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## **Echoing Hylas : metapoetics in Hellenistic and Roman poetry**

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## CHAPTER 3

### ELEGIAC HYLAS: PROPERTIUS 1.20

Non puto ullam extare Elegiam vexatiorem in toto Latio.  
Broukhusius 1727, 82

#### 1. Introduction

The peculiarity of Propertius 1.20 raises as many questions today as it did three centuries ago. Whereas the preceding poems in book 1 all deal with heterosexual love, and in particular the speaker's passion for Cynthia, elegy 1.20, the longest poem in the book, is about a certain Gallus' love for a boy. Another striking feature of the poem is the mythological exemplum, a retelling of the story of Hercules and Hylas. Although the elegiac topos of the poet as *praeceptor amoris*, "teacher in love", is common enough in book 1, the story told in this poem to warn Gallus to keep an eye on his love, is much longer than any other mythological passage in Propertius' first book. Scholars have also often commented on the language and style of the poem, which is "quite unlike anything in the rest of the book",<sup>348</sup> and have been puzzled by its "conspicuous position near the end of the book".<sup>349</sup>

In this chapter, I shall attempt to find a way through the *impasse* by means of a sustained metapoetical reading of the whole poem. My premise will be that behind Gallus the addressee lies a version of Propertius' most important Roman elegiac predecessor, C. Cornelius Gallus. Recognizing the hitherto undervalued importance of Theocritus' meta-bucolic *Idyll* 13 and Virgil's *Eclogues* as intertexts, I will argue that Propertius, in a poem that constitutes the climax in a series of poems dealing

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<sup>348</sup> Hubbard 1975, 37.

<sup>349</sup> Hubbard 1975, 40.

with Gallus, not only outdoes a rival for elegiac supremacy, but is also able to transform Virgil's bucolic world into elegiacs.

## 2. An elegiac warning

In his elegy 1.20, Propertius tells his addressee, one Gallus, the story of Hylas and Hercules to warn him and impress upon him a point formulated in line 3: *saepe imprudenti fortuna occurrit amanti*. "Often cruel fortune has run up against the careless lover." (tr. Heyworth) As Hercules should have done, Gallus is to take care of his love, who is apparently also called Hylas and is as beautiful as Hercules' mythological beloved:<sup>350</sup>

est tibi non infra specie, non nomine dispar,  
Theiodamanteo proximus ardor Hylae. Prop. 1.20.5-6

Your flame resembles Hylas, son of Theodamas, not inferior to his beauty, not unlike in name. (tr. Goold)

Propertius continues his warning in lines 7-12: when Gallus is visiting fashionable Italian holiday resorts, like the shores of the Anio in Tibur and Baiae on the bay of Naples, he should protect his Hylas against "nymphs", female predators, whose love matches that of the Greek nymphs in the myth:

hunc tu sive leges umbrosae\* flumina silvae,  
sive Aniena tuos tinxerit unda pedes,  
sive Gigantei spatia bere litoris ora,  
sive ubicumque vago fluminis hospitio,  
nympharum semper cupidas defende rapinas  
(non minor Ausoniis est amor Adryasin), Prop. 1.20.7-12

\* umbrosae Ω: Umbrae sacra Hoefft

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<sup>350</sup> In principle, I follow the new Oxford Classical Text of Propertius, Heyworth 2007a. Divergences from this edition (except for minor alterations in orthography and punctuation) are marked by an asterisk, referring to my select apparatus.

Him, whether you skirt the streams of a shadowy forest, or the water of the Anio wets your feet, or you stride on the edge of the Giants' shore, or wherever you are in the meandering hospitality of a river, you should always protect from the lustful abduction of nymphs (no less is the love of the Italian Adryades). (tr. Heyworth, adapted)

If Gallus does not keep a close eye on his Hylas, Propertius continues in lines 13-16, he is doomed to wander in the wild in agony, like Hercules:

ne tibi sit duros montes et frigida saxa  
Galle, neque expertos semper adire lacus  
quae miser ignotis error perpessus in oris  
Herculis indomito fleverat Ascanio. Prop. 1.20.13-6

lest it be your lot always to approach harsh mountains and chill rocks, and lakes not tried before, Gallus. These things were endured by the unhappy wandering of Hercules in foreign lands and he wept long ago to the unrelenting Ascanius. (tr. Heyworth)

In the greater part of the poem, lines 17-50, Propertius then presents his own version of the Hylas myth as a cautionary *exemplum*. In the final two lines, Propertius returns to his addressee once more:

his, o Galle, tuos monitus servabis amores,\*  
formosum nymphis credere visus\* Hylan. Prop. 1.20.51-2

*lac. post 51 Heyworth: visus Ω: rursus ζ*

Warned by this story, Gallus, you will keep your love safe, you who have been seen to entrust beautiful Hylas to nymphs. (tr. Heyworth, adapted)

So in this poem, Propertius acts as the characteristic *praeceptor amoris* ("teacher in love") of Roman love elegy.<sup>351</sup> The phrasing of the warning here at the end (*his ... monitis*), as well as at the very start of the poem (*hoc ... monemus*), alludes to the end

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<sup>351</sup> Cf. Bramble 1974, 87. For the *praeceptor amoris* as a topos of Roman love elegy, and more specifically in Propertius' first book, see e.g. Wheeler 1910; 1911.

of the programmatic first poem of the book, where the poet sends out a warning too:<sup>352</sup>

**hoc, moneo**, vitate malum: sua quemque moretur  
cura, neque assueto mutet amore locum.  
quod si quis **monitis** tardas adverterit aures,  
heu, referet quanto verba dolore mea! Prop. 1.1.35-8

I warn you, avoid this pain: let each remain with his true love and not change places when love has grown familiar. But if anyone is slow to turn his ears to this warning, alas with what pain shall he recall my words. (tr. Heyworth)

Poem 1.20 thus immediately stakes its claim to be a love elegy, and this is further developed in what follows. First of all, references to places that actually exist (Tibur, Baiae), in lines 7-9, are characteristic of Roman love elegy. Unlike Virgil's bucolic poetry, which is situated in a fictionalized countryside, Roman elegy presents itself as urban poetry situated in the "real" world.<sup>353</sup> In *Eclogue* 10, Virgil even opposes these (in many ways quite similar) genres to each other in order to explore their boundaries (in Conte's words).<sup>354</sup> The elegiac nature of Propertius' lines on the Roman holiday resorts is reinforced by the appearance of Baiae in a more typical love elegy earlier in the book, in poem 11, where Cynthia's presence in the resort causes Propertius' persona, who has always kept a close eye on his beloved, to be afraid of losing her to rivals.<sup>355</sup> Apart from the clear thematic connection, the intertextual contact between the two poems is strengthened by the resonance at 1.20.22, in the

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<sup>352</sup> The programmatic dimension of Prop. 1.1 is discussed by e.g. Commager 1974, 21-36; Ross 1975, 59-70; Zetzel 1996, 86-9; Booth 2001a; Miller 2004, 85-90; Cairns 2006, 110-2. For the intertextual contact between poems 1.1 and 1.20, see Eckert 1985, 180-1; Petrain 2000, 420-1.

<sup>353</sup> See e.g. Conte 1986, 106-29 on what he calls the interaction between the bucolic and the elegiac code. Cf. Veyne 1988, 101-15 (Ch. 7: "The pastoral in city clothes").

<sup>354</sup> Conte 1986, 129-40 on the confrontation of bucolic and elegiac poetry in *Ecl.* 10, e.g. p. 126: "The eclogue's metaliterary depth (...) allows it to achieve an *exploration of the boundaries* of a poetic genre – an inquiry into features located very close to another genre but which, for that very reason, are distinctive and peculiar to it. (...) The aim of Virgil's exploration here is not to link and blur two poetics but to gain a deeper insight into that which divides them."

<sup>355</sup> See also e.g. Ross 1975, 76; Petersmann 1980, 194-5 on the contact between the two poems.

mythological *exemplum* where the Argonauts are described preparing for the night on the shores of Mysia, to 1.11.14, describing Cynthia lying on the beach of Baiae.<sup>356</sup>

molliter in tacito **litore** *compositam*.

Prop. 1.11.14

(...) elegantly resting on the silent shore. (tr. Heyworth)

hic manus heroum, placidis ut constitit oris,

mollia *composita* **litora** fronde tegit.

