Food for Thought: Eating in Virgil's *Eclogues*

*Revised from a paper given to the Virgil Society on 16 October 2021**

> 'Excellent, i'faith, of the chameleon's dish; I eat the air, promise-crammed. You cannot feed capons so.' (Shakespeare, *Hamlet* III.ii.95–6)

If we believe that Virgil's *Eclogues*, artificial and well-worked though they may be, remain rustic dramas that involve actual herdsmen and their lifestyle, then we must consider some of the more realistic elements that the poems evoke. Chief among these intrusions into the pastoral world is the necessity of food consumption, the tyranny of the belly. Studying this, one is led to a curious opposition between the conditions of the animals and their guardians. The former category seems always to be eating; the latter hardly ever are. The famous advice of Apollo in *Eclogue* 6 is to fatten up the sheep (*pascere oportet ovis*, 6.5), not for the poet himself to indulge. Likewise, the only phrase uttered by the god-like *iuvenis* in the telling of Tityrus is *pascite, ut ante, boves, pueri, submittite tauros* ("Feed your oxen as before, boys, bring up your bulls", *Ecl.* 1.45); in contrast, Meliboeus has been sick (*aeger* at 1.13), and Amaryllis has left the apples hanging on the trees (1.37). In contrast, apples, that well-known erotic fruit, are usually picked (3.70, 8.37; quinces at 2.51) or thrown (3.64), but not eaten.[1] And at the very end of the poetry-book the reference to the juniper tree, just before the goats are told to go home full, may well be derived from personal observation of the *ginepraio*, dense groupings of such trees, "a favorite food of goats".[2] Thus, the *Eclogues* do not reflect the passage of Homer that names a Bienor who has been seen as a precursor for the Bianor of *Eclogue* 9,[3] where, in the pastoral simile which describes the twilight

* I would like to thank those who attended my Virgil Society paper in October 2021, especially Nicholas Freer, Christopher Grocock, and Fiachra Mac Góráin, and the audience, in particular Alison Sharrock, and organiser, April Pudsey, of the Manchester Classical Association public lecture which I gave in January 2021, as well as Francesca Bellei, Tom Geue, and the editor of *PVS*.

1 Littlewood (1968) is the major study; cf. for example Felgentreu (1993); Harrison (2003) 90; Blythe (2018).

2 As observed by Fantazzi and Querbach (1985) 364 and endorsed by Clausen (1994) 311. See now Campbell (2023) 20–6 on the programmatic grazing of Virgil's goats.

3 Davis (2012) 58–60, drawing on Tracy (1982).

hour of his death in Agamemnon's *Iliad* 11 *aristeia*, "desire of sweet food seizes his [*sc.* the woodman's] mind" (*Il.* 11.89).

Few stones have previously been left unturned in the criticism of Virgil, and the seed for this article was sown by an important analysis of the underpinnings of Virgilian bucolic in responses to Sicilian landscapes and history.[4] It seems fundamentally relevant to the relative positioning, in *Eclogue* 2, of Corydon and his intended paramour Alexis, that Sicily was the site of numerous slave revolts, originating in endemic problems of inequity and vile treatment by landowners. In that context, it matters that Corydon's gift-offering for Alexis at 2.51–3 consists of domesticated and edible fruit and nuts (quinces, chestnuts, plums), in contrast to the bountiful but strictly ornamental flower bouquet gathered by the nymphs:[5] foraging for desirable sustenance opposed to mere aesthetic pleasures. In what follows, I will endeavour to track the reality principle in food form through several of the *Eclogues*, while keeping an eye on their literary affiliations. Liquids, too, will hold our attention, especially milk – even if we avoid dwelling much on the supposed water-wine debate which involves Callimachean poses and criticism[6] – but note that the four overt references to actual drinking either involve animals again (*potum … iuvenci*, 7.11; *cum canibus … ad pocula dammae*, 8.28) or faraway lands remote from the rustic idyll (*Ararim Parthus bibet*, 1.62; *nec si … Hebrumque bibamus*, 10.65). In contrast, the prize of *Eclogue* 3, the cups, is stored away and has not been drunk from: Menalcas says, "I have not yet touched my lips to them" (*necdum illis labra admovi*, 3.43, repeated verbatim by Damoetas).[7]

The first example of this article is actually something inedible in the middle of the *Eclogue* book: the staff which Mopsus offers to Menalcas as a gift at the poem's end. We find here a parenthesis which identifies an Antigenes as having asked for and then been denied the staff, even though he was "worthy to be loved" (5.89). Normally, Antigenes' unique naming here is seen as a throwback to his cameo in Theocritus' *Idyll* 7.[8] But of clear relevance for my culinary concerns is Antigenes' appearance in an epigram by Philodemus, *AP* 9.412 (= 20 Gow-Page = 29 Sider):[9]

> Ἤδη καὶ ῥόδον ἐστί, καὶ ἀκμάζων ἐρέβινθος,
> καὶ καυλοὶ κράμβης, Σωσύλε, πρωτοτόμου,

[4] Leigh (2016), who rightly insists that we pay attention to accounts by such witnesses as Strabo of problems in historical Arcadia also.

[5] As suggested by Armstrong (2019) 241, more tentatively than this formulation.

[6] See Knox (1985), who closes by discussing Gallus by the Permessus in *Eclogue* 6.

[7] Oksanish (2017) 119–20. I do not engage with the problem of how many cups there are in this passage.

[8] Coleman (1977) 171. He's a poet too: Cucchiarelli (2012) 317.

[9] For a discussion of this poem, with bibliography, see Cairns (2016) 8–9, 399–403.

καὶ μαίνη †ζαλαγεῦσα, καὶ ἀρτιπαγὴς ἁλίτυρος,
καὶ θριδάκων οὔλων ἁβροφυῆ πέταλα.
ἡμεῖς δ᾽ οὔτ᾽ ἀκτῆς ἐπιβαίνομεν, οὔτ᾽ ἐν ἀπόψει
γινόμεθ᾽, ὡς αἰεί, Σωσύλε, τὸ πρότερον;
καὶ μὴν Ἀντιγένης καὶ Βάκχιος ἐχθὲς ἔπαιζον·
νῦν δ᾽ αὐτοὺς θάψαι σήμερον ἐκφέρομεν.

It is already the season of the rose, Sosylus, and of ripe chickpeas, and the first cut cabbages, and smelts, and freshly set salty cheese, and the tender leaves of curly lettuces. But do we neither go up to the lookout nor sit on the belvedere, Sosylus, as in the past? And yet Antigenes and Bacchius were fooling around only yesterday, and today we carry them to their graves to be buried.

This epigram was surely known to Virgil, in light of his likely appropriation of the "freshly set salty cheese" in the invitation to a consolatory meal that Tityrus extends to Meliboeus at the end of *Eclogue* 1 with its *pressi copia lactis* ("an abundance of freshly pressed cheese", 1.81).[10] Antigenes in the final couplet of the epigram is revealed to have died, as has Bacchius, whose name is a form of the divine name Bacchus – which in Virgil's *Eclogues* appears notably in *Eclogue* 5, in the songs of first Mopsus (5.30) and then Menalcas answering it (5.69).[11] Roses, as mentioned in the first line of the epigram, appear only once in the *Eclogues*,[12] here in Menalcas' polite flattery of Mopsus: the younger man is as much better than Amyntas as the rose-garden (*rosetis*) is to the Celtic nard (*saliunca*, 5.17). The adjective Menalcas uses to differentiate Mopsus from Amyntas, rose from nard, and olive from willow is *humilis* ("humble", 5.17). In view of the epigram's focus on a humble meal that includes chickpeas, sprats, cabbage-stalk and lettuce, Menalcas' decision to say that Mopsus, roses, and olive are not that (meaning, not an Epicurean invitee) is opaque and ironic.

Since Menalcas and Mopsus have been viewed as erotically involved,[13] and amatory affairs often demand gift-giving, we must continue by considering further comestible offerings in

[10] Thus Davis (2004) 67. Some think that Tityrus is offering milk, not cheese: Du Quesnay (1981) 93–4. Cairns (2015) claims that *premeretur* (1.34) and *pressi* (1.81) hint at an etymology of *caseus* from *cogere*.

[11] The close responsion between the two songs is almost explicit: Schafer (2017) 152–5, cf. Cucchiarelli (2011b), especially at 238–40 on Bacchus more specifically, with Cucchiarelli (2011a) 163–6 and Cucchiarelli (2012) 315. The only other explicit naming of Bacchus in the *Eclogues* is Silenus' *Iaccho* (6.15), which could form the standard metonymy for wine.

[12] I do not count *viburnum*, the "guelder-rose", which features in the simile about the uniqueness of the city at *Ecl.* 1.25. See Armstrong (2019) 241–2 for the implications of cultivation and exotic colour here, including the strangeness of the unique mention of *saliunca*.

[13] Cf. Breed (2006) 67.

the *Eclogues*. We have already seen one set of these, Corydon's offering to Alexis; the former's earlier boasting of his abundance of milk – *lac mihi non aestate novum, non frigore defit*, "new milk is not lacking for me in summer, nor does it fail me in winter" (2.22) – is famously an adaptation of a line from Theocritus, *Idyll* 11, where the Cyclops says: "And cheese is not absent, neither in summer nor in autumn, nor at the end of winter" (τυρὸς δ'οὐ λείπει μ'οὔτ' ἐν θέρει οὔτ'ἐν ὀπώρᾳ, | οὐ χειμῶνος ἄκρω, *Id.* 11.36–7).[14] Back in *Eclogue* 1, we realise that Tityrus' name can be derived from τυρός, the Greek word for cheese, and Galatea from γάλα, meaning milk.[15] (This is not to discount any of the other famous etymologies for 'Tityrus'.) The coalescence of dairy here has been analysed fully by Michael Paschalis, who observes that Tityrus is the only one in the *Eclogues* to make cheese: he takes the *pinguis caseus* to town to sell, but never comes back with much coin (1.34–5). We know that *pinguis*, "rich", is not a common adjective for cheese,[16] and the contrast with Tityrus' impecunious return is marked, whether that is because the city folk are miserly or because Galatea's demands form an expensive burden that overrides *cura peculi* (1.32).[17] But we have already seen Tityrus' generosity at the end of the poem where he offers Meliboeus the cheese (alongside ripe apples, *mitia poma*, and mealy chestnuts, *castaneae molles*, 1.80–1).[18] These are autumnal products, and the presence of cheese here adds clear Epicurean hints, in the intimation of a consolatory invitation.[19] Now, if we triangulate these two *Eclogue* 1 passages with the following poem's dairy material, we note easily that the adaptation of the *Idyll* 11 line in *Eclogue* 2 leaves out autumn and replaces cheese with milk. But the ending of Theocritus' poem is not usually adduced in the consideration of these passages: "So by singing Polyphemus shepherded his love, and it served him easier than if he'd paid a fee" (Οὕτω τοι Πολύφαμος ἐποίμαινεν τὸν ἔρωτα | μουσίσδων, ῥᾷον δὲ διᾶγ' ἢ εἰ χρυσὸν ἔδωκεν, 11.80–1). The mention of money there, while a commonplace joke intended for the addressee, Nicias, a doctor who charges for his services, can be compared with Tityrus' unsuccessful cheesemonger operations in *Eclogue* 1. Innocent and ineffectual, the amatory and poetic exchanges sit uneasily against harder economic transactions.[20]

So, too, Thestylis in *Eclogue* 2 provides a service, making a 'ploughman's lunch' for the labourers in the field (2.10–11):

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[14] See, e.g., Cucchiarelli (2012) 184–5.

[15] Paschalis (2008). On wordplay in Roman food situations, see Gowers (2021); already Boyd (1983), on the quinces (*cydonea mala* and the links between *malum*, apple, and *mala*, cheek), is a classic of the genre.

[16] Clausen (1994) 46, although his conclusion that *pinguis* goes with both *victima* and *caseus* is disputed by Cucchiarelli (2012) 152. See further Jaeger (2015) 73.

[17] On the question of whether or not this represents a bid for manumission, see now Xinyue (2021) 35.

[18] See Xinyue (2021) 41 on the question of who exactly the benefactor is here.

[19] For this see Davis (2012) 34–9, who usefully cites (36 n. 25) Epicurus' "little pot of cheese" (Diogenes Laertius 10.11) as an exemplar of the plain meal.

[20] Cf. Saunders (2008) 78–9 on comparing such trades and trade-offs.

> Thestylis et rapido fessis messoribus aestu 10
> alia serpyllumque herbas contundit olentis.
>
> Thestylis pounds up, for the harvesters tired from the scorching heat, garlic and wild thyme and pungent herbs.

This recipe is surely a *moretum*, the same as the subject of the familiar pseudo-Virgilian poem. That supposedly slight work – which, like its namesake foodstuff, could be said to bely the effort of its production – has been subjected to criticism from various angles.[21] I recall here one aspect only, the dietary staple (as opposed to the complement, which is the *moretum* itself). Whereas substantial attention is paid there to the labour-intensive making of bread as a necessary accompaniment, here in the eclogue in Corydon's conception there is no such vehicle – not even a cracker – for the meal.[22] Nor does the Virgilian (as opposed to the pseudo-Virgilian) *moretum* have body to it: no cheese or oil, which we would add to a pesto. Instead, the mention of *serpyllum*, the wild thyme favoured not just by hungry workers but also by bees,[23] with its etymology from *serpere* ("to creep") as advertised by Varro (*R.* 1.35.2), neatly anticipates both Corydon's close stalking of Alexis' footsteps (*Ecl.* 2.12) and the interplay of the ivy and laurel in the poet's (be it Pollio's or Octavian's) crown, in the famous lines partly quoted by Quintilian (*Inst.* 10.1.92), *sine tempora circum | inter victricis hederam tibi serpere laurus* ("around the forehead allow the ivy to creep around your victor's laurels"): in a sense, she honours and elevates the workmen with the meal. Likewise, as with *pinguis* we saw earlier, the adjective *rapidus* that is applied to the sun's intense heat is ambiguous, as it could be applied, even if not strictly grammatically (since the adverb would be *rapide*), to the motion of Thestylis' pestle, which creates its own heat to make the herbs *olentes*. Of course, readers of both the *Moretum* and Horace's *Epode* 3 know, in literary terms, the heat of garlic.[24] Now, Thestylis had featured as the sidekick of Simaetha in Theocritus, *Idyll* 2, another model for the present poem, *Eclogue* 2: in the Greek work she was a servant who helped Simaetha in preparing a concoction

[21] See, e.g., Fitzgerald (1996) on the poem's world of work; Haley (2009) 41–8 focuses on Scybale and her often racist reception; Gowers (2021) 250–60 finds meaning in the poem's varied and linguistic processes. Francesca Bellei, on sexual resonances, and Tom Geue, on property and metaphor, both have important readings forthcoming.

[22] Ovid's *moretum* in the *Fasti*, an offering for the Magna Mater (*Fast.* 4.367–72), similarly does not come with the dietary staple; it becomes clear shortly after, in the discussion, on the occasion of the Cerealia, of how early humans' "bread" was "fresh greens" (4.395), that this is because the meal is an ancient, pre-agricultural one.

[23] Cf. Columella, *Rust.* 11.3.39, with Virgil, *Georgics* 4.31 and Armstrong (2019) 242–3.

[24] "Four heads" (*Mor.* 87) can be set alongside the special mention of *alia* in *Ecl.* 2; in turn, Horace, *Ep.* 3.4, *O dura ilia messorum* ("O the tough guts of harvesters"), refers back to the *Ecl.* 2 lines, as Gowers (1993) 289–90 notes. The heat of garlic reflects rageful iambic tendencies: Gowers (1993) 281, 284, 294–5, 297–8, 300.

for the purposes of love magic.[25] The juxtaposition reveals that Virgil's herbal meal should by rights be motivated by a *quid pro quo*: what does Thestylis get in return for her labour? Where is the love?[26]

We might look in this context to Theocritus, *Idyll* 10, where Milon ends by referring to "hungry love" (λιμηρὸν ἔρωτα, 10.57).[27] Just beforehand, he claimed to channel a culture-hero, inventor of agriculture, Lityerses, in singing one of his working-songs, which culminates in a recipe (10.54–5):

> Κάλλιον ὦ 'πιμελητὰ φιλάργυρε τὸν φακὸν ἕψειν·
> μή τι τάμῃς τὰν χεῖρα καταπρίων τὸ κύμινον.
>
> Better to boil up the lentil soup properly, stingy overseer; don't cut your hand while slicing the cumin seed.

From a cookery perspective, Thestylis' pesto is actually the opposite of this lentil recipe,[28] despite their seemingly mutual humility, and lack of delicacy, in *cucina povera*. The herb dip is quick and prepared to order; but in Theocritus the cook, who seems to be identical with the foreman, is enjoined not to stint on cooking time or on spicing, which is the import of the cumin seed advice, not to be mean.[29] Again, we wonder at the generosity of the food provision.[30] A little later in *Eclogue* 2, Corydon expands (2.40–4):

> praeterea duo – nec tuta mihi valle reperti –
> capreoli sparsis etiam nunc pellibus albo,
> bina die siccant ovis ubera; quos tibi servo.
> iam pridem a me illos abducere Thestylis orat;
> et faciet, quoniam sordent tibi munera nostra.

[25] Saunders (2008) 126–7 notes that Corydon has effectively positioned himself in a poetic landscape, while Cucchiarelli (2012) 180–1 comments that "garlic has its own magical potential".

[26] I have been tempted to read Simulus' use of "two fingers" (*Mor.* 114) in shaping the *moretum* – Kenney (1984) 50 provides a note pondering why not hands – as sexually suggestive.

[27] Campbell (2023) 33–41 places *Idyll* 10 at the heart of Virgil's generic engagement with Theocritus.

[28] Leigh (2016) 415 labels this "the bathetic if comforting reality of lentil soup".

[29] Hunter (1999) 213–14.

[30] Indeed, the use of the singular φακὸν alongside the singular κύμινον serves as comic diminution: not only is the overseer cutting up one cumin seed, but he is also boiling up just one lentil. This point is developed from an observation by Morgan (2007) 46 on a similar occurrence in the *Aesop Romance* (G 39), there linked to Theocritus' usage.

> Moreover, two roe-deer fawns – I found them in a dangerous valley – whose skins are sprinkled with white, dry up the udders of an ewe twice a day; these I keep for you. Now for a while Thestylis has been begging me to lead them away; and she'll do it, since my gifts mean little to you.

While this offering and then withdrawal of the gift of deer, which he risked his life to obtain, seems petulant,[31] the reappearance of Thestylis cues us to reconsider her earlier cookery: does she want them as pets or ingredients?[32] Should we dare to impute a grasping ambition to her, fostered perhaps by the abuse of her unpaid labour, like the greed of the assiduous young deer who themselves desire milk?

This appearance of udders, *ubera*, is one of three in the *Eclogues*, the others being those of goats in the Golden Age of *Eclogue* 4, which they "will bring home distended with milk all by themselves" (*ipsae lacte domum referent distenta capellae*, 4.21), and those of cows fed on clover which will swell (*sic cytiso pastae distendant ubera vaccae*, 9.31),[33] if Moeris, in Lycidas' account, begins to sing.[34] These full udders recall a particular food item, which is not in fact on the menu but referred to in another celebrated epigram by Philodemus, *AP* 11.44 (= 23 Gow-Page = 27 Sider):

> αὔριον εἰς λιτήν σε καλιάδα, φίλτατε Πείσων,
> ἐξ ἐνάτης ἕλκει μουσοφιλὴς ἕταρος
> εἰκάδα δειπνίζων ἐνιαύσιον· εἰ δ' ἀπολείψεις
> οὔθατα καὶ Βρομίου χιογενῆς πρόποσιν,
> ἀλλ' ἑτάρους ὄψει παναληθέας, ἀλλ' ἐπακούσῃ 5

[31] Cucchiarelli (2012) 193 rightly notes the goatish model (Theocritus, *Id.* 3.34–6) and the etymologising of Thestylis' name from θέσσομαι.

[32] We know from Varro, *R.* 3.12.1 (backed up by Pliny, *NH* 8.211) that Q. Fulvius Lippinus preserved deer for consumption, with other game animals such as boar and wild sheep, and indeed snails (*NH* 9.173), in his enclosure of forty *iugera*, by the time of the dramatic date of Varro [54 BCE, in the *communis opinio* as per Richardson (1983); 50, in the trenchant response of Linderski (1985)], "a little before the civil war involving Pompey the Great", in the words of Pliny in the snail passage. Cf. Starr (1992).

[33] I am indebted to Laurence Totelin for drawing my attention to the natural efficacy of *cytisus* in leading to the production of an abundant quantity of milk (Pliny, *NH* 13.131). On Roman milk in general, see Alcock (2000) and Déry (2000); on human milk in the context of taboos surrounding the female body, Lawrence (2021). While humans might be thought the only animals to drink others' milk, Bretin-Chabrol (2017) observes inter-species milk-consumption in the agronomists, where an ass foal made to suckle a mare will become a mule – though Virgil in the *Georgics* says little about asses or mules.

[34] The link between singing and happy cows producing milk is as miraculous as the revived Golden Age wonder where the ram changes his colour at will (*Ecl.* 4.43–5); Kania (2016) 86–7 is right to note the *Eclogue* speaker's "imaginative fiction" and "inventiveness" there; still, his n. 48 notes a plausible link with an Etruscan prophetic text (in Macrobius, *Sat.* 3.7.1–2) that cites coloured sheep as a favourable omen.

Φαιήκων γαίης πουλὺ μελιχρότερα·
ἢν δέ ποτε στρέψῃς καὶ ἐς ἡμέας ὄμματα, Πείσων,
ἄξομεν ἐκ λιτῆς εἰκάδα πιοτέρην.

Tomorrow, dearest Piso, your musical comrade will drag you to his modest place at 3 pm, feeding you on the annual visit for the Twentieth. If you will miss udders and Bromian wine bottled in Chios, still you will see faithful comrades, still you will hear things much sweeter than the land of the Phaeacians. And if you should ever turn your eyes to us, Piso, we shall lead out a richer feast, from a humbler.

Virgil was part of this Epicurean coterie on the Bay of Naples, as he reveals in his *sphragis* at the end of the *Georgics*, and this invitation poem participates – just like the *Eclogues* – in a negotiation of Greek and Roman cultures and norms. And we should not forget that several of the *Eclogues* are rather formal invitations to the exchange of songs, sometimes in competition but always in responsion. Thus, it stands to reason that, even though the dish is recorded as sow udders, *sumina*, and it was noteworthy for being expensive,[35] the fact that it was preferred by Romans rather than Greeks, and the insistence in the Virgilian examples on luxurious amplitude, solidify a connection to the pleasures of the table. Additionally, the reference in the epigram to the "land of the Phaeacians", which dovetails with the reference to Chios (the supposed birthplace of Homer),[36] can be matched with the allusion in *hinc usque ad sidera notus* ("known from here right to the stars", *Ecl.* 5.43) to Odysseus' declaration of his identity to the Phaeacians in *Odyssey* 9.[37]

But in that poem, *Eclogue* 5, we have a striking instance of animals not behaving as they ought (5.24–6):

non ulli pastos illis egere diebus
frigida, Daphni, boves ad flumina: nulla neque amnem
libavit quadrupes, nec graminis attigit herbam.

On those days, Daphnis, nobody drove the pastured oxen to the cold river; no four-footed beast drank from the stream or touched the grass of the meadow.

[35] Gowers (1993) 222; Sider (1997) 158 with references. Roman delicacy: Athenaeus 9.399c = 14.656e.
[36] See Bettenworth (2012).
[37] Cf. e.g. Du Quesnay (1976/7) 22.

These abstaining animals appear to be acting out the pathetic fallacy,[38] but they are also in sync with an historical event: the death of Julius Caesar, at whose death, Suetonius tells us, "the herds of horses which he had dedicated to the river Rubicon when he crossed it, and had let loose without a keeper, stubbornly refused to graze and wept copiously" (*Div. Iul.* 81.2). This is one of the points which has encouraged commentators to read Caesar into the eulogies for Daphnis delivered by Mopsus and Menalcas, the one a lament and the other a more positive apotheosis;[39] I accept the analogy and would add that food symbolism continues to exert an influence over the remainder of the poem. This occurs first in the promise of worshipping the deified Daphnis, whereby Menalcas will offer him annually two cups of milk and two bowls of olive oil, in a nod to Theocritus, *Idyll* 5's similar offerings. That ritualised feeding is followed up by the avowal that Daphnis' name will be glorified "as long as the bees feed on thyme and cicadas on dew" (*dumque thymo pascentur apes, dum rore cicadae*, 5.77). Given that bees and especially cicadas are figures for poets in antiquity,[40] it is striking that their eating habits are here troped as a model for collective memory,[41] albeit in tandem with the archaic milk (more so than the oil).[42]

Yet poetic memory speaks through allusion, and that reference earlier in *Eclogue* 5 to Odysseus' touching "fame has reached the stars" quotation has rightly been seen to include Lucretius in its purview.[43] Concerted argument about the niceties of the relative Epicurean positions of Lucretius, Philodemus, and Virgil is beyond the scope of this paper; that said, I want to focus on one more marked and highly literary instance of commensality. The didactic poet calls up a recollection of one of the most notorious of mythic feasts, that of Thyestes on his children served to him by his brother Atreus, when in his screed against the effects of fearing death he presents the breakdown of society (*DRN* 3.72–3):[44]

> crudeles gaudent in tristi funere fratris
> et consanguineum mensas odere timentque.
>
> Cruel, they rejoice in the sad death of a brother and hate and fear the tables of blood-kin.

[38] So Nauta (2006) 327.
[39] Notably Du Quesnay (1976/7) 30–4; Karakasis (2011) 168–72; Gale (2013) 279–86.
[40] See, e.g., Fitzgerald (2016b), with references at n. 21; Karakasis (2011) 175; Cucchiarelli (2012) 314.
[41] Cf. Meban (2009) 123.
[42] Déry (2000) 124, citing Romulus' milk-offerings at Pliny, *NH* 14.88. Cucchiarelli (2012) 311 notes the link of "fresh milk" with *Ecl.* 2.22, a line discussed above.
[43] Gale (2013) 280–2: the self-advertisement also recalls Lucr. 6.7–8.
[44] On this see Cowan (2013).

In Virgil, near the end of Silenus' mythic song (and note, he did not eat the crimson mulberries, merely had his face smeared with them), the narrator asks the question, why should he tell us about the following (*Ecl.* 6.78–81):

> ut mutatos Terei narraverit artus,
> quas illi Philomela dapes, quae dona pararit,
> quo cursu deserta petiverit, et quibus ante
> infelix sua tecta super volitaverit alis?

> how he recounted the story of Tereus' changed limbs, and the feasts and gifts Philomela prepared for him, in what way she sought the desert, and with what wings she flew, the unlucky one, above her own home.

These two family feasts (or feasts on family members) are closely related in the details of their horror, and in the obliqueness of their reference to the mythological paradigm; in the eclogue the time relations are severely out of joint. In view of the contemporary resonance in the Lucretian passage, which has referred only a few lines earlier to civil war, I would claim that these meals – and note that Virgil's is only told in summary – are in a sense apotropaic: they are brought up as a kind of corrective to the standard view, purveyed by such as Cicero (*Tusc.* 5.89), that Epicureans talked too much about food. We may compare Philomela, here noted to be *infelix*, with the other *infelix* of *Eclogue* 6, Pasiphae, who earlier had been portrayed pining for a bull who "chews up the pale grasses" (*pallentis ruminat herbas*, 6.54). This sequence is indebted to Calvus' *Io*, and the famous fragment *a virgo infelix, herbis pasceris amaris* ("Ah unhappy maiden, you feed on bitter grasses", 20 Hollis). Noting the brilliant detail, observed by careful readers,[45] that the grass is only bitter from a human point of view because it is typical fare for a cow, we again see a removal of the traces of human consumption in the eclogue. Indeed, we may speculate that thinking about eating the pastoral animals being cared for so assiduously is simply too much for everybody to handle.[46]

