.250, sv. “emulation...in bucolic...; Virgil’s of Catullus..., of Homer..., of Lucretius..., of Theocritus...; cf. oppositio in imitando, urbanitas”; also Thomas 1982.148, and on Catullus 64 and prior epic, “Giangrande’s oppositio in imitando. ... the opportunity to overhaul, partly through correction, that entire tradition,” Thomas 1986.185.

\(^{69}\) Damon 1961.285-290.
With the motif of music-making itself, Virgil further ironizes his literary relationships. Three variants occur in his Theocritean reference texts: the music of the pine and the longed-for Komatas (μελισδ-, Idd. 1.2, 7.89), the anonymous goatherd’s piping (οὐριοδ-1.3), and the poetic process of Lykidas, described ironically as toilsome rather than sweet: ἔξεπονάσσα (7.51), with its parallel in nature, the cicadas’ music, ἕχον πόνον (they had toil, 7.139). On the latter Hunter remarks, “The transference of this epic phrase to the aesthetic πόνος of song (51n.) is wittily paradoxical, as cicadas seem to have been notoriously lazy.” True to the emerging profile of Melibœus, Virgil opts for irony and does so in language that adds another hint of public life at Rome. Meditari suggests concentrated mental effort, as in planning, intending, thinking out, or practicing (OLD). A programmatic passage from the De oratore shows a normal context for the verb even while suggesting another link between that dialogue and Virgil’s:

Age uero, ne semper forum, subsellia, rostra curiamque meditere, quid esse potest in otio aut iucundius aut magis proprium humanitatis, quam sermo facetus ac nulla in re rudis?

(But come, lest you be always striving for the forum, the bench, the platform and the senate, what in leisure can be either sweeter or more proper to humanity than speech that is well made and in nothing rough?)

De or. 1.32

Meditaris thus imputes a laborious and urban character to Tityrus’ craft. On the other hand, Cicero’s picture of leisure resembles Theocritean sweetness and the portrait that Virgil will make Tityrus draw of himself, in rebuttal to Melibœus (B. 1.10).

5. Meager Style

Gow 1952.1.61. Cf. the foundation myth of Komatas, κηρία φερβόμενος ἔτος ὄριον ἐξεπονάσσας (“on honeycomb fed, didst endure with toil the springtime of the year,” Gow: 7.85).

Hunter 1999.194; for the symbolic role of cicadas in poetics, see Phaedrus 259a-d.

Meditaris drew the gloss exerces from La Cerda, like others following the lead of Servius, who cites the Greek synonym πόνος and the ancient belief that the Latin derived from the Greek by exchange of letters (3.5.10 Th.-H.).

Cf. Horace’s description of the Bucolics: epos...| ...molle atque facetum | Vergilio adnuerunt gaudentes rure Camenae (epos... soft and well-turned the Camenae who delight in country granted Virgil, Serm. 1.10.43-45).
Ironies proliferate with tenui, which takes a position against Theocritean esthetics. The ambiguous tenor of an instrument and of its sound replaces the sweetness prominent not only in Theocritus but even in Lucretius' dismissive version of pastoral.\(^{74}\) Tenuis, like siluestris, bears contradictory connotations. It could imply the negative, “thin” and “poor” (as argued by Cristoforo Landino),\(^{75}\) or the positive, “refined” (which Losse Bade affirmed against Landino, glossing it with deductum, delicata).\(^{76}\) Neutrally, it characterized the fundamental matter of the image in Lucretian physics.\(^{77}\) The negative seconds the other deprecating tendencies in Meliboeus. The positive anticipates a recurrent esthetic ideal in the book,\(^{78}\) much as siluestris foreshadowed the recurrent siluae of place.

Tenui also opens further literary horizons. Recent commentators see a specific link to the ideal of slightness associated with Callimachus;\(^{79}\) and beyond his μοῦσα λεπταλέη (slight muse, fr. 1.24 Pf.) lies an epic vignette. In the Iliad on Achilles’ great shield, Homer represented an entertainment for the vintage by one who sang λεπταλέη φωνη (“with delicate voice,” Leaf: II. 18.571). The image is marginal to the action on the shield, which is marginal to the epic as a whole. Yet the shield’s themes also include action like that around Troy, so that the shield is sometimes said to contain the poem. The vintage song thus invites comparison with the singing of the Iliad itself; and its theme of slightness fits any literary initiative that draws

Cf. dulcisque querellas (DNR 4.584); also ἀδύ of natural music (Id. 1.1), and of human music, Id. 1.2, 7; 7.89; also γλυκῇ Μοίσα κατὰ στόματος χέε νέκταρ (the Muse poured sweet nectar on his mouth, 7.82), the latter two of the mythic Komatas: cf. Hunter’s remarks on the metapoetic implications of sweetness, above n. 7.

Sensitive to a shading in Virgil’s language that some later readers reject or ignore, Landino 1531 notes that tenui greatly differs from subtili, because it diminishes, as in attenuuo and extenuuo: ergo laudat subtile ingenium, tenue vituperat.

Badius Ascensius 1544; cf. the Callimachean deductum carmen (song drawn out fine) of B. 6.5.

E.g., nunc age, quam tenui natura constet imago (note now in how thin a nature the image consists, DRN 4.110.

The commentators compare tenui B. 6.8; cf. deductum, 6.5.

So, e.g., Kenney 1983.50, and Wright 1983.109, but not Clausen 1994 ad loc.; cf. for the aesthetics of slightness, a convenient review in Hopkinson 1988.7-9, 89-91 including II. 18.571; also Pfeiffer 1965.5.
energy from playing centers against margins.  
It is a complex and multivalent context, then, that conditions Virgil's choice of a motif to cap his initial program.  
We have inferred programmatic hints from the fact that he evoked the sounds of the first idyll's opening only to intensify the drama and shift esthetic emphasis from sweet to thin.  
We have seen him transfer motifs of foundation myth from the seventh idyll to his new Tityrus.  
For a final mytheme, then, he turns to the first subject of Tityros' song, which was Daphnis; and this takes him from the sounds that open the first idyll to an enigmatic motif at its climax.  
There the pipe figured as a significant attribute of the bucolic hero -- the sole possession designated by Daphnis for an heir.  
Theocritus imagined Daphnis' last gesture before death as calling Pan to leave Arcadia for Sicily to claim the pipe (Id. 1.128-29).  
The account of the instrument is so elaborate (and elusive) as to leave Hunter (for once) at a loss: "no reason why Daphnis would say such a thing to Pan."  
Yet the emphasis on details of the pipe's construction, even to the middle voicing of the verb, φερευ, seems calculated to imply the myth of its invention by Pan, which Virgil would emphasize as the background for his own bucolic exercise.

Daphnis' call to the Arcadian god takes the form of an apostrophe; and Hunter has shown us that such apostrophes have foundational implications.  
He saw a "foundation myth" for "aipolic" poetry in Tityros' apostrophe to Komatas and an "apparent wish that 'bucolic' had never been invented" in the apostrophe to Pasiphae at B. 6.45; he also identified Daphnis as "the


On the importance of context, see again above, n. 14.

Hunter 1999.101-02; cf. three variants on Daphnis and Pan in Theocritus: dedicating pipes to him (Theocr. Epigr. 2.1-3), warned to flee rape by him (idem 3.3), provoking him by piping (cf. the warning against disturbing his noontide rest, Id. 1.15-17, which is described in the same terms as Daphnis' rest at Epigr. 3.1-2).

Pan primum calamos cera coniungere pluris | instituit (B. 2.32-33), primus calamos non passus inertis (B. 8.24).

Hunter 1999.174-176. Hunter's analysis of the nested voicing in Id. 7 and how it served Virgil in B. 6 should refine suggestions made by Thomas 1999.291-296, where he backs away from his own and others' uncritical insistence on Virgil's Callimacheanism, claiming to discover in B. 6 the filtering role of the fictional narrator, Tityrus: but cf. Van Sickle 2000 with reference to divers publications, e.g., Van Sickle 1995, correcting Clausen 1994. It would be well if from Tityrus
Thus an apostrophe from Daphnis to Pan to take the pipe implies a literary succession. It makes Daphnis, as the “founding hero” of a bucolic mode in Sicily, appear later than (and therefore secondary to) the inventor of the bucolic instrument in Arcadia. This sequence in foundational mythology becomes available to Virgil when he confers the pipe on Tityrus. How he turns it to further advantage will emerge in the course of the book.86

[end of part 1]

in B. 6 Thomas moved to interpret the stagy return of Meliboeus in B. 7 as also a metapoetic motif that is both recursive and proactive in its proper context (cf. above, n. 14), which is the developing book. He would then find Virgil pulling back from the poetics associated with Tityrus in the first halfbook, making way for the framing role of Meliboeus in B. 7, 8, and 10 (cf. above, n. 22). Virgil opens B. 6 by turning from his outline for heroic and historical epic (the ideology and poetics of Tityrus and Tityrus’ god: B. 1-5) toward the ambition to refound the bucolic strain of epic on Arcadian ground (making a prequel to Theocritus: cf. below, n. 86.

85
Idem 176.
86
Virgil seized the opportunity to claim notional priority over Theocritus by gradually linking his new bucolic with Arcadia. Virgil’s Daphnis deified will captivate Pan (B. 5.59); his dignified Daphnis will welcome Arcadians into an Italic foreground (B. 7); and Gallus, his Roman elegiac replacement for Daphnis, will perish in Arcadia, but do so at a notional time imagined as prior to the nymph Arethusa’s flight to Sicily, where Theocritus’ Daphnis dying bid her farewell (Id. 1.117): see Van Sickle 1995.130-31.