Prop. 1.20.21-2

Here the band of heroes, when they set foot on the calm shore, covered the beach and made it soft with a pile of foliage. (tr. Heyworth)

In view of this intertextual contact, it may not be a coincidence that the shores of Baiae are associated with Hercules at the beginning of 1.11: *Baiis | qua iacet Herculeis semita litoribus*, “Baiae, where lies a causeway on shores made by Hercules” (tr. Heyworth, adapted).<sup>357</sup> One effect of these last two allusions is that they closely associate the fate of Gallus, whom Propertius advises to keep an eye on his beloved Hylas when he visits Baiae, with that of Hercules in the mythological *exemplum*, who also apparently visited Baiae and lost his Hylas on a shore similar to that where Cynthia was lying and where she was an easy prey for the rivals of Propertius (or rather his poetic persona). The close connection between Gallus and Hercules is reinforced by their respective beloved boys, who, as the text explicitly states, are not only of comparable beauty, but even have the same name (*non nomine dispar*, 5).<sup>358</sup>

The most obvious consequence of the intertextual contact with 1.11, however, is that Hylas is aligned with Cynthia as the object of elegiac desire,<sup>359</sup> which makes

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<sup>356</sup> See also p. 153, n. 451 below for the elegiac connotations of the word *mollis*.

<sup>357</sup> The reference is to part of the road from Baiae to Naples, which was named after Hercules, who had built it, as legend had it, in the context of one of his labours: the stealing of Geryon’s cattle.

<sup>358</sup> With e.g. Fedeli 1980, 460 (ad loc.) I think that *non nomine dispar* is equivalent to *eodem nomine*. For the other view that *nomine* is equivalent to *fama* here, see Enk 1946, II, 178 (ad loc.). As Shackleton Bailey 1956, 56 argues, however, this interpretation is unconvincing, as in that case “*Hylan* in 52 must mean ‘your Hylas’, i.e. ‘the boy you love’. This would surely require *tuum*. Nor is a boy very likely to be complimented on his fame.”

<sup>359</sup> See p. 153-4 below (with nn. 452-3) for the symbolic significance of Cynthia as representing Propertius’ elegiac poetry, which further establishes the link with Propertius’ Hylas, who, as I will

Gallus an elegiac lover and thus also a poet, for these two activities are inseparable.<sup>360</sup> As a result, just as Propertius' poetic persona evokes the historical poet, it is hard not to see behind this addressee the alleged inventor of Roman love elegy, C. Cornelius Gallus, who features in Virgil's sixth and tenth *Eclogues*, and of whom unfortunately only ten lines have come down to us.<sup>361</sup>

### 3. The identity of Gallus

The question whether or not the Gallus of 1.20 is the historical person is closely connected to the identity of the other Gallus characters in book 1. Poems 5, 10 and 13 are also addressed to a lover Gallus, and in the penultimate poem 21 a character with the same name features as narrator. Despite the enormous scholarly debate over the identity of the Gallus figure in book 1, almost all modern scholars agree that the Gallus of 1.20 evokes the elegist.<sup>362</sup> The framing of the poem as advice to an addressee recalls Theocritus' Hylas poem, *Idyll* 13.<sup>363</sup> As this poem is addressed to a historical figure, the poet and physician Nicias, it is reasonable to suppose that the addressee of 1.20 is a historical figure and a poet. Ross has done most to show that the Gallus of 1.20 is connected to the historical C. Cornelius Gallus.<sup>364</sup> His main

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argue below (Sections 4 and 7) also symbolizes elegiac poetry, on the basis of his name's etymology (< ὕλη, "poetic subject matter").

<sup>360</sup> Cf. Volk 2002, 163: "One of the constituting features of Latin love elegy is that the persona of the lover is at the same time a poet. His love and his poetry are closely connected: it is the girl that inspires him to compose elegy, and his poems, in turn, are intended to win his beloved for him".

<sup>361</sup> For the fragments of Gallus, with translation, commentary and a concise but comprehensive introduction, see Hollis 2007, 219-52 (= *FRP* 138-45).

<sup>362</sup> See e.g. Ross 1975, 74-81; Sullivan 1976, 33, n. 17; Monteleone 1979, 38-51; King 1980; Kennedy 1982, 377-80; Cairns 1983, 83-4; Gall 1999, 181-91; Petrain 2000, 414-6; Cairns 2006, 219-49 (= 2004). On the other hand, Hubbard 1974, 25; Syme 1978, 99-103 and Fedeli 1981, 235-6 do not believe that the Gallus in book 1 can refer to the poet. The only argument, however, is based on poem 1.5.23-4, where it is said that Gallus' *nobilitas* and his *priscae imagines* will not help him in love. Because Cornelius Gallus was an *eques*, so the argument goes, he could not be meant. Cairns 1983, 84-6 has convincingly refuted this argument.

<sup>363</sup> Petrain 2000, 414.

<sup>364</sup> Ross 1975, 74-81.

argument<sup>365</sup> is based on the language of the poem, which has always been seen as extravagant and different from the rest of the book.<sup>366</sup> The archaic and neoteric elements that both Ross and, recently, Cairns, who has tried to strengthen Ross' case, have discerned in the poem may indeed go back to Gallus.<sup>367</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> I summarize some further arguments from Ross. (1) The Hamadryads ("tree-nymphs"), the abductors of Hylas who appear in 1.20.32, stand in some way for Gallus' poetry. Kennedy 1982, 377-80 has elaborated on this and has argued that both Propertius and Virgil associate Hamadryads with Gallus' poetry and treat them as "surrogate Muses" of Gallus' love-poetry (see, however, Section 5.1 below for my interpretation of Propertius' and Virgil's Hamadryads). (2) The description of the scene of Hercules' unhappiness in 1.20.13-4 (*duros montes et frigida saxa | ... neque expertos ... lacus*) recalls that of the desolate places in Prop. 1.18, especially lines 27-8 (*pro quo divini fontes et frigida rupes et datur inculto tramite dura quies*), and both passages are allegedly derived from Gallus. (3) The description of the spring Pege (33-8) is claimed to owe much to Gallus' description of the Grynean grove, which he [in turn] derived from Euphorion. Ross' argument is based on Servius' comments on *Ecl.* 6.72: *Grynei nemoris ... origo* ("the origin of the Grynean grove"). Servius says that the seers Calchas and Mopsus once had a competition in the grove and then continues: *hoc autem Euphorionis continent carmina, quae Gallus transtulit in sermonem latinum*. ("This the poems of Euphorion, which Gallus translated into Latin, contain.") D'Servius then gives a description of Grynium, a city in Mysia, *ubi est locus arboribus multis iucundus, gramine floribusque variis omni tempore vestitus, abundans etiam fontibus* ("where there is a place, pleasant because of its many trees, always covered in grass and various flowers, even abounding in springs"). Ross concludes: "trees, flowers springs. There is only one *ekphrasis* that is likely to be the original summarized here, and that is Gallus' own description of the Grynean Grove. If it is not sheer coincidence that Propertius' description of Pege parallels so closely that bald summary ... then it must be assumed that Propertius has taken from Gallus not only diction and expression, but an important passage from a very important poem, by reference to which the nature and purpose of his poem would have been made even more clear." This argument is not convincing, however, as we do not know whether Gallus' poem on the Grynean grove was important, or that it even definitely existed. Even then, however, the parallels are indeed likely to be sheer coincidence, since the description of a *locus amoenus* is such a well-known topos (see Schönbeck 1962).

<sup>366</sup> See e.g. Enk 1946, II, 176; La Penna 1951, 131-44; Hubbard 1974, 37, 40; Skutsch 1963, 239; Tränkle 1960, 15, 37.

<sup>367</sup> Ross points, for instance, to the infinitive *quaerere* (24) used with a verb of motion, an archaic construction that is very rare in poetry and possibly influenced by Greek usage. One of the other two occurrences of this construction, moreover, is in the Milanion *exemplum* (1.1.12), which Ross, for other reasons, had associated with Gallus' poetry earlier (61-5). Ross also focuses on the archaic dative form *nullae* (35) – Heyworth 2007a, however, reads *nulli* here, an early modern conjecture (ς). Ross thinks that such archaisms were typical of the poetry of Cornelius Gallus and considers it possible that these lay behind the remarks of both Quintilian (10.1.93), who calls Gallus *durior*, "rather harsh", and Parthenius, who, in the dedication of his *Erotica Pathemata* to Gallus, describes Gallus as pursuing τὸ περικτὸν, which Ross takes to refer to "Gallus' elevated diction" (see also Lightfoot 1999, 370 for a discussion of the meaning of περικτός). The grammatical and stylistic aspects of 1.20, identified by Ross as characteristic of Gallus, are conveniently summarized by Cairns 2006, 223-4 (= 2004, 79-80). Acknowledging the excessive generality of Ross' pointers to Gallan neotericisms, Cairns has tried to strengthen Ross' case by identifying more specific allusions to Gallus' poetry in 1.20 (224-32 = 2004, 80-5). He concludes that the verbal similarities with Gallus' poetry are concentrated in those sections of the poem in which Gallus is addressed, and that in the narrative of the myth itself (18-50) the echoes evoke more general neoteric features, as identified by Ross (I find Cairns' suggestion that Propertius'



This line of inquiry does not address the more interesting question, however, of how these possible echoes of Gallus' poetry in 1.20 should be interpreted. Ross and Cairns assume that Gallus has written a poem on Hylas, to which Propertius reacts, but the nature of and reason for this reaction, as well as its implications, are not discussed. The hunt for Gallus in 1.20 – and this goes for other Gallus poems in book 1 as well – has distracted the attention from the poem itself, which has much more to say, as I will argue in what follows.

#### 4. Stealing Gallus' poetry

D. Petrain has recently argued for a metapoetical reading of the poem, grounded in an etymological play on the name Hylas, as derived from ὕλη, which can metaphorically denote "(poetic) subject matter", through its Latin equivalent *silva*.<sup>368</sup> The play is triggered by the "etymological signpost" *non nomine dispar* and by the "vertical juxtaposition" of *Hylae* and *silvae*, at the end of the successive lines 6 and 7, techniques used by Virgil to highlight etymological wordplay.<sup>369</sup> Following Ross in assuming that Gallus has written an elegy about Hylas, Petrain concludes:<sup>370</sup>

Propertius warns Gallus to keep safe his Hylas and his ὕλη from those who might steal them away, but in the course of giving this advice perpetrates just such a theft, taking over in his own poem Gallus' subject matter and perhaps even some of his poetic idiosyncrasies. Poem 1.20 thus commits the very act it

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version of the myth is therefore modelled on a now lost Hylas poem by Parthenius (unconvincing). Petrain 2000, 415 also mentions a few "striking" stylistic similarities to the famous papyrus containing nine lines of Gallus' elegiac poetry, found in Qaṣr Ibrīm, Egypt, in 1978 (*FRP* 145), such as a "predilection for hyperbaton, and in the pentameters a pronounced tendency for the two halves to end with a noun and its adjective (often cultivating internal rhyme), and for the line to close with a word longer than two syllables". Given the length of the fragment and the lack of context, however, these resemblances are less convincing.

<sup>368</sup> See also Introduction, Section 2; Ch. 1, Section 3.2.4; Ch. 2, Section 3.3.3; Ch. 4, Section 5.1 for the etymological play on Hylas in other versions of the myth.

<sup>369</sup> Petrain 2000, 410, with reference to O'Hara 1996, 75-9 (on "etymological signposts") and 86-8 (on "vertical juxtaposition").

<sup>370</sup> Petrain 2000, 418-9.

warns Gallus to be on his guard against, so that by the time its final admonition in the last couplet comes around, Hylas/Ὕλη has already been filched.

Petrain sees this metapoetical reading confirmed at the end of the poem, where Propertius repeats his warning: “Warned by this story, Gallus, you will keep your *amores* safe, you who have been seen to entrust beautiful Hylas to nymphs.” (51-2; tr. Heyworth, adapted). In this specific context, the word *amores* clearly evokes the elegiac work of Gallus which was almost certainly called *Amores*, as becomes clear from Servius’ comments on *Eclogue* 10.1:<sup>371</sup>

Gallus (...) fuit poeta eximius; nam et Euphorionem (...) transtulit in latinum sermonem, et amorum suorum de Cytheride scripsit libros quatuor. FRP 139

Gallus (...) was an outstanding poet; for he both translated Euphorion into Latin (...) and he wrote four books of his *Amores* on Cytheris.  
(tr. Hollis, adapted)

Petrain thus reads line 51 as “a virtuoso performance in the way it sums up both the surface narrative (Propertius’ advice for Gallus to keep his boy safe) and the metapoetic discourse (Propertius’ challenge to Gallus that he must now defend *his* poetic material, material which Propertius has already begun to take over in 1.20).”

Petrain has made it very clear that 1.20 has a metapoetical dimension, and his interpretation is for a large part very convincing. I do not, however, agree with Petrain’s last point that Propertius has, in poem 1.20, somehow subjected Gallus to what he warned him to beware of: appropriation of his poetry. Not only does the formulation of the warning at the very end of the poem (*servabis*, “you will keep

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<sup>371</sup> See, however, Gauly 1990, 33-40, who has challenged the idea that *Amores* was the title of Gallus’ four books of love elegies, by arguing that the ancients used *amores* to generally refer to love poetry. I am not convinced by this interpretation (which would, incidentally, not diminish the allusion to Gallus’ love elegies in Prop. 1.20.51), because of the emphatic use of word *amores* in *Ecl.* 10, at the end of lines (even successive lines at 34-5), and its close connection with Gallus’ poetry: *Galli dicamus amores*. “Let us tell of Gallus’ *amores*. (6); *vestra meos olim si fistula dicat amores*. “If once your pipe would tell of my *amores*.” (34) [Gallus’ words]; *meos incidere amores | arboribus: crescent illae, crescetis, amores*. “(...) to inscribe my *amores* in the trees: they will grow and you, *amores*, will grow as well.” (53-4)

safe”) speak against this, more importantly, the identification of the nymphs points in another direction, as I will now argue.

## 5. A bucolic dimension

### 5.1. *The Hamadryads and bucolic poetry*

Extrapolating from Petrain’s interpretation, the crucial “nymphs” against whom Propertius warns Gallus would denote Propertius himself or his poetry. Although Petrain, strangely enough, does not interpret the nymphs in this metapoetical way, he does tackle what they stand for in another context, where he argues for “an intimate connection between 1.20 and Cornelius [*Gallus*]”,<sup>372</sup> following D. Kennedy’s interpretation of the *Hamadryades* in 1.20.52 and elsewhere as “surrogate Gallan Muses”.<sup>373</sup> This interpretation, however, makes Petrain’s metapoetical reading seriously problematic, as it is incompatible with his theory that Hylas is “stolen” by Propertius. But I do not believe that the Hamadryads are associated with either Propertius or Gallus. *A priori*, it is already unlikely that nymphs would be associated with elegiac poetry, as they are closely connected with bucolic poetry in both Theocritus’ *Idylls*, where they even feature as “bucolic Muses”,<sup>374</sup> and Virgil’s *Eclogues*, where they are a characteristic part of the bucolic landscape. The occurrences of the word *Hamadryades* on which Kennedy bases his argument also point in the direction of a bucolic world, and that of Virgil in particular. The Hamadryads occur only once in Virgil, in *Eclogue* 10.62. As Conte has convincingly shown, this poem confronts the similar genres of elegiac and bucolic poetry “to gain a deeper insight into that which divides them”.<sup>375</sup> As Conte argues, Virgil depicts the elegiac poet as a guest in his bucolic landscape in order to help his friend to get over

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<sup>372</sup> Petrain 2000, 416.

<sup>373</sup> Kennedy 1982, 377-80.

<sup>374</sup> See Ch. 2, Section 3.4.4.

<sup>375</sup> Conte 1986, 126. See also p. 122 with n. 354 above.

his passion, by leaving his elegiac poetry and way of life behind.<sup>376</sup> As is established by the allusions to Theocritus' *Idyll* 1,<sup>377</sup> Gallus adopts the role of the archetypal bucolic poet Daphnis, who, although he wasted away with the passion aroused in him by Aphrodite, resisted love, even in the underworld.<sup>378</sup> Although Gallus tries twice, this role does not fit the elegist, and he is forced to leave Virgil's bucolic world and give in to his passion. Virgil thus pays great tribute to his friend, as he promised to do at the start of the poem, by showing Lycoris how much Gallus loves his elegiac mistress (and hence his elegiac poetry).<sup>379</sup> Gallus ends his speech and his bucolic adventure – shortly before Virgil will do the same – as follows:

iam neque Hamadryades rursus nec carmina nobis  
 ipsa placent; ipsae rursus concedite silvae.  
 non illum nostri possunt mutare labores,  
 nec si frigoris mediis Hebrumque bibamus  
 Sithoniasque nives hiemis subeamus aquosae,  
 nec si, cum moriens alta liber aret in ulmo,  
 Aethiopum versemus ouis sub sidere Cancri.  
 omnia vincit Amor: et nos cedamus Amori.

*Ecl.* 10.62-9

Now, once again, we take no joy in Hamadryads, | not even in song – again  
 wish even the woods away. | No alteration can our labours make in him, | not if  
 we drank of Hebrus in the middle frosts | of watery winter and endured

<sup>376</sup> Cf. Conte 1986, 113 on this equation of elegiac poetry and elegiac way of life in elegy, which is “the distinctive criterion of its [*Roman love elegy's*] literary code.” Cf. also Conte 1986, 106 on Gallus in *Ecl.* 10: “Gallus (...) is not just an elegiac poet but also an elegiac character, if we admit that this literary genre brings life and poetry closest together.”

<sup>377</sup> See, for instance, the most clear allusion at the beginning of *Ecl.* 10: *quae nemora aut qui vos saltus habuere, puellae | Naides, indigno cum Gallus amore peribat?* “What woodlands or what rides detained you, Naiad maids, |, when Gallus pined away of an unworthy love?” (9-10; tr. Lee) to the beginning of Thyrsis' song of Daphnis: *πᾶ ποκ' ἄρ' ἦσθ', ὅκα Δάφνις ἐτάκετο, πᾶ ποκα, Νύμφαι*; “Where were you, Nymphs, when Daphnis wasted away, where were you?” (66; tr. Verity). See further Conte 1986, 104-8 for the initial “Daphnidization” of Gallus in *Ecl.* 10.

<sup>378</sup> *Id.* 1.103: *Δάφνις κῆν Αἴδα κακὸν ἔσσεται ἄλγος Ἐρωτι*. “I tell you, even from Hades Daphnis will prove to be a source of painful grief to Love.” (tr. Verity) See also Ch. 2, Section 3.3 for Theocritus' Daphnis.

<sup>379</sup> *Ecl.* 10.2-3: *pauca meo Gallo, sed quae legat ipsa Lycoris, | carmina sunt dicenda; neget quis carmina Gallo?* “For Gallus mine (but may Lycoris read it too) | a brief song must be told; who'd deny Gallus song?” (tr. Lee) On these lines, see Conte 1986, 125: “This, I believe, is the gift Virgil wished to offer, a gift dedicated to Lycoris as well as to Gallus.” For the beloved as poetic subject matter see n. 452 (Cynthia), pp. 138-9 (Lycoris) and Sections 4 and 7 (Hylas) below.

Sithonian snows,| nor if, when dying bark shrivels on the lofty elm,| beneath  
the Crab we herded Ethiopian sheep.| Love conquers all: we also must submit  
to love. (tr. Lee)

The *Hamadryades* and *carmina* in line 62 are closely connected (*neque ... nec*) and operate as a hendiadys denoting Virgil's bucolic landscape/poetry. This is reinforced by the mention of *silvae*, a usual metonym for Virgil's bucolic poetry,<sup>380</sup> which is in its turn closely connected (through the repetition of *rursus* and *ipsa/ipsae*) to the Hamadryads and *carmina*. So although the Hamadryads are mentioned in a speech by Gallus, they are part of a landscape that is used by Virgil to symbolize his poetry, a "bucolic stage", that Gallus is now leaving.<sup>381</sup>

The other examples that Kennedy discusses are less straightforward, but if they reveal any association with poetry, it is, again, with the bucolic poetry of Virgil. At the end of his elegy 2.34, Propertius gives his own history of Roman love poetry in which Virgil features prominently. As part of the section on the *Eclogues* the Hamadryades again appear as part of a bucolic landscape, featuring also the shepherd Corydon and his pipe, in short the setting of *Eclogue* 2:

felix, qui viles pomis mercaris amores;  
huic licet ingratae Tityrus ipse canat.  
felix intactum Corydon qui temptat Alexin  
agricolae domini carpere delicias.  
quamvis ille sua lassus requiescat avena,  
laudatur faciles inter Hamadryadas. Prop. 2.34.71-6

Happy are you who buy love cheap with apples; to her though she be  
ungrateful let Tityrus himself sing. Happy is Corydon who tries to pluck the  
untouched Alexis, darling of his master, the farmer. Although he rests tired  
from his pipe, he is praised among the easy nymphs. (tr. Heyworth, adapted)

<sup>380</sup> Cf. Heyworth 2005, 149: "'Woods' (*silvae*), along with 'shade' (*umbra*; e.g. 1.4, 10.75-6), is Virgil's favoured metonym for the genre."

<sup>381</sup> Conte 1986, 123, n. 25: "The use of the imperative of 'concedere' is a standard formula in comedies; it shows when a character must leave the stage. It is almost as if Gallus, at this point in the action, finds he must dismiss the bucolic setting that has been set up for him as an ephemeral mise-en-scène."

The obliging attitude of the Hamadryads recalls the situation in *Eclogue 2*, where *nymphae* helped Corydon (45-55) in his attempt to conquer Alexis,<sup>382</sup> but the epithet *faciles* (“friendly”, “sympathetic”) especially brings *Eclogue 3* to mind, where nymphs again appear as a standard part of the bucolic setting: *sed faciles Nymphae risere* (“but the sympathetic nymphs laughed”, 9).

Another passage discussed by Kennedy is to be found in Propertius 2.32, where the poet defends the promiscuous behaviour of his Cynthia by adducing mythological *exempla*. Having dealt with Helen and Venus’ adulterous relationship with Mars, Propertius gives another example, which initially teasingly seems to deal again with Venus, who made love to a shepherd on Mount Ida (*H. Hom.* 5.54-5, 166-7),<sup>383</sup> but in fact deals with the affair of Oenone and Paris:

quamvis Ida deam pastorem dicat amasse  
atque inter pecudes accubuisse deam,  
hoc et Hamadryadum spectavit turba sororum  
Silenique senes et pater ipse chori,  
cum quibus Idaeo legisti poma sub antro  
supposita excipiens, Nai, caduca manu. Prop. 2.32.35-40

deam *Clausen 2000*: Parim Ω

Although Ida says that a goddess loved a shepherd, and a goddess lay with him amid the flocks, even the crowd of her sister Hamadryades witnessed and accepted this, and so did the aged Sileni and the father of the chorus himself, with whom, Naiad, you picked apples deep in the dell of Ida, catching them as they fell with a hand placed below. (tr. Heyworth)

Kennedy reads *Parim* in line 35; this, however, is a gloss on the following *pastorem*.<sup>384</sup> This results in Kennedy interpreting the example of Paris and Oenone as “a bit out of place” in the company of the other ones, which causes him to suggest that the story “was told in some form by Gallus, and that Propertius is drawing upon another

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<sup>382</sup> See also Section 5.2 below for this passage.

<sup>383</sup> Heyworth 2007*b*, 253-4

<sup>384</sup> See Heyworth 2007*b*, 252-4 for a thorough critical discussion of the line.

famous literary precedent to reject moral criticisms of his 'Cynthia'".<sup>385</sup> Although Parthenius tells the story in his *Erotica Pathemata* (4), a collection which, as he states in his preface, he has written to provide Cornelius Gallus with subject matter for his poetry, Kennedy's interpretation is not very convincing. Clausen's emendation *deam*, for instance, makes the appearance of the story not striking at all by smoothing the transition from the previous exemplum involving Venus and Mars. Furthermore, the other "obscurities" that Kennedy discerns in the passage and associates with Gallan presence again point in the direction of bucolic poetry rather than Gallan elegy. On the *Sileni senes* in line 38, for instance, Kennedy notes: "Silenus seems to have had something to do with poetic inspiration, and he may have been used in this connection by Gallus." Kennedy refers, however, to Silenus' appearance in *Eclogue* 6, a poem in which, as Deremetz has most convincingly shown, the old satyr sings a "meta-bucolic" song.<sup>386</sup> Kennedy's other reference, to *Georgics* 2.494 (*Silvanumque senem*), which he sees as "dealing with the sources of Virgil's inspiration",<sup>387</sup> indeed also concerns a passage that deals with Silenus (using his alternative name Silvanus), but this is only obvious because the combined mention of "the rustic gods, Pan and aged Silvanus and the sisterhood of Nymphs" (493-4), clearly evokes Virgil's bucolic world.

On his last example, elegy 1.20, Kennedy states that "Propertius' reason for using Hamadryads in this context remains a puzzle".<sup>388</sup> He suggests, however, that the poem deals with the poet Gallus "on the same imaginative level as Virgil's Tenth *Eclogue*" (i.e. as a poetic figure based on Gallus' poetic persona), and that line 32, mentioning the Hamadryads, "may conceal much beneath the surface, bearing in mind what has already been conjectured about the poetic role of the Hamadryads [*as surrogate Gallan Muses*"]". It is quite likely that Propertius is offering some sort of

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<sup>385</sup> Kennedy 1982, 379.

<sup>386</sup> Deremetz 1995, 287-314 (≈ 1987). See also Section 7.2 below.

<sup>387</sup> Kennedy 1982, 379, n. 49.

<sup>388</sup> Kennedy 1982, 380.

literary comment in this line, but what it is must be a matter of speculation.”<sup>389</sup> As the other examples suggest, however, the Hamadryads symbolize Virgil’s *Eclogues*, and this identification should also be the first place to look with regard to the meaning of the Hamadryads in 1.20.<sup>390</sup>

C. Monteleone already suggested that the nymphs in this poem “metonymically designated the *Bucolica*,”<sup>391</sup> an interpretation strengthened by the allusions, discerned by Monteleone, to Virgil’s work, and *Eclogue* 2 in particular.<sup>392</sup> First of all, the landscape in which Hylas is abducted, and of which the nymphs are a part (33-40), recalls that in which the shepherd Corydon is trying to seduce Alexis, helped by the nymphs (*Ecl.* 2.45-52).<sup>393</sup> Furthermore, the last line of 1.20 clearly alludes to the first line of *Eclogue* 2:<sup>394</sup>

formosum nymphis credere visus Hylan.

Prop. 1.20.52

formosum pastor Corydon ardebat Alexin.

*Ecl.* 2.1

That it here concerns Propertius’ metapoetical warning to his colleague Gallus to keep safe his beloved Hylas/his elegiac poetry, as was argued earlier, suggests that Gallus is warned for Virgil’s *Eclogues*, as symbolized by one part of Virgil’s bucolic world, which also metonymically represented the *Eclogues* in *Eclogue* 10.62: the Hamadryads. This link between the framing warning and the mythological narrative was already triggered in the initial admonition, which revealed that both Gallus and

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<sup>389</sup> Kennedy 1982, 380.

<sup>390</sup> The following metapoetical interpretation of 1.20 is inspired by, and partly based on, an unpublished paper by P. Heslin, “Hylas descending: Propertius 1.20 as allegory” (Heslin 2007), in which he tries to reconcile Petrain’s metapoetical observations with the bucolic elements in the poem as discerned by Monteleone. Heslin argues for the importance of *Eclogue* 10 in Prop. 1.20, a poem in which Propertius inverted what Virgil did to Gallus (i.e. incorporated his elegiacs in bucolic poetry) by incorporating Virgil’s bucolic poetry into his own elegy. Although I owe much to his findings, my own conclusions differ significantly from his.

<sup>391</sup> Monteleone 1979, 50: “per metonimia (la divinità per la sua sfera d’ influenza), *Nymphae* designa le *Bucoliche* ...”

<sup>392</sup> Monteleone 1979, 28-36; 39-40.

<sup>393</sup> Monteleone 1979, 28-9 also compares 1.20.36 with *Ecl.* 1.37: *cui pendere sua patereris in arbore poma*; *Ecl.* 7.54: *strata iacent passim sua quaeque sub arbore poma*; *Ecl.* 8.37: *roscida mala*.

<sup>394</sup> Monteleone 1979, 29: “l’explicit di Prop. 1.20 (...) presenta analogie con l’incipit dell’ ecloga seconda.”



Hercules' beloveds were named Hylas, and that the "Italian nymphs" were as amorous as their mythological counterparts. The metapoetical warning to Gallus can thus be paraphrased as followed: "Warned by this story, Gallus, you will from now on look after (*servabis*) your *Amores*, you who have been seen to entrust your elegiac poetry to Virgil's *Eclogues*." But in what sense has Gallus done this? To answer that question, I will first explore Gallus' connection with the *Eclogues*.

### 5.2. Gallus and his elegy in *Eclogues* 2 and 10

Although the landscape in which Hylas disappears alludes to *Eclogue* 2, the *Eclogue* is not typically bucolic. In fact, as has often been shown, Corydon's unrequited passion (*ardebat*, 1) for Alexis, the beautiful boy from the city, as expressed in the song that constitutes almost the entire poem (6-73), is very elegiac. As Kenney puts it:<sup>395</sup>

In that simple plot Virgil has incorporated most of the standard ingredients of love-elegy as we know them from Propertius, Tibullus and Ovid: separation, the rich rival, the heartless beloved, love as infatuation, the lover as a figure of suffering. It is a complete transposition of the elegiac situation into the pastoral mode.

Corydon is a shepherd, however, who belongs in Virgil's harmonious bucolic world, which is free of elegiac, unrequited passion. At the end of the poem, Corydon realizes this and consoles himself by returning to his own world, which he had neglected in his elegiac madness (*dementia*):<sup>396</sup>

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<sup>395</sup> Kenney 1983, 51. See also e.g. Putnam 1970, 82-119; Deremetz 1995, 311-4; Hardie 2002, 125-6 for the elegiac aspects of *Ecl.* 2, which is underlined by the allusions to Callimachus' story of Acontius and Cydippe (*Aet.* fr. 67-75 Pf.), as well as (probably) to Gallus' reworkings of it (see Kenney 1983, 48-52 on these allusions). The Callimachean story, and especially the part in which Acontius consoles himself in the wilderness, carving the name of his beloved on the bark of a tree, is treated by Roman elegists as a prototype of their poetry: see e.g. Barchiesi 2001, 124: "(...) the episode of Acontius and Cydippe (...) is very influential for a complex poetic strategy: through this allusion the elegist 'proves' that his Callimachean allegiance has a basis; through the theme of writing 'beautiful Cydippe', the Callimachean character becomes a project for the 'subjective' Roman poet."

<sup>396</sup> See also p. 140 with n. 418 below on elegiac passion, and *furor* ("madness") in particular.

a, Corydon, Corydon, quae te dementia cepit!  
semiputata tibi frondosa vitis in ulmo est.  
quin tu aliquid saltem potius, quorum indiget usus,  
viminibus mollique paras detexere iunco?  
invenies alium, si te hic fastidit, Alexin.

*Ecl.* 2.69-73

Ah, Corydon, Corydon, what madness mastered you! | You've left a vine half-pruned upon a leafy elm: | why not at least prepare to weave of osiers | and supple rushes something practical you need? | If this Alexis sneers at you, you'll find another. (tr. Lee)

As Putnam shows, the weaving of the basket (*detexere*) – a useful object made of material proper to the bucolic world and thus closely associated with that world – is not only a bucolic activity, but also metaphorically designates the writing of bucolic poetry, through activation of the common metaphor of weaving for the poetic process:<sup>397</sup> Corydon, whom we can associate with Virgil's poetic persona here, continues to write bucolic poetry after this elegiac excursion in *Eclogue* 2.<sup>398</sup> This interpretation is reinforced by the end of *Eclogue* 10, where Virgil explicitly associates the writing of his own bucolic poetry with weaving a basket:<sup>399</sup>

haec sat erit, divae, vestrum cecinisse poetam,  
dum sedet et gracili fiscellam textit hibisco.

*Ecl.* 10.70-2

To have sung of these things, goddesses, while he sat and wove | a frail of slim hibiscus, will suffice your poet. (tr. Lee)

The verb used of Corydon's planned activity, *detexere*, "which means, literally, to finish off by weaving",<sup>400</sup> implies that Corydon will continue the bucolic task, which he had neglected before, just as he left the vine "half-pruned" (*semiputata*, 70). As Putnam argues, this word, *semiputata*, "has the secondary implication of 'half

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<sup>397</sup> Putnam 1970, 113. Cf. Deremetz 1995, 313 (quoted in n. 402 below). See also Introduction, n. 31 for this metaphor.

<sup>398</sup> See Clausen 1994, 64 (on *Ecl.* 2.1) for the ancient association of Corydon with Virgil. See also Hardie 2002, 123-5 and Putnam 1970, 119 for the way *Eclogue* 2 relates to the first and third *Eclogues* respectively, as a deviation from the bucolic mode.

<sup>399</sup> Putnam 1970, 113-4.

<sup>400</sup> Putnam 1970, 113.

considered' and seems in this sense to balance *incondita* ("not finely or elaborately wrought", "unpolished", *OLD 1a*) in line 4",<sup>401</sup> which describes the elegiac song of Corydon:

(...) ibi haec incondita solus  
montibus et silvis studio iactabat inani. *Ecl.* 2.4-5

(...) There, alone, in empty longing, | he hurled this artless monologue at hills  
and woods. (tr. Lee)

So elegiac poetry seems to be considered as inadequate to the bucolic world, and is opposed to bucolic poetry as represented by the woven basket.<sup>402</sup> Now, in this elegiac song, Corydon describes how the nymphs are picking flowers and are twining (*intexens*) these together as a garland to present to Alexis:<sup>403</sup>

huc ades, o formose puer: tibi lilia plenis  
ecce ferunt Nymphae calathis; tibi candida Nais,  
pallentis violas et summa papavera carpens,  
narcissum et florem iungit bene olentis anethi;  
tum, casia atque aliis intexens suavibus herbis,  
mollia luteola pingit **vaccinia** caltha.  
ipse ego cana legam tenera lanugine mala  
castaneasque nuces, mea quas Amaryllis amabat.  
addam cerea pruna (honus erit huic quoque pomo);  
et vos, o lauri, carpam et te, proxima myrte,  
sic positae quoniam suavis miscetis odores. *Ecl.* 2.45-55

Come here, O lovely boy: for you the Nymphs bring lilies, | look, in baskets full;  
for you the Naiad fair, | plucking pale violets and poppy heads, combines |  
narcissus with them, and the flower of fragrant dill; | then, weaving marjoram  
in, and other pleasant herbs, | colours soft hyacinths [?]<sup>404</sup> with yellow  
marigold. | Myself, I'll pick the grey-white apples with tender down, | and

<sup>401</sup> Putnam 1970, 112.

<sup>402</sup> Cf. Deremetz 1995, 313: "Le chant élégiaque est vain (*studio inani*), illusoire et stérile; inadapté au monde rural, il devient dans la bouche du berger Corydon un chant grossier (*incondita*) et inefficace, dont l' inachèvement est d'ailleurs représenté par l'image de la vigne à demi taillée sur l'ormeau trop feuillu (2, 70). A l'opposé, le tressage du jonc, métaphore de la composition de la bucolique, produit un objet utile (2, 71-71) qui apaise le tourment amoureux du berger et le ramène à la raison de sa vie."

<sup>403</sup> The bold and underlined words will be discussed on pp. 139-41 and pp. 149 respectively.

<sup>404</sup> See n. 419 below for the identification of *vaccinium*.

chestnuts, which my Amaryllis used to love;| I'll add the waxy plum (this fruit too shall be honoured),| and I'll pluck you, O laurels, and you, neighbour myrtle,| for so arranged you mingle pleasant fragrances. (tr. Lee, adapted)

The mention of the verb *pingit* (50) clearly suggests that the garland is a work of art, but it can also be seen as a metapoetical symbol by analogy with the basket at the end of the poem; this is (again) suggested through the metaphor of weaving (*intexens*) for the writing of poetry. Deremetz attempts to extend the metapoetical dimension by suggesting that the collecting (*carpens, legam*) of the various parts of the garland represent the process of poetic *inventio*, and that their joining together (*intexens, iungit*) refers to the arrangement of the words (*iunctura*, cf. Hor. AP 48) and the parts (*dispositio* or *ordo*) of a poem.<sup>405</sup> Be that as it may, the passage clearly invites a metapoetical reading, but whereas the basket represents Virgil's bucolic poetry, the garland, the function of which is to seduce Alexis, would represent Corydon's elegiac song.<sup>406</sup> As Putnam in fact argues, the flowers that are central in the description of the garland "are all emblems of love":

They are intended to appeal to Alexis as a reflection of himself in Corydon's world. This is why the nymphs carry lilies in their baskets and why the naiad, who brings the rest, is *candida*, like *candidus* Alexis. The new context is also the reason why, when *vaccinia* reappear at line 50, they have no association with time's passing, as at line 18, but become simply *mollii*, another link of Alexis' beauty with the aspects of the pastoral world which Corydon imagines might be charming to him."<sup>407</sup>

This all suggests that Corydon's garland, like his song, is not just elegiac, but, as the setting and the presence of the nymphs for instance show, rather a bucolic version of elegiac poetry, an incorporation of the elegiac into the bucolic, i.e. what would happen if a shepherd/bucolic poet would write elegy. As Corydon realizes, however,

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<sup>405</sup> Deremetz 1995, 312.

<sup>406</sup> Cf. Deremetz 1995, 313: "(...) il convient d'opposer l'art de la bucolique, défini métaphoriquement par le tressage d'un objet en jonc ou en osier, végétaux emblèmes des activités pastorales, à celui de la couronne de fleurs, emblème de la quête amoureuse."

<sup>407</sup> Putnam 1970, 104-5.

his gift, like his elegiac song, is useless,<sup>408</sup> just as Polyphemus' song was in the poem's most important model, Theocritus' *Idyll* 11.<sup>409</sup> Consequently, Corydon (and thus Virgil) leaves elegiac poetry behind: "It is bucolic poetry, not elegiac verse, that belongs to the shepherd and is compatible with his surroundings and character."<sup>410</sup> Virgil thus not only incorporates elegiac verse in his *Eclogues*, but also seems to declare the superiority of his genre.

This interpretation of the poem becomes more polemic if we assume that it is not only elegiac poetry, but more specifically Gallus' poetry that Virgil incorporates and claims to surpass. As Kenney has argued very convincingly, Virgil in *Eclogue* 2 reworks Callimachus' story of Acontius and Cydippe (*Aetia*, fr. 67-75 Pf.), and especially the part in which the lovesick Acontius wanders in the wild (fr. 72 Pf.), where he carves the name of his beloved on trees (fr. 73 Pf.).<sup>411</sup> That Gallus has also written a (now lost) elegiac version of this part of the story, or depicted himself as an Acontius, wandering in the lonely wilderness, is suggested by *Eclogue* 10. In this poem, Gallus, making his appearance in Virgil's bucolic world to soothe his elegiac passion, says he will change his elegiacs into bucolic poetry (50-1).<sup>412</sup> Resembling

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<sup>408</sup> Deremetz 1995, 313: "(...) la poésie élégiaque, qui, à la fois comme modèle poétique et comme art de vie, exprime la déchirure et la souffrance, peut et doit être transcendée par la poésie bucolique dont la puissance souveraine est liée à son efficacité consolatrice et à l'harmonie qu'elle réussit à rétablir entre l'homme et la nature."

<sup>409</sup> For Virgil's reworking of *Id.* 11, see Putnam 1970, 116-9; Du Quesnay 1979. See also Ch. 2, Sections 3.4 and 3.5 for the metapoetical dimension of *Id.* 11.

<sup>410</sup> Putnam 1970, 114.

<sup>411</sup> Kenney 1983, 48-52. Cf. also La Penna 1963, 488; DuQuesnay, 48. For this part of the story we have to rely further on the Greek version of the story in prose by the 5<sup>th</sup> cent. epistolographer Aristaenetus (*Ep.* 1.10).

<sup>412</sup> Following Quintilian (10.1.56), I believe that *Chalcidico versu* refers to the elegiac poetry of Euphorion of Chalcis (3rd cent. BC), whose influence on Gallus is well attested, as e.g. Servius (on *Ecl.* 10.1 = *FRP* 139a) shows: [*Gallus*] *Euphorionem* (...) *transtulit in latinum sermonem*. "[Gallus] translated Euphorion into Latin." It is often assumed, however, that Euphorion only wrote hexameter poems: see e.g. Clausen 1994, 306-7 (on *Ecl.* 10.50), following Ross 1975, 40-3: "It has been established beyond reasonable doubt that Euphorion did not write elegiac poetry." Diomedes (4<sup>th</sup> cent. AD), however, dealing with elegy, suggests that Euphorion was an elegiac poet: *quod genus carminum praecipue scripserunt apud Romanos Propertius et Tibullus et Gallus imitati Graecos Callimachum et Euphoriona*. "This kind of poetry was practised in Rome in particular by Propertius, Tibullus and Gallus, imitating the Greek poets Callimachus and Euphorion." (p. 484, lines 21-2 K). Furthermore, pseudo-Probos states (on *Ecl.* 10.50 = *FRP* 139b) that Euphorion is an elegiac poet (*elegiarum scriptor*), "whose 'colouring'

Acontius, he contemplates carving his *amores*, referring to both the name of his beloved Lycoris and his elegiac *Amores* that deal with her, on trees (53-4):<sup>413</sup>

Ibo et Chalcidico quae sunt mihi condita versu  
carmina pastoris Siculi modulabor avena.  
certum est in silvis, inter spelaea ferarum,  
malle pati tenerisque meos incidere amores  
arboribus: crescent illae, crescetis, amores.

*Ecl.* 10.50-4

I'll go and tune to the Sicilian shepherd's oat | the songs I put together in  
Chalcidic verse. | The choice is made – to suffer in the woods among | the wild  
beasts' dens, and carve my love into the bark | of tender trees: as they grow, so  
my love will grow. (tr. Lee)

As the *Eclogue* deals with Gallus and his poetry, and probably contains many allusions to his elegies,<sup>414</sup> it is reasonable to suppose that Gallus wrote about Acontius in his elegies, which Virgil has rewritten in bucolic in his tenth,<sup>415</sup> as well as in his second, *Eclogue*.<sup>416</sup>

These two *Eclogues* are also connected with Gallus in another way, for when Gallus contemplates living with his Lycoris and writing his elegiac poetry in Virgil's bucolic world, the poem alludes to Corydon's elegiac effort in *Eclogue* 2:

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Gallus seems to have followed in his writings" (*cuius in scribendo secutus colorem videtur Cornelius Gallus*). So at least some ancients thought that Euphoriion wrote elegiac poetry. See also Zetzel 1977, 251, n. 5 on pseudo-Probus' comment: "The scholiast may have inferred this from Euphoriion's known influence on Gallus, but pseudo-Probus is a tricky source, who knows some strange things. (...) He cannot be dismissed out of hand."

<sup>413</sup> See esp. Ross 1975, 72-4 for Gallus' hypothetical *Acontius* and *Cydippe*. Cf. Cairns 2006, 119 (also for more bibliography): "(...) it is clear that in his elegies Gallus had either narrated this myth or portrayed himself as an Acontius figure (...)."

<sup>414</sup> As Servius' comment on *Ecl.* 10.46 (= *FRP* 141a) also suggests: *hi autem omnes versus Galli sunt, de ipsius translata carminibus*. "All these are lines of Gallus, transferred from his own poetry." (tr. Hollis)

<sup>415</sup> The bucolic character of the passage is enhanced by "a reminiscence of a pastoral passage in Lucretius" (Clausen 1994, 306, on *Ecl.* 10.54): *arboribus, crescent ipsae fetuque gravantur*. "(...) on the trees, these grow themselves and become heavy with fruit." (1.253)

<sup>416</sup> Cf. Hardie 2002, 125 (referring to Kenney 1983, 48-52): "It is generally accepted that *Eclogue* 2 draws heavily on elegiac models, both Callimachus' account of Acontius' lovelorn visits to the countryside, and lost Gallan material, including Gallus' reworking(s) of the Callimachean situation."

(...) o mihi tum quam molliter ossa quiescant,  
 vestra meos olim si fistula dicat amores!  
 atque utinam ex vobis unus vestrisque fuissem  
 aut custos gregis aut maturaе vinitor uvae!  
 certe sive mihi Phyllis sive esset Amyntas,  
 seu quicumque furor (quid tum, si fuscus Amyntas?  
 et nigrae violae sunt et **vaccinia nigra**),  
 mecum inter salices lenta sub vite iaceret:  
**serta mihi Phyllis legeret**, cantaret Amyntas.  
 hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata, Lycori;  
 hic nemus; hic ipso tecum consumerer aevo.

*Ecl.* 10.33-43

(...) O how softly then my bones would rest, | if only your reed pipe hereafter  
 told my love! | And how I wish that I'd been one of you, and either | guarded  
 your flock or harvested the ripened grapes! | For surely, were I mad on Phyllis  
 or Amyntas | or anyone (what if Amyntas is dark-skinned? | Dark too are  
 violets, too, and hyacinths [?]<sup>417</sup> are dark), | they'd lie with me among willows,  
 under a limber vine; | Phyllis would gather garlands for me, Amyntas sing. |  
 Here, Lycoris, are cool fountains, here soft fields, | here woodland, here with  
 you I'd be Time's casualty. (tr. Lee, adapted)

Gallus is thinking in very elegiac terms here, as he tries to see how he can reconcile his elegiac world with that of Virgil. The relationship, for instance, that he imagines with Virgilian-bucolic characters, the girl Phyllis or the boy Amyntas, is described in elegiac terms, as *furor* ("furious longing", 38), reveals.<sup>418</sup> As an urban, elegiac lover, however, Gallus prefers boys from the city, who are *candidi*, have a white skin, instead of bucolic herdsmen who are suntanned (*niger*). By association, Gallus then thinks of an element that can be found in the bucolic world, but that has very elegiac associations because of its seductive role, flowers, and he consoles himself with the

<sup>417</sup> See n. 419 below for the identification of *vaccinium*.

<sup>418</sup> OLD, 3. For the elegiac associations of *furor*, see e.g. Conte 1994, 54: "[T]he ideology of elegy (...) associated love and furor in a strict rhetorical bond and, by entrusting erotic passion to the logic of impetuous impulses, denied it the positivity of a stable satisfaction" Cf. also *furor* at the beginning of Propertius oeuvre in 1.1.7: *ei mihi, iam toto furor hic non deficit anno, | cum tamen adversos cogor habere deos*. "Alas, already a whole year has gone by and still madness has not left me." (tr. Heyworth). Cf. also Conte 1986, 109, n. 13: "In Ovid's 'Triumph of Love', *Amores* 1.2.25ff. – a mocking parody of a solemn Roman triumph (...),– one of the elegiac personifications in Eros' train is, significantly, called Furor (...)."

thought that *vaccinia* ("hyacinths?") are dark as well.<sup>419</sup> Next, Gallus imagines how Phyllis would make him a garland (*serta*) of flowers, a passage that clearly recalls Corydon and his elegiac garland in *Eclogue* 2. This poem is the only other place in the *Eclogues* where *vaccinia* appear. We have already seen that they were part of the Corydon's garland (pp. 135-6), but they are also mentioned earlier in the poem. There Corydon contemplates returning to his bucolic world and love of his ex-girlfriend Amaryllis or ex-boyfriend Menalcas, contrasting the latter with the elegiac and *candidus* Alexis:

nonne fuit satius tristis Amaryllidis iras  
atque superba pati fastidia? nonne Menalcan,  
quamvis ille **niger**, quamvis tu **candidus** esses?  
o formose puer, nimium ne crede colori;  
alba ligustra cadunt, **vaccinia nigra** leguntur. *Ecl.* 2.14-8

Had I not better bide the wrath of Amaryllis, | her high-and-mighty moods?  
Better endure Menalcas, | however black he were and you however blond? | O  
lovely boy, don't trust complexion overmuch: | white privet flowers fall, black  
hyacinths [?] are picked. (tr. Lee, adapted)

As I argued, Corydon tries, but eventually abandons (Gallus') elegiac poetry, which he cannot reconcile with the bucolic world. Gallus, on the other hand, somewhat later in *Eclogue* 10, tries to soothe his passion in Virgil's bucolic world and, on a metapoetical level, to rewrite his elegiac *Amores* in the bucolic manner, on Virgil's trees. The consequence is, however, that Gallus, by leaving his elegiac life and poetry – both as personified by Lycoris – behind, is alone, a fact with which the elegist cannot live, because it affects the essence of his poetry: although the elegiac beloved is always unattainable, she is never completely out of his life, which would metaphorically mean death and, in metaphorical terms, the end of poetry. *Eclogue* 10 is thus ultimately about the impossibility of reconciling bucolic and elegiac poetry, as

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<sup>419</sup> See *OLD* s.v. on the identification of *vaccinium* in Virgil: "A dark-flowered plant corresponding to the γράππὰ ὑάκινθος of Theocritus 10.28 (variously identified, perh. an orchid or fritillary)." Cf. Clausen 1994, 69, on *Ecl.* 10.18 (also for more bibliography): "some ancient readers identified the *vaccinium* with the hyacinth (DServ. on G. 4.183). Whether V. did so is a question."



is *Eclogue* 2, but this time it is the elegiac poet who is made to leave the bucolic world behind.<sup>420</sup> Immediately after the passage just quoted, in which Gallus only imagined himself in a bucolic landscape, Gallus realizes his separation from Lycoris, which triggers his elegiac *insanus amor* again (44-9). “Only now the ‘insania’ (madness) is no longer a matter of clinging stubbornly to a love that yields nothing but unhappiness. (...) Now (*nunc*) that Gallus has experienced the sweetness of bucolic life, the *insania* is “amor duri Martis” (love of harsh war). Yes, he almost protests (...) this is true madness, the madness that keeps him tied to the world of war, which is intrinsically hostile to love.”<sup>421</sup> As a reaction to this “near-total breakdown”,<sup>422</sup> Gallus imagines that he adopts a bucolic way of life, but immediately after he has pictured himself as a kind of Acontius, writing his love (and poetry) on trees, the poet, again like Acontius (albeit in his mind), traverses the lonely wilderness as a frustrated lover, for the bucolic landscape becomes increasingly un-bucolic. It is as if through Gallus’ focalizing eyes the imaginary landscape becomes what it is to him without Lycoris, not a world of bucolic harmony between man and nature, as symbolized by the echo,<sup>423</sup> but one of solitude, featuring frost, rocks and echoes that reveal loneliness, not presence:

interea mixtis lustrabo Maenala Nymphis,  
aut acris venabor apros; non me ulla vetabunt  
frigora Parthenios canibus circumdare saltus.  
iam mihi per rupes videor lucosque sonantis  
ire (...)

*Ecl.* 10.55-9

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<sup>420</sup> At the same time, however, Virgil ends his *Eclogues*, by which the poet seems, in characteristic fashion, to declare the eventual futility of (his) poetry. Cf. the story of Orpheus and Eurydice in *Georgics* 4.457-527, where the archetypal poet, the son of Apollo, who has the magical power to move nature, and whom scholars often associate with Virgil himself (see e.g. Kofler 2003, 95-104 and Ch. 4, Section 8.1), is ultimately not able to obtain his beloved. See Boyle 1986 for such pessimistic readings of Virgil’s poetry.

<sup>421</sup> Conte 1986, 111-2.

<sup>422</sup> Conte 1986, 112.

<sup>423</sup> See Ch. 2, Section 3.2 for the “pastoral echo” in Virgil’s *Eclogues* and the later pastoral tradition.

But meanwhile with the Nymphs I'll range on Maenala | or hunt the savage  
boar. No frosts will hinder me | from drawing coverts on Parthenium with  
hounds. | Already I see myself explore the sounding rocks | and groves (...)  
(tr. Lee)

Significantly, the scenery starts to resemble the cold landscape where his Lycoris  
(and metaphorically his poetry) has gone, described in lines that, according to  
Servius, are derived from Gallus' own poetry:<sup>424</sup>

tu procul a patria (nec sit mihi credere tantum)  
Alpinas, a! dura nives et frigora Rheni  
me sine sola vides. a! te ne frigora laedant!  
a, tibi ne teneras glacies secet aspera plantas! Ecl. 10.46-9

You, far from fatherland, (could I but disbelieve it!) | gaze – ah, callous – on  
Alpine snows and frozen Rhine, | alone, without me. Ah, may the frosts not  
injure *you*! | Ah, may the rough ice never cut *your* tender feet! (tr. Lee)

Gallus then gives up his bucolic adventure (*neque Hamadryades rursus, neque carmina  
nobis | ipsa placent; ipsae rursus concedite silvae*, 62-3),<sup>425</sup> which offers no *medicina furoris*  
to the elegiac lover (60). As he yields to invincible Amor at the end of his speech,  
Gallus compares the place of solitude that the bucolic world has become for him with  
icy Thrace and the scorching desert:<sup>426</sup>

non illum nostri possunt mutare labores,  
nec si frigoribus mediis Hebrumque bibamus,  
Sithoniasque nives hiemis subeamus aquosae,  
nec si, cum moriens alta liber aret in ulmo,  
Aethiopum versemus ovis sub sidere Cancri.  
omnia vincit Amor: et nos cedamus Amori. Ecl. 10.64-9

No alteration can our labours make in him, | not if we drank of Hebrus in the  
middle frosts | of watery winter and endured Sithonian snows, | nor if, when

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<sup>424</sup> See n. 414 above for Servius' comment.

<sup>425</sup> See pp. 129-30 above for the way these lines symbolize Virgil's bucolic landscape and poetry.

<sup>426</sup> Cf. Ross 1975, 105: "Gallus cannot forget Lycoris, human emotion cannot be ignored, and the pastoral landscape becomes a desert."

dying bark shrivels on the lofty elm,| beneath the Crab we herded Ethiopian sheep.| Love conquers all: we also must submit to love. (tr. Lee)

Again, the cold (*frigora*) and snow (*nives*) of the inhospitable landscape that symbolizes the end of Gallus' elegiac poetry echoes Lycoris' current whereabouts. From a metapoetical point of view this is quite understandable, as Lycoris symbolizes Gallus' elegiac poetry, in a way comparable to Cynthia's symbolizing of Propertius' poetry.<sup>427</sup>

### 5.3. Propertius 1.18 and 1.19 and the end of elegy

As has often been noted, Propertius reacts to Virgil's last *Eclogue* in elegy 1.18, reinforcing the metapoetical interpretation as outlined above. Propertius has been separated from Cynthia since poem 11, where she was in Baiae, but at the end of the first book, in the sequence constituted by poems 15 to 19, which "contemplate several aspects of lovers' separation",<sup>428</sup> Propertius' situation increasingly deteriorates. After the poet has described himself as shipwrecked in 1.17, he faces the ultimate climax in his separation from Cynthia in the next poem, where he writes elegy (*querenti*) in complete solitude:<sup>429</sup>

haec certe deserta loca et taciturna querenti  
et vacuum Zephyri possidet aura nemus Prop. 1.18.1-2

This place at least is deserted and quiet in response to my complaints, and Zephyr's breeze is the master of the empty wood. (tr. Heyworth)

Like the Acontius of Callimachus (and Gallus?),<sup>430</sup> Propertius wanders in an inhospitable landscape, and as the Gallus of *Eclogue* 10 had contemplated doing, he

<sup>427</sup> On Cynthia as symbol of Propertius' poetry see nn. 452 and 453 below.

<sup>428</sup> See e.g. King 1980, 213-4; Baker 2000, 11-5 on the sequence of poems in book 1.

<sup>429</sup> See Saylor 1967 for the way the verb *queror* ("to complain") and its cognates denote Propertius' elegiac poetry.

<sup>430</sup> See Cairns 1969 for Propertius' reworking of Callimachus' *Acontius and Cydippe*. On a possible reworking of the story by Gallus, see Section 5.2 above.

writes his elegiac poetry, Cynthia, on the trees, clearly alluding to Virgil's last bucolic poem:<sup>431</sup>

vos eritis testes, si quos habet arbor amores,  
fagus et Arcadio pinus amica deo.  
a quotiens teneras resonant mea verba sub umbras  
scribitur et vestris Cynthia corticibus! Prop. 1.18.19-22

You will be witnesses, if there is a tree that has any experiences of love, pastoral beech, and pine, mistress of the Arcadian god [*Pan*]. Ah, how often my words resound beneath the soft shade, and Cynthia is written in your bark!  
(tr. Heyworth)

As in *Eclogue* 10, the landscape seems a grim version of the bucolic countryside, for although the typically bucolic beech (*fagus*)<sup>432</sup> and Pan are invoked, the echo, which in the *Eclogues* symbolizes harmony between man and nature and is closely associated with bucolic poetry,<sup>433</sup> here only emphasizes Propