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Pastoral at the Boundaries:  
The Hybridization of Genre in the Fourteenth-Century Italian Eclogue Revival

By

Jonathan David Combs-Schilling

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Italian Studies

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in Charge:

Professor Albert Russell Ascoli, Chair

Professor Steven Botterill

Professor Timothy Hampton

Fall 2012



Abstract

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The Hybridization of Genre in the Fourteenth-Century Italian Eclogue Revival

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Doctor of Philosophy in Italian Studies

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Professor Albert Russell Ascoli, Chair

This dissertation demonstrates that one of the principal aspects of pastoral is its identity as a metagenre by focusing attention on the Latin pastoral production of the fourteenth-century eclogue revival in Italy, and by integrating that production into larger estimations of pastoral's history. Long taken to be a closed circuit within, or a derivative offshoot of, the genre's history, the eclogues of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio at once accentuated the metageneric elements of classical pastoral and influenced the future of pastoral representations through their consistent exploration of pastoral's boundary-crossing double move—an expansionary movement outward into the representational terrain of other genres and a recuperative (and incorporative) return to the fold.

My first chapter, "Dante's Two Reeds: Pastoral Hierarchies and Hybrids," examines Dante in terms of this double move, positions his eclogues at the origins of a new era of pastoral representation, and addresses why the first continuous tradition of pastoral production in the history of the genre begins with their 165 verses. I individuate one of the principal causes of their influence to be the epistolary context out of which they were forged. By sending his eclogues as letters to the protohumanist Giovanni del Virgilio, Dante harnesses the boundary-traversing movement of epistolarity and invests the metageneric movement of pastoral with a new critical thrust. With this new orientation, Dante utilizes the genre's self-figured humility to interrogate and overturn Giovanni's rigid distinctions between high and low literature and, in the systematically hybrid second eclogue, produces a pastoral fiction that is at once low *and* high.

There is both a vertical and a horizontal aspect to Dante's use of pastoral as metagenre, and though the two are conjoined, my next two chapters argue that Petrarch explores its vertical aspect through a methodical comparison with epic, while Boccaccio explores its horizontal aspect through a narratologically innovative breach of pastoral's diegetic horizon. In chapter 2, "*Translatio bucolicorum*: Pastoral and the Place of Epic in Petrarch's *Bucolicum carmen*," through an analysis of his first eclogue and his letters, in particular *Familiare* 21.15, I reveal that Petrarch conceived of his collection as a response to the letter that Giovanni had sent Dante, whereby he not only attempts to replace Dante as the originator of the pastoral revival but also figures his collection as an

“answer” to Giovanni’s request for a new Latin epic. In this light, I proceed to examine Petrarch’s pervasive appropriation of epic tropes and strategies, in particular *translatio imperii*, as he extends the implications of Dante’s high-low hybrid to pastoralize the book of epic, and in the process generates the first modern collection of eclogues.

In my third chapter, “Tending to the Boundary: Between Inner and Outer Pastoral in Boccaccio’s *Buccolicum carmen*,” I redress critical estimations of Boccaccio’s usage of allegory in his eclogue collection to show that it is not a departure from “authentic” pastoral but rather works in concert with the other innovations he brings to the genre, most noticeably the sharp increase in dramatic movement within the eclogues and the narratological complexity deployed in the songs of their protagonists. By narrativizing the arrival of allegory to the landscape of pastoral, as well as its departure, Boccaccio drastically increases the genre’s representational purview while also maintaining the autonomy of its fictions. This provokes a doubling of the landscape, which becomes mapped into two distinct but overlapping spaces: an inner pastoral, a more conventional Arcadian scene, and an outer pastoral, a liminal space where the genre encounters and pastoralizes the system of literature beyond its borders.

The cumulative effect of this inquiry is a two-fold recognition: first, while still respecting the distinctions between the pastoral poetics of the *tre corone*, we can meaningfully speak of the fourteenth-century eclogue revival as a movement; and, second, it was a movement that helped shape pastoral’s future as a metagenre.

For  
Kathleen McDermott  
and  
William Sloane Coffin  
*senza di voi languisce il cor*

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## Acknowledgments

That I should have become so invested in the affairs of shepherds surprises no one more so than me. Yet with the dissertation now complete, I can see that the seeds of this project were planted in the years 2000-2001, while I was still an undergraduate, during my studies with Professors Jean Howard and Teodolinda Barolini. With the former, I first encountered the green fields of pastoral, in the form of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, and under the latter's guidance I began to approach the three poets at the heart of this dissertation: Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. Without the two of them, I would not do what I do, and for this and much more, I give them my most heartfelt thanks.

My greatest debt is owed to the members of my dissertation committee. Professor Albert Russell Ascoli has been an illuminating guide, a tireless reader, and a nourishing mentor at every stage of this project and has become a dear friend in the process. I will happily carry my professional and personal debt to him for many years to come. My deepest thanks as well to Professor Timothy Hampton, in whose office hours I first forged my take on pastoral. His intellectual exuberance has made this process more enjoyable, and his probing questions have made me a better reader. Finally, Professor Steven Botterill, through his encouragement, advice, consistent acts of kindness, and sharp eye for grammatical infelicities has improved the process of, and hopefully the writing contained within, this dissertation. It has been an unqualified pleasure to work with all three of them.

My gratitude extends to other Berkeley professors. In particular, I am most grateful for Louise George Clubb's warm and generous mentorship. It was an honor to be one of her final students, and I hope to be able to explore as deeply and defend as eloquently a genre that is dear to her heart. My thanks, as well, to Professors Mia Fuller and Barbara Spackman who have improved and enlivened my time at Berkeley. Over the years, there have also been many others who have offered their receptive ears to my take on pastoral, and so I extend many thanks to the following professors for their insightful and encouraging comments: Theodore J. Cachey Jr., William J. Kennedy, Ronald L. Martinez, Giuseppe Mazzotta, Jane Tylus, and David Quint.

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Finally, my deepest gratitude to my parents for their ceaseless support and boundless affection.



## Introduction

### Pastoral as Metagenre

Few literary categories have been laden with more ponderous and variegated forms of non-literary significance than has pastoral. In the two millennia of its reception history, many a reader has considered it light fare, a pleasant but frivolous retreat from the cares of the modern world (or, in Samuel Johnson's more caustic formulation, an "easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting" poetic enterprise),<sup>1</sup> yet those critics who have found a greater substance beneath the humble garb of shepherds have taken pastoral very seriously indeed. The discrete boundaries of Arcadia have been claimed variously as part of the vast territories of philosophy, theology, and politics, while the effects engendered by its landscape and by its inhabitants have been categorized as a vehicle for the moral reformation of its readers, an outlet for their anxiety concerning urban existence, and a mirror in which their basic humanity is reflected.<sup>2</sup> The proliferation of intellectual, socio-political and spiritual criteria with which to measure pastoral suggests that this form of literature gives voice to a basic aspect of the human experience, and though critics may disagree about exactly *which* basic aspect is at stake, they concur that pastoral has cast a long shadow on Western culture, approaching a universality awarded to few forms of literature.<sup>3</sup>

Such divergent appraisals of pastoral's meaning attest to the endurance of the genre's subjects and the flexibility of its structures, yet by locating the nature of pastoral within larger currents of intellectual history, such appraisals also suggest that, when understood transhistorically, pastoral is not fundamentally a literary phenomenon. It may have innumerable textual incarnations, yet its essence is most fully expounded when the pastoral is discussed in concert with broader discourses of Western thought. This model is useful for charting the ease with which pastoral was exported to other media—from drama to music and the visual arts—and helps explain the potent but vague cachet the word still possesses in contemporary culture, capable of evoking a vast web of associations without specific formal expectations so that a reader can find the title of, say, Philip Roth's *American Pastoral* to be meaningful without expecting it to concern shepherds or contain eclogues.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, since one cannot deny that the outside space of pastoral has frequently served as a site for political dissent, or that the myth of the Golden Age has been immensely fertile in discussions of the human condition, such a

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<sup>1</sup> Of Milton's *Lycidas*, Johnson writes: "In this poem there is no nature, for there is no truth; there is no art, for there is nothing new. Its form is that of a pastoral, easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting" (2006: 278-79).

<sup>2</sup> Philosophical interpretations of pastoral have themselves produced starkly divergent hypotheses. For the Epicurean matrices of pastoral, see Rosenmeyer 1969. For its Platonic nature, see Cody 1969. For a discussion (and critique) of Christian interpretations of pastoral see Poggioli 1975, esp. pp. 16-20. For the political concerns of pastoral, see Patterson 1987. For pastoral as a site of moral reformation, see George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, ed. Edward Arber (London: Edward Arber, 1869), esp. pp. 52-53. For the anti-urban question, see Williams 1973. For pastoral as a place of convening in which shepherds and readers alike examine the communal bonds of humanity, see Alpers 1996.

<sup>3</sup> See Ettin 1984: "Like the terms *tragedy* and *comedy*, the term *pastoral* denotes experiences and ideas that are permanent parts of our thinking and writing" (1).

<sup>4</sup> For the spread of pastoral to drama, see Sampson 2006. For music, see Gerbino 2009. For the visual arts, see Panofsky 1955. For a discussion of the polysemous connotations of pastoral in contemporary cultural, see Gifford 1999.

model does aid the analysis of the specific pastoral texts that do rigorously engage with intellectual, socio-political and spiritual thematics.<sup>5</sup>

However, there are a number of questionable implications that this model has for the study of pastoral. First, the model implies that, though pastoral may depict shepherds' song, it is really about something else. Viewed in such a light, the pastoral text is insufficient by itself and requires the gloss of a supplementary interpretative code for its meaning to reach the reader. This approach locates the text in a subordinate position in the process of signification, reliant upon other sources of meaning for discursive coherence. The literary form becomes a placeholder for a larger discussion of the human experience, a discussion which does not require pastoral for its authority but in which pastoral must inscribe itself if it wishes to concern matters greater than the otiose afternoons of shepherds. This subordination is made clearer when compared to the manner in which other genres are analyzed in terms of such thematics, for we may discuss the gender implications of the Petrarchan sonnet or the vision of nation implied by Shakespeare's history plays, but do not presume that such categories offer the last word on the subject. By contrast, too many pastoral theorists approach the intersection of pastoral text and extra-literary discourse as if the relationship were exclusive: pastoral is *about* psychological nostalgia, or politics, or whatever other broad modality a given pastoral theorist wishes to advocate.

Second, it deemphasizes the importance of the relationship between the pastoral text and the tradition of pastoral literature as a whole. The question of why pastoral has manifested itself in such hybridized forms, so vexing to pastoral theorists,<sup>6</sup> is thus conveniently sidestepped, for there is no urgent need to defuse what Lisa Sampson recently termed the "definitional minefield" (4) of pastoral's generic identity if such formally divergent literary structures as the eclogue collection (such as Vergil's *Bucolica*) the prosimetrum (such as Sannazaro's *Arcadia*) and the five-act drama (such as Guarini's *Il pastor fido*) are in the end connected not by the lineaments of a definable literary genre but rather by a philosophical current or a shared ethos.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, just as the model restricts our understanding of the relationship between texts within the pastoral tradition, it similarly restricts their ability to engage meaningfully with other forms of literature. By privileging the (unequal) dialogue between pastoral and non-literary discourses and by implying that, though the case-specific form of pastoral texts may change all too much, "Pastoral" functions as a timeless and unchanging reservoir of human experience, critics have removed pastoral from the vicissitudes of literary history. If its most meaningful points of reference are drawn primarily from the history of ideas, the principal duty of the critic is to locate a pastoral text within the changing currents of, say, Christian doctrine, political

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<sup>5</sup> See, for example, the illuminating examination of the political uses of the Golden-Age myth in eighteenth-century France in Edelstein 2009.

<sup>6</sup> For critical anxiety regarding the heterogeneous nature of the pastoral's developmental history, and the concomitant reluctance to engage with questions of pastoral as genre, see Alpers 1996: "it sometimes seems that there are as many versions of the pastoral as there are critics and scholars who write about it" (8). See also Patterson 1987: "Nor will this book launch another attempt to define the nature of pastoral—a cause lost as early as the sixteenth century [and] a cause reduced to *total confusion* by modern criticism's search for versions of the pastoral in the most unlikely places" (7). In their shared frustrations with the "versions" of pastoral, both critics are implicitly critical of William Empson's approach in his *Some Versions of Pastoral*, which has been considered excessively inclusive in that it considers works such as *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Beggar's Opera* to be pastoral. See Empson 1950.

<sup>7</sup> Sampson's work is one of the most recent additions to pastoral scholarship. Though it concerns the specific subset of pastoral drama, which possesses much more distinct generic associations than the pastoral at large, she feels the need to move past generic questions. She writes: "It is difficult or even impossible to define [the pastoral] categorically" (4). Instead, she follows the work of Alpers in regarding the pastoral as a mode.

struggle, and philosophies of humankind, without paying much heed to the position of pastoral in the midst of other forms of literature, or to the scope of its influence on them.

In my dissertation, I wish to reassert that, before pastoral became a detachable concept that flowed across the boundaries of myriad disciplines, it was first and foremost a literary phenomenon and should be treated as such. In so doing, I will advocate for the literariness of pastoral, by which I do not mean to suggest that its artifice has gone unnoticed, for the conventionality of pastoral is proverbial (and frequently derided), but rather that it has not been treated often enough as if it existed within the same spectrum as other literary genres. In no way do I wish to diminish (and in no way will I ignore) the genre's frequent and substantive contributions to intellectual, socio-political and spiritual concerns, but I will stress the representational autonomy of pastoral, its ability to signify without extrinsic glosses. The pastoral may open upon vast themes yet those themes are not coterminous with the genre, nor are pastoral's representational possibilities exhausted by them.

By returning to the fact that pastoral was a literary phenomenon before it became a pervasive but imprecise modality of Western thought, I hope to recover certain central elements that have not been given sufficient attention by the criticism. I will offer a new generic syntax that will hopefully go some distance in explaining the genre's hybridity. In a critical climate that has witnessed exciting expansions of pastoral studies into the terrain of ecocriticism and interdisciplinarity, such an emphasis on genre might appear to be a retrograde step.<sup>8</sup> The last decades of pastoral studies have witnessed a progressive flight from the question of genre, as major theorists have removed themselves from the fight to articulate a unified definition of the pastoral's generic status and instead have searched elsewhere to establish the term's coherence and utility. Thus Annabel Patterson's *Pastoral and Ideology* (1987) abdicates genre in favor of "function," Paul Alpers' *What is Pastoral?* (1996) in favor of "mode," and Thomas K. Hubbard's *The Pipes of Pan* (1998) in favor of "convention."<sup>9</sup> Though each taxonomical rebranding generates its own distinct vision of what is most characteristically "pastoral," they are joined by a shared advocacy that literary genealogies must move beyond genre in the examination of pastoral.<sup>10</sup>

Such consistent reluctance to engage with the question of the pastoral's generic identity is exacerbated by an analytical climate that views a rigid conception of genre with suspicion, for criticism in the wake of post-structuralism has seen an escalation in the revision of its meaning and the destabilization of its authority. To begin with, the validity of generic boundaries, essential to pre-nineteenth-century understandings of genre, has been called into question.<sup>11</sup> In Jacques Derrida's influential formulation, since the markers of generic identity are not themselves ascribable to the genre to which they point, the walls that separate genres begin to

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<sup>8</sup> For an ecocritical approach to classical pastoral, see Saunders 2008. For an ecocritical approach to Renaissance pastoral, see Watson 2006. For an illuminating interdisciplinary approach which synthesizes pastoral, music, Petrarchism, and *Cinquecento* court-culture, see Gerbino 2009.

<sup>9</sup> See Patterson 1987: "It is not what pastoral *is* that should matter to us ... [but rather] how writers, artists, and intellectuals of all persuasions have *used* pastoral for a range of functions and intentions that the *Eclogues* first articulated" (7). Alpers 1996 writes that pastoral is not a genre but rather "a literary *mode* based on what Kenneth Burke calls a *representative anecdote*" (ix). See also Hubbard 1998: "[T]he present study of the pastoral tradition aims to move in a completely different direction, one that from the outset assumes pastoral as 'convention' rather than as 'theme,' as a tradition more than a definable genre" (4-5).

<sup>10</sup> Patterson underscores the enduring use of Vergil's *Bucolica* in the articulation of rhetorics of power, Alpers the shepherd as a representative anecdote of human existence, and Hubbard the intertextual dialogue between pastoral authors.

<sup>11</sup> For an account of the reconsideration of genre in twentieth-century thought, see Hernadi 1972.

dissolve as soon as they are erected.<sup>12</sup> Subsequent genre theory has developed Derrida's interest in the moments in which the authority of a genre is breached, and has similarly dismantled the barriers between literary and non-literary genres to examine the degree to which genre guides and produces "the social organization of knowledge" (Frow 2005: 4).<sup>13</sup> On the one hand, these new valences of genre—which valorize the examination of, say, the generic status of the newspaper headline—seem difficult to apply retroactively to classical, medieval and Early Modern literary phenomena such as pastoral. On the other hand, when genre is construed in its more conservative sense, it seems too monolithic and hierarchical to facilitate the analysis of how texts are now understood to produce meaning.<sup>14</sup>

One unfortunate consequence of the simultaneity of these developments is that the conception of pastoral as genre has been left in the middle, as pastoral theory has decamped in search of other categories and literary theory has pushed genre in radically new directions. Thus, one benefit of my approach, I hope, is that it will be among the first to apply some of these new valences of genre, specifically its porous boundaries and its perpetual change, to the pastoral tradition in a sustained fashion.<sup>15</sup> More specifically, though, the construct of genre will be essential to my argument for three reasons. First, appropriating Frederic Jameson's terminology, I would argue that while most general theories of the pastoral have tended toward a *semantic* understanding of genre, I wish to analyze the genre's *syntax*.<sup>16</sup> The dominance of the semantic approach is comprehensible in light of the abundance of semantic markers in pastoral: brooks, inscribed trees, even the endlessly recurring names of its protagonists. Yet such an approach does little to address the wide range of literary forms taken by the pastoral, since it accentuates where Tityrus goes, not why he goes there. Moreover, since I will be particularly invested in the question of how pastoral macrottexts are constructed, a syntactical approach to genre will help me articulate a new set of constitutive attributes of pastoral.

Second, since I am as concerned with the intersections of pastoral with other forms of literature (and will show that these intersections are explicit and intentional) as I am with a definition of what pastoral is when taken by itself, I will rely upon the construct of genre precisely because any single genre requires the presence of others for its meaning. Genres are referential by nature, and an approach to genre must position one species in a larger system, defining the individual genre against and in concert with its companions. I will argue that new attention must be paid to the pastoral's relationship to its own generic status by exploring the moments when it seems to cease functioning as a delineable and sovereign genre, that is, when it joins with, reformulates, or otherwise comes into contact with other genres, following the seemingly paradoxical assertion that pastoral's generic attributes become clearest when it seems to breach its own boundaries. As such, the construct of genre provides me with the necessary language to examine the negotiation between pastoral and other forms of literature.

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<sup>12</sup> See Derrida 1980, esp. pp. 185-86.

<sup>13</sup> For such new uses of genre, see also Bowker and Star 1999 and Coe et al. 2002.

<sup>14</sup> Chartier 2006 notes, regarding the critical caution shown towards genre in late twentieth-century literary studies in general and in Renaissance studies in particular, "the rigidity of the category of genre is ... unable to grasp [literature's] hybridity and lability" (129). He proceeds to specify the reasons for which various interpretative models (e.g., Reader-Response theory, New Historicism, etc.) have distanced themselves from genre, but also shows the manner in which genre continues to exert a certain influence on their thinking.

<sup>15</sup> See Cohen 1991: "genre criticism and theory have moved from assumptions of genres as fixed to genre as process of textual change" (86-87).

<sup>16</sup> See Jameson 1994.

Finally, and most crucially, pastoral is *about* genre. It at once analyzes and represents genre, from the fictional boundaries of the Arcadian landscape that function as spatialized metaphors of generic distinction to the interventions of its narrators and singers that explicitly refer to the pastoral's position among other genres. Indeed, though pastoral has long been recognized as metapoetic, I will argue that pastoral is just as essentially metageneric, in that it is about its own generic identity, and also moves beyond it, acting as a bridge to other genres. For a text to be considered pastoral, then, it must conjoin the metapoetic to the metageneric inside its narratives. While the former enables the poet to represent and examine his or her social, political, and artistic concerns in the form of characters within the text, the latter enables the text to represent itself as an actor that exerts influence upon and positions itself within a system of literature.

In this regard, I will show that pastoral manifests many of the qualities that Bakhtin ascribes to the novel. Pastoral typifies the paradigm of the dialogical, the "multi-linguaged consciousness" (1998: 11), not only in the explicit sense that pastoral texts are often structured by dialogues, but also in the overlay of and slippage between the voices of pastoral narrators and pastoral characters that results in a "double-accented, double-styled *hybrid construction*" (304). Moreover, the pastoral's commentary on and alteration of the construct of genre mirrors "the ability of the novel to criticize itself" (6). One of the principal markers of the pastoral genre, then, is that it is in a perpetual state of self-definition, simultaneously examining and depicting what is, what is not, and what could be pastoral.

Yet pastoral not only comments on and figures itself, but also places other genres under the light of its generic inquiries. Like the novel, pastoral is at once "critical and self-critical, fated to revise the fundamental concepts of literariness and poeticalness dominant at the time" (10).<sup>17</sup> Pastoral is in constant dialogue with other genres, that is to say, it is about *them* as well. This dialogue moves in both an inward and an outward direction. In the former, pastoral internalizes other genres for use in its representational strategies. Like the novel, it "parodies other genres (precisely in their role as genres) ... it squeezes out some genres and incorporates others into its peculiar structure" (5). In the latter, pastoral leaves its traditional generic confines and influences the literature that surrounds it. On the simplest level, this generic transfer occurs when a shepherd heads to the battlefield or a warrior to the forest, moments that produce miniature "pastorals" within the larger frame of a different narrational structure.<sup>18</sup> Yet pastoral travels beyond its boundaries not only as a set of thematic associations but as a representational model that inflects other genres. At times, this transfer leads to the hybridization of multiple existing genres into a single new one, while at others it leads to a reappraisal of how other genres produce meaning, and how they could be made to produce meaning in new ways. In these moments, "literature is then caught up in the process of 'becoming,' and in a special kind of 'generic criticism'" (Bakhtin 5). Through the pastoral's attention to the resonances of genre (in its own case and at large) and its propensity to not only embody a genre but act on the level *of* genre, when it proliferates within a larger literary culture, it becomes a venue for a nascent form of literary criticism and engenders generic change. In short, it *pastoralizes* the literature that surrounds it.

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<sup>17</sup> I agree with Guillen 1971 that "as [genres] change, they affect one another and the poetic, the system to which they belong, as well" (121), but in the case of the pastoral, the effect is explicit and intentional.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, the episode of Erminia and the shepherd in Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, canto 7, for a discussion of which, see Tylus 1993, esp. pp. 81-82 and 101-103; and Combs-Schilling 2012: 16-18.

The extension of Bakhtin's notion of novelization to pastoral studies is helpful in the analysis of pastoral's tendency to produce hybrid forms, such as pastoral elegy, pastoral novel, pastoral drama, pastoral romance, and so forth. The very need for additional generic qualifiers seems to suggest that "pastoral" functions more as an adjective, a thematic placeholder, than as a proper genre.<sup>19</sup> The construct of pastoralization, however, restores pastoral's agency in the creation of these hybrids, and as such, suggests a spectrum of pastoral participation, with one pole in full pastoral and the other in a different genre (epic, lyric, and so forth). My dissertation will explore that spectrum, and as such will attempt a definition of pastoral that is at once more restrictive and inclusive. My definition is more restrictive in that I position the eclogue at the most pastoral side of the spectrum and will advocate that it represents pastoral in its fullest and most distinctive form. On the other, through the process of pastoralization that occurs both inside and outside the enclosure of those collections, I will examine the ways in which pastoral hybrids are both implicit in and forged by the eclogue.

A further reason for which the eclogue will be of central importance to my analysis, one that exploits the pastoral's generic self-awareness and its engagement with the system of literature, is that pastoral concerns the book, the writing and ordering of poetry, for pastoral at once depicts and requires the book to a greater extent than most genres. To begin with, in contrast with the other major classical genres, each of which has roots in orality, the pastoral's origins are quite literally in writing.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, writing is one of the constitutive metaphors of pastoral representation, through the enduring *topos* of the inscription of shepherds' songs on the bark of trees. Through this *topos*, even if the inhabitants of the pastoral landscape present themselves as speakers and singers, they represent themselves as authors. Pastoral, then, not only post-dates writing but also dramatizes the act of poetic composition within its fictions. In fact, it depicts its own historical transition from orality to writing through its representation of the moment in which its own "oral" songs become textual artifacts.

Finally, and most significantly, pastoral requires writing and the book both for its structural integrity and for its representational strategies.<sup>21</sup> The structure of a pastoral work in its entirety can only be grasped by reading the pastoral book. While the lyric achieves self-enclosed structural unity by the completion of its formal expectations (thirty-nine verses for the sestina, fourteen for the sonnet, and so forth) and the epic by the completion of the narrative set forth in the proem, the pastoral text simply proceeds until it notifies the reader that it has stopped, that is, it lasts from when the book opens until the book closes. In short, pastoral is intimately linked to the representational possibilities provided by the macrotext.<sup>22</sup> This creates a certain friction between the unity of the parts and the unity of the whole of a pastoral text that anticipates the structural properties of the lyric sequence, for the eclogue collection is likewise neither a single, unbroken textual whole nor a haphazard grouping of smaller texts, but rather partakes of both

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<sup>19</sup> See Fowler 1982: "The phrase 'a pastoral' implies the existence of a pastoral kind only grammatically: critically it is shorthand for 'a pastoral elegy,' 'a pastoral eclogue,' and the like...[W]hen a modal term is linked with the name of a kind, it refers to a combined genre, in which the overall form is determined by the kind alone" (107).

<sup>20</sup> Since it is rarely given due stress, I think it worthwhile to state the obvious: pastoral is remarkably young in comparison with the other major classical genres. Whereas the first transcriptions of the oral tradition of the lyric date back to c. 2500 B.C.E. and of the epic to c. 2000 B.C.E. (both entering the Western tradition in Greece around the eighth century B.C.E.), and classical drama commences in Greece in the sixth century B.C.E., the antecedents of the eclogue—some of Theocritus' *Idylls*—appear only in the third century B.C.E.

<sup>21</sup> Vergil's *Bucolica* was in fact one of the first author-ordered books. See Krevans 1983.

<sup>22</sup> My understanding of macrotexts is influenced principally by Segre 1985.

states simultaneously.<sup>23</sup> The book and its constituent parts are not coterminous, but rather are mediated by the unique literary category of “collection,” a collection moreover in which the original poet and the subsequent compiler is the same author. In fact, the name of “eclogue” indicates this aspect of pastoral representation, for it is derived from the Greek *eklegein*, “to choose.” The original pastoral, then, is predicated on the break between the individual eclogues. As a genre, pastoral shows its indebtedness and receptiveness to “new forms of mute perception” (Bakhtin 3) that come with writing by exploiting the materiality of the book to generate its structural coherence and by investing the order of the sequence with significance, as its constituent parts amplify and revise the parts that come before. The structure of the eclogue collection thus endows its representations with “an indeterminacy, a certain semantic openendedness” (Bakhtin 7), for through the dialogue between eclogue and book, pastoral reformulates the figure of the author and recasts the manner in which a narrative establishes, or complicates, narrative truth.

Precisely because it fictionalizes its own material existence and thinks in terms of genres, interpolating so many into itself, pastoral has provided authors with a space from which to address and reconfigure the aspects of literary production that orbit the constructs of genre and the book: the author’s placement within the hierarchy of other authors (both past and present), his position *vis-à-vis* his characters and other representations, and the manner in which he is to figure and authorize himself for the reader. As such, it is a genre that reformulates a given culture’s basic assumptions regarding literature and, through pastoralization, inflects the ways in which other genres signify and function. Its very attention to such basic assumptions and the flexibility of its generic boundaries may have made it a capacious vessel for some of the most momentous philosophical, spiritual, and socio-political themes of Western culture, yet these themes should not distract us from recognizing its constitutive attribute: pastoral defines itself through its function as a textualized laboratory for literary criticism and innovation.

My focus will be upon one such literary culture in which pastoral at once flourished and played a galvanizing role: fourteenth-century Italy, where after centuries of scarce and isolated pastoral production, the Vergilian eclogue was put back into circulation by the pastoral collections of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. This focus is determined by two factors. First, literary histories of pastoral have never fully accounted for this stage in the history of the genre, and yet, as I will discuss in the first chapter, it was with Dante’s two eclogues that the first continuous tradition of pastoral production in the history of the genre began. My contention is that the integration of this foundational moment into the broader history of the genre will necessarily change our understanding of that history.

To do so, it is necessary to untangle a literary-historiographic knot that has fettered the reception of these poems. Accounts of this period emphasize two narratives at cross-purposes with each other—one concerning epistolarity, the other allegory—that lead it to be characterized as a representational dead-end in the development of the genre. In terms of epistolarity, the story goes, Dante is to be credited for having revived the Vergilian eclogue but also faulted for having done so in the context of an epistolary exchange with Giovanni del Virgilio. This eclogue-and-epistle combination has been regarded as an “unnatural” hybrid of forms which undermines the

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<sup>23</sup> Barolini’s assessment of Petrarch’s *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* applies equally well to the special structure of the eclogue: “In the dialectic between collection and fragment, neither pole should be privileged: the genius of the genre lies precisely in its balancing of both” (1989: 194).

impact of the revival.<sup>24</sup> Thus Martellotti, while praising Dante for his return to Vergil's *Bucolica*, considers the Dante-Giovanni macrotext to be a model that had to be unmade: "la corrispondenza tra Dante e Giovanni del Virgilio aveva segnato per essa [i.e. the history of the eclogue] l'inizio d'un episodio che l'aveva portata fuori della strada maestra" (1983a: 89). According to this narrative, it was with Petrarch's *Bucolicum carmen* later in the century, which appears to dissociate the eclogue from epistolarity, that "la poesia bucolica ha ritrovato definitivamente il suo stile" (1983b: 106).<sup>25</sup>

Juxtaposed to this "progressive" narrative is the "retrograde" one of Petrarchan allegory. When approached in these terms, Dante was not "fuori della strada maestra" but rather on the right path because his allegory, though certainly present, has been judged to be light and enjoyable.<sup>26</sup> Then Petrarch, and in his wake Boccaccio, turned toward a pastoral style so heavily allegorical that it became "a kind of closet poetry, esoteric and inbred, a development . . . which makes a sham of the original mandate of the genre" (Rosenmeyer 1969: 274). The implication is that whatever lessons Dante's *Eclogues* had to offer were quickly unlearned by his immediate followers.<sup>27</sup> With the Vergilian eclogue revival halted so soon after it began, "the only possible advance was to go backwards, even to start again," that is, to erase the influence of these through the re-interpretation of Vergil and the re-circulation of Theocritus, but "it took a hundred years before the fresh air of the Renaissance made such a reading possible" (Cooper 1977: 46).<sup>28</sup>

The result of this prevailing assessment is a representational double bind—as the eclogue form develops across the course of the fourteenth century, it finds a "correct" structure but "incorrect" content. One of the principal goals of this dissertation is to expose the limitations of this assessment—for, as I will show, Dante's pastoralization of epistolarity was not a haphazard result of the case-specific context in which was written but rather was born out of his understanding of, and inquiry into, the genre; Petrarch's collection of eclogues were influenced by, and in dialogue with, Dante's letter-poems on a global level; and Boccaccio's adaptation of Petrarchan pastoral allegory was not a repudiation of pastoral poetics, or the Dantean model, but rather served as a mechanism whereby he brought a suite of innovations to the genre.<sup>29</sup> On the one hand, this reorganizes the relationship between these three poets so that their pastoral poetics,

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<sup>24</sup> Thus Martellotti critiques the "innaturale legame che [l'egloga] aveva contratto con la 'tenzone'" (1983a: 88; my emphasis), and later writes about the "funzione innaturale dell'egloga [dantesca], che era insieme una missiva" (1983b: 100; my emphasis).

<sup>25</sup> Martellotti's narrative has become a critical commonplace that continues to contour scholarship on fourteenth-century pastoral. See, for example, the recent work of Lorenzini 2010, who contends that Boccaccio's Latin eclogues move "dal modello dantesco della corrispondenza con Giovanni del Virgilio, ancora *imperfetto* nella mescolanza dei suoi caratteri con la tenzone medievale, a quello classicamente più rigoroso del 'libro di egloghe' di Petrarca" (154; my emphasis).

<sup>26</sup> For the lightness of Dante's allegory, see Rosenmeyer 1969: 274; and Cooper 1977: 36, among the many.

<sup>27</sup> The periodizing issues that arise from this narrative are evident in Grant's chiasmic formulation of fourteenth-century pastoral: "we can justifiably call the mediaeval Dante's eclogues classical and the humanist Petrarch's mediaeval" (1965: 87).

<sup>28</sup> For similar assessments, see Rosenmeyer 1969: 273; and Velli 1992: 115.

<sup>29</sup> It is to emphasize these points that leads me to structure the dissertation in the manner that I have. The Latin pastoral production of Petrarch and Boccaccio is more or less contemporaneous, prior to which Boccaccio had already penned vernacular eclogues in the *Comedia delle ninfe fiorentine*. Indeed, one of the most remarkable aspects of their pastoral poetics is the frequency with which, earlier in their careers as pastoralists, they arrived at similar innovations independently. However, so as to rectify the prevailing narratives concerning how the works of these three poets relate to one another, Petrarch will be the subject of the second chapter to elucidate the extent of his debt to Dante, while Boccaccio will be the subject of the third chapter, so as to reveal that his use of allegory is in fact quite distinct from Petrarch's.



while distinct, can be seen to build on each other. On the other, once we understand that epistolarity *was* a step forward and allegory was *not* a step back, we can begin to see that, even if Renaissance pastoralists rarely sent their eclogues as letters and avoided, at least in general, the heavily allegorical style of Petrarch and (some of) Boccaccio, the manner in which these poets *used* epistolarity and allegory was still be influential.

The second factor that determines the focus of this dissertation is that, though the metageneric nature of pastoral is evident both earlier and later in the history of the genre, it is particularly explicit in the laboratory of fourteenth-century Italy.<sup>30</sup> Here Martellotti's assessment of Dante's epistolarity is useful, if, in my opinion, incorrect: "L'egloga dovrebbe chiudere in sé il dialogo, la tenzone; non essere invece, come avviene qui, una battuta di un dialogo che si compie al di fuori di essa" (1983a: 78). It is precisely in the *balance* between *in sé* and *fuori di essa* that pastoral reveals itself to be a metagenre. This is its boundary-crossing double move—an expansionary movement outward and a recuperative (and incorporative) movement inward.

My first chapter, "Dante's High and Low Reeds: Pastoral Hierarchies and Hybrids," examines Dante in terms of this double move, positions his eclogues at the origins of a new era of pastoral representation, and addresses why the first continuous tradition of pastoral production in the history of the genre begins with their 165 verses. I individuate one of the principal causes of their influence to be the epistolary context out of which they were forged. By sending his eclogues as letters to the protohumanist Giovanni del Virgilio, Dante harnesses the boundary-traversing movement of epistolarity and invests the metageneric movement of pastoral with a new critical thrust. With this new orientation, Dante utilizes the genre's self-figured humility to interrogate and overturn Giovanni's rigid distinctions between high and low literature and, in the systematically hybrid second eclogue, produces a pastoral fiction that is at once low *and* high.

There is both a vertical and a horizontal aspect to Dante's use of pastoral as metagenre, and though the two are conjoined, my next two chapters argue that Petrarch explores its vertical aspect through a methodical comparison with epic, while Boccaccio explores its horizontal aspect through a narratologically innovative breach of pastoral's diegetic horizon. In chapter 2, "*Translatio bucolicorum*: Pastoral and the Place of Epic in Petrarch's *Bucolicum carmen*," through an analysis of his first eclogue and his letters, in particular *Familiares* 21.15, I reveal that Petrarch conceived of his collection as a response to the letter that Giovanni had sent Dante, whereby he not only attempts to replace Dante as the originator of the pastoral revival but also figures his collection as an "answer" to Giovanni's request for a new Latin epic. In this light, I proceed to examine Petrarch's pervasive appropriation of epic tropes and strategies, in particular *translatio imperii*, as he extends the implications of Dante's high-low hybrid to pastoralize the book of epic, and in the process generates the first modern collection of eclogues.

In my third chapter, "Tending to the Boundary: Between Inner and Outer Pastoral in Boccaccio's *Bucolicum carmen*," I redress critical estimations of Boccaccio's usage of allegory in his eclogue collection to show that it is not a departure from "authentic" pastoral but rather works in concert with the other innovations he brings to the genre, most noticeably the sharp increase in dramatic movement within the eclogues and the narratological complexity deployed in the songs of their protagonists. By narrativizing the arrival of allegory to the landscape of pastoral, as well as its departure, Boccaccio drastically increases the genre's representational

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<sup>30</sup> In terms of the tradition before Dante, though to my knowledge I am the first to describe pastoral as a metagenre, the work of some classicists is consonant with my approach. See Breed 2006, who argues that Vergil's *Bucolica* act as "a vehicle for generating a history of the genre of pastoral" (338), so that "the history of pastoral is...constantly being made and remade over the course of the book" (358). See also Conte 1984.

purview while also maintaining the autonomy of its fictions. This provokes a doubling of the landscape, which becomes mapped into two distinct but overlapping spaces: an inner pastoral, a more conventional Arcadian scene, and an outer pastoral, a liminal space where the genre encounters and pastoralizes the system of literature beyond its borders.

The cumulative effect of this inquiry is a two-fold recognition: first, while still respecting the distinctions between the pastoral poetics of the *tre corone*, we can meaningfully speak of the fourteenth-century eclogue revival as a movement; and, second, it was a movement that helped shape pastoral's future as a metagenre.

## Chapter 1

### Dante's High and Low Reeds: Pastoral Hierarchies and Hybrids

In the winter months of 1319, the poet-teacher Giovanni del Virgilio took it upon himself to write a Latin verse epistle articulating the cultural assumptions and poetic standards of a group of Northern Italian scholars whose revitalization of classical rhetoric and whose valorization of the study of the texts of antiquity sparked the movement we call humanism.<sup>31</sup> Already the author of several poetic works, at the time of the letter's composition Giovanni was embedded in the intellectual context of his birthplace, Bologna, and was most likely a private teacher of grammar. The appellative "del Virgilio" was a recent acquisition (due, almost certainly, to his admiration for and study of the great Roman poet) that marked his desire to participate in the classical upswell of his day.<sup>32</sup> This inclination would receive an official mandate in 1321 when the commune of Bologna entrusted Giovanni with the task of instructing university students in the texts of Vergil, Ovid, Lucan and Statius,<sup>33</sup> but he was already connected to some of the movement's major players—such as Albertino Mussato, whom he had encountered a few years earlier—and was linked by family and intellectual affiliations to the hotbed of early humanism, Padua.<sup>34</sup> The epistle he wrote amounted to a miniature manifesto registering the concerns and interests of these associations, as he fashioned himself as their spokesperson.

Such a document, written in the inaugural phase of the humanist movement by a figure in the genealogical line of descent from Lovato Lovati to Coluccio Salutati, is significant in its own right, for it illuminates the cultural coordinates of humanism in its early stages and testifies to the movement's growing self-awareness.<sup>35</sup> Yet it is the identity of this epistle's recipient that makes it such a remarkable cultural artifact and has served as the principal source of the (albeit limited) attention that both work and author have received over the centuries—for Giovanni sent this poem to Dante Alighieri. Such a bold choice of interlocutor is perhaps explained by the fact that Giovanni and Dante may have already been on friendly terms.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, Giovanni would

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<sup>31</sup> For the dating of this letter and the epistolary exchange it initiated, see Reggio 1969, 13-20. I am inclined to concur with his assessment of their chronology: Giovanni's verse-letter was written in late 1319 or early 1320; Dante's first eclogue in the spring of 1320; Giovanni's eclogue soon thereafter; and Dante's second eclogue in the spring or summer of 1321. For the early stages of humanism, see Witt 2000: 81-173.

<sup>32</sup> For Giovanni's position in the humanist movement, see Kristeller 1961 and Billanovich 1963. Kristeller 1961: 182-83 and Witt 2000: 236-38 provide brief but essential accounts of what we know about Giovanni's life. For additional biographical details, see Cecchini 1985: 740-43. The earliest of his works, *Diaffonus*, (c. 1315) was also an epistolary exchange. See Carrara 1925. At the time of the composition of *Diaffonus*, he was not yet known as "del Virgilio." The choice of name was later borne out by two of his additional epistolary exchanges in which he was asked to gloss Vergil. His admiration was such that he seems to have named his son Virgilio as well. For discussions arguing that the cognomen was not familial but vocational, see Kristeller 1961: 182.

<sup>33</sup> This was an investiture of great historical significance. Kristeller 1961 notes that "il documento del 1321 con cui egli fu condotto a insegnare la poesia e i grandi poeti latini rappresenta, se non il primo caso, almeno la prima prova scritta dell'insegnamento umanistico nelle università italiane del tardo medio evo" (181).

<sup>34</sup> He was connected to Padua both by family and intellectual affiliations. For the centrality of Padua in the development of humanist practices and principles, see Witt 2000: 81-116.

<sup>35</sup> For this line of descent, see Billanovich 1963.

<sup>36</sup> Witt 2000: 219 assumes that the two met in Bologna at some point.

have had reason to consider Dante amenable to certain aspects of his classicizing approach. On the one hand, Dante's exilic peregrinations (1304-21) had brought him to the very cities—Verona, Padua, perhaps even Giovanni's own Bologna—that nourished proto-humanist thought, and his contact with both the scholars and the manuscripts to be found in those places undoubtedly shaped his own cultural and poetic outlook.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, Dante's works bespoke a sustained and profound engagement, most extensively in the *Commedia*, with the same cultural patrimony whose examination early humanism took to be its *raison d'être*: the works of Latin antiquity.

While their shared interests may have suggested that Giovanni and Dante would exchange friendly letters, the principal theme of Giovanni's epistle was the distance that separated Dante from "nos pallentes" ["we pale [scholars]" (Giovanni-Dante 1.7)] of early humanism.<sup>38</sup> By consequence, the humanist principles that Giovanni wished to advocate are articulated in terms of, but also against, Dante's *Commedia*, which Giovanni positions on the low rungs of the poetic, cultural, and linguistic hierarchies that he formulates, for the looming presence of Dante was problematic for the new generation of poets and scholars who were trying to found a new cultural practice. Dante's deployment of classical culture differed greatly from proto-humanist usages and interpretations, especially through his integration of pagan classical works into the theological vision of his *Commedia*, which was in stark contrast to the secularizing tendencies of Northern Italian classicism.<sup>39</sup> This divergence would have been rendered palpable for Giovanni by the figure of Vergil, since Giovanni's self-appointed namesake was also Dante's chosen guide. One of the auxiliary goals of his epistle, then, was to establish himself as the pre-eminent Vergilian authority of his day. Thus, there is a polemical aspect to his assertion that *he* is "vocalis verna Maronis" ["vocal attendant upon Maro [i.e. Vergil]" (36)], for though it testifies to his devotion to the Roman poet, it also seeks to rival, even surpass, Dante's assertion, made to the character Virgilio in the first canto of *Inferno*, that "Tu se' lo mio maestro e 'l mio autore" ["You are my master and my author" (85)].<sup>40</sup>

Even more troubling for Giovanni was Dante's chosen language: the vernacular. The principal target of Giovanni's elitist critique was this very choice, which, in light of Dante's learning and poetic talent, Giovanni likened to throwing pearls before swine (21). It was not just that by rejecting Latin Dante distanced himself from the language and readership of the educated elite of Europe. The paradigm that Northern Italian scholars were in the process of formulating was predicated upon the linguistic model provided by the texts of antiquity as much as it was upon the moral, philosophical, or political lessons to be found within them. The revitalization of classical rhetoric hinged upon the idea that a new style of rhetoric in which contemporary concerns and values could be articulated was to be found in, and forged through, old texts. That Dante chose the vernacular as a vessel for philosophical profundity and classical erudition was all the more problematic, for these are what the proto-humanists took to constitute their domain.

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<sup>37</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>38</sup> All citations of the Giovanni-Dante correspondence are from the edition of Giorgio Brugnoli and Riccardo Scarcia (Naples: Ricciardi, 1980), with translations from Wicksteed and Gardner (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Company, 1902).

<sup>39</sup> The question of Dante's relation to classical authors is one of the largest in Dante studies. Important examinations of that encounter include Paratore 1968, Hollander 1983, Barolini 1984, and Jacoff and Schnapp 1991. For the secularizing tendencies of Northern Italian early humanism, see Billanovich 1961, Weiss 1969 and Witt 2000.

<sup>40</sup> Giovanni's summary of the pilgrim's journey in the *Commedia* strongly suggests that he had read the first two canticles. For a minority opinion that Giovanni's direct knowledge of the poem was limited to the first cantos of *Inferno*, see Martellotti 1983a: 77-76.

This deep ambivalence concerning the figure of Dante is registered throughout the letter: Dante's poetic vocation is extolled, so much so that he is deemed to be a *magister* (51), while his poetic output is lambasted. Since up to this point the only direct way to ascertain the worth of Dante's poetic vocation was precisely through his vernacular verse, this rhetorical move might appear contradictory, but in light of the cultural practices that Giovanni took it upon himself to adumbrate, his intentions are apparent: to defuse the threat posed by the *Commedia* as a rival model for engaging the classical world by bringing Dante into the humanist fold.

Giovanni's ambivalence, registered here at such an early stage in both the reception history of the *Commedia* and in the development of humanism, implicates two larger points, similarly at odds with one another. First, it testifies to the rapidity with which Dante ascended to the status of "author" in the eyes of his contemporaries.<sup>41</sup> Second, it represents a remarkably early airing of one of the problems that humanism would wrestle with for generations: the status of the vernacular. One of the anxieties at the very heart of humanism concerned the opposition between modern learning and modern languages. While the former, through humanist scholarship and instruction, could match and even outdo that of the ancients, the latter could not, construed as they were as an insufficient vehicle for the expression of learning when compared to Latin.<sup>42</sup> By cleaving Dante's vatic inspiration from his vernacular utterances, Giovanni at once manifests and attempts to resolve that tension. So doing, he anticipates many of the contours of later disputations on the possibility of reconciling humanism with modern vernacular poetry, such as Leonardo Bruni's *Dialogi ad Petrum Paulum Histrum*, or at least one half of that dialogue, the anti-vernacular stance of Niccolò Niccoli. Yet precisely because Giovanni articulates this opposition at such an early date, Dante is not only a theme at the center of such disputations but is given the opportunity to be an interlocutor himself, to defend his language and his poem.

Dante did respond to Giovanni's epistle, thereby initiating an epistolary exchange that would continue up to the last months of his life. Yet the manner of his defense is curious and oblique: he "answers" through the voice of Tityrus, the archetypal shepherd of pastoral, that is, he responds to Giovanni's Horatian *carmen* with a Vergilian eclogue.<sup>43</sup> Through a representational sleight-of-hand, he counters Giovanni's critique of his fiction-making with a fictional world that in turn critiques Giovanni's perspective. Already accomplished at self-exegesis from the examination of his own poetry in texts such as *Vita nuova* and *Convivio*, Dante sent Giovanni a letter with a remarkable tripartite identity, at once poem, polemic, and meta-literary self-assessment. Yet by realigning the space of the debate, Dante's first eclogue introduces a structural imbalance to their correspondence. Though Giovanni's letter is also a poem, rife with allusions to classical texts, his stakes are explicit, his argumentation straightforward, and his discourse firmly rooted in the present. For Giovanni's discursive concreteness Dante substitutes the fictional space and time of the pastoral landscape and the

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<sup>41</sup> See Ascoli 2009: 117-20.

<sup>42</sup> See *ibid.*: "[There were] basic tensions within early humanism that would only intensify over the course of the fourteenth century: on the one hand, its commitment to the advancement of modern authors, such as Mussato, to comparability with the classical greats; on the other, its resistance to the new, vernacular literature" (118).

<sup>43</sup> Though a few scholars have suggested that Giovanni's opening letter was already a pastoral of sorts [e.g. Scott 2004: 351], most are in agreement that it is Dante who is to be credited with having turned their exchange towards pastoral discourse and the eclogiac form. On the status of Giovanni's first letter as a Horatian *carmen*, see Bregoli-Russo 1985: 34 and Villa 2010: 138-143. In regard to Dante's decision to represent himself through this Vergilian shepherd, Allegretti 2004 makes an intriguing case that the opening verses of his first eclogue present "Tityrus" as an acrostic.

proliferating voices of shepherds. Though I will show that Dante thoroughly engages the critical points laid out by Giovanni, his pastoral dislocation structures that engagement as much as a move *beyond* as it is a response *to* Giovanni terms.

In all likelihood, had Dante penned a direct and explicit refutation, these letters would not occupy their current marginal position in the critical tradition, for if he had responded *ad litteram* and offered a declarative evaluation of his poetics and his position *vis-à-vis* the new cultural trends he witnessed in the last decades of his life, it would be easier to define the identity of Dante's letter and to establish the terms and stakes of his debate with Giovanni. The resultant document would be of singular importance to critical assessments both of Dante's work and of the period. Dante studies would possess a summation of the *Commedia's* worth and purpose, in addition to the poet's last words on such abiding concerns as the dignity of the vernacular and the position of pagan classics in Christian society. An explicit debate with Dante and Giovanni on a level playing field would also assume a more central position in narratives of the developmental history of humanism, because such a direct confrontation between two distinct poetics—with contrasting positions on the value and function of poetry, the language in which it is to be written, and the audience for whom it is intended—and two opposing models for the appropriation of classical culture would help map the seismic cultural shifts of the period.

Yet had Dante's response been less oblique, had he not availed himself of the wider representational possibilities sanctioned by his addition of fiction-making to the literary debate, in short, had he not fashioned himself as Tityrus, the history of the post-classical pastoral would have been markedly different. To begin with, though an epistolary exchange makes for a curious mid-wife in the rebirth of genres, the first major historical point to register is that out of this context, Dante revives a major classical genre, the pastoral, the tradition of which had been sparse, isolated, and fragmentary for a millennium.<sup>44</sup> That the eclogue returned through Dante is not to suggest that it would not have been revived without him. Prior to him, there had been the occasional renewal of interest in the pastoral, frequently coupled with a renewed interest in classical literature in general, as seen most extensively in the Carolingian period, and there is no reason to doubt that, without Dante's contribution, some humanist would have placed Vergil's *Bucolica* back into circulation as a model for literary imitation at some point during the pervasive classical revival of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. All the same, it was Dante who sparked the revival, and the context in which he lit that spark needs to be incorporated into accounts of where the genre then went. Moreover, whereas previous post-classical ventures into the pastoral had occurred in isolation, without knowledge of other similar efforts, pastoral production changes radically after Dante.<sup>45</sup> The second major historical point to register, then, is

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<sup>44</sup> Such isolated authors include Endecheus in the late fourth century and Modoin in the early ninth century. See Kegel-Brinkgreve 1990: 191-237 and Hubbard 1998: 213-23 for a discussion of these and similar authors, whose poetics frequently slant toward Christian allegories of the shepherd and the flock. Unaware of this intermittent tradition, Giovanni clearly credited Dante with the resurrection of Vergil's 1,300-year-old *Bucolica* as a model for poetry: "Ha divine senex, ha sic eris alter ab illo!" ["Ah, divine old man, thus shalt thou be second from [Vergil]" (Giovanni-Dante 3.33)].

<sup>45</sup> Kegel-Brinkgreve 1990 notes that, in contrast to pastoral production earlier in the Middle Ages, starting in fourteenth-century Italy "poets tended to be aware of each other's existence and to be interested in the work of their colleagues" (246-47).

that Dante's two eclogues initiate the first continuous tradition of pastoral production in Western literature.<sup>46</sup>

The rapidity with which Dante's eclogues became a model for imitation—beginning with Giovanni himself—and the extensiveness of the subsequent spread of pastoral can be explained, in part, by their emergence in a cultural climate prepared to embrace classical models. Yet Dante's innovative leap differs from previous attempts to revive the genre also because of the new shape that Dante gives pastoral, making it particularly compelling and useful for later poets. Though Dante closely imitates his Vergilian model, he not only reactivates but also recasts that model. In the first case, he makes use of elements (both explicit and implicit) already present in Vergil's *Bucolica*, in particular: the isolated and self-sustaining microcosm of pastoral, which nourishes (and examines) poetry; its generic self-awareness; its putative lowness, belied by its examination and appropriation of "high" genres; the close but elusive bond between author and character; and its propensity to be structured as dialogue, with a concomitant proliferation of voices and figures of the author. Yet, in the second case, Dante's choice to use pastoral *here*, in response to Giovanni's hierarchical vision of poetry, endows the genre with a new ability to engage with—but also subvert—the literary culture that surrounds it. In fact, Dante's choice of pastoral is a three-fold act of resistance. First, it resists the template established by Giovanni's *carmen* for their epistolary exchange. Second, it structures Dante's refutation of Giovanni's critique. Finally, and most importantly, pastoral is not only the vehicle for Dante's counterattack, but is itself a challenge to Giovanni's understanding of their literary system. Though pastoral would travel far and wide in the centuries after Dante's foundational moment, violating the boundaries between countries, genres, and media this initial act of resistance would continue to shape the contours, indicate the representational possibilities, and suggest the potential usefulness of pastoral for generations to come.

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With their summation of Dante's poetic career, engagement with new cultural trends, and influence on subsequent pastoral poetry, Dante's *Eclogues* are as inaugural as they are valedictory. Yet their curious epoch-bridging function at a threshold in the history of poetry has led them to be relegated to a double-periphery by the criticism, for they are not easily integrated into either the storyline of Dante's career—from lyric poet to vernacular philosopher to the master of the *Commedia*—or to genealogies of the vast, transmedial production of pastoral in the Renaissance, and have been neglected by the two fields of study in whose light they are most fully illuminated and for which they could offer the most penetrating insights: Dante studies and pastoral theory. The scant attention they have received in Dante scholarship, in which nearly every word penned by the Florentine poet is glossed and interpreted by a seven-hundred-year exegetical tradition, is particularly surprising.<sup>47</sup> They are rivaled only by Dante's excursion into

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<sup>46</sup> Despite the broad influence of Vergil's *Bucolica* (completed c. 44 B.C.E) on classical poets, especially Ovid, the poetic form of the eclogue wait a century for its first imitator—Calpurnius Siculus (mid-first century C.E.)—and another two for its second—Nemesianus (late third century C.E.).

<sup>47</sup> One explanation for the relative neglect of the *Eclogues* within Dante studies is undoubtedly the marginal position ascribed to Dante's so-called *opere minori* in general. As Steven Botterill has argued, "One result of the canonisation of the *Comedy* has been the serious critical and scholarly neglect of Dante's other writings" (1996: ix), which "almost always produces fatally enfeebled readings of the *Comedy*" (x), at the same time that it "runs the risk of creating an equally unsatisfactory (because excessively narrow) approach to these texts, in which they are read exclusively in relation to their author's other work" (xii). This final point is particularly relevant to scholarship on

physics—the *Questio de situ et forma aque et terra*—for the dubious distinction of being the least studied of Dante’s mature works. Though they have received the occasional monograph and article, these analyses have been devoted principally to the resolution of a relatively small set of interpretative questions, such as the debate over their authenticity and the definition of a few of their allegorical terms, to which I will return. Moreover, despite their epilogic perspective on many of the themes that preoccupied Dante throughout his career—the status of the vernacular, sources of authority, hierarchies of genre, the position of the poet, and so forth—they are conspicuously absent from most major analyses of Dante’s poetics and thought.<sup>48</sup> As for the other camp, their neglect within pastoral studies has been even more pervasive. The most sustained analysis of Dante’s *Eclogues* I have found among the histories of pastoral is in Kegel-Brinkgreve’s *The Echoing Woods*, where they receive only nine pages of analysis.<sup>49</sup> Despite the fact that they are the first eclogues written within the Italian tradition, the lineage of which would lead to the pastoral poetry of France, Spain and England, and despite their anticipation by only a few decades of the first major collections of eclogues since Vergil’s own (Petarch’s *Bucolicum carmen* and Boccaccio’s *Buccolicum carmen*), the vast majority of pastoral theorists have not considered Dante’s *Eclogues* to represent a major juncture in the history of the genre.

Given the immense fame of their author, and the broad popularity in subsequent generations of the form they resurrected, it is necessary, then, to begin with an examination of the factors that have rendered the *Eclogues* so peripheral and problematic. Thus, before turning to the texts themselves, I will enumerate some of those factors here, three that, broadly speaking, can be grouped under the rubric of the reception history of the *Eclogues*, and two that are more intrinsic to their structure and composition. During the course of this analysis, I hope to show that these factors not only help explain the neglect to which these works have been subjected, but also provide a point of entry into their generic novelty and the pivotal role they played in the history of pastoral. In short, many of the reasons for which the *Eclogues* have not been examined more extensively are precisely the reasons why they need to be studied now. Indeed, their very problematic nature is what makes Dante’s *Eclogues* so useful, for it tests the narratives in which these poems are implicated but which, in turn, they resist. If a fuller insertion of the *Eclogues* into Dante studies would require a reappraisal and enrichment of certain central interpretative questions—such as Dante’s theory of the vernacular, the narrativization of his poetic career, the generic status of the *Commedia*—the rehabilitation of these poems within

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the *Eclogues*, in which the practice of interpreting them through the lens of the *Commedia* is so pervasive that the presence (or absence) of echoes of the *Commedia* in the *Eclogues* has been put forth as evidence of their (in)authenticity [See Pertile 2006]. In many ways, my approach to the *Eclogues* can be seen as an extension of Botterill’s call to “both read [the minor works] on the terms they themselves dictate, as interesting and valuable texts in their own right, and also attempt to relate them to the output of writers...perhaps less celebrated but no less significant, at least in the history of ideas” (xiii), for though late 20th- and early 21st-century Dante criticism has witnessed the progressive rehabilitation of many of Dante’s minor works [see, for example, Mazzotta 1979 and 1993a, Ascoli 2008], the *Eclogues* remain *minorissime*.

<sup>48</sup> A few meaningful exceptions to this trend are Barolini 1984 and 1992.

<sup>49</sup> Helen Cooper’s *Pastoral: Mediaeval into Renaissance* and W. Leonard Grant’s *Neo-Latin Literature and Pastoral*, both of which take the medieval pastoral as one of the principal emphases of the inquiries, each only devotes two pages to Dante’s *Eclogues*. To take a selection of major pastoral history, Hubbard’s *The Pipes of Pan* devotes four pages, the eclogues are mentioned in passing once in Rosenmeyer’s *The Green Cabinet*, whereas Patterson’s *Pastoral and Ideology* and Alpers’ *What is Pastoral?* do not mention them at all. Perhaps the most characteristic silence is found in Renato Poggioli’s *The Oaten Flute*. The first poet quoted is in fact Dante (p. 3), yet though he goes on to refer to Dante some thirty times over the course of his definition of pastoral, these are to other of Dante’s works, especially the “pastoral” moments of the *Commedia*, but never to the *Eclogues*.



pastoral genealogies necessitates a new understanding of the genre's meteoric post-classical success.

The silence surrounding the *Eclogues*, at least in pastoral studies, may be explained in part by a certain bias in Anglo-American surveys of the pastoral that slants critical attention toward the English Renaissance, not always but all too often eliding the centuries between Augustan Rome and Elizabethan England.<sup>50</sup> When the influence of the Italian tradition of pastoral is taken into consideration, interest rarely delves back further than the late fifteenth century, privileging Sannazaro's *Arcadia* and pastoral drama while obscuring the Latin pastoral of the medieval period and the fertile vernacular pastoral production evident in, say, Siena in the generations preceding Sannazaro's more famous collection.<sup>51</sup> Finally, in the case of scholarship that does engage seriously with the medieval period, attention is drawn away from Dante once again, in this case to Petrarch and Boccaccio, whose pastoral production was more extensive.<sup>52</sup> At the margins of a set of shrinking concentric circles, then, Dante's *Eclogues* are in the unenviable position of being the wrong type of pastoral thrice over. Consequently, the reinsertion of the *Eclogues* into pastoral genealogies and the articulation of an integrated narrative of the pastoral of the Italian Renaissance that *begins* with Dante provide a useful corrective to Anglo-centric understandings of the pastoral, for such a realignment of the Italian pastoral tradition also necessitates a new understanding of subsequent pastoral traditions as well. Though it is beyond the parameters of this project to track that transnational influence, I do hope to show that any full account of the post-classical pastoral must reckon with Dante's foundational role.

It would appear that such an assertion of the broad influence of the *Eclogues* on subsequent Italian poetry is belied by their material history; for they are, in a sense, literally marginal. Buried in Boccaccio's notebooks,<sup>53</sup> Dante's eclogues were not published until the eighteenth century, that is, after the pastoral's apogee was already past.<sup>54</sup> As such, they seem to jump straight over the entire history of the post-classical pastoral, written before the fourteenth-century revival began in earnest and presented to a larger reading public only after interest in the genre had begun to wane. Yet, though such minimal circulation is in stark contrast with the manuscript tradition of other Dantean works and with later pastoral collections, this tells only a small part of the story. For though Dante's text did not reach the printing press until the eighteenth century, it *did* reach the hands of the many of the relevant parties. That it circulated between Boccaccio and Petrarch and that its presence can be found in the midst of the culture of Laurentian Florence is certain, and there is ample reason to believe that it also reached Sannazaro. In fact, the three locations where manuscripts were to be found in the Renaissance are precisely the three centers where the pastoral flourished—Florence, Naples, and Modena.<sup>55</sup> Thus, despite

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<sup>50</sup> Recent examples of this persistent phenomenon are Haber 1994 and Lindheim 2005. Despite titles that lay claim to vast time periods (the former, "Pastoral and the Poetics of Self-Contradiction: Theocritus to Marvell"; the latter, "The Virgilian Pastoral Tradition: From the Renaissance to the Modern Era") each in fact jumps from Vergil to a poet of the English Renaissance, Sydney and Spenser respectively.

<sup>51</sup> This is the case with Alpers 1996.

<sup>52</sup> This is the case with Chaudhari 1989.

<sup>53</sup> On Boccaccio's *Zibaldone* and Dante's *Eclogues*, see Padoan 1978: 163-73. For the general significance of Boccaccio's notebooks, see Picone and Bérard 1998.

<sup>54</sup> They were first published in Florence in 1719 in the first volume of the collection *Carmina illustrium poetarum italicorum*. In 1726 Giovanni's two eclogues (one to Dante, one to Mussato) were published in the eleventh volume of the same collection. The entire correspondence was not published until 1788, in the fourth volume of Gian Giacomo Dionisi's *Aneddoti*. [See Reggio 1969: 3 and Battisti 1955-56: 62-63.]

<sup>55</sup> See Brugnoli and Scarcia 1975: x.

their limited readership in the four centuries following their composition, the *Eclogues* were available to the poets who sustained the pastoral revival of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The study of the *Eclogues* leads to a third issue that has vexed the interpretation of these texts and has greatly preoccupied Dante scholarship, namely the suspicion that the *Eclogues* are not in fact by Dante, but are instead falsifications penned by Boccaccio, Dante's great fourteenth-century admirer, who, the story goes, wished to convince Petrarch—his dear friend and an inveterate anti-*Dantista*—that their poetic forbear was a master not only of the vernacular hendecasyllable but of Latin hexameters as well.<sup>56</sup> Though critical consensus seems to have located these texts firmly within Dante's corpus, and many scholars have sought to debunk the assertions of Aldo Rossi, the Boccaccio thesis' most fervent advocate, the specter of inauthenticity remains (at least in the obligatory footnotes with which critics, myself included, must hedge their readings of these poems), and attests to the precariousness of their position both within larger accounts of Dante's poetics and thought, and in interpretations of the subsequent pastoral tradition.<sup>57</sup> The threat of inauthenticity may never be entirely silenced, though the Boccaccio hypothesis has found fewer and fewer advocates in recent years. Yet, viewed in a different light, the fact that the hypothesis was ever put forth merits reflection in and of itself. The reasons why it would be more agreeable to consider the *Eclogues* as *not* Dante's are various, as are the reasons why it would be desirable to think of them *as* Boccaccio's.<sup>58</sup> I would like to suggest that the confusion over their authorship can also be read *in bono*, and that there is a positive implication of the inauthenticity hypothesis, namely that the desire to temporally relocate the *Eclogues* to the generation after Dante's death itself illustrates the degree to which they prefigure and map out the directions that pastoral would take in the course of the fourteenth century. One of the reasons why it is even conceivable to put forth the hypothesis is that they are consonant with what follows them, as the works of Boccaccio, so rife with traces of them, make manifest.<sup>59</sup> Though any claim to Dante's authorship must be made seriously and rigorously, I would like to suggest that if we are willing to accept their authenticity, as we should, the entire debate attests not only to the eccentric quality of the *Eclogues* but also to their novelty and influence.

However, moving past the possibility of critical biases, their transmission history, and the question of authenticity, there are two intrinsic aspects of Dante's eclogues that make them problematic texts, aspects that can be interpreted as a sign of their novelty, but also make them appear to be an awkward culmination of Dante's ambitious career and an inauspicious point of origin for a new stage of the pastoral: their brevity and their contingency. In the first case, Dante's two eclogues amount to a mere one hundred and sixty-five verses. In the constellation of Dante's works, such brevity is troubling, especially after the poet dedicated himself to the composition of the hundred cantos of the *Commedia*, the longest of which, *Purgatorio* 32, these

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<sup>56</sup> Though Dante wrote extensively in Latin prose (e.g. *De vulgaria eloquentia*, *Monarchia*), his *Eclogues* constitute the entirety of his Latin verse production, save for the Latin translations of parts of the *Commedia* found in the *Epistle to Cangrande*, another work whose authenticity has been called into question.

<sup>57</sup> Battisti 1955-56: 64-68 offers a useful summary of the authenticity question, while siding with the critics who view the poems as works of Dante. Aldo Rossi returned to his hypothesis repeatedly throughout his career, but see in particular Rossi 1960, 1963 and 1968. The rebuttals of his hypothesis have been similarly numerous, but see in particular Padoan 1963, 1964 and 1968; and Martellotti 1983a and b.

<sup>58</sup> It is worth considering that one of the other projects of Aldo Rossi was to rehabilitate, and advocate a greater influence for, Boccaccio.

<sup>59</sup> Some critics have begun to suggest that the Giovanni-Dante correspondence also influenced Petrarch, a case I will make and extend in scope in the following chapter. [See note 109 below.]

eclogues barely surpass in length. Dante may have composed short, free-standing poems in his youth (the sonnets and *canzoni* of his lyric output), but with *Vita nuova*, in which he collected, re-arranged, and glossed many of those poems, he forged a sizable macrotext out of those fragmented lyrics, with a concomitant broadening of his poetic ambition and his formal imagination, that was followed by similarly ambitious works—*De vulgari eloquentia*, *Convivio*, and, most famously, the *Commedia*. The clarion call at the end of *Vita nuova* for a new form of poetry, in which Dante proposes to no longer write of his beloved Beatrice “infino a tanto che io potesse più degnamente trattare di lei” (XLII), a pronouncement that has been crucial for the narrativization of Dante’s career, not only augurs the coming of a new form of poetry but also retroactively figures his previous, structurally isolated poetry as insufficient, since these earlier lyric fragments lack the necessary scope to express his full poetic imagination, and marks them as a thing of the past. Thus, Dante’s return to brief verse works at the end of his career is unexpected, and seems to question that finality of his declaration in the *Vita nuova*, or at least lie beyond its purview.

If his *Eclogues* stand alone within his verse output, they are similarly out of place among his Latin works. They are differentiated from all of them by the fact that they alone are works of poetic imagination. Moreover, among the other works that evince Dante’s increased interest in Latin composition towards the end of his career—*Monarchia* and the *Questio*—these poems are once again eccentric. While (in a very limited view) those texts can be understood as “auxiliary” to the *Commedia*, as Latin philosophical texts in which Dante articulates the undergirding of his political and scientific thought, respectively, the relationship of the eclogues to the *Commedia* is murkier, for it is not immediately evident why they would be necessary or useful for its composition or why they would be sufficiently important to interrupt its completion. The modest dimensions of the *Eclogues*, then, make them distinct in Dante’s entire output and defy the normative arc of Dante’s career, thus suggesting one powerful explanation for why they are the least studied of his mature verses, since it is easier to integrate them into that arc if they are construed as a casual afterthought or “witty badinage” (Grant 78) penned at the termination of his principal occupation.

Those modest dimensions prove equally problematic for pastoral genealogies, for if the *Eclogues* are dwarfed by the *Commedia* that came before and alongside them, they are similarly dwarfed by the eclogue collections upon which they were modeled and by which they were followed. Vergil’s *Bucolica* set the canonical number for pastoral collections at ten, and the Renaissance frequently witnessed the composition of collections of even larger dimensions. The length of any collection of eclogues may seem diminutive in regards to other genres, such as the epic, yet when compared to Dante’s verses, the collections of Petrarch (twelve eclogues), Boccaccio (sixteen, in addition to those included in his *Comedia delle ninfe fiorentine*), Boiardo (two collections of ten), and Sannazaro (twelve eclogues with extensive prose sections, and a second collection of six piscatorial eclogues), not to mention the collections of the English Renaissance, seem positively mammoth. Petrarch’s tenth eclogue alone is more than twice the length—and Pontano’s first eclogue nearly five times the length—of Dante’s entire pastoral output. Moreover, while Dante composed his eclogues at a distance of perhaps two years while principally occupied with the *Commedia*, many later poets—starting with Petrarch and Boccaccio—would devote themselves to pastoral poetry for extended segments of their careers. For example, Sannazaro manifested a sustained interest in his pastoral muse for nearly four decades. As such, Dante’s two slender poems do not seem to bespeak a great commitment to pastoral or to mark an earnest, sustained, or meaningful resurrection of a dormant genre. Thus,

pastoral theorists have tended to figure Dante's contribution as a generic dalliance befitting his love of Vergil, and an extension of the fragmentary production of isolated poets that characterized the pastoral in the Middle Ages, in short, as a part of modern pastoral's pre-history.<sup>60</sup>

Of course, brevity is not coterminous with negligibility of consequence. As Ernst Robert Curtius has argued concerning Vergil's *Bucolica* 1, itself eighty-two verses shorter than Dante's eclogue output, "It is not too much to say that anyone unfamiliar with that short poem lacks one key to the literary tradition of Europe" (190). Though the brevity of Dante's *Eclogues* may render them troubling for Dante scholars and unassuming for pastoralists, in no way does it necessarily curtail the scope of their influence. However, a second intrinsic aspect of their composition poses a thornier problem: their contingency. These poems appear even more ill-fitting within the constellation of Dante's work and their generic novelty seems further tempered by the curious context that produced them, for they are at once eclogues and letters embroiled in a poetic debate. They are structurally interwoven with the poems of their interlocutor, Giovanni del Virgilio, who commences the exchange with a Latin *carmen* in the manner of Horace and who responds to Dante's first eclogue with an eclogue of his own, which in turn leads to Dante's final composition. This concatenation of authors and forms leads to a curious polygeneric macrotext whose problematic nature is made evident by the difficulty that editors have had in labeling its constituent parts, with some opting to smooth its rough edges by numbering them *Eclogues* I-IV, while others have taken the more precise (but more contorted) route of labeling Giovanni's half of the contribution as "Carmen" and "Ecloga responsiva."<sup>61</sup> This editorial strain manifests the much more difficult question of how to define the structural, generic, and authorial identity of this macrotext.

The plurality of authorship is particularly inopportune for Dante scholars; for Dante, who dedicated his entire career to the construction of his own authority and who had become so accomplished at sublimating the presence of his influences and at subsuming the voices of his interlocutors into his own, here seems to yoke his authorial voice (and his claim to literary novelty) to a relatively minor figure. In other words, at this point in his career, a reader expects him to converse with classical poets and Church Fathers, not with a pedant from Bologna. The only analogue within Dante's corpus is, once again, found in his youthful work, such as his *tenzone* with Dante da Maiano. Though the epistolary exchange with Giovanni may represent an intriguing extension of the *tenzone* into the language of Latin and the form of the eclogue,<sup>62</sup> that Dante would choose to enter into a dialogue with a contemporary while finishing the last cantos of the *Commedia* is at once significant and problematic, for it seems to mark a *volte face* from the figure of the author in Dante's previous work. Without a closer examination of this macrotext, it is hard not to view the transition from the Emyrean to the sheepfold—that is, from

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<sup>60</sup> In this regards, Hubbard, who is otherwise laudable in reckoning with Dante's eclogues at some length, is characteristic in that a single line separates Modoin from Dante, the ninth-century Carolingian court from fourteenth-century Northern Italy.

<sup>61</sup> In their editions, Cecchini and Brugnoli-Scarcia take the former approach, which has the effect of "pastoralizing" Giovanni's first letter, even if the critics in question do not consider it a work of pastoral, while Wicksteed and Gardner take the latter approach. My approach may be no more elegant, but it aims to maintain both the generic difference and the co-authorship of macrotext. Thus, in my discussions I will refer to the constituent pieces as Giovanni's first letter and his eclogue, and Dante's first and second eclogues, while citations will convey the directionality of the given epistle and its position in the collection. Thus Dante's second eclogue, verse one, will appear as "Dante-Giovanni 4.1."

<sup>62</sup> For the relationship of these eclogue-epistles to the medieval *tenzone* tradition, see Martellotti 1983a.

the universal aspirations of the voice of the *Commedia* to the colloquial voice of the *Eclogues*, and from its universalizing vision to the discrete landscape of pastoral—as an anticlimax.

For many of the same reasons, Dante's eclogues seem too occasional, too case-specific to usher in a new stage of pastoral. Granted, Giovanni's first epistle was *not* an eclogue, so that the pastoralization of their exchange is still of Dante's making, yet because Dante's first eclogue is a response to that epistle, the exact point of origin of any potential generic originality that these works might possess has been questioned. Since his half of the exchange follows (and to a certain extent is contoured by) Giovanni's critique, Dante's engagement with pastoral seems ancillary to the defense of his poetics. As such, the very quality that makes these eclogues an intriguing document for scholars of the development of humanism, namely that these poems are a *reaction* to new intellectual trends stirring in the last years of Dante's life, has sanctioned scholars of the pastoral in minimizing their importance in the history of the genre. It problematizes the question of who is the true author of the "pastoralness" of these poems, and raises the suspicion that Dante's contribution is too contingent and his cultural referent too specific, that is, that these poems are ultimately in the service of something other than pastoral itself, to mark a foundational stage in the history of the genre.<sup>63</sup>

Construing the *Eclogues* as a brief addendum at the end of Dante's career, instead of as an expression and reformulation of the concerns of that career, and as more properly a part of the tradition of occasional verse than that of pastoral, has focused much of the scholarship in both camps on questions of tone and autobiographical points of reference. In regards to the former, the poems have been discussed in terms of their humorous and playful engagement with Giovanni, as a manifestation of literary *bonhomie*.<sup>64</sup> The latter question emphasizes the indications that the poems provide of Dante's state of mind and their representation of the coterie of personages that surrounded him at the end of his life. It is not surprising, then, that both camps have tended to emphasize the allegorical aspect of these poems, which has limited the types of questions that are asked about the texts. For pastoralists, the eclogues' various allegories, ranging from the certain [the representation of historical personages in pastoral guise (e.g. Dante as "Tityrus," Giovanni as "Mopsus," Dino Perini as "Meliboeus," etc.)] to the more conjectural (e.g. interpretations of the various kinds of sheep as allegories for different ranks of scholars),<sup>65</sup> affiliate them with the allegorical tendencies of medieval pastoral. For Dante scholars, it has focused critical attention on the definition of a few of the more enigmatic symbols and characters of these poems, such as the exact nature of the ten-pail package that Dante promises Giovanni in his first eclogue and the precise identity of Polyphemus in his second.<sup>66</sup> However necessary and insightful some of these inquiries may be, the excessive stress placed upon the allegorical aspect of these poems has limited the attention of pastoralists and the range of approaches hazarded by Dante scholars.

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<sup>63</sup> The influential work of Martellotti is indicative of this assessment. He recognizes Dante's role in the revival of the eclogic form and emphasizes the innovative aspects of this revival [see Martellotti 1983a: 77], yet views Dante's fusion of eclogue and epistle to be a wayward stage in the history of the genre, which required the intervention of Petrarch to set it once again on its correct path [see Martellotti 1983b: 93]. A similar tension is evident in pastoralists such as Rosenmeyer 1969, who praises "the whole enterprise...[as] one of almost conspiratorial enjoyment and spirited invention" (274), yet considers its position with the history of the genre to be a stage of "trial and error" (273).

<sup>64</sup> See Grant 1965: 78; Vecchi 1967: 74; Cooper 1977: 36; Took 1990: 187,

<sup>65</sup> See Wicksteed-Gardner 1902: 228 and 233.

<sup>66</sup> Interpretations of the "decem vascula" and Polyphemus, along with the question of Boccaccio's hypothetical authorship of the exchange, are in fact the most recurrent *topoi* of the criticism. See notes 75 and 98 below.

Our understanding of both the nature and the historical consequence of Dante's *Eclogues* benefits from an approach that widens the scope of inquiry beyond the allegorical, that at once addresses and valorizes their strangeness, and that brings them from the margins to the center. One of the principal reasons for which they merit such relocation is that which also makes these poems seem problematic: the sense of contingency. While that contingency may cast the *Eclogues* as eccentric among Dante's mature works and may encourage pastoral scholars to look elsewhere for a more stable foundation for the Renaissance revival of pastoral, it also provides us with a useful point of entry into their novelty and significance. In the case of our understanding of Dante, the opportunity to examine his authorial voice *while* it is enmeshed in that of another poet is revelatory since, in contrast to his composition of the *Commedia*, in his *Eclogues* he does not dictate the terms. He may quickly, ingeniously, and authoritatively seize control of the exchange, but there is necessarily a degree of discursive accommodation in the authorial transactions that occur between these four poems, and the variety of strategies that Dante adopts when faced with those transactions "throw open the workshop" of his art.<sup>67</sup>

Yet since, considering the aims of this dissertation, it will prove more germane to establish what Dante means to the pastoral than what the pastoral means to Dante, those strategies will be examined in light of the pastoral tradition that develops out of them. Dante's *Eclogues* are at the very heart of that tradition and usher in a profoundly new stage of the eclogue's function, status, and influence, precisely through the sense of contingency that this multi-authored, polygeneric macrotext produces. In the shift from Giovanni's first epistle to Dante's first eclogue, two generic transformations occur at once: Dante pastoralizes their epistolary exchange, but he also recasts pastoral as an epistle, a move that is "senza precedenti nella storia del genere (Martellotti 1983a: 77). Dante's turn to the eclogue was useful and fertile for the defense of his poetics and for the subsequent pastoral tradition because, by responding in the form of an epistle-eclogue and by harnessing both the tensions and the possibilities that accompanied that generic fusion, Dante unlocked the pastoral's potential to serve as a forum for proto-literary criticism and as a dialogical space. Through Dante, the Vergilian pastoral was reborn *out of* a literary debate and *through* a dialogue.

In the ensuing exchange of poems, the dialogical contribution is squarely Dante's. Giovanni's single eclogue is conspicuously monological. He models his poem on the most monological of Vergil's *Bucolica*, the elegiac lover's lament voiced in the second eclogue by Corydon, who jealously holds on to his control of discursive space and whose voice is threatened by the very idea of the voices of others. In contrast, Dante's *Eclogues* constitute a rigorous exploration of the representational possibilities of the dialogue. These two poems constitute an intricate, allusive dialogue with Giovanni's ideas, in which Dante's authorial voice is playful but firm, even combative, in its response to Giovanni's critical broadsides. In fact, he conjoins the literal dialogue of the epistolary exchange with the dialogical potential of the pastoral not only

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<sup>67</sup> The words are Dante's own, from his treatise on the vernacular language, *De vulgari eloquentia* II.4.1, and come from his discussion of the different styles for which the vernacular can be used. The original passage reads "illius artis ergasterium reseremus" ("I will now throw open the workshop of that art"), the art in question being the composition of *canzoni*. In regards to this "workshop," what I mean to suggest is that the *Eclogues* reveal a side of Dante that is akin to the one Teodolinda Barolini individuates in his *Rime*, a sequence of poems that offer, she argues, "l'accesso al tavolo di lavoro del poeta, lasciandoci intravedere il processo attraverso cui Dante è diventato Dante" (Barolini 2009: 6). The *Eclogues* serve a complimentary function, with the useful difference that they come at the end of his life and thus bear witness to a Dante *after* he had become Dante, and offer insights into Dante's experimentation not through an aggregate corpus but rather through the different representational possibilities that Dante explores within a single macrotext.

conceptually but also structurally. Both of his eclogues are structured as intricate dialogues, which has certain implications for Dante's formal imagination, since the *Commedia* is, at its most basic, a sequence of concatenated dialogues.<sup>68</sup>

Moreover, he enters his poems into a dialogue with Giovanni's poems by interpolating and playing off the titles of Giovanni's poems in such a way as to place his songs in a paratextual competition with Giovanni's, turning the diachronic epistolary exchange into a synchronic song contest in the manner of pastoral, a contest that Dante wins. Yet the dialogue is not limited to Giovanni, for these poems are dialogical in the full Bakhtinian sense of the term. In his *Eclogues*, Dante initiates a dialogue between Latin and the vernacular, high and low styles, and among genres. In the process, Dante establishes the *loci* that will shape Italian pastoral production for centuries to come: the construction of literary genealogies, the articulation of the vernacular's status, and the formulation and revision of generic hierarchies.

While examining these dialogues, it is essential to strike a balance between understanding Dante's *Eclogues* as enmeshed with the poems of their interlocutor and as autonomous works. They are part of a curious macrotext, but they foreground their own poetic autonomy as well. In each eclogue, Dante represents his shepherds engaged in their pastoral activities *before* the arrival of Mopsus' (Giovanni's) songs, presenting the fiction that their pastoral world existed before the epistolary exchange commenced. Moreover, precisely because they incorporate their interlocutor into their fictions, Dante's *Eclogues* switch the positionality of these poems from a horizontal relationship—a linear sequence of letter following letter—to a vertical one in which Dante's half of the exchange both contains and transcends Giovanni's. Moreover, by establishing parallels between his first eclogue and Vergil's—most explicitly in the shared names of their characters (Tityrus and Meliboeus)—Dante stages his poem as a new beginning, which relegates Giovanni's first epistle to a space before and outside the world that Dante creates. After invoking the beginning of Vergil's collection in his first eclogue, Dante then closes his second with a final reference to the end of that collection,<sup>69</sup> thereby presenting his two eclogues as a self-contained, pastoral microcosm. Yet, these poems need to be understood as autonomous not only structurally but also poetically. Though Dante's *Eclogues* are a response to Giovanni's critique of the *Commedia*, and as such to a certain extent are about the *Commedia* as well, these points of reference do not exhaust their significance, for they are also an analysis and expansion of Vergilian pastoral. Though they may have been marginalized by generations of interpreters, it is in the direction of that inquiry into and alteration of pastoral's representational possibilities that they would find their greatest influence upon the poets that followed them.

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The conversation between Giovanni and Dante commences with a single pressing issue: the status of the vernacular. In his first epistle, Giovanni praises Dante's poetic mastery but vehemently opposes his use of the vernacular and exhorts him to turn to the composition of a Latin epic with civic themes, through which Dante would find his true audience, the fame he deserves, and the laurel crown to which he aspires (received, naturally, in Bologna from Giovanni). Giovanni's explicit target is the language in which Dante composed the *Commedia*: the great poet should stop throwing pearls before swine, and turn to "nos pallentes" (7), the pale

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<sup>68</sup> On the importance of dialogue in the *Commedia*, see De Ventura 2007. Kegel-Brinkgreve 242 suggests an affiliation between the *Commedia* and Dante's *Eclogues* because of this structural similarity.

<sup>69</sup> Dante-Giovanni 2.94 cites the "mollia prata" of *Bucolica* 10.42.

scholars for whom Giovanni makes himself spokesperson. At first it would seem that Dante offers no defense.<sup>70</sup> He does not even acknowledge that Giovanni had been critical of him at all until the fifty-second verse of his first eclogue. Yet the very choice of a *pastoral* response represents the first line of defense. In light of the reactionary aspects of the pastoral myth of the Golden Age, its proverbial retreat from the concerns of the world and its nostalgic backward glance to simpler times, it can be hard to think of pastoral as subversive; yet in the context of the elitism of Giovanni's cultural schema, Dante's self-representation as shepherd is polemical.

First, Dante satisfies only in part Giovanni's request for a new Latin epic by responding strategically with a work in Latin but not in the high style. This representational sleight-of-hand profoundly altered the history of the genre, in particular through Dante's adaptation of the classical trope of *recusatio*. According to this trope, the poet promises to compose a great work for his patron in the future, whose promised theme is usually the patron himself, but in the meantime sends him a completed work that, though humble by comparison, will serve as a placeholder until the later work is finished. Though the explicit purposes of *recusatio* are, first, to manifest the poet's deference to his patron and, second, to figure the relative humility of his current project, it also mediates between a present humble work and a future loftier one because the former begins to deliver on what is promised by the latter.<sup>71</sup> As such, one of the consequences of *recusatio* is to make generic identity labile, and Dante avails himself of its logic to upend Giovanni's rigid literary hierarchies and to structure pastoral as a generically hybrid space.

Second, Dante's pastoral response is also polemical inasmuch as it suggests that pastoral verse offers a precedent within the classical tradition, authorized by Vergil no less, for the poet to assume the voice of the humble. This is witnessed in the eclogue's quotidian imagery, such as the barley cooking in Tityrus' little hut with which the eclogue closes ["parva tabernacula nobis dum farra coquebant" (68)], which marks a stark shift away from the elevated rhetoric of Giovanni's first letter.<sup>72</sup> Asked to respond with a Latin epic, Dante responds instead with a Latin that thematically and stylistically approximates the vulgar herd that Giovanni disdains.<sup>73</sup> Dante extends the implications of this pastoral move by taking aim at one of the key terms of Giovanni's critique: "digesta" (1.12). Giovanni asserted that Dante's vulgar audience cannot digest, that is, comprehend or benefit from the *Commedia*. To disprove Giovanni's construction of poetic indigestion, Dante deploys the language of nourishment, and stages a scene of *intellectual* nourishment, throughout his dialogue. He (figured as Tityrus) and his companion Meliboeus (Dino Perini) are counting their flock when the latter asks the former to decipher the

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<sup>70</sup> In fact, Grant 1965: 78 thinks that the eclogue ignores the language questions entirely.

<sup>71</sup> On Dante's use of *recusatio* in his eclogues, see Kegel-Brinkgreve 1990: 243 and, especially, Hubbard 1998: 224: "Dante correctly saw pastoral as the ideal form for a *recusatio*...[and] also correctly understood the nature of the classical *recusatio* as a poem that in some senses delivers what it refuses: Dante gives del Virgilio a learned Latin poem, albeit of a different genre than del Virgilio wanted."

<sup>72</sup> By choosing to follow Dante into the pastoral landscape, Giovanni in turn is obliged to adopt such a tone befitting such quotidian imagery, as seen by the meal that Mopsus promises Tityrus if the latter should visit him: "tibi Nisa lavabit / ipsa pedes accinta libens cenamque parabit; / Testilis hec inter piperino polvere fungos / condiet, et permixta doment multa allia, si quos / forsitan imprudens Melibeus legerit hortis" ["Nisa herself shall gladly gir her to wash thy feet and shall prepare thy meal, while Testilis shall dress with pounded pepper the mushrooms, and many a shred of mingled garlic may avert the harm, if Meliboeus has been careless as he culled them in the orchards" (57-61)].

<sup>73</sup> Classical pastoral does not purport to represent the lives of real shepherds. Yet, within the classical canon, pastoral represents the perspective of the low, and Dante's use of pastoral here to defend himself against Giovanni's assertions suggests that, in his view, pastoral is a poetic analogue of the vernacular.



song sent by Mopsus (Giovanni), for he is unable to parse—to digest—it. Tityrus chides his companion’s ignorance, which licensed Giovanni to construe Meliboeus as an ignorant shepherd worthy of mockery. What is so striking, though, is that Dante establishes a hierarchy between the high and the low shepherd in order to then mediate between the two, for Tityrus proceeds to offer a poetic commentary so as to impart the song’s meaning to his companion.<sup>74</sup> The eclogue is in fact dominated by the pedagogical: a learned shepherd teaches his less cultured companion about song. The hierarchy that Giovanni established between the learned and the vulgar herd is destabilized, and the distance between the two mediated, through Dante’s poetry.

The scene closes with the promise of a shared meal for, while these shepherds have been singing, their dinner of barley was cooking in a nearby hut. This is evocative of the close of Vergil’s first eclogue, in which *his* Tityrus offers *his* Meliboeus a humble but generous meal (1.80-81). The generic implications are clear: by appropriating the names, many of the structures, and the final image of Vergil’s first eclogue, Dante intends to establish a new foundational moment for the pastoral tradition. Yet the meal that unites shepherd-teacher and shepherd-student is also squarely within the horizon of Dantean thought, in particular in the *Convivio*, in which he positioned himself as mediator between the “alta mensa” of philosophers and the “pastura del vulgo,” bringing to the latter the “pane” that he gleaned from the table of the former (*Convivio*, 1.1.8-10). The first thing to say about the language of nourishment that subtends the entire eclogue, then, is that through it Dante recuperates the cultural mandate of the vernacular (and relegitimizes the meditative position he allots himself), both of which were attacked by Giovanni, by returning to the cultural matrix of the *Convivio*. Yet Dante goes one step further by adjusting the symbolic language in which that nourishment is figured. Though Tityrus’ final exhortation to Meliboeus—“duris crustis discas infigere dentes” [“learn to ply thy teeth on stubborn crusts” (66)]—is evocative of the eucharistic language of the *Convivio*, Book 1, it is imagery not of bread but rather of milk that dominates this eclogue. It first appears in the curious verses with which the eclogue begins, which describe in pastoral terms the material event of Dante receiving and reading Giovanni’s letter: “Vidimus in nigris albo patiente lituris / Pyerio demulsa sinu modulamina nobis” [“We saw in letters black, supported by the white, the modulations milked for us from the Pierian breast” (1-2)]. In this transitional image that mediates between Giovanni’s city song and the eclogue that follows, the parchment itself brims with the pastoral image of sheep’s milk. Yet it is the description of Tityrus’ most prized sheep that most powerfully conveys the centrality of milk to the figural imagination of this eclogue. This “ovis gratissima” [“most loved sheep” (58)] is so full of milk [“tam lactis abundans” (59)] that her udders can barely manage it, and from this bounty Tityrus will send Mopsus the gift of ten pails of milk. Interpretations concerning these *decem vascula* (64) have dominated the criticism on this eclogue, divided between viewing them as ten cantos of *Paradiso* and a complete ten-eclogue pastoral collection.<sup>75</sup> Though I am inclined to side with the *Paradiso* thesis since Dante throughout seems to suggest that the best defense against Giovanni’s critique of the *Commedia* is the *Commedia* itself, both interpretations obscure the fact that Dante sent neither cantos nor a pastoral collection, as Giovanni’s response makes clear. In fact, this eclogue is itself the gift, and the image of the abundant milk is at once the currency with which Dante fulfills Giovanni’s request and the terms with which he defends himself from Giovanni’s attacks. For though the ten pails of milk, like Tityrus and Meliboeus’ shared meal, are beautifully consonant with the landscape of pastoral, given the stakes of this epistolary exchange they are

<sup>74</sup> As I will discuss in chapter 3, this pedagogical scene would greatly influence Boccaccio’s use of pastoral allegory.

<sup>75</sup> On the various interpretations of these ten pails of milk, see Chiarini 1967 and Reggio 1969: 29-33.

also the milk of the mother tongue. In *De vulgari eloquentia* I.1, Dante asserts that the vernacular is that which we learn “nutricem imitantes” (“by imitating our nurses”).<sup>76</sup> In addition to other interpretative possibilities, the *decem vascula* should also be taken as a symbol of the fecundity of the vernacular. Thus, through his linguistic and conceptual evocation of both *De vulgari eloquentia* and *Convivio*, Dante uses milk as a figure to legitimize his choice of the vernacular for the *Commedia*. Yet, by refashioning and updating the myth of pastoral abundance, he also remaps the pastoral, marking it as a place that at once surveys and nourishes modern vernacular poetry.

The linguistic ramifications of the first half of the Giovanni-Dante exchange, especially Dante’s affiliation of pastoral with the vernacular, are significant both in light of what precedes these poems—Dante’s extensive analysis and defense of the vernacular in his “minor” works and in (and through) the *Commedia*—and what emanates from them, for pastoral would frequently serve as a forum for investigations into the vernacular in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. However, it is the fundamental high-low binary that lies beneath this particular formulation of the language question, and Dante’s strategic use of pastoral to negotiate between the terms of that binary, that is most consequential for the development of the post-classical pastoral. On the one hand, Giovanni uses the language of the *Commedia* as a foil to construct an unbridgeable gap between elevated and humble poetry. On the other, Dante initially uses pastoral to reiterate Giovanni’s hierarchical structure, only to then collapse that structure by conjoining its opposing terms. If the principal axis along which their poetic debate initially develops is the opposition between Latin and the vernacular, the implications of these rival constructions of high and low extend beyond the question of language to that of genre, with a corollary opposition between Giovanni’s reliance upon distinct boundaries between genres and Dante’s systematic integration of high and low within the “humble” confines of pastoral.

For Giovanni, the cultural superiority of Latin scholars over the vernacular herd is doubled by the supremacy of epic over humble forms of poetry, disdainfully personified by the *comicomus*, or comic actor (1.13), performing on street-corners for commoners. Moreover, the type of epic that Giovanni advocates is doctrinaire, consonant with the propensity that he manifested throughout his career to organize literature into a stable and well-differentiated system. Among his other works are three additional epistolary exchanges (two of which concern the proper interpretation of Vergil), two commentaries on Ovid, an *Ars dictaminis*,<sup>77</sup> and four grammatical treatises.<sup>78</sup> Though richly varied, what connects this output is Giovanni’s investment, as teacher and poet, in not only the examination but also the systematization of poetry: its value, the levels on which it generates meaning, the works that fit into its canon, even how it is written decorously. His prescriptive approach to both the interpretation and the composition of poetry presupposes that poetry can be categorized according to genres separated by distinct boundaries, and that those genres in turn can be inserted into a hierarchy structured in terms of their relative worth.

A poem as vast and stylistically heterogeneous as the *Commedia* would necessarily resist such discrete generic categories and pose a problem to Giovanni’s cultural perspective.<sup>79</sup> In fact,

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<sup>76</sup> As Pertile 2006 notes, the pervasive language of milk also associates Dante’s first eclogue with *Paradiso* 25. See also Cestaro 2003 for the imagery of suckling in the *De vulgari eloquentia*.

<sup>77</sup> For the influence of the *Ars dictaminis* tradition on Giovanni’s conception of literary hierarchies, and the concomitant superiority of Latin over the vernacular, see Vecchi 1967: 63-71.

<sup>78</sup> See Alessio 1981.

<sup>79</sup> See Baranski 1991 and 1997 on the elasticity of Dante’s conception of *commedia*.

though Dante's use of the vernacular is the principal target of Giovanni's critique, there is a simultaneous (albeit implicit) attack on the generic novelty of the *Commedia*, which indicates that Giovanni found its lack of precedence within the canon and its transgression of classical hierarchies of genre as troubling as its chosen language—that is, a Latin *Commedia* would not have resolved his issues with Dante's project. Giovanni's critique of the unprecedented nature of the *Commedia* is evident from the very start of his first epistle:

Pyridum vox alma, novis qui cantibus orbem  
 mulces letifluum, vitali tollere ramo  
 dum cupis, evolvens triplicis confinia sortis  
 indita pro meritis animarum, sontibus Orcum,  
 astripetis Lethem, epyphebia regna beatis,  
 tanta quid heu semper iactabis seria vulgo,  
 el nos pallentes nichil ex te vate legemus?  
 Ante quidem cythara pandum delphyna movebit  
 Davus et ambigue Sphynchos problemata solvet,  
 Tartareum preceps quam gens ydiota figuret  
 et segreta poli vix experata Platoni:  
 que tamen in triviis nunquam digesta coaxat  
 comicomus nebulo, qui Flaccum pelleret orbe. (Giovanni-Dante 1.1-13)

Sacred voice of the Pierides who with unwonted songs dost sweeten the stagnant world, as with life-giving branch though longest to upraise it, unfolding the regions of threefold fate assigned according to deserts of souls, Orcus to the guilty, Lethe to them that seek the stars, the realms above the sun to the blest; such weighty themes why wilt thou still cast to the vulgar, while we pale students shall read nought from thee as bard? Sooner shalt thou stir the curving dolphin with the harp, and Davus solve the riddles of equivocating Sphinx, than that unlettered folk shall figure the precipice of Tartarus and secrets of the pole scarce unsphered by Plato. Yet these are the very themes which are croaked forth, all undigested, at street corners by some buffoon with comic actor's shock of hair who would have driven Flaccus from the world.

While the central verses delineate the basic contours of Giovanni's negative estimation of the vernacular (and the general populace that lacks knowledge of Latin), the verses that frame them subtly extend that estimation to the poem's content and form. Initially, the first verses seem laudatory and descriptive, yet they are mirrored and recast by the final verses of the section. The first doubling is between the "triplicis . . . sortis" (3) of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise and the "triviis" (12), the street corners where the poem is performed by the *comicomus*. To a certain extent, this is still a critique of the poem's reception, so that the explicit issue is the audience that Dante has chosen for his work. Yet the lexical contamination of the divine three-fold fate—which represents the subject matter, topography, and structural principle of the *Commedia*—with this mundane street-scene, in which the very title of Dante's poem is both invoked and parodied by the *comicomus*, strongly suggests that Giovanni viewed Dante's endeavor to represent the afterlife as inherently contradictory and the resultant poem as a problematic hybrid of high and low. This sense is abetted by a second doubling between "orbem" and "orbe" that frames the

entire section, which establishes an inverted trajectory of elevation and debasement. Though Dante seeks to redeem this world through his poetry, the *Commedia* would cast the very classical poets that he cites as authorities from it. In light of these doublings, the novelty [“novis” (1)] that Giovanni ascribes to Dante’s song, which initially seems to indicate his high estimation of Dante’s muse, acquires a note of ambivalence as well, for it suggests not only the originality but also the unconventionality of Dante’s poetry. It is telling that the bulk of Giovanni’s neologisms occur in these very verses and congregate around his description of the *Commedia*; for, while they bear witness to the erudite flourishes that pervade Giovanni’s epistle, they suggest the eccentricity and bizarreness of Dante’s project, for there are no Latin words to describe it.<sup>80</sup>

Giovanni’s vision of epic, and the resulting negative assessment of the *Commedia*, comes into clearer focus when he offers Dante four potential themes that would make for a more regular poem. Ranging from Ugucione della Faggiuola’s victory over the Guelphs at Montecatini (1315) to the siege against Robert of Anjou at Genova (1318-19), they all concern recent regional strife in Italy.<sup>81</sup> They are uniformly bellicose and geographically and temporally discrete. Their geographical focus, that is, their association of theme with city, is significant in that Giovanni here advocates a poetic circuit, in which the inspiration for, and function of, epic are bound together by their shared municipal context, a civic poetry whose themes are drawn from the recent past and that in turn addresses present political concerns. The implicit model for such poetry, and the foil against which Giovanni measures Dante’s verse, is Albertino Mussato. A student and friend of Lovato Lovati and a protagonist of the cultural matrix that influenced Giovanni, whom he met in Bologna in 1316, Mussato was crowned poet laureate in 1315 for his *Ecerinis* (1315), which juxtaposed events from history (the resistance of the citizens of Padua to the tyranny of Ezzelino da Romano) with current political concerns (the threat posed to Padua by Cangrande della Scala) in the high style of Senecan tragedy. The implications of Giovanni’s proposed themes, then, are not only political but also stylistic.

The geographical reduction evinced by these themes is accompanied by a temporal contraction. Giovanni is adamantly focused on the present, as witnessed in the anaphora on “jam” [“now” (vv. 25, 35, and 41)], which introduces the final three sections of the letter. Though related to Giovanni’s call for a form of civic poetry that directly addresses the current concerns of Italian politics, this insistence also has structural implications, for his focus on such discrete and (relatively) brief events from the recent past would make for an epic with an orderly beginning, middle and end. Taken in tandem with his geographical reduction, this temporal focus stands in stark contrast to the historiographical and cosmological sweep of the *Commedia*. Through these four potential themes, Giovanni’s first directive—that Dante should no longer write in the vernacular—is accompanied by a second—that he should not write a work that stretches from Adam to the present, and from the center of Hell to the Empyrean. Instead, Dante should compose a Latin city-poem, for the resultant work would constitute a proper epic and Dante would finally receive the acclaim his talent deserves not only because it would be written in the language of the intellectual elite but also because it would be generically uniform.

Dante does not seem to engage directly with Giovanni’s polemics regarding genre in the first eclogue, focusing his response instead on the more pointed critique of the vernacular. Yet if the *decem vascula* that Tityrus promises Mopsus can be interpreted as ten cantos of *Paradiso*, he does at least suggest that Giovanni’s ideal epic holds no interest for him and that the best line of defense against Giovanni’s negative appraisal is the *Commedia* itself. Moreover, once again, the

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<sup>80</sup> See Brugnoli-Scarcia 1980: 3-4, n. 2.

<sup>81</sup> For a discussion of the four themes, see Brugnoli-Scarcia 1980: 16, n. 26.

very choice of pastoral is polemical in the context of Giovanni's literary hierarchies for, though Dante accepts Giovanni's directive to write in Latin verse, he blatantly refuses to conform to the Mussato model for elevated poetry and instead "fulfills" Giovanni's request for a poetic conversion by turning downward to the genre that, according to the classical hierarchy of the *genera dicendi*, was the quintessence of the humble style. It is this friction, produced by Dante's ambivalent acquiescence, that will ignite in the second half of the exchange when, after having dispatched with the language question, Dante turns his pastoral imagination squarely upon the question of genre and its boundaries.

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The second half of the exchange is less openly contested, as the dialogue becomes more even-footed (though less direct) now that both authors occupy the space of pastoral. It also registers a provisional win for Dante, as he is now the one setting the terms of the debate. Clearly delighted by Dante's foray into Vergilian bucolics, Giovanni eagerly responds in kind with an eclogue, closely modeled on Vergil's second, in which he seems to relent. The bite of the first letter is gone, the language question is jettisoned, and the polemical air dissipates, save for one potential conflict. Though he renews the invitation to Bologna, he introduces the threat that he might turn elsewhere, specifically to Albertino Mussato, if Dante refuses to accept (88). Though full of pastoral blandishments and learned verse, the semantic horizon is significantly reduced in comparison with his first letter, and there is little for Dante to respond to, save for accepting or refusing the invitation to Bologna

A clue to why Dante did respond, and a key to understanding the stakes of his second eclogue, is the moment in which Giovanni explicitly steps back from his pastoral fiction and comments upon the generic disparity of the first half of the exchange:

Et mecum: "Si cantat oves et Tityrus hircos  
aut armenta trahit, quianam civile canebas  
urbe sedens carmen, quando hoc Benacia quondam  
pastorale sonans detrivit fistula labrum?  
Audiat in silvis et te cantare bubulcum."  
Nec mora, de postis calami maioribus, inter  
arripio tenues et labris flantibus hysco. (26-32)

And I to myself: 'If Tityrus sings of sheep and goats, or draws the herds in song, why didst thou sing a city lay, sitting within the city,—since ere now the Benacian flute of pastoral sound hath worn this lip of thine? Let him hear thee too sing as a herdsman in the woodlands.' And without more delay, casting the greater reeds aside, I seize the slender ones and part my lips to blow.

With this aside, Giovanni remarks upon the strange discursive shift that had occurred in their polygeneric epistolary macrotext as *carmen* turned into eclogue. By retroactively defining that *carmen* as a city-song, Giovanni underscores three characteristics of his previous poem—its location, style and theme—which, by implication, his second will no longer possess. First, it was written *from* a city, in stark contrast to the pastoral countryside that housed Tityrus' song. Second, its elevated style and erudite classical rhetoric manifest Giovanni's connection with the

urban centers of learning of Northern Italy. Finally, it was a poem *about* cities, specifically in regard to the civic poetics he advocated through his suggested themes. As such, his decision to leave the city constitutes a significant turn, as he announces that he will leave such themes aside, change his style, and immerse himself fully in the bucolic world of Tityrus.

By recounting the moment in which he decides to make this turn, by drawing attention to his acceptance of Dante's terms, Giovanni offers a poetic representation of the act of imitation—Mopsus will sing as Tityrus has sung before him. Though Giovanni's principal model will be Vergil's *Bucolica*, he still accepts the yoke to which Dante's pastoral move subjected him.<sup>82</sup> Giovanni's choice to fashion himself as a shepherd marks him as the first poet to follow in Dante's footsteps in the revival of the classical eclogue. As such, the line of poets who imitated Dante's *Eclogues* after the exchange is inaugurated within the epistolary macrotext.<sup>83</sup> Yet this formal imitation also bears with it significant conceptual implications since, in regards to the cultural circuits Giovanni set in place in his first epistle, his adoption of the pastoral code seems to indicate a *volte-face*. Though his acceptance of the slender reeds may serve as a generic marker inasmuch as they serve as a synecdoche for pastoral poetry in general ever since Tityrus' own "tenui...avena" (Vergil, *Bucolica* 1.2), it is a charged choice in light of the first epistle's poetic hierarchies. His initial position seems to have undergone a chiasmic transformation. Instead of Giovanni enacting a change in Dante's poetry, Dante enacts a change in Giovanni's. Instead of elevating Dante's style, Giovanni lowers his. Whether or not this implies a substantive revision of Giovanni's cultural perspective, it does mean that to a great degree he concedes the language debate. Whatever the motivation for Giovanni's acceptance of Dante's pastoral move may have been—on one end of the spectrum, a genuine excitement at the prospect of a revival of the Vergilian eclogue; on the other, a competitive desire to reassert his own preeminence as interpreter of Vergil—one clear consequence of his choice is that, after occupying the center of Giovanni's discourse in the first epistle, the language question recedes into the background.

Yet if Giovanni seems to concede, or at least turn his attention away from, the language point, he also reasserts his conception of genre, for in the very moment in which he assumes the voice of the shepherd, he reifies the hierarchy of, and reinforces the boundary between, high poetry and low. Nowhere is his conception of genre more rigid nor the boundaries separating them more distinct and impermeable than when he deigns to turn from the high style ("depostis calami maioribus") to the low style of pastoral song. The gesture of "depostis" is revealing, for it is not simply a shift from one style to another but rather a downward move, a descent from the lofty and consequential world of war and politics to the modest, circumscribed terrain of shepherds. A corollary effect of this reification of generic distinction is that it passes judgment on the poems that precede it, implying that the discourse of their collective exchange descended in the transition from Giovanni's first letter to Dante's. However much Giovanni may have delighted at the arrival of Dante's letter, he places it in a position of generic inferiority next to his exordial city song.

This rigid formulation of genres will be the principal target of Dante's second eclogue. That he had it firmly in his crosshairs is assured by his citation of these very verses immediately preceding the eclogue's central event: the arrival of a breathless Meliboeus while Tityrus and his

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<sup>82</sup> His imitation of Dante begins with the very first line of his eclogue. "Forte sub inriguos colles" follows Dante's "Forte recensentes pastas de more capellas" (Dante-Giovanni. 2.4), in turn modeled on the first verse of Vergil's *Bucolica* 7 ("Forte sub arguta").

<sup>83</sup> Kegel-Brinkgreve 1990: 246 makes a similar point.

fellow shepherd Alpheisiboeus are resting in the shade.<sup>84</sup> The other shepherds laugh at his uncoordinated haste and when they press him to explain it, without a word he brings his flute to his lips. Miraculously, instead of emitting simple instrumental notes, the flute sings Mopsus' song, that is, Giovanni's eclogue. Meliboeus' actions are described thus: "Ille nihil contra, sed quam tunc ipse tenebat / cannea cum tremulis conjuncta est *fistula labris*" (4.36-7; my emphasis). This clear evocation of Giovanni's "pastorale sonans detrivit *fistula labrum*" (3.29) goes right to the heart of Giovanni's pastoral shift, to the moment in which he tried to legitimate his own right to pen an eclogue. Having Meliboeus, the *Eclogues*' personification of humility, be the performer of Giovanni's song underscores Dante's recognition of the significance of that shift. More importantly, it places Giovanni's construction of generic difference at the center of Dante's eclogue.

In fact, Dante's remapping of the boundary between high and low begins at the very start of his second eclogue. Perhaps in response to the close of Giovanni's eclogue, which ended with the sun setting over the hills, Dante begins his counter-response with celestial coordinates, but in a much more complex fashion than was the case in Giovanni's eclogue.<sup>85</sup>

Velleribus Colchis prepes detectus Eous  
 alipedesque alii pulcrum Titana ferebant.  
 Orbita, qua primum flecti de culmine cepit,  
 currigerum canthum libratim quemque tenebat;  
 resque refulgentes, solite superarier umbris,  
 vincebant umbras et fervere rura sinebant. (Dante-Giovanni 4.1-6)

Stripped of the Colchian fleece, dashing Eous and the other winged steeds were bearing lovely Titan; the course at the point where it first begins to slope down from his summit was holding either chariot-bearing wheel in poise, and things that catch the sun, but now outstripped by their shadows, excelled their shadows and let the country burn.

The poem commences, then, with a full-fledged, rhetorically intricate celestial proem that establishes the season (spring) and the hour (midday).<sup>86</sup> Such an astronomically dense introduction is familiar to readers of the *Commedia*, especially of *Purgatorio*, where such

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<sup>84</sup> This is an event of great consequence to the history of the genre. To begin with, it is the most dramatic event up to this point in the pastoral tradition. Though there are a number of precedents for the arrival of a third shepherd to what had previously been a poetic dialogue between two shepherds (e.g. the arrival of Palaemon to the dialogue between Menalcas and Damoetas in Vergil's *Bucolica* 3), such shepherds arrive leisurely and their most common purpose is to act as judge for a song-contest. By contrast, Meliboeus arrives with a great sense of urgency and brings news from the world beyond the diegetic space of this eclogue. In different ways, this event would greatly influence the other poets of the fourteenth-century eclogue revival. The complex spatial relationship that Meliboeus' movement establishes between the separate pastoral worlds of Mopsus and Tityrus would influence Petrarch's innovative expansion and reorganization of pastoral space in his *Bucolicum carmen*, while the doubling of Meliboeus' dramatic movement and the information he brings would influence both the allegories and the narratological complexities of Boccaccio's *Buccolicum carmen*.

<sup>85</sup> See Giovanni-Dante 3.97: "Dum loquor en comites, et sol de monte rotabat" ("The whilst I speak behold my comrades, and from the mount the sun was rolling down").

<sup>86</sup> Raffa 1996 argues that, through the Golden Fleece, as well as a variety of imagery evocative of competition, Dante returns to the thematic of poetic coronation.

poems abound.<sup>87</sup> The affiliation of this poem with *Purgatorio* is strengthened by its learned and detailed description of the shadows that objects cast (5-6), for it is precisely the shadow that “outstrips” the pilgrim that distinguished him from the translucent souls of Mount Purgatory. The poem is further linked to the *Commedia* by the prominent reference at the beginning of the first verse to the “Velleribus Colchis,” the Golden Fleece, for Dante invokes the myth of Jason at the beginning and end of *Paradiso*.<sup>88</sup> Thus, the *Commedia*, after having been forgotten in Giovanni’s eclogue, is made present both formally and thematically at the start of Dante’s response.

However, though this poem is consonant with the poetics of the *Commedia*, it is quite surprising in the context of pastoral. The spatial constriction that characterizes the pastoral landscape blocks out (for the most part) both the land outside Arcadia’s borders and the heavens above it, and limits the “gaze” of the reader to the small patch of terrain shared by a few shepherds while they tend their flocks. There are a few exceptions (e.g., the song of Silenus in Vergil’s *Bucolica* 6, the brief celestial coordinates offered in *Bucolica* 8.14-15), but the scope and astronomical precision of this poem is still something new to the genre. Yet this generic novelty is used not to disrupt the pastoral horizon but rather to amplify one of the quintessential tropes of pastoral poetry, since all of the recondite references to Eous and Titan in this unorthodox introduction communicate one basic fact: it is noon, the time of shepherds’ song and the archetypal occasion for the pastoral genre. The search for shelter from the burning sun leads shepherds to the shade of the pastoral enclosure, which provides them with the *otium* that produces their song. Dante’s elaborate poem reproduces that context, though now with celestial garb. Through the specificity of his astronomical references and close examination of the production of shadow, Dante outlines a physics of the pastoral moment.

By projecting the pastoral moment onto a cosmic plane, and by introducing *his* pastoral song—the eclogue that follows—in such a stylistically elevated register, Dante initiates a confrontation between, but also a synthesis of low, and high, pastoral and epic (made all the more direct by the fact that the closest model for these verses is the poem to Book 7 of Lucan’s *Pharsalia*), a generic dialogue that will play out through the entirety of this eclogue. The confrontation seen in these verses constitutes Dante’s first response to Giovanni’s hierarchical schema, and it is not only the distinction that the latter made between the *maioribus* and *tenues* styles but the *depositis* with which Giovanni turned from the first to the second that is at stake here, as the following verses of makes clear:

Tityrus hoc propter confugit et Alphisibeus  
ad silvam, pecudumque suique misertus uterque,  
fraxineam silvam tiliis platanisque frequentem.  
Et dum silvestri pecudes mixtaeque capelle  
insidunt herbe, dum naribus aera captant,  
Tityrus, hic annosus enim, defensus acerna  
fronde soporifero gravis incumbibat odori (7-13)

Tityrus therefore withdrew with Alphisiboeus to the grove—each taking pity on his flocks and himself—the grove of ash with many a linden and plane intermixed;

<sup>87</sup> The celestial poems of *Purgatorio* include cantos 2, 9, 15, 19, 25 and 27.

<sup>88</sup> The references to Jason are found in *Paradiso* 2.1-18 and 33.94-96. For the importance of this figure to the overarching design of the final canticle, see Hollander 1969: 220-32.



and whilst the flocks, with goats between, settled upon the woodland grass and with wide nostril sniffed the air, Tityrus, for he was stricken in years, shading himself with maple-leaves, stretched him there upon the ground, heavy with the sleep-inducing fragrances.

Here the link between the movement of the heavens and the activities of the shepherds becomes explicit. The elevated proem is retroactively justified by the very pastoral effect it has upon the shepherds, as they seek refuge in the shade. At the same time, the passage introduces certain metapoetic implications, for the many varieties of trees and the commingling of sheep and goat [“mixtaeque,” (10)] serve as a suggestive gloss on the blending of genres that occurred in the proem. Yet, the most striking image is the reclining Tityrus. As the narration “pans” down from the celestial chariot to the weary head of Tityrus resting upon the shaded grass, it replays Giovanni’s descending gesture, this time on a vast scale, but more importantly, it recasts that gesture as one that establishes not the difference but the correspondence between high and low. The role that Tityrus took for himself as teacher in Dante’s first eclogue, mediating between the elevated and the humble, is replayed here, but now on a cosmic scale.

To underscore his revision of Giovanni’s high-to-low move, Dante traces this trajectory a second time in the speech that immediately follows. Alpheisiboeus, Tityrus’ dear companion and the principal voice of the eclogue, makes a sequence of comparisons to illustrate the natural order of pastoral existence, and to indicate Mopsus-Giovanni’s violation of that order. He presents five scenes in which the behavior of humans and animals are consonant with their surroundings to underscore how strange it is that Mopsus takes relish in his current residence. That the thoughts of humans return to the stars whence they came (4.16-17), that swans delight in song along the Cayster (18-19), that fish swim upstream from the ocean into rivers (20-21), that Hircassian tigers stain the Caucasus with blood (22), and that adders slither across the Libyan deserts (23), “I marvel not,” he says, “for the things to its own life give unto each delight” [“non miror, nam cuique placent *conformia vite*,” (24); my emphasis], but that Mopsus should take delight in the harsh, barren environs of Etna baffles him and the other youth of Sicily (25-27).

Initially, Alpheisiboeus’ vision of “*conformia vite*” may not seem particularly surprising. The bond between individual and environment is one of the hallmarks of pastoral, so much so that the pathetic fallacy—the empathic response of the inanimate landscape to the shepherd’s plaint—is one of the most identifiable, (and parodied) elements of the genre. Yet the particular terms established by Alpheisiboeus carry with them implications that far exceed the trope’s vision of harmony between man and nature. First, the trajectory from stars to shepherd is traced again here, redoubling the proem’s efforts to undermine Giovanni’s hierarchical *depositis*. The fact that the theory expounded here seems to be dangerously close to the Platonic theory of soul generation that Beatrice lambasts in *Paradiso* 4 has directed attention away from the fact that Alpheisiboeus’ first two images display the same positionality as the celestial proem, shuttling between the heavens and the pastoral landscape, with emphasis placed once again on likeness over difference in the descent from high to low.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, the effect of these images is to estrange Mopsus from his own environs, to figure him as the one who breaks that chain of correspondence. While Giovanni had represented himself as a willing inhabitant of Arcadia in the previous eclogue, Dante here reasserts his own control over their pastoral discourse. After the

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<sup>89</sup> See Martinez 2003: 623-26 concerning Dante’s obsession with Neoplatonic “procession and return” (626).

proem positioned Tityrus at the center of the pastoral landscape, Alpheisboeus' speech now alienates Mopsus from it.

An additional consequence of this pastoral dislocation is that Giovanni's renewed invitation is already rejected before it is even broached. With the miraculous flute song a few verses later, Mopsus' request will be reiterated, and Tityrus' companions will beseech him to stay with them, at which point Tityrus will in fact turn down the offer, but (through Alpheisboeus) Dante has already given a provisional answer. That Dante will not accept Giovanni's request to visit him in Bologna, and that he is not threatened by being replaced by Mussato, is made clear by the manner in which he brusquely relocates Mopsus from the rivers of Bologna to the arid slopes of Mt. Etna. The most explicit issue at stake in Giovanni's eclogue has already been dispatched with in the first twenty-seven lines of the second of Dante's.

Yet the move is at once spatial and generic, as Alpheisboeus' other terms suggest. The first of his comparisons retraced the proem's transition from the heavens to the world of pastoral song, but they are followed by a move not up or down but *outside* pastoral. After an intermediate image of schools of fish—a neutral image, perhaps, but suggestive in that their journey upstream initiates a loop back to the high, and that their oceanic location is indicated by Nereus, whose daughter Galatea will be of central importance later in the eclogue—Alpheisboeus makes a turn to tigers and snakes. If the first two terms presented a world at peace—meditative humans, joyfully singing swans—the last two introduce the threat of violence into the eclogue, as the shepherd's imagination extends far beyond the boundaries of Sicily. Yet this, too, is an upward move of sorts, in regards to genre, because the threat introduced here is a specifically epic one. The tigers of the Caucasus conjure up Vergil's *Aeneid*, down to the very verse, since Dante's clear model for his "*Caucason Hyrcane maculent quod sanguine tigres*" (22) is *Aeneid* 4.367: "*Caucasus Hyrcanaeque admorunt ubera tigres.*"<sup>90</sup> On the other hand, the Libyan sands point squarely to the civil wars of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, whose presence was already felt in the proem, and whose ninth book had already provided Dante with a model for the Libya-sand-snake triad in *Inferno* 24-25.<sup>91</sup> As such, if Alpheisboeus' comparisons trace a vertical maneuver between high and low by reenacting the proem's move from the heavens to the pastoral landscape, they also encompass a generic maneuver that trespasses the boundaries between pastoral and epic.

The eclogue begins, then, with two set pieces that function in a complementary fashion to foreground Giovanni's distinction between the high and the low style, then reroute the circuit with which Giovanni connected the two terms, and proceed to fuse pastoral and epic. The former takes an epic structure—the elaborate proem—and inserts the voice of pastoral inside of it, to meditate on the central pastoral thematic of the midday sun, while the latter takes a pastoral device—the correspondence between individuals and their surroundings—and pushes it to its very limits so that it incorporates the consequence and heavy themes of epic, as high and low are linked by a chain of similitude.

Alpheisboeus' outward move to the realm of epic is then perpetuated by the rest of the eclogue, which is rife with epic imagery and situations. Immediately after this speech, Meliboeus arrives anxiously bearing news of Mopsus' song, which, as previously noted, leads to the general amusement of the shepherds. The language used to describe their playful derision is curious, for they are said to laugh at him as the Sicilians laughed at Sergestus. The intertext is

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<sup>90</sup> These words are spoken by Dido to Aeneas. This too anticipates the centrality of Aeneas' Mediterranean voyages to the horizon of the poem's figural language.

<sup>91</sup> See Lucan, *Pharsalia* 9.706 and following.

*Aeneid*, book 5, in which Aeneas holds a series of games to commemorate the death of his father.<sup>92</sup> The first is a boat race in which Sergestus, to the amusement of his companions, arrives late after crashing his ship on the rocks. The comparison is revealing not only because shepherds are here compared to warriors (albeit warriors on their day off) but because these funerary games were held in Sicily, the current residence of Tityrus and his companions. As the narrator establishes a correspondence in the behavior of these shepherds and the characters of the *Aeneid*, the pastoral past and the epic past become overlaid in the shared heritage of this literary Sicily.<sup>93</sup> This co-penetration of the high and low styles continues with the return of the figure of Aeneas later in the eclogue, as his travels are invoked through the figure of Achemenides, the companion of Ulysses left behind at the Cyclops' cave, whose harrowing experience is used to gloss the horridness of Mt. Etna, the home of Polyphemus and the current residence of Mopsus. In short, in comparison to Dante's previous eclogue and to the *Eclogues* of Vergil, the shepherds of Dante's second eclogue understand and express their situation in terms of epic precedents with surprising frequency.

There is, moreover, an emphasis placed upon the Sicilian-ness of these epic precedents. This is witnessed by a small but curious alteration of the intertext of Sergestus. Though this captain was jeered when he finally approached the shore, the closer reference is to the laughter of the Teucrians (Trojans) who mock Menoetes, the helmsman thrown into the sea by his captain Gyas earlier in Book 5.<sup>94</sup> On the one hand, this emendation stresses the similitude of these Sicilian shepherds with the Sicilians of the *Aeneid*. On the other, by twice positioning the reader in Sicily in the span of five verses, Dante draws attention to the fact that he has willfully shifted the terrain of his epistolary exchange with Giovanni away from the Northern Italian horizon that had nominally contained it up to this point. Giovanni's first epistle was a city song, and his eclogue similarly positioned itself in the context of Bologna (and positioned Dante in Ravenna), albeit with pastoral dress. Dante's first eclogue, on the other hand, lacked geographical specificity and instead inhabited a more general pastoral landscape, which did not conform to Giovanni's localization of the poets in Northern Italy, but offered no precise geographical alternative. Now Dante emphatically stresses that Tityrus' residence and his confrontation with Mopsus both have Sicilian coordinates.

This dislocation is made most explicit by one of Tityrus' rare speeches, a moment in the eclogue that has led to the displeasure of many critics.<sup>95</sup> After Alpheisiboeus has beseeched Tityrus to refuse Mopsus' request and remain with his companions, Tityrus redraws the pastoral map of the Dante-Giovanni exchange:

Mopsus amore pari mecum connexus ob illas  
que male gliscentem timide fugere Pyreneum,  
litora dextra Pado ratus a Rubicone sinistra  
me colere, Emilida qua terminat Adria terram,  
litoris Ethnei commendat pascua nobis,  
nescius in tenera quod nos duo degimus herba  
Trinacride montis, quo non fecundius alter

<sup>92</sup> The specific verses in question are 5.271-2.

<sup>93</sup> The link to the Sicilian games is furthered by the fact that Tityrus' words to Meliboeus are modeled on Aeneas' at the end of Book 5.

<sup>94</sup> See Brugnoli-Scarcia 1980: 82, n. 31.

<sup>95</sup> See Martellotti 1983a: 81-81 and Davie 2005: 27-33.

montibus in Siculis pecudes armentaque pavit. (65-72)

Mopsus...deeming that I dwell on the shores right of Po and left of Rubicon, where the Adriatic bounds the Emilian land, commends to us the pastures of Etna's shore, ignorant that we two linger on the soft grass of the Trinacrian mount than which no other of Sicilian mountains has given richer pasturage to flocks and herds.

Here Dante rehearses Giovanni's precise coordinates only to reject them. Some critics have taken this moment of explicit over-writing to be an indication that Dante's pastoral imagination falters. The curtains of the pastoral fiction briefly drop to reveal an inelegant maneuver which points outside the poem. Yet, in light of Giovanni's own poetics and the figural language of Dante's second eclogue, this dislocation is not a poetic lapse, but rather an additional critique of Giovanni's cultural perspective; and it, in fact, indicates some of the reasons why Dante was invested in pastoral.

The first consequence of the spatial dislocation executed by Dante is to rise above the civic circuit that Giovanni established as the generative matrix of poetic identity and representation. For, despite its bucolic garb, Giovanni's eclogue *is* still a city song. In fact, it is all about cities, and plays out along an axis of Northern Italian urban locations that can be summarized as: "You happily reside in Ravenna, and should be recognized in Florence, but since that appears to be unlikely, you should visit me in Bologna, and if you refuse the invitation, I will happily turn to Padua." The triad Mussone-Padua-Mussato is particularly illustrative of Giovanni's monocular focus upon civic matters. The river Mussone is a properly pastoral allusion to place, yet that it is as evocative of Mussato's own name as it is indicative of the Paduan landscape suggests an inextricable bond between poet and place, that poetry is rooted in the community that produces it and in turn should be limited to addressing the concerns of that community. In this regard, Giovanni's eclogue perpetuates the poetic circuit set forth in the list of themes in his first letter. By transporting both Giovanni and himself away from that circuit and projecting them both onto the literary horizon of Sicily, Dante's sidesteps Giovanni's localization, and opens up to the possibility of a poetry neither limited to that civic reality nor coterminous with it, that can be broader both in scope and style.

Yet there is a more specifically generic implication to Dante's Sicilian move, which further refutes Giovanni's literary hierarchies: the relevance of Sicily to pastoral. To begin with, as the home of Theocritus, Sicily is the birthplace of pastoral, so that Sicilian pipes often function as a metonymy for the genre, as in Vergil's last eclogue, when the singer pronounces the he "will play on a Sicilian shepherd's pipe" ["carmina pastoris Siculi modulabor avena" (10.51)]. Yet, since Dante would not have had access to Theocritus (whose *Idylls* would not return into circulation in Western Europe until some one-hundred fifty years after Dante's death), it is rather the specifically Vergilian implications of Sicily that matter here. For while Dante's move might seem to be little more than the geographical cognate of composing pastoral fictions, it is important to remember that the choice of Sicily was not inevitable at this point in the pastoral tradition, precisely because Theocritus had been forgotten, and because Vergil had presented an array, or rather an amalgam, of pastoral landscapes, ranging from Grecian Arcadia to Sicily to the Italian peninsula. Instead, Dante's Sicilian move needs to be understood in light of Vergil's use of Sicily to convey not only the location of a mythical Golden Age, but to mark

the boundaries of the pastoral genre, precisely at the moment in which he transgresses those boundaries.

The most prominent reference to Sicily in Vergil's *Bucolica* comes in the fourth, a poem whose importance for Dante cannot be overstated.<sup>96</sup> It begins:

Sicelides Musae, paulo maiora canamus.  
non omnis arbusta iuvant humilesque myricae;  
si canimus silvas, silvae sint consule dignae. (1-4)

Sicilian Muses, let us sing a somewhat loftier strain. Not everyone do orchards and the lowly tamarisk delight. If our song is of the woodland, let the woods be worthy of a consul.

Here the Sicilian Muses represent pastoral at its most bold. This brief proem represents a double move in regard to the generic status of pastoral and its position in literary hierarchies. First, it retroactively defines the three previous eclogues as humble through its recognition that some readers may disdain their lowly subject matter and through the narrator's aspiration to change the quality of his song to accommodate a higher style. Second, while the narrator distinguishes this eclogue from its companions, he simultaneously differentiates between the humble tone of those specific songs and the status of the genre as a whole, for here pastoral is raised up and fashioned into a forum for a song of the coming of a new age. The entire world is the subject matter of this poem, yet it is still pastoral, as it frames itself in the worthy woods and is framed in turn by the eclogues that surround it. In these verses, at the very moment in which he positions pastoral as humble, Vergil annexes new territory for the genre.

Dante's insistence upon the Sicilian coordinates of his second eclogue needs to be understood in terms of this Vergilian intertext, for these Sicilian muses at once symbolize and sanction Dante's hybridization of pastoral and his mediation between high and low through the systematic juxtaposition and fusion of pastoral and epic. Moreover, while this Sicilian move already constitutes an implicit overturning of Giovanni's hierarchies, the opposition between their differing perspectives on pastoral is made more pointed by the fact that Dante's representation of the Sicilian muses is also a re-interpretation (and a dismantling) of the terms with which Giovanni constructed those hierarchies, for Vergil's fourth eclogue also lies behind Giovanni's understanding of the generic status of pastoral. As previously noted, when Giovanni decided to follow Dante into the pastoral landscape, he had Mopsus turn from his city song, lay down his high style, and adopt the slender reeds of pastoral: "Nec mora depostis *calamis maioribus* inter / arripio *tenues* et labris flantibus" (3.31-32). The terms of this generic transaction are those of Vergil's fourth eclogue: "Sicelides Musae, paulo *maiora canamus*. / non omnis arbusta iuvant *humilesque* myricae" (1-2).<sup>97</sup> Yet Giovanni reverses the implications of his Vergilian model. Instead of indicating the high registers to which pastoral can rise, Giovanni's "calamis maioribus" represent a vertical boundary, the definition of what pastoral is *not*. As Vergil's move of generic expansion is processed through the matrix of Giovanni's literary hierarchies, the terms of the fourth eclogue become inverted. The notion of a higher song is no longer deployed to open pastoral, to raise it and make it receptive to other genres, but rather to

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<sup>96</sup> See Cioffi 1988.

<sup>97</sup> Cooper 1977: 35 notes that Giovanni here is imitating Vergil's fourth eclogue but does not interpret the significance of the citation and seems to consider their pastoral discourses analogous.

limit its range and subordinate it to the elevated style that is left behind once the shepherd's pipes are adopted. By returning to their shared Vergilian model, Dante responds to and corrects Giovanni's (mis)quotation and, through his Sicilian move, restores and expands Vergil's original bold gambit.

The figure of this move is Polyphemus. The presence of this famous Cyclops in Dante's second eclogue has long been noted by critics, for he looms over the shepherds and dominates the second half of the poem, and the question of who this Polyphemus might be has been the principal concern of criticism on this eclogue. The dominant trend in interpretation has been to view him as the sign of a return to politics, a symbol of regional strife and the theme of exile in Dante's poetics, and is taken to be a historical personage whose actions and political affiliations would have dissuaded Dante from accepting Giovanni's invitation to visit Bologna.<sup>98</sup> Various interpretations as Robert of Anjou, Fulcieri da Calboli, and many others, he represents a harsh intrusion of the world that lies beyond the pastoral hedge, a menacing, anti-pastoral Other who stands in opposition to, and threatens the viability of, Tityrus' peaceful community. Without distancing myself from such interpretative possibilities, I would advocate a change in the range of questions asked about this menacing character. Political thematics and the experience of exile certainly lie below the surface of Dante's *Eclogues*—as witnessed in his stated desire to return to Florence in his first eclogue and the importance of the peregrinations of Aeneas to his second—but to focus on a purely allegorical understanding of the figure of Polyphemus hinders recognition of what this curious character has to say about Dante's pastoral imagination. In short, critics have paid more attention to who Polyphemus might have been outside of the text than how he functions in it.

Polyphemus first appears at the end of the speech in which Tityrus transplanted himself and Mopsus to Sicily, as the reason for Tityrus' refusal to visit Mopsus. Tityrus states that he and Mopsus are bound by their mutual devotion to the Muses, and that for this he would even visit Mopsus in the unpleasant climes of Etna, were it not for the menace of Polyphemus. The paraphrasis used to denote the Muses is revealing. They are described as "illas / que male gliscentem timide fugere Pyreneum" ["those who fled in fear from the ill desires of Pyreneus," (65-66)]. The reference is to the myth of Pyreneus (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 5.269-93), the Thracian king who attempted to kidnap the Muses and who, upon their flight, plunged to his death from the tower in which he had imprisoned them. This descriptive choice prepares the reader for Polyphemus, another violator of the laws of hospitality, and proleptically casts him as a threat to poetry. In this regard, he *is* the Other for Tityrus, yet the very fact that he is present in the poem at all, that he is incorporated into the generic weft of pastoral, complicates the matter, for if he poses a threat to the world within the poem, he still becomes a pastoral character.

Yet he already was a pastoral character of sorts, who appeared as a bizarre shepherd in the works of both Theocritus and, more importantly for Dante, Ovid. Indeed, it is precisely this genre-breaching quality that Dante exploits. If, on the one hand, Polyphemus' grotesque ferocity enables Dante to introduce a threatening note of political reality, on the other hand, the tradition of this character across different works heightens Dante's programmatic hybridization of pastoral and epic, for, in the final instance, the Cyclops is a polygeneric character. His double valence is evident in the fact that Alpheisiboeus describes him twice over. When Tityrus confesses that it is the presence of Polyphemus that holds him back from visiting Mopsus, Alpheisiboeus concurs that any shepherd in his right mind would fear the terrifying Cyclops:

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<sup>98</sup> Reggio 1969: 35-47 and Ascoli 2009: 170, n. 97 summarize the various figures with whom this Polyphemus has been linked.

“Quis Poliphemon” ait “non horreat” Alpheisiboeus  
 “assuetum rictus humano sanguine tingui,  
 tempore iam ex illo quando Galatea relict  
 Acidis heu miseri discerpere viscera vidit;  
 vix illa evasit. An vis valuisset amoris,  
 effera dum rabies tanta perferbuit ira?  
 Quid, quod Achemenides, sociorum cede cruentum  
 tantum prospiciens, animam vix claudere quivit?” (76-84)

“Who would not shudder at Polyphemus,” replies Alpheisiboeus, “wont as he is to dye his jaws in human blood; since what time Galatea beheld him tear the flesh of poor deserted Acis. Scarce herself escaped. Would love’s might have kept its hold when the mad frenzy boiled up in such wrath? And what of Achemenides, who only looking on him, gory with the slaughter of his comrades, could scarce keep the breath within his body.”

Alpheisiboeus, then, begins his description by rehearsing the salient details of the Acis-Galatea-Polyphemus love triangle as relayed in *Metamorphoses* 13.738-897. Ovid’s own conflation of the Polyphemus of pastoral (Theocritus) and the Polyphemus of epic (Homer’s *Odyssey*, Vergil’s *Aeneid*) provides Dante with a model for both his thematic and generic operations, in the former case as a precedent for the violent shepherd and in the latter as a previous attempt to interweave pastoral and epic. However Dante raises the stakes twice over. He revisits one of Ovid’s own sources—Vergil’s *Aeneid*—through the story of Achemenides (*Aeneid* 3.588-691), thereby reappropriating Polyphemus for epic, as the description turns from a tragic love story set in a bucolic landscape to the gore of Achemenides’ comrades-in-arms. In sequence, without a break, Alpheisiboeus progresses from Polyphemus the killer of shepherds to Polyphemus the killer of soldiers, with pastoral and epic fused together, the two genres undifferentiated under the Cyclops’ gaze.

It is worth noting, however, that Ovid’s Polyphemus does not pertain, strictly speaking, to the pastoral genre, but instead is presented within a bucolic interlude inside a larger work. Dante, on the other hand, places Polyphemus squarely within the confines of pastoral, first by turning him into a character in his own eclogue, and then by relaying a small detail that points toward Vergil’s *Bucolica*. It is here that the intertextual fabric of this passage becomes even denser. The description of Galatea’s frightful encounter is, once again: “tempore iam ex illo quando *Galatea relict* / Acidis heu miseri discerpere viscera vidit” (78-79). This is a clear evocation of Vergil’s *Bucolica* 1, when Galatea leaves Tityrus: “postquam nos Amaryllis habet, Galatea reliquit” [“after Amaryllis began her sway and Galatea left me” (30)]. Thus, behind Dante’s Polyphemus lies Ovid’s, behind whom lies Vergil the epic poet, behind whom lies Vergil the pastoralist. In a virtuosic transformation of his source material, Dante takes a character who was already a hybrid in Ovid, accentuates his genre-bridging function by reincorporating Polyphemus’ encounter with Achemenides into the story of Acis and Galatea, while still keeping his discourse firmly planted within the pastoral tradition, by rooting his composite image in the genre’s ultimate authority, Vergil’s *Bucolica*.

This delicate balancing act is indicative of the structure of the eclogue as a whole. The tensions introduced by Polyphemus are significantly reduced by Alpheisiboeus’ promise to

Tityrus that an exalted virgin [“alta / virgine” (86-87)] already prepares a laurel crown for him. With this promise, the theme of poetic coronation returns, though now no longer contingent on the judgment of an external authority—either Giovanni in Bologna or the city of Florence—but instead a tribute proffered by the poem itself. It also marks a return to Vergil’s *Bucolica* 4, for within this heightened Sicilian context, this pastoral virgin deity is also the “Virgo” (4.6) Astraea who returns the world to the reign of Saturn and the Golden Age. Under her peaceful sign, and the serene, wordless smile with which Tityrus responds to Alpheisiboeus’ words [“Tityrus arridens et tota mente secundus / verba gregis magni tacitus concepit alumni” (88-89)], the eclogue ends in perfect equipoise. In terms of genre, that equipoise was evident in the poem’s strategic use of classical references, as Sergestus manifested epic at its most light and Polyphemus manifested pastoral at its most heavy, a mirroring correspondence already suggested by the poem’s inaugural image of the wheels of the sun’s chariot held in balance at the zenith of the sky.

However, in between Sergestus and Polyphemus there is one additional classical references that needs to be accounted for: Midas. Meliboeus’ magical flute is figured in terms of the reeds that spoke of King Midas’ secret (his donkey ears) with a disembodied voice. On the one hand, Midas is linked to pastoral through the story of the satyr Silenus (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 11), whom the king returned to Bacchus, and his foolish praise of Pan in the latter’s singing contest with Apollo, in punishment for which his ears were transformed. The gold stain that he places on the sands of Pactolus [“Pactolida tinxit arenam” ( Dante-Giovanni 4.53)] links him to Polyphemus, who stains his jaw with human blood [“humano sanguine tingui” (77)]. Yet there is a specifically epic point of reference to Dante’s use of his story here, which, to my knowledge, has gone unnoticed. The speaking reeds and the stained ground (associated with blood through the parallel with Polyphemus) link Midas to Vergil’s Polydorus (*Aeneid*, book 3), an episode whose importance to Dante is clearly evident in the character of Pier delle Vigne in *Inferno* 13, as well as the end of *Purgatorio* 20. Aeneas encounters the dead Polydorus at the beginning of his Mediterranean peregrinations, whose importance in this eclogue has already been noted. While preparing sacrifices to his mother, Aeneas encounters a mound:

forte fuit iuxta tumulus, quo cornea summo  
virgulta et densis hastilibus horrida myrtus.  
accessi viridemque ab humo convellere silvam  
conatus, ramis tegerem ut frondentibus aras,  
horrendum et *dictu* video *mirabile* monstrum.  
nam quae prima solo ruptis radicibus arbor  
vellitur, huic atro liquuntur sanguine guttae  
et terram tabo *maculant*. mihi frigidus horror  
membra quatit gelidusque coit formidine sanguis (*Aeneid* 3.22-30; my emphasis)

By chance, hard by there was a mound, on whose top were cornel bushes and myrtles bristling with crowded spear shafts. I drew near and essaying to tear up the green growth from the soil, that I might deck the altar with leafy boughs. I see an awful portent, wondrous to tell. For from the first tree which is torn from the ground with broken roots trickle drops of black blood and stain the earth with gore.



The episode of Polydorus colors both Midas and this eclogue's central event, for its "dictu...mirabile" (26) provides a model for the miraculous song of Meliboeus' flute and the narrator's response to its human voice: "mira loquar sed vera tamen" ["strange things I am about to tell, but true" (40)].<sup>99</sup> At the heart of Dante's second eclogue, through the superimposition of the humble shepherd's pipe and the voice of the warrior issuing forth from the broken branch with drops of blood, Dante conjoins the *tenues* and the *majoribus* reeds that Giovanni had kept separate, and emblazons his systematic expansion of the boundaries of pastoral.

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What emerges from Dante's treatment of the eclogue is a poetic form with great elasticity that resists and violates literary hierarchies while still recognizing their existence, that provides a forum for representational experimentation which allows the poet to both analyze and push his poetic praxis to the limit, and that shuttles across generic boundaries as it generates hybrid figures that pertain equally to the high and the low. It is a configuration of pastoral that tests the notion of a backward-looking, nostalgic genre. By inserting pastoral into the epistolary situation, or rather by pastoralizing epistolarity so that sender, letter, and recipient coexist inside the fiction narrated by the eclogue-epistle complex, Dante alters the temporality and positionality of pastoral. While the myth of the Golden Age may linger in the vision of smiling serenity with which Tityrus joins his companions to retire to their homes at the end of their pastoral day, the concerns and possibilities of the fiction-making and the concomitant implications of its literary inquiry are decisively present-tense, as Dante uses pastoral—as he *sends* it to Giovanni—to engage with the cultural "now" that surrounds him. Even when, in future generations, pastoral poets would compose their poems without a Giovanni, without an explicit, concrete and polemical interlocutor in mind, the potential inaugurated by Dante's pastoral move, and the vestiges of the context that made that move possible, would remain.

In the process, Dante unlocked the full dialogical implications of pastoral as poetry that structures itself through dialogues between shepherds, that allows for a transformative dialogue between genres, and that points outside itself toward other poets to commence a dialogue about what poetry can achieve. And it is on that final note—the dialogue between Dante and posterity—that Dante's *Eclogues* end, for after the narrative of the shepherds' day comes to a close, the narrator offers the reader a surplus that figures the reception of the poem itself:

Callidus interea iuxta latitavit Iollas,  
omnia qui didicit, qui retulit omnia nobis:  
ille quidem nobis, et nos tibi, Mopse, poymus. (4.95-97)

Meantime the wily Iolas lay hiding close at hand; who heard it all, and told it all to us. He made the tale for us, and we, Mopsus, for thee.

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<sup>99</sup> These verses pertain to the very heart of Dante's poetics. For the importance of *mirabile dictu* in the *Commedia*, specifically in the episode of Geryon, and its affiliation with Meliboeus' singing pipes in Dante's second eclogue, see Barolini 1992: 60. For the poetics of *mirabile dictu* in general, see Biow 1996.

These three verses are among the most disputed (and least interpreted) of the entire collection.<sup>100</sup> Yet, since structural clues indicate that these verses are indissoluble from the rest of the poem, if Dante's second eclogue is considered to be authentic, as it should be, then it is with this curious intervention by an unnamed narrator that Dante seals his exchange with Giovanni and, quite possibly, his poetic career.<sup>101</sup>

The justification for this unexpected turn is that these brief verses distill the various ends to which Dante deploys pastoral. They manifest the extent to which Dante was profoundly influenced by, and inventively manipulated, his Vergilian model, for they are partially based on the close of Vergil's *Bucolica* 7. The narrator in that poem had a name—Meliboeus—but the situation is analogous. After residing in the background for most of the eclogue, he intervenes at its end to frame the songs that the eclogue had contained and enrich the temporality of the textual moment for the reader: "Haec memini, et victum frustra contendere Thyrsin. / ex illo *Corydon Corydon* est tempore *nobis*" ["So much I remember, and how Thyrsis strove in vain against defeat. From that day Corydon is the one and only Corydon for us" (7.69-70; my emphasis)], whose circular syntax and foregrounded "nobis" Dante's verses echo. The intertext is not a casual one, for Dante began the pastoral narration of his first eclogue with an echo from the same source. "Forte recensentes pastas de more capellas" (2.3) is clearly modeled on the *incipit* of *Bucolica* 7: "Forte sub arguta considerat ilice Daphnis."<sup>102</sup> The frame that Dante creates through this strategic citation of Vergil's *Bucolica* 7 is revealing. After all, Dante's first eclogue was, structurally speaking, a self-enclosed whole, beginning with the characters of Vergil's first eclogue and concluding with the homeward journey and shared meal with which that eclogue ended. There is no reason to suspect that, had Giovanni not replied, Dante would have made a second foray into the pastoral landscape. Yet Giovanni did respond, thereby opening up Dante's poetic closure. This aperture led to an expansion of Dante's pastoral discourse—Polyphemus, the miraculous flute—yet it raised the need for an additional image with which to restore the autonomy of Dante's *Eclogues*. This suggests one of the reasons why ending his second eclogue at verse ninety-four would have been insufficient for Dante, for it would have replayed the same homeward journey as his first, thereby introducing the possibility of infinite reiterations. Instead, Dante attains structural closure anew by turning not to the end of his first eclogue but rather to its beginning. The resultant fiction is that his two eclogues are in fact one and, by consequence, that Giovanni's two contributions exist wholly *inside* that macro-eclogue, that is, that they "occur" when Tityrus reads Mopsus' first poem (Dante-Giovanni 2.55) and when Meliboeus' miraculous flute sings his second (Dante-Giovanni 4.41).

In fact, these verses constitute a double frame for, while their shared Vergilian source affiliates them with the third verse of Dante's first eclogue, they also mirror the equally unexpected first two verses of that eclogue by mutually inscribing the epistolary situation onto pastoral.<sup>103</sup> The first eclogue began: "Vidimus in nigris albo patiente lituris / Pyerio demulsa

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<sup>100</sup> Pertile 2006 sees these verses to be one of the "insanabili difetti di esecuzione ai quali si deve in larga parte la generale inafferrabilità del racconto" (31). Though his assessment is particularly harsh, it is indicative of the confusion they have provoked.

<sup>101</sup> On the dating of the second eclogue to the final months of the poet's life, and the possibility that it was composed after *Paradiso* had reached completion, see Reggio 1969: 18.

<sup>102</sup> The connection between the third verse of Dante's first eclogue and the first verse of Vergil's seventh is a commonplace in editions of Dante's *Eclogues*. What has gone unnoticed, to my knowledge, is that the two citations work in tandem, and the significance of the frame they create has not been explicated.

<sup>103</sup> Reggio 1969: 53 links these two passages but does not expand his analysis beyond suggesting that the fact that they are equally odd.

sinu modulamina nobis” [“We saw in letters black, supported by the white, the modulations milked for us from the Pierian breast” (2.1-2; my emphasis)].<sup>104</sup> Here Dante represents the materiality of the letter he received from Giovanni and the moment its words passed before his eyes, though he now views them through the lens of pastoral, as ink and parchment are turned into objects consonant with the landscape that issues forth from this brief pre-text. With exquisite formal balance, the second eclogue ends by tracing the route by which the letter-song will return to the original sender who initiated the correspondence. As such, unlike the Vergilian intertext, this mirroring is as much a gesture of aperture as it is of closure. As the past-tense “Vidimus” (2.1) incorporates a time *before* the poem, so the present-tense “poymus” (4.97) points to a continuation, a *before* and an *after*. Like the incipit of Dante’s first eclogue, then, the intervention of the unnamed narrator in his second is interstitial, an integral part of the poem that is also penetrated by the material reality that lies beyond it. If Dante first mediated between epistle and eclogue, here he transitions back to epistle, acknowledging Giovanni-Mopsus’ position outside of the poem and his partial agency in its creation.

The liminal quality of these verses makes for a provocative close to Dante’s pastoral imagination, and they can serve as an emblem of the porous boundaries of the pastoral genre itself, at once rigorously framed by the fiction of the pastoral enclosure and trespassed by pastoral’s metagenetic appropriation of and expansion into the literature that surrounds it. The effectiveness of this re-imagined *envoi* is made all the more powerful by the fact that the doubling of its gaze—back to Dante’s poetry and out toward Giovanni’s—is embedded in the last word of the poem: *poymus*. The medieval Latin *poire*, defined by rhetoricians of the time as “to show in poetic form,”<sup>105</sup> occurs only once elsewhere in Dante’s body of work. In Book 2 of *De vulgari eloquentia*, precisely at the moment in which Dante articulates the points of equivalence between modern vernacular poets and their classical Latin predecessors, he defines the vocation of the poet in terms of *poire*:

Revisentes igitur ea que dicta sunt, recolimus nos eos qui vulgariter versificantur plerunque vocasse poetas: quod procul dubio rationabiliter eructare presumpsimus, quia prorsus poete sunt, si poesim recte consideremus; que nichil aliud est quam fictio rethorica musicaque *poita*. (II.4.2; my emphasis)

Looking back, then, at what was said above, I recall that I frequently called those who write verse in the vernacular ‘poets’; and this presumptuous expression is beyond question justifiable, since they are most certainly poets, if we understand poetry aright; that is, as nothing other than a verbal invention composed according to the rules of rhetoric and music.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Though it is fanciful to suggest that Dante had already conceived of something along the lines of his second eclogue’s close when he wrote these opening verses, the fact that the second verse ends with “nobis” (as the final verse of Vergil’s *Bucolica* 7 had) is still revealing of the influence of that eclogue on Dante’s conception of eclogiac structure, which he would later re-deploy so effectively when he did turn to the composition of his second eclogue.

<sup>105</sup> See Bregoli-Russo 1985: 35.

<sup>106</sup> I note in passing that the link that Dante here makes between the language question and *poire* immediately follows a brief discussion of high and middle styles. I do not mean to suggest that the treatment of these questions is analogous between *De vulgari eloquentia* and the *Eclogues* but rather that the two principal themes of Dante’s correspondence with Giovanni—the vernacular and genres—are contained *in nuce* in *De vulgari* 2.4.2.

The close of the *Eclogues*, then, constitutes a backward glance on Dante's earlier "minor" works, through a word that is charged with the very themes that have been at the heart of the dispute between Giovanni and Dante's poetics, representing a final gauntlet thrown at Giovanni's critiques, one moreover that emphasizes Dante's status as poet, as maker of fictions, in contrast to Giovanni's vocation as teacher and critic.<sup>107</sup>

Yet while *poymus* may revisit a constellation of themes from Dante's earlier work, it also marks a dramatic departure from the end of *Paradiso*, whose final word—*stelle*—closes all three of the poem's canticles.<sup>108</sup> Structurally, the *Commedia* is a closed circuit, the poetical cognate of the universe bound in a single volume by God's love ["legato con amore in un volume" (*Par.* 33.86)]. By contrast, *poymus* ends the *Eclogues* with an outward move that insists on its present tense to engage with the world beyond and after the text. While concluding the poem, it inaugurates a line of transmission—of imitation—that bridges the distance between the characters within the pastoral fiction to the reader(s) of that fiction and invites (and challenges) them to carry that transmission forward.

The implications of this parallel terminus to Dante's career as poet should be explored further within the context of Dante studies. In fact, in light of the sidereal imagery in the opening verses of his second eclogue and their reference to Jason's fleece, each of which links this eclogue to the final canto of the *Commedia*, the transition from the Heavens to the reclining Tityrus could in fact be interpreted as Dante's post-*Commedia* transition back to earth, in which case this eclogue would be Dante's last work of poetry and would provide an image of the poet in serene repose after the completion of his great project. What is of consequence here, though, is the effect of *poymus* on pastoral. With it, Dante inaugurates a chain of pastoral communication, as the songs of Tityrus, Alpheisiboeus, and Meliboeus' miraculous flute are relayed from Iollas to the narrator, who in turn transmits them to Mopsus. After Dante's death, Giovanni would accept the narrator's invitation and send an eclogue to Albertino Mussato, adding another link to the chain, and after him, poets would take up the dialogue for centuries to come.

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<sup>107</sup> Whether Dante would have thought that Giovanni was capable of noticing these echoes is beside the point. What matters here is that the stakes of Giovanni's first epistle returned Dante's thought to his earlier treatise, as the link between milk and the vernacular in his first eclogue strongly suggests.

<sup>108</sup> The final verses of the canticles are: "E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle" (*Inf.* 34.139); "puro e disposto a salire a le stelle" (*Purg.* 33.145); "l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle" (*Par.* 33.145)

## Chapter 2

### *Translatio bucolicorum:* Pastoral and the Place of Epic in Petrarch's *Bucolicum carmen*

If Dante concluded his eclogues with a gesture toward a posterity of pastoral imitators, critical consensus (until very recently) has been that Petrarch disregarded the invitation.<sup>109</sup> The sole transparent reference in Petrarch's oeuvre to Dante's Latin poems characterizes them negatively.<sup>110</sup> Moreover, though both poets are frequently grouped together in the "messy," medieval prehistory of Renaissance pastoral, most examinations of the state of the genre in this period have suggested that Petrarch rejected Dante's pastoral model by greatly accentuating the genre's capacity for allegory and by appearing to sever Dante's link between pastoral and epistolarity.<sup>111</sup> Though Petrarch has received a modicum of praise for having returned the genre to its "natural" setting—the single-authored eclogue collection—his allegories have provoked criticism, and occasional ire, from pastoral scholars.<sup>112</sup> According to this assessment, Petrarch's emphasis on pastoral allegories is a medieval accretion that obscures Vergil's foundational fictions and a representational negation that excises the genre's defining tropes, themes, and "atmosphere" which are then replaced by an alien style and alien material, resulting in an "inbred" literary form that "makes a sham of the original mandate of the genre" (Rosenmeyer 1969: 274).<sup>113</sup> Indeed, though the poems have been appreciated for the light they shed on Petrarch's life and his response to major political events during the period in which the collection was composed,<sup>114</sup> Michele Feo's description of the collection's tenth and longest eclogue—*Laurea*

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<sup>109</sup> A few scholars in recent decades have individuated traces of the Giovanni-Dante exchange in Petrarch's *Bucolicum carmen*. See Krautter 1983:86-87; Kegel-Brinkgreve 1990: 255-56; and, especially Ascoli 2009: 114-73, who demonstrates the centrality of Dante's eclogues to the "eclogue plus epistle complex" (116) of *Parthenias* (*Buc. carm.* 1) and its accompanying letter (*Fam.* 10.4).

<sup>110</sup> See *Familiares* 21.15, par. 24, a letter to which I will soon turn.

<sup>111</sup> On the "medievalness" of Petrarch's eclogues, see Grant (1965: 87) and Bergin's introduction to his 1974 translation of the collection: "It is undeniable that mediaeval elements abound in the *Carmen* and a mediaeval air suffuses it" (xv).

<sup>112</sup> For the critical commonplace that, by distancing himself from Dante's epistolarity and encouraging Boccaccio to do the same, Petrarch returned the genre to its correct path, see my introduction, esp. note 25. For scholarly frustration with the poetry of the *Bucolicum carmen*, see Cooper 1977: 36-46, whose interpretation of Petrarch (including his influence on Boccaccio) is particularly scathing; and also Grant: "in Petrarch's work the eclogue becomes a vehicle for the most mediaeval kind of riddling; the allusions are everything and the classical form is wholly incidental to the mystification" (1965: 89). Such frustration is evident even among scholars who are encouraged to view the text favorably [e.g. Hubbard 1998: "The almost Byzantine polysemy of the terms seems designed to bewilder" (229-30)], as well as those who make excuses for its poetry [e.g. Bergin: "If we look beyond the mediaevalism, not allowing our eye to be distracted by the gargoyles of the allegory...to the discipline, artistry and honesty of the *Carmen* we may find it a persuasive and *au fond* even humanistic work" (1974: xv)].

<sup>113</sup> See also Kegel-Brinkgreve 1990: "the whole apparatus of bucolic poetry as we have come to know it, with amoebaeon song, exchange of gifts, refrains, rustic comparisons and the like, is discarded by the *Bucolicum carmen*" (251). However, other scholars have argued rightfully that the effects of Petrarch's allegory on the "pastoralness" of his collection should not be overstated. Chaudhuri's assessment of these interpretive trends is particularly helpful in this regard: "Scholars have been so caught in the tangles of Petrarch's allegory that they have neglected the richness of the pastoral itself" (50).

<sup>114</sup> For examples of the valorization of these poems in terms of the light they shed on Petrarch's biography, see Bergin 1974: xvi; and Carrai 2009: 165. For the dating of the collection, see Mann 1977: 127-80, who provides evidence that there was an initial flurry of activity between 1346 and 1349, by which point the collection "was

*occidens* (“The Falling Laurel”—is representative of the frustration that the majority of critics have felt with the collection as a whole: it is a “mostruoso crittogramma” (1975: 117-18).

Petrarch was the first to admit that his version of pastoral was cryptic. In a letter sent to his brother Gherardo (*Fam.* 10.4) in the company of, and as a commentary on, *Parthenias* (*Buc. carm.* 1), he avers that the eclogue in question, and pastoral poetry in general, cannot be understood unless the author provides an interpretive key to its allegories: “id genus est quod nisi ex ipso qui condidit auditum, intelligi non possit” [“its nature is such that it must be explained by the author himself to be understood” (par. 12)].<sup>115</sup> The thick weft of Petrarch’s allegories have been understood as the extension of a hermeneutic practice dating back to Servius which individuated and glossed potential allegorical meanings in Vergil’s *Bucolica*.<sup>116</sup> As the comments that Petrarch wrote in the margins of his own copy of the *Bucolica* make clear, this tradition certainly influenced his interpretation of Vergil’s eclogues, which suggests that he understood his own pastoral production to be in line with his reading of Vergil’s.<sup>117</sup> However, at the same time, Petrarch was also aware of the generic novelty of his collection, as he makes clear at the beginning of *Laurea occidens*, when the shepherd Silvanus (i.e. Petrarch) asks his companion: “Pastoria nunquid / materia est lugere deas?” [“Is a dirge for a goddess departed suitable matter for singing in pastoral verses?” (10.9-10)].<sup>118</sup> At the start of his most ostentatiously unconventional eclogue, Petrarch here shows himself to be keenly aware of the generic expectations of pastoral at the very moment that he trespasses them.<sup>119</sup>

Silvanus’ question can be taken as an admission on Petrarch’s part that anticipates later critiques of the “pastoralness” of his collection. Yet, since the implicit answer offered by the

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substantially in the form in which we now know it” (133), but with significant additions and changes through the early 1350s, followed by renewed activity as Petrarch completed the autograph manuscript in 1357. Yet even then, additional changes were made, in particular to the tenth eclogue, until 1366. As Mann rightfully notes, “the eclogues were constantly in flux” (130).

<sup>115</sup> All citations of the *Rerum familiarium libri* are from Ugo Dotti’s edition (Nino Aragno: 2004-09), with translations from Aldo Bernardo’s *Letters on Familiar Matters* (Italice Press: 2005). In all, Petrarch wrote three letters as commentaries on individual eclogues: to Gherardo (*Familiars* 10.4), Barbato da Sulmona (*Lettere disperse* 7) and Cola di Rienzo (*Lettere disperse* 11), which gloss eclogues 1, 2, and 5 respectively. In addition, Martellotti 1968: 12-13 argues that Petrarch circulated the tenth eclogue, *Laurea occidens*, with a key to decipher its numerous veiled references to Greek and Latin poets. For the interpretation that the mere existence of these letters is as additional evidence of Petrarch’s willful opacity, see Ettin 1984: 3-4; as well as Chaudhuri 1989: “the need for such commentary appears when we consider the astonishing degree of symbolism in Petrarch’s Eclogues” (26). However, Hubbard 1998 offers a useful corrective to scholars who overemphasize Petrarch’s statements regarding the impenetrability of his eclogues: “We should perhaps not take Petrarch’s allegorical reading of his own text quite as seriously and straightforwardly as some critics are inclined to do...[since] the basic issues of the text are clear enough without the allegorizing glosses” (230). Indeed, Hubbard rightfully contextualizes Petrarch’s auto-exegesis in terms of his desire to match the authority of classical authors: “not only is Petrarch traditional in the sense of following the influence of Homer and Vergil, but he is also ‘traditional’ in the other direction—in the sense of wanting to be an object of the same kind of learned discussion” (ibid.). For a penetrating examination of Petrarch’s auto-exegesis in terms of Dante’s, see Ascoli 2009, esp. pp. 122-23.

<sup>116</sup> For this hermeneutical tradition, see Patterson 1987: 19-42; and Kegel-Brinkgreve 1990: 184-89.

<sup>117</sup> For an account of the influence of Servian hermeneutics on Petrarch’s pastoral poetics, see Patterson 1987: 42-49; and Carrai 2009: 172.

<sup>118</sup> All citations of the *Bucolicum carmen* are from the edition prepared by Marcel François and Paul Bachmann (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001), with translations from Thomas Bergin’s *Petrarch’s Bucolicum Carmen* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).

<sup>119</sup> The structural and thematic innovations of the eclogue are self-evident. At 411 verses in length, *Laurea occidens* far outstrips its pastoral precedents. Moreover, one of its shepherd’s recounts his voyages around the Mediterranean, which leads to a protracted catalogue of ancient poets.

four-hundred verses that follow is that a dirge *can* be suitable material for an eclogue, it can also be understood not as a rejection of pastoral but rather as a marker of the generic hybridity that pastoral can produce. Indeed, a different approach to the question of the “pastoralness” of the *Bucolicum carmen* is suggested by the manner in which Petrarch categorizes it in the *Liber sine nomine*, a work whose composition overlapped with that of his pastoral poetry:

Cum semper odiosa fuerit, nunc capitalis est veritas. Crescentibus nempe flagitiis hominum, crevit veri odium, et regnum blanditiis ac mendacio datum est. [...] Ea me pridem cogitation induxit, ut *Bucolicum carmen*, *poematis genus ambigui*, scriberem, quod paucis intellectum plures forsitan delectaret. (*Sine nomine*, Preface; my emphases)

Though truth has always been hated, it is now a capital crime. No doubt the hatred if truth has grown and flattery and falsehood now reign supreme because of the growing sins of mankind. [...] This idea led me some time ago to write the *Bucolicum carmen*, a kind of *cryptic poem*, which, though understood only by few, might possibly please many.<sup>120</sup>

Zacour’s translation catches the primary denotation of “genus ambigui,” yet there is a secondary sense contained within Petrarch’s definition of his pastoral poetics. While this passage attests to the fact that the *Bucolicum carmen* traffics in ambiguity, there is also the suggestion that it produces an ambiguity concerning its identity as a genre. This reading is particularly suggestive in light of the generic hybridity of the *Sine nomine* itself, which, as Marco Ariani has discussed, is “on the most inventive and experimental tangent of the Latin Petrarch” (188).<sup>121</sup>

My contention in this chapter is that the *Bucolicum carmen* resides alongside the *Sine nomine* on that inventive and experimental tangent. I will argue that Petrarch was not only indebted to Dante’s formulation of pastoral, but that he unpacked the implications of its generic hybridity and expanded them in scope, both theoretically and structurally. To do so, I will begin by examining the degree to which Petrarch’s pastoral poetics were informed by the epistolary context in which Dante’s were produced. As I will show, his pastoral production is framed by two encounters with Giovanni and Dante’s epistolary exchange—*Parthenias* (*Buc. carm.* 1) and *Familiares* 21.15—in which he covertly manipulates and strategically appropriates the perspectives of both interlocutors. The consequences of these appropriations are far-reaching both for literary histories of the post-classical pastoral and for analyses of Petrarch’s text. In terms of the history of the genre, they disprove the assessment that Dante’s eclogues were an isolated blip in that history, with little influence on the development of the genre, for they reveal that Petrarch’s pastoral was not an erasure of the model provided by Dante’s revival of the eclogue, but rather was formulated out of Dante’s dialogue with Giovanni. Despite Petrarch’s professed ignorance of the works of his troublingly illustrious predecessor and his attempts to exclude him from the pastoral canon, the *Bucolicum carmen* implicitly positions Dante’s pastoral

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<sup>120</sup> All citations of the *Sine Nomine* are from Ugo Dotti’s edition (Bari: Laterza, 1974), with translations from Paul Zacour’s *Petrarch’s Book Without a Name* (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2005).

<sup>121</sup> For the hybridity of genre in the *Sine nomine*, see Martinez 2009, esp. pp. 295-97. Martinez (296) also witnesses a double meaning in “genus ambigui,” but interprets its suggestion of generic hybridity in terms of the *Sine nomine*. I will show that this sense informs the *Bucolicum carmen* as well. In fact, there is reason to think that Petrarch’s experiments with genre in his pastoral collection helped him conceive of the hybridity of the slightly later epistolary collection.

experimentalism at the start of a literary genealogy precisely because of the degree to which the Giovanni-Dante macrotext informs both Petrarch's conception of the genre and the version of it that he passed on to subsequent generations of pastoral poets.

In regards to Petrarch's own pastoral production, the recognition of the Dantean context out of which Petrarch conceived of his pastoral poetics necessitates a drastic reappraisal of the *Bucolicum carmen*, which this chapter seeks to provide. I will argue that, by returning to and "answering" Giovanni's initial request for a Latin epic while simultaneously building upon, and attempting to efface, Dante's eclogiac response, Petrarch organized his collection in terms of a dialogue between his *Bucolicum carmen* and his *Africa*, and between pastoral and epic in general. This dialogue does not simply constitute one of the many instances in which the *Africa* found life in Petrarch's other works once the epic project itself had ceased.<sup>122</sup> Instead, Petrarch's representation of the *Africa* from within his pastoral fictions testifies to the metagenetic nature of pastoral and traces the double-move that derives from that nature. First, by examining through its own fictions the conditions—cultural, ideological, historical, and biographical—that both produced and prevented the completion of the *Africa*, the *Bucolicum carmen* testifies to pastoral's utility as a space of proto-literary criticism. Second, by internalizing many of the generic markers of epic, in particular the discourse of *translatio imperii*, the *Bucolicum carmen* tells its own "epic" story, related to but also distinct from the *Africa*, through which Petrarch reanimates and reshapes the pastoral macrotext. In short, in the first modern eclogue collection, Petrarch pastoralizes epic and, in the process, redraws the boundaries of pastoral.<sup>123</sup>

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Petrarch's fraught response to Dante's legacy is well known, and has been of singular importance to Petrarch studies both in terms of what Petrarch did inherit from his predecessor, despite his categorical statements to the contrary, and the strategies he used to hide the trace of that inheritance. Essential to these considerations is *Familiare* 21.15, whose importance as a document of Petrarch's self-fashioning in terms of and against Dante is widely known and extensively studied.<sup>124</sup> However, an important pastoral context for its composition and a pastoral aspect of its argumentation have not been adequately recognized, both of which shed light on the composition of Petrarch's *Bucolicum carmen*. In this letter, which Petrarch wrote "to" Boccaccio in 1359 after the latter visited him in Milan, the explicit aim is to dispel the claim that Petrarch envied Dante and to show in fact that he considered his predecessor to be worthy of praise.<sup>125</sup> The manner in which this "praise" is severely undercut by Petrarch's rhetorical

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<sup>122</sup> See Bernardo 1962, esp. chapters 4 and 5 for the many works in Petrarch's oeuvre that are informed by the *Africa* and the figure of Scipio.

<sup>123</sup> After the eclogue collections of ancient Rome—Vergil's ten, Calpurnius Siculus' seven; Nemesianus' four—there were two volumes of eclogues in the high Middle Ages: the ten of Metellus of Tergernsee (c. 1150-60) and the four of Martius Valerius (late twelfth century). For these collections, see Kegel-Brinkgreve 1990: 221-30. However, the Italian poets of the fourteenth-century eclogue revival were unaware of them.

<sup>124</sup> Bernardo 1955 was one of the first to extensively explore the negative image of Dante that results from Petrarch's "praise." For a useful discussion of the letter (and an extensive bibliography), see Feo's entry in the *Enciclopedia dantesca* (4:451, 457-58). Paolazzi 1983 provides an essential examination of the letter in terms of the Petrarch-Boccaccio relationship, outlining the circuit whereby 21.15 responds to and in turn informs Boccaccio's works on Dante.

<sup>125</sup> The letter was not actually sent to Boccaccio, at least not initially. However, it circulated widely enough for Boccaccio to learn of its existence, and he was forced to request a copy in 1367. See Boccaccio's *Epistle* 15, in which he makes his request. The letter's assessment of Dante is famously complicated by the fact that, though



strategies has been amply documented, yet critical attention has been focused on the manner in which Petrarch positions himself in regards to, and distances himself from, Dante the vernacular poet and vernacularity *tout court*. This focus is in part the consequence of two claims that Petrarch makes in the letter which are essential to his self-definition and which receive their fullest articulation here: first, that Dante's vernacular poetry had no influence over his own vernacular compositions because he did not read Dante until long after he had composed them; and, second, that he underwent a poetic conversion at a young age that led him away from these vernacular "trifles" to his true calling as a Latin poet. Yet there is a third narrative in *Familiare* 21.15 regarding the Latin poetry of *both* authors that has not received sufficient attention. Indeed, to these two dubious Petrarchan claims a third must be added: Dante's Latin texts were of no consequence to his own Latin production. While scholars have exposed the falsity of the first two claims, only recently has the third been seriously questioned.<sup>126</sup>

That there is a pressing need to examine the influence of the Latin Dante on the Latin Petrarch, particularly in terms of their mutual engagement with the eclogue, is made evident by the letter itself, whose rhetorical strategies provide a key to understanding the representational strategies used by Petrarch at the start of the *Bucolicum carmen*. There are three aspects of *Familiare* 21.15 that attest to the relevance of pastoral to the letter's manipulation of literary history: the context in which it was written, Petrarch's brief but categorical dismissal of Dante's Latin output, and the precise manner in which he articulates one of his principal critiques of Dante's vernacularity. Regarding the context in which the letter was written, scholarship has rightfully drawn attention to Boccaccio's visit to Petrarch's home in Milan during the early spring of 1359, which suggests that the letter was written in response not only to Boccaccio's written praise of Dante but also to discussions the two friends must have had concerning their predecessor during Boccaccio's stay.<sup>127</sup> Yet while speculation that Dante was central to their conversations is justified,<sup>128</sup> one subject that we are certain they discussed is pastoral, for while in Milan Boccaccio transcribed Petrarch's *Bucolicum carmen*.<sup>129</sup> The nearly simultaneous production of these two texts—the first full copy of Petrarch's collection that circulated; the fullest articulation of Petrarch's desire to be read entirely outside of Dante's large shadow—suggests an additional motivation for the writing of the letter, and for the letter's pervasive association of Dante with the vernacular: to safe-guard his collection from future recognition of its debt to its immediate precedent, Dante's Latin eclogues.

In this light, Petrarch's one reference to Dante's Latin output acquires a new weight. In a letter filled with damning praise, Petrarch's only overt critique of Dante is that his works in Latin

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Dante is the letter's central theme, he remains unnamed throughout. For the significance of this rhetorical strategy, see Mazzotta 2009a: 181-82.

<sup>126</sup> For a synthesis of these scholarly trends, see Ascoli 2009: 146, n. 3.

<sup>127</sup> Many scholars have considered Boccaccio's revision of *Ytalie iam certus honos* to have sparked Petrarch to write the epistle. Billanovich 1947: 238-39 suggested, and Paolazzi 1983, extensively argued that Boccaccio's *Trattatello in laude di Dante* was in fact the principal object to which Petrarch responded. See also Billanovich 213-14 for the vast cultural significance of this and other meetings between Petrarch and Boccaccio.

<sup>128</sup> See Dotti 2004: 331-32, who also provides evidence that the *Africa* and the on-going project of translating Homer were also discussed during the stay.

<sup>129</sup> Of course, this fact is well known, and plays an important part in accounts of the poem's early reception, since Boccaccio's manuscript was the first copy of the entire poem to circulate. See Mann 1977: 134. Yet these two major events of 1359 are rarely interpreted in terms of each other. That the *Bucolicum carmen* was one of their principal themes of their discussion is further suggested by the letter that Petrarch actually *did* send to Boccaccio after the latter's departure from Milan—*Fam.* 22.2—in which Petrarch requests that his friend make certain emendations to the *Bucolicum carmen* before allowing it to circulate.

were markedly inferior to his vernacular production, for he asserts: “fuisse illum sibi imparem, quod in vulgari eloquio quam carminibus aut prosa clarior atque altior assurgit” [“his style was unequal, for he rises to nobler and loftier heights in the vernacular than in Latin poetry or prose” (21.15, par. 24)]. There are two remarkable aspects to this assertion. First, it provides evidence that Petrarch read Dante’s eclogues, since they constitute the entire corpus of Dante’s Latin poetry;<sup>130</sup> and, second, he clearly wants his audience to believe that he was in no way affected by reading them. Since the letter has already subordinated the “heights” of Dante’s vernacular poetry to Petrarch’s truly noble and lofty Latin verse, Dante’s eclogues are doubly disavowed here. Moreover, by making Dante’s vernacular production the yardstick against which his Latin works are measured, Petrarch rhetorically insulates his own Latin poetry from contact with Dante’s.

In the face of this assertion, *Familiare* 21.15 makes clear just how attentively Petrarch studied the Giovanni-Dante exchange, for in his critique of Dante he relies extensively on the critique articulated by Giovanni forty years prior in *Pieridum vox alma* (Giovanni-Dante 1), the letter-poem that initiated their exchange. Petrarch’s virulent characterization of the *Commedia*’s audience as a vulgar herd throughout the letter affiliates his argument with Giovanni’s, who beseeches Dante to abjure the judgment of the masses [“nec vulgo iudice tolli” (1.34)]. Indeed scholars such as Ahern and Gilson have located Giovanni and Petrarch within the same elitist cultural *milieu*, a community that viewed the initial divulgation of the *Commedia* with suspicion.<sup>131</sup> However, their affiliation is not limited to a shared cultural perspective—there are concrete intertexts that attest to the direct influence of Giovanni’s letter on Petrarch’s. Revealingly, they begin to proliferate when Petrarch’s thoughts turn to poetic crowns. At the end of the letter’s second section, Petrarch assumes the mantle of judge of poetry—“Iam qui me aliis iudicandum dabam, nunc de aliis in silentio iudicans” [“I who once gave myself up to the judgment of others, now judge others in silence” (par. 13)]—and awards Dante “vulgaris eloquentie palmam” [“the palm for vernacular eloquence” (ibid.)]. With the first gesture Petrarch appropriates the position that Giovanni defined as his purview when he declares himself to be “censor liberrime vatium” [“the most free critic of bards” (Giovanni-Dante 1.19)], and with the second he revisits, and meaningfully diminishes, the prize that Giovanni as *censor* offered Dante: the laurel crown. Petrarch’s revision of the prize indicates one of principal reasons why he would have found Giovanni and Dante’s exchange at once troubling and stimulating because the two interlocutors offer rival assessments of the mechanism whereby the laurel crown is achieved. These assessments would have been of singular importance to a poet who was so greatly invested in his own laureation, and who, in the face of the historical record, staged that laureation as the first since Statius’.<sup>132</sup> Here Petrarch returns to Giovanni’s promise of the laurel

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<sup>130</sup> If the authenticity of the *Epistle to Cangrande* is accepted, Dante’s corpus of Latin poetry is augmented slightly by the Latin translation of *Commedia* verses in that letter.

<sup>131</sup> In his illuminating work on the early circulation of the *Commedia*, particularly in terms of the conflict between oral and literary cultures, Ahern 1997 and 2003 relies on Giovanni and Petrarch’s critiques of Dante for his portrait of how the oral circulation of the *Commedia* was viewed in learned circles. See also Gilson 2005: 32-40 for an excellent analysis of Petrarch’s letter, in which he suggests that “Petrarch is ... building upon the precedent of del Virgilio, in order to associate Dante’s vernacular poetry with popular culture and thereby divorce it from the aristocratic world of Latin verse” (36). However, though both critics provide an essential context for the reading of *Familiare* 21.15, neither suggests that there is a direct influence of Giovanni’s epistle on the specific rhetorical strategies used in Petrarch’s letter.

<sup>132</sup> For an examination of the *Coronation Oration*, and the importance of the event to Petrarch’s self-representation and self-promotion, see Wilkins 1951 and Looney 2009.

crown to Dante, but in so doing exorcises the threat that offer posed to his own cultural project by replacing the laurel crown with a prize of lesser value.

Once this exorcism has been effected, Petrarch begins to evoke Giovanni with greater frequency and progressive explicitness. Indeed the third section of the letter is closely modeled on the first thirteen verses of Giovanni's poem. Most strikingly, the three principal echoes of Giovanni's argument in *Familiars* 21.15 maintain the order they followed in the original. First, once Petrarch has placed himself in Giovanni's position as judge, he rehearses Giovanni's ambivalent assessment of Dante's poetic worth: "cum unus ego forte, melius quam multi ex his insulsis et immodicis laudatoribus, sciam quid id est eis ipsis incognitum quod illorum aures *mulcet*, sed obstructis ingenii tramitibus in animum non descendit" ["Perhaps I alone, more than many of these tasteless and immoderate admirers, know the nature of that unknown quality that charms their ears without penetrating their minds since the pathways of intelligence are closed to them" (par. 14; my emphases)]. Though the overt function of this nominal praise is to further dispel the assertion that Petrarch envies Dante, it is in fact the root of Giovanni's argument *against* Dante's vernacular poetry (Giovanni-Dante 1. 1-7). Giovanni had characterized Dante as "Pieridum vox alma, novis qui cantibus orbem / *mulces* letifluum" ["sacred voice of the [Muses] who with unwonted song *sweetens* the stagnant world" (1-2; my emphasis)], but lamented that such poetic value was wasted on the masses while learned scholars received nothing from his pen. Petrarch positions himself in the same privileged perspective and introduces the same instability to Dante's poetic project by constructing an impasse between Dante's poetic worth and his chosen audience. In each case, the implication is that the critic, because he is a learned scholar and in spite of his disdain for the vernacular, can individuate the sweetness produced by Dante's talent [Giovanni's "mulces" (verse 2); Petrarch's "mulcet" (par. 14)], while the audience for whom the *Commedia* is intended (i.e. the vulgar masses) cannot, yet this value is significantly curtailed precisely because the *Commedia* was not written for the critic (i.e. in Latin).<sup>133</sup>

Once Petrarch has followed Giovanni's example by cleaving Dante's poetic worth from the textual vehicle of that worth, Petrarch follows Giovanni again by turning next to the intellectual limitations of his audience (Giovanni-Dante 1.8-11; *Fam.* 21.15 par. 15). Petrarch asserts that, since even learned men of antiquity at times misapprehended the greatest of classical orators and poets, "quid in hoc nostro inter *ydiotas* in tabernis in foro posse putas accidere?" ["what can you expect to happen to our poet among the [*ignoramus*] in the taverns and the squares?" (par. 15; my emphasis)]. The lower-class associations of these urban spaces is consistent with Petrarch's anti-vernacular rhetoric throughout the poem and shows a certain debt to Giovanni's depiction of the vulgar masses and their haunts, but it is the lexical choice of *ydiotas* that reveals the del Virgilian pedigree of this moment. A word rarely used by Petrarch, its source is to be found in the centerpiece of Giovanni's critique of the *Commedia*: "Ante quidem cythara pandum delphyna movebis / Davus et ambigue Sphynchos problemata solvet / Tartareum preceps quam *gens ydiota* figuret / et secreta poli vix experata Platoni" ["Sooner shall you stir the curving dolphin with the harp, and Davus solve the riddles of equivocating Sphinx,

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<sup>133</sup> This critique is particularly negative in the case of Petrarch, for while Giovanni provides Dante with a solution which would reassert the stability of his poetic project (i.e. a future poem in Latin), Petrarch allows Dante no such escape, first and foremost because Dante is, of course, dead, but also precisely because he claims to hold Dante's Latin poetry in such disdain.

than that unlettered folk shall figure the precipice of Tartarus [i.e. *Inferno*] and secrets of the pole [i.e. *Paradiso*] scarce unsphered by Plato” (Giovanni-Dante 1.8-11; my emphasis).<sup>134</sup>

Giovanni followed his estimation of Dante’s intellectually bankrupt audience with an assertion that they deformed his work not only through misreading but also through their vulgar recitation of the *Commedia*, and it is with the same theme that Petrarch concludes this section of the letter. Here the del Virgilian intertext is hidden in plain sight behind an explicit citation of Vergil’s third eclogue, as Petrarch describes a singer “in *triviis* solitus ‘Stridenti miserum stipula disperdere carmen’” [“at the *street corner* usually ‘ruining [a] poor song with his screeching reed’” (par. 18; my emphasis)].<sup>135</sup> In light of the pastoral context that informs the composition of the epistle, Petrarch’s use of Vergil’s pastoral authority is striking by itself. Yet it is in fact a double citation, for the same verses were echoed by Giovanni in his critique of Dante at the end of his poem’s first section: “quae tamen in *triviis* nunquam digesta coaxat / comicomus nebulo qui Flaccum pelleret orbe” [“Yet these are the very themes [i.e. the *Commedia*’s representation of the afterlife] which are croaked forth, all undigested, at *street corners* by some buffoon with a comic actor’s shock of hair who would have driven Horace from the world” (Giovanni-Dante 1.12-13; my emphasis)].<sup>136</sup>

The significance of these echoes is manifold. They suggest that Giovanni may have been a privileged source of Petrarch’s cultural elitism in general.<sup>137</sup> Moreover, by symbolically appropriating the pen of one of Dante’s previous critics, Petrarch here makes explicit what is pervasive but covert elsewhere—*Familiare* 21.15 is a letter written against Dante’s poetry. In this regard, it is particularly suggestive that, between the second and third evocations of Giovanni, Petrarch briefly speculates that, if Dante were still alive, he would be Petrarch’s friend. Though this is in keeping with the letter’s professed intent to praise Dante and dispel reports of envy, its consequence is to insert Petrarch figurally into the same temporal horizon as Dante, inside of which fiction Petrarch is not writing *about* Dante but *to* him as a new Giovanni. By modeling himself on Giovanni, he roots his critique of Dante in the language of proto-humanism, and thus aligns himself with the Paduan circle of Lovato Lovati and Albertino Mussato in which Giovanni received his cultural formation.<sup>138</sup> At the same time, he significantly revises his model to definitively exclude Dante from that circle by eliminating the aspects of Giovanni’s letter that were most threatening to Petrarch’s self-fashioning. Giovanni’s letter was not only a critique of Dante’s vernacular poetry but also an invitation to Dante, both to visit Giovanni in Bologna and to join the circle of “nos pallentes” [“we pale [scholars]” (Giovanni-Dante 1.7)]. By reformulating this invitation into a definitive proclamation of Dante’s inescapable vernacularity, Petrarch emphasizes the aspects of Giovanni’s letter that were consonant with his own cultural project and his self-definition against Dante’s troubling legacy, while he simultaneously defuses

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<sup>134</sup> In fact, Petrarch’s use of “ydiota” here has a specific corollary in *Parthenias*. The word only appears three times in the 350 letters of the *Rerum familiarum libri*: once here and twice in letters Petrarch sent to his brother Gherardo, the first of which was sent in the company of, and as a commentary on, the *Bucolicum carmen*’s first eclogue. See *Familiare* 10.4, par. 28 and 18.5, par. 6.

<sup>135</sup> The Vergilian verses in question are *Bucolica* 3.26-27: “non tu in triviis, indocte, solebas / stridenti miserum stipula disperdere carmen?” (“Wasn’t it you, you dunce, that at the crossroads used to murder a sorry tune on a scranell straw?”). All Vergilian citations are from the Loeb edition of his works, edited and translated by H. Rusthon Fairclough (Cambridge MA, 1999).

<sup>136</sup> Like Giovanni, Petrarch links Vergil’s *triviis* to the lowbrow spaces of oral recitation, and specifically to the space of theater. Compare Giovanni’s “comicomus” (1.13) and Petrarch’s “theatris” (21.15, par. 17).

<sup>137</sup> See Witt 2000: 236-39 for the suggestion that Petrarch may have been aware of the Giovanni-Dante exchange at a very early stage of his career when he was a student at the University of Bologna, where Giovanni was a professor.

<sup>138</sup> For Giovanni’s cultural formation, see notes 32 through 34 in the first chapter.

the threat that Giovanni's invitation poses to the anti-Dantean arguments made elsewhere in *Familiares* 21.15.

Yet Petrarch's decision to write to Dante as a new Giovanni also has significant implications for the history of the fourteenth-century pastoral revival. To take up Giovanni's pen after Dante's death is to deny Dante a chance to respond, indeed to deny symbolically that he ever did respond, just as Petrarch explicitly denies the quality of that response when he dismisses Dante's Latin poetry. As Petrarch re-writes in miniature the text that precipitated the pastoral revival, he revises, indeed collapses, literary history by projecting himself into Giovanni's position within the Giovanni-Dante dialogue, at the same time that he silences Dante's half of that dialogue. Consequently, on the eve of the *Bucolicum carmen's* first circulation, *Familiares* 21.15 at once revisits the scene of pastoral's post-classical revival and dislocates Dante from his position as its architect. In short, Petrarch creates a representational vacuum both in the Giovanni-Dante exchange and in the revival itself.

It is of course Petrarch who fills this vacuum of his own making, for if in this letter he figures himself as writing "to" Dante, he also figures himself as responding "to" Giovanni. This is particularly evident in his double-citation of Vergil and Giovanni's "triviis." Most strikingly, whereas the other echoes of Giovanni served to criticize Dante, Petrarch refers the "triviis" to himself. After echoing Giovanni's condemnation of the base public that mangles Dante's poetry, he turns to a new crossroads where street performers mangle *Petrarchan* verse, and professes that the horror their distortions provoked in him was one of the principal motivations of his turn from the vernacular to Latin compositions.<sup>139</sup> By utilizing the terms of the critique that Giovanni leveled against Dante for his own autobiographical portrait, Petrarch generates the fiction that he heeded Giovanni's exhortation to turn from the vernacular to Latin, moreover that he did so without external counsel. When the wider context of Giovanni's critique is brought into focus here, this spontaneous conversion generates in turn one of the letter's most direct comparisons of Dante and Petrarch poetic careers—whereas Dante received a critique of his poetic production at the height of his artistic maturity and did nothing, Petrarch criticized his *own* poetic production at an early stage and effected change. It is a cunning move that at once restages and effaces Giovanni and Dante's entire exchange, for Petrarch models his poetic conversion on its terms and projects himself into both of the positions in their dialogue—at once the judge of poets (Giovanni) and the poet judged (Dante)—only to collapse them into his singular identity so as to assert that his actions have no model at all, since his change emanated from his own understanding of poetry.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Indeed he names this character singing at the crossroads "Dameta meus" ["my Dametas" (par. 18)], in reference to the Vergilian shepherd to whom the words were originally addressed. It is highly suggestive that Petrarch positions his Dametas not only at the crossroads but under porticos as well ["in porticibus" (ibid.)]. Though Petrarch stages this encounter in the present tense, these porticos seem colored by reminiscence, since they evoke the urban landscape of Bologna, the site of Giovanni's professorship and Petrarch's university study. If this is indeed a representation of Petrarch's student days in Bologna, it furthers the larger point of the passage—that Petrarch claims to have turned away from the vernacular at an early stage of his poetic career—but it also strengthens Witt's hypothesis that Petrarch encountered both Dante's text and Giovanni's teachings during his residence in Bologna.

<sup>140</sup> This sheds light on the full meaning of Petrarch's earlier statement regarding his relationship to the vocation of critic: "Iam qui me aliis iudicandum dabam, nunc de aliis in silentio iudicans" ["I who once gave myself up to the judgment of others, now judge others in silence" (par. 13)]. While he suggests that is a diachronic narrative, they are two vocations practiced simultaneously by Petrarch. Consequently, the statement is a preparation for the argument that follows, in which Petrarch appropriates the discursive space of both Giovanni and Dante.

In the process, Petrarch re-routes the circuits of recent literary history so as to redirect Giovanni's letter to himself, which has significant implications for where Petrarch wanted his *Bucolicum carmen* to be located in the history of the genre and how he wanted it to be understood. In regards to the former, by answering Giovanni anew, Petrarch attempts to replace Dante as the originator of the return to Vergil's *Bucolica*. In regards to the latter, by responding to Giovanni's request for a new Latin epic with a collection of Latin eclogues, Petrarch at once returns to Dante's suggestive and polemical substitution of pastoral for epic, and significantly expands its implications by composing a collection of twelve eclogues, the canonical number of epic.<sup>141</sup> That is, with the *Bucolicum carmen*, Petrarch symbolically collapses Giovanni's request and Dante's response into a work that is at once pastoral *and* epic.

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The same constellation of issues formulated (albeit with subterfuge) on the eve of the *Bucolicum carmen*'s circulation in *Familiares* 21.15 are evident approximately one decade prior in *Parthenias*, the eclogue with which Petrarch begins his pastoral collection, which similarly appropriates the dialogue between Giovanni and Dante and makes the link between Petrarch's pastoral and epic projects explicit. In regards to the former, recent scholarship has established that one of *Parthenias*' principal intertexts is the Giovanni-Dante exchange.<sup>142</sup> The event around which the eclogue is constructed is an invitation extended to the shepherd Silvius (i.e. Petrarch) by his brother Monicus (i.e. Petrarch's brother, Gherardo) to reside with him in the well-guarded leisure of his cavern.<sup>143</sup> Critics have rightly noted that the former's rejection of that invitation is modeled in part on Dante's rejection of Giovanni's invitation to visit Bologna, an intertext strengthened by their shared symbolic location: the *antrum*. Thus Silvius-Petrarch avoids his brother's cave as Tityrus-Dante had avoided the cave of Polyphemos. Petrarch's adoption of Dante's position of polite refusal is part of a strategy used to evade his predecessor's daunting influence, in part through the introduction of his own Polyphemos who, though explicitly a figure for the Carthaginian general Hannibal, is also a figure for Gherardo and, most importantly, Dante.<sup>144</sup> Consequently, as would later be the case in *Familiares* 21.15, Petrarch manipulates the Giovanni-Dante exchange so as to suppress Dante's influence over his own poetics.

Yet, as would later be the case in *Familiares* 21.15, Petrarch figurally inserts himself into both sides of that exchange, that is, he assumes the perspective of Giovanni as well. The first point of convergence is the section of the eclogue concerning Petrarch's turn from vernacular to Latin composition (*Buc. carm.* 1.16-30). This autobiographical portrait dramatizes the main

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<sup>141</sup> Critics who have rightfully noted that the number of collected eclogues suggests a certain affiliation with epic, but the implications of Petrarch's structural choice have not been examined fully. See Kegel-Brinkgreve 1990: 266; Ascoli 2009: 136-37; and Carrai 2009: 167.

<sup>142</sup> See note 109 above.

<sup>143</sup> The cavern in question is the Charterhouse of Montrieux, where Gherardo resided and which Petrarch visited in 1347, around the time of this eclogue's composition.

<sup>144</sup> This is the principal thrust of the interpretation of Ascoli 2009, to which I am indebted in many regards, in particular for the compelling case he makes that Dante was squarely within Petrarch's sights when he wrote *Parthenias*. Alongside this influence, there are two main distinctions between our approaches. First, as I have already begun to address in my interpretation of *Familiares* 21.15, my contention is that Petrarch's dialogue with the Giovanni-Dante correspondence is not limited to the first eclogue of the *Bucolicum carmen* but rather subtends the entire collection. Second, while Ascoli asserts that "Petrarch in *Parthenias* dramatizes an unresolved struggle between the two genres [i.e. pastoral and epic]" (137), I will show that the *Bucolicum carmen* is structured around a hybridizing synthesis of the two.

argument of Giovanni's first letter, that is, Dante should not squander his talents in works for the masses. Moreover, it anticipates the portrait Petrarch articulates a decade later in his epistle to Boccaccio: Petrarch's literary conversion came early and was not provoked by the critique of a contemporary but rather through his own developing poetics, in this case born out of his reading of classical poets.

When Silvius defends the validity of those poets against Monicus' advocacy of Christian poetics, Petrarch's adoption of Giovanni's perspective becomes more concrete. Silvius acknowledges his awareness of the psalms of David admired by his brother, but attests to his preference for the classical poets who sang of great matters: "Hi Romam Troiamque canunt et prelia regum, / quid dolor et quid amor possit, quidve impetus ire, / qui fluctus ventosque regat, qui spiritus astra" ("My masters sing of great Rome and of Troy and of kings locked in combat, telling of love and its powers, the effects of grief and of anger, who governs the flood and the winds, what spirit rules the high heavens" (75-77). As Silvius proceeds to enumerate the reigning gods of classical mythology, his description begins and ends with echoes of Giovanni's first letter. He turns first to the divine brothers among whom the various realms were divided, that is, Jupiter, Neptune and Hades: "Necnon et *triplicis sortitos* numina regni / Expingunt totidem, varia sed imagine, fratres" ["Under designs ever varied they [i.e. Homer and Vergil] paint for us the great brothers, given by lot to share dominion over the three kingdoms" (78-79; my emphasis)]. His description of these three kingdoms given by lot to the divine brothers echoes Giovanni's description of Dante's *Commedia*:<sup>145</sup>

Pieridum vox alma, novis qui *cantibus orbem*  
mulces letifluum, vitali tollere ramo  
dum cupis evolvens *triplicis* confinia *sortis*  
indita pro meritis animarum, sontibus Orcum,  
astripetis Lethen, epiphoebia regna beatis. (Giovanni-Dante 1.1-5; my emphases)

Sacred voice of the Pierides who with unwonted songs doth sweeten the stagnant world, as with life-giving branch thou longest to upraise it, unfolding the regions of threefold fate assigned according to deserts of the souls, Orcus to the guilty, Lethe to them that seek the stars, the realms above the sun to the blest.

Here Giovanni transposes into classical terms the thematic scope of Dante's vernacular poem. While Petrarch cites this description, he severs it from Dante's representation of the afterlife and returns it to the divisions of the universe in classical cosmography. Then at the end of Silvius' discussion of Homer and Vergil, Petrarch again cites Giovanni: "totum altisonis illustrant versibus orbem" (*Buc. carm.* 1.90). Petrarch's "versibus orbem" calques Giovanni's "cantibus orbem", and it may also generate a structural parallel between Silvius' speech and the entire first section of Giovanni's letter, which not only began but also ended with a reference to *orbe*.<sup>146</sup> In this regard, it is suggestive that the length of the passage from Silvius' first and second echo of Giovanni's letter (verses 78 and 90 respectively) is the same as that of the first section of that letter: thirteen verses. Moreover, there is an additional calque of Giovanni in verse 90 of *Parthenias*, for if "versibus orbem" echoes Giovanni's description of Dante's

<sup>145</sup> Feo 1988: 70 also suggests that there is a parallel between Giovanni and Petrarch's triads. I aim to show that Petrarch's appropriation is in fact both more systematic and strategically motivated.

<sup>146</sup> See Giovanni-Dante 1.12-13, quoted above.

vernacular song, “altisonis...versibus” echoes the Latin song that Giovanni desired from Dante. Giovanni urges Dante to turn from the vernacular to Latin with the following verses:

Nec margaritas profliga prodigus apris  
nec preme castalias indigna veste sorores;  
at precor ora cie quae te distinguere possint,  
*carmine vatisono* sorti communis utrique. (Giovanni-Dante 1.21-24)

Cast not in prodigality thy pearls before the swine, nor load the Castalian sisters [i.e. the Muses] with a garb unworthy of them; but I pray thee summon utterance which may out-single thee, with bard-like song common to either lot.

Petrarch’s simultaneous invocation and alteration of the “*carmine vatisono*” to which Giovanni wishes Dante to turn his attention has a number of implications. First, it is representative of Petrarch’s desire to appropriate the positions of both interlocutors in the Giovanni-Dante exchange which, as would be the case in *Familiare* 21.15, is indicative of his attempt to subsume the macrotext that led to the post-classical revival of pastoral so as to place himself in the inaugural position. This may help explain why Petrarch, who in general assiduously avoided explicit echoes of Vergil’s *Bucolica* in his *Bucolicum carmen*, begins his first eclogue with an echo of Vergil’s first, as Silvius approximates the condition of Meliboeus and Monicus that of Tityrus.<sup>147</sup> In so doing, Petrarch stages *Parthenias* as a return to the origins of the genre, sidestepping Dante’s decision to figure himself as Tityrus in his exchange with Giovanni. Second, the shift from “*carmine vatisono*” to “altisonis...versibus” furthers the citational strategy evident in Petrarch’s adaptation of Giovanni’s “triplicis sortis”—he invokes Giovanni’s description and praise of Dante, as well as the poetic conversion that Giovanni wishes to see in Dante, but systematically purges Dante from his citations. On the one hand, this furthers his attempt to suppress Dante’s presence in the Giovanni-Dante exchange. On the other, the shift from a vatic song to a lofty one is an implicit continuation of Petrarch’s critique of both Giovanni’s conception of Dante as *poeta-theologus* and Dante’s self-conception as *scriba Dei*, which Ascoli has shown to be central to this eclogue’s meaning.<sup>148</sup>

Finally, Petrarch focuses attention on the request that sparked the Giovanni-Dante exchange: Giovanni’s desire for a new Latin epic on contemporary events. Through his citations of Giovanni’s letter and his representation of Gherardo as a Giovanni-surrogate who both invites him into his *antrum* and beseeches him to change his style, Petrarch suggests here in *Parthenias*, as he later would in *Familiare* 21.15, that he conceived of his *Bucolicum carmen* as a symbolic response to Giovanni’s request for a new Latin epic. That the *Bucolicum carmen* should be understood in some sense as epic-like is first suggested, as I have already noted, by the length of the collection—twelve eclogues—which affiliates it not with the conventional dimensions of a pastoral macrotext—the ten eclogues of Vergil’s *Bucolica*—but rather that of an epic poem—the twelve books of Vergil’s *Aeneid*. The degree to which we should take this structural choice

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<sup>147</sup> Petrarch articulates his theory of imitation, and his aversion to transparent allusions, in a letter to Boccaccio (*Fam.* 22.2), in which his articulation of the theory is spurred by a few verses of the tenth eclogue which Petrarch felt too closely resembled their sources, and which he requested Boccaccio to amend before allowing the collection to circulate. For a discussion of the letter and the changes, see Guglielminetti 1991: 11-14. For the link between Vergil 1 and Petrarch 1, see Kegel-Brinkgreve 1990: 248; and Hubbard 1998: 227-28.

<sup>148</sup> See Ascoli 2009, esp. 119 and 135.



seriously is indicated by that fact that Petrarch would generate a similarly fertile tension between the generic identity of constituent microtexts and the macrotext that binds them in the *Familiares*, his collection of epistles which, like Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, is divided into twenty-four books.<sup>149</sup> Moreover, in Silvius and Monicus' debate concerning classical and Christian poetry, one of the principal themes is epic poetry, introduced both by the arrival of Vergil and Homer as characters in Petrarch's fictional autobiographical portrait and by Silvius' reference to the epic poem that has previously occupied him and which he hopes to finish, that is, the *Africa* (*Buc. carm.* 1.121-22). Indeed, though *Parthenias* serves as the point of entry into Petrarch's pastoral discourse, it could serve equally well as a versified and dialogized preface to his epic work.

In light of the doubts raised by critics concerning the "pastoralness" of the *Bucolicum carmen*, it can rightfully be asked whether or not *Parthenias*' focus on epic matters displaces and subordinates pastoral poetics. Yet the eclogue consistently mediates between the two genres, which is evident in both the treatment of epic poets as characters in the first half of the eclogue and the representation of the *Africa* in the eclogue's final section. The former is structured according to the pastoral trope of poetic investiture, whereby an older shepherd bequeaths his pipes to a young practitioner,<sup>150</sup> while the second is structured according to the pastoral trope of pathetic fallacy. In the case of the former, Silvius' encounters with the two poets creates an imaginative, synchronic literary genealogy that at once acknowledges his debt to his predecessors but also places him in direct contact with them. Though this genealogy is explicitly one concerning epic poetry, the mechanism whereby Petrarch generates the fiction of a direct poetic investiture within a collapsed temporal horizon is a pastoral one. In fact, it is this aspect of pastoral that Giuseppe Velli takes to be constitutive of the genre.<sup>151</sup> Though Petrarch's use is

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<sup>149</sup> Indeed, Mazzotta 2009b considers the *Rerum familiarum libri* to be "an epistolary epic" (310). It is striking that Petrarch made the decision to order his epistles into twenty-four books in 1359. Mazzotta notes that his original plan consisted of twelve books of letters, but after he received Leontio Pilato's partial translation of the *Odyssey* in 1359, he decided to expand it so that its dimensions coincided with the Homeric text. (Pertusi 1964: 9-10 and 224-38; and Dotti 2004: 328 argue that the partial translation in question was in fact of the first five books of the *Iliad* with an accompanying essay by Leontio.) On the one hand, the fact that, from the late 1340s through the late 1350s, Petrarch conceived of both the *Bucolicum carmen* and the *Familiares* as twelve-book macrotexts is further evidence that the representational link between eclogue and epistle established by Dante was not severed by Petrarch. On the other hand, as I discussed above, 1359 is also the year of Boccaccio's visit to Petrarch in Milan and the first circulation of the *Bucolicum carmen*. The coincidence of the circulation of the pastoral macrotext and the re-conception of the epistolary one suggests that they may have had complementary positions in Petrarch's imagination, with the former a symbolic stand-in for Vergilian epic and the latter for Homeric.

<sup>150</sup> Petrarch utilizes this trope explicitly in the fourth eclogue, *Daedalus*, whose theme is the titular character's gift of a lyre to Tyrrhenus (i.e. Petrarch), but as we shall see, it also informs Silvius' encounter with his predecessors in *Parthenias*. One of the Vergilian sources for the trope is *Bucolica* 2.36-39. For an insightful interpretation of *Daedalus* in nationalistic terms, see Kennedy 2003: 35.

<sup>151</sup> See Velli 1992, esp. p. 71: "If Dante (and Giovanni) refer to Vergil, and Vergil to Theocritus, the pastoral word and form an ensured vitality by tradition. Their meaning derives from the vitality of other words now unchangeable and exemplary. To go back to Vergil means to enter the vital circler of that tradition, to possess that model which above all others has proved fertile." It is indicative of the critical reluctance to move past Petrarch's pastoral allegories that Velli does not recognize Petrarch's participation in this pastoral tradition of diegetically presenting literary genealogies. Indeed he, like Cooper, considers his pastoral poetry to be "a step back" (73). Yet I would contend that Sannazaro's famous pastoral genealogy in the tenth prose section of *Arcadia*, which represents a direct line of descent through Pan, Theocritus, and Vergil to the present (and is the centerpiece of Velli's argument), more closely resembles that of *Parthenias* than previous examples in the genre, in that both compress the vast scale of literary history into a single geographical location. This contention is strengthened by the fact that Petrarch, figured as Silvio, then appears as one of Sannazaro's competitors in *Arcadia* 11.

innovative, it places him in a pastoral tradition of representing imagined communities of poets, which ranges from Vergil to Sannazaro.

Evident in Petrarch's adaptation of pastoral genealogies to include epic poets is the tendency of pastoral to move from the metapoetic to the metageneric. In the case of the former, the fictional community of shepherds lends itself to the formulation of an imagined community of actual poets, as contemporary practitioners of the genre speak of, or directly to, their forbears. In the case of the latter, by expanding the range of that metapoetic dialogue from the conventional set of pastoral interlocutors to include the epic poets Homer and Vergil, Petrarch moves outward from an endogenous community of pastoral poets to a metageneric network of poets across the range of literary production, through which he examines the epic tradition from within the space of pastoral.

This examination receives a specific point of reference when Silvius' attention turns to the *Africa*, and indeed this eclogue and those that follow it in the collection act as a revealing figural commentary on Petrarch's unfinished epic, as I will soon discuss. Yet it is important to recognize that this turn to the *Africa* is represented not as a rejection but rather an extension of pastoral poetics. Earlier in the eclogue, Silvius describes in pastoral terms how Vergil and Homer inspired him and altered his poetic process:

Verum ubi iam videor, collectis viribus, olim  
posse aliquid, soleo de vertice montis ad imas  
ferre gradum valles; ibi fons michi sepe canenti  
*plaudit*, et arentes *respondent* undique cautes. (1.32-35; my emphases)

Some days, when I have summoned my strength and feel I am ready, down from the loftiest summit I make my way to the valley's depths, where a gushing spring will often *applaud* my singing, where from all sides the arid rocks seem *to echo in answer*.

Here Petrarch generates the fiction of perfect correspondence between song and setting that is characteristic of the pathetic fallacy, by figuring the inanimate landscape as an ideal and active recipient of the singing shepherd's outpourings. Though the explicit effect of the pathetic fallacy is to generate the serene unity of pastoral space, in which the landscape nourishes not only the shepherd's life but also his song, Petrarch intuited that it is also an incisive representation of the circuit of literary production, for it maps at once the inspiration, composition and reception of poetry. Petrarch makes manifest this aspect of the pathetic fallacy in his gloss on these verses in *Familiares* 10.4, in which he informs his brother that "fons qui canenti plaudit, est studiosorum chorus; arentes cautes ydiotes, in quibus, quasi echo in cautibus, nude vocis est usus et consonans sine discretione responsio" ["the spring that applauds the singer is the chorus of scholars, while the arid rocks are ignoramuses on whom, as an echo among rocks, the word resounds emptily without meaning" (par. 28)]. Later in the eclogue, as Silvius describes the theme of his epic project to his brother, he imagines the great deeds of Scipio Africanus in Africa, to which all Italians respond in salute from their shores: "Hunc simul Italidesque nurus, puerique, senesque / attoniti adverso certatim a litore laudant" ["He it is that all Italy hails; young and old and women and children vie in applause and cheer him from the great sea's opposite shoreline" (*Buc. carm.* 1.18-19)]. If the first scene concerns the initial response of a small audience to Petrarch's poetry after he directed his attention to his two epic

models, the second concerns the universal fame that Petrarch hopes to achieve upon the completion of that project. Though the extension of the space circumscribed by the pathetic fallacy from an enclosed valley to the entire Mediterranean is both audacious and theoretically charged, the parallel that Petrarch establishes between the two celebratory landscapes once again mediates between pastoral and epic horizons.

By suggesting that his Latin eclogues are a symbolic answer to Giovanni's request for a new Latin epic and by mediating between pastoral and epic, Petrarch betrays a debt to Dante. Indeed, despite his attempts to efface Dante's role in the recent revival of pastoral poetry and to fashion himself as Giovanni's ideal interlocutor, his first eclogue is informed by Dante's response to Giovanni. In the previous chapter, I discussed the significance of Dante's decision to satisfy partially Giovanni's request for a new Latin epic by responding strategically with a work in Latin but not in the high style and how Dante thereby availed himself of the logic of *recusatio* to upend Giovanni's rigid literary hierarchies and to structure pastoral as a generically hybrid space. At the same time, Dante also profoundly altered the circuit which *recusatio* establishes between poet and judge. If the conventional structure of this circuit is to encourage the recipient to preemptively judge the poet in a favorable light because of a work that he promises to *start* at some indefinite point in the future, Dante establishes a situation in which the poet will confer that judgment upon himself through the *completion* of the work that already occupies him. It is this version of self-directed *recusatio* that Petrarch adopts—by referring to an unfinished epic work from within the space of pastoral, he is following Dante's representation of the soon-to-be-finished *Paradiso* in his first eclogue. The distinction is made evident by a comparison to a more conventional use of *recusatio* at the beginning of the *Africa*, when he encourages King Robert of Naples, to whom the poem was dedicated, to view the poem favorably by promising him that someday he will compose a work concerning Robert's great deeds (*Africa* 1.38-45). In *Parthenias*, by contrast, it is not a hypothetical future work but rather a return to and completion of the *Africa* itself that will elevate Petrarch to the status of a modern Homer and Vergil.<sup>152</sup>

The insertion of *Parthenias* into the compositional history of the *Africa* accomplished within the eclogue is doubled by the eclogue's accompanying letter, in which Petrarch openly states that the composition of the *Bucolicum carmen* displaced his work on the *Africa*. He describes the agitated state in which he found himself when, in the summer of 1346, he began writing his eclogues:

Illic ergo tunc eram eo animo qui, sicut sub tanta rerum mole *magnum* aliquid aggredi non auderet, sic omnino nichil agere nesciret, ab infantia mea bono utinam, sed certe in actu perpetuo enutritus. Media via igitur electa est, *ut maioribus dilatis, aliquid pro solatio illius temporis meditarer*. Ipse autem loci habitus et recessus nemorum, quo me sepe curis gravidum lux oriens urgebat et unde me sola nox rediens pellebat, ut Silvestre aliquid canerem suasere. Quod ergo pridem in animo habueram, bucolicum carmen XII eglogis distinctum, scribere orsus, *incredibile est quam paucis diebus absolverim*; tantum ingenio locus calcar addiderat. (*Fam.* 10.4, pars. 10-11; my emphases).

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<sup>152</sup> If *recusatio* in the form of a substitution of the *Bucolicum carmen* for the *Africa* is relevant here near the beginning of the former's composition, the situation would return a decade later in a particularly vivid, staged form when the collection first circulated. During Boccaccio's stay with Petrarch in 1359, he requested the *Africa*; Petrarch refused and gave him the *Bucolicum carmen* in its stead. See Wilkins 1961: 163; and Dotti 2004: 331-32.

While not daring to undertake anything *major* because of my countless pressing matters, I nevertheless was incapable of doing absolutely nothing, since from my childhood I was constantly taught to do something, if not always something good. Thus I chose a middle course, *though delaying greater projects, I got involved in something to while away the time*. The very nature of the region with its wooded groves, where the rising sun often drove me weighted with my cares and whence only the coming of night recalled me, persuaded me to sing something pastoral. I thus began to write what had been in my mind for some time—a bucolic poem divided into twelve eclogues. *It is incredible how swiftly it was completed*, so much did the atmosphere of the place stimulate my inspiration.

Petrarch's account of the *Bucolicum carmen*'s inception seems to amount to a form of *recusatio* in reverse: he delays the completion of the loftier work, and replaces it with humbler one, whose subordination is stressed by the fact that he does not consider it to be "maioribus," that it serves as a pastime, and was completed at great speed.<sup>153</sup> Of particular interest to the present issue is his depiction of it as a pastime, for in addition to attributing a certain sense of frivolity to the pastoral project (if only for rhetorical effect), it represents its veritable function to be that of a *temporal placeholder*. The narrative of a stylistic shift is also important, for it has a striking parallel in the Giovanni-Dante exchange, that is, when Giovanni narrates his decision to change his song from the high style of his first letter to the humble style of Dante's eclogic response. After avowing his desire to let Dante hear him sing in the same pastoral vein, he describes the shift in the following fashion: "Nec mora deponis calamis *majoribus* inter / arripio tenues et labris flantibus hisco" ("And without more delay, casting the *greater* reeds aside, I seize the slender ones and part my lips to blow" (Giovanni-Dante 3.31-32; my emphasis)].

It would appear that with this account of the *Bucolicum carmen*'s composition, Petrarch is not mediating between epic and pastoral, but rather is attesting to their categorical difference, like Giovanni before him. However, as I have already argued in regards to Petrarch's recasting of pastoral tropes to act toward epic ends, *Parthenias* suggests that the *Bucolicum carmen* takes the place of the *Africa* not only in the sense of interrupting its composition but also of resembling it and appropriating the markers of its generic identity. Once again, Dante's use of *recusatio* is relevant, for if his first eclogue only satisfied Giovanni's request partially by giving him a Latin work but denying him an epic one, he recuperated epic through the generic hybridity of his second eclogue. One of the central figures for this hybridity was his Polyphemus, who appears in *Parthenias* as well as a figure for Scipio's foe, Hannibal. I fully concur with Ascoli that Petrarch's Polyphemus is a negative figuration of both Gherardo and Dante, yet the reappearance of the character here also figures a continuation and an unpacking of the generic hybridity initiated by Dante.<sup>154</sup> Indeed, Petrarch extends the contamination of genres through a chiasmic inversion of Polyphemus' generic status in the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*. There the shepherding Cyclops was a pastoral character in an epic poem; here in *Parthenias*, he becomes an epic character (i.e. Hannibal) in an eclogue.

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<sup>153</sup> Once again, the actual composition history shows that the completion was hardly swift, as the text occupied Petrarch's attention to varying degrees for two decades. See note 114 above.

<sup>154</sup> The fact that Petrarch evokes events, turns of phrase, and characters from across the constituent parts of the Giovanni-Dante macrotext is an additional indication that Petrarch is attempting here to collapse and internalize their entire exchange.

Moreover, in a later letter sent to Boccaccio (*Seniles* 2.1), Petrarch revisits the *recusatio* question in a manner that suggests that the boundary between the two genres is not nearly as neat as he suggest in *Familiares* 10.4. Written in 1363, the letter addresses a variety of critiques to which Petrarch had been subjected, and is framed by a reference to the *Africa* early in the letter and the *Bucolicum carmen* at its end. One of the first examples of the criticism that he has received concerns the few episodes of the *Africa* that circulated in his lifetime. Of particular relevance here is the vignette with which he prefaces his account of that circulation: following the death of Robert, he was sent to Naples where his friend Barbato da Sulmona persistently asked to see “Africa mea que, tunc iuvenis notior iam famosiorque quam vellem, curis postea multis et gravibus pressa consenuit” [“my *Africa*, which, though new at the time, was already better known and more famous than I wished, but later waned under the weight of many grave preoccupations” (*Sen.* 2.1, par. 7)]. Though Petrarch tries to resist his friend’s requests, he eventually cedes and gives him thirty-four verses on the condition that he not allow them to circulate. The principal focus of the story is the reproof that Petrarch then received when Barbato allowed them to circulate, and thus he turns quickly to one of his abiding themes: the chorus of critics who persecuted him throughout his life. Yet through the invocation of the death of the *Africa*’s dedicatee, thereby reiterating that the loss of his patron was a major obstacle to the poem’s completion, the *Africa* casts a shadow over the rest of the letter.

Into this space characterized by absence of a materialized *Africa*, Petrarch inserts the *Bucolicum carmen*, which becomes the focus of the final critique that he refutes. He states: “altior in Bucolicis, ut aiunt, stilus es meus quam pastorii carminis poscat humilitas” [“many say my style is more lofty in the *Bucolics* than the humbleness of a pastoral poem requires” (par. 80)]. He proceeds to acknowledge the divisions between humble, middle, and lofty styles, and that violating these divisions is subject to blame. Yet he concludes with a surprisingly modern articulation of genre theory that approaches Claudio Guillén’s assertion that the identity of a genre is constructed through reference to other genres within a system of literature.<sup>155</sup>

Ceterum comparative magis quam simpliciter altum aliquid inumque vel medium dici solet. [...] Poema ego illud iuvenis scripsi, “audaxque iuventa” ut de suis Bucolicis ait Maro. Videbar inde aliquid scriptures, iamque inceperam, quod sperabam—nec despero—altum adeo evasurum ut aliud sibi adiunctum humilie satis ostenderet ac depressum. [...] Apud me quidem, illo in carmine, nichil est altius quam deceat aut quam velim. (pars. 81-84)

Usually, however, something is said to be lofty or lowly or medium by comparison, rather than in an unqualified sense...I wrote that poem as a youth, and with youthful daring, as Maro says about his *Bucolics*; I thought I was then on the verge of writing something else, and had already begun what I hoped, and still hope, will turn out so lofty that it will make anything else look lowly and base next to it. [...] To me nothing in [the *Bucolicum carmen*] is loftier than is proper or than I wish.<sup>156</sup>

<sup>155</sup> See Guillén 1971: 107-34.

<sup>156</sup> The extent to which the Giovanni-Dante exchange was embedded within Petrarch’s conception of pastoral poetics is suggested once again by the fact that, immediately after his defense of the *Bucolicum carmen*, he describes his detractors as “in angulis inter mulierculas ac fullones vulgaria eructare problemata” [“belching forth their

Here the *Bucolicum carmen* occupies the same temporal position in the arc of Petrarch's career, located between the past and present tenses of Petrarch's desire to finish his epic. Yet it is no longer figured as a pastime or negatively contrasted with a major poetic endeavor, but instead is associated now (albeit provisionally) with a lofty style. This self-assessment, echoed by Boccaccio in his description of Petrarchan pastoral in his letter to Fra Martino da Signa,<sup>157</sup> has been taken by many scholars to be an indication of how far Petrarch's pastoral style diverged from convention,<sup>158</sup> or how, in Cooper's openly negative assessment, in the hands of Petrarch, "pastoral becomes almost indistinguishable from the heroic" (1977: 37). I contend that such assessments miss the larger theoretical point that Petrarch is trying to articulate here. It is not that pastoral becomes almost indistinguishable from, or rather loses itself in, the heroic, for even if the *Bucolicum carmen* introduces a variety of styles and plays with a wide set of generic expectations (*including* the heroic, yes, but also tragedy, comedy, and the georgic), it is still consistently and meaningfully informed by the pastoral tradition, as is evident in Petrarch's use of its central tropes. Rather, Petrarch positions pastoral in a dialogue with the heroic, in which the former remains distinct from but also examines and even assimilates the latter.

And it is through pastoral's possible assimilation of epic that Petrarch takes *recusatio* to its most experimental extreme. *Seniles* 2.1 maintains the conventional logic of *recusatio* by figuring the *Bucolicum carmen* as a placeholder in time, offering the author's audience temporary satisfaction until the promised work is complete, yet it also radically extends the implications of the generic hybridity produced by *recusatio* as it "in some senses delivers what it refuses" (Hubbard 1998: 224), for here pastoral serves not only as a placeholder for the epic work but comes to resemble it as a surrogate for that work's generic identity. That is, according to this narrative, as work on the *Africa* slowed, the *Bucolicum carmen* not only came to occupy the place of the *Africa* in terms of Petrarch's attention, but in a certain symbolic sense *became* it until the primary epic project could be completed, retroactively "revealing" the high style of Petrarchan pastoral to be humble. This narrative is particularly striking because, by 1363, Petrarch's interest in the composition of the *Africa* had been cool for over a decade, even if his interest in promoting the idea of it was still alive. Consequently he may have already recognized that the poem that he had hoped would "turn out so lofty" would in fact never be complete and, consequently, would never fully displace the *Bucolicum carmen* from its position in his oeuvre. Thus, though he maintains a subordinate position for pastoral in regard to epic, he attributes to it a generic elasticity so that it can move from a low style to a high one. Through this transgression of generic boundaries and through Petrarch's radical extension of the logic of *recusatio*, the *Bucolicum carmen* pastoralizes epic.

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The extent to which Petrarch's Latin eclogue collection pastoralizes his Latin epic is not limited to its overt references to the *Africa* and its characters.<sup>159</sup> Indeed, another strategy

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puzzles in the vernacular at street corners among silly women and fullers" (par. 85)], which echoes both Giovanni's first epistle and Petrarch's *Familiars* 21.15.

<sup>157</sup> For the historical context and significance of this letter, see note 226 in chapter 3.

<sup>158</sup> For the interpretation of Petrarch and Boccaccio's pastoral poetics in terms of this letter, see Paoletti 1974: 71-72; Kegel-Brinkgreve 1990: 274-75; and Carrai 2009: 176-77.

<sup>159</sup> In addition to *Parthenias*, references to Scipio Africanus and/or Ennius' poem of his African campaign are found at eclogues 3.152-55 and 10.172-83.

whereby the *Bucolicum carmen* “takes the place of” the *Africa* is through the direct citation and restaging of it, which is particularly extensive in the first three eclogues. In *Parthenias*, the scene of a victorious Scipio saluted from the other side of the Mediterranean may be a compressed structural echo of the entirety of *Africa*, book 8 which “pans” back and forth between the North African coast and Rome. Regardless, the following eclogue, *Argus*, contains clear echoes of the *Africa*’s final book. The two are generally affiliated by theme, since both concern the death of King Robert, yet the calques are precise enough to suggest that Petrarch is rewriting the epic text from within the space of pastoral. Moreover, though *Argus* splits the laments of Robert’s death and the celebration of his life between two shepherds, its echoes of the *Africa* are only articulated by one of them, Silvius, a figure for Petrarch through whom he recuperates the voice of his earlier self-representation as epic narrator. The first convergence is in the description of Robert’s ascent to heaven. In the *Africa*, the poet describes his apotheosis in the following fashion:

Iam repetens, terrasque retro despectat inertes;  
 Sceptra caduca fugit, mortals negligit actus.  
 Ille tamen, quamquam regni diadema relict  
 Rideat et curas veteres, nimiosque labores  
 Erroresque hominem solio miseratus ab alto. (9.434-38)

His soul returning Heavenward looks down with scorn upon the inert earth below,  
 bidding farewell to transitory crowns and hold mortal deeds of small account.

In *Argus*, Silvius’ account follows the same ascending trajectory and palinodic gaze: “Illinc de vertice summo / despicit et nostras curas nostrosque tumultus, / Regnateque videt quanta est angustia silve” [“And thence, from his peak high above us, casting his glance far below, he observes our cares and our troubles, marking how small the woodland now seems that once he reigned over” (2.17-19)]. The manner in which the epic narrator and the shepherd reckon with the life that lies ahead after Robert’s death is also closely related. In the *Africa*, the narrator proclaims, “Utendum sorte est et sidera nostra sequenda, / Qua ducunt, ne forte trahant” [“We must accept our lot and follow on / whither our stars will lead us” (9.450-51)]. This statement is echoed twice by the shepherd: “Sed ferre necesse est” [“It was fated and we must endure it” (2.53)]; and, especially, “Extorque lacrimas; nec iam michi vivere dulce est / post Argum. Sed vivaci parebimus astro” [“Tears, bitter tears you draw forth. For my part, life is no longer sweet without Argus. However, we’ll obey as our star disposes” (2.103-04)].

While *Argus* restages the poet’s expression of grief following the death of Robert at the end of the *Africa*, the next eclogue, *Amor pastorius* (“The Amorous Shepherd”), contains a sequence of echoes of the epic’s penultimate section, which recounts Scipio’s triumphant return to Rome. The eclogue is a dialogue between the shepherd Stupeus, another figure for Petrarch, and the nymph Daphne, who in part represents Laura but is principally a figure for poetry in general. The majority of the poem is structured around Daphne’s diffident questioning of Stupeus’ merits, yet once he has convinced her of his love of the Muses, and their love of him, she rewards him by leading him up a hill. The hill in question is the Capitoline in Rome, and after Daphne describes the “pastores . . . victricia” [“the victorious shepherds” (3.131)] who once hastened up its slopes, (i.e. the Roman generals and poets who once were crowned on its summit), she fashions a laurel crown for Stupeus. Clearly the scene is a fictional reenactment of

Petrarch's actual coronation on the Capitoline in 1341,<sup>160</sup> yet the scene that Daphne describes and the historical genealogy she establishes between past coronations and the present one are modeled meticulously on book 9 of the *Africa*.<sup>161</sup> The intertexts begin with the arrival of the heroes: Scipio arrives on a chariot "niveis invectus equis" ["drawn by chargers white as snow" (*Africa* 9.340)], while, in *Amor pastorius*, Daphne recounts how "referre / curribus invectos niveis delubra deorum" ("coursers whiter than snow would bear them into the temples" (3.132-33)). Then follow the captives (*Africa* 9.341; *Buc. carm.* 3.135) and the spoils (*Africa* 9.363-65; *Buc. carm.* 3.136) brought to the hill by the victors. Even the elephants, which particularly astonished the crowds present at Scipio's triumph (*Africa* 9.368-71), appear now in the pastoral procession (*Buc. carm.* 3.141).

In the wake of this procession, there are two events which, in addition to providing further examples of the extent to which Petrarch modeled this section of the eclogue on his epic, generate a provocative hybridization of pastoral and epic. The first is the clangorous sound of celebrations that mark the end of the victors' journeys home. In the *Africa*, "Tum tube et horrisonis victricia classica late / Perstrepuere modis" ["horns and triumphant trumpets far and wide blare out their raucous notes" (9.383-84)]. In *Amor pastorius*, "Et longos rerum strepitus, pompasque frementes" ["Multitudes cheered as they marched 'midst the triumphant blare of the trumpets" (137)]. Though the latter is clearly modeled on the former, it acquires a different meaning in its new context, for it marks a stylistic shift—the bellicose sounds of epic now reverberate within the landscape of pastoral.

With this alteration of sound comes a related redefinition of pastoral space. The actions of the epic hero have secured Rome its position at the center of the world: "Nec dubium quin ad reliquos per bella triumphos / Straverit ense viam atque Orbis patefecerit Urbi / Imperium" ["[Scipio's] sword, beyond all doubt, had cleared the way / for conquests yet to come, assuring Rome / of world empire" (*Africa* 9.393-95)]. The geopolitical centrality of Rome reappears in *Amor pastorius*: "Quicquid nemus undique pressis / extulit uberibus, hoc est monte coactum" ["In brief, all things that the fertile woodland has ever yielded this mount has claimed as its tribute" (*Buc. carm.* 3.142-43)]. The description here echoes Stupeus' first impression of the new vista presented to him by Daphne: "Imperiosus apex dare circum iura videtur / collibus, et celo silvas despectat aperto" ["Dominating its neighbors, this regal peak seems to be giving laws to them all and under a clear sky ruling the woodlands" (129-30)]. Once again, Petrarch is clearly imitating his earlier work, yet this imitation amounts to more than a pastoral translation of his epic, for it too affects a change in the pastoral scene. Petrarch utilizes the horizon of epic to formulate a new map for the landscape of pastoral, one predicated both on multiplicity and unity. He fractures the genre's singular space by imagining other Arcadias, that is, pastoral colonies

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<sup>160</sup> See note 132 above.

<sup>161</sup> Bernardo 1962 also interprets these episodes in tandem and sees the eclogue as a venue in which "the image of Scipio receives further definition" (50). However, his interpretation is principally a symbolic one, in which Scipio and Laura are complementary figures in Petrarch's imagination: "In the *Africa*, then, Scipio summarizes in Latin a humanistic ideal whose counterpart Petrarch had tried all his life to define in Italian through the image of Laura: a concept of virtue that complements a concept of glory in a way that makes both acquire near-Christan hues" (64). My intention is to reveal that the appropriation of the *Africa* in *Amor pastorius* is at once more extensive and generically subversive.



through which a shepherd might wander, while positing a governing center—the site of an imperial pastoral—that organizes these other locations into a network.<sup>162</sup>

In addition to presenting a pastoralized version of portions of the *Africa*, these echoes in the first quarter of the *Bucolicum carmen* introduce numerous implications in regard to the status of genre in the collection and its relation to its epic predecessor. The first is perhaps the most audacious: the unfinished “story” of a work in one genre is carried over into a work in a different genre. By focusing on a constellation of passages from the last pages of the *Africa* in the opening poems of the *Bucolicum carmen*, Petrarch generates the fiction that the latter is at once a transposition and continuation of the project initiated by, but ultimately left unresolved in, the *Africa*. The impression that the later work is, in fact, an extension of the earlier one is strengthened by the fact that the *Bucolicum carmen* delivers on certain promises that Petrarch had made in the *Africa*’s proem, in which, as I previously noted, he presents his dedicatee with a conventional formulation of *recusatio*:<sup>163</sup>

Suscipe, iam precor, regum inclite, suscipe tandem  
Atque pias extende manus et humina flecte.  
Ipse tuos actus meritis ad sidera tollam  
Laudibus, atque fortassis carmine quondam  
(Mors modo me paulum expectet! non longa pentuntur)  
Nomen et alta canam Siculi miracula regis,  
Non audita procul, sed que modo uidimus omnes  
Omnia. (Africa 1.38-45)

I pray you, glorious King, accept at last this gift; extend a hand in benediction and give it approbation with your glance. For with the praise that you have merited I shall extol your exploits to the stars, and in a day to come—if death give respite, not to long a time I ask-- perchance I may sing of the King of Sicily, his fame and his miraculous deeds, not yet well known abroad but which we all have witnessed.

At first glance, it seems that the promise of a poem concerning the great deeds of Robert should not be taken as anything more than a ploy whereby Petrarch ingratiates himself to his patron.<sup>164</sup> Yet *Argus*, in addition to being a lament for Robert’s passing, is precisely a catalogue of his “miraculous deeds.” Moreover, it literally extols his exploits to the stars by narrating his ascent to heaven. In short, the eclogue represents a fulfillment in miniature of the hypothetical epic that Petrarch promised to dedicate to Robert.

There is a second manner in which the *Bucolicum carmen* seems to deliver on the *Africa*’s promises, and this time on the global level. After promising to write about Robert one day, Petrarch briefly considers the novelty of such a project:

Namque solent similis quos cura fatigat

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<sup>162</sup> This new formulation of pastoral space is essential to the interpretation of the eclogues that follow *Amor pastorius*, as I will argue later in this chapter.

<sup>163</sup> On the proem of the *Africa*, see Velli 1965 and 1989.

<sup>164</sup> This sense is particularly strong later in the proem (55-62) when Petrarch makes the rather ridiculous claim that in fact he would prefer to write a poem about Robert now, but is not sufficiently bold, and thus will turn first to the “easier” theme of the Second Punic War.

Longius esse retro; tenet hos millesimus annus  
 Sollicitos, pudet had alios consistere meta,  
 Nullus ad aetatem proriam respexit, ut erret  
 Musa parum notos nullo prohibent per annos  
 Liberior; Trojamque ideo canit ille ruentem,  
 Ille refert Thebas, juvenemque occultat Achillem,  
 Ille autem Emathiam romanis ossibus implet,  
 Ipse ego non nostri referam modo temporis acta. (1.45-53)

In truth, the poets with such themes as mine are wont to turn to times remote; some send their Muse back o'er a thousand years and others halt not at that ancient mark, but none as yet has sung of his own age, and thus the Muse, with no impediment, wanders through old and unfamiliar years in freedom. Lo, of fallen Troy one sings, a second tells the tale of Thebes and hides the young Achilles, while with Roman bones another fills up the Emathian fields. I shall not chronicle events still fresh of recent times.

It is certainly curious that, at the beginning of poem that narrates events from fifteen centuries in the past (9.563), Petrarch briefly betrays an enthusiasm for a poem set in his own time, and the trailblazing novelty that would accompany such a project.<sup>165</sup> Yet the present-day epic that he momentarily considers is intriguingly similar to the type of poem that Giovanni requested from Dante, namely a Latin epic depicting the political events of the Italian peninsula's recent past.<sup>166</sup> This potential intertext is made all the more suggestive because one of the four subjects that Giovanni suggested to Dante was the same King Robert. Though in the *Africa* Petrarch then turned away from this contemporary theme to the events of the ancient past, the idea of Giovanni's epic of the now returns in the *Bucolicum carmen*. Indeed, this section of the *Africa*'s proem serves as an effective gloss on the later text, for it is in large part a chronicle of "events still fresh of recent times." The chronological arc of the collection, addressing both private and public events from roughly 1342 to 1356, is typically interpreted as a form of allegorically veiled diary.<sup>167</sup> Though there is ample reason for this trend, its drawback is that it diminishes appreciation of Petrarch's innovative decision to compose a twelve-poem collection in Latin devoted to contemporary Italy. Indeed, the majority of the collection addresses the major events and catastrophes that occurred during (or immediately prior to) its composition: the death of Robert (eclogue 2); the infighting among the Roman nobility and Cola's revolution (eclogue 5); the relocation of the papacy to Avignon (in particular in eclogues 5-6); the Black Plague (eclogues 9-11); and the One Hundred Years' War (eclogue 12). In short, through pastoral, Petrarch approximates the epic of the now that Giovanni requested in his first epistle to Dante and that Petrarch himself briefly entertained in the proem to the *Africa*.

<sup>165</sup> Once again, Petrarch overstates his claim to primacy (or in this case what *would* have been his primacy) and reveals his anxiety concerning the generation of poets immediately preceding him by suppressing the fact that Albertino Mussato had written just such a poem on the subject of deeds of Henry VII: the *Historia Augusta*.

<sup>166</sup> The four themes the Giovanni offered as potential subjects for an epic were all drawn from the previous decade. See note 81 in the previous chapter. Petrarch may have already read the Giovanni-Dante exchange at this early date, as Velli 1985: 197-98 argues. See also note 137 above.

<sup>167</sup> See Carrai 2009: 65 and 167.

Yet if the *Bucolicum carmen* extends Petrarch's epic project in a variety of ways, it is also clearly a revision of it. This is particularly evident in the retrograde movement back from the *Africa*'s final lament to its culminating triumph. Petrarch's restaging of his coronation acquires a new meaning when it appears here in the immediate aftermath of Robert's death. Though the relocation of his coronation to a mythic plane so that the poet receives the laurels directly from the laurel tree—that is, Daphne—is motivated in part by the pastoral fiction, it also serves as an attempt to suture the metaphorical wound produced by the premature death of the man who not only was to receive the completed *Africa* but also authorized Petrarch's coronation.<sup>168</sup>

As this attempt to sidestep the contingency of history suggests, the *Bucolicum carmen* not only appropriates and perpetuates the *Africa*, but also acknowledges and examines the failure of that project. Though this failure has been interpreted in a variety of manners by many critics, Petrarch manifests a remarkable self-awareness in that three of the principal causes put forth for the unfinishability of the epic coincide with Petrarch's first three eclogues.<sup>169</sup> Of these, *Argus* is the most explicit account of failure: the poet loses his patron.<sup>170</sup> Yet the examination of, and tension between, classical and Christian poetics in *Parthenias* renders in the form of a debate between two brothers the poet's noted struggles to reconcile Christian theology and Roman history in the *Africa*.<sup>171</sup> *Amor pastorius* might seem to mark a hopeful reversal, through its celebration of the poet and its placement of him in a line of descent from the poets of antiquity. However, there is a striking consequence to Petrarch's decision to depict the Capitoline as a pastoral landscape—though it generates the conceit of an imperial pastoral space, it symbolically undoes the founding of Rome. The clear precedent for a wandering pilgrim who is guided up these hills to survey the surrounding lands is Aeneas in book 8 of the *Aeneid*. While Vergil's protagonist looks out at the pre-history of the city he will found, Stupeus examines a city that has reverted to its rustic past. Through this doubled perspective, Petrarch generates a powerful visual metaphor that represents his conception of contemporary Rome, in which past heroes can be seen as phantasms ascending the heights of the Capitoline, but which has lost the power that previously established its authority and afforded the poet a position from which to write.<sup>172</sup> In short, though the eclogue restages Petrarch's coronation, it also acknowledges the tensions inherent in any such coronation when the center of the empire is a vacuum.

By passing in sequence through the conditions that imperiled his epic project, Petrarch shapes his pastoral into an incisive examination of epic and shows, as Dante had before him, that one of the uses of pastoral is to act as a form of proto-literary criticism. Yet precisely because pastoral enacts this criticism, its theoretical inquiries also generate new kinds of fiction. For this reason, in the next section of this chapter I will turn to one of Petrarch's boldest experiments with genre, through which his pastoral appropriates the epic discourse of *translatio imperii*, and hybridizes not only the themes but also the structures of an eclogue collection.

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<sup>168</sup> This trauma is also reenacted *in nuce* in the transition from the first to the second eclogue, that is, from Petrarch's renewed dedication to the composition of the *Africa* to the catastrophe of Robert's death.

<sup>169</sup> For a survey of the various compositional obstacles that Petrarch faced, see Groves 1975.

<sup>170</sup> See Smarr 1982, who interprets Petrarch's inability to finish the *Africa* in terms of the death of his patron and, in particular, the absence of political authority in Rome.

<sup>171</sup> For this understanding of the irreconcilable tensions at the heart of Petrarch's epic enterprise, see Greene 1963: 1-3; and Gregory 2006: 56-65.

<sup>172</sup> For the singular importance of Roman ruins to Petrarchan thought, see the description he provides of them in a letter to Giovanni Colonna (*Fam.* 6.2), and the interpretation of this letter in Mazzotta 1993b: 18-24.

The discourse of *translatio imperii* is first and foremost a teleological vision of geopolitics according to which the authority of one empire is transferred providentially, and typically in a westward direction, to a later one which dislocates but also extends the reign of its predecessor.<sup>173</sup> Accordingly, when Charlemagne was crowned emperor by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day, 800, the center of the ancient Roman empire “moved” from its original site to Paris, for the coronation signified the “first *renovatio* of the Empire in modern times ... Thus renewed in Charlemagne [it] was regarded as indeed the Roman Empire itself through the theory of the translation of the Empire” (Yates 1975: 2).

In an early letter to his patron, the cardinal Giovanni Colonna (*Fam.* 1.4), Petrarch makes it clear that he did not view Charlemagne as a descendant of the leaders of old.<sup>174</sup> Indeed, in a famous letter directed to the senators of Rome and included in the *Sine nomine*, Petrarch vehemently rejects the validity of *translatio imperii* in general, for there can only be one site for the world empire:

Illud vero quis inoffensis auribus accipiat inter homines doctos queri, an romanum imperium Rome sit? Ergo apud Parthos Persasque et Medos Parthorum Persarumque et Medorum regna consistent, *romanum imperium vagum erit?* Quis hanc indignitatem stomachus ferat? quis non potius evomat penitusque reiciat? *Si imperium romanum Roma non est, ubi, queso, est?* Nempe si alibi est, iam Romanorum imperium non est, sed eorum penes quos illud *volubilis fortuna* deposuit. (*Sine nomine* 4)

But who may hear, without being upset, the question being debated among those learned fellows, whether the Roman empire be in Rome? With the kingdoms of the Parthians, Persians and Medes located among the Parthians, Persians and Medes, are we then to believe that *the empire of the Romans will wander around?* Who can stomach such vile stuff? Who would not rather heave it up from the very pit of his being? *If the Roman empire is not in Rome then where, I ask, is it?* Obviously, if it is somewhere else than in Rome, then it is no longer an empire of Romans but rather of those to whom *changeable Fortune* has granted an empire.

Through his examples of Eastern kingdoms (themselves organized from east to west), Petrarch alludes to the westward trajectory traced by *translatio imperii*, yet he definitively severs the chain of transference by asserting that it is neither divine authority nor a direct line of descent from ancient Rome that has shifted contemporary temporal power, but rather the vicissitudes of fortune. Written in the fall of 1352, by which point the majority of the *Bucolicum carmen* had

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<sup>173</sup> On the theory of *translatio imperii* in the late Middle Ages and the early Renaissance, see Yates 1975: 1-16. On the manner in which this theory was informed by scripture, see Curtius 1952: 28-30. For Petrarch’s problems with the discourse of *translatio imperii*, see Ferguson 1948: 6-9; Yates 1975: 9-14; and Mazzotta 1993b: 25-26. His rejection of the historiographical unity produced by it is intimately linked with his own historiographical vision of a Dark Ages that separated him from the Roman past, for which see Momsen 1942.

<sup>174</sup> Describing his trip to Paris and his visit to the king’s tomb, he writes of “Carolum regem, quem Magni cognomina equare Pompeio et Alexandro audent” [“King Charles, whom they dare equate to Pompey and Alexander by giving him the surname of ‘the Great’”] (*Fam.* 1.4, par. 7).]

been composed, this letter strongly suggests that the logic of *translatio imperii* did not inform his conception and representation of geopolitics in his pastoral collection.<sup>175</sup>

Yet *translatio imperii*, of course, is also a template for epic narrative, as authoritatively established by Vergil's *Aeneid*, whose first half has Aeneas and his Trojan companions relive their defeat through their wanderings across the Mediterranean before they exorcise their loss through their victory in the second half of the poem and their subsequent foundation of a new empire in Rome.<sup>176</sup> It is this aspect of the theory that would proliferate in the epics of the Renaissance, in which "the Trojan disaster becomes a kind of fortunate fall as the ruins of Troy are happily reintegrated into the 'fictive' history of (Roman, Ferrarese, French, Portuguese, British) *imperium*" (Bellamy 1992: 24). And it informs Petrarch's epic as well, where its logic appears in Lucius Scipio's prophecy of Roman history (*Africa* 2.288-93).<sup>177</sup>

It is out of the tension between these two Petrarchan conceptions of *translatio imperii*—the illegitimacy of modern translations of power; its use as a structuring principle for the twelve books of epic and of narrative space—that he shapes his pastoral collection. On the one hand, one of the central themes (and, structurally speaking, *the* central theme) of the collection is the corruption of the Avignon papacy and its illegitimate dislocation of the *sancta sedes* from Rome to Provence.<sup>178</sup> For this critique, Petrarch could use the theory of *translatio imperii* polemically, that is, as a *translatio in malo*. On the other hand, as the eclogues contend with the effects—at once psychological, representational, and spatial—of this illegitimate dislocation, Petrarch's pastoral appropriates the epic structure of *translatio imperii* in two distinct but complementary ways: first, as a structural metaphor with which to comment upon a world subject to the papacy's fraudulent transference of the *caput mundi*; and, second, as an oppositional narrative to that transference with a countervailing eastward movement through which the poet attempts, at least symbolically though ultimately without success, to redress the problems posed by a vacant Rome.

The influence of the discourse of *translatio imperii* on Petrarchan pastoral is in evidence as early as *Parthenias*, where it appears, however, in a positive formulation. Critics have rightfully focused on the rival poetics of Silvius and Monicus but there is one matter upon which they agree: the centrality of Rome in the world order, whose authority, be it poetic or theological, arrives to the city by way of a westward movement from eastern authorities (Homer and David, respectively). Thus, for Silvius, the Greek poet is the source from which his Roman descendent drank (1.26). Similarly, after Monicus has given an account of the powers of his shepherd's song, he describes how it has traveled west from Jerusalem to new shores:

Jure igitur, patriis primum celebratus in arvis,  
attigit et vestros saltus, lateque sonorum  
nomen habet: que rura Padus, que Tybris et Arnus,  
que Rhenus Rodanusque secant, queque abluit equor

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<sup>175</sup> On Petrarch's refutation of *translatio imperii*, see Yates 1975: "[Petrarch] seems to view with scorn some of the most cherished notions of medieval imperialism. For him, the barbarous influences which had destroyed Rome live on in the barbarized Empire of the Middle Ages" (14).

<sup>176</sup> See Quint 1993: 50-96.

<sup>177</sup> Yates 1975: 13 takes this as a suggestion that Petrarch's refutation of the theory was not total.

<sup>178</sup> This theme achieves its fullest and most scathing articulation in the *Sine nomine*, though it informs many Petrarchan texts. For an insightful survey of Petrarch's various representations of Avignon, see Mercuri 1997: 118-21. See also Mazzotta 1993 for "the impossibility of a *translation* from Rome to Avignon" (25) for Petrarch's conception of empire. The ant-papal theme is structurally central to the *Bucolicum carmen* in that it is most fully developed in eclogues 6 and 7, the collection's midpoint.

omnia iam resonant pastoris carmina nostri. (1.105-09)

First—and with reason—acclaimed in the distant land that he springs from, now he has come to your hills and your pastures. His glory, far sounding, spreads wide abroad over lands bathed by Po and Tiber and Arno, even the vales of the Rhine and the Rhone and the shores that the ocean borders resound to the fame and the sacred songs of our shepherd.

Linked to Silvius' account of poetry's journey to the west by their shared fluvial language, Monicus narrates the arrival of scripture in Italy where it achieves a new geographical centrality. The result is the articulation of a geopolitical order whose center is in Rome and whose authority radiates outward to the rest of the Italian peninsula, and then extends to the lands north of the Alps (represented here by the rivers of France and Germany). Thus, though the brothers' debate on poetics, which constitutes the body of the eclogue, juxtaposes their classical and Christian heritage, the westward move of their respective genealogies affiliates the two by positioning Rome at "the centre of the ecclesiastical and secular universe" (Zacour 1973: 25).

After Monicus sketches the contours of his cartographic system, the final section of the eclogue appears to be a *non sequitur*, for Silvius says that perhaps he will listen to David's songs some day but for now his attentions draw him elsewhere. However, this section of the eclogue, in which Silvius discusses his desire to finish the *Africa*, is in fact the consequence of Monicus' geographical discourse. When Silvius imagines a unified Italian populace that salutes Scipio's deeds in Africa from across the sea, he extends Monicus' map southward, emphasizes the importance of the Mediterranean within the geopolitical system, and firmly establishes Italy as the center of that system. Moreover, the fact that Silvius' thoughts turn to his epic only after both he and his brother have traced the relocation of cultural and religious authority to Rome suggests that it is in fact the necessary condition for the composition of the *Africa*. He then makes manifest the political implications of the westward move through his depiction of Scipio's subjugation of North Africa. Thus the *Bucolicum carmen* begins with a valid, indeed essential and foundational, instance of *translatio imperii* that, on the one hand, creates a stable geopolitical order with a unified Italian peninsula at its center and, on the other, at once sanctions and sustains the vocation of the epic poet.<sup>179</sup>

Juxtaposed to this discourse of Rome is the fraudulent "poetry" of Avignon. Petrarch's invectives against the Babylonian Captivity of the Church are well known and pervade his oeuvre, with examples ranging from the letters of the *Sine nomine* to sonnets 136-39 of *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, yet one of his most vituperative and scathing accounts of the corrupt Avignon curia is to be found at the heart of the *Bucolicum carmen*. Eclogues 6 (*Pastorum Pathos*, or "The Shepherd's Suffering") and 7 (*Grex infectus et suffectus*, or "The Infected and Replenished Flock") present a bipartite picture of papal illegitimacy and immorality. In the former, Pamphilus (St. Peter) attacks Mitio (Clement VI) for having led his flock away from its native fields and for his lascivious and greedy ways. In the latter, Mitio consoles himself with his lover, Epy (the Church). Though Petrarch's indictment of Clement is pervasive, covering his inexpiable lust for wealth (verses 65-70) and women (verses 92-93), as well as his pact with the French king (verses 98-99), the principal charge he levels is that of the illegitimate *translatio* of the Church from Rome. The effects of this dislocation are evident in the eclogue's opening verses, which contain a sequence of questions articulated by Pamphilus:

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<sup>179</sup> For the centrality of the idea of Rome to Petrarch's thought, see Smarr 1982, Mazzotta 2006, and Looney 2009.

Quis nemus omne *vagis* lacerandum prebuit hircis?  
 Quid silve meruere mee, quas rore superno  
 Iupiter, et rivis spumantibus horrida coniunx,  
 impiger atque olym Pyreos Phanosque rigarunt?  
 Que rabies furtim, segetes dum *carpit* acerbas  
 spes et opes turbavit agri? (6.1-6)

Who has neglected my woodlands, permitting the ravaging *wanderings* of the he-goats; why do they merit this treatment? Heavenly Jove once bedewed them, aye, and his awesome consort, aided by tireless Pyreus and Phaneus, laced them with purling brooklets. What treacherous folly, *uprooting* the unripe harvest.

In these verses, the illegitimacy of the papacy's French residence is first registered by the bewilderment of Pamphilus, who has returned to a world whose map has been redrawn. In addition, his focus on the neglect of the papacy's native site, Rome, returns attention to the previous eclogue, *Pietas pastoralis* ("The Shepherds' Piety"), in which Rome is presented as a dilapidated house in desperate need of renewal, as two brothers reckon with the poor health of their mother (a figure for Rome itself). As the *Bucolicum carmen* transitions from the representation of a deserted Rome in ruins in eclogue 5 to the sinful opulence of Avignon in eclogue 6, the macrotext enacts structurally the westward *translatio* of the papacy, and comments on its deleterious effects.<sup>180</sup>

At the end of the passage, Pamphilus figures this *translatio* in the horticultural terms of pastoral, that is, of an uprooted Church. This figure is then developed and made more explicit later in the poem when he focuses attention on Epycus (Clement V), the shepherd who orchestrated the abandonment of the flock's native fields: "prior ipse puellam / nactus ad irriguos secum *traduxerat* ortos" ["He was the first to *bear her off* to dally with him in gardens laced by clear brooklets" (152-53; my emphasis)]. In his examination of this spatial dislocation, Pamphilus focuses not only on the trajectory of the westward move but also emphasizes the movement that this dislocation in turn produces. Thus, in his account of the misled flock of Christianity, he states: "Turba nociva satis, nulla que lege per agros / *spargitur* insultans" ["Over the fields that pestilent herd goes *straying* at random" (29-30; my emphasis)]. Later, when he describes the abandoned Church, he figures it as a woman—first chaste, then wanton—and again emphasizes movement:

Uxor enim ignotis iampridem in collibus *errat*  
 et, patrium limen thalamumque egressa pudicum  
 illa sequetur ovans meretrix famosa, procosque  
 secum aget ardentem et olentem turpiter hircos,  
 herba *peregrine* quibus est iam grata paludis. (112-16; my emphases)

See how your spouse has been *straying* for long over hills unfamiliar, having forsaken her lawful bed and the house of her fathers. Yielding her place to that

<sup>180</sup> This is also registered in the speech of the characters. In eclogue 5, the queen of the forest is Rome herself: "O pecudum decus eximium, reginaque silve" ["Honor of the flock, queen of the forest" (129)]. By eclogue 6, she has become Epy, that is, the Avignon Church: "ac nemorum regina potens" ["sovereign queen of the woodland" (5.38)].

infamous whore, exulting in lovers ardent with lust and a pack of rapacious malodorous he-goats, grown now accustomed to savor the herbage of *alien* marshes.

In these verses Petrarch presents *in nuce* the contrapuntal thematics of the chaste but abandoned wife in Rome and the whore of Babylon in Avignon that would later permeate the *Sine nomine*. In fact, the thematic contiguity of these eclogues and the *Sine nomine* suggests that the *Bucolicum carmen* may have acted as a sort of representational laboratory for the epistolary collectiojn. Yet as important here is the representation of the Church's wanderings. This too would be echoed later by the *Sine nomine*, in the previously cited fourth epistle in which Petrarch asks: "romanum imperium *vagum* erit?" ["are we then to believe that the empire of the Romans will *wander around*?"; (my emphasis)]. Throughout the eclogue, Pamphilus links the illegitimate *translatio* of the Church to the production of a state of pervasive errancy, both moral and spatial.

In light of Pamphilus' extensive and vehement attacks on Mitio, one of the most striking aspects of the eclogue is that Mitio speaks back and articulates a coherent (albeit fallacious) defense of his wayward life, which then proliferates in eclogue 7. Granted, for Petrarch, Mitio's rhetoric of self-defense is as damning as Pamphilus' indictment, yet the eclogue gives him the final word and he proceeds to seize control of the next eclogue, in which Pamphilus has decamped and Epy arrives. Moreover, the second eclogue is, as we shall see, principally concerned with covering up the truth of Pamphilus' attacks, so that he would have no grounds for critique were he to return. Indeed, eclogue 7 attempts to undo the critical discourse of eclogue 6 through a suggestive meditation on the art of concealment.

Earlier, I suggested in passing that Avignon, in Petrarch's conception, is the site of a fraudulent poetics, and it is here, at the midpoint of the collection, that these poetics are articulated. Pamphilus is the first to associate Mitio with the production of fiction when interrogating him about his adulterous ways: "Turpis, adulteria et thalami tot probra pudenda / *dissimulare* potes?" ["How can you hope to *dissimulate*, dirty rogue, the many adulterous evils that stain your bed?" (6.92-93; my emphasis)]. Eclogue 7 then proceeds to focus precisely upon fictions that attempt to dissimulate the truth. With Pamphilus gone, Mitio examines his flock with Epy and finds it in a poor state, for the remedy of which they resolve to add to its numbers.<sup>181</sup> Epy counsels her husband to find new members solely among their own lands (i.e. France), an allegory for the predominantly French group of cardinals added to the College 1350:

Hos tibi fecunde matres peperere: Quid heres  
sanguine *in externo*? Veteri nova cornua serto  
floribus ex nostris *ornabimus*. Ipse latentem  
Pamphilus haud noscat *fraudem*. (7.98-101; my emphases)

Well then, since fecund mothers have born you these lambs, why go seeking *alien* stock? We'll *adorn* these nascent horns with old garlands, made of our native blossoms. Never will Pamphilus, surely, learn our *deceit*.

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<sup>181</sup> The examination and augmentation of the flock alludes to the additions made to the College of Cardinals in 1350. For the explication of this allegory, see Wilkins 1955.



There are a number of interesting implications to these verses. By formulating their search in terms of natives and foreigners, Epy at once invokes and inverts Pamphilus' spatial discourse, which critiqued Mitio precisely for having trespassed the boundary between natural home and alien fields. As Mitio and Epy redraw the boundaries of Pamphilus' map, Romans become foreigners to the Church of Rome.<sup>182</sup>

In addition, these verses suggest that the alteration enacted by Mitio and Epy is not only a refutation of Pamphilus' world vision, but also an act of rewriting, that is, an instance of representational subversion. The ritual of bestowing garlands, though principally an allegory for the robing of the new cardinals, is also dangerously close to parodying Petrarch's coronation, particularly because Epy presents herself and her husband as manipulators of truth. That they traffic in an art that produces fictions is made clear once their task is complete. Mitio avers that he is satisfied with the results: "Quoniam *res magna* peracta est. / Pamphilus ut redeat, iusta licet *arte* querelas / *abstulimus*" ["In truth it's a *great thing* we have accomplished. Pamphilus, if he returns, will find we have *artfully parried* any complaints, although just" (138-40; my emphases)]. In short, they have created a work of art to subvert the truth articulated in the previous eclogue.

The most powerful association of Avignon with an art of deception is Mitio's directive: "Vera licet fictis pretextere crimina verbis" ["We'd best have ready a fiction to cover the truth of our crimes" (7.17)]. This commingling of truth and the interwoven fictions that hide crimes is clearly, first and foremost, a moral indictment of the Avignon *curia*. Yet, by focusing attention squarely upon the manipulation of words, this verse also figures Mitio as a writer. This association of Mitio with writing is particularly disruptive because, in many ways, he resembles Petrarch. At the start of eclogue 7, while still feeling the bite of Pamphilus' critique, he informs his wife that he wishes to discuss their quarrel with her because "nam dulce est animum exonerare loquendo" ["a solace it is to give one's feelings expression" (7)]. Though his sentiment does have a Horatian ring to it, the most relevant intertext is Petrarch's definition of his own poetics at the beginning of canzone 23 of the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, in which he proclaims that he will sing "perché cantando il duole si disacerba" ["because, through singing, pain becomes less bitter" (*RVF* 23.4)].<sup>183</sup> Mitio's invocation of Petrarch's poetics is all the more suggestive because he revealed himself to be a lyric poet in the previous eclogue: "Sedeo iaceoque supinus, / multa canens que *dictat amor*, nec crastina curans" ["I lie or sit here, singing the songs that *love bids* [or dictates to] me and taking no thought for the morrow" (6.78-79; my emphasis)]. Most importantly, here the representation of Mitio as lyric poet draws a parallel not only with Petrarch the lyric poet, but also with Petrarch the pastoral (and epic) poet. By figuring his poetic process as a dictation he receives from Love, Mitio approaches Petrarch's self-representation as Silvius in the first eclogue, in which he describes his poetic process, after encountering Vergil and Homer, as a dictation taken down from the Muses: "Sic eo, sic redeo. Nitar, si forte Camene / dulce aliquid *dictare* velint, quod collibus altis / et michi complaciat, quod lucidus approbet ether" ["Thus do I go back and forth, in the hope that perchance the Muses, smiling, may deign to dictate some sweet notes, likewise appealing both to the crags and myself and which the bright air may shine on" (1.40-42; my emphases)].

It is clear that the relationship between Mitio and Silvius is not one of similitude, as the end of eclogue 7 makes explicit. As Epy finishes her catalogue of the new "sheep" who have

<sup>182</sup> The same inversion is evident when Epy retells the story of the *translatio* from Rome to Avignon, now presented as a positive epic journey in miniature (7.76-77).

<sup>183</sup> See Horace, *Carm.* 4.11.35-36.

arrived in their fields, she scornfully turns her attention to a foreigner: “Invisa regione satum, quem florea vallis / paverit et nostri spretorem miserit arvi” [“Seed of an odious land, by a flowery valley nourished, hither has he been sent to look with scorn on our meadows” (7.133-34). The recent critical consensus, with which I concur, is that this is a figure for Petrarch himself, who thus recuperates (albeit briefly) Pamphilus’ (and his) invective against Avignon in an eclogue otherwise dominated by the papal perspective.<sup>184</sup> Thus the parallels between pope and poet serve not to affiliate the two but rather to structure them in polemical opposition.

Yet it is highly suggestive that in this eclogue Petrarch is viewed from an external perspective, that is, as a poetic Other. In the process, Petrarch figures the pope as a counterauthor at the heart of his own collection and a disruptive force within that collection. This is one of the overtones of Mitio’s poetics—“vera licet fictis pretextere crimina verbis”—because, though the primary sense of the verb *pretextere* here is “to decorate” or “to cover” the truth, thereby making it inaccessible to the eyes of Pamphilus, it also foregrounds the act of weaving, which returns attention to *Parthenias* and implicates the papacy’s *translatio in malo* in the problematic composition of the *Africa*. After Silvius describes the exploits of Scipio on the African shore, he expresses his desire to return to his epic poem in the following fashion: “Carmine fama sacro caret hactenus, et sua virtus / premia deposcit; pavitans ego carmine cepi / *texere*: tentabo modulabor, vox forte sequetur” [“Hitherto, great though [Scipio’s] fame, he has wanted a singer. His virtue merits a proper reward. So timidly I have been *weaving* verses to laud him. I’ll try my skill, my voice may avail me” (120-22)]. Having already cast Mitio as a negative formulation of his own poetic identity, the convergence of their weaving figures the incompleteness of his epic poem (and one of the principal causes of its incompleteness) in terms of the macrotextual structure of his pastoral collection. Petrarch creates a symbolic bridge between the beginning and the center of the *Bucolicum carmen*, with which he suggests that the papacy’s illegitimate move to Avignon works against the completion of his epic project in part because it appropriates the sanctioned narrative movement of epic. In short, Mitio’s weaving has undone Silvius’ epic tapestry.

Yet, at the same time that the representational antagonism between Silvius and Mitio relates to the *Africa*’s lack of a final structural coherence, it serves as the organizing principle for the *Bucolicum carmen*. Many critics have acknowledged that the structural position of these two eclogues stresses the importance of Petrarch’s anti-Avignon critique to his thought, and they are undoubtedly correct.<sup>185</sup> However, the macrotextual significance of their location is not limited to the question of emphasis. First, it is crucial to account for the fact that they may have been conceived initially as a single eclogue, for the amplification of a single story into two structurally distinct poems has a number of consequences.<sup>186</sup> First, it makes this pastoral diptych into an innovative example of pastoral’s changing relationship to narrativity in the fourteenth century because, in contrast to earlier pastoral conventions, the characters, scene and dramatic situation of one eclogue carry over into the next. Thus, like Boccaccio’s “Neapolitan” eclogues (*Bucolicum carmen* 3-6), Petrarch’s anti-papal eclogues participate in the growing complexity

<sup>184</sup> For a persuasive discussion of this identification, see the commentary of François and Bachmann (2001: 336).

<sup>185</sup> See Kegel-Brinkgreve 1990: 258 and Carrai 2009: 167.

<sup>186</sup> On the question of their original form, see Cooper 1977: 40; Mann 1977: 132; and Kegel-Brinkgreve 1990: 261. Whether or not they were in fact a single eclogue initially does not meaningfully alter my discussion. I use the hypothesis that they may have initially been a single eclogue to illustrate the structural and conceptual novelty of these two central poem, yet this novelty would remain even if they had been conceived of as distinct poems from the start.

of pastoral storytelling.<sup>187</sup> Second, because they are two works, they are the center of the poem as an aggregate. There is no balance between a single anti-papal eclogue and a preceding or following (and equally central) eclogue. In other words, while the story of Pamphilus, Mitio and Epy continues from eclogue 6 to 7, the macrotextual narrative comes to a full stop as it hovers around Avignon for two full poems and only passes to a new pastoral space in eclogue 8. Thus, the exact midpoint of the collection is not the hinge between two pastoral spaces—such as the transition from the laments for Daphnis in Vergil’s fifth eclogue to the song of Silenus in his sixth—but rather an empty space in the middle of the fields of Avignon.

Finally, as some critics have suggested, there is a symmetrical aspect to the overall structure of the *Bucolicum carmen*.<sup>188</sup> The anti-papal eclogues are not simply an example of this symmetry—they symbolically *produce* it, which is true not only on the structural level but on the figural level as well. This is seen in eclogue 6, when Mitio describes his relationship with Epy:

Dulcem cantando nactus amicum,  
 formosus fieri studeo; solemque perosus,  
*antra umbrosa* colo frontemque manusque recenti  
 fonte novans. *Speculum* Coridon bizantius istud,  
 quo michi complaceo, dono dedit. (6.143-45)

Since through my song I have found a fair friend, I am striving to make myself handsome; eschewing sunshine, shaded recesses I seek. The water of cool flowing fountains bathes and refreshes my hands and my brow. This mirror I treasure Byzantine Corydon gave me.

There are a number of remarkable aspects to this passage.<sup>189</sup> Since Petrarch assiduously avoided direct echoes of Vergil, the name “Corydon,” the protagonist of *Bucolica* 2, stands out, though the narcissistic love song of the Vergilian Corydon is certainly in keeping with the scene Mitio describes.<sup>190</sup> The mirror he prizes furthers the sense of narcissism, yet the identity of the gift-giver complicates its meaning. “Coridon bizantius” is, as the “dono” mentioned in the following verse suggests, a figure for Constantine the Great. Consequently, the mirror also symbolizes the Donation of Constantine, as Pamphilus’ later reference to it makes clear: “fuere et speculum Coridonis habeto. / Eternum gemat ille miser, pastoribus aule / qui primus mala dona dedit” [“Enjoy her [i.e. Epy] and cling to Corydon’s mirror! Oh, may he suffer forever, the wretch who first gave the shepherds fatal endowment of lordship!” (6.157-59)]. In short, Pamphilus places the Avignon papacy *translatio in malo* in a line of descent from Donation of Constantine, the

<sup>187</sup> I will discuss Boccaccio’s Neapolitan eclogues at length in next chapter.

<sup>188</sup> Berghoff 1998: 238 sees a certain symmetry between eclogues 2 and 11, both of which are funeral lamentations (for King Robert and Laura respectively), but considers the principal structural design of the collection to be its division into three sections, organized by theme: Poetry (1-4), Rome (5-8), and Lamentation (9-12) (238). Jensen 1997: 72 takes the idea of symmetry further so that it embraces most, though not all, of the collection, which she organizes according to the following themes: funeral lament (2 and 11); Laura (3 and 10); *patria* (5 and 8); and pope (6 and 7). However, she does not analyze the significance of this structural design and considers “the symmetrical arrangement [to be] a general idea rather than a strictly coherent system” (73).

<sup>189</sup> I note in passing that it further links the center of the poem to *Parthenias*, for Mitio’s *antra umbrosa* echoes the *tranquillo antro* (1.1.) that Monicus invites Silvius to enter, though the dark cavern outside of the sun here symbolizes Mitio’s attempts to cover up the truth with his poetics of fraud.

<sup>190</sup> On Petrarch’s theory of imitation, see note 147.

document from which the Church “authorized” its temporal power, a genealogy further alluded to by the fact that Constantine himself had “translated” the Roman empire to the east, which Pamphilus underscores with the epithet “bizantius.”

Most importantly, at the beginning of the middle of the collection, Mitio’s mirror serves as a metonym for the collection’s structure as a whole. Pamphilus gives an indication of how the specularity produced by the anti-papal eclogues is to be interpreted. Immediately prior to his invective against Constantine, he juxtaposes “speculum” (157) to “sepulcrum” (155), a link made all the more forceful by the fact that the sepulcher in question is that of Epycus, that is, Clement V, who brought the Church to Avignon. The poetics of fraud and the figure of deadly specularity appear as a consequence of Clement’s illegitimate departure from Rome, and produce a representational vacuum at the center of the text around which the other eclogues orbit. This is a bold gambit, for while it exposes the dire consequences which Petrarch witnessed in the papacy’s *translatio in malo*, it also *reproduces* them by placing Avignon squarely at the center of his collection as the site that organizes the surrounding pastoral spaces. It is a strategy whereby Petrarch can approximate epic closure in the face of an abandoned Rome, while also commenting on the epistemological crises produced by this inverted world.

In these operations, one can witness the influence of chiasmic structures, which relates to Petrarch’s conception of Avignon in general. For Petrarch, as Roberto Mercuri argues, “Avignone è il luogo del ribaltamento della storia: è quindi il luogo del non senso e del caos, dato che i Galli sconfitti da Cesare ora dominano l’Italia e occupano la sede della Chiesa” (1997: 118). If Avignon’s poetics of fraud and the figure of Mitio as counterauthor represent the “non senso” and “caos” to which Mercuri refers, the surrounding eclogues enact his spatialized chiasmus.<sup>191</sup> As the middle books of Vergilian epic, whose centrality is not only structural but ideological as well, are dislodged from the center of the *Bucolicum carmen* and replaced by the non-space of Avignon, they are pushed toward the margins of the collection. In fact, Books 6-8 of the *Aeneid* are relevant to Petrarch’s structural design. In Book 6, Aeneas descends to the underworld and is presented with a *Heldenschau*, or congregation of heroes, which constitutes his future lineage and through whom the history of Rome is revealed. In Book 7, Aeneas and his companions finally arrive in Latium and war breaks out, sparked by a skirmish between native shepherds and the Trojans.<sup>192</sup> In Book 8, Aeneas arrives at the site of what will be Rome and examines its landscape from atop the future Capitoline Hill.

The twin surveys of books 6 and 8, one genealogical, one geographical, are combined and reformulated in the *Bucolicum carmen*, which situates them in the symmetrically located positions of eclogues 3 and 10. In the former, *Amor pastorius*, the brief catalogue of Roman heroes and poets that Daphne provides Stupeus, and the direct line of descent that she draws between them and him, parallels the catalogue that Anchises provides Aeneas in book 6, while Stupeus’ location—a pastoralized version of the Capitoline—doubles the perspective of Aeneas in book 8.<sup>193</sup> The fusion of these Vergilian intertexts becomes more explicit and extensive in the latter, *Laurea occidens*. Here Petrarch, now figured as Silvanus, grieves at Laura’s death with Ludwig van Kempen, figured as Socrates (as he is in the *Rerum familiarum libri*). Yet in the

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<sup>191</sup> This chiasmus was already expressed *in nuce* by Epy’s inversion of Pamphilus’ spatial semantics (7.98-101; quoted above), through which the Church’s native Romans and the alien French were reformulated into the native French and alien Romans.

<sup>192</sup> Though I will not discuss Book 7 here, it will prove relevant to my discussion of *Buc. carm.* 12.

<sup>193</sup> Hubbard 1998: 232 also sees an echo of book 6’s *Heldenschau* in *Amor pastorius*, but does not pursue the significance of the parallel this draws between eclogue 3 and the central books of the *Aeneid*.

midst of this poignant scene, Silvanus recounts his voyage around the Mediterranean to learn how to cultivate his laurel from other shepherds. This protracted parenthesis, from verses 36 to 349, amounts to a history of classical poetry, in which Petrarch provides a brief, allegorical portrait of all of the ancient poets of whom he was aware. This extensive display of erudition, to which Petrarch continued to add poets until the mid-1360s, has received critical approbation as a stunning feat of philology, but as a work of poetry it has provoked frustration in many critics.<sup>194</sup> Yet its general conceit should be of great interest, precisely because of its manipulation of its Vergilian intertexts. Petrarch explicitly restages the scene of book 8 by having Silvanus survey the seven hills of Rome (278-80). Moreover, by collapsing all of the ancient poets into a single temporal horizon through which Silvanus moves, Petrarch generates the doubled perspective of *Aeneid* 6: that of the poet who writes his history after the fact and that of his character who experiences a vision of that history *ab origine*.

By at once invoking and displacing the central books of the *Aeneid*, Petrarch figures his unified pastoral collection as a fragmented and reordered epic. This macrotexual movement, which pushes Rome from the center to the margins, is doubled by the movement of Petrarch as character *through* the macrotext. As Thomas Greene has noted, this movement begins at the end of the first eclogue when Monicus warns his brother of the dangers that he will encounter in his wanderings: “Silvius, facing the risks of road and thicket, becomes a heroic poet in two senses” (1982: 39).<sup>195</sup> Though the thematic of movement pervades Petrarch’s texts and thought, it receives a particularly focalized iteration in the *Bucolicum carmen*, where it is structured as a contrapunctal narrative, juxtaposing the displaced heroism of Petrarch’s wanderings across the collection to the illegitimate movement of the papacy to Avignon at its center.<sup>196</sup> That the two are linked is shown by a parallel between Pamphilus’ critique of Mitio in eclogue 6 and Monicus’ critique of Silvius in eclogue 1, both of which focus on the transgressive movement of their interlocutors. Pamphilus asks: “Que tibi causa *fuge*? cur *claustra quieta* relinquis?” [“What’s the excuse for your *flight*, driving you from the *calm of the cloister*? (6.135; my emphases)]. These questions conjoin Monicus’ dismay at his brother’s errancy—“Quis te per devia cogit?” [“Who leads you into such pathways?” (1.7)—and the respite from wandering that he offers his brother, the sacred peace of his “tranquillo antro” (1.1). Related to the juxtaposition of Silvius the author and Mitio the counterauthor, here the movements of the two characters are structured into a narrative of cause and effect: because of the papacy’s movement toward the illegitimate centrality of Avignon, Petrarch is pushed out and forced into a state of wandering.

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<sup>194</sup> See note 112 above.

<sup>195</sup> See *Buc. carm.* 1.124: “I sospes, variosque vie circumspice casus” (“Go then, if you must, in safety. Have a care for the road and its hazards”).

<sup>196</sup> See Cachey 2002: “The incessantly wandering, incessantly writing Petrarchan subject conflates the planes of textual and territorial space in order to extend the range of the Petrarchan self and to authenticate the reality of that self by fixing it against the backdrop of cartographical-geographical space” (25). Cachey also notes that “Petrarch’s self-fashioning as a master of geographical space appears to intensify in the period leading up to his definitive relocation to Italy between 1347 and 1353” (6), and examines the *Familiares*, the “Letter to Posterity,” and the *Secretum* in terms of this program of geographical mastery. I would add that these are the same years that saw the principal composition of the *Bucolicum carmen*, and that the pastoral collection provides numerous insights into Petrarch’s understanding, and strategic manipulation, of geographical representation. See also Greene 1982, who provides an illuminating examination of the “ambivalence of the existential wanderer” (36) across the Petrarchan canon, including the *Bucolicum carmen*. My conception of Petrarch’s self-figuration as a displaced heroic character in his many guises across the *Bucolicum carmen* is informed by Greene’s argument.

The movement of Petrarch, then, becomes a heroic attempt to escape Avignon's gravitational pull.<sup>197</sup> This is most evident in eclogue 8 ("Divortium," or "Separation") in which Petrarch articulates both a thematic and a structural manoeuvre away from eclogues 6 and 7, for it concerns the departure of Petrarch (figured as Amyclas) from his patron, Cardinal Giovanni Colonna (figured as Ganymede), and from Avignon.<sup>198</sup> In it, Petrarch charts both a centripetal and a centrifugal trajectory in regards to the papal city. He narrates the events which led his father to relocate their family to Provence, but expresses his desire to cross the Alps and return to Italy, because "levis est ad prima recursus / principia" ["going back to my [beginnings] cannot but bring me happiness" (8.85-86)].

It is less immediately apparent that this narrative informs the metapoetic voyage of *Laurea occidens*, yet this eclogue, in fact, replays the desire to return to the origins on a vast historiographical scale. The key, once again, is to perceive the correlation between the westward movement of the papacy (and, initially, of Petrarch himself) and the subsequent movement of Petrarch-Silvanus as character. In Silvanus' description of his dislocation to France at the beginning of the eclogue, the discourse of *translatio* receives one of its most explicit formulations: "Hic michi, quo fueram tusco *translatus* ab Arno, / (sic hominum res fata rotant!) fuit aridulum rus" ["There [i.e. in Avignon], whither I had been born, away from the Tuscan Arno (so we are whirled by destiny's wheel), I owned an infertile acre" (10.14-15; my emphasis)]. Here Petrarch's body traces the same geographical arc as the papal move, while also acknowledging the model for that move: *translatio imperii*. At the same time, he figures its use of that authority as illegitimate by positing Fortune as its cause, as he would later do in *Sine nomine* 4. In the process, the unjust and involuntary *translatio* of Petrarch becomes at once the effect of and synecdochic for the one devised by the pope.

It is in light of this dislocation that the peregrinations of Silvanus need to be understood. The ostensible function of his journey is for him to learn how to cultivate the laurel tree by heeding the lessons of its illustrious cultivators around the Mediterranean, the conceit whereby Petrarch constructs a catalogue of the poets who "influenced" him, though he would have been unable to read the works of many of them. Yet though this catalogue makes the eclogue, in the words of Nicholas Mann, almost seem to be "the Triumph of Scholarship" (1984: 97), the contours of Silvanus' journey are that of a miniature epic as he follows the paths of Odysseus and Aeneas around the Mediterranean's rim. Guided not by *translatio* but rather a *re-translation* of empire, Petrarch returns to the eastern origins of the Roman empire and, through the wanderings of his person, attempts to undo the papacy's *translatio in malo*.

In retrospect, it is a narrative suggested by the title of the eclogue. In the primary meaning of the phrase, "occidens" is to be understood as a participle that denotes "falling." In this sense, the titular falling laurel refers to the death of Laura. Yet, as a noun "occidens" denotes "the west" and, in an eclogue that meticulously maps the space from the far reaches of the Levant to the ocean borders of Spain, Petrarch is playing with both these meanings.<sup>199</sup> Thus

<sup>197</sup> Martinez 2009: 293 notes that this is the principal, if implicit, narrative of the *Sine nomine*, which is a further indication that the pastoral collection may have informed the later text to a significant degree.

<sup>198</sup> For the interpretation of this eclogue, see Wojciehowski 1995: 68-72. See also Ascoli 2011: 143, n. 47.

<sup>199</sup> This interpretation is bolstered by the fact that Petrarch would later articulate the same link, though in reverse (i.e. "falling" for "west"), in his *Invective contra eum qui maledixit Italie* (1373): "Ego autem, petita venia, *occiduam* hanc *Ierusalem*, unde homo ille descendit, felicissimus ni rediisset, patriam potorum et vini multiplicis fontem voco" ["By your leave, I shall call this *sinking Jerusalem*—from which the pope went down to Rome, and which would have been most fortunate if her had never returned—the 'homeland of toppers and the source of many wines'" (8, par 70)]. "Occiduam Ierusalem" is a pun on representations of Avignon as "occidentalis Ierusalem," that is, "the

a revelatory, if secondary, translation of the title would be “The Westering Laurel”—a figure for Petrarch’s heroic account of the westward movement of poetry through which he attempts to combat his status as “*translatus*” at the poem’s beginning. Moreover, as the privileged *locus* of pastoral—the shade-giving tree—becomes mobile and is sent on an epic journey, Petrarch arrives at his most fully developed formulation of a hybridized pastoral *translatio* through a metageneric symbol that traverses the distance between pastoral and epic.

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If the *Bucolicum carmen*’s pastoralization of epic receives its symbolic culmination in the westering laurel of the tenth eclogue, it is taken to its theoretical extreme by the twelfth and final eclogue—*Conflictatio* (“The Conflict”)—which is one of the least studied eclogues in the collection and whose structural significance has not been explained.<sup>200</sup> Its relevance to the status of genre in Petrarchan pastoral is made evident by the fact that the end of the collection recounts the beginning of a war. From a distance, Arthicus (the king of England) spies Pan (the king of France) in the arms of Faustula (the Church), and initiates a battle. An allegory for the One Hundred Years’ War, this eclogue marks the first war in the history of the genre.<sup>201</sup> A precedent for its general structure—a scene of pastoral repose interrupted by an incipient conflict—is to be found, instead, in *Aeneid*, book 7. Consequently, one of the important aspects of the eclogue is that, along with eclogues 3 and 10, it participates in the structural design through which the *Bucolicum carmen* at once invokes and displaces the central books of the *Aeneid*.

Yet as important as the war itself is the rhetoric used by each side during their preparations for battle. First, each shepherd-king accuses the other of having trespassed his lawful boundary.<sup>202</sup> Second, a fact of singular importance to the collection as a whole, both explicitly locate their authority in the discourse of *translatio imperii*:

Jam brachia uterque  
pastor ad ambigui certaminis orsa parabat;  
jam studijs adverse acies, iamque fremebant.  
Queque suos vocat ore deos: Hec menia Troie,  
Arturumque canit; pugilum canit illa labores,  
mostrificumque refert Carolum. (12.54-59)

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western Jerusalem.” I cite from Petrarch’s *Invectives*, ed. and trans. David Marsh (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

<sup>200</sup> One of the few aspects of the eclogue that has received critical attention is the fact that, though it was probably among the first to be written, a passage was later added in late 1357. See Mann 1977:132-3. Since the addition presents Pan in a somewhat more positive light, this has focused attention on whether this should be interpreted as an indication a change in Petrarch’s estimation of the French king. See Bergin 1974: 250; as well as François and Bachmann 2001: 259-67. As for the eclogue’s position in the structure of the collection, Berghoff 1998: 239 and Carrai 2009: 167 argue that the eclogue should be grouped with eclogues 9-11, because of a shared “tragic tone” [Carrai (167)]. Jensen 1997, who perceives a symmetrical order elsewhere in the *Bucolicum carmen*, considers it “a strange work, difficult to bring into harmony with the collection as a whole” (76).

<sup>201</sup> This primacy is complicated by the bellicose events of Boccaccio’s Neapolitan eclogues, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Yet Petrarch and Boccaccio appear to have arrived at this thematic innovation independently.

<sup>202</sup> See Greene 1982: 40 on the importance of thresholds and the verb *transcendere* (i.e. “to step over” or “transgress”) in this eclogue.

Already with arms uplifted, both of the shepherds make ready for [the uncertain] conflict; already opposite battle-lines drawn, both hosts are clashing their armor. Each side invokes its gods; one calls on the ancient Trojan Walls and on Arthur of old; the other vaunting the wond'rous gesta of Charles and his champions, makes ready answer.

In these verses, Arthicus alludes to the legend according to which Britain was founded by Brutus, a descendant of Aeneas, while Pan openly refers to Charlemagne, who “translated” the Roman Empire to Paris. It is revealing that Petrarch chooses to describe each invocation of imperial authority with the verb *canit*, “to sing.” In so doing, he alludes to two distinct narrative traditions in the Middle Ages: Arthurian romance and the *chanson de geste*. Moreover, by having them “sing” of their translated origins, he makes explicit the link between *translatio imperii* and epic narration. Yet what is most striking is that these are rival and irreconcilable theories of *translatio*, out of which collision their political struggle is born. In so doing, Petrarch comments upon the geopolitical consequences of post-Roman *translationes* and implicitly asks the question, to reformulate Petrarch’s own in *Sine nomine* 4, “If the Roman empire is not in Rome but in England, how can it also be in France?”

It is through this meditation on the political situation of Northern Europe that the structural importance of the eclogue 12 is revealed. Its symmetry with the first eclogue is not principally thematic but rather geographical. The first eclogue had focalized its attention on, and emphasized the geopolitical importance of, the Mediterranean by having sound traverse a vast distance as the men and women of Italy sent their salutes across the sea to Scipio in North Africa. In eclogue 12, the transnational dialogue between Arthicus and Pan is figured in terms of the same sea-traversing sound. After the former finishes his first challenge to the latter, the surrounding environment recoils in horror: “Dixit, et omne fretum refugasque exterruit undas, / horridaque extremis vox est audita Britannis” [“Saying as much he frightened the waves, and the currents retreating bore the sound of his voice to the farthest corners of Britain” (12.12-13)]. In like fashion, as Pan sees enemy armies approach, he lets out a sound that spreads across the continent: “Sustulit horrificam vocem, qua flumina et agri, / et mare vicinum infermuit, collesque remoti; ac procul aeriam clamor pervenit ad Alpem” [“Roaring he sent forth a shout that, borne over fields and rivers, echoes across the adjacent sea and the far distant mountains, passing with its great clamor the Alpine aerial summits” (32-34)]. Through their corresponding border-crossing shouts, Arthicus and Pan traverse and chart the contours of a geopolitical landscape which pushes the Mediterranean to the margins.

In his geographical sweep from *Parthenias* to *Conflictatio*, Petrarch comes close to acknowledging a historical reality that was epistemologically unacceptable for him: with a vacant Rome, the geopolitical center of gravity has migrated to the north. Indeed, he seems to recognize what retrospective knowledge would reveal to be the true directionality of post-classical *translatio imperii*—it was not a translation to the west but rather “a translation of the Empire to the North” (Yates 1975: 4). Moreover, it utilizes the *Bucolicum carmen*’s complex macrotextual design to generate a harsh structural metaphor: *Conflictatio* is the final consequence of a system which places Avignon at its center.

While *Conflictatio* approaches an acknowledgment of political defeat, it also marks the representational success of the *Bucolicum carmen*. The metagenic dialogue between epic and pastoral implied by the collection’s twelve-book structure and its interconnectivity with the *Africa*, which is further developed symbolically, thematically and theoretically by the preceding



eclogues here in *Conflictatio* finally enters the pastoral diegesis, and results in the most complete fusion of eclogue and epic in the collection. In this regard, the “ambigui certaminis” [“uncertain conflict” (55)] of the battle between the armies of Arthicus and Pan can be interpreted in the same two senses as Petrarch’s definition of the collection as a “genus ambigui.”<sup>203</sup> Written approximately a century before the conclusion of the One Hundred Years’ War in 1453, the eclogue’s representation of the outcome is indeed uncertain and ambiguous. Yet, as the narrative of the eclogue itself suggests, the conflict between these warring shepherds also produces a state of fertile ambiguity in regard to the generic identity of this eclogue and the collection that contains it.

Moreover, eclogue 12 is the culmination not only of Petrarch’s hybridization of pastoral but also of his manipulations of pastoral space. Throughout the collection, Petrarch manifests what Theodore Cachey has described as his investment in “*establishing spatial zones*, that is, recognizing and exploiting territorial dichotomies” (2002: 5). As we have seen, the establishment of spatial zones in the *Bucolicum carmen* is focused on, but not limited to, the territorial dichotomy of Avignon and Rome. Yet as interesting as the political and ideological implications of these zones is the structural form they take. Petrarch thematizes geographical tension within each eclogue and moves across the boundaries separating spatial zones as the macrotext progresses. The result is a reformulation of the pastoral macrotext which invests the transition from the pastoral space of one eclogue to the next with new meaning. As Thomas Greene has shown, “the chartless, formless space of [Petrarchan] errancy finds a focus in the boundary or threshold whose crossing situates a drama” (1982: 46). In addition to the many literal thresholds of the *Bucolicum carmen*, its structural “thresholds,” that is, the material and representational blank spaces between its eclogues become the site of a new and heightened form of pastoral drama with an implied narrative trajectory.

The precedent for these Petrarchan innovations is to be found in the Giovanni-Dante exchange. While their letters literally traversed the space between Bologna and Ravenna, these locations also entered the diegetical space of their pastoral landscapes and the distance between them was both thematized and traversed by the movement of shepherds’ songs, which had the effect of fashioning their exchange into a tale of two cities. In the *Bucolicum carmen*, Petrarch both develops this structure and radically extends the implications of its macrotextual border-crossings, and in the process remaps pastoral space. As I have already had occasion to discuss, pastoral is predicated on the opposition of its horizon with other categories of space (e.g. the city, the sea). Petrarch’s genial move is to make the spatial “other” of pastoral into a different spatial formulation of pastoral itself. In so doing, he fundamentally altered the genre’s geographical imagination and provided a model, informed by the structures of epic, for how to organize this new geography. The boldness of these innovations is seen here in *Conflictatio*, for in it, two distinct but equally pastoral spatial zones *speak* to each other.

The *Bucolicum carmen* is a transformative work, both within Petrarch’s oeuvre and the pastoral tradition. In the case of the former, it is in an intricate and protracted dialogue with *Africa* and it appears to have acted as a laboratory for the themes, figures, and the generic hybridity of the *Sine nomine*. In the case of the latter, Petrarch pushed pastoral’s metagenic dialogue with other genres to its theoretical extreme by systematically engaging with and commenting on epic, and redrew the pastoral map by expanding and reorganizing the genre’s representation of space. Certain aspects of his representation may not have been universally embraced by future pastoralists, in particular his thick allegories, though even these found

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<sup>203</sup> See note 121 above.

adherents in poets such as Mantuan and Spenser. Yet the convergence of his two boldest innovations was of singular importance to the genre's developmental history, for Petrarch's hybridization and spatialization of pastoral were not only present at the creation the first modern collection of eclogues but in fact gave it shape.

## Chapter 3

### Tending to the Boundary: Between Inner and Outer Pastoral in Boccaccio's *Buccolicum carmen*

Among the eclogue poets of the Trecento, Giovanni Boccaccio showed the most extensive and variegated engagement with pastoral poetics. From the “sylvan fantasy” (Cassell and Kirkham 1991: 3) of *Caccia di Diana* (1333-34) to the Certaldan hills of *Aggelos*, the final eclogue of his *Buccolicum carmen* (c. 1367), his corpus attests to a career-long fascination with the green spaces of the world.<sup>204</sup> What is evinced by the heterogeneity of these texts is the range of Boccaccio's pastoral imagination as it inflects various genres, structures, and narrative strategies: the spiritual journey of Ameto in the prosimetrical *Comedia delle ninfe fiorentine* (1341-42); the epicized pastoral conflicts of the *ottava-rima Ninfale fiesolano* (1344-46); the pastoral time and space inside of which the members of the Florentine *brigata* recount their *novelle* in the *Decameron* (1349-51). As Janet Smarr has noted, in Boccaccio's myriad formulations of pastoral, “l'autore era sempre pronto ad esperimenti nuovi” (2001: 254).

Some of these experiments have received significant critical attention and have been accorded great influence over subsequent developments in pastoral fiction-making. In particular, Giuseppe Velli has argued that *Comedia delle ninfe fiorentine* is one of the principal models for the major pastoral text of the Italian Renaissance: Jacopo Sannazaro's *Arcadia*.<sup>205</sup> Yet Boccaccio's most protracted and direct engagement with classical pastoral, the sixteen-eclogue *Buccolicum carmen*, composed in Latin over more than twenty years, has been drastically understudied.<sup>206</sup> This scholarly neglect constitutes a conspicuous lacuna in Boccaccio studies, in which the poems have been reduced, for the most part, to a compendium of biographical information.<sup>207</sup> Indeed, critical narratives concerning the *Buccolicum carmen* betray the influence of old commonplaces that have been superseded in the analysis of his other works but which continue to marginalize this collection within Boccaccio's corpus and subordinate it to the Latin eclogues of Dante and Petrarch.

In particular, while we have learned to approach Boccaccio's declarations of artistic humility in regard to Dante and Petrarch with critical skepticism, all too often such declarations

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<sup>204</sup> For an examination of the place and significance of the *locus amoenus* in Boccaccio's fictions, see Raja 2003. Though her inquiry ranges across many Boccaccian texts, both vernacular and Latin, *Buccolicum carmen* does not figure prominently in her argument. On the dating of *Aggelos* and *Buccolicum carmen* as a whole, see Ricci 1985.  
<sup>205</sup> See Velli 1977.

<sup>206</sup> In her account of recent scholarship on the collection, Simona Lorenzini states that the *Buccolicum carmen* “è tra i testi meno studiati di Boccaccio” (2010: 153). Indeed, in the twenty years she surveys (1990-2010), only five articles dedicated to the *Buccolicum carmen* were published.

<sup>207</sup> Thus, in the introduction to his edition of the *Buccolicum carmen*, Perini argues that its principal worth is as “un prezioso reperto biografico e soprattutto psicologico” (1994: 696). Grant also asserts that the poems, which he considers to be of little aesthetic worth, are valuable as documents attesting to “the psychological development of the author” (1965: 110). One of the few exceptions to this critical trend is the work of Janet Smarr, whose edition and translation of the *Buccolicum carmen* and whose article on Boccaccio's pastoral career are full of insights and are notable for their attempts to integrate his Latin pastorals into a syncretic analysis of his engagement with the genre. Though there are many instances in which my interpretation of Boccaccio's pastoral poetics diverges from hers, I am indebted to her scholarship on, and advocacy of, these poems.

in the *Buccolicum carmen* are taken at face value.<sup>208</sup> Without sufficient interrogation of Boccaccio's rhetoric of self-deprecation, his eclogues have been judged to be of inferior artistic value, with their author viewed correspondingly as an epigone in the Latin eclogue revival, a belatedness conveyed by the tendency to divide his eclogue production into Dantean and Petrarchan phases.<sup>209</sup> The concomitant assumption is that, though Boccaccio may have been a trailblazer in his vernacular engagements with pastoral earlier in his career, the *Buccolicum carmen* is excessively indebted to poetics he inherited from others. This is especially evident in discussions of Boccaccio's turn to a more heavily allegorical style in his third eclogue, *Faunus*, following his encounter with Petrarch's *Argus*, an eclogue concerning the death of King Robert of Naples.<sup>210</sup> Since *Faunus* also takes as its theme the death of Robert and since it and subsequent eclogues in Boccaccio's collection are significantly allegorical in style, while the eclogues preceding it were not, there can be little doubt that Boccaccio witnessed new possibilities for the genre in *Argus*.<sup>211</sup> However, when coupled with Boccaccio's declarations of humility vis-à-vis Petrarch, this stylistic shift has been construed not as an act of appropriation but rather one of a servile imitation, with *Faunus* and subsequent eclogues—in particular the “Neapolitan” sequence (i.e. *Bucc. carm.* 3-6) composed in the same time period and all focused on themes of Southern Italian politics—written off as variations on a Petrarchan theme.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> For an account of how Boccaccio's self-deprecation has restricted critical appreciation of the novelty of his work, and how this restriction is no longer tenable, see Gittes 2008: 3-11, in which he notes: “The unfortunate legacy of Boccaccio's habit of self-deprecation has been to depreciate his work, often making it impossible for readers to recognize the merit of his contribution to humanistic studies in his scholarly Latin works and the great originality of his vernacular fiction” (7). I certainly concur with Gittes' formulation, yet it is revealing that he implicitly excludes the *Buccolicum carmen* from the ranks of Boccaccio's literary and cultural innovations, since it is neither scholarly nor in the vernacular.

<sup>209</sup> This is evident even in the most probing recent studies of the *Buccolicum carmen*, such as Chiecchi 1995 and Smarr 2001. According to Chiecchi's analysis of the fourteenth eclogue, *Olympia*, Boccaccio distances himself from Petrarch's pastoral poetics by re-inscribing himself in Dante's. Smarr's survey of Boccaccio's pastoral career establishes the following sequence of imitation: Boccaccio's initial vernacular pastorals derived from a fusion of Vergil's eclogues and Dante's *Commedia*; then for a brief period of time he was inspired by Dante's eclogues and initiated an exchange of eclogue-epistles with Checco di Meletto Rossi; Petrarch's *Argus* then led him to distance himself from Dante's epistolarity and turn to a more heavily allegorical style; and finally he returned to the *Commedia*, in particular *Purgatorio*'s Earthly Paradise, to find his mature pastoral voice. Each critic is undoubtedly right about the principal intertexts utilized by Boccaccio at various stages of the *Buccolicum carmen*, yet the resultant implication is that Boccaccio vacillated between poetic guides to whom he subordinated his own pastoral voice. Though part of the richness of the *Buccolicum carmen* as an object of study is precisely the information it contains regarding Boccaccio's estimation of, and self-positioning between, Dante and Petrarch, future scholarship on the collection needs to account more fully for the complexity of Boccaccio's imitative praxis (in particular the instances in which he continues to imitate Dante during his Petrarchan “phase” and vice-versa) and the aspects of his pastoral representation that diverge from both of these models.

<sup>210</sup> Later incorporated into Petrarch's own pastoral collection—the *Bucolicum carmen*—as the second eclogue in the sequence, *Argus* already circulated in isolation in 1347. See Velli 1992: 75.

<sup>211</sup> The first two eclogues of the *Buccolicum carmen* are dominated by Vergilian imitation and the theme of love. It is a critical commonplace that, after reading *Argus*, Boccaccio “converted” to Petrarchan pastoral. Indeed, it is frequently the sole aspect of the eclogue that receives attention. See Cooper 1977: 36; Velli 1992: 75; Kegel-Brinkgreve 1990: 275; Hubbard 1998: 242; and Smarr 2001: 246-47.

<sup>212</sup> The reluctance to revisit and challenge old narratives of Boccaccio's pastoral allegories is especially surprising in light of the significant attention paid to the allegorical praxis and theories of his vernacular fictions and Latin treatises. Indeed, arguments concerning the allegorical complexity of his vernacular fictions were one of the principal lines of argumentation used to dispel the notion that Boccaccio was an author of erotic trifles. See, for example, Hollander 1977 and Kirkham 1985. Kriesel 2009 provides a contextualization of Boccaccio's conception

In addition to diminishing the complexity of Boccaccio's relationship to Petrarch, this critical narrative has significantly affected understandings of the history of the fourteenth-century eclogue. I have already had occasion to discuss the extent to which the turn to allegory in fourteenth-century pastoral has been subjected to scholarly scorn, and has been used to justify eliding the centuries between classical and Renaissance pastoral in transhistorical accounts of the genre.<sup>213</sup> Yet though both Petrarch and Boccaccio have been the recipients of these critical broadsides, Petrarch at least has been awarded the stature of having authored this change in pastoral poetics while Boccaccio has been figured as his misguided follower, which severely questions the latter's pastoral authority. According to this assessment, Boccaccio's use of allegory is doubly suspect for it is a "Petrarchan revision he *inflicted* on his later compositions" (Cooper 1977: 38; my emphasis).<sup>214</sup> This narrative of subordination is furthered by the fact that one of the few aspects of the Neapolitan sequence that has received praise is also credited to Petrarch: Boccaccio's putative rejection of epistolary pastoral. In *Faunus*, Boccaccio rewrites an eclogue that he had previously sent as an epistle to Checco di Meletto Rossi, in clear imitation of the eclogue-epistle exchange between Giovanni del Virgilio and Dante.<sup>215</sup> That Boccaccio apparently cleaved his vision of pastoral from Dante's epistolarity upon reading Petrarch's *Argus* has been used to generate the teleological narrative according to which, thanks to Petrarch, the Trecento eclogue revival moved from a brief association with epistolarity in Dante's eclogues to its "natural" and "autonomous" setting: the single-author eclogue collection.<sup>216</sup> Thus, whether Boccaccio's pastoral "conversion" post-*Argus* is construed positively or negatively, he is seen to have yoked his understanding of the genre to Petrarch's, effectively disavowing the novelty of his earlier pastoral experiments.<sup>217</sup>

In this chapter, I will show that the *Buccolicum carmen* not only furthers Boccaccio's earlier pastoral experimentalism but is its culmination, and the fullest expression of pastoral as metagenre in the Trecento eclogue revival. In his experimentation, Boccaccio does reveal himself to be an attentive reader of both Dantean and Petrarchan pastoral. From the former he inherits the understanding of pastoral as an instrument with which to engage polemically with contemporary literary theories, and a space in which to produce generic hybridity that transforms those theories. From the latter he inherits the recognition that, through allegory and the systematic appropriation of epic, the pastoral macrotext could be used to explore new thematic terrain. Yet Boccaccio at once extends the theoretical implications of his fellow pastoralists and formulates a new model of pastoral's metageneric identity by fashioning it into a compelling

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of allegory in terms of medieval theories and a probing analysis of how his conception informs his corpus of texts and his poetic genealogies, but mentions the *Buccolicum carmen* only in passing.

<sup>213</sup> See my introduction, esp. notes 27 and 28.

<sup>214</sup> It is revealing that Smarr, who more than any other critic has attempted to dispel negative evaluations of Boccaccio's Latin pastoral, of which Cooper's is one of the most caustic, echoes Cooper's language of self-inflicted harm when she refers to the arrival of political allegory in *Faunus* as a "malattia" (2001: 247).

<sup>215</sup> On the poetic correspondence between Boccaccio and Checco, see Simona Lorenzini's excellent introduction to her recent critical edition of their exchange (Boccaccio 2011).

<sup>216</sup> See my introduction, esp. notes 24 and 25. See also Chiecchi 1995: 222; and Smarr 2001: 254. In chapter 2, I have already shown that this teleology ignores Petrarch's significant debt to the Dante-Giovanni correspondence. At the end of this chapter, I intend to show that Boccaccio's "break" from epistolarity was never complete and that he explicitly recuperates Dante's epistolary model in *Aggelos*, the final eclogue of the *Buccolicum carmen*.

<sup>217</sup> In fact Velli 1992: 1975 explicitly states that his argument concerning the novelty and influence of Boccaccian pastoral does not extend to the poems written after Boccaccio's encounter with *Argus* in 1347. To frame the issue in a different fashion, in Vittore Branca's famous account of Boccaccio's role as innovator and renovator of late medieval genres, one of the only works that is *not* mentioned is the *Buccolicum carmen*. See Branca 1976.

narrative design. That is, Boccaccio turns the most abstract tangents of pastoral's analysis of literary systems into a fount of storytelling, in which metagenic border-crossings are doubled by diegetic movement and metagenic dialogues are invested with new poignancy and theatricality.

I turn first to a single sequence of Boccaccio's *Buccolicum carmen*, the "Neapolitan" eclogues (*Bucc. carm.* 3-6), precisely because it marks the arrival of allegory into Boccaccio's Latin eclogues and, as such, illuminates the manner in which he conjoined allegorical meaning and pastoral fiction.<sup>218</sup> My contention is that how Boccaccio used allegory to transform pastoral fiction-making may have influenced future authors, even if the allegories themselves did not. I will show that, by narrativizing the arrival of allegory into a conventional pastoral landscape, he at once maintains the poetic integrity of pastoral fictions and broadens the horizon of pastoral representation through the systematic appropriation of other genres. In short, in the *Buccolicum carmen*, allegory does not constitute a departure from pastoral poetics; instead it becomes a border-crossing figure for pastoral's metagenic engagement with other representational models. I will then turn to *Olympia*, written some two decades later, to at once illustrate some of the central and abiding concerns of his pastoral imagination, a continuity that has not been sufficiently acknowledged by the criticism, and examine how Boccaccio's earlier experimentalism culminates in this later eclogue into a full-fledged summa of pastoral's metagenic possibilities which provides a new model for the voices and spaces of the genre.

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A key to understanding Boccaccio's use of allegory is the manner in which his shepherds meet. His ninth eclogue (*Anxiety*) stages the encounter of two strangers, as Batracos, a resident of the poem's pastoral scene, spots a foreigner named Archas who has arrived in the shepherd's fields by chance. This novel situation leads the eclogue to begin with a question that is without precedent in the history of the genre: "Quis, precor, es, nostris in silvis exterus hospes?" ["Pray, who are you, a visitor in our woods?" (9.1)].<sup>219</sup> In classical pastoral, with its relatively limited set of conventional names, a shepherd's identity is well known both to his interlocutors and his readers.<sup>220</sup> In stark contrast to that closed society, here an unknown visitor crosses the boundary of Batracos' landscape and brings news of the world beyond its borders. It is surprising, then, that this new character, though a foreigner to Batracos, is not represented as a foreigner to the genre as well but instead is distinctly marked as an inhabitant of pastoral. Indeed, his name, Archas, is synecdochic for the figure of the Arcadian shepherd, as his first words to Batracos

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<sup>218</sup> These eclogues were most likely written between 1347 and early 1348. For the dating of the collection, see note 204. They are referred to as the Neapolitan eclogues because of the historical events depicted by their allegories, which include: the prosperity and security of Naples under King Robert II; Robert's death; the ascension of his granddaughter Joan and her husband Andrew to the throne; the murder of Andrew (perhaps by Joan); King Louis' entry into Italy to avenge Andrew and gain the crown; and Joan's return to Naples with her new husband, Louis of Taranto. I outline the events here because the content of Boccaccio's allegorical narratives will not be the object of study, but rather how the allegory functions. For the historical context represented in the poems, see Smarr 1987: 201-04.

<sup>219</sup> I cite from Perini's edition of the *Buccolicum carmen* in volume 5:2 of *Tutte le opere di Giovanni Boccaccio*, edited by Vittore Branca (Milan: Mondadori, 1994). The English text is taken, with occasional adaptation, from Janet Smarr's translation (New York: Gardand, 1987).

<sup>220</sup> For a discussion of the representational link between physical convening and literary convention in pastoral dialogues, see Alpers 1996: 71-93.

make clear.<sup>221</sup> Consequently, the meeting of the two shepherds is a scene characterized at once by difference and similitude, as representatives of rival Arcadias encounter each other.

Though such explicit alterity within the community of shepherds is rarely encountered elsewhere in the *Buccolicum carmen*, whose interlocutors otherwise seem to be thoroughly acquainted with each other, the meeting of Batracos and Archas can be used as a heuristic to better understand the encounters between shepherds throughout the collection, for the majority of Boccaccio's eclogues begin with a disconnect between the protagonists. This disconnect is not to be confused with the conventional space of pastoral opposition, the amoebaeon song contest, in which singers are positioned as rivals who refashion the usually serene space of Arcadian colloquy into a forum for antagonistic exchanges, by turns jovial (e.g. Vergil 7) and acerbic (e.g. Vergil 3), as each shepherd seeks to assert the superiority of his song. Boccaccio was well aware of this tradition, and used it to structure some of his eclogues, but in general his shepherds are characterized by sentimental solidarity.<sup>222</sup> Instead of conventional polemics or rivalry, what introduces opposition to this circle of friends is a disparity of knowledge and an initial incompatibility of perspective regarding the landscape that surrounds them. In short, the shepherds disagree not about who is the superior singer, but rather what they know and where they are.<sup>223</sup>

In such instances, the eclogues begin with two shepherds who seem to inhabit different worlds and to experience pastoral in openly divergent ways. This divergence receives one of its most explicit formulations in eclogue 15 (*Phylostropos*), in which the titular shepherd exhorts his companion Typhlus to abandon his love of Crisis and Dyone (figures for wealth and lust, respectively) for more spiritual pursuits. To hasten his companion's departure from such pleasures, he draws attention to a barren and somewhat ominous landscape: "non cernis summa Cephei / iam texisse nives et silvas ponere fronds?" ["Do you not see how snow already whitens the mountain peaks and how the woods are leafless?" (15.3-4)]. Not only does Typhlus disagree with the sentiments voiced by Phylostropos—his eyes gaze on a different world: "Quid montes spectem? Video flavescere campos, / et cantu rauce quantiunt arbusta cicade" ["Why shall I look at mountains? I do see the fields grow golden, and the hoarse cicadas shake the trees with song" (5-6)]. Thus the poem opens not only with a difference of opinion but a difference of seasons as it juxtaposes two landscapes: one in winter with song extinguished, the other in early summer with the fields abuzz with song.<sup>224</sup> The simultaneous introduction of such incompatible horizons would be jarring in any genre, but in pastoral, in which landscape plays such an active role in shaping the representation, it is particularly significant.<sup>225</sup> Through *Phylostropos* and Typhlus' contradictory gazes Boccaccio produces a fissure in the topography of Arcadia.

In a letter to Fra Martino da Signa, in which Boccaccio offers a partial gloss to his Latin eclogues, the author indicates that *Phylostropos* is a figure for Petrarch and Typhlus is a figure

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<sup>221</sup> See *Bucc. carm.* 9.2: "Archas eram quondam pastorque; et nominor Archas" ["I once was an Arcadian and shepherd, Archas by name"].

<sup>222</sup> *Bucc. carm.* 7 (*The Quarrel*) and 13 (*Laurea*) are modeled on the amoebaeon song contest.

<sup>223</sup> Variations of this opening schema are found in over two-thirds of the collection (i.e. eclogues 3-6, 8-10, and 12-15).

<sup>224</sup> To further differentiate the latter's vitality from the former's bleakness, the flourishing Arcadia in which Typhlus resides is marked by traces of the archetypal landscape of the Golden Age, for the "campos" he sees "flavescere" invoke those of Vergil's fourth eclogue, in which "molli paulatim flavescet campus arista" ["slowly will the plains yellow with the waving corn" (4.28)]. All citations of Vergil are from the Loeb edition of his works, edited and translated by H. Rusthon Fairclough (Cambridge MA, 1999).

<sup>225</sup> For the classic account of the pastoral landscape, see Snell 282.

for himself.<sup>226</sup> Thus one possible explanation for the opposed landscapes is that they represents a juxtaposition of Petrarch and Boccaccio's approach to pastoral, with the former superseding the latter as Boccaccio humbly submits to his mentor's admonition to leave Arcadia behind and convert to more spiritual pursuits. Though this hypothesis is in keeping with most readings of the poem and of Petrarch's influence on Boccaccio, it is a limited interpretation because this "Petrarch" functions very much like a Boccaccian shepherd.<sup>227</sup> In fact, the rival Arcadias present in eclogue 15 are not a symptom of a palinodic turn away from pastoral, but rather are a development of the models established earlier in Boccaccio's collection, particularly in the stretch of eclogues from 3 to 6, the Neapolitan eclogues, each of which begins with shepherds similarly out of sync. In eclogue 3 (*Faunus*), Pamphylus luxuriates in a peaceful Arcadian scene but Palemon informs him that the rest of the forest is disturbed by the complaints of Testilis. In eclogue 4 (*Dorus*), Montanus invites Dorus into his serene home but Dorus informs him that he flees in search of a hiding place because their landscape is now ruled by terror. In eclogue 5 (*The Falling Forest*), Pamphylus placidly sings of his love for Chalcidia but Caliopos informs him that his lover is wretchedly weeping. In eclogue 6 (*Alcestus*), Melibeus laments the destruction of Arcadia but Amintas informs him that the other shepherds are celebrating its salvation. As these brief summaries indicate, the poems' initial coordinates shift systematically as contradictory scenes are introduced simultaneously. Like Phyllostropos and Typhlus, these shepherds inhabit a shared dialogical space but different pastoral worlds.

Revealingly, the doubling of the landscape is partially articulated in terms of knowledge, for in each instance a first shepherd inhabits one version of pastoral while a second inhabits another because the latter knows something that the former does not. In eclogues 3 to 5, Pamphylus, Montanus, and Pamphylus (again) are unaware that there is cause for alarm, just as Melibeus is unaware that there is cause for jubilation in eclogue 6.<sup>228</sup> In addition to exacerbating the division between the protagonists, these gaps in information figure the dislocation of the reader as well, who upon encountering the poem is immediately presented with two contradictory sets of expectations. Since these four eclogues lack a narrator to position the reader within the fiction and to prepare him or her for the songs that follow, the fact that the localizing statements of the shepherds are at odds with each other briefly but meaningfully calls

<sup>226</sup> For an influential study of the letter, see Branca 1977: 180-84, who dates it to the period 1371-72.

<sup>227</sup> For interpretations of this poem as evidence of Petrarch's agency in the spiritual conversion of Boccaccio, see Zumbini 1886: 142-44; Carrara 1909: 127-128; and especially Labagnara 1968: 35-36, who reads the entire collection as a narrative of progressive spiritual ascent. For Petrarch's influence on Boccaccio's pastoral praxis, see notes 209 and 211.

<sup>228</sup> By situating each of these four eclogues around a gap in knowledge that is then bridged by a shepherd who relays information to his companion, Boccaccio is imitating and expanding the pedagogical event of Dante's first eclogue, in which Tityrus initially asserts that Meliboeus cannot comprehend the hidden meanings of the song sent by Mopsus, but then proceeds to teach his companion how to read it. Consequently, while the principal precedent for Boccaccio's allegorical move is Petrarch's *Argus*, one of the sources for how that allegory structures the pastoral dialogue is Dantean. Moreover, this comingling of models is evident not only through the structure of these eclogues but their citations as well. For example, eclogue 5 (*Silva cadens*) is in many ways the most exacting imitation of *Argus* in the sequence, for it follows Petrarch's imitation of his own model—Vergil's fifth eclogue—and contains two songs concerning a fallen Arcadia in the wake of King Robert's death. Yet through the celestial coordinates of the sun's chariot with which it opens (verses 4-5), its reference to the golden fleece (verse 40), and its representation of Polyphemus (verses 57 and following), it also consistently echoes Dante's second eclogue. [For Dante's celestial chariot, see *Eclogue* 2.3-4; for the golden fleece, see 2.1; and for Polyphemus, see 2.27.] In short, though Petrarch's influence is powerfully evident in the Neapolitan eclogues, Dante's eclogues continue to inform Boccaccio's pastoral poetics both globally and locally, a further indication that the narrative of a categorical Petrarchan "conversion" at this point in his pastoral career needs to be questioned.



into questions the coherence of the representation. Thus the doubling effect created by the shepherds' contrasting worlds is not only topographical but hermeneutical as well.

In this recurring *mise-en-scène*, Boccaccio revisits and elaborates one of his earliest pastoral experiments: the song contest in *Comedia delle ninfe fiorentine*. This prosimetrical work from the early 1340s contained among its lyric components two eclogues, which are in all likelihood the first vernacular eclogues in Italian.<sup>229</sup> The second of these is an amoebaeon contest between the shepherds Acaten, who espouses the value of life in the valley, and Alcesto, who espouses the value of life in the mountains. Some critics have witnessed in this contrast a spiritual allegory “won” by Alcesto.<sup>230</sup> As such, this eclogue presents an early formulation of the doubled pastoral topography that would be further explored in *Phylostropos*. This parallel between one of Boccaccio's first eclogues and one his last indicates a greater continuity in his pastoral praxis than has previously been accepted.<sup>231</sup> Moreover, it challenges a simplistic reading of *Phylostropos*' (i.e. Petrarch's) moral superiority over Typhlus (i.e. Boccaccio), for the former's message has a nearly thirty-year-old Boccaccian pedigree.

Of particular relevance to the Neapolitan eclogues is an additional allegorical discourse that has been identified by numerous critics, according to which the two shepherds are representatives of “due tipi di poesia” (Smarr 2001: 242). Hortis, Padoan and Velli consider Acaten to be a representative of literal (i.e. Theocritean) pastoral, with Alcesto a representative of its more allegorical (i.e. Vergilian) counterpart.<sup>232</sup> By contrast, Smarr interprets their contrast to be between classical (pagan) pastoral and its modern (Christian) descendent, “dove la vittoria va alla seconda” (ibid.). Both of these interpretations have their merits, yet examinations of the message conveyed by Alcesto's victory, be it the author's preference for a more allegorical style over a more literal one or his affiliation with Christian pastoral as opposed to its pagan roots, or both, miss what I consider to be the most remarkable aspect of this double song: that it happens at all. In all likelihood, considering the spiritual allegory of the *Comedia delle ninfe fiorentine* as a whole, Boccaccio here is aligning himself with Alcesto, yet just as important is that at this early stage of his career, Boccaccio conceives of pastoral as a space that can embrace multiple, and openly divergent, generic horizons. In short, Boccaccio seems to have understood pastoral to be a metagenre from the start, in which different voices can convey not only different perspectives and subjectivities but also different modalities for the construction and interpretation of pastoral fictions.

It is in light of this metageneric dialogue between Acaten and Alcesto that the representational fissure opened up by the Neapolitan eclogues can best be understood, for these later poems expand and complicate this initial doubling of pastoral space and discourse. As previously noted, *Faunus* begins with Pamphylus in a state of pastoral ease while Palemon is distressed by the mournful cries of Testilis. The first three verses neatly delineate these two horizons:

Pamphyle, tu patrio recubas hic lentus in antro,  
dum fremit omne nemus pulsum clamoribus egre  
Testilis, et parvi vacuus nunc omnia pendis. (3.1-3)

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<sup>229</sup> See Hortis 1879: 66.

<sup>230</sup> See Smarr 2001: 241-42.

<sup>231</sup> Smarr also notices the structural parallel between *Comedia delle ninfe fiorentine*'s song contest and *Bucc. carm.* 15.

<sup>232</sup> See Hortis 1879: 66; Velli 1977: 199; Padoan 1978: 155; and Smarr 2001: 242.

Pamphylus, are you lying drowsy here in your paternal cave, while the whole forest trembles at the shouts of anxious Testilis, and do you in your idleness consider it unworthy of concern?

The first verse positions Pamphylus within the conventional space of Arcadian shade, a location made all the more identifiable by extensive echoes of Vergil's first eclogue.<sup>233</sup> The second and third verses then take the poem into unconventional territory as Pamphylus' *otium* is disrupted, or rather encircled, by a forest filled with cries. The stakes of this juxtaposition are registered by their different perspectives on *otium*, for in the wake of Vergil's *Bucolica*, the peaceful ease of the shepherd's life became the constitutive positionality of the genre. Before the second verse complicates the scene, generic expectations suggest that Pamphylus' ease will serve as the pretext for the song that follows, but Palemon immediately undermines these expectations as he provides a dissonant counterpoint to that ease by bringing news of Testilis, and then proceeds to directly challenge the legitimacy of *otium* itself. At the start of the eclogue that marks Boccaccio's turn to a new pastoral praxis, he restages the conventional pastoral scene at the same time that he introduces a figure that veers from it.

That the initial opposition of these two pastoral figures marks a decisive event in Boccaccio's understanding of pastoral is made evident by the fact that the next seventeen verses replay the juxtaposition of ease and threat. First, the initial scene is disrupted temporally and narratologically by a story. Caught unawares by the news of Testilis' distress, Pamphylus asks Palemon to "ignaroque aperi, queso, percepta" ["tell an ignorant man what you have heard" (11)], which leads the latter to narrate his encounter with her. Palemon begins his tale with "Tempus erat," a conventional classical formula for inserted narratives, yet one that is distinctly *not* pastoral. Instead, this form of analepsis is associated with epic, as seen in the stories of Aeneas' dream during the fall of Troy (Vergil, *Aeneid* 2.268) or Myrrha's heinous seduction of her father (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.446). The thwarting of generic expectations here is made evident by a shift in setting, for while those classical precedents led to narratives that transpire in the middle of the night, Palemon's transpires under the midday sun:

Tempus erat placidum; pastores ludus habebat  
aut somnus lenis; paste sub quercubus altis  
ac patulis passim recubabant lacte petulcis  
ubera prebentes natis distenta capelle. (12-15)

The day was clear; the shepherds played or slumbered. Beneath the tall and spreading oaks, the shegoats well-fed lay here and there, now offering milk-swollen udders to their butting young.

The scene that Palemon describes is at once epic *and* pastoral. The slumber of some of the shepherds strengthens the allusion to the *Aeneid*, Book 3, where two verses after "Tempus erat" Aeneas is found "in somnis" (270), yet the occasion for sleep is now the heat of midday, the conventional timeframe of pastoral song. Juxtaposed to these citations is the return of Vergil's first eclogue, in a calque even more precise than that used to describe Pamphylus at the

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<sup>233</sup> "Pamphyle, tu" and "recubas" calque "Tityre, tu patulae recubans" (Vergil 1.1); "patrio antro" calques "nos patriae finis" (1.3); and "lentus" calques "lentus" (1.4).

beginning of the poem, for the she-goats, like Tityrus, are “patulis . . . recubabant.” As such, the fissure between a conventional pastoral landscape at peace and an unconventional pastoral landscape in peril is opened under the sign of generic hybridity.

Moreover, as this new evocation of Vergil’s first eclogue suggests, Palemon now finds himself in the pastoral space that Pamphylus inhabited in *Faunus*’ first verse, though in the past tense. Once again, a shepherd’s repose is interrupted, and this time the rupture of *otium* is made explicit: “*ocia cum subito rupit vox improba meste / Testilis*” [“when suddenly sad Testilis’ persistent voice *broke* in upon our *leisure*” (20-21; my emphasis)]. As these verses replay and gloss the opening of the poem, the breaking of leisure becomes explicitly metageneric and serves as an aperture in the pastoral enclosure. Only then does Palemon finally relay to Pamphylus (and the reader) the news that led him to chastise his friend’s leisure at the beginning of the poem: Testilis laments the departure of her lover Faunus, who has abandoned her to hunt wild beasts in the forest. With this scene, allegory finally enters the poem.<sup>234</sup> On the heels of two eclogues relatively devoid of allegory, its sudden eruption here has been duly noted by critics.<sup>235</sup> However, what has not been acknowledged is what occasions the allegory and how it encounters the literal, for here the allegory acts diegetically within the pastoral fiction. The poem’s titular character and the allegory that orbits him are only introduced to the poem after Boccaccio has accomplished two things. First, by opening up a fissure in the Arcadian landscape through his characters’ divergent perspectives, he introduces the possibility of two different but simultaneous levels of pastoral, each with its own process of signification. Second, by staging Palemon’s transmission of unknown information to the “ignorant” Pamphylus (11), he figures the arrival of a new message that alters the latter’s understanding of his surroundings. If the doubled landscape of the former mirrors the correspondence between the literal and the allegorical, the latter’s transaction places the two directly in contact as the literal “reads” the allegorical. These two maneuvers reroute the vertical circuit of literal signifier and allegorical signified into a horizontal narrative that recounts the entry of allegory into Arcadia. In short, the story that Palemon tells his companion, out of which the allegory is spun, is figured as a border-crossing. Though *Faunus* may be dominated by an intricate allegorical narrative, Boccaccio’s staging of its arrival suggests that this allegory is not immanent but rather imported.

As Palemon’s brief epic-pastoral narrative suggests, this importation occurs under the sign of generic hybridity, which the rest of the eclogue proceeds to further accentuate. This is particularly clear after the appearance of a third shepherd, Moeris, whose arrival establishes the same link between allegory, movement, and storytelling. He brings news from the front, the generic markers of which are ascribable not to pastoral but rather to epic. For example, his tale includes a graphic description of Alexis’ murder (82-88), and news of the conscription of shepherds as Tityrus amasses his army (97-101). Both of these violent scenarios are pastoralized—Alexis’ killer is a wolf, the archetypal figure for threats to Arcadian peace, and Tityrus’ forces are armed with hunting spears and nets, imagery evocative of conventional pastoral metaphors of the hunt. Of course, this pastoralization is necessitated, in part, by Boccaccio’s chosen subject matter, for once he had decided to use pastoral for the representation of contemporary politics, he needed to construct a compelling pastoral veil to mask the historical

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<sup>234</sup> Boccaccio’s letter to Fra Martino explains that Testilis is a figural allegory for the city of Forli, and Faunus represents Francesco degli Ordelaffi, Forli’s ruler, who was indeed fond of hunting, but whose departure here represents his decision to join the cause of King Ludwig of Hungary (figured later as Tityrus), who is travelling to Naples to establish his claim to its throne.

<sup>235</sup> See notes 209 and 211.

truth if the allegory was to function without jettisoning the coherence of the poem's fiction. Yet it is not simply a matter of substitution, for Boccaccio is assiduous in his representation of allegory as a change that occurs *within* the fictional events in addition to being a change in how that fiction is read. First it affects how these shepherds talk, as is evident in the polygeneric *incipit* of Palemon's story. Moreover, it affects how they act and how they perceive their surroundings, the most clamorous example of which is Palemon's decision at eclogue's end to accompany Faunus and enlist in Tityrus' army. For the first time in the history of the eclogue, a shepherd goes to war. The novelty of this moment can hardly be overstated, for here a shepherd effectively leaves the horizon of pastoral—whose portrait this very shepherd had offered at the beginning of the poem—for a different genre. Moreover, at the moment he decides to strike out for the world of epic, he articulates an ethos that is unprecedented in pastoral: “Naritius nullas potuit preponere laudes / quesitis peregre” [“The highest praises, said Naritius, are praises won abroad” (123-24)]. Though desire for fame is not foreign to the genre, whose singers frequently vie for poetic supremacy, the source of, and audience for, that fame is delimited by the boundaries of Arcadia. Palemon aspires to a very different pastoral design: the ambitions of the wandering shepherd. Moreover, this too is an act of generic appropriation, for Naritius is a pastoralized figure for Ulysses.<sup>236</sup> The unexpected appearance of the classical hero here is particularly significant because, unlike the weeping Testilis or the bellicose Tityrus, it is unnecessary for the poem's allegorical narrative. Rather, it is a symptom of the poem's generic negotiations and ambitions—the wandering Ulysses becomes a figure for the poem's representation of movement across the boundaries of pastoral.

Indeed, the transgression of boundaries is foregrounded elsewhere in the poem. For example, Moeris asks his companions if they recall how they recently *saw* Tityrus and his army as “hac olim transire via silvamque per omnem?” [“he crossed this way through the entire forest?” (107)]. Not only does this bring war practically to the doorstep of pastoral—it mirrors the polyvalent movement that structures Moeris' role throughout the eclogue. His entry into the two-person dialogue between Palemon and Pamphylus, the news he brings of Argus, Alexis, and Tityrus, and the allegory imported by that news here become embodied in the form of an army that traverses Arcadia on its way from and to the world of epic. This dramatic embodiment then shifts to the present tense a few verses later when Moeris turns the attention of his companions to the horizon as the army encroaches: “Pulvis patet, aspice colles” [Look: you see the dust is rising on the hills” (115)]. From within the space of pastoral, the shepherds now peer into another genre.

Thus in *Faunus*, the first of Boccaccio's eclogues to traffic extensively in allegorical signification, that allegory works in concert with, and is figured within the fiction as, the topographical expansion of the pastoral landscape and the thematic expansion of pastoral representation. By turning allegory into a figure in motion that arrives in, but also departs from, Arcadia, Boccaccio suggests its innovative potential for the eclogue form. Yet at the same time he also indicates that pastoral representation and allegorical interpretation are not coterminous. Though it would be a willful misreading of Boccaccio's eclogues to suggest that allegory is not a fundamental aspect of their meaning, *Faunus* suggests that there is a pastoral before and after the allegory, that the range of the representable is expanded by the allegorical narrative that subsequently arrives, but is not exhausted by it. In this regard, it is illustrative that the poem does not follow Palemon as he departs, but rather stays with Pamphylus, whom Palemon has instructed to feed his flock, that is, to uphold the pastoral way of life in his absence. And it is

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<sup>236</sup> Boccaccio's source for this Ulyssean cognomen is Ovid's *Fasti* (4.69).

with Pamphylus, the eclogue's representative of conventional pastoral, that the poem ends as he bids farewell to his companion: "I felix, factumque putes rediturus, amice" ["Go with my blessing; and consider it done; for surely you'll return to us, my friend" (128)]. The motion charted by this departure and projected return has a metagenic significance that glosses the poem's balancing of pastoral and epic discourses, for it turns the initial distinction between the peaceful and the anxious shepherd into a spatial narrative that locates the former within the pastoral fold while it sends the other to the epic battlefield. In this regard, it is revelatory that *both* shepherds are figures of the poet. In the initial version of the poem, Boccaccio figured himself as the shepherd Menalcas, which character *Faunus* splits into Palemon and Pamphylus.<sup>237</sup> Through the circuit of movement traced at the end of the eclogue, Boccaccio represents himself as at once departing from and residing within the conventional space of pastoral.

The following eclogue, *Dorus*, makes good on Pamphylus' promise of a return to the pastoral fold. In fact, the titular character is a shepherd-soldier who reenters Arcadia having narrowly escaped death in the war that was about to break out at the end of *Faunus*. The shepherd Montanus is going about his business at the end of the day when Dorus and Phytias rush past his cave. After Montanus offers the two wayfarers shelter and a simple meal, Dorus tells him of the devastation visited upon a distant population of peaceful shepherds by the monster Polyphemus, a narrative which further broadens the thematic repertoire of pastoral to include the horrors of warfare, with mutilated corpses (4.73) and blood-tinted streams (78). As in *Faunus*, these generic transgressions are associated with diegetic movement, for Polyphemus' rage forces Dorus and Phytias to flee:

Hinc natale solum silvas armenta domosque  
 liquimus, ac tenui lembo diffugimus ambo  
 infandam monstri rabiem; nec defuit usquam  
 dux fidus, placideque tulit quoscunque labores.  
 Nos turbo fluctusque maris Thelamonis ad oras  
 impulit, inde tuos errantes venimus agros. (4.135-40)

Hence we have left out native soil, abandoned the forests, flocks, and homes, and fled together from the monster's rage unspeakable, inside a fragile boat. I never lacked a trusty guide; he calmly bore all blows. The ocean's wave and eddy drove us to the shores of Thelamon, from which we've come by wandering to your fields.

Dorus' final speech constitutes an epic in miniature, indeed one that resembles the *Aeneid*, whose protagonist not only follows a similar oceanic trajectory but also concludes his tale to Dido in Book 3 with a similar pronouncement.<sup>238</sup> Yet, as was the case in Palemon's generically hybrid narrative in *Faunus*, the terms here are charged with associations that are at once epic and pastoral, for these verses are also a calque of Meliboeus' exilic state in Vergil's first eclogue. Indeed, verse 135 is exactly modeled on Meliboeus' confession that "nos patriae finis et dulcia linquimus arva; nos patriam fugimus" ["we are leaving our country's bounds and sweet

<sup>237</sup> For an examination of the initial version of *Faunus*, see Martellotti 1983a: 88; and Smarr 2001: 244-46.

<sup>238</sup> See *Aeneid* 3.715. The association of Dorus and Aeneas is furthered by the fact that one of the last events in Aeneas' story is his encounter with Polyphemus.

fields. We are outcasts from our country” (1.3-4)]. Moreover, Boccaccio’s use of Vergilian echoes here conflates the perspectives of Meliboeus and Tityrus for while the first verse of the passage cited above is modeled on Vergil’s Eclogue 1.3-4, the second verse evokes and refashions Tityrus’ “*tenui . . . avena*” (1.2). Here Boccaccio transforms Tityrus’ slender reed, the symbol of the pastoral muse itself, into a figure for pastoral errancy. In so doing, Boccaccio creates a new pastoral figure that, in addition to anticipating the peripatetic heroes of pastoral romance, serves as a signpost for his experiments with the genre, in particular his importation of dramatic movement to pastoral and his amplification of its horizons. Like the related reference to Ulysses in the previous eclogue, Dorus’ *tenui lembo* is synecdochic for the poem’s numerous departures from convention and its appropriation of the coordinates and themes of other genres.

In addition to the striking generic hybridity of *Dorus*, it carries two larger implications that illuminate the novelty of Boccaccio’s approach to pastoral. The first regards pastoral and narrativity, while the second regards the intersection between convention and innovation. In the case of the former, to state what might seem to be the obvious, *Dorus* is a sequel to *Faunus*. In terms of themes, characters, and structures, it is a continuation and revision of the eclogue that precedes it. Indeed, eclogues 3 to 6 are all concerned with Neapolitan politics and their effects on the Italian peninsula. This stretch of the *Buccolicum carmen* is of singular importance to the history of the genre because it tells *one* story, albeit from fragmentary and at times contradictory perspectives, over the course of *multiple* eclogues. This constitutes a remarkable innovation in the representational possibilities of the pastoral macrotext, which for the first time becomes invested with narratological significance that explicitly carries over from one eclogue to the next.<sup>239</sup>

An eclogue collection both invites and evades narrativization. Like a lyric sequence, the ordering of its constituent parts and the thematic threads that connect them can be used to suggest a story. Yet also like the lyric sequence, and to an even greater degree since it replaces the singular lyric subject with a proliferation of interlocutors, it resists an unequivocal and stable narrative arc because of the representational gap between poems.<sup>240</sup> Thus Vergil’s *Bucolica* has provoked numerous and divergent interpretations that try to tease out an overarching structure that unifies its eclogistic fragments.<sup>241</sup> There have been similar attempts to individuate some type of “progress” across Boccaccio’s *Buccolicum carmen*. Yet such inquiries have been focused principally upon the autobiographical narratives hinted at by the sequence, without sufficient attention directed toward the various strategies with which Boccaccio links his eclogues, and nowhere are those links more explicit than in the Neapolitan eclogues, the most narratologically ambitious sequence of eclogues written up to this point in the history of the genre.<sup>242</sup>

The novelty of Boccaccio’s narrativization of pastoral comes with one caveat: Petrarch’s *Bucolicum carmen*. As I have argued in the previous chapter, Petrarch introduces new narratological complexity to pastoral through a perspectival movement that progresses across the entire macrotext and through miniature blocks of eclogues within the larger collection, such as

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<sup>239</sup>In her introduction to Boccaccio’s *Eclogues*, Smarr indicates that the multi-poem allegorical narrative of the Neapolitan eclogues is “a novelty in the genre which encouraged its incorporation into narrative” (1987: xxxiv). Yet in her later work on the same subject, she qualifies this novelty by criticizing the manner in which this narrative is constructed, and calls Boccaccio’s decision to widen the thematic scope of pastoral so that it includes political and historical narratives a representational “malattia” (2001: 247).

<sup>240</sup>For the effects of unity and fragmentation on narrative in the lyric sequence, see Barolini 1989.

<sup>241</sup>For the long history of narrativizing the *Bucolica*, see Van Sickle 1978.

<sup>242</sup>Representative of the autobiographical approach is the argument of Labagnara 1968: 31-41, who claims that the *Buccolicum carmen* “narrates” the ascending spiritual trajectory of its author.

the papal eclogues (*Buc. carm.* 5-6), which like Boccaccio's Neapolitan eclogues are linked by subject-matter, structure, and character-names.<sup>243</sup> Yet this is decisively *not* another instance of Boccaccio imitating Petrarch, since both initiated their experiments in the potential for pastoral storytelling contemporaneously and independently.<sup>244</sup> This simultaneous exploration of the pastoral macrotext's latent narrativity is one of the great surprises of the Trecento eclogue revival. However, these authors did share a stimulating precedent: the Giovanni-Dante exchange. The epistolarity that Dante introduced to pastoral led to a fundamental shift in the structure of an eclogical macrotext. A sequence of exchanged letters generates a narrative order as it progresses from a "now" to a "then", an effect augmented by Dante's incorporation of the materiality of Giovanni's letters into the diegesis of his eclogues so that their arrivals become narrative events within the fictional world of Tityrus and Mopsus. That is, though their exchange may be first and foremost a poetic debate, because Dante shifted the terms of that debate through his allusive pastoral response to Giovanni's initial non-pastoral letter, it is also a three-eclogue story about that debate and, by consequence, is the first pastoral macrotext with a singular narrative focus.<sup>245</sup>

Boccaccio's abiding imitation of Dante's eclogues even in his Petrarchan "phase" and Boccaccio and Petrarch's co-creation of a movement toward ever-greater narratological complexity in pastoral is a testament to the fact that the developmental history of the fourteenth-century eclogue is much more complex than previously thought. Moreover, that one of the ways the Neapolitan eclogues begin to tell a story is through their allegorical overlaps is further evidence that Boccaccio's use of allegory needs to be reappraised. Long taken to be a derivative offshoot in the developmental history of the genre, the extensive allegories of the *Buccolicum carmen* are in fact one of the signs of its generic novelty. Boccaccio's allegory enters Arcadia in the company of, and in collaboration with, the aspects of his representation that are more conspicuously innovative, such as the dramatic increase of diegetic movement within the pastoral landscape and the new narratological complexity he gives to the dialogical space of the eclogue. Since it works in concert with these other strategies, Boccaccio's version of allegorized pastoral needs to be understood not as a step away from pastoral discourse, but rather as a vehicle he deploys to claim new representational terrain for the genre. Through this usage, allegory becomes a mechanism, even a figure, for pastoral's metageneric representation of other genres within its own fictions. It is in the context of Boccaccio's larger project to renew and expand pastoral that his allegory must be understood, in which it is a privileged tool, but still only one of the many, that he uses to remap the genre.

In fact, Helen Cooper's indictment of Boccaccio's allegorical pastoral (along with Petrarch's), in which she asserts that "the dead hand of allegory very nearly killed the genre," after which "the only possible advance was to go backwards, even to start again" (46), is belied by the complexity of Boccaccio's allegorical praxis which inscribes the *Buccolicum carmen* in two distinct and influential pastoral genealogies. The representational link that he establishes

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<sup>243</sup> See also *Buc. carm.* 9-11 which are similarly united by subject-matter—the Black Death—if not by structure and character-name.

<sup>244</sup> Petrarch was working on his papal eclogues in summer of 1347, when Boccaccio was composing the Neapolitan sequence. Though Petrarch seems to have conceived of his pastoral poetry as a collection from the start, his *Buccolicum carmen* was not finished for another decade, and at the time of Boccaccio's composition of *Faunus*, he would have had access only to *Argus*.

<sup>245</sup> An additional, and particularly suggestive, example of Boccaccio and Petrarch's shared yet independent imitation of Dante is the figure of Polyphemus from Dante's second eclogue, whom both authors introduce to their own pastoral fictions, again contemporaneously and again without awareness of the other author's work. See Petrarch, *Buc. carm.* 1.115, and Boccaccio, *Bucc. carm.* 4.62 and 5.126, each of which was composed in the period 1347-48.

between allegory and movement both within and across eclogues refers back to his immediate predecessor—Dante—and also points forward to future developments in the genre. On the one hand, by staging allegory as the arrival of information, that is, a pedagogical event in which one shepherd informs another of a message of which the latter is ignorant, Boccaccio develops the implications of Dante’s first eclogue, in which Tityrus instructs Meliboeus on the meaning of Mopsus’ song. This aspect of Boccaccio’s representation would develop into the pedagogical allegories of Mantuanus’ *Adulescentia* and eclogues such as Pontano’s *Quinquennius*, in which a mother humorously instructs her son on bathroom etiquette. On the other hand, by staging allegory as a movement across boundaries, Boccaccio revisits the dramatic event of Dante’s second eclogue, in which Meliboeus suddenly comes rushing into view. Meliboeus’ actions not only constitute the first such dramatic event in the history of the genre, but also generate a macrotextual link with the poem that precedes it in the Giovanni-Dante exchange, for it is soon after his arrival that his flute miraculously “plays” the eclogue that Giovanni had sent Dante (Dante-Giovanni 2.28-43). In the *Buccolicum carmen*, Boccaccio takes the two narratives generated by Meliboeus’ arrival, that is, the diegetic movement within the eclogue and the macrotextual movement across eclogues, and expands their scope and representational potential. Though the narratives that Boccaccio develops are still fragmentary, and the *Buccolicum carmen* does not yet articulate a unified story as later texts would, his addition of dramatic events to his eclogues and the greater narratological complexity he invests into them both as individual poems and as parts of a macrotext anticipate the developments that, at the end of the fifteenth century, would lead to Pontano’s massive *Lepidina*, Sannazaro’s *Arcadia*, and the creation of the pastoral novel.

In light of these future developments, in which allegory would play a progressively diminished role, it is essential that Boccaccio’s allegories and his innovations in pastoral narrativity, though intimately linked, can be dissociated. It is not only the allegory but also the structures of the fiction that solder together these eclogues to generate a macrotextual narrative. Dorus’ flight at the beginning of his eclogue is in explicit contrast to Pamphylus’ initial idleness in the preceding eclogue but also carries over the movement at the end of *Faunus* when Palemon departs to enlist in Tityrus’ army. Similarly, Pamphylus’ declaration of friendship at the end of *Faunus* is immediately echoed by the amity Montanus shows Dorus at the beginning of the following eclogue when he invites him into his cave. In fact, all four of these eclogues are marked by such structural echoes. For example, eclogue 5 (*The Falling Forest*) begins with an echo of the first verses of *Faunus*, and the two are additionally linked by the fact that both rebuked shepherds are named Pamphylus. In turn eclogues 5 and 6 (*Alcestus*) are bound together structurally by the ominous barking of dogs at the beginning of the former and the conclusion of the latter. Consequently, it is not only the shared points of reference of their allegorical narratives but also the structural concatenation of the fiction itself that shapes the Neapolitan eclogues into a macrotextual unit.

There is an additional structural echo that conjoins these four poems which introduces the second larger implication of *Dorus* and the two eclogues that follow. As I have previously noted, like *Faunus*, each of these eclogues begins with two shepherds out of sync, a disconnect registered in part by echoes of Vergil’s first eclogue. Whereas *Faunus* began with an echo of the start of Vergil 1, *Dorus* begins with echoes of its end. For the first three verses, the reader is positioned within the pastoral confines of Pamphylus’ cave. Both the setting, the time of day, and the simple meal that he offers Dorus are drawn from the closing scene of the Vergilian intertext, in which Tityrus invites Meliboeus to share a meal with him as smoke is seen rising



from the shepherds' huts at dusk. Once again, the coordinates shift as Dorus informs Montanus that he is forbidden from accepting because of a terror that impels him to flee, a surprising volte-face from Montanus' serene invitation that generates the doubling of landscapes witnessed in *Faunus* into which space is inserted Dorus' allegorical narrative.<sup>246</sup> Moreover, the different generic horizons the two shepherds inhabit are introduced, once again, by a doubling of interpretation. While Montanus' initial interpretation of Dorus' flight is conventionally pastoral—the latter must be in search of his goats or cows—Dorus' explanation is decidedly not—he is afraid of everything. As was the case in *Faunus*, the generically innovative allegorical narrative that dominates the eclogue is preceded by, and generated from, two shepherds who interpret their surroundings differently.

In addition to furthering the impression of narrative continuity, Boccaccio's reiteration of the opening disconnect carries with it a powerful implication for his pastoral praxis. Were the disconnect only to appear once at the beginning of *Faunus*, it would be compelling to interpret it as the marker of Boccaccio's transition from the predominantly non-allegorical love eclogues with which his collection begins to the systematically allegorical poems that follow. Instead, he repeatedly returns to the scene of doubled Arcadias.<sup>247</sup> If in *Faunus* Boccaccio stages the arrival of allegory as an aperture in pastoral discourse, it is an aperture that his poems continuously reopen. There is no doubt that these eclogues mark a significant change from the pastoral model that Boccaccio had established in the first two eclogues, yet each begins with a momentary evocation of a pastoral before that change, that is, a pastoral space without allegory.<sup>248</sup> At no point does the intricate allegory of these poems obscure the representational attention to the literal pastoral fiction, precisely because the literal and the allegorical encounter each other at their starts. In each instance, before Boccaccio introduces the allegorical narratives for which he is famous, and frequently derided, he roots his pastoral discourse in a space that the tradition has made familiar, and however far the subsequent representation departs from convention, that space is never lost.

One of the principal means whereby Boccaccio achieves his balance between tradition and innovation is his use of Vergil. Of course, Vergilian echoes are a commonplace in the pastoral tradition and are to be found throughout the *Buccolicum carmen*. Indeed, Boccaccio's second eclogue (*Pampinea*) is a more exacting imitation of the *Bucolica* than anything written by

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<sup>246</sup> The incompatibility of their landscapes is even more explicit than it was in the previous eclogue, for Dorus announces that "Pastorum pascua quippe / nec bona nunc quero" [I look not now for a shepherd's pastures" (4.14-15)].

<sup>247</sup> See note 223.

<sup>248</sup> A comparison with Petrarch's *Argus* is illuminating in this regard for it too opens with a peaceful Arcadia that is soon subjected to peril. It is a moment of great relevance to Boccaccio's Neapolitan eclogues because Petrarch begins the poem in a more conventional pastoral style before turning toward an allegorical narrative, whose beginning is coincident with the arrival of danger to the shepherds' world. Yet the manner in which Petrarch and Boccaccio handle the juxtaposition of distinct Arcadias is markedly different. Petrarch understands the juxtaposition historiographically by first representing a Golden-Age Arcadia and then, with the death of King Robert, turning to an Arcadia after the fall. By contrast, Boccaccio oscillates between an Edenic and a postlapsarian Arcadia. Though the utility of Petrarch's conceit for commentary on contemporary Italian politics was not lost on Boccaccio, as his own political narratives make clear, he seems to have been more intrigued by the representational possibilities afforded by presenting the two temporalities simultaneously. Moreover, while Petrarch juxtaposes the past and present of the genre only once, before turning to the latter as it definitively follows and replaces the latter, Boccaccio systematically revisits the juxtaposition so that the two can speak to each other.

Dante or Petrarch.<sup>249</sup> Yet the particular manner in which Boccaccio uses Vergil at the beginning of his eclogues suggests that he is adopting a specific citational strategy. Twelve of Boccaccio's sixteen eclogues have at least one strong citation of Vergil in their first ten verses.<sup>250</sup> Of the various eclogues echoed, Vergil's first is the privileged intertext, especially in the Neapolitan eclogues, each of which bears its trace. In a sequence of eclogues in which Boccaccio tests the limits of the genre and articulates a new understanding of its representational range which redefines what can be housed within the confines of pastoral, he steadfastly revisits Vergil's foundational poem. It is a remarkable double-move for it at once secures his pastoral experiments in the authority of Vergil and differentiates his approach from that authority. He shapes the space of Vergil's first eclogue into a flexible structure that he then expands to include the innovative elements he subsequently introduces.

This is particularly evident at the beginning of eclogue 13 (*Laurea*):

*Ocia* nunc celebras, Stilbon, mirabile visu!  
 et qui scabras ambire sueveris alpes  
 candidulos minibus tractans hinc inde lapillus  
 torrentis vitrei, *recubas* iam segnis in *umbra*. (13.1-4; my emphasis)

Now you're at *leisure*, marvelous to see! You, Stilbon, who were wont to cross rough Alps, dragging from here and there with busy hands those dazzling gems from out the icy torrent, now lazily *recline* beneath the *shade*.

The second and third verses are generically audacious. In terms of its objects, activity, location, and the shuttling movement across different landscapes, this portrait of the life and peregrinations of the merchant is utterly new to pastoral. Yet this novelty is embraced by echoes of *Bucolica* 1, rendered with particular force by the first and last words of the citation, for *ocia* (i.e. *otium*) and *umbra* are two of the principle markers that delimit the pursuits and space of pastoral life. The structural balance that this opening strikes between convention and innovation is emblematic of Boccaccio's approach to pastoral throughout the collection. His boldest alterations of the genre—the amplification of its potential for allegory; the introduction of novel elements, especially storytelling and diegetic movement; his appropriation of the themes and *topoi* of other genres, epic in particular; and his movement toward narrative continuity—are figured within the poems themselves as departing from but also returning to the Vergilian model.

Consequently, one of the remarkable effects of Boccaccio's citational strategy is that it allows him to enact literary history. The Neapolitan eclogues all begin at the origins of the genre by positioning their shepherds (and readers) within the landscape of Vergil's *Bucolica* through explicit citations, before the trademarks of Boccaccio's approach—movement, storytelling, and allegory—transport the representation forward in time both historically, through references to contemporary politics, and literarily, through modifications in the genre's repertoire and coordinates, to the mid-fourteenth century.

<sup>249</sup> It is modeled on Vergil's second eclogue. For a catalogue of Vergilian citations throughout the *Buccolicum carmen*, see Labagnara 1968: 55-69.

<sup>250</sup> Hubbard 1998: 236-37 investigates the same citational phenomenon, but understands it in terms of similitude, according to which view Boccaccio suggests the themes of what follows by evoking an appropriate Vergilian precedent. I intend to show that the intertextual situation is much more complex, as Boccaccio uses these citations to mark his departures from Vergil.

This is equally true for the history of Boccaccio's own literary career, for the representational pivot from the conventional shepherd to the shepherd who brings news of a different world also marks the macrotextual transition from Boccaccio's more rigorously Vergilian approach in the first two eclogues of the *Buccolicum carmen* to the innovative pastoral project he introduces in the rest of the collection. This macrotextual self-awareness is particularly evident in eclogue 5 (*The Falling Forest*), at the beginning of which the shepherd Caliopus rebukes Pamphylus in terms that replay the structure of *Faunus*' opening:

Pamphyle, tu placidos tecum meditaris amores  
 Calcidie, viridi recubans in gramine solus;  
 ipsa dolens deflet miseram quas nescio silvas. (5.1-3)

Pamphylus, by yourself you meditate, reclining on the green grass all alone, the sweet love of Chalcidia; but she weeps in sorrow for some wretched woods or other.

As in *Faunus*, these verses neatly delineate and juxtapose two pastoral landscapes, a conventional Arcadia at peace (1-2) and an unconventional pastoral in peril (3). Once again, the references to Vergil's first eclogue are abundant. Moreover, the generic hybridity implicit in the juxtaposition of the various landscapes throughout these poems here receives a very explicit formulation, for Caliopus' name is clearly modeled on Calliope, the muse of epic, who here enumerates the key markers of pastoral at the same time that he exhorts Pamphylus to take the representation in a new direction. Finally, poetry is now explicitly at stake. Whereas the beginning of *Faunus* addressed the *otium* of pastoral life, the beginning of *The Falling Forest* introduces the pastoral poetry that *otium* produces, for Pamphylus has become a poet who composes love songs to and about Chalcidia. Since the theme of love has been conspicuously absent in the previous two eclogues, Pamphylus' love for Chalcidia harkens back to the loves of Damon in *Galla* and Palemon in *Pampinea* (*Bucc. carm.* 1-2). The name of the new lover makes the reference to these earlier eclogues concrete, for in addition to being one of the protagonists of *Faunus*, Pamphylus is also mentioned in *Galla*, where he is figured as a singer of a new type of love song.<sup>251</sup> As *The Falling Forest* pushes this novelty from the theme of love to the theme of politics and the coordinates of epic, it charts the movement of the four eclogues that precede it in the collection. That it is Calliopus, a proxy for epic, who marks the transition illustrates how the boundaries of the genre have been remapped in the interim.

If the entire Neapolitan sequence implicitly generates a kind of literary genealogy, its final eclogue explicitly thematizes Boccaccio's pastoral inheritance and suggests how Boccaccio understood his position in the history of the genre, the implications of which further undermine a literal understanding of his rhetoric of self-deprecation. Unlike its companions, *Alcestus* is an eclogue of celebration. Though it opens with the same fissure that structured the beginnings of the previous three poems, the terms have been reversed, as Melibeus wrongly thinks that political turmoil still governs the landscape [verse 8: "Silva vetus cecidit" ("The ancient wood has fallen")], while Amintas brings news of shepherds rejoicing at the end of the conflict. Now that the specter of Polyphemus has been cast out, order has returned to Arcadia: "Alcestus *rediit* nobis, *rediere* vagantes / pastores oviumque greges, *rediere* priores, / letitiaque virent silve vallesque resultant" ["Alcestus has returned; the wandering shepherds and their straying flocks

<sup>251</sup> See *Bucc. carm.* 1.66.

are all come back to us just as before; with joy the woods grow green and valleys echo” (6.13-15; my emphases)]. With this scene of pastoral repatriation Boccaccio figures the rise to power of Alcestus (Louis of Taranto) as a return to the Golden Age.<sup>252</sup> Yet once again the allegorical message elicits suggestive representational implications that have not received sufficient critical attention, for the anaphora “return” (i.e. *rediiit, rediere, rediere*) links this passage to the final verse of the first Neapolitan eclogue, *Faunus*: “I felix, factumque putes *rediturus*, amice” [Go with my blessing; and consider it done; for surely you will return to us, my friend” (3.128; my emphasis)]. As previously noted, these words were spoken by one figure of the poet—Pamphylus—to another—Palemon—as the latter set out to join Tityrus’ army. The evocation of Pamphylus’ words here not only provides the entire Neapolitan sequence with a sense of closure; it serves as a commentary on the metagenic negotiations that have transpired between the beginning and end of that sequence: Boccaccio-Palemon has wandered across new representational terrain but now returns to the fold of conventional pastoral, just as Boccaccio-Pamphylus had promised.

Consequently, in addition to its celebration of newfound peace, *Alcestus* glosses Boccaccio’s position vis-à-vis the pastoral tradition he has inherited. This becomes particularly clear when the question of tradition becomes openly thematized as Amintas suggests some songs for the now jubilant Melibeus to sing:

Esculeo dudum descriptos cortice rastro  
Phyllidis incipies, vel quos mage duxeris, ignes,  
seu magis Alcesti laudes: non dignior ullus;  
seu magnos Phytias quos pertulit ante labores,  
qui meruit versus qua Stilbon flabat avena. (6. 68-72)

Begin with Phyllis’ loves, which have already been inscribed in the oak bark with the prongs of a rake, or any loves which you prefer; or even better sing Alcestus’ praises: no one is more worthy; or the great trials which Phytias endured, who earned some verses from the pipe of Stilbon.

In terms of the political allegory, these three potential subjects for song can be seen to figure the stability that has returned to Naples, for Alcestus is clearly Louis of Taranto, and critics have interpreted Phyllis to be his wife Joan and Phytias to be his seneschal Niccola Acciaiuoli.<sup>253</sup> Yet this only tells part of the story, for this passage represents a pastoral repertoire both thematically and intertextually. The three options differ greatly from each other and convey a sense of the breadth of pastoral representation. Moreover, the passage places that breadth into a tradition of pastoral singing, which through the *topos* of the inscribed bark alludes not only to the fictional tradition of shepherds’ songs but also to the textual history of the eclogue.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> The fourth eclogue had figured Louis, lover and then husband of Queen Joan of Naples, as the titular shepherd Dorus, and recounted his flight from Sicily after King Ludwig of Hungary had gained control of Naples (1347-48). After Ludwig’s departure in 1350, Louis and Joan returned. He was crowned King of Naples in 1352. See Smarr 1987: 202-03.

<sup>253</sup> See Perini 1994: 965.

<sup>254</sup> Thus, though Stilbon is most likely a figure for the Neapolitan court-poet Zanobi da Strada who did indeed compose songs on the subject of Niccola Acciaiuoli his presence on the list also conveys a sense of a community of pastoral singers.

This textual history alludes to the fact that Boccaccio's evocation of the repertoire available to these shepherds is based on Vergil's *Bucolica* 5, which serves as a model for *Alceustus* as a whole.<sup>255</sup> In that eclogue, when Menalcas urges Mopsus to sing, he likewise provides him with a few generic options: love songs for Phyllis, the praise of Alcon, or gibes at Codrus (Verg. 5, 10-12). These potential themes also convey a sense of breadth, yet they achieve something else that is quite remarkable—they loosely but effectively describe the themes of the three eclogues that precede the one in which Menalcas is currently singing, that is, Corydon's love song in *Bucolica* 2, the gibes exchanged between Damoetas and Menalcas in *Bucolica* 3, and the praise of the coming newborn in *Bucolica* 4. In short, Vergil has one of his characters offer a metapoetic index of his own collection. Boccaccio achieves a similar effect in *Alceustus*, with Phyllis a representative of his amorous eclogues (1-2), Phytias—a character in his fourth eclogue—a representative of the eclogues of political turmoil (3-5), and Alceustus the titular figure of this eclogue of political celebration (6). Yet, by citing the first theme on Vergil's list—the love songs of Phyllis—he also positions his collection in a genealogy that extends Vergil's repertoire diachronically to embrace pastoral's classical past and Christian present.<sup>256</sup>

Consequently, Boccaccio here figures not only the breadth of the genre but the history of pastoral representation as well, while negotiating an ambitious position for himself within that history. This becomes particularly clear when Menalcas asserts that, just as the trees have preserved songs of Phyllis for him, so they will preserve *his* song for future generations. Thus Boccaccio is equally attentive to his legacy, and stresses the novelty of his pastoral project.<sup>257</sup> Near the end of Amintas' song, he attests to the durability that Alceustus' fame will achieve precisely because of the song he is currently singing:

Vix, Alceste decus nostrum, vix credere fame  
 post nos ruricole poterunt, sed cortice duro  
 posteritas tua facta leget; te populous ingens,  
 te corilus sculptum, servabit te quoque fagus  
 [...] Crescent ea nomina quantum  
 ipsa quidem fagus crescet. Mirabitur Arnus  
 atque colet, gratis linquens tua facta futuris. (6.130-37)

O our joy Alceustus, later famers will scarce be able to believe the report, but posterity will read your deeds in the hard bark; your name will be preserved by mighty poplar, hazletree, and beech. [...] Your name will grow just as the beech tree grows. Arnus will wonder, reverent, and leave your deeds for grateful future generations.

Thus in the last of the Neapolitan eclogues, which for nearly a decade was the final poem in Boccaccio's Latin eclogue output until he began to expand the collection in the mid-1350s, he imagines the grateful reception of his eclogues by future generations. Indeed he suggests that he

<sup>255</sup> As previously noted, this eclogue also served as the principal model for Petrarch's *Argus*.

<sup>256</sup> In this regard, it is highly suggestive that Amintas' repertoire is immediately preceded by a request from Melibeus to sing a sacred song: "tu primus sacrum gracili perflabis avena" ["you first will blow a sacred song upon your slender reed" (6.60)].

<sup>257</sup> This is already suggested by the fact that, within the set of potential themes for their song, Phyllis' loves have already been turned into textual artifacts and Stilbon has already treated the theme of Phytias' toil, while the theme of Alceustus is without precedent.

has changed the boundaries of the genre. The poem's reception is first figured by Melibeus' praise for the song which, through a chain of pastoral comparisons (6.-142-43), attests that Amintas' poetic talents surpass those of a certain Menalcas ["ego tu *superes* dicam cantando Menalcam, / et calamis" (144-45; my emphasis)]. At first glance, this is the conventional superlative praise that accompanies the conclusion of a shepherd's song. Yet the choice of name for Amintas' poetic rival generates a sophisticated intertextual game, for it was Vergil's Menalcas in *Bucolica* 5 who provided Amintas with a model for his pastoral repertoire (*Buc.* 5.10-12, *Bucc. carm.* 6. 68-72). Moreover, Melibeus' praise of Amintas in *Alceustus* is also modeled on the words of the Vergilian Menalcas. In *Bucolica* 5.16-18, he had praised his singing-companion Mopsus by stressing his musical superiority over another shepherd: Amintas. By both citing the Vergilian Menalcas' evocation of the pastoral tradition and switching the terms of his poetic verdict, Boccaccio reveals the complex representational economy evident in the Neapolitan eclogues. That is, in clear Vergilian terms which attest to his abiding investment in the pastoral tradition, he indicates that he has changed the contours of the genre. Through his exploration of the metageneric dimension of pastoral representation and his systematic incorporation of innovative tropes, structures, and themes, he claims (albeit quietly) to have surpassed his Vergilian model.

At the same time, he does acknowledge the extent to which he was inspired by Petrarch's *Argus*. In the first of the Neapolitan eclogues, shepherds had spoken highly of the poet Mopsus, a figure for Petrarch.<sup>258</sup> Here in *Alceustus*, the protagonists contend that no singer can rival them, save for Petrarch—now figured as Yollas—for “hic alios superat quantum vepreta cupressi” [“he towers like a cypress over briars” (6.65)]. In addition to providing the Neapolitan eclogues with yet another structural frame, these verses constitute an early formulation of his admiration for, and ostensible humility in regard to, a famous contemporary who he still had not met in person.<sup>259</sup> Indeed there is no reason to doubt that Boccaccio's encounter with Petrarch's *Argus* was one of the central events in his pastoral career. Yet it is essential to refrain from overstating the extent to which Boccaccio imitated his Petrarchan model, or from construing the relationship between Petrarch and Boccaccio's eclogues here as the infliction of the former's allegory on the latter's pastoral imagination. At the same time that Boccaccio praises, and acknowledges his debt to, Petrarch, he differentiates himself from his contemporary's approach, first and foremost through his innovative use of Vergilian citation.<sup>260</sup>

This ambivalence is, to a certain extent, registered by an additional reference to Petrarch later in *Alceustus* which occurs immediately after Boccaccio implies that he has surpassed Vergil. Melibeus exclaims, “O! quantus eris, si *prestet* Yollas / te stipula perflare sua! Tunc saxa movebis” [“Oh, how great will you be if Yollas will *lend* his pipes for you to play upon! Then you will move stones” (6.145-46; my emphases)]. Here too the depiction of Petrarch is reverential, yet the symbol of the pipes complicates the scene of imitation. In the metaphorical loan of Petrarch's pipes, Boccaccio figures his appropriation and transformation of Petrarchan pastoral. Indeed, immediately following these verses, he suggests that Petrarch will admire the changes he has made. In recognition of Amintas' skill, Melibeus follows the custom of Arcadia and offers him a beautiful vase. As a mark of his gratitude, Amintas asserts that “non parva

<sup>258</sup> See *Bucc. carm.* 3.16-19 and 53.

<sup>259</sup> Again, the Neapolitan eclogues were written in 1347-48. Boccaccio would not meet Petrarch until the latter's visit to Florence in 1350.

<sup>260</sup> As previously noted, a hallmark of Petrarch's eclogues is that they meticulously avoid Vergilian echoes. See chapter 2, note 147.

teneret Yollas” [“of no small worth would Yollas esteem them” (6.154)]. The explicit reference is to the quality of the gift that Melibeus offers, yet as the intriguing slippage between the singular and the plural suggests, these verses equally refer to the reception of his eclogues that Boccaccio felt he deserved from Petrarch. In short, in a seventeen-verse span, between the end of Amintas’ song and the suggestion that Petrarch will appreciate that song, Boccaccio attempts to carve out a space for his pastoral approach by juxtaposing it to those of the genre’s most illustrious practitioners, both past and present, acknowledging his debt to both Vergil and Petrarch while also advocating that he has brought something new to the genre.

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Later in the collection, Boccaccio’s assertion to pastoral novelty is no longer equivocal. In the fourteenth eclogue, *Olympia*, he turns to a scenario for which there is no pastoral precedent: the reunion of a father with his dead daughter. The shepherd Silvius—a figure for Boccaccio—is visited in the night by Olympia—Boccaccio’s daughter Violante, who died at the age of five—to console her father and sing him a song about the glories of Paradise.<sup>261</sup> In addition to the poignancy of this scenario in which Boccaccio allusively represents events from his life, it introduces entirely novel themes and situations to pastoral. It is a novelty of which Olympia herself seems to be aware, for she prefaces her song by proclaiming that Arcadia has never heard anything quite like it: “ignotos silvis modulus cantabimus istis” [“we will sing tunes that these woods have never heard” (14.88)].

Though the claim to novelty here specifically refers to the hymn she then sings (91-111), it also provides a commentary on the eclogue as a whole, which is unlike anything previously written in the pastoral tradition, as a brief summary makes clear. In the middle of the night, Silvius’ repose is interrupted by a portent of strange happenings: his dog Lycus “runs to and fro with coaxing whimper” [“Itque reditque Lycos blando cum murmure” (3)], evidently excited by the arrival to their woods of some foreign presence. As Silvius squabbles with Camalus, one of his servants, when the latter refuses to investigate the cause of Lycus’ excitement, the forest that surrounds his house is suddenly filled with such piercing light that those indoors fear that the trees outside are aflame. Yet it is soon revealed that this spontaneous illumination is not perilous but rather nourishing [“alma” (32)], in fact divine, for it has been brought down to earth from Paradise and imbued into this pastoral scene by the arrival of Olympia who, having left her heavenly abode to visit her father, recounts the splendors that he will experience once he joins her in the afterlife. For now, though, she must return to her seat in Paradise as dawn approaches, leaving her father in tears as she departs from him a second time.

This summary of the dramatic events that transpire over the course of Boccaccio’s longest eclogue suffices to indicate the degree to which *Olympia* diverges in many ways from its classical antecedents, yet the miraculous nature of Olympia’s descent from Paradise and the generic ambition of the eclogue as a whole are already introduced *in nuce* by the quality of the light that announces her arrival, which, despite its unconventionality, is figured in terms that are eminently pastoral. Her descent from heaven induces a meteorological paradox in the pastoral landscape that is noted by Therapon, another of Silvius’ servants, when he registers his awe at the transformation of his surroundings: “Si spectes celo, testantur sydera noctem: / in silvis lux alma diem” [“If you look up, the stars show that it’s night: yet in the woods is the nourishing light of day” (31-32)]. On the one hand, Therapon’s pronouncement is a vivid example of the

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<sup>261</sup> Boccaccio reveals the identities of the shepherd and shepherdess in his letter to Fra Martino. See note 226.

juxtaposed landscapes of the Neapolitan sequence, which here explicitly commingle. On the other hand, the apparent contradiction of temporal coordinates that astonishes these pastoral characters with its unprecedented nature is articulated in terms that approximate the structure of one of pastoral's privileged tropes—the *adynaton*.

According to the logic of this trope, a certain outcome is represented as highly improbable by equating it to a hyperbolic disruption of the natural order of things (e.g., wolves will run from lambs) and, though the *adynaton* is by no means limited to pastoral,<sup>262</sup> from Vergil's *Bucolica* on it possessed a particular currency in pastoral representations because, though its explicit function is to register a logical impossibility, the *adynaton*, like pastoral itself, is invested in the question of boundaries. This aspect of the trope is evident as early as Vergil's *Bucolica* 1, in which Tityrus deploys a series of them to affirm that he will never forget the face of the god that he met in Rome (i.e., Augustus):

Ante leves ergo pascentur in aethere cervi,  
et freta destituent nudos in litore pisces,  
ante pererratis amborum finibus exsul  
aut Ararim Parthus bibet aut Germania Tigrim,  
quam nostro illius labatur pectore vultus. (*Buc.* 1, 59-63)

“Sooner, then, shall the nimble stag graze in air, and the seas leave their fish bare on the strand—sooner, each wandering over the other's frontiers, shall the Parthian in exile drink the Arar, and Germany the Tigris, than that look of his shall fade from my heart.

The reader is presented with four scenarios that will *not* happen so as to adamantly assert what will: Tityrus will remember his patron for the rest of his life. Yet this placid vision of pastoral harmony, in which the humble shepherd is protected from on high by his patron, is complicated by imagery that disturbs that harmony. Tityrus' first *adynaton* causes a figural upheaval in the pastoral forest as stags fly in the air, which is then extended outward beyond Arcadia's borders by the second to include the ocean as fish come to reside on the land. The third and fourth *adynata* then proceed to spread this upheaval across the entire globe. Moreover, they actualize the transgression of boundaries implicit in the first two terms by explicitly thematizing the construct of the boundary itself as they redraw the map of nations, sending Parthians to Gaul and Germans to the Orient. Both strategies are adopted here to register the impossibility of such events, yet the trope still incorporates them into the pastoral imagination, a figural internalization that is quickly literalized when Meliboeus, the shepherd to whom Tityrus' *adynata* were voiced, finds himself, like the Parthians and Germans, in a state of exile. Thus, while the trope attempts to keep disorder at bay, it lets it in through the language it uses. In short, the *adynaton* is as invocational as it is apotropaic. Through its oscillation between various impossibilities and potential disruptions, the pastoral *adynaton* asserts the natural order of things in terms that violate that order or that might augur a new one. By consequence, it is a device that transgresses the boundaries of the pastoral landscape at the very moment that it erects them.<sup>263</sup> As such, it

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<sup>262</sup> For an example in epic, see *Aeneid* 12.202-09.

<sup>263</sup> As we shall soon see, Boccaccio's investment in the construction and violation of boundaries is thematized by his choice of setting: Silvius' house and the surrounding woods. As is probably clear from my language, I am advocating that the *adynaton* is Derridean *avant la lettre*.



can serve to pose a threat to the autonomy and security of the pastoral Golden Age, while at the same time widening the genre's engagement with the world beyond its borders by projecting the pastoral landscape outward and bringing the outside in.

Boccaccio had utilized this trope as early as the first eclogue of the *Buccolicum carmen* (*Galla*, 99-103), in which the shepherd Damon deploys one to lament the wantonness of his beloved Galla.<sup>264</sup> Yet the *adynaton* most relevant to the meteorological paradox that confronts Silvius and his servants comes only a few verses before the arrival of Olympia's holy light. In the middle of his squabble with Camalus, Silvius chides the latter in the following fashion:

Camale, dum primos terries prestabit Hyberus  
nocturnos ignes, currus dum Delia fratris  
ducet ad occasum, dum sternet cerva leones,  
obsequium prestabit hero sine murmure servus (14.12-15)

Camalus, when Ebro lends to earth the night's first stars, when Delia drives her brother's chariot westward, and when deer strike down lions, then a servant will do his master's bidding without grumble.

In contrast to the typically serious matters with which the pastoral *adynaton* is concerned—such as poetic superiority or, in the case of Damon in Boccaccio's *Galla*, intense sentiments of love—here Silvius utilizes its logic for the relatively mundane, even humorous, purpose of bemoaning the disobedience of servants.<sup>265</sup> Yet this comic note is arrived at by way of the most elevated of realms: the firmament. Silvius' use of the trope joins the movement of the stars and the passage of the sun's chariot to the indolence of shepherd-servants. The template used here, perhaps with a slight note of Boccaccian parody, is the celestial proem that opens Dante's second eclogue, in which the movement of the steeds of the sun were linked to Tityrus' life on earth.<sup>266</sup> Before the eclogue has even introduced its main character, Boccaccio has raised certain key questions of generic identity and literary hierarchies, and has mapped out a remarkably broad vertical horizon.

This figural conjuncture of high and low is then enacted by what transpires after Silvius' *adynaton*, for the low actually meets the high when the mortal Silvius briefly reunites with his heavenly daughter. The journey of his *adynaton* down from the heavens to his house proleptically announces Olympia's descent from Paradise and, in the span of sixteen verses, its sidereal imagery is transformed into the meteorological paradox that her presence induces. Thus the remarkable difference between the usual *adynaton* and what occurs in this eclogue is that

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<sup>264</sup> This first *adynaton* in the *Buccolicum carmen* is incredibly extensive and intricate: "Cum capreis pascetur ovis, lupus acer ybisco, / gurgite cum vultur vivet, cumque ethera piscis, / cum freta sulcabit vomer, cum pascua navis, tunc servare fidem incipiet lasciva puella; carmine tunc Gallam revocabimus, arte vel herbis" [vv. 99-103: "When sheep eat goats, or when the ravening wolf dines on hibiscus, or when vultures live beneath the sea, and fish fly in the air, or when a plough leaves furrows in the waves, and ships plough fields, then will a wanton girl keep faith, then only will we call back Galla with song, with art, with herbs"]. It rehearses many of the salient aspects of Tityrus' in *Bucolica* 1, such as the dislocation of animals and the substitution of earth for land.

<sup>265</sup> Inexplicably, Perini 1994: 1055, n. 12; and Chiecchi 1995: 237 consider this to be a conventional pastoral *adynaton*.

<sup>266</sup> For a discussion of this proem, see chapter 1. This Dantean intertext may also help explain the otherwise curious intrusion of the more conventional imagery of lions and deer, for Alpheus' speech to Tityrus (Dante-Giovanni 4.16-27) passed from the stars to Hircanian tigers, in which case Silvius' *adynaton* is a conflation of the two moments early in Dante's second eclogue that shuttle between the high and the low. There is another partial precedent in Petrarch's *Galatea* (*Buc. carm.* 11.98-102).

Delia *has* yoked herself to her brother's chariot as night and day become mixed. In fact, Silvius' response to this miraculous occurrence would provide a succinct definition of the *adynaton* itself were it not for that fact that the impossible has actually happened: "Nature has changed her ways" ["*Sic natura vices variat*" (v. 33)].

*Olympia*, then, is an *adynaton* come true. This striking actualization of pastoral's trope of impossibility initiates a systematic expansion of what can be contained within pastoral representation, for this eclogue extends far beyond pastoral expectations. Its very setting represents a double violation of those expectations, for this eclogue begins at night and indoors. That *Olympia* is in fact a nocturnal eclogue stands in stark opposition to the foundational *locus* of pastoral: the shade of trees during the midday heat, which provides both the location and motivation for shepherds' songs.<sup>267</sup> This radical departure from the context that typically nourishes pastoral song can, in part, be glossed in terms of the subject matter that follows, since the intersection of a nocturnal scene and an otherworldly apparition affiliates *Olympia* with both the classical and the Christian tradition of the dream vision, with models ranging from Cicero's *Somnium scipionis* to Dante's *Commedia*, as well as Boccaccio's own *Amorosa visione*, a work which he was in the process of revising in the same span of years that he composed this eclogue.<sup>268</sup> Silvius invokes this tradition himself when *Olympia* first appears, as he twice wonders aloud if he is dreaming.<sup>269</sup> To a certain extent, then, this nocturnal setting is necessitated by the divine revelation that follows. Seen in this light, the initial *adynaton*, with its suggestive celestial language, could then be interpreted as preparation for the miracle that follows, when the sky breaks open and the glories of Paradise are revealed. Indeed, *Olympia* does share certain salient features with a Biblical scene of revelation, that is, the Annunciation to the Shepherds (Luke, 2:8-20), in which an angel awakens sleeping shepherds to announce the coming of Christ. Thus, one potential description of the matrix that produced *Olympia* is that Boccaccio conflated various classical and medieval literary models that (through moral or Christian allegory) allow for the revelation of truth, which is made manifest to the protagonist through dreams, and then projected the resultant narrative onto the pastoral landscape by way of the New Testament.

Consequently, it could be argued that Boccaccio is abandoning pastoral here rather than engaging with it. Since the poem is still an eclogue, this would be noteworthy itself, inasmuch as it would constitute the incorporation of a foreign genre into pastoral. This would stand as further evidence of the elasticity of pastoral as it expands its own discourse to incorporate other genres into its structures. From this perspective, Boccaccio's fourteenth eclogue can be seen to trace the genre-crossing move that Vergil made in this final eclogue, which "translated" the love elegy into pastoral terms, thereby closing the *Bucolica* with a move outward to the genres beyond the

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<sup>267</sup> Though some previous eclogues occur (or end) toward the end of day, the fully nocturnal eclogue is very rare before Boccaccio, though he had a precedent in himself (*Vallis opaca*, *Bucc. carm.* 10), and in Petrarch, particularly in the case of *Argus*, which begins late in the day, but in which night is forced upon the pastoral landscape as the sun is extinguished following the death of King Robert. The nocturnal eclogue would later be developed beautifully by Sannazaro, especially in his *Eclogae piscatoriae*.

<sup>268</sup> For Boccaccio and the tradition of the dream vision, see Branca 1986, esp. pp. xii-xvii. For the contemporaneous composition of *Olympia* and revision of *Amorosa visione*, see Smarr 2001: 252.

<sup>269</sup> See verses 25-26: "Quid istud? / quid video? Sanusne satis sum? *dormio* forsan?" ["What's that? What do I see? Am I quite sane? Perhaps I am asleep" (my emphasis)]; and verse 42: "Nescio num *vigilem*, fateor, seu *somniam* cernam" ["I do not know whether I wake or dream, I do confess" (my emphasis)].

boundaries of pastoral. Similarly, *near* the close of his own collection, Boccaccio moves upward from the eclogue to allegorical truths revealed through the dream vision.<sup>270</sup>

Yet, though the possibility of pastoral *qua* dream vision is certainly suggestive, particularly considering that Boccaccio has already linked the two formally by using *terza rima* for both in earlier works,<sup>271</sup> the movement of genre in *Olympia* is much more complex than a transplant from without. As Silvius himself informs the reader, he is *not* dreaming, a rhetorical gesture that foregrounds the tradition of the dream vision while differentiating this eclogue from it.<sup>272</sup> In fact, this scene is not a negation of the conventions of the genre at all, nor does its nocturnal setting constitute an anti-pastoral. Instead, *Olympia* is a calculated revision of pastoral's midday song. Its transposition does not thwart the temporal coordinates of that song haphazardly, but instead strategically transposes them by commencing not at midday but midnight and concluding not with dusk but with dawn. Thus, its timeframe is a specular inversion of Vergil's first and last eclogues, as well as Dante's second. If *Olympia*'s celestial opening affiliates it with Dante, the Vergilian connection is made patently clear by the eclogue's last word: "umbris" ["shadows" (285)]. The pastoral *umbra* had been genre-defining since the beginning of Vergil's *Bucolica* 1, in which Tityrus was described as "at ease beneath the shade" ["*lentus in umbra*" (Verg. 1, 4)], yet the most relevant Vergilian intertexts are the final verses of both his first and last eclogues, for in each instance the Latin poet closes his pastoral discourse with reference to shade and shadows.<sup>273</sup> The connection with Vergil's *Bucolica* 10 is particularly strong and suggestive, for Boccaccio invokes it meticulously in the last verses of *Olympia*.

Vergil 10:

surgamus: solet esse gravis cantantibus *umbra*,  
juniperi gravis *umbra*; nocent et frugibus *umbræ*.  
ite domum saturae, venit *Hesperus*, ite capellae" (75-77; my emphasis).

Let us arise. The shade is often perilous to the singer—perilous the juniper's shade, hurtful the shade even to crops. Get home, my full-fed goats, get home—the Evening star draws on.

Boccaccio 14:

Vos, pueri, vitulos in pascua pellite: surgit  
*Lucifer* et mediis iam sol emittitur umbris (284-85)

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<sup>270</sup> That these ends have a very close affiliation is evinced by the fact that Boccaccio meticulously refers to the end of *Buc.* 10 at the end of *Olympia*. This close tie between Vergil 10 and Boccaccio 14 will be examined shortly.

<sup>271</sup> *Terza rima*. In regards to the fusion of dream vision and eclogue, one must note the interesting role played by *terza rima* in both cases, a poetic form that Boccaccio inherited from Dante and used both for his moral-allegorical dream vision (*Caccia di Diana, Amoroza visione*) and for vernacular eclogue (*Comedia delle ninfe fiorentine*).

<sup>272</sup> The first pronouncement comes when he sees the strange light; the second when he hears *Olympia*'s voice. The entire quote reads: "dormio forsân? Non facio!" ["Perhaps I am asleep; no, I am not! (26-27)]. When he raises the possibility that he might be dreaming a second time (42-45), he seems less certain, but he articulates his incredulity not in terms of dreams but rather the possibility that the gods might be misleading him.

<sup>273</sup> Eclogue 1: "et iam summa procul villarum culmina fuman / maioresque cadunt altis de montibus *umbræ*" (82-83; my emphasis).

You servants, drive the calves into the pastures; the morning star is rising and already the sun is shining forth amid the shadows.

Here Boccaccio reveals his poetic lineage by adopting the central image of *umbra*, but then systematically inverts the rest of Vergil's terms. It is Lucifer (not Hesperus) that rises as dawn (not dusk) approaches, and thus it is time not to call the herd back home but instead to send it out to pasture. As such, Boccaccio's innovative temporal transposition of the eclogue meditates on a Vergilian gesture that both closed and took stock of the *Bucolica*. The fact that Boccaccio begins where Vergil ended—at home and in the dark—and extends the shepherd's day into unprecedented representational territory emphasizes his innovative approach to pastoral and his generation of a new vein for pastoral expression, which would later be explored by works ranging from Sannazaro's third piscatorial eclogue to Leopardi's *Canto notturno di un pastore errante dell'Asia*. At the same time, *Olympia*'s contrapuntal revision of pastoral conventions shapes its nocturnal scene into a space in which to reflect and comment on those conventions, as formulated by Boccaccio's diurnal eclogues and the pastoral tradition at large.

The temporal transposition that Boccaccio orchestrates in *Olympia* is accompanied by a spatial restriction, for this eclogue initially transpires indoors. This too is a striking innovation, for there is no precedent in the tradition (outside of Boccaccio's own work) for a *domestic* eclogue.<sup>274</sup> Of course, the pastoral landscape had not been completely devoid of domiciles. Vergil's first eclogue famously ends with the invitation that Tityrus extends to Meliboeus to accompany him to the smoking huts that they see in the distance, where he will offer him rest and nourishment at the end of the pastoral day. Yet the representation of the shepherd's home as something more than a figure, instead as an actual *locus*, was outside the limits of pastoral representation. By contrast, *Olympia* inserts its characters fully inside Silvius' home. Moreover, it takes this enclosed space not as a point toward which the eclogue aims, that is, a place that provides closure to pastoral song, but rather as its point of departure, and as the venue for a potential aperture in that song.

This move inside is matched by a corresponding alteration of themes and protagonists, for this unconventional setting serves as the stage for an equally unconventional cast of characters: a father and a daughter. Before this eclogue, familial connections were conspicuously absent from pastoral, for such bonds would necessitate a significant revision of the societal imagination of the genre. On the one hand, familial connections would insert a shepherd into a synchronic web of social responsibilities and loyalties far more intricate than the simple bonds forged by the sharing of songs and the giving of gifts that traditionally organize the lives of shepherds. On the other hand, familial connections would root these shepherds in time, initiating a diachronic narrative of births and deaths which would profoundly revise the temporal coordinates of the genre by inscribing Tityrus into a family tree. Though there are a few notable exceptions, most significantly in the case of Vergil *Bucolica* 4, which focuses its attention squarely on the birth of a very special child, family members do not appear (and are rarely even spoken of) in Arcadia.<sup>275</sup> By contrast, *Olympia* orbits around the encounter of Silvius and his "pulchra propago" ["sweet lovely offspring" (73)], a genealogy that later is extended backward

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<sup>274</sup> Carrara 1909: 126-27 calls it the "primo esempio di poesia domestica" in Italian literature.

<sup>275</sup> In Vergil's *Bucolica* 3, Menalcas mentions his father and stepmother, but to humorous effect to add to the rustic and earthy atmosphere. Damon's song in *Bucolica* 8 mentions a mother and daughter. The most relevant precedent is Petrarch's representation of brothers in his first eclogue.

to include Silvius' own father, Asylas (verse 225), thus effectively framing Silvius in a domestic narrative that includes his past and future.

In so doing, Boccaccio introduces the thematics not only of personal but also poetic genealogies, to which I will return. Of equal consequence to the future of the genre, Boccaccio's development of domestic themes leads to a momentous change in the pastoral dialogue: a woman speaks. Female interlocutors are completely absent from the classical eclogue, appearing rather as the silent objects of shepherds' affections. When the female voice had been inserted in the pastoral dialogue before Boccaccio, it was always at a certain remove.<sup>276</sup> Olympia, then, is the first full-fledged female character to add her voice to the protracted male dialogue held between the Corydons, Damons, and Menalcases of Arcadia under the shade of the oak tree. Perhaps the identity of her author has diminished critical appreciation of this watershed moment, for Boccaccio's usage of female interlocutors in his other works (most famously in the *Decameron*) is extensive and well-studied, yet considering the importance of female pastoral characters to the eclogues of future poets, such as Pontano and Sannazaro, to not even speak of the vast array of female protagonists in pastoral drama, Boccaccio's innovation here is of singular importance. Moreover, precisely because she is both woman *and* child, Olympia constitutes a powerful antidote to a form of genealogy that is often found in pastoral, namely the fiction of poetic parthenogenesis, according to which the pipes of Pan are handed down from male shepherd to male shepherd, which suppresses the contribution of female characters to pastoral society and denies them access to the process whereby the tradition of pastoral song is cultivated and maintained. In *Olympia*, this chain of male inheritance is interrupted and enriched by the voice of a daughter who presents her father with a song quite unlike his own.

The domestic space inside of which *Olympia* begins is the focal point for many of these alterations of pastoral convention, which already manifests some of the broad-ranging consequences of Boccaccio's decision to remap the pastoral scene. Yet Silvius' house is important not only because it provides a venue that occasions new representational possibilities (i.e. new themes, new voices, new genealogies). Its walls participate in these genre border-crossings by thematizing the boundary itself. By adding walls to pastoral, Boccaccio arrives at thoroughly new formulation of its space, one in which there is a clear demarcation of an interior and an exterior, which can then serve either as a barrier cleaving the two or a threshold that conjoins them. As I have argued, the boundary is a cardinal theme for pastoral throughout its history, without which the genre would be unimaginable, yet prior to Boccaccio those boundaries are positioned at a certain distance from the pastoral center: the fluid perimeter of the oak tree's shadow. The introduction of a house to this fluid landscape radically changes the situation for suddenly there are boundaries that, though small, double the pastoral scene into an interior and an exterior, or rather an "inner" and an "outer" pastoral.

In *Olympia*, the contrast between the two is partially articulated in terms of light. When Camalus refuses his master's order to investigate the cause of the dog's agitation, he offers an excuse for his disobedience by professing his fear of penetrating the dark recesses, for Silvius "noctis pavidas lustrare tenebras / vult pueros" ["wants us servants ... to examine the nighttime's fearful shadows" (10-11)]. Initially, then, the boundary between the interior and exterior is

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<sup>276</sup> For example, in Vergil's *Bucolica* 8, Alphesiboeus *assumes* the perspective of a woman for his song, and in Boccaccio's *Faunus*, Palemon reports of the laments of Testilis, whose identity as a woman is further attenuated by the fact that she is a figural allegory of a city, Forlì, just as Florida is a figural allegory of Florence in Boccaccio's seventh eclogue (*The Quarrel*). In Petrarch and Boccaccio's eclogues, women also occasionally appear in the form of muses.

articulated in terms of the illumination inside the house and the darkness of the forest outside. However, within seven verses, the situation is inverted when the source of light becomes external as the woods begin to shine upon Olympia's arrival. This inversion replays the structure of the *adynaton*, whose chiasmic structure brings the outside in and pushes the inside out. In fact, Boccaccio's investment in this spatial exchange is made manifest in the first verses of *Olympia* not only by Silvius' *adynaton* but also by an almost obsessive representation of thresholds. First, Silvius asks Camalus to "find out what's out there...and bring back a report" ["quit si perquirite ... compertaque ferte" (6-7)], that is, to move along a circuit from inside to outside and back. When Camalus refuses, Silvius then asks Therapon to not only go out but open up, that is, to "go unbar the stable" ["O Therapon, stabuli tu solve repagula nostri" (16)]. If his first request required the crossing of a boundary between interior and exterior, but with a quick return to the security of the center, the second request is bolder. It represents an aperture of the boundary itself, an unfurling outward to the strange occurrences in the surrounding forest. At this point, however, the movement of the poem rushes back into Silvius' house, for Therapon has fled back inside in terror to announce the arrival of the strange light. Curiously, with what seems to be an unnecessary addition of information, he *tells* Silvius and Camalus that he has done so: "intra / festinus redii" ["I hastened *back* inside" (21-22; my emphasis)]. In so doing, with words that approach the stage directions of a play, he not only underscores the presence of the boundary that separates the outside from the inside, and his crossing of that boundary, but also reenacts the strange excitement of the dog Lycus, who paced back and forth ["Itque *reditque*" (3; my emphasis)], or rather repeatedly moved out and came back in. In fact, the loop that Lycus traces with his outward move and his inward return is a synecdochal figure for the eclogue's many threshold-crossings, for even before Olympia arrives, that is, before the high and the low, the Christian and the pagan, converge, this eclogue has rapidly shuttled between Silvius' pastoral enclosure and the world beyond.

When that convergence finally arrives, the representation of the boundary is invested with even greater significance, as Silvius finally crosses it to reunite with his daughter. Immediately before her arrival, new portents of a special coming beguile his senses, as new fragrances and new songs permeate the house (35-37).<sup>277</sup> He is convinced that these portents must "signify that the gods are walking here" [Hec *superos* ambire locos et pascua signant" (39; my emphasis)]. However, his initial pleasure is momentarily curtailed when Olympia finally speaks to him and he sees her image. Upon hearing the voice of his defunct daughter he is initially dubious, fearing that it might be a trick played by the gods. At this point, though the text is frustratingly, but meaningfully, silent regarding Silvius' location, he appears to be at the threshold of the house. Therapon has just rushed back inside to inform his master of the coming blaze, but Silvius can see the day mixed with night outside and now is able to espy the form of his daughter's spirit. The question of his position is of great importance because of what he says in response to his uncertainty concerning the identity of this nocturnal apparition: "Nos claustra *petamus*" (45: my emphasis). This statement has led to conflicting interpretations. What is clear is that Silvius turns his thoughts to his *claustra*, the barrier or gate of his pastoral abode (though perhaps also the space that is therein confined). What has led to such divergent interpretations is

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<sup>277</sup> The specific fragrances that enter Silvius' house are further indication that *Olympia* is represented as an *adynaton* come true, for they had been used as the terms for an explicit *adynaton* earlier in the collection. In verses Silvius describes how these fragrances make it seem that his woods have been transformed into those of Sabaea, a "famous Arabian source of perfumes" [Smarr 1987: 253]. These same perfumes appear in Batracos' *adynaton* (*Bucc. carm.* 9.43).

the exact nature of that engagement. The verb *peto* describes an action that points its subject at something, someone or someplace, yet it could denote that Silvius makes for or seeks refuge in the *claustra* (i.e. he keeps his distance from what he thinks may be a trick), or that he directs his attention to it (i.e. he stands at the limen between his house and the woods, considering what to do, perhaps with the intention of locking it, which would affiliate this definition with the previous one) or that, from a perspective within the house, he heads to the *claustra* so as to go beyond it.

Each interpretation has its merits, as well as the backing of eminent Boccaccio scholars, and each reveals a facet of this intricate opening scene.<sup>278</sup> If it marks Silvius' desire to return inside, it constitutes a final iteration of the circuit away from and back to the center that appears throughout these verses. If, instead, it places him at the threshold in a state of uncertainty and anticipation, it becomes the verbal cognate of the boundary-line between the interior and exterior spaces, and between the prologue and the eclogue's central dialogue. Indeed, after Olympia's responds to these words, Silvius recognizes her as his daughter and her song finally commences. Yet it is the third interpretation that I find most convincing, because it works in concert with the prologue's chiasmic structure, that is, when Olympia's voice comes into the house, Silvius goes out into the forest. In any case, all three possibilities underscore the importance of the boundary itself. Having served as one of the main structuring principles for the opening verses of *Olympia*, at this point the perimeter of Silvius' house bristles with representational possibilities.

I would, however, like to offer two possible intertexts that suggest that *petamus* does convey a move beyond the boundary, a move not only outward but up. Each comes from a work by Ovid and in both instances the Roman poet adds a vertical dimension to *peto*. The first is from Book I of the *Metamorphoses*: “mons ibi verticibus *petit* arduus *astra* duobus” [“There [the] Mount lifts its two peaks skyward, high and steep” (316; my emphasis)].<sup>279</sup> The second is from Book 3, 7 of the *Fasti*: “nunc fruitur caelo, quod pinnis ante *petebat*, / et nitidus *stellis* quinque decemque micat” [“Now he enjoys the sky, that his wings once flew, and glitters there brightly” (457-56)].<sup>280</sup> Considering the centrality of the vertical axis to *Olympia*, introduced both by the shepherds' gazes directed up at the stars and the titular character's descent down from the heavens, these configurations of *peto* as an act of rising are suggestive, presenting the possibility that Silvius meets his daughter part way as she descends from Paradise. Moreover, that both Ovidian passages connect *peto* to stars is illuminating, since it returns attention to Therapon's comment fourteen verses prior that the stars still shine though the woods are as bright as day (31-32). Yet it is the full Ovidian context in which these verses appear that makes them particularly relevant here, for the mount in question in the *Metamorphoses* is Mount Parnassus and the winged creature of the *Fasti* is Pegasus. In each instance, then, *peto* is invested with powerful poetical implications, since Mount Parnassus is the home of the Muses and Pegasus is not only their sacred steed but with a kick of his hoof had produced the Hippocrene stream on Mt. Helicon, both of which are similarly sacred to them. Seen in the light of these intertexts, Silvius' *petamus* acquires a metapoetic resonance, specifically that of a poetry

<sup>278</sup> Ricci is of the first camp and translates it as “Io rientro in casa” (675), as is Perini, whose translation is more florid: “Meglio chiudersi in casa” (861). Smarr instead takes a more neutral approach that places him at (and tending to) the boundary: “I'll check the folds” (157). Finally, Velli 1990: 43 is convinced that Silvius does in fact cross the threshold definitively here.

<sup>279</sup> I cite from the Loeb edition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, edited and translated by Frank Justus Miller and revised by G. P. Gould (Cambridge MA, 1984).

<sup>280</sup> I cite from the Loeb edition of Ovid's *Fasti*, edited and translated by Sir James George Frazer and revised by G. P. Gould (Cambridge MA, 1989).

that rises up, which is deployed in *Olympia* at the point that marks the transition from one song to another, as the eclogue “ascends” from its prologue to *Olympia*’s song.<sup>281</sup>

This understanding of *peto* has at least two advantages. First, it figures *Silvius*’ movement as symmetrical according to the terms that he himself uses to describe both the cause and the trajectory of his movement. He believes that all of the astonishing events of this night may be a sign that the gods are walking in his forest. In verse 39, he calls those gods *superos*, literally “the high or elevated ones.” Accordingly, since they may have descended from on high, he will rise to the boundary to investigate if it is in fact them. Second, since *Silvius* is not only a shepherd but also a figure for the author, his words can be parsed both in terms of *Boccaccio*’s poetic ambitions and in terms of his sensitivity to and expansion of pastoral’s position *qua* genre. As I have discussed at length in earlier chapters, pastoral manifests a supreme awareness of the hierarchies of literature and its position within them, inside of which it frequently figures itself as low so as to ascend to greater heights by appropriating representational models from genres of higher status. *Boccaccio* had already figured pastoral’s vertical move through *Silvius*’ *adynaton*. Now, at the very moment that the eclogue is about to explore novel representational terrain, *Boccaccio* has a character rise to the upward limit of the pastoral boundary, which the author will then surpass.

There are some larger points to register about *Boccaccio*’s examination and reconception of pastoral’s poetics of the boundary at the beginning of *Olympia*. By inserting walls into the Arcadian landscape, *Boccaccio* provides a paradigmatic specimen of the pastoral enclosure at the same time that he structures his eclogue as a dramatic exploration of the space beyond that enclosure. For the history of the genre, it is essential to recognize that this drama is both theatrical and metageneric. In terms of the former, the *mise-en-scène* and dramatic movement of *Olympia* anticipate pastoral drama by over a century.<sup>282</sup> In terms of the latter, *Boccaccio* focalizes the metageneric inquiries in which he had engaged earlier in the collection. As we have seen, the diegetic movement of shepherds in the Neapolitan eclogues—in particular, the trajectory of departure and return in *Faunus* and *Alceustus* [e.g. *Pamphylus*’ “*I felix, factumque putes rediturus, amice*” (3.128; my emphases)]—also figured the metageneric wanderings of the eclogues themselves. The insistent shuttling between the interior and the exterior in this scene—the *itique reditique* of *Lycos*; the *redii* of *Therapon*—compresses the entire horizon of that wandering into a single location. That is, while the shepherds of *Faunus* espied the dust kicked

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<sup>281</sup> Moreover, both Mount Parnassus and Pegasus have concrete points of reference to the *Buccolicum carmen*, for both figures appear in surrounding eclogues, most revealingly in Eclogue 12, which takes place on Mount Parnassus and narrates the myth of the Hippocrene’s creation. Finally, both appear in *Olympia*. Later in the eclogue *Olympia* describes Paradise in terms of a rising mount: “Far off there is a mountain impassible to sickly sheep, and bright with light perpetual” [“Est in secessu pecore mons invius egro” (170-71)]. Likewise, *Silvius* refers to the Hippocrene stream to underscore the excellence of *this* song, for even the god that presides over the “antro / gorgoneo” [“the Gorgonean cave” (vv. 120-21)], that is, *Apollo*, could not rival his daughter in song. This connection with *Fasti* 3, 7 goes even deeper into *Olympia*’s fictions for there *Ovid* recounts the story of *Jove* being nursed by nymphs: “ignibus Ossa novis et Pelion Ossa / arsit et in solida fixus *Olympus* humo. / stat quoque *capra* simul: *nymphae* pavisse feruntur / Cretides, infanti *lac* dedit illa *Iovi*” [“*Ossa* blazed with new the new fires (of his thunderbolts); *Pelion*, too, higher than *Ossa*, and *Olympus*, fixed in the solid ground. A she goat also stands (beside the image of *Veiovis*); the *Cretan* nymphs are said to have fed the god; it was the she-goat that gave her milk to the infant *Jove*” (441-44)]. One of the precedents for *Olympia*’s descent, then, is that of *Jove*. In fact, *Fasti* 3,8 provides a lapidarian model for the eclogue’s trajectory as a whole since, in a mere two verses, the poem descends from *Olympus* to the pastoral landscape before *Pegasus* then returns it to the heavens.

<sup>282</sup> *Velli* writes of *Olympia*’s “pronunciata teatralità” (1990: 44).



up by another genre on the horizon (3.115), here the threshold between genres is brought to the very doorstep of Silvius' home.

In light of the novelty that Olympia's arrival and her song of Paradise bring to the pastoral landscape, which has been the principal focus of scholarship on this eclogue, it is essential to recognize that the eclogue's inquiries into the genre-identity of pastoral begin from within that house. That is, according to the fiction, *Olympia's* metageneric movement is initiated not by the saved shepherdess but by the pagan shepherds who, through Silvius' *petamus*, are participants in the "elevation" of pastoral discourse in the manner of Vergil's fourth eclogue.<sup>283</sup> Consequently, Silvius' foray into the space beyond his home is of singular importance to understandings of the eclogue. Through it, Boccaccio generates a powerful and enduring figure of pastoral as metagenre.

Once again, the exact moment when Silvius leaves his pastoral enclosure to walk in the woods with his daughter is not clear. Yet that he is outside while she sings of Paradise is evident, and is registered with particular force when he points back at the house he has recently exited. This is an emotionally charged moment, for it follows Olympia's description of the heavenly home to which she must return. In response Silvius points at his house and says, "Nos omnes teget illa domus" ["That home will shelter all of us" (133)], that is, there is no need for Olympia to return to heaven since his home, and the shepherd's life that it symbolizes, will provide them with all they require. Yet the moment is not only poignant—through Silvius' glance, Boccaccio renders pastoral's metageneric potential in perspectival terms, as Silvius examines the foundations of pastoral from the outside.

It is here that the significance of Boccaccio's innovative addition of walls to the pastoral landscape reaches its apex for, at this moment, Silvius occupies a space that is both inside and outside the genre. In terms of the poem's Christian allegory, the juxtaposition of the house to Olympia's depiction of heavenly life implies that the Golden-Age life of Silvius the character is found lacking in comparison to the plenitude of salvation. Yet, as poet-figure, Silvius is positioned in a liminal space between genres from which the author interrogates the pastoral traditions he has inherited and the innovations he has brought about. In so doing, Boccaccio formulates a map for the genre's frequent forays into other poetic "territory," that is, the move that characterizes pastoral's interaction with other genres. Yet, by formulating *two* pastoral spaces—the inner and the outer—Boccaccio not only transports the boundaries of Arcadia, beyond which reside not only other landscapes but other genres, from an unspecified point in the distance to Silvius' doorway. He also turns the outer space into an extension of pastoral itself (i.e. the woods where, during the day, Silvius lives the life of a shepherd). The move outside, then, is figured not as a departure *from* but rather an expansion *of* pastoral, for in the loop between its inner and outer pastoral spaces, *Olympia* trespasses the boundaries of the pastoral landscape while staying within the system of pastoral representation.

In this cartographic representation of pastoral's expansionary tendencies and metageneric appropriations, it is highly suggestive that the precise point at which Silvius crosses the boundary between inner and outer pastoral is unclear. The scene that transpires between Silvius' attention to the boundary (verse 45) and his backwards glance (verse 133) thus becomes a liminal, co-penetrated space that at once draws attention to the boundary and effaces it. Consequently, Boccaccio's suppression of the precise moment of trespass becomes a powerful representation of the porous boundaries of the genre itself. *Olympia*, then, provides one of the most elaborate and

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<sup>283</sup> Again, Vergil speaks of refashioning the pastoral landscape into "silvae...consule dignae" ["woods fit for a consul" (4.3)]

dramatic formulations of the pastoral as a literary horizon predicated on generic border-crossings, whose boundaries embody Jacques Derrida's assertion that the walls that separate genres begin to dissolve as soon as they are erected.<sup>284</sup>

That the border crossings between inner and outer pastoral have these metageneric implications is assured by the fact that they are joined by concomitant shifts in theme and style. As the walls of Silvius' house become progressively more porous, so the generic bearings of this eclogue repeatedly shift over the course of the first scene. In short, the examination and expansion of pastoral space works in tandem with a heightened awareness of generic expectations, and the subsequent violation of those expectations. However, in contrast to the other generic markers that *Olympia* inverts or recasts—pastoral time, space, and characters—here the innovation derives not from the strategic alteration of expectations but rather from the deployment of multiple thematic and stylistic expectations sequentially, without satisfying any of them. In the opening verses, the eclogue “jumps,” as a variety of themes and styles with pastoral pedigrees—established either by earlier poets or Boccaccio himself—are adopted in quick succession only to be abandoned as new ones are assayed. Silvius' opening speech provides the first set of expectations when he announces that he hears “the holy rural deities rejoicing and all the wood is filled with the song of birds” [“pia numina ruris / letari et cantu volucrum nemus omne repleri” (1-2)]. This metapoetic frame, evocative of Vergil's *Bucolica* 6 as well as Boccaccio's eleventh and twelfth eclogues, is quickly punctured by Camalus' refusal to obey his master. The combative nature of their interaction is in line with the taunting commonly found in the rustic version of the amoebaeon contest between two shepherds, as typified by Vergil's *Bucolica* 3, in which Damoetas and Menalcas insult each other at great length. This Vergilian model had already been invoked by the two poems that precede *Olympia*: traces of it are present in eclogue 12, which also explicitly cites it,<sup>285</sup> and its antagonistic vein dominates eclogue 13, which is in fact structured upon it, with the arrival in each of a third shepherd (Palaemon and Critis respectively) to act as the judge of the singing dispute between the shepherds. Here, in the first scene of *Olympia*, it displaces the incantatory, metapoetic opening and is briefly considered as the possible start of a new type of song.<sup>286</sup>

Therapon then enters the house and, while his arrival echoes that of Critis as judge in the previous eclogue thereby furthering the expectation for an amoebaeon contest, his words send *Olympia* veering off in a new direction, for the quicksilver shift from one potential pastoral representation (Silvius) to another (Silvius and Camalus), which to a certain extent rehearses the macrotextual transitions between the four previous poems, here is subjected to further change, as the previous two options are now replaced by the threat that the pastoral landscape will be destroyed. Until it is revealed that the cause of the light that so frightens Therapon is in fact divine, his sudden reentry into the house and the ill tidings he brings generate a powerful sense of peril. Yet the significance of this moment is not limited to the drama it injects into the pastoral scene—like the two previous contenders for this eclogue's theme, this threat conjures up a different type of pastoral. In fact, one of the most striking aspects of the *Buccolicum carmen* is

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<sup>284</sup> See Derrida 1980, esp. pp. 185-86.

<sup>285</sup> See *Bucc. carm.* 12—“Non ego te vidi pridem vulgare cantentem / in triviis carmen, misero plaudente popello?” [“Didn't I see you before singing a vulgar song beside the crossroads, with the wretched rabble all applauding?” (3.48-49)]—and *Buc.* 3: “non tu in triviis, indocte, solebas / stridenti miserum stipula disperdere carmen” [“Wasn't it you, you dunce, that at the crossroads used to murder a sorry tune on a scrannel straw?” (26-27)].

<sup>286</sup> This transition is thematically relevant inasmuch as Vergil's *Buc.* 3 provides *Olympia* with one of the few models for the representation of masters and servants. See *Buc.* 3.1-6. In contrast to this song, Vergil's master and servant do not appear together, and yet it is the reference to Damoetas' master that commences their combative exchange.

the frequency with which the pastoral landscape is threatened with destruction, a threat that is often articulated in terms of fire. Fire imagery is first adopted by Damon in eclogue 1 (*Galla*) to represent the destructive power of love,<sup>287</sup> yet it is most thoroughly associated with political themes. In numerous eclogues, including the Neapolitan sequence, the pastoral landscape faces destruction from without, as Boccaccio—deploying various allegorical strategies—confronts the political upheavals of fourteenth-century Italy. These themes are invoked here as Therapon raises the alarm, but with a startling increase to the menace that they had previously posed for those external dangers are no longer simply spoken of but seem to have arrived at Silvius’ door.<sup>288</sup>

Only then does the eclogue pivot to its chosen theme: Olympia’s song of Paradise. This transition—from pastoral apocalypse to divine revelation—is the most drastic of the shifts in generic coordinates with which *Olympia* begins. One powerful consequence of this introduction is the articulation, once again, of a pastoral repertoire. Like the explicit lists of Vergil’s *Bucolica* 5 and Boccaccio’s *Alceustus*, *Olympia*’s introduction manifests an awareness of the pastoral repertoire, both that of the genre at large and that of the collection in which this eclogue is found. However, in those two eclogues a single theme was chosen and a single song was sung. The lists provided by Menalcas and Amintas foreground the repertoire to then position their song within the pastoral tradition, so that the shepherds themselves become active members of the construction of that tradition. Here, instead of speaking of this repertoire, Boccaccio incarnates it. By shuttling through a variety of options, each of which could make for an eclogue, *Olympia* begins in a state of flux, as a work within a genre that at this very moment is being changed from within.

Through its simultaneous engagement with and subversion of expectations and its juxtaposition of different pastoral worlds, *Olympia*’s prologue revisits the opening scenes of the Neapolitan eclogues and invests their metagenetic implications with new complexity. In this regard, Olympia’s arrival echoes that of the earlier shepherds who presented their companions with new knowledge (i.e. of political peril in eclogues 3-5 and jubilation in eclogue 6). As a result, after having explored spatial metaphors of pastoral’s engagement with other genres and provided that engagement with a map, Boccaccio proceeds to expand the metagenetic possibilities inherent to the pastoral dialogue.

Many critics have suggested that, through this dialogue between a pagan father and a Christian daughter, two different poetic cultures encounter and speak with each other. In the words of Jonathan Usher:

The dialogue . . . between Olympia and Silvius is a fascinating and moving exploration of the differences between the classical conception of Elysium (largely Virgilian) held by Silvius and Olympia’s Christian iconography of the abode of the blessed (essentially a synthesis of Dante’s earthly paradise, including the mystic procession, and the celestial rose).<sup>289</sup>

<sup>287</sup> See *Bucc. carm.* 1.38, 46, 52, 81, and 114.

<sup>288</sup> Compare Chalchidia’s lament in *Bucc. carm.* 5 (*The Falling Forest*)—“*esculus exarsit summissis undique flammis*” [“the Italian oak is burning with set fires” (79)]—to Therapon’s warning in *Olympia*--“*uritur omne nemus*” [“all the woods are burning” (14.20)].

<sup>289</sup> See Usher 1996.

In particular, because of the forum for this exploration, it has been interpreted as a debate concerning pastoral poetics, with Silvius a representative of classical pastoral and Olympia the advocate of a new Christian pastoral.<sup>290</sup> However, what has not been adequately integrated into interpretations of this debate is that, in so doing, Boccaccio was extending his previous pastoral experiments. That is, *Olympia* is articulated along the axis that he had established in the Neapolitan eclogues: literal fictionality diegetically encounters allegorical hermeneutics. As before, and with greater theatricality, the union of pastoral and allegory is staged as the dramatic arrival of the latter into the former. There are at least three implications to the fact that *Olympia* replays these earlier scenes (albeit with greater elaboration and experimental audacity). First, it attests to the consistency of Boccaccio's pastoral praxis at a remove of two decades, and is further evidence of the need to interpret the eclogues of the *Buccolicum carmen* integrally, as opposed to parsing *Olympia* only in terms of Boccaccio's other late eclogues. Second, like the eclogues of the *Comedia delle ninfe fiorentine* had done a quarter-century prior, it suggests that the metageneric potential of the pastoral dialogue was integral to Boccaccio's understanding of the genre. Here it is essential to recognize that this dialogue, for Boccaccio as it had been for Dante, is not simply a self-reflective assessment of the nature of pastoral, but rather produces new hybrid forms of pastoral. Third, since, on the one hand, the Neapolitan eclogues showed the Boccaccio's pastoral allegories work in tandem with an array of other innovations and, on the other hand, they imagined a space both before and after the allegory which maintained the autonomy and utility of pastoral fictionality, it necessitates a reappraisal of precisely how the classical-pagan and the modern-Christian horizons converge in *Olympia*.

There is no doubt that Christian allegory flourishes in this eclogue. Olympia's is by far its dominant voice, and through her account of Paradise, Boccaccio explores new strategies for fashioning pastoral fictions into a vessel for Christian doctrine. As is well established, his principal guide here is Dante's *Commedia*. Intertexts range from *Inferno* to *Paradiso* but the most consistent point of reference is Dante's depiction of Earthly Paradise in *Purgatorio*.<sup>291</sup> In terms of the metageneric potential of pastoral, this is already significant, regardless of whether we see *Olympia* as the triumph of Christian pastoral over its pagan roots or not. Boccaccio's career-long imitation of Dante has perhaps distracted from the novelty of an eclogue that attempts to integrate a miniature *Commedia* into its structures. By doing so, *Olympia* presents an example of pastoral at its most elastic, as it appropriates an "epic" narrative and fashions it into material for an eclogue, thereby generating a new strand of pastoral representation.<sup>292</sup>

Yet most critics argue that this appropriation of the *Commedia* results in a liquidation of the classical pastoral, now seen to be insufficient in light of Christian truth.<sup>293</sup> In terms of Boccaccio's theology, there is no cause to dispute this hypothesis. Yet in terms of Boccaccio's assessment of the representational validity of classical pastoral, I disagree with Hubbard's

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<sup>290</sup> See Chiecchi 1995, who argues that *Olympia* is a "traduzione narrativa del teorico dibattito sul genere, per cui Silvio sostiene l'arcadia pagana, mentre Olimpia la miglior vita cristiana" (223). Chiecchi 224 also insightfully notes that, in this regard, the dialogue between Silvius and Olympia has a precedent in Petrarch's *Parthenias*, one made all the more suggestive by Boccaccio's choice of poet-figure, for in *Parthenias* it was another Silvius (Petrarch) who advocated the poetry of Vergil and Homer, while Monicus (his brother Gherardo) advocate David and the poetry of the Bible.

<sup>291</sup> For a discussion of *Purgatorio* intertexts in *Olympia*, see Chiecchi 1995: 231-36. See also Armstrong 2005, who argues that *Paradiso* is a relevant to *Olympia* as *Purgatorio* is.

<sup>292</sup> See Grant 1965: 258-89 for Boccaccio's influence on subsequent Christian pastoral, which was a major vein for late medieval and Renaissance pastoralists.

<sup>293</sup> See Chiecchi 1995: 231.

assertion that *Olympia* “makes the classical conception [of pastoral poetry] appear inadequate in comparison with the Christian and sets up an implied agonism between the two” (244). For *Olympia* is a protracted attempt to mediate between the literal (pagan) fiction and the allegorical (Christian) message, without the latter subsuming the former. This is witnessed in part in the fact that the eclogue returns to the juxtaposition of perspectives that characterized the Neapolitan eclogues at their beginning but suppresses the moment in which those shepherds arrived at a shared perspective. In each of those eclogues, despite initial resistance, the shepherds arrived at a concord regarding the news brought to the pastoral landscape before the proper song began.<sup>294</sup> In *Olympia*, though Silvius progressively approaches Olympia’s message, he never fully arrives at an understanding of it. On the one hand, this turns the entire eclogue into a meditation on how to accommodate the classical past and Christian present. On the other hand, it maintains the integrity of the classical perspective until the very end. Through his attention to the representational coherence of both sides of the encounter, Boccaccio invests the metagenic dialogue of pastoral with the “multi-linguaged consciousness” (11) and formulates the “double-accented, double-styled *hybrid construction*” (304) that Bakhtin took to be representative of the novel.

It has not been sufficiently recognized just how curious it is that, in this dialogue, Boccaccio figures himself as the representative of classical pastoral poetics, and that he continues to represent those poetics even after Olympia departs. To state it in terms of the parts of *Purgatorio* that Boccaccio so thoroughly imitates here, it is as if the reader does not follow the ascent of Beatrice and Dante into the heavens, but instead stays behind with Virgil. In so doing, Boccaccio represents himself, as he had at the end of *Faunus*, as at once departing from the pastoral world while also residing squarely inside of it. This delicate balance between tradition and innovation also plays out on the level of the eclogue’s dialogical aspect. Though much of the novelty of this particular eclogue derives from Olympia’s revelation of divine truth, according to which Silvius is found lacking, of equal importance to Boccaccio is the ability of the eclogie form to converse with itself about its generic identity, and in the process discover the potential for a replenishing range of new fictions.

As both the Neapolitan eclogues and *Olympia* make clear, the *Buccolicum carmen* is not only a work of pastoral but a metagenic inquiry into pastoral and a representation of its developmental history from its classical origins to its fourteenth-century revival and transformation. Despite his broad revision of what can be considered pastoral, Boccaccio positions his boldest innovations in a lineage that descends from Vergil. The rise of pastoral allegory, the wandering shepherds who weave together landscapes and eclogues, the new intricacy of pastoral storytelling—Boccaccio figures these changes as extensions of the conventions that they alter, and thereby keeps his own discourse rooted in the foundational fictions, figures, and *topoi* of classical pastoral. Yet his representation of the genre’s history also betrays his awareness of the novelty of his project. As he systematically thwarts the expectations generated by his Vergilian *incipits* in the Neapolitan eclogues, Boccaccio offers future poets a model for the production of hybridity from within pastoral itself. In *Olympia*, he then figures a space in which that hybridity is produced and offers future poets a new formulation of the landscape which, in the convergence of inner and outer pastoral, allows for the generic elasticity of pastoral to be explored in spatial terms. In so doing, he provides an enduring example of the pastoral’s status as a metagenre, in which the boundaries between genres are erected so as to be breached.

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<sup>294</sup> In *Faunus*, the accord arrive in verse 11; in *Dorus*, verse 30; in *Silva cadens*: v. 4; and in *Alcestus*, verse 42.

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Through Boccaccio's refashioning of *Purgatorio* as subject-matter fit for pastoral, Dante and the eclogic form reunite. Yet precisely because *Olympia* foregrounds Dante's Earthly Paradise, it can rightfully be asked what has become of Dante's eclogues in Boccaccio's pastoral imagination. Janet Smarr interprets Boccaccio's turn to the *Commedia* as a gesture that not only differentiates him from Petrarch but also distances him from Dante the eclogue-poet. Building upon the interpretations of Perini and Martellotti, she takes Boccaccio's later Latin eclogues as evidence that "l'influsso del Dante bucolico latino era stato...una strada 'senza uscita' da mettere a parte" (2001: 254).<sup>295</sup>

I have already discussed various aspects of Boccaccio's pastoral representation that strongly question this assertion. From the pedagogical scene of Dante's first eclogue that informs the encounters between shepherds in the Neapolitan sequence to the characters and symbols of Dante's second eclogue which Boccaccio echoes (e.g. Polyphemus in eclogues 4 and 5, the celestial proem in eclogues 5 and 14), the influence of Dante the Latin pastoralist did not disappear even as Boccaccio's range of intertexts grew. Yet there is also explicit evidence provided by the *Buccolicum carmen*'s final eclogue which suggests that Dante's eclogues subtended Boccaccio's pastoral imagination to the very end of his poetic career. The sixteenth eclogue, *Aggelos* ("Messenger"), is something of a paratextual dialogue in which the eclogue collection is tasked with its own dedication. The first speaker is Appenninus, a figure for Donato degli Albanzani, a friend of both Boccaccio and Petrarch and the *Buccolicum carmen*'s dedicatee.<sup>296</sup> The second is Angelus, so named because he has been sent by Cerretius (i.e. Boccaccio) to lead the other eclogues to their dedicatee and who speaks as a messenger for their author.<sup>297</sup> Both the title of the eclogue and the name of the second shepherd are redolent with epistolarity, as the text figures itself in, and proceeds to describe and dramatize, a space between sender and recipient. Consequently, through its structure, this dedicatory eclogue, which strictly speaking is gratuitous since Donato had already received a dedication at the beginning of the collection, approaches the representational space in which the eclogue was revived a half-century earlier.

Moreover, in the opening exchange, the fifteen preceding eclogues are figured as so many sheep that Angelus brings to Appenninus. Critical attention has been focused on the description of this flock, for Appenninus is initially wary of the gift and describes it as "pecus ... claudum, servans vix pellibus ossa" [a "lame herd, that scarcely with its skin can hold its bones together" (16.25)]. In fact, he recommends that Angelus lead them to Silvanus—a figure for Petrarch—who might better purge them of their defects (26-30). Many have taken this to be another example of Boccaccio's putative humility, though surely there must be a slight note of

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<sup>295</sup> For Dante's eclogues as a poetic pathway "senza uscita," see Perini 1994: 693. See also Martellotti 1983a. Chiecchi's analysis of *Olympia* suggests that Boccaccio here is furthering Petrarch's project to return pastoral from the epistolary situation of the Dante-Giovanni exchange to its "alveo naturale, di canto amebeo concluso e autonomo" (1995: 222).

<sup>296</sup> Boccaccio's letter to Fra Martino informs us that the speaker is so named because Donato was born on the foothills of the Apennines [see Epistle 23, par. 32]. Donato also receives a more conventional dedication before the first eclogue of the collection: "Ad insignem virum appeninigenam Donatum de Pratoveteri dilectissimum amicum suum" ["To the renowned son of the Apennines Donato da Pratovecchio, his dear friend."]

<sup>297</sup> See Epistle 23, par. 32. Boccaccio chooses the name Cerretius for himself in honor of Certaldo, his place of birth and final residence.

irony registered by this description of a pastoral collection that was in fact longer than anything previously written.<sup>298</sup> Yet of greater importance here is the resemblance of this flock to the *decem vascula*—the ten pails of milk—that Dante promised to send to Giovanni in his first eclogue.<sup>299</sup> Developing Dante’s figure, Boccaccio pastoralizes the textuality of his collection’s constituent parts and provides them with a trajectory. In so doing, Boccaccio retroactively figures his eclogues *as* epistles.

The epistolary situation represented by this eclogue is further enriched by its engagement with actual epistles, in particular those between Boccaccio and Petrarch. Indeed, Boccaccio’s relation to Petrarch is one of the eclogue’s central themes. The depiction is ambivalent: in the first half of the eclogue, Boccaccio defers to Petrarch as his great mentor and the greatest of pastoral poets, but in the second half, he humbly refuses Petrarch’s invitations to depart from his Tuscan home and live with Petrarch as a guest. In the case of the former, Boccaccio is indeed laudatory, and though his corpus is filled with praise of Petrarch, none is more ardent or unabashed than that expressed in this eclogue:

si calamis, si voce canat, si forte susurro  
murmuret ipse, sibi semper Silvanus in ore  
Cerretii resonat, semper Silvanus ubique,  
et pater et dominus, spes gradis et unica semper. (39-42)

Whether Cerretius plays his pipes or sings or murmurs, in his mouth is always sounding Silvanus’ name, everywhere Silvanus, both lord and father, sole great hope, always.

This praise has been taken by many critics to constitute another instance in which Boccaccio subordinates his pastoral poetics to Petrarch’s, rendered all the more forceful by its position at the close of the collection.<sup>300</sup> Thus Thomas Hubbard argues that, in *Aggelos*, “the elevation of Petrarch to quasi-divine stature ... is complemented by an acute self-deprecation—even self-effacement—of Boccaccio himself” and that “in exorcising the Vergilian father, Boccaccio acquires another, whose influence was even more potent by reason of his closeness” (246). Considering their long and close friendship, there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Boccaccio’s affection or admiration for his peer, but this eclogue equally suggests an opposite negotiation: the critique of Petrarch and the articulation (and praise) of Boccaccio’s poetic autonomy.

This counter-narrative is formulated principally through allusions to the correspondence between the two poets. As previously mentioned, this eclogue is in part a gentle but firm refusal of the invitations that Petrarch extended to Boccaccio to move in with him. Appeninus depicts Silvanus’ invitation to Cerretius in the following fashion: “persepe remotum / Cerretium dudum vel viva voce vocarit / Silvanus” [“very often Silvanus has called faraway Cerretius at length and

<sup>298</sup> See Kegel-Brinkgreve 1990: 281 and Hubbard 1998: 246. Smarr follows the interpretation of this humble flock in Rossi 1963: 47, and considers it to be Boccaccio’s “self-denigrating” (1987: 262) estimation of his own eclogues in comparison to the ewe with abundant milk in Dante’s first eclogue.

<sup>299</sup> See Dante-Giovanni 2.64.

<sup>300</sup> Indeed, Boccaccio seems to put forth Petrarch as the greatest authority on pastoral poetics: “Non archas siculusve fuit, non ysmarus olim, / non ytalus pastor, cum tantum iuris in agris / alma Pales dederit” [“There has been no Arcadian, no Sicilian, no Ismarian, nor Italian shepherd to whom nourishing Pales gave so much rural authority” (28-30)].

with loud voice” (76-78)]. The specific reference is to the letters of invitation that Petrarch had sent Boccaccio, namely *Seniles* 1.5 and 3.1.<sup>301</sup> Yet what is most striking is the pastoralization of the epistolary situation, as the voice of Silvanus traverses the space separating his landscape from Cerretius’, just as the voices of Mopsus and Tityrus had reached the ears of their faraway interlocutors in the Giovanni-Dante exchange.

If the fifteen sheep and Silvanus’ traveling voice engage epistolarity directly, there is also a more subtle manner in which letter-writing informs this eclogue: its oblique but pervasive allusions to Boccaccio’s tenth epistle, sent to Petrarch in 1353. Indeed, the counterpoint that this epistle provides to *Aggelos* is sufficient to consider the result an example of what Albert Ascoli, in his discussion of Petrarch’s *Parthenias*, calls an “eclogue plus epistle complex” (116). In Epistle 10, Boccaccio voiced a coruscating attack on Petrarch’s decision to relocate to Milan and enter the services of Giovanni Visconti, which Boccaccio viewed as unforgivable concord with a tyrant. As is well known, this critique was voiced in pastoral terms.<sup>302</sup> One major point of congruence is that Boccaccio figures Petrarch as Silvanus in both eclogue and epistle. Though it is true that it was an appellative that Petrarch had chosen for himself, and Boccaccio refers to him by this name elsewhere in the collection, Boccaccio also uses a variety of other names for Petrarch as well, and his use of it here opens up the possibility of an uncomfortable convergence of (apparently) laudatory eclogue and condemnatory epistle.

Moreover, early in the eclogue Boccaccio invokes the time and context in which Epistle 10 was written. Angelus inquires when Appenninus had encountered Cerretius, and the other shepherd replies that he had seen him as an old man (most likely a reference to Boccaccio’s visit to Venice in 1367, soon before the composition of this eclogue), but that he had also met him some years prior in Ravenna (16.22).<sup>303</sup> Torraca dates this encounter to the months that Boccaccio spent in Ravenna in 1353, that is, the very period during which Boccaccio learned of Petrarch’s move to Milan and penned his critique.<sup>304</sup> It is immediately following this reference that Petrarch-Silvanus is first introduced in *Aggelos*.

These allusions gain greater currency through the eclogue and epistle’s shared thematics. The central critique of the epistle was that Petrarch had foregone republican liberty and yoked himself to a tyrant to gain the riches that such patronage afforded. By contrast, in *Aggelos* Boccaccio cautions against such patronage as he rejects the wealth offered by Petrarch, relives his failed attempt to secure the patronage of Niccola Acciaiuoli in Naples, and accepts with pride his meager flock that is indeed humble, but for which he owes no such debts. The eclogue and epistle further converge through the terms of the protection that Petrarch offers in *Aggelos*. According to Appenninus, Silvanus is prepared to offer “carosque greges tacitosque recessus” [“fine flocks and quiet retreats” (78)]. There follows a list of the locations that afford Silvanus the security to make his offer: the glades of Liguria, the pastures of Anser, the Euganeus, and the Venetian marsh (79-81), that is, the four ecclesiastical benefices held by Petrarch. Though all four further differentiate Boccaccio and his humble residence in Certaldo from his affluent and well-positioned friend, it is the first reference—Liguria—that is particularly germane here for it is with a reference to Giovanni Visconti’s seizure of “Ligurum ... silvas” [“the woods of the Ligurians” (Ep. 10, 8)] that Boccaccio begins his portrayal of the tyrant’s iniquity. Thus,

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<sup>301</sup> Branca 1977: 125 and 135 discusses Petrarch’s repeated invitations to live with him and Boccaccio’s persistent refusals.

<sup>302</sup> Boccaccio describes it as written “sub pastorali cortice” [“under pastoral bark” (Ep. 10, par. 3)].

<sup>303</sup> See Branca 1977: 155.

<sup>304</sup> See Torraca 1912: 186-90.



embedded within the depiction of Silvanus' generous offer is the implication that such generosity would not have been possible had Petrarch not accepted the Milanese patronage that so disturbed Boccaccio.

And it is through the figure of Giovanni Visconti that the interrelations of the eclogue-epistle complex are most suggestive. In Epistle 10, Boccaccio figures Visconti as the nefarious shepherd Egon. At a crucial juncture of *Aggelos*, preceding the reported speech in which Cerretius articulates his goal of humble autonomy, there is a reference to another shepherd named Egon. In light of a reference to an Egon in Boccaccio's eleventh eclogue, *Pantheon*, many critics have surmised that the shepherd in *Aggelos* is a figure for the pope as well.<sup>305</sup> Yet, as Perini has noted, Egon's activity here—the composition of love poetry—is most incongruous for a pope.<sup>306</sup> Giuseppe Billanovich has offered an illuminating alternative for this shepherd's identity: Petrarch.<sup>307</sup>

This interpretation is strengthened by a Vergilian intertext whose implications have not been sufficiently registered by the criticism. At the beginning of the eclogue, Appenninus asks: “Angele, quis, queso, pecus hoc” [“Angelus, who was the shepherd of this herd” (16.1)], which commentaries on the *Buccolicum carmen* duly note is a calque of the first verse of Vergil's third eclogue: “Dic mihi, Damoeta, cuium pecus? an Meliboei?” With this calque, Boccaccio introduces the problematic of patronage that the rest of the eclogue develops. What has not been registered is how Damoetas responds: the flock is Aegon's [“Non, verum Aegonis” (*Buc.* 3.2)]. It was in all likelihood in reference to this Aegon, a rich shepherd to whom other shepherds are indentured, that Boccaccio decided to figure Visconti as Egon in Epistle 10. This intertext introduces suggestive implications to the affiliation of Petrarch and Egon later in the eclogue, which becomes a double-figure referring to Petrarch's submission to a tyrant and the tyrant himself. In light of these developments, when Angelus informs Appenninus that the flock is Cerretius', Boccaccio effectively asserts that he owes his “flock” neither to a lord nor to Petrarch.

There are three general implications concerning this eclogue-epistle context that I would like to suggest. First, as the vein of Petrarchan critique in *Aggelos* makes clear, Boccaccio's self-effacing assessments in regards to Petrarch cannot be taken at face value. As a growing number of scholars in recent years have advocated, there is a need for a drastic reappraisal of Boccaccio's self-assessment vis-à-vis Petrarch,<sup>308</sup> to which I add that the *Buccolicum carmen* provides a privileged case study for such inquiries since: it is massively understudied; it is one of the few literary genres with which both poets engaged; pastoral was one the most consistent topics of their conversations and letters; and since the collection openly, albeit strategically, thematizes the relationship between their pastoral poetics.

Second, in terms of the pastoral tradition, the critical narrative according to which Boccaccio concludes his *Buccolicum carmen* by subordinating his pastoral poetics to Petrarch's is no longer tenable.<sup>309</sup> By returning to an earlier moment in his career when he had used pastoral discourse against Petrarch, and by firmly maintaining his liberty—a liberty that is not only personal but poetic as well—in the face of Petrarch's invitations, *Aggelos* provides one of the fullest articulations of the autonomy of Boccaccio's pastoral muse.

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<sup>305</sup> See Smarr 1987: 262-63. Smarr notes that *Aggelos* shares some names with Epistle 10, but does not pursue the intertextual implications.

<sup>306</sup> See Perini 1994: 1082 n. 97

<sup>307</sup> See Billanovich 1947: 273 n. 1.

<sup>308</sup> See note 208 and Eisner 2007: 139.

<sup>309</sup> Smarr is tentative here, but in her brief discussion of *Aggelos* (2001: 253-54), she suggests that the eclogue might mark a break from Petrarch.

Third, as the epistolary figures of the sheep and the echoes of Epistle 10 make clear, Boccaccio ends his collection not with the refutation of Dante's epistolarity but rather an acknowledgement of his abiding debt to it. In this light, his evocation of the *ravennate* origins of Epistle 10 at the beginning of *Aggelos* is not only an implicit critique of Petrarch but also a return to the site where Dante wrote his responses to Giovanni, and a recognition of the origins of the fourteenth-century eclogue revival.

It is in terms of this return that we need to interpret the final verses of the *Buccolicum carmen*. As Appenninus comes to accept Cerretius' gift, he makes the following statement:

Sat dictum. Fiat, sit nostrum. Caludicet esto,  
nam pregnans video, prolem sperasse iuvabit  
et cepisse novam. Surgunt ex montibus altis  
sydera; sis mecum. Nostro hoc tu iungito, Solon. (141-44)

Enough is said. So be it: it is mine. Perhaps that ewe is limping now because as I perceive, she's pregnant. I'll enjoy having awaited offspring and then gotten a newborn. From the high peaks stars are rising; stay with me, Solon, join this flock with ours.

If the first words of this passage signal the end of Boccaccio's pastoral career, the following verses figure a space beyond the collection that opens upon the future of the genre. Boccaccio achieves this aperture by fusing the ends of Dante's first and second eclogues. If the pregnant ewe calques Dante's *ovis gratissima*, from whose abundant and privileged milk he will send Giovanni his ten pails of milk, the sudden introduction of a third interlocutor—Solon (a figure for Donato's son)—generates the scene in which Dante, at the end of his second eclogue, introduced the new character Yolas and, harnessing the trajectory of the epistle, invited the future imitation of his pastoral discourse. After having dramatically extended both the size and the metagenetic implications of Dante's eclogues, Boccaccio ends the second stage of the fourteenth-century eclogue revival where it began—with pastoral, informed by both the directionality and the border-crossings of epistolarity, in a transformative and experimental metagenetic dialogue with the system of literature that surrounds it, and with an invitation to future poets to continue the experiment.

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