By way of conclusion, we can witness the afterlife of pastoral eating in Virgil's *Aeneid*. I will restrict myself to brief observations on the theme of satiety. First, in Aeneas' retelling his band of exiles, when they arrive at the Strophades, encounter and kill some livestock (*Aen.* 3.220–1):

[45] Höschele (2013) 341, after Hollis (2007) 61.

[46] Little wonder that the vegetarian Pythagoras, as ventriloquised by Ovid in *Metamorphoses* 15, uses a concept lifted from the *Eclogues* in his meat-abjuring peroration, *ubera dent saturae manibus pressanda capellae* ("let the she-goats give full udders to be milked by your hands", *Met.* 15.472), shortly after his reference to "Thyestean tables" (15.462).

laeta boum passim campis armenta videmus 220
caprigenumque pecus nullo custode per herbas.

We see the happy herds of oxen all about the fields and the flock of goats amid the grasses with no guards.

These goats are clearly a pastoral addition to the Cattle of the Sun God from the passage's chief model in *Odyssey* 12.[47] But making them their food results again in dissatisfaction, owing to the party-crashing Harpies who attack the assorted crew and foul up the repast.[48] This is the opposite of being full and satisfied, which is the condition of the happier goats at the end of Virgil's *Eclogues* (*saturae … capellae*, 10.77). We can look also to the Carthaginian banquet at the end of *Aeneid* 1, where no edible material (unlike the wine) is explicitly mentioned – the servants are there "to heap up the tables with feasts" (*qui dapibus mensas onerent, Aen.* 1.706) – but Cupid, the fake Iulus, makes it such that Dido's "mind is unable to be filled" (*expleri mentem nequit*, 1.713), while he "filled out the great love of the tricked father Aeneas" (*magnum falsi implevit genitoris amorem*, 1.716).[49] It is no wonder, then, that in the very first sentence of *Aeneid* 4, which bears an ambiguous time relationship (*iamdudum*, 4.1) to that banquet, what Dido does is – literally – "feed her wound", *vulnus alit* (4.2). In view of Aeneas' reflection of Callimachus' Erysichthon – the paradigmatic overeater in the *Hymn to Demeter* – in the episodes where he disturbs trees, such as his discovery of the body of Polydorus in his own Book 3 banquet narration to Dido,[50] we again sense a tension between different modes and styles of consumption. Eating in the *Eclogues* thus finds its way to the heart of the matter in the epic *Aeneid*.

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[47] On the "archaic flourish" of *caprigenum*, with the lack of guards apparently non-pastoral and indebted to "Greek religious usage", which may recall the Arcadians whom Leigh (2016) observes at one remove from Virgil, see Horsfall (2006) 189–90.

[48] Gowers (2021) 247–50, 260–1 rereads the long aftermath of the Harpies' intervention, namely the fulfilment at *Aen.* 7.107–15 of Celaeno's 'pizza prophecy' at *Aen.* 3.255–7, as filled with puns and linguistic games, which could be construed as Lucretian and therefore Epicurean.

[49] Cf., e.g., Dyson (1996), esp. 212–14 on Dido "drinking deep of love" (*longumque bibebat amorem*, *Aen.* 1.749) as a reminiscence of Lucretius' honey on the cup of wormwood, whereas she had "barely touched the [actual] cup with her lips" (*summo tenus attigit ore*, 1.737); it is very familiar that Iopas' song accompanying the banquet is an Epicurean cosmogony centred on natural philosophy.

[50] For this, Thomas (1988) is an inspirational discussion.

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