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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

Department of Classics

Augustan Allusion and Poetic Immortality in the Pseudo-Virgilian *Dirae*

by

Vergil Graham Parson

A thesis presented to the
Graduate School of Arts & Sciences
of Washington University in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts

May 2015
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May 2015

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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Master of Arts in Classics

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Professor Catherine Keane, Chair

In the following pages, I argue that the pseudo-Virgilian *Dirae*, found in the *Appendix Vergiliana*, uses and expands on Virgilian metaphor and symbolism to creatively explore the poetics of succession. The *Dirae* poet uses elements of Virgil's poems, as well as the poems of other Augustan poets, to compose his own poem. The *Dirae* poet understands that this borrowing is a kind of literary usurpation and knows that he is just as vulnerable to harvesting by later poets. Throughout this study, I maintain a distinction between the poet, who envisions the scenario of the *Dirae* and makes use of an allusive program, and the singer, who is the pastoral character created by the poet who sings a curse song in response to his upcoming exile. I call the poet the "poet" and the singer the "singer" or "speaker." The *Dirae* is a series of curses directed at the singer's former land with the nominal object that the usurping soldier who replaces the singer will be unable to profit from his usurpation. These curses, I argue, dramatize the angst that the *Dirae* poet feels at his place in a literary tradition. The poet is simultaneously uncomfortable with following Virgil and with being followed in turn. If the singer can destroy the land, later pastoral singers will have no occasion or place to sing. The *Dirae* poet undermines his singer's curses using strategies analyzed below. The poet undermines the curses to show that despite the angst involved in poetic succession, that succession, which entails rewriting and usurping

previous material, is inevitable. The *Dirae*, therefore, is a provocative allegory reflecting on the nature of literary tradition and the pastoral genre particularly.

This study opens by presenting the twin claims that pastoral is a genre uniquely concerned with poetic succession and that the *Dirae* is responding to a specifically Virgilian creation of pastoral as a genre. This is the first chapter. The second and third chapters attempt to define the ends for which the *Dirae* poet adapts elements of Virgil's poetry. The second chapter maps the connections between impotence of pastoral speakers and the impotence of language generally. It first elucidates how the *Dirae* poet takes traditional symbols of pastoral wonders such as *adynata* and swan song and twists them into emblems of futility and loss. It then shows how the *Dirae* poet constructs his speaker as a version of Orpheus, who is ineffective and rage-filled, and subverts the meek but still powerful Orpheus in the *Georgics*. After this analysis of the ways in which the *Dirae* poet uses allusive elements to highlight the speaker's weakness, the third chapter explores how the poet positions his speaker in a community. This community has metapoetic implications: the first section of this second chapter highlights how the singer's reclusive, Bacchic poetics express the paradox that poetry is an individual creation but also takes place in a poetic "scene." The second section of this chapter shows ways in which the *Dirae* poet uses the speaker's beloved, Lydia, to bridge the worlds of pastoral and elegiac lovers. This thesis in its entirety, therefore, presents evidence for reading the scenario of the *Dirae* as an allegory of poetic reception and usurpation by interrogating the various allusive metaphors that make up the overarching allegory.

Chapter 1: Pastoral as a Genre of Succession

The *Dirae* locates itself in a pastoral tradition that prizes what some have called “literary filiation.”¹ Due to pastoral’s concern with its relationship to its predecessors, it is a genre ripe for use as an exploration of the possibilities of writing pseudepigrapha. Virgil takes pains to define a pastoral genre in the *Eclogues*; the *Dirae* poet, by disrespecting the generic boundaries that Virgil has set around his own pastoral, enacts the usurpation and destruction narrated in his own poem. In this section, I will highlight the major areas in which Virgil defines his version of pastoral, mainly through programmatic statements and obvious textual echoes. Virgil creates his pastoral and then highlights transgressions, thus defining by contrast what is purely pastoral in his work. I will then show how the *Dirae* poet goes back to older pastoral models, particularly the *Lament for Bion* attributed to Moschus. In recalling the *Lament*, the *Dirae* poet draws attention to Virgil’s deviation from older pastoral when creating his new definition, and the *Dirae* poet shows his own ability to master varieties of bucolic poetry, “one-upping” his model while acknowledging his poetic debt.

Virgil signals his pastoral definition with obvious programmatic statements in *Eclogues* 4, 6, and 10. Taking *Eclogue* 6 first, we can see one way in which Virgil defines his pastoral by exclusion and variation. He recuses himself from epic and history and adopts cosmological song (*Ecl.* 6.1-8):

Prima Syracosio dignata est ludere uersu
nostra neque erubuit siluas habitare Thalea.
cum canerem reges et proelia, Cynthus aurem
uellit et admonuit: 'pastorem, Tityre, pinguis
pascere oportet ouis, deductum dicere carmen.'

¹ E.g. Hubbard 1998.

nunc ego (namque super tibi erunt qui dicere laudes,
Vare, tuas cupiant et tristia condere bella)
agrestem tenui meditabor harundine Musam

She first deemed it worthy to play in Syracusan verse,
And my Thalia did not blush to dwell in the woods.
While I was about to sing about kings and battles, Cynthian Apollo
Plucked my ear and warned me: "Tityrus, a shepherd needs
To raise fat sheep, but utter a thin-spun song."
Now I--(since there will always be those who will sing for you,
Varus. They'll want to sing your praises and to compose grim wars.)
--For now I will practice a rustic Muse with my slender reed.

This opening, famously reminiscent of the opening of Callimachus' *Aetia* (fr.1.21-24), itself draws attention to Callimachus' updating of the shepherd Hesiod's encounter with the Muses in the *Theogony* (22-34).² Virgil expresses his mastery of two different traditions by identifying Callimachus' own model and adapting Callimachus back to it. He takes the content of the Callimachus' stylistic program and reinserts it into a Hesiodic shepherding context. He is carving out a genre by acknowledging his debt to Callimachus while showing his independence from him by bypassing him in his poetic history.

In this passage, Virgil also steps away from panegyric to Varus. In doing so, he distinguishes his own poetry from Theocritean poetry, which was no stranger to panegyric. *Idylls* 16 and 17, for example, praise Hieron II of Syracuse and Ptolemy II respectively.³ Virgil elsewhere suggests that pastoral singers can try their hand at panegyric, but in context, these attempts often backfire or show the political instability of the poet's position. Panegyric in *Elcogues* 1 and 9 goes hand in hand with loss of property. In *Eclogue* 9, for example, Moeris

² Harrison 2007, 46.

³ See Stephens 2006, 113-116 for a note of worry in *Idyll* 16.

claims that Menalcas tried to save Mantua from resettlement by making poetry for Varus, but was somehow unable (*Ecl.* 9.26-29):

‘Immo haec, quae Varo necdum perfecta canebat:
“Vare, tuum nomen, superet modo Mantua nobis,
Mantua uae miserae nimium uicina Cremonae,
cantantes sublime ferent ad sidera cycni.”’

But he was singing these songs to Varus, which weren’t finished yet:
“Varus, your name, should Mantua survive for us—
Manuta, alas too near miserable Cremona—
Swans will bear it to the stars, singing on high.”

Whether Menalcas was unable to complete the poetry or whether he left the work unfinished because he was unable to persuade Varus is left unclear. This moment, showing a shepherd pleading to Varus through song, is a generic transgression and consequently ineffective. The deprivation of property here and in *Eclogue* 1 is another Virgilian update to pastoral.⁴ Lycidas thought Menalcas saved Mantua, but Moeris is quick to disabuse him (*Ecl.* 9.10-13):

[L] Omnia carminibus uestrum seruasse Menalcan.
[M] Audieras, et fama fuit; sed carmina tantum
nostra ualent, Lycida, tela inter Martia quantum
Chaonias dicunt aquila ueniente columbas.

[L] [I heard] your Menalcas saved everything with his songs.
[M] You heard, and that was the rumor. But songs
Such as ours are not so strong, Lycidas, amongst martial tools
Like Chaonian doves, they say, when the eagle comes.

Lycidas has assumed, presumably because of his faith in the poetic powers of Menalcas, that Mantua was saved. Moeris, however, understands the larger context. Menalcas’ power exists only in its pastoral environment and, transposed from this, is helpless. This is clearly Virgil’s

⁴ Cf. Hubbard 1998, 51 on the uniqueness of Virgil’s Meliboeus. Hunter 2006, 269 suggests that Virgil distances himself from Theocritus by implying that “Ptolemaic peace was necessary for the production of (bucolic) poetry.” In the climate of Roman civil war, bucolic projects are doomed to failure.

own creation of pastoral categories. As mentioned earlier, Theocritus was no stranger to panegyric. This emphatic distinction between pastoral and panegyric, demonstrated by the failure of one mode when transplanted to another, is an innovation of Virgil and emblematic of his particular pastoral.⁵ Virgil does take praise as his primary theme in *Eclogue* 4, which shows clear borrowings from other genres.⁶ This is marked with a programmatic opening. “Sicilian Muses, let’s sing a song that’s a little greater. The arbutus and tamarisk don’t please everyone. If we sing of woods, let them be woods worthy of a consul” (*Sicelides Musae, paulo maiora canamus/non omnis arbusta iuuant humilesque myricae/si canimus siluas, siluae sint consule dignae, Ecl. 4.1-1*). Pastoral is identified as a “lesser” genre in terms of grandeur. Song “worthy of a consul” can be incorporated, but this is (and must be) marked in the introduction. The narrator of this eclogue recognizes that the panegyric subject matter that follows is out of place with the coherent internal definition of pastoral established throughout the book of *Eclogues*.

The programmatic opening in *Eclogue* 10 signals Virgil’s experiments at bringing Gallus and Gallan elegy into his pastoral world. “Permit me this last work, Arethusa: A few songs for my Gallus but ones that Lycoris herself might read. These songs ought to be sung. Who’d deny songs for Gallus?” (*Extremum hunc, Arethusa, mihi concede laborem/pauca meo Gallo, sed quae legat ipsa Lycoris/carmina sunt dicenda; neget quis carmina Gallo? Ecl. 10.1-3*)

These songs are not only for Gallus but later in the poem become songs by Gallus. Gallus becomes the subject, instead of the object, of this pastoral poem, saying “I will go, and what I

⁵ Contrast Nauta 2006 who sees panegyric running rife in the *Eclogues* but defines panegyric loosely as almost any sort of praise: “And panegyric, as [*Eclogue* 1] demonstrates, disrupts the genre of bucolic poetry. Nevertheless, most of the other eclogues in the *Bucolics* include panegyric” (310). I cannot agree with such a broad definition.

⁶ Harrison 2007, 36-44 examines the inclusion and adaptation of Sibylline prophecy and the *Metamorphoses* of Parthenius in *Eclogue* 4.

composed in Chalcidic verse, I'll ply these songs on the pipe of a Sicilian shepherd" (*ibo et Chalcidico quae sunt mihi condita uersu/ carmina pastoris Siculi modulabor auena, Ecl. 10.50-51*). The object of *Eclogue 10* is the reimagining of Gallus as a pastoral subject. For this generic experiment to be possible, Virgil had to first draw clear lines around his pastoral, so the intrusion of Gallus in 10 is a clear meeting of two distinct genres. This *Eclogue*, the last in the collection, is Virgil's capstone transgression. This generic contact is emphasized if we believe that Gallus was the inventor of Latin love elegy.⁷ Thus Virgil draws attention to his own re-creation of pastoral by highlighting its interactions with another newly created genre.

This meeting of elegy and pastoral implies a formal openness of both genres at the date of the composition of the *Eclogues*. Bringing Gallus into pastoral, for example, "stands as proof that both pastoral and elegy, despite essentializing rules of genre, can accommodate one another in their generically distinct worlds."⁸ ("Essentializing rules" is complicated, as has been shown, by Virgil's need to delimit his own pastoral definition before he deviates from it.) The directions bucolic poetry took after Theocritus and leading up to Virgil's time only emphasize generic accommodation. *Idyll 8*, transmitted in but not original to the Theocritean corpus, even uses elegiacs for its amoebean contest (33-60).⁹ Virgil's emphasis and point in *Eclogue 10* is not play leading to fusion and generic formlessness but an examination of what is innovative about the poetry of two contemporaries, Virgil and Gallus. In my reading of *Eclogue 10*, Virgil creates a conversation between two generic innovators. Perhaps the attempt and failure to bring Gallan elegy into Virgilian pastoral is an homage to Gallan elegy, marking it too as a new distinctive

⁷ Suggested by Ovid, *Tristia* 4.10.53-54.

⁸ Henkel 2009, 124.

⁹ See Bernsdorff 2006, 178-179 for the argument that *Idyll 8* takes inspiration from the Hellenistic epigrammatic tradition.

genre not to be collapsed into older models. *Eclogue* 10 opened with a programmatic appeal to a Sicilian divinity, just as *Eclogues* 4 and 6 did, to prepare the reader for a generic transgression. Since these would not be transgressions in the Theocritean bucolic tradition, we can deduce that Virgil is taking pains to establish his own version of pastoral by marking ways in which he claims to step beyond it into “un-pastoral” poetry.

The combination of deprived herdsmen and curse poetry in the *Dirae*, far from being a departure from Virgil, is precisely the kind of generic redefinition he practiced in the *Eclogues*. For the remainder of this section, I will show how the *Dirae* poet signals his own innovations by use of the post-Theocritean *Lament to Bion* attributed to Moschus, which itself meditates on the trouble relationships involved in poetic succession.¹⁰ In the *Lament*, the poet mourns the death of his teacher Bion. This poem was inspired by Bion’s own *Lament for Adonis*, but it styles itself after the lament for Daphnis found in Theocritus’ *Idyll* 1. The poet thus respects his master and teacher while going over that poet’s head and appealing to an even earlier generic founder.

The poem is a series of lamenting stanzas divided by the refrain “Begin, Sicilian Muses, begin the mourning” (ἄρχετε Σικελικαί, τῷ πένθεος ἄρχετε, Μοῖσαι). The stanzas appeal to nature directly, like the *Dirae*. For example, the poet tells the nightingales to announce Bion’s death and cries that with his death Doric poetry has died (*EB* 9-12):

ἀδόνες αἱ πυκνοῖσιν ὀδυρόμεναι ποτὶ φύλλοις
νάμασι τοῖς Σικελοῖς ἀγγεῖλατε τᾶς Ἀρεθοΐσας
ὅτι Βίων τέθνακεν ὁ βουκόλος, ὅτι σὺν αὐτῷ
καὶ τὸ μέλος τέθνακε καὶ ὄλετο Δωρὶς ἀοιδά.

You nightingales who lament in the thick leaves
Announce to the Sicilian springs of Arethusia

¹⁰ I use the text of the *Epitaphios Bionis* in Gow 1952. For Virgil’s use of the *Lament for Bion*, see Kania 2012, 673-683.

Bion the herdsman is dead, and with him
Music has died, and Doric song has perished.

This stanza serves as an example of the sympathetic power that Bion's death has over nature, and Bion is imagined as a Doric Orpheus in line eighteen. The loss of Bion entails the loss of all Doric song and all "melody" (μέλος). This is paradoxical, given that the lament itself is a Doric song. The singer highlights this paradox without acknowledging it by claiming to be a successor to Bion's bucolic song. The poem therefore examines the ways successors relate and respond to their generic predecessors. The author of the *Lament* is explicit about his relationship to Bion (93-97):

...αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ τοι
Αὐσονικᾶς ὀδύνας μέλπω μέλος, οὐ ξένος ᾠδᾶς
βουκολικᾶς, ἀλλ' ἄντε διδάξαι σεῖο μαθητᾶς
κλαρονόμος μοίσας τᾶς Δωρίδος, ἧ με γεραίρων
ἄλλοις μὲν τεὸν ὄλβον ἐμοὶ δ' ἀπέλειπες ἀοιδάν.

...But I myself
Sing the song of grieving Ausonia, no stranger to bucolic
Song, but it fell to me, a student of your teaching,
The inheritor of Doric song. Honoring me,
You left to others your property, but to me your song.

The tension between one Doric song, now dead with Bion, and another, surviving with Bion's heir, is unresolved.

The *Lament* places Bion's Doric song above the songs of all other canonical poets (*EB* 86-93). Boeotia misses him more than Pindar and Lesbos more than Alcaeus, for example. Bion out-does the exemplary representatives of various genres even on their own turf, in other words. This "demarcation from other genres"¹¹ is a very strong technique for identifying one's own

¹¹ Bernsdorff 2006, 205.

genre. Despite the strong identification, this poem innovates on traditional bucolic poetry with, for example, the heroic figure of Bion surpassing all other poets.¹² So at the same time in which generic definition and a place in a poetic lineage seem most defined, the poet updates. This is similar to the Virgilian program described above: the author places himself in a subordinate position to earlier poets, but this is not a naïve history. Instead it is a polemical, innovative redrawing of a generic map.

The *Dirae* poet adheres to the same process, signaling that he has understood the way Virgil has redefined pastoral. On the one hand, the *Dirae* poet acknowledges his greatest poetic debt to Virgil by using the Virgilian innovation that is herdsmen suffering land confiscations. This is the starting point for the entire poetic scenario. The form of the poem, however, significantly depends on the *Lament for Bion*. Both poems are a series of stanzas directed to various sympathetic bodies separated by refrains, mourning some loss. As I will argue in later sections, pastoral poetic production is tied to the land; the confiscation of land, therefore, is the same sort of catastrophe as the loss of a poetic father. Both poems depict their losses as curtailing poetry, but these claims are undermined because in both poetry does in fact go on, using a wide variety of models. The *Lament for Bion* takes its content from Bion's *Lament for Adonis*, while borrowing the form of Theocritus' *Idyll* 1. It pays homage to an immediate poetic predecessor, while showing mastery of an entire tradition. Virgil did this by adapting Callimachus' *Aetia* opening back to its original Hesiodic form, demonstrating his allegiance to Callimachus and mastery of Callimachus source material thereby. The *Dirae* poet follows all these.

¹² Kania 2012, passim but see especially 662, "Within the poem's fiction, the conventional wisdom of literary history yields to the *Lament's* revisionary program."

The technique of recalling two different generations of poets, we have seen, positions oneself in a literary lineage and demonstrates one's mastery of it. Given Virgil's pains to define what constitutes pastoral in his own poetry, described above, we can infer that the *Dirae* poet's subsequent disrespect of Virgil's definition is a poetic stance in line with the physical confusion and destruction enacted in the text of the poem. Just as Neptune will move onto the land with his streams (*migret Neptunus in arva/ fluctibus*, 50-51), the *Dirae* poet similarly returns to the lack of definition, generic confusion, and formal openness that characterizes pre-Virgilian bucolic. The poet understands this as a return (compare the language of Discord returning at 6). As I will argue throughout this study, the dispossessed herdsman of the *Dirae*, symbolic of the usurped and rewritten poet, attempts to destroy everything so that no fruits of the land, which is to say poetry, can come after his departure. The act is futile because usurpation is inevitable, but the attempt shows a deft handling of poetic genealogies and generic succession, in order to identify itself as a new creative piece. It recognizes the rewriting of pastoral in Virgil and is itself a commentary on writing poetry after Virgil.

Chapter 2: The Weakness of the *Dirae* Singer

2.1 Ineffective Pastoral Power

Throughout the *Dirae*, the speaker never curses the usurper; rather, he attempts to use poetry to destroy the usurper's land, which was formerly the speaker's. The land in pastoral is equated with pastoral self-hood, and consequently, loss of land entails loss of self.¹ Just as shepherds and poets use the land and material of predecessors, the *Dirae* poet has harvested tropes and figures from earlier pastoral poets. The *Dirae* poet, who has taken so much from his predecessors, himself as singer trying to curse and destroy the landscape (the imagined poetic land necessary for the production of pastoral) so that he cannot be usurped and harvested in turn. The poet intentionally makes the singer's words tense and ineffective because he knows that poetic succession, and with it use and usurpation, is inevitable. The *Dirae*, in my reading, is not so much a practice example of pastoral after the model of Virgil's *Eclogues*, but an attempt to use pastoral, with its concern for genre and tradition, to demonstrate the agony of making an individual creative work, only to be cannibalized by later poets and become part of the tradition. To that end, the *Dirae* piles curses and refrains together in a *carmen perpetuum* like the *Metamorphoses*.² In this respect it is similar to Ovid's *Ibis*, "a spell whose composite elements are interwoven in unbroken, unexhausted sequence."³ The *Dirae* poet thoughtfully drew from a

¹ Cf. Henderson 1998, 217. "And this equation of self-hood with property leads even, or even specially, in the idyllic countryside, to dispute and special pleading."

² Lorenz 2005, 6. "Wir befinden uns mit v. 1 bereits mediis in rebus. Den Lesern wird der Eindruck vermittelt, dass der Text schon vor v. 1 begonnen hat und im Stile eines *carmen perpetuum* unendlich fortgesetzt werden kann."

³ Williams 1996, 90. Cf. 121 for another similarity between *Dirae* and *Ibis*. "This is a protest at the poet's inability to escape the frustrating cycle of fresh recollection and recurring pain, and the form the protest takes strongly suggests a creative impulse locked into repeating itself."

large range of material, and the features he chose gain significance as they pass through tradition (e.g. from Theocritus to pseudo-Moschus to Virgil). More importantly, these features are known by the poets using them to gain meaning through accretion. For instance, the *Dirae* poet combines Callimachean, Horatian, and Virgilian images of swans to create a symbol whose meaning is confused and even contradictory. He uses adynata normally reserved for a climactic change, whether a golden age or the death of a Daphnis figure, to raise doubts about his own curses' effectiveness. Finally, he uses magical refrains that, in Virgil, are meant to be powerful, to raise doubts about the closure and power of his own songs.

The *Dirae* opens with a programmatic proem that evokes earlier pastoral and general Callimachean aesthetics. Although the imagery is standard and canonical, the structure of the occasion separates it from previous models and inverts traditional pastoral forms: while an interlocutor or accompanist is named, the poem is a monologue (perhaps even an apostrophe); while the proem contains usual pastoral adynata, these occur not as a by-product of a golden age but because of deprivation and sorrow. After the eight line proem, the situation becomes clear. A soldier has been settled on the speaker's land, much like the situation of Meliboeus in *Eclogue 1* and the characters in *Eclogue 9*. We know nothing about the speaker except the nature of and his feelings towards his loss. In a sense, this is all we need to know: the only occasion for the pastoral poem and the speaker's self is the property that has been lost. The integration of the pastoral speaker and the pastoral event gives the *Dirae* poet an opportunity to play with the poetics of "textual self-hood," by exploiting similarly programmatic statements from his predecessors.

The poem opens with the first instance of its refrain, identifying for its readers its genre and central theme: "Battarus, let us repeat swan voices in song." (*Battare, cycneas repetamus*

carmine voces, 1.) The identity of Battarus will be discussed later. The “swan voices,” need to be deciphered. They are the content of everything that follows, and therefore “beginnt bereits im ertsen Verse in selbstreferentieller Akt der Reflexion der *Dirae* auf und über sich selbst.”⁴ The emphasis on swan voices is strange, since the voice of the swan in previous poetry is not as important when compared to the swan’s color or swan as a whole. The focus on the voice confirms that this image of the swan will be central to understanding how the poem’s song works.

As we will see, Augustan swan imagery provides an excellent tool by which the *Dirae* poet acknowledges a traditional understanding of poetic power while simultaneously emphasizing the frailty of a dispossessed herdsman or farmer. At various times, swans have been a way to mark certain poetic aesthetics. At other times, swans’ association with death has been turned to rhetorical effect. In antiquity, swans were thought to sing a “swan-song” before death.⁵ The connection stretches at least as far back as Aeschylus: Clytemnestra says of the now dead Cassandra that “she, like a swan, lies here, having sung her last deathly groan.” (ἡ δὲ τοι κύκνου δίκην/ τὸν ὕστατον μέλψασα θανάσιμον γόον/ κεῖται, *Ag.* 1444-1446) Cicero, for example, wrote on the final speech of Lucius Crassus that “nevertheless that was the swan voice and speech of the divine man.” (*Illa tamquam cycnea fuit divini hominis vox et oratio*, *Cic. De Or.* 3.6) Here, Cicero describes prose oratory as swan-like. More often, however, swans are associated with Callimachean poetry due to their association with Apollo, Callimachus’ patron, along with the Muses and Orpheus. In the Homeric Hymns we find “Phoebus, even the swan hymns you, shrill under its wings.” (φοῖβε, σὲ μὲν καὶ κύκνος ὑπὸ πτερύγων λίγ’ αἰδεῖ, *h. Hom.* xxi.1)

⁴ Rupprecht 2007, 62.

⁵ See van der Graaf 1945, *ad. loc.* for a fuller list of classical sources.

Callimachus takes this up in his Hymn to Delos, in which swans are the “birds of the Muses, most songful of flying things.” (Μουσάων ὄρνιθες, ἀοιδότατοι πετεηνῶν, Call. *Del.* 252)

Through their connection with Callimachus’ divinities (the Muses, Apollo), swans gained Callimachean overtones, but this is not to say that swans are automatically Callimachean. Horace describes Pindar as a “Theban swan” when he says that “much air lifts the Theban swan.” (*multa Dircaeum levat aura cycnum*, C. 4.2.25) In *Ode* 4.2, Pindar is not at all Callimachean, being likened to a rushing torrent (C. 4.2.5). It is possible, therefore, that “sich der Schwanengesang auf eine überzeitliche apollinische Qualität von Dichtung bezieht, [und] auf keinen Fall auf hellenistisch(-neoterisch) geprägte Poesie beschränkt ist.”⁶ The frequency of swans in poetry, however, given their relative rarity in antiquity, implies that they are a bird more readily called to mind from poetic rather than personal experience.⁷

The *Dirae* uses swans to express Callimachean aesthetics, following Virgil’s lead, and Virgil uses swan imagery in the *Eclogues* primarily as a stylistic marker. In *Eclogue* 7, the contest between Corydon and Thyrsis, Corydon uses a swan to emphasize Galatea’s elegance (*Ecl.* 7.37-40):

Nerine Galatea, thymo mihi dulcior Hyblae,
candidior cycnis, hederā formosior alba,
cum primum pasti repetent praesepia tauri,
si qua tui Corydonis habet te cura, uenito.

Nerine Galatea, sweeter to me than Hyblean thyme,
Brighter than swans, more lovely than pale ivy,
Right when the bulls return to the stalls after they have grazed,
If any care for your Corydon has you, come.

⁶ Rupprecht 2007, 188-189. Rupprecht cites Varius and Cinna (mentioned in Virgil) as well as Pindar as non-neoteric poets compared with swans. Pappaiannou 2004, 59 argues that Ovid in the *Metamorphosis* acknowledges the “literary complexity and multiple genre associations that the swan symbolizes.”

⁷ On the relative rarity of swans in antiquity, see Arnott 1977, 151.

Dulcior has Callimachean overtones, in much the same way as *tenuis*.⁸ In fact, the image here may be a very closely inspired by the Callimachean buzzword μελιχρός: Hybla was a Sicilian town near Mt. Etna famed for its honey.⁹ The thyme is sweet by association with the town and due to the fact that it increased the quality of the honey made by bees in its area.¹⁰ This first line, with the reference to Galatea, Sicily, and sweetness, then, points to Theocritean pastoral and Hellenistic/Neoteric literary aesthetics. The ivy is similarly a conventional motif. It can simultaneously refer to Apollo and Bacchus, providing a catch-all plant for poetic inspiration.¹¹ It is not exclusively pastoral. Horace can say of his lyric output “Ivy, the reward for learned brows, will mix me with the gods above” (*Me doctarum hederæ præmia frontium/ dis miscent superis*, C.1.1.29-30.) *Doctarum* here is difficult to translate but implies that Horace is referring to his training as well as to the genre of his poetry.¹² Propertius uses ivy to contrast grand Ennian epic with his own finely-wrought verse, saying “Ennius may gird his poetry with hairy wreaths. Give me leaves from your ivy, Bacchus.” (*Ennius hirsuta cingat sua dicta corona/ mi folia ex hederæ porrige, Bacche, tua*, 4.1a.61-62.) The swans in this passage, therefore, become a symbol for careful, light Hellenistic poetry by their inclusion in a list of terms with these connotations. The *cycneas voces* of *Diræ* 1 combine the elegance called up by these swans with sadness, which *Eclogue* 7.37-40 lacks but has already been noted with Cicero’s *illa cycnea vox*.

⁸ Schmidt 1972, 31.

⁹ Clausen 1994, 52 has a list of Augustan and later references to honey from Hybla.

¹⁰ Coleman 1977, 217

¹¹ Karakasis 2011, 89.

¹² See Nisbet and Hubbard 1970, *ad loc.* “The adjective is particularly common in verse, and is applied impartially to the poet, the poet’s lady, and the Muses themselves.”

While maintaining the swans' stylistic meanings, Virgil does acknowledge the dolorous associations of swans (*Ecl.* 9.26-29):

“Immo haec, quae Varo necdum perfecta canebat:
‘Vare, tuum nomen, superet modo Mantua nobis,
Mantua uae miserae nimium uicina Cremonae,
cantantes sublime ferent ad sidera cycni.’”

Instead these were the things, which [Menalcas] was singing to Varus, even though they weren't finished yet: Varus, that's your name, let Mantua survive somehow for us. Mantua, alas, too near miserable Cremona. Singing swans will bear your name to the star.

This passage occurs in a discussion between two herdsmen, Moeris and Lycidas, who have been dispossessed of their land. Lycidas had heard that another shepherd, Menalcas, had won back their land by means of poetry. This was not the case, and Moeris and Lycidas mourn while tossing pastoral songs between themselves. The lines attributed to Menalcas are *necdum perfecta*. The occasion of their delivery is consequently unknown. Did Moeris overhear Menalcas composing or was he in earshot when Menalcas delivered unfinished poetry to Varus? It is possible that the song is unfinished because Menalcas stops composing “when it became clear that Varus was not going to fulfil earlier hopes.”¹³ Varus is a reoccurring character: these lines in *Eclogue 9* quoted above seem to comment on Virgil's *recusatio* (in the mouth of Tityrus) from writing an encomium for Varus at *Eclogue 6.6-9*.¹⁴

Nunc ego (namque super tibi erunt qui dicere laudes
Vare, tuas cupiant et tristia condere bella)
agrestem tenui meditabor harundine Musam
non iniussa cano.

Now I (for there will always be those Varus
who desire to speak your praises and compose grievous wars)

¹³ Coleman 1977, 261.

¹⁴ Hubbard 1998, 122.

I will meditate on a rural muse with a tender reed.
I sing things not unordered.

Tityrus sings things “not unordered.” Presumably, the order comes from Apollo not Varus, although no doubt Varus applied pressure; therefore this image of a swan occurs in a context that highlights the tensions between pastoral poetry’s seclusion from reality and the politics behind Roman poetry.

In the *Georgics*, discussing land quality and where to pasture animals, Virgil writes: “And such a field unlucky Mantua lost, grazing snow-white swans at a grassy stream. (*et qualem infelix amisit Mantua campum/ pascentem niueos herboso flumine cycnos*, *Georg.* 2.198-199) Reading this passage in connection with the one from *Eclogue* 9, we see the swans functioning as a poetic symbol at risk or destroyed. Given the highly allusive nature of pastoral, the *Dirae* poet cannot or does not think of one without the other. This conjunction seems primary in the first two lines of the *Dirae*, and by their uses of words for repetition, the lines call back to Virgil’s descriptions of pastoral deprivation: “Battarus, let us repeat swan voices in song: Let us sing the seats and fields sundered again. (*Battare, cycneas repetamus carmine uoces: diuisas iterum sedes et rura canamus*, 1-2.) The *voces* are the “seats divided again.” *Iterum* can refer to the singing, but given that repetition is already inherent in *repetamus* it is safe to hold that the *Dirae* poet conflates two events: he sings again and land is confiscated again. These two are linked in a pastoral occasion that has Virgilian precedents (*Eclogues* 1 and 9). This is why Cicero’s familiar *cycnea vox* can be *repeated*: swan voices are a commonality in Hellenistic and Neoteric poetry while also being a specific marker for a particular event of Virgilian pastoral loss.

The *Dirae* poet taps in to the trope of immortality associated with swans. For the finale of *Odes* 2, Horace describes his metamorphosis into a swan. “I will be born on extraordinary and not slender/ wings through the liquid air, a biform bard/ I won’t dally on earth for long/ I, greater, will leave off from the hostility of the city.” (*non usitata nec tenui ferar/ pinna biformis per liquidum aethera/ vates neque in terris morabor/ longius invidiaque maior/ urbis relinquam*, C.2.20.1-5) Here Horace describes his transformation into a swan (*canorus ales*, C.2.20.15-16) drawing attention to the immortality that will accompany this transformation. The swan may have been chosen because, as a migratory bird, it will cover a lot of ground, much like Horace’s fame.¹⁵ The line “I will not tarry in the lands” probably means that Horace will fly over them. The “lofty” description and Horace’s self-proclaimed identity as a *biformis vates*, however, gives these lines a grandeur inappropriate to pastoral. Similarly, Virgil’s swans bearing Varus’ name to the stars might be unpastoral. “The notion of immortality of the patron/benefactor secured through poetry, as suggested in [*Ecl.* 9.26-29], does not constitute a traditional pastoral motif...as the *cycni* of Menalcas’ encomium not only make Varus’ reputation *sublime*, but also mark Moeris’ divergence towards the generically *sublime* as well.”¹⁶ Later, however, stars in the eclogue seem to fit pastoral poetry well: “Lo, the star of Caesar proceeds to Diona, the star in which the crops rejoice through fruit.” (*ecce Dionaei processit Caesaris astrum/ astrum quo segetes gauderent frugibus*, *Ecl.* 9.47-48.) This is the “star of Julius” that was seen after Julius Caesar’s death. The (pastoral) poetic swans for Varus, then, may be a mediation between mundane life and political greatness. This is perhaps not purely pastoral, but it functions as a comment on pastoral’s place in the larger world. The *Dirae* poet borrows Virgilian swan imagery

¹⁵ Nisbet and Hubbard 1978, 332-333.

¹⁶ Karakasis 2011, 196.

as a poetic device fulfilling three roles. The imagery signals adherence to a particular aesthetic; it implies a specifically Virgilian feeling of death and loss; finally, it promises immortality of the poetic soul.¹⁷

The *cycneas voces* at *Dirae* 1 are something marvelous and poetic on the one hand; on the other, they the emblem of the superior poet in an amoebean singing match. Elsewhere in the *Eclogues*, swans do have a clear pastoral and amoebean character, a Virgilian rewriting of Theocritus (*Ecl.* 8.52-56):

nunc et ouis ultro fugiat lupus, aurea durae
mala ferant quercus, narcisso floreat alnus,
pinguia corticibus sudent electra myricae,
certent et cycnis ululae, sit Tityrus Orpheus,
Orpheus in siluis, inter delphinas Arion.

Now may even the wolf flee before the sheep,
May the oak bear apples of solid gold, the alder bloom with narcissus,
May the tamarisks sweat out thick ambers on their bark,
Owls may vie even with swans, Tityrus would be an Orpheus,
An Orpheus in the woods, an Arion amongst the dolphins.

These lines are inspired by the last words of Theocritus' Daphnis (*Idyll* 1.132-136):

νῦν ἴα μὲν φορέοιτε βάτοι, φορέοιτε δ' ἄκανθαι,
ἂ δὲ καλὰ νάρκισσος ἐπ' ἀρκεύθοισι κομάσαι,
πάντα δ' ἀναλλα γένοιτο, καὶ ἂ πίτυς ὄχνας ἐνεΐκαι,
Δάφνις ἐπεὶ θνάσκει. καὶ τὰς κύνας ὄλαφος ἔλκοι,
κῆξ ὀρέων τοὶ σκῶπες ἀηδόσι γαρύσαιντο.

Now may brambles bear violets, and thorns bear them too,
The beautiful narcissus might grow from junipers,
Let everything be topsy-turvy. And the pine may bear pears,
Since Daphnis dies. And the stag may hector the hounds,
And from the mountains, owls may sing with nightingales.

¹⁷ See Jacobson 1995 for the argument that Horace in *C.2.20* has bird-soul imagery in mind for his transformation.

How owls singing with nightingales is a suitable culmination to this list of impossibilities has no good answer, but ancient readers thought the line meant the absurdity of an owl competing with a song-bird.¹⁸ When Virgil changes nightingales to swans (possibly because they are the excellent symbols described above), he does not “fix” Theocritus’ anticlimax. Instead, he borrows another Theocritean image. “It’s not right, Lacon, that the jays should ever compete with the nightingale/ or the hoopoe with swans. You, wretch, are bellicose.” (οὐ θεμιτόν, Λάκων, ποτ’ ἀηδόνα κίσσας ἐρίσδειν/ οὐδ’ ἔποπας κύκνοισι· τὸ δ’, ὧ τάλαν, ἐσσι φιλεχθής, *Id.* 5.136-137.) Rather than *Idyll* 5.136-137 being an *adynaton*, it is something that is occurring at the very moment of speaking but is “not right.” Thus, when Virgil combines these two images he leaves open questions about possibility. What was a quote about natural order in Theocritus becomes a marvel.¹⁹ It is possible that Damon, by hoping that owls will vie with swans, shows his wish “for the continuation of the pastoral *certamen*...whereby it is customary for the contestants to be described by means of animal terms.”²⁰

In addition to a foundational use of swan imagery, *Eclogue* 8 also supplies the *Dirae* with its template for *adynata*. After the swan stanza, Damon sings, “Let everything be in the middle of an ocean. Goodbye forests.” (*Omnia vel medium fiat mare. Vivite silvae, Ecl.* 8.58.) Thus the *Dirae*’s “May they call my fields a wild sea. Beware sailor.” (*Dicantur mea rura ferum mare; nauta caveto*, 61.) In addition, Virgil’s miraculous plants producing different fruit is almost unique besides in Virgil’s one Theocritean model.²¹ It is conceivable, then, that Virgil provided the literary source for the wide variety of marvelous curses in the *Dirae*. Damon’s song in

¹⁸ Gow 1950, 29-30.

¹⁹ Braun 1969, 293.

²⁰ Karakasis 2011, 144.

²¹ Ross 1987, 107.

Eclogue 8 stems from an imagined loss. Tityrus' brief *adynata* in *Eclogue* 1 also come from his loss and subsequent redemption and seem to inspire the *Dirae* (*Ecl.* 1.59-63):

Ante leues ergo pascentur in aethere cerui
et freta destituent nudos in litore piscis,
...
quam nostro illius labatur pectore uultus.

Therefore, light deer will graze in the atmosphere
And the seas will abandon fish bare on the shore,
...
Before the face of that man falls from my heart.

As Hubbard puts it, "The evocative rustic tableau thus reminds us of the real world's intrusion and of Meliboeus' own alienation from such happiness; the perfect pastoral moment contains within itself the seeds of its potential loss and negation."²² The *Dirae* brings this tension to the foreground by using *adynata* in its proem to promise permanent pastoral resistance to political deprivation:

Battare, cycneas repetamus carmine uoces:
diuisas iterum sedes et rura canamus,
rura quibus diras indiximus, impia uota.
ante lupos rapiunt haedi, uituli ante leones,
delphini fugient pisces, aquilae ante columbas
et conuersa retro rerum discordia gliscet –
multa prius fient quam non mea libera auena:
montibus et siluis dicam tua facta, Lycurge.

Battarus, let us repeat swan voices in song:
Let us sing fields and homes sundered again,
Fields on which we cast curses, unholy prayers.
Before goats snatch wolves, before calves snatch lions,
Sooner than dolphins flee fish, [and] eagles doves
And the chaos of things creeps back...
Much will happen before my pipe is unfree:
I will tell your deeds to the mountains and forests, Lycurgus.

²² Hubbard 1998, 53.

The speaker links these adynata with *discordia*, a technical word for “acosmic” force.²³

Compared to Tityrus, the *Dirae* speaker places his wonders on a larger order of magnitude. The universe itself must be upset in order for his pipe to be unfree. Of course, in the remaining lines of the poem, the speaker will summon such universe-confusing curses as could be described as “discord.”

In addition to swans and adynata, the *Dirae* poet uses refrains to yet again take a preexisting Virgilian pastoral trope and twist it into a statement of personal frailty. The *Dirae* may be broken up into a series of ten stanzas separated by intercalary verses.²⁴ The refrains all follow a similar patten with minor variations, often addressed to the unknown Battarus and often commenting self-reflexively on the speaker’s song. The refrains do initially promise an unending song. “Let us repeat again and again this song, Battarus” (*Rursus et hoc iterum repetamus, Battare, carmen*, 14) and “May the curse song never be absent from our pipes.” (*Nec desit nostris devotum carmen avenis*, 19.) The fate of the poem is left in doubt, however. “Let us recall the *last* song on the reed, Battarus. Although you will be fire or water, I will always love you. I will always be allowed to remember your joys.” (*extremum carmen revocemus, Battare, avena...quamvis ignis eris, quamvis aqua, semper amabo/ gaudia semper enim tua me meminisse licebit*, 97, 102-103.) The reader is left wondering what happens after this line. An appeal to memory is much less awe-inspiring than the earth-shattering curses earlier. In addition, the transfiguration of the *rura* into fire or water seems to be exactly the kind of discord referred to in the proem. We are unsure how much closure there can be in this ending. Is the land

²³ Van der Graaf 1945, *ad loc.*

²⁴ The number of stanzas depends on how one counts them and what counts as a break due to a refrain. I follow the stanza breaks in the *OCT*. Lorenz 2005 argues that ten stanzas reflect and comment on Virgil’s ten *Eclogues*.

destroyed by change and now only exists in the speaker's head? Or has the song reached its end and the state of the land still unknown?

Refrains like this harken back to the magic of Simaetha in Theocritus' *Idyll* 2. The refrains of the *Dirae* are mediated, however, by Virgil's *Eclogue* 8. In the context of *Eclogue* 8, the songs accompanying these refrains are claimed to be effectual by the reporter (*Ecl.* 8.1-5):

Pastorum Musam Damonis et Alphesiboei,
immemor herbarum quos est mirata iuuenca
certantis, quorum stupefactae carmine lynces,
et mutata suos requierunt flumina cursus,
Damonis Musam dicemus et Alphesiboei.

The Muse of the shepherds Damon and Alphesiboeus
At whose contest the heifer marveled, forgetting her forage
At whose song the lynxes were dumbstruck.
And streams stalled and changed their courses.
We sing the Muse of Damon and Alphesiboeus.

We see here marvels effected by songs with refrains, a model which the *Dirae* poet clearly used. The lack of a narrator's comment but the inclusion of so many intertextual markers in the *Dirae* is puzzling. Breed argues that "the collective effect of repetition, memory, and performance in the *Dirae* is to locate the uttering of curses within a continuous history of pastoral poetry, one that authorises the poem as part of a tradition with the *Eclogues* at its head but at the cost of grounding [it]... in a dramatic context that might make clear questions of authenticity...which is itself a Vergilian reflex."²⁵ Given the complexity of the *cycneas voces* and the tensions inherent in its adynata, it seems a surer bet to argue that, rather than a pastoral tradition authorizing this particular example, the *Dirae* poet is stressing his predecessors' tensions in order to break and

²⁵ Breed 2012, 11.

destroy the coherence of his predecessors' imagery, another tactic in what has been called a "rhetoric of destructive imitation."²⁶

²⁶ Rupprecht 2007, 203. I agree with most of Breed 2012's framework. The difference between our focuses is that while he holds that "pastoral for the *Dirae* poet is always from the beginning self-destructive," I see the *Dirae* poet (over-)emphasizing an aspect of the *Eclogues* to comment on poetic succession, or to borrow the phrase "the anxiety of influence."

2.2 Orphic Characteristics of the *Dirae* Singer

In the *Dirae*, the speaker tries to use his poetry to confuse the natural universe. The poet creates a speaker who follows in the Virgilian bucolic tradition of Orphic singers. These are sad, powerful poets, who, through a connection with nature, effect the impossible. The *Dirae* speaker, however, instead of having an affinity with nature, presumes to use the power of his song to destroy nature. While this destructive tendency is initially at variance with Virgilian Orphics, we will reconcile it by examining the cosmological underpinnings of the *Eclogues*. Orpheus' power in poetry before the *Dirae* descends from two separate sources: exclusive knowledge of the universe and emotive poetic artistry. The end of this section argues that the *Dirae* speaker imagines a scenario in which Virgil's Orpheus, destroyed after a fashion by Aristaeus, has his revenge by destroying the land that is so dear to Aristaeus.

The definition of "Orphism" varies. The poetic, and especially Latin poetic, definition comes after a long history of Orphic religious and mystic cult. The term "Orphic," therefore, accurately applies to a variety of speakers and powers in the *Eclogues* (and the *Dirae*) that are not identified with Orpheus but possess family resemblances. West has argued that Orpheus grows from a shamanistic tradition expressing otherworldly truths about death and life and is "rationalized" in the Hellenistic period.¹ In West's model, the label "Orphic" attaches itself to cosmological or otherwise mythological poetry as a source of authority. "Orphic" centers around a collection of characteristics and the figure of Orpheus coincidentally centers on this same collection. Edmonds notes that "while Orpheus already appears [in the Hellenistic period] as the

¹ West 1983a, esp. 5-7.

most important of these [authoritative culture hero] poets, it is only in later periods that Orpheus becomes the predominant figure, the epitome of ancient Greek wisdom.”² It is important to recognize that pastoral figures like Silenus, Daphnis, Damon, and Alpheisiboeus are drawn from a stereotype of knowledgeable, effective poets, whose best standard is Orpheus himself.

Orpheus’ earliest references name him as a poet who has power over nature, and over time this power is explained through Orpheus’ cosmological knowledge. Kania identifies the “core meaning of the Orpheus myth [as] his music’s supernatural power.”³ He cites the *Agamemnon* and Euripides’ *Bacchae*. Aegisthus compares Orpheus to the Chorus (*Ag.* 1629-1632):

Ὅρφεϊ δὲ γλῶσσαν τὴν ἐναντίαν ἔχεις
ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἦγε πάντα που φθογγῆς χαρᾶ
σὺ δ’ ἐξορίνας νηπίοις ὑλάγμασιν
ᾄξι.

You have the opposite tongue of Orpheus.
For he led everything by the beauty of his voice,
But you drive men to exasperation with your infantile barking.

The Chorus in the *Bacchae* in a prayer to Dionysus describes Orpheus primarily by his movement of the natural world (*Bacchae* 560-564):

τάχα δ’ ἐν ταῖς πολυδένδροισιν Ὀλύμπου
θαλάμαις, ἔνθα ποτ’ Ὀρφεὺς κιθαρίζων
σύναγεν δένδρεα μούσαις
σύναγεν θῆρας ἀγρώστας.

Swiftly into the woodsy nooks
Of Olympus, where once Orpheus, playing the lyre,
Led trees with his songs
Led wild beasts.

² Edmonds 2013, 24.

³ Kania 2012, 666.

The emphasis on “moving” (ἤγε, σύναγεν) implies that an important characteristic of Orpheus is his power. Kania’s “core meaning,” however, is complicated by another Attic tragedy surviving only in fragments, Aeschylus’ *Bassarai*.⁴ The plot of the *Bassarai* and the rest of the plays in its trilogy are contested. The trilogy possibly revolved around the disrespect paid to Dionysus by a Thracian king Lycurgus, Lycurgus’ ultimate punishment, Orpheus’ death for neglecting Dionysus in his enthusiasm for Apollo (the plot of the *Bassarai*), and the institution of the cult of Apollo-Helios.⁵ This cult then rectified any imbalance of honor that may have existed between Dionysus and Apollo. The death of Orpheus is cited as belonging to Aeschylus in the *Catasterisms* attributed to Eratosthenes (1.24):

διὰ δὲ τὴν γυναῖκα εἰς Ἄιδου καταβάς καὶ ἰδὼν τὰ ἐκεῖ οἷα ἦν τὸν μὲν Διόνυσον οὐκ ἐτίμα, ὑφ’ οὗ ἦν δεδοξασμένος, τὸν δὲ Ἥλιον μέγιστον τῶν θεῶν ἐνόμισεν, ὃν καὶ Ἀπόλλωνα προσηγόρευσεν... ὅθεν ὁ Διόνυσος ὀργισθεὶς αὐτῷ ἔπεμψε τὰς Βασσαρίδας, ὡς φησὶν Αἰσχύλος ὁ τῶν τραγωδιῶν ποιητής.

On account of his wife, he went down into Hades and seeing things as they really were, he did not revere Dionysus, by whom he was taught, but thought Helios the greatest of the gods, whom he called Apollo. Because of this Dionysus was angered and sent the Bassarides against him, as Aeschylus the tragic poet says.

The obscure mention of “τὰ ἐκεῖ οἷα ἦν” tantalizingly suggests some connection to Orphic cult; Orpheus has some knowledge of a hidden reality which he shared with practitioners in his cult. What Orpheus saw may have been “mystic light” which he associated with Apollo Helios. Aeschylus here is playing with two Orpheuses: the Pythagorean Orpheus associated with Apollo

⁴ The *Bassarai*’s importance for the *Dirae* was noticed by van der Graaf 1945.

⁵ For this reconstruction, see West 1983b, 70.

and the mystery-cult Orpheus associated with Dionysus.⁶ We have, therefore, at the same time, Orpheus associated with music's supernatural power but also death and the secrets of the universe. That these elements are all combined in literature is important because we can outline relationships without becoming lost in the murky idiosyncrasies of various Orphic cults.

Virgil gives "Orphic" a wide meaning and ascribes himself and many other poets to the rubric. "Lucretius, Empedocles, Apollonius, Calvus, Gallus, Hesiod, and Callimachus all appear under the aegis of Orpheus, a mysterious but potent symbol for the power of poetry to disclose the secrets of the universe, and thus to control nature."⁷ In Virgil's pastoral poetry, a number of characters have similar powers. As Kania puts it, "Virgil permits a plurality of singer-shepherds to aspire to Orphic greatness. Yet in spite of the availability of such powers to some of its denizens, there is no single preeminent Orphic hero in the *Eclogues*' bucolic world."⁸ Damon and Alpheisiboeus, for example, charm flora and fauna with their amoebian singing (*Ecl.* 8.1-5):

Pastorum Musam Damonis et Alpheisiboei
Immemor herbarum quos est mirata iuuenca
Certantis, quorum stupefactae carmine lynces
Et mutata suos requierunt flumina cursus
Damonis Musam dicemus et Alpheisiboei.

The Muse of the shepherds Damon and Alpheisiboeus
At whose contest the heifer marveled, forgetting her forage
At whose song the lynxes were dumbstruck.
And streams stalled and changed their courses.
We sing the Muse of Damon and Alpheisiboeus.

The wonderful effects of Damon and Alpheisiboeus' poetry are situated in a contest (*quos certantis*). Neither poet is particularly dominant, and in fact neither is declared the winner.

⁶ Seaford 2005, 605-606.

⁷ Farrell 1991, 311.

⁸ Kania 2012, 676

Silenus, when he begins his song, is described as surpassing Orpheus, but not with any special elaboration or conviction (*Ecl.* 6.27-30):

Tum uero in numerum Faunosque ferasque uideres
Ludere, tum rigidas motare cacumina quercus
Nec tantum Phoebos gaudet Parnasia rupes
Nec tantum Rhodope miratur et Ismarus Orphea.

Then indeed you'd see Fauns and beast playing
In array, then the rigid oaks swaying their tops.
The Parnasian cliff didn't rejoice so much in Phoebus
Nor did Rhodope and Ismarus wonder so much at Orpheus.

Silenus impresses his audience even more than Orpheus or Apollo their respective audiences, but this particular phrase seems to be a trope based on earlier poetry.⁹ The point is that Orphic powers do not denote the person of Orpheus uniquely.

Silenus' song and the songs of Orpheus have a cosmogonic bent. When we do not know the content of the songs of other Orphic speakers, it is tantalizing to assume that they sing on similar themes and that this content has a role in the songs' power. Silenus, immediately after being described as causing oaks to move, sings a cosmogonic song (*Ecl.* 6.31-34):

Namque canebat uti magnum per inane coacta
semina terrarumque animaeque marisque fuissent
et liquidi simul ignis; ut his ex omnia primis
omnia.¹⁰

And he was singing that through the great void
The seeds of earth, air, and water were driven together
And so too clear fire. Thus: from all things with these first principles
Came all things.

⁹ Clausen 1994 ad vv.29-30

¹⁰Clausen 1994 ad loc. defends reading "ex omnia" for a variety of reasons, seeing the second *omnia* as an epanalepsis. Coleman 1977 ad loc. reads "exordia," given the Lucretian feel of "his exordia primis." Clausen sees the *primis* as the elements and Virgil as using Lucretian language for un-Lucretian view of nature. In Coleman's words, "the choice is a difficult one."

The *semina* are not atoms, as so often in Lucretius, but the four elements of earth, air, sea, and fire. This passage ties together Lucretian poetry with Empedoclean natural philosophy.¹¹

Empedocles was Sicilian.¹² Perhaps Empedocles and pastoral's mutual association with Sicily encouraged Silenus' philosophical leanings. This same association influenced the *Dirae* poet, as we will see.

The *Dirae* author undertakes his poetic experiment to explore the artistic possibilities of an Orpheus who narrates destruction and the return of the universe to its confused state. Orpheus himself was well known as signing the origins of the universe. To forestall a conflict amongst the Argonauts, Orpheus sings about the origin of things: "He sang how the earth and sky and sea too were originally formed together amongst themselves in unity. Each was separated from each by destructive strife." (Ἡεῖδεν δ' ὡς γαῖα καὶ οὐρανὸς ἠδὲ θάλασσα/ τὸ πρὶν ἔτ' ἀλλήλοισι μιῇ συναρηρότα μορφῇ/ νεῖκος ἐξ ὀλοοῖο διέκριθεν ἀμφὶς ἕκαστα, *Arg.* 1.496-497.) These lines, from Apollonius' *Argonautica*, shares similarities with *Eclogue* 6.31 and Empedocles, especially through use of Empedocles' principle of cosmic strife, νεῖκος. This is not always the cosmology sung by an Orpheus. In a later text, the *Orphic Argonautica*, and many other Orphic cosmogonies, the first principles are Chaos, Chronos, Night, and Air.¹³ The tradition I've outlined, then, can be understood as a literary descent. Hyginus, writing around the same time as Virgil,¹⁴ refers to the *Bassarai* mentioned above and claims that Orpheus sang a theogony when he attempted to free Eurydice (*Astr.* 2.7): [*Orpheus*] *qui querens uxoris Eurydices mortem, ad*

¹¹ See Farrell 1991, 301-304 for more.

¹² Cf. *Lucr.* 1.714-717.

¹³ Edmonds 2013, 161-164. 164n6 lists bibliography for ancients seeing Empedocles as an Orphic.

¹⁴ The dating and identity of Hyginus is troubled. For Augustan dating, see Le Boeuffe 1965, 286f. The Teubner (1992) follows this dating. For a later date, see Desmedt 1970. Regardless, the use of Hyginus shows the range of attributes that the *Dirae* poet could draw on in describing Orpheus.

inferos descendisse existimatur, et ibi deorum progeniem suo carmine laudasse, praeter Liberum patrem. A progeniem deorum is the equivalent of Hesiodic θεῶν γένος.¹⁵ Orpheus' song (or Orphic song) is involved in the nature of the universe and how that universe came to be.

The *Dirae* poet opens his own song with a “return” to a confused state of the universe (2-7):

diuisas iterum sedes et rura canamus,
rura quibus diras indiximus, impia uota.
ante lupos rapiunt haedi, uituli ante leones,
delphini fugient pisces, aquilae ante columbas
et conuersa retro rerum discordia gliscet –
multa prius fient quam non mea libera auena.

Let us sing homes and fields sundered again,
Fields on which we hurl curses, foul prayers.
Before goats snatch wolves, deer the lions,
Before dolphins flee fish, and eagles doves
And the topsy-turvy discord of matter creeps back...
Much must be before my pipe's not free.

The animal adynata and *discordia rerum* belong to two different registers. The first is a pastoral cliché; the other is high philosophy, and the juxtaposition is jarring. On the one hand, this elevates the speaker's assertion. The generic pastoral impossibilities transition to a higher genre by the appeal to cosmic confusion.¹⁶ The *retro* signals that discord is fundamentally different than the other adynata. Whereas the animal adynata are absurdities, the appearance of discord announces a terrifying regression.

Throughout the course of the *Dirae*, the audience hears a variety of curses, conjuring up this very discord. The flow of the poem is contrary, therefore, to a typical Orphic cosmological

¹⁵ West 1983b, 81n23.

¹⁶ *Discordia* here translates the Empedoclean νεῖκος. See van der Graaf 1945 ad loc. For discord in Orphic cosmogony, see Edmonds 2013, 167f.

song. Apart from the curses for infertility (9-13, 16-19), there is one curse early on for a sort of confusion. “May you plant oats in fields exhausted from grain.” (*Effetas Cereris sulcis condatis auenas*, 15.) The difference between this curse and a curse for general infertility has an important metapoetic dimension: the *Dirae* speaker, by his poetry, will have used up the soil so that the pastoral *avena* produced for his successor will be of lackluster quality. I follow Thomas’ emendation of *effetas* to *effetis*.¹⁷ This has the benefit of explaining the curse on the land. The land is “worn out by producing” the superior crop, grain (*OLD* s.v. *effetus* 2). This line looks back to *Eclogue* 5.36-37. “Often in the furrows in which we planted great barley unproductive vetch and sterile oats will be born.” (*Grandia saepe quibus mandauimus hordea sulcis/ infelix lolium et steriles nascuntur auenae*.) This *Eclogue*, a discussion between two shepherds, includes poems about the death and the catasterism of Daphnis. Daphnis is an Orphic figure (cf. Theoc. *Id.* 1 for impossibilities associated with his death and the sympathy of the natural world). Now that Daphnis is dead, useless crops (*infelix, auenae*) grow. *Effetas* is not equivalent to *steriles*, however. While the *avenae* named in the *Dirae* may be *steriles*, they are not “worn out.” As Thomas points out, even when proleptic, *effetas* must describe the producer not the product. The line in the *Dirae*, therefore, should mean that valueless crops grow because the good crops have been used up. We should note that Daphnis is elevated, even while the land is unfruitful in mourning. The elevation of Daphnis is an elevation of pastoral generally, and Saunders notes that “Any story that subsequently involved Daphnis became at the same time a story about that kind of poetry. In the case of *Eclogue* 5, the account of the ascent of Daphnis to the stars is also an

¹⁷ Thomas 1988a.

account of the elevation of bucolic verse into cosmological verse.”¹⁸ The reeds left behind afterwards are consequently sterile because of the lack of the master poet.

The curse at *Dirae* 15 can be understood as a comment about poetry. The land is necessary for the production of pastoral poetry, but by destroying the land, good pastoral poetry cannot be produced. “Worn out” is a good description of a pastoral landscape/poetic milieu over-harvested through production. The *avena* is not only crop but also the shepherd’s instrument (cf. *Ecl.* 10.51: *carmina pastoris Siculi modulabor auena*). Thus the curse, coming from a pastoral poet to a usurper, is that the pastoral instrument be “founded” in worn-out tracts.¹⁹ The *Dirae* poet’s use of Orpheus, therefore, functions on at least two levels. His speaker, a pastoral Orphic poet, inverts the traditional cosmological Orpheus and instead of narrating a creation *from* chaos tells a return *to* chaos. Secondly, like the Orphic Dapnis, for whom plants grew but at whose departure nature paused, the *Dirae* speaker claims that he will halt pastoral production, with the consequence that no pastoral poets can come after him.

The next change for which the speaker prays is the destruction of flowers. In a stanza-long curse, the speaker hopes that the wreath of Venus (*Veneris florentiaserta*) will change into poisons and plague (22-24):

haec Veneris uario florentiaserta decore,
purpureo campos quae pingunt uerna colore
(hinc aerae dulces, hinc suaui spiritus agri),
mutent pestiferos aestus et taetra uenena;
dulcia non oculis, non auribus ulla ferantur.

These wreathes of Venus flowering with diverse ornament
Which paints the fields in the purple color of spring

¹⁸ Saunders 2008, 22f

¹⁹ “Condo” may also be used of composing a song. E.g. Hor. *Serm.* 2.1.82,84: *si mala condiderit in quem quis carmina...*

(Here there are sweet breezes; here the breaths of the pleasant field),
Let them change to plague-bearing heat and foul poisons.
Let no pleasantness be brought to either eyes or ears.

These *Veneris sertae* are analogous with *Trinacriae...gaudia* of 9, and they introduce an “erotic moment” in the *Dirae*.²⁰ The picture of the delights of the field is the most extensive image in the entire *Dirae*, taking up three lines. This adds weight to the sudden change to pestilence. The curse, like the one discussed earlier, is not meant to be deadly or economically destructive. Instead, the “delights” of the field are being taken away. With the removal of the *Dirae* speaker, future poetry and future pleasure should not come from the landscape.

These two subversions of natural pastoral process fit the definition of *discordia* as *veikos*. In the first, the natural outcome of pastoral poetry from pastoral landscape is thwarted. In the second, flowers, which are attached to and color the land, are changed. The importance of *mutent* is that, when understood as “change through mutation,” the products of the fields are again cursed to be unnatural or worse. Fields which normally produce good crops and flowers (which ought to be exclusive: agricultural land and grazing land with flowers do not intermingle, so this land must be imaginary) will now produce “poisons.” The irony, of course, is that these are the poisons of the speaker’s curses. He is enacting his own curses in hopes that his own poetry cannot be usurped and used like the imagined land.

The next time *discordia* is used, it appears discord has already “crept back.” “O viciously cursed fields, the crimes of praetors! And you, Discord, always an enemy of your citizen.” (*O male deuoti, praetorum crimina, agelli/ tuque inimica tui semper Discordia ciuis*, 82-83.) How

²⁰ It is good to note here that Venus can be the Empedoclean attractive force (*philia*), in the same way that Ares can stand for Discord. It’s possible that the *serta Veneris* changing into something foul follows the same logic as the reintroduction of Discord. Cf. Hardie 1986, 62

Discord can be an enemy of its own citizen has puzzled commentators. Fraenkel explained it as an enemy “to the citizen who is yours because he has to live under your rule.”²¹ While I agree with this reading, the union of *male devoti agelli* with *Discordia inimica* needs to be understood. The fields and Discord are lumped together because the fields are now associated with Discord via the curses uttered in the previous lines. Not only has civil war (one Discord) forced the speaker off his fields, the fields cursed badly are now equated with cosmic strife (the other Discord), because they have become ash and water simultaneously. The Orphic tradition of singing from chaos to order has been reversed through the course of the poem.

We have reason to doubt that the curses of our Orphic speaker are effective. Pastoral speakers are usually powerless in the face of land confiscations. Likewise, they are usually unable to effect curses. (For example, *Idyll 2* leaves open the question of Simaetha’s magical effectiveness.) In addition, the *Dirae* speaker’s claim to power differs from traditional Orphic poets. We have discussed how Orpheus’ power may relate to a mysterious knowledge of the cosmos. Generally however, as in the death of Daphnis or the song of Silenus, nature sympathizes with the person of the speaker. The beauty of the song and the *pathos* of the poet together convince nature to mourn or pay attention. The death of Damon reported in *Eclogue 8* offers “examples of the hypnotic force of song to draw attention to itself and, as a result, to bend the world to its will.”²² While the *Dirae* may draw attention to itself and its repetitions may offer a kind of lulling, the source of power is not located in the pastoral song. It actually is not located anywhere. The poet claims he will tell the woods and mountains the wrongs he has suffered

²¹ Fraenkel 1966, 150.

²² Putnam 1970, 257.

(*montibus et siluis dicam tua facta, Lycurge*, 8) but then proceeds to curse. The poem draws attention to the objects of the curse, instead of itself.

Repetition, tradition, and public display are all methods of empowerment in the *Dirae*, but these are at odds with the traditional portrayals of Orphic song. As mentioned above, Damon and Alpheisiboeus charm nature while competing together. “At whose contest the heifer marveled, forgetting her forage/ At whose song the lynxes were dumbstruck.” (*Quos est mirata iuuenca/ certantis, quorum stupefactae carmine lynces, Ecl. 8.2-3.*) *Certantis* might even be causal. Heifers marvel at them *because* they are competing. Similarly the “song” at which the lynx is dumbstruck is the unified song composed of each singer’s part. The occasion is important to the charm. Contrast the *Dirae*. The speaker readies himself to hand over his song to Battarus (54, 64): *Tristius hoc, memini, reuocasti, Battare, carmen* and *Battare, fluminibus tu nostros trade dolores*. By acknowledging that Battarus has sung and hopefully will sing (*trade*), the speaker undercuts the magic of the pastoral occasion. This is just “an” event, instead of some sort of climactic pastoral occasion. Discussing the Orpheus in the *Georgics*, Charles Segal notes, “In Virgil, Orpheus’ grief effaces the order and restraints of art. This Orpheus ‘weeps to himself’ and still ‘charms tigers and draws oak trees by his song.’ (G.4.509f) Yet his song’s magical power now belongs more to grief than to art. Song becomes pure feeling, another form of ‘weeping.’”²³ This is in many ways the opposite of the Orphic speaker in the *Dirae*. The *Dirae*, with its carefully regulated stanzas, belongs to a more regimented form of grief.

The *Dirae* gives voice to Orpheus who has been supplanted by Aristaeus. When Orpheus appears in the *Georgics*, he is the incarnation of loss. He dies off-screen, as it were, and his story

²³ Segal 1993, 212.

is only told in the context of Aristaeus' eventual triumph. In this sense, the pastoral hero is eclipsed by the new earth-worker. Aristaeus is a complicated figure, open to conflicting interpretations. W.S. Anderson has seen the farmer as Virgil's "symbol of the compromised individual in a world of responsibility. He must act responsibly and intelligently to ensure the productivity of his fields, trees, animals, and bees; he must also act ruthlessly and unsentimentally, subordinating the individual to the larger group."²⁴ The Lycurgus of the *Dirae*, then, may be just this sort of Aristaeus figure. The *facta* of the soldier with an *impia dextra* are never mentioned in the *Dirae*. We do know that the confiscated fields are *funesti praemia belli* (85). While he is the beneficiary of civil war, the soldier is not necessarily morally implicated by it. He is, perhaps, analogous to the farmer, forced to work in a post-Golden Age world. That the voice of Orpheus in the *Georgics* and of the singer in the *Dirae* is ultimately ineffective we can understand because we too live in a post-Golden Age world. Orpheus does not get a chance to elucidate his feeling towards Aristaeus in the *Georgics*. It is very possible they would be bitter. If so, the *Dirae* poet has given Orpheus his chance.

Sporadically in the *Dirae*, the poet's mistress Lydia appears (89, 95). We do not know who she is, but the eponymous poem appended in the manuscripts to the *Dirae* suggest she is his elegiac mistress. She is being left behind with the fields (89): *Dulcia rura ualete et Lydia dulcior illis*. This is strange on first blush. "For what reason Lydia was left behind on the poet's estate, we can only guess."²⁵ Indeed, there is no reason why the soldier given land in a confiscation would somehow obtain the poet's elegiac mistress. This scenario makes perfect sense, however, if we read it as a manifestation of the poetic model discussed previously: the land is the fount of

²⁴ Anderson 1982, 35

²⁵ Van der Graaf 1945, 128.

pastoral poetry, and as the poet leaves, he curses it so no *poetry* can be produced from it. In the same way, the elegiac mistress is the fount of elegiac poetry, and the poet will also be bereft of that. (The second section of the third chapter deals more extensively with Lydia.) Orpheus was similarly deprived of his human love by Aristaeus, who, as we've seen, is the georgic replacement for the pastoral speaker. The last two lines of the *Dirae* may be seen as the culmination of the poet's understanding of Orpheus. "Even if you will be fire, even if you will be water, I will always love you. I will always be able to remember your joys." (*Quamuis ignis eris, quamuis aqua, semper amabo/ gaudia semper enim tua me meminisse licebit*, 102-103.) The curses calling down confusion do not change the love the poet has for his object. Like Orpheus faithful to Eurydice, the *Dirae* speaker will love *semper*. The poet signals the Empedoclean, cosmological nature of his speaker with the lines preceding: "Foreign events will move into the bodies of things sooner than care for you will leave my bones." (*migrabunt casus aliena in corpora rerum/quam tua de nostris emigret cura medullis*, 100-101.) The poet has taken the three "core meanings" of Virgil's Orpheus myth (poetic power, cosmological poetry, and faithful love) and created a character who gets to speak out against an Aristaeus-like usurper. The poet has remembered Virgil's invention, however: Orpheus is unsuccessful.²⁶ Kania argues that Virgil inaugurates Orpheus as the chief of a new bucolic tradition.²⁷ Virgil has remade Orpheus as the central image for pastoral. The *Dirae* poet uses Orpheus to "speak after," speaking after he possibly could in the *Georgics* and outstripping his even his new Virgilian role.

²⁶ See Thomas 1988b, 225. I do not agree with Anderson 1982, 27f, who argues that Virgil expresses the story in a way that indicates audience familiarity. Another objection is Plato's *Symposium*. Plato has Orpheus not succeed, in a way, but see Lee 1996, 6 for the difficulties of using the *Symposium* as a myth handbook.

²⁷ Kania 2012, 678

Chapter 3: Community and Characters in the *Dirae*

3.1 The Identity of Battarus as Bacchus

The addressee of the *Dirae*, Battarus, lives in no other poem, and in the *Dirae* itself he has very few defining characteristics. While most pastoral interlocutors are fleshed out by circumstantial detail, Battarus takes no part in the poem despite being mentioned throughout. In this section, I will argue that Battarus is a stand-in for Bacchus. While the poem imitates traditional features of amoebean pastoral through its address to Battarus and repeated use of the first person plural, in contrast to traditional amoebean poems it is a monologue imagined as joint singing. Instead of another shepherd, however, the speaker only has recourse to Bacchus, in his role as the pastoral poet's patron. Bereft of his land (the prerequisite for pastoral), the singer cannot join in communal pastoral song. He retreats into a reclusive, Bacchic poetics just as he is retreating unwillingly from his land. In the *Dirae*, the poet subverts the traditional Virgilian trope of a discourse occurring precisely at the moment of loss (*Eclogues* 1 and 9) by having his speaker give a monologue after loss, looking backward. Bacchus is the only remnant of poetic community, and it is in the ultimately ineffectual appeals to Bacchus that the *Dirae* speaker locates his own power.

Earlier, we examined the connection of the Bassarai with Bacchus and Orpheus. The Bassarai are another name for the Bacchants who tear Orpheus apart in an Aeschylean trilogy. The first play of this trilogy deals with the anti-Bacchus resistance of the Thracian king Lycurgus. A further hint that our Battarus is meant to recall the Bassarids is the inclusion of a

Lycurgus as the impious solder, who is the new owner of the *Dirae* speaker's fields (8). (This ownership is presumably the *tua facta* of 8.) Curses are never directed against Lycurgus himself but are aimed at his land. Generally, these curses are optative or horatory subjunctives such as "Let both leaves from woods and moisture from springs be absent." (*desint et silvis frondes et fontibus umor*, 18.) These wishes can be concise, such as when the speaker prays, "Let all be ash." (*cinis omnia fiat*, 46.) Occasionally, these curses are aimed. to catch a god's ear, as when the speaker prays that "May Neptune drive these unseen [monsters] with his hostile trident." (*haec agat infesto Neptunus caeca tridenti*, 58.) Battarus also seems to be appealed to (64-70):

Battare, fluminibus tu nostros trade dolores:
nam tibi sunt fontes, tibi semper flumina amica.
[*nil est quod perdam ulterius: merita omnia ditis.*]
flectite currentis lymphas, uaga flumina, retro,
flectite et aduersis rursum diffundite campis;
incurrant amnes passim rimantibus undis
nec nostros seruire sinant erronibus agros.

Battarus, deliver our griefs to the streams
For to you the springs and to you the streams are friends.
[There is nothing which I would destroy further: all these are the deserts of the
rich.]
Bend the running waters back, you wandering streams.
Bend and pour back into the opposite fields.
Let the rivers invade all over with probing waves
And may they not permit [themselves] to serve our fields with their wanderings.

The speaker implores the streams themselves with the plural imperatives *flectite* and *diffundite*, but the intermediary between the streams and the speaker is Battarus, who will "deliver our griefs." Apart from singing or playing music, this hand-off is the only action Battarus is said to take in the poem. The language here is reminiscent of Horace's hymn to Bacchus: "You [Bacchus] turn the rivers; you turn the barbarian sea." (*tu flectis amnis, tu mare barbarum*, C. 2.19.17.) While Bacchus controls the rivers by his innate power, the speaker hopes to control

them by his own poetry mediated by Battarus. The speaker implies that he does not have power of the waters on his own: Battarus is to be the ambassador to the waters because (*nam*) they are amicable to him. The “barbarian sea” mentioned by Horace could be a particular eastern sea as Bacchus was often associated or said to come from the East. Seneca names a particular eastern sea when he describes Bacchus as the “master of Lycurgus and the Red Sea” (*Lycurgi domitor et rubri maris, Herc. Fur. 903*).¹ In both the *Dirae* and the *Hercules Furens* we have a character as master of waters appealed to as the adversary of a Lycurgus.

Battarus and the speaker are fused in a poetic moment, in which Battarus’ presence and voice are understood but never articulated. He is with the poet and empowers the poet but never speaks. “Our griefs” (*nostros dolores*) may be the shared griefs of the speaker and Battarus, and throughout the poem the speaker uses the first person plural without differentiating. He hopes that “the curse song not be absent from our pipes.” (*Nec desit nostris devotum carmen avenis. 19*) These plural pipes must belong to the speaker and Battarus. They are imagined as playing music together, but with the addition of lyrics the speaker and Battarus cannot both simultaneously play instruments. The music must be imagined, an artifact of pastoral: we have only the text of the poem but are meant to understand that the occasion involves song with accompaniment; the practical details are inconsequential. The poet’s songs are Battarus’ too.. The speaker can finalize a curse with, “thus I pray, and may these songs overcome with our prayers.” (*Sic precor, et nostris superent haec carmina votis. 25*) Given the singular “I pray,” the *nostris votis* may be royal plural; however, because this refrain follows the previous one about “our pipes,” it contains echoes of the musical accompaniment described above. The

¹ Nisbet and Hubbard 1978, 324 notes that this red sea could be the Indian as well as the Red Sea, waters crossed by Dionysus in his journey to India.

accompanying Battarus and the poet are imagined as performing together even while the “thus I pray” reinforces the speaker’s individuality.

This individuality is necessary for pastoral loss. In *Eclogue 1* Meliboeus links the deprivation of his livelihood to the silencing of his song (*Ecl.* 1.75-78):

non ego uos posthac uiridi proiectus in antro
dumosa pendere procul de rupe uidebo;
carmina nulla canam; non me pascente, capellae,
florentem cytisum et salices carpetis amaras.

After this, I will never, sprawled in a green cave
Under jutting rock covered in briar, never look on you;
I will sing no songs. Not while I’m pasturing you, goats,
Will you feed on flowering cytisum and bitter willows.

The “I will sing no songs” occurs in the middle of other pastoral activities and looks forward to Meliboeus’ separation from Tityrus. Once separated, he will have neither companions nor pastoral places; consequently, he will not sing. His ability to sing currently flows from his meeting with Tityrus. The *Dirae* speaker, by contrast, prays that his singing will never cease, but the singing is imagined as separate from the singer, as in when the singer complains to Battarus that “not often will my song echo to me, Battarus.” (*Nec mihi saepe meum resonabit Battare carmen.* 30) *Resonare* picks up on the language of *Eclogue 1*, particularly when Meliboeus differentiates himself from Tityrus: “We flee our fatherland. You, Tityrus, sedate in the shade teach the woods to echo lovely Amaryllis.” (*nos patriam fugimus; tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra/ formosam resonare doces Amaryllida siluas, Ecl.* 1.4-5.) That the *Dirae* speaker’s song will “not often” resound has two possible meanings. Because the speaker is leaving, it might mean the song ceases with him. The woods will not echo back his song as he sings it. Due to their proximity, a better reading takes the first words *nec mihi saepe* as closely related. The song will

not often resound *mihi*, i.e. to the singer. The song hangs in the air, impersonal, but the originator has been removed. This reading is supported by Battarus' actions, related by the speaker. The speaker recalls that "More sadly, I remember, you recalled *this* song, Battarus." (*Tristius hoc, memini, revocasti, Battare, carmen.* 54) On a different occasion, Battarus performed the song differently. "I remember; you recalled the song more happily." (*Dulcius hoc, memini, revocasti, Battare, carmen.* 71)² *Hoc carmen* is the song that the speaker currently sings. The speaker has possession of the song in that he is producing it. The song is in a way also Battarus' as he has sung an inspirational version (inspirational to the singer because in the performance the singer "remembers" it). The notion of owning a pastoral song is almost oxymoronic.³

The *Dirae* poet, then, acknowledges his position as a poet in the pastoral community. This acknowledgment is accompanied by angst, which in turn leads him to attempt the destruction of his land with curses so that no later poetry can result.⁴ Since the singer distances himself from other pastoral singers, he has to turn to Bacchus for power, and not only does the speaker gain distance from pastoral singers, he is removed from the land. In the penultimate stanza, the speaker reenacts his displacement (81-87):

piscetur nostris in finibus aduena arator
 aduena, ciuili qui semper crimine creuit.
 o male deuoti, praetorum crimina, agelli,

² Kenny's OCT remarks of *dulcius: non satis explicatum*. Fraenkel 1966, 148 asserts that "the following lines are on an almost idyllic note." This is not the case: the change of arable land into swamp (72) and the replacement of "melodious crickets" with "garrulous frogs" (74) is precisely the tenor of the curses of 15-18 and 48-51. The crickets here stand in for good poetry, and the frogs are a typically anti-poetic animal. Cf. *Idyll* 7.41 for frogs competing with grasshoppers. These curses are the same style as throughout: the land will be changed sufficiently so that good pastoral poetry cannot be produced after the speaker has left. *Dulcius* and *tristius* must refer to the mode of song, not the content

³ Cf. Hubbard 1998, 124 "The world of pastoral song, unlike the political domain that intrudes itself in this poem, seems remarkably unconcerned with questions of property rights and possession: all song seems to constitute a communally shared patrimony, claimed equally by all."

⁴ This angst seems to be located in the speaker's awareness that he is in a pastoral poem and that entails a lack of personal voice. Cf. Breed 2006, 23 "The absence of voice diffused within the 'communal discourse' of the pastoral world must, therefore, be balanced against all the claims to presence that are asserted by voice."

tuque inimica tui semper Discordia cuius,
exsul ego indemnatus egens mea rura reliqui,
miles ut accipiat funesti praemia belli?
hinc ego de tumulo mea rura nouissima uisam,
hinc ibo in siluas.

A foreign plowman will fish in our domain,
The foreigner who has always prospered with a civil suit.
O fields grievously cursed, the sins of praetors,
And you, Discord, always hostile to you citizen.
Do I, condemned as exile, destitute, leave my fields
So a soldier can accept the rewards of deadly war?
From here I will look down from this mound on my furthest fields.
From here I will go into the woods.

These lines move the speaker from his own home to outside his familiar world. At the start he is at the center, and the usurper is an *advena*, a foreigner who is “increasing” or “growing.” This *advena* is the usurper of the *Dirae*. (The previous line hopes “the foreigner, a plowman, will fish in our lands.” *Piscetur nostris in finibus aduena arator*, 80.) The *semper*, then, does not imply a generalization (*crevit* is not subjunctive). Instead, this usurper is the archetypal Foreigner, the same unnamed foreigner who profits from the removal of shepherds in the *Eclogues*, perhaps. For the first lines (81-83), the speaker is at the lands, in the center so to speaker, and the foreigner is coming in from the outside. Then the apostrophe to the fields and to Discord joins these two together. This is the same junction that occurs throughout the curses: the landscape and some change or destruction characterized by discord. After these curses, the speaker identifies himself as an exile, condemned and impoverished (84). In the first five lines, therefore, the focus follows the creation of the poem: the usurper is introduced and the lands lost; the curse poem is made and/or performed; the speaker leaves the land as an exile. The speaker has been marginalized and stands at the boundary. That is why he says that “from here, I will/might look at the edge of my lands” (86). *Hinc* means the point in the poem but also the status of the speaker

being displaced by the soldier. He will move to increasingly more remote (and loftier) terrain: cf. *de tumulo* 86, *colles* 87, *montes* 88. The speaker looks on the “newest” fields, but *novissima* can also mean the last in an order, so furthest (*OLD* s.v. *novissimus* 2 & 3). The speaker has positioned himself in an ascent and at the liminal space between his lands and his exile.

The poet appeals to Battarus or Bacchus because of his association with remote, reclusive poetry. Horace sees “Bacchus teaching songs on the remotest cliffs.” (*Bacchum in remotis carmina rupibus/ vidi docentem*, C.2.19.1-2) Bacchic revelry inspires Horace to “wander banks and enjoy marveling at empty glades.” (*ut mihi devio/ ripas et vacuum nemus/ mirari libet*, C.3.25.12-14) The *Dirae* speaker sings with and to Battarus for the same reason. Bacchus, the name lurking behind Battarus, is the patron of secluded poetry, and as the *Dirae* speaker moves away from traditional pastoral community, he finds his voice in Bacchic poetics.

The speaker’s final movement into the woods might seem to keep him in a pastoral zone, but it actually signifies his removal. Virgilian pastoral woods are places of harvesting, where the poet can draw from the raw material of others. Woods and bucolic pasture should be separate, since animals cannot be grazed in woods. Virgil, however, uses *silvae* as a pastoral location frequently.⁵ In fact, Virgil uses *silvae* especially to mark his poetry off from others.⁶ Specifically, they may represent Virgil’s “heavy reliance on and imitation of existing literary traditions.”⁷ So, when the *Dirae* poet says “from here I will go into the woods,” (*hinc ibo in silvas*, 87) he

⁵ Cf. Schmidt 1972, 243 “Die ‘silvae’ sind der Wesenraum der Bukolik, von welchem die Dichtung u. a. die Strukturen der Teilnahme, Resonanz und Reflexion erhält bzw. in den hinein sich diese Strukturen projizieren lassen.”

⁶ Lipka 2001, 31. 31n14 mentions that ὕλα, the word corresponding to *silva*, is used very infrequently in Theocritus, while ἄλσος (grove) is more common. ἄλσος implies a slightly less dense wooded area. Perhaps Virgil imagines his pastoral locale as “more dense” because it contains the remnants of more pastoral predecessors.

⁷ Henkel 2009, 138-9. Here is also a bibliography of *silvae* used to replicate the Greek pun in ὕλη to mean both “woods” and “material.”

consigns himself to move from the place of poet-producer to the place where poetry is read and used for the poems of others. This is the final movement away from center that started when the soldier invaded and usurped the speaker. When the speaker says in his final refrain “let us sing the last song, Battarus, on the reed,” (*extremum carmen revocemus, Battare, avena, 97*) he is referring to the final stanza, but he is also setting up a contrast between that ending *carmen* and the *carmen* that is prayed to “never be absent from our pipes.” (21) Despite the repetitions and the passing back and forth of songs between speakers (as Battarus is imagined to “recall” the song), the song will not be perpetually performed but will have a textual afterlife. The speaker acknowledges this (25-28):

 sic precor, et nostris superent haec carmina uotis:
 ludimus et multum nostris cantata libellis,
 optima siluarum, formosis densa uirectis,
 tandem uirides umbras.

 Thus I pray, and may these songs conquer with our prayers.
 We are playing, and we are cutting the best of the forests,
 Things sung much in our little books, dense with beautiful greenery.
 We are cutting the green shades.

The speaker “plays” in the sense of making verse, but his verses are a destruction of pastoral as he uses Virgilian elements to create land-destroying curses, hence how he can “cut” the best parts of the forests. The song can be eternal due to its existence as text.

 Despite the fiction, described above, of Bacchus as the patron of the poet-recluse, Bacchus is often associated with a troupe. The entire troupe is outside a “civilized” setting, like a city. Thus Ovid imagines how far his exile is (outside even the normally far-off Bacchic haunts) (*Tr. 5.3.31-34*):

 Ut tamen audisiti percussum fulmine vatem

Admonitu matris condoluisse potes,
Et potes aspiciens circum tua sacra poetas
“Nescioquis nostri” dicere “cultor abest.”

So that, after you heard that a bard was struck by lightning,
With the memory of your mother, you could sympathize
And be able, looking around your holy poets
To say, “A worshiper of mine, I don’t know who, is missing.”

The joke in these lines is how little connection Bacchus has with Ovid. He will not know Ovid by name; he only notices his absence from a lack in the headcount. In the *Dirae*, we never hear Battarus speak or know his involvement in the singer’s song. Bacchic power may, in fact, be lacking from the song. Ovid acknowledges the possibility that Bacchic power may be absent and his prayers may therefore prove ineffectual, so he turns to his fellow poets: “You too, comrades-in-study, pious crowd, poets! After you’ve taken up the sauce, everyone, ask after these same things.” (*vos quoque, consortes studii, pia turba, poetae/ haec eadem sumpto quisque rogare mero*, *Tr.* 5.3.47-48) The appeal to Bacchus alone must be supplemented, and it is Ovid’s remembrance by his fellow poets that closes this poem’s original appeal to Bacchus. This understanding of Bacchus contributes to the sense of loss in the *Dirae*. The *Dirae* speaker, compelled from his land, now entrusts his cares to the god of reclusive poetics, but even these reclusive poetics require poetic community.⁸ When the speaker says that he will entrust Lycurgus’ deeds to mountains and woods (*montibus et siluis dicam tua facta, Lycurge*, 8), he is entrusting them to poetic history (the *silvae* mentioned above) not to an effectual coterie.

We can draw one final link between *Tristia* 5.3 and the *Dirae* in that Ovid associates the Bacchic chorus (*nostri choro*, used of the poets in 5.3.52) with the *Pieridumque choro* (10). *Tristia* 5.3 also provides evidence for the connection between the Muses and Bacchus in their

⁸ Cf. Horace’s *C.* 3.1.1-4 in which he “hates and shuns” the crowd, but sings *virginibus puerisque*.

role as inspiration to poets. This connection may be particularly pastoral. The *Lament for Bion*, a post-Theocritean pastoral inspiration of Virgil's, repeats the refrain, "Begin, Sicilian Muses, begin, therefore, the mourning." (ἄρχετε Σικελικαί, τῷ πένθεος ἄρχετε, Μοῖσαι. *EB* 13)⁹ Here we have another instance of a refrain calling in higher powers to assist in a dolorous song. The *Dirae* poet changes from the plural "Sicilian Muses" to the singular "Battarus" to heighten the isolation of the speaker, this echo of the Muses in the *Dirae* is a further confusion of the individual voice of the poet. Just as the singer repeats songs that Battarus "recalled," the inspiration of the Muses reduces the agency of the artist.¹⁰ The *Dirae* poet, then, through his creation of Battarus simultaneously expresses his exclusion from pastoral landscape and poetic community and his dependence on "inspiration," which is understood to function as textual allusion and dependence on predecessors. Thus the figure of Battarus is one of the principal embodiments of the drama of the *Dirae*: separation and destruction are sought as a means of destroying the potential for usurping (poetic) successors, but the language of separation and destruction are ineffectual and leave the poet in the "woods" ready to be harvested by the next poet.

3.2 The Lydia and Elegiac Elements in the *Dirae*

When, in the final line, the speaker of the *Dirae* promises to remember "your delights," (*gaudia...tua*, 103), he transitions from his traditionally pastoral curses and seemingly prepares the way for the next poem in the *Appendix Vergiliana*, a hexameter poem about a lost love Lydia. As mentioned earlier, the *Dirae* and the *Lydia* are transmitted as a single poem in the manuscript tradition, but owing to the difference in content between the two, a break was made

⁹ The *Epitaphius Bionis* attributed to Moschus is analyzed in light of its inspiration for Virgil in Kania 2012.

¹⁰ Cf. Sharrock 2002, 207 "The language of inspiration is part of a traditional discursive nexus through which poets play out the tensions involved in the poetic process as both creative and derivative."

in 1792.¹¹ Some have seen these two poems as completely distinct and the *Dirae* as far superior.¹² Others have seen the two as comprising one work inspired by Virgil's own playful attempts at including forlorn elegiac loves in his *Eclogues*, e.g. with Gallus in *Eclogue* 10.¹³ This section will argue that the two poems should be read as a diptych; each poem plays with different generic conceits, but each expresses similar themes. The Lydia of the *Dirae* is in the periphery because she is merely a by-product of the land and the poetry associated with the land. When the poet switches to an elegiac mode, the circumstances of composition, which are crucial to pastoral self-definition with its shepherds' pipes and *certamina*, fall to the background, and the elegiac *puella* takes center stage. Pastoral women, as this section will show, blur the line between the actual experience of the (male) singer and the artistic tradition from which the singer creates his songs. The *Dirae*, an experiment in how poems are harvested and passed on, uses elegiac elements to emphasize this tension between tradition and experience.

Erotic elements pop up early in the *Dirae* and prepare us for the *Lydia* and the poet's take on "written women." When cursing the field, the poet prays for the change of "wreaths of Venus" into pestilence (*Dirae* 20-24):

haec Veneris uario florentia sarta decore,
 purpureo campos quae pingunt uerna colore
 (hinc aurae dulces, hinc suavis spiritus agri),
 mutent pestiferos aestus et taetra uenena;
 dulcia non oculis, non auribus ulla ferantur.

These wreathes of Venus flowering with diverse ornament
 Which paints the fields in the purple color of spring
 (Here there are sweet breezes; here the breaths of the pleasant field),
 Let them change to plague-bearing heat and foul poisons.

¹¹ See van der Graaf 1945, 125-127 for a history of the division.

¹² E.g. Fraenkel 1966, 152 "And to the reader who has tuned his mind to the mood and style of this virile poem the sudden appearance of the girl at this point and the soft note of *tua Lydia* must cause an unpleasant surprise."

¹³ Lorenz 2005, 26 The *Dirae* poet "löst gewissermaßen das ein, was Vergil selbst in *Ecl.* 10 angedeutet hatte."

Let no pleasantness be brought to either eyes or ears.

The “wreathes of Venus” are an ornament to the field and act as an addition to the otherwise blank canvas of the terrain. When these adornments are changed through cursing, “nothing pleasant” will be brought to the observer. Since the fields are a metapoetic prerequisite for pastoral, we can read the *serta Veneris* as the particular manifestations or outgrowths of the poetry. Thus, when the speaker in the *Lydia* complains to the field that “I envy you; you have my joys” (*inuideo uobis, agri: mea gaudia habetis*, 20), he speaks from a remove. The love interest in the *Dirae* remains in the fields while the speaker is forced to leave because the beloved is somehow tied to the land, not the speaker, in other words, to the poetry, not the poet. In my reading therefore, the eponymous Lydia is written as an afterthought in the *Dirae* because the *Dirae* speaker is preoccupied with the production of poetry and Lydia is a product. In the rest of this section, I will argue that this is a concern reflected in other pastoral poetry.

The name of the addressee of the *Dirae*, Battarus, echoes another pastoral name: Battus of Theocritus’ *Idyll* 4. In that *Idyll*, Battus encounters his friend Corydon, and the two banter on a variety of topics. Battus remembers a girl dear to him, Amaryllis, and mourns her death (*Id.* 4.29-42)

{ΚΟ.} οὐ τίνα γ', οὐ Νύμφας, ἐπεὶ ποτὶ Πῖσαν ἀφέρπων
δῶρον ἐμοί νιν ἔλειπεν· ἐγὼ δέ τις εἰμὶ μελικτάς,
κεῖ μὲν τὰ Γλαύκας ἀγκρούομαι, εἴ δὲ τὰ Πύρρω.
αἰνέω τάν τε Κρότωνα – Ἐκαλὰ πόλις ἅ τε Ζάκυνθος ...’ –
καὶ τὸ ποταῶνον τὸ Λακίνιον, ἄπερ ὁ πύκτας
Αἴγων ὀγδώκοντα μόνος κατεδαίσατο μάζας.
τηνεὶ καὶ τὸν ταῦρον ἀπ' ὄρεος ἄγε πιάξας
τᾶς ὀπλᾶς κῆδωκ' Ἀμαρυλλίδι, ταὶ δὲ γυναῖκες
μακρὸν ἀνάυσαν, χῶ βουκόλος ἐξεγέλασεν.
{ΒΑ.} ὦ χαρίεσσ' Ἀμαρυλλί, μόνας σέθεν οὐδὲ θανοίσας
λασεύμεσθ' ὅσον αἴγες ἐμὶν φίλαι, ὅσσον ἀπέσβης.
αἰαὶ τῶ σκληρῶ μάλα δαίμονος ὅς με λελόγχει.

{KO.} θαρσεῖν χρή, φίλε Βάττε· τάχ' αὔριον ἔσσετ' ἄμεινον.
ἐλπίδες ἐν ζῳοῖσιν, ἀνέλπιστοι δὲ θανόντες.

Corydon: Not that, indeed! No, by the nymphs, since when he was going to Pisa
He left it [his pipes] to me as a gift. And I am something of a singer myself,
And well can I strike up those bits of Glaucus, well too those of Pyrrhus.
And I tell of Croton— “A lovely city is Zacynthus...”—
And Eastern Lacinion, where the boxer
Aegon devoured eighty barley loaves alone.
And there from the mountain he led him grasping
The hoof and gave him to Amaryllis. The women
Cried loudly, and the shepherd burst out laughing.
Battus: O delightful Amaryllis, you alone, although dead,
We will not forget. As much as my goats are dear to me, you were dear, and you
died.
It's a very hard deity who's assigned to me.
C: Take heart, dear Battus. Perhaps things will be better tomorrow.
Hopes for the living; the dead are hopeless.

This passage occurs because of a discussion of pastoral poetry. Aegon left his pipes to Corydon, and Corydon assures Battus they are in good condition still. To back this up, Corydon asserts that he is a good singer and relates snatches of songs from his repertoire. These songs blur the distinction between reality and artifice. The songs he knows are identified by their composers (e.g. τὰ Γλαύκας) or by their subject matter. Eastern Lacinion for example is sung because of the astounding story involving Aegon and Amaryllis. The place and event are conjured up because Corydon wants to bring up the song, but for Battus the song reminds him of Amaryllis' loss. Corydon is focused on the song itself, but Battus focuses on the person behind the song. She is then “remembered” through song, even though dead. For the two interlocutors in this *Idyll*, that memory clearly has different emotional valences. This event presumably happened a while ago, but the memory upsets Battus, so much so that he bemoans his entire life.

Amaryllis gets completely consumed by pastoral tradition, however, with the result that she is indistinguishable from any character in a song. In *Eclogue 1*, Meliboeus remarks that his

interlocutor “‘teaches’ the woods to echo ‘lovely Amaryllis’” (*tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra/ formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas, Ecl. 1.4-5*). Stories connected to Amaryllis and intense personal feeling at her death disappear as Tityrus sings an impersonal song. In *Idyll 3*, the speaker says that he (whoever he is) “serenades Amaryllis, and my goats graze on a mountain, and Tityrus leads them [the goats]” (Κωμάσδω ποτὶ τὰν Ἀμαρυλλίδα, ταὶ δέ μοι αἴγες/ βόσκονται κατ’ ὄρος, καὶ ὁ Τίτυρος αὐτὰς ἐλάυνει, *Id. 3.1-2*). Tityrus in *Eclogue 1* borrows a song, disentangled from its emotional context.

In the *Dirae*, a similar process occurs with the speaker’s beloved. He bids the fields farewell “and you too, best Lydia, farewell” (*tuque, optima Lydia, salve, 95*). This late verse is the first time that Lydia has been addressed in the *Dirae*, and she is described as *optima*. The other time *optima* was used, it was used in a context that implied literary tradition. The speaker claimed that he played and was cutting the “best parts of the forests, much sung in our little books” (*multum nostris cantata libellis/ optima silvarum, 26-27*). These best bits of the forests are the *Dirae* poet’s best poetic predecessors. Lydia in line 95, by extension, is best in the sense that she is the best product of the land. She functions in the same way as the wreathes of Venus mentioned earlier; she is an ornament and one of the *ulla dulcia*, not a person for whom the speaker has real emotional feeling. She is Amaryllis, but Tityrus’ Amaryllis, not Battus’.

Before his last stanza, the *Dirae* speaker sings to Battarus, “Let us recall the ultimate song on the reed” (*extremum carmen revocemus, Battare, avena, 97*). This *extremum carmen* echoes language in the *Eclogues*. In *Eclogue 10*, Virgil asks Arethusa to “permit me this final work” (*extremum hunc, Arethusa, mihi concede laborem, Ecl. 10.1*). This final work will be the “pastoralization” of the elegiac poet Gallus. Virgil will attempt to bring Gallan love elegy into his pastoral mode. The refrain about final song in the *Dirae* introduces its last stanza, but it can

also be understood to introduce the following poem, the *Lydia*. The other two uses of *extremum* we examined both pointed to erotic themes. The *Dirae* closes with a stanza in a much more elegiac register (100-103):

migrabunt casus aliena in corpora rerum,
quam tua de nostris emigret cura medullis.
quamuis ignis eris, quamuis aqua, semper amabo:
gaudia semper enim tua me meminisse licebit.

The causes of certain things will travel into strange matter
Sooner than care for you will leave from my bones.
Though you may be fire, though water, I will always love;
Always, indeed, will I be able to remember your joys.

The *gaudia* have erotic undertones.¹⁴ *Medullis* is often used of the innermost parts affected by love.¹⁵ The speaker has moved away from the destruction imagined in his earlier curses and concedes that whatever the object of his song changes into, he will love that object. This appeal to memory is not nearly as optimistic as the hope that “these songs will conquer with our prayers” (*nostris superent haec carmina votis*, 47). The speaker, then, has transitioned from a defiant, if unbelievable, song of curses to a restrained attitude of defeat. This defeat takes the form of erotic elegiac language.

We have seen the *Dirae* sharing themes with Ovid’s exilic elegy, specifically the *Ibis* and the *Tristia*. In the *Tristia*, Ovid ties his removal from Rome to the deterioration of his poetry and his health. In *Tristia* 3.3, Ovid dictates an epistolary poem to be sent to his wife detailing how he wishes to be preserved after death. His illness, caused by his removal to foreign lands, causes in its turn his inability to write (Ov. *Tr.* 3.3.1-4, 7):

Haec mea si casu miraris epistula quare

¹⁴ *OLD* s.v. 2.

¹⁵ Cf. Catullus 35.15.

alterius digitis scripta sit, aeger eram,
aeger in extremis ignoti partibus orbis;
incertusque meae paene salutis eram.

...
nec caelum patior, nec aquis adsuevimus istis.

If, perhaps, you wonder why my letter
Should be written with another's finger, I'm sick.
Sick in the farthest parts of an unknown world
And uncertain of my health.
I can't stand the sky, nor am I used to these waters.

Ovid attributes his loss of his health to his unfamiliar environment. The change of environment in the *Dirae* is similarly imagined as ending the poetic output of the singer's usurpers. In Ovid's poem and the *Dirae*, then, the land is tied to poetic production in a context that involves writing to a lover. Ovid's secretary, whether slave or free, is unidentified, but it is understood that this poem is passed down through different levels. Ovid composes and "sings" it, and the poem is transmitted by this unnamed intermediary. Ovid disregards this intermediary and blends together orality and literacy, in much the same way as pastoral generally and the *Dirae* in particular, when he says, "It's nice to write a lot, but my voice is weary with talking and an exhausted tongue denies the power of speech" (*scribere plura libet, sed vox mihi fessa loquendo/ dictandi vires siccaque lingua negat, Tr. 3.3.85-86*). The *Dirae* and *Tristia* 3.3, therefore, share the premise that a change of environment entails a loss of production and that writing and speaking are blurred. The difference between written and spoken poetry is raised with the understanding that books or poems are separable from the poet and that these can have a life outside the poet (*Tr. 3.3.77-80, 83-84*):

...etenim maiora libelli
et diuturna magis sunt monimenta mihi,
quos ego confido, quamvis nocuere, daturus
nomen et auctori tempora longa suo.

...

quamvis in cinerem corpus mutaverit ignis,
sentiet officium maesta favilla pium.

...And yet greater are my books
And they are more lasting monuments for me,
Which I trust, although they have harmed, will give
A name and long times to their author.

...
Although fire will have changed my body to ash,
The pitiable dust will know its pious duty.

The remains, the dust, will know the duty it has to maintain Ovid's legacy. The books are given agency (they have harmed), and because of this agency, they will be able to maintain Ovid's name. The transferal of agency from the author to the written work is impossible in the *Dirae* because the curses in the *Dirae* are imagined as songs accompanied by the pipe. The speaker of the *Dirae*, when his voice is tired and he is sick from the change of scene, will be utterly destroyed. The song can be recollected, but outside of a textual tradition, pastoral song is authorless. Therefore, in the *Lydia* the speaker says, "and for you now is the pleasure which was mine before" (*et vobis nunc est mea quae fuit ante voluptas*, 21). The pastoral singer in the *Dirae* has tried to resist his usurper, failed, and his poetry and delights are ours.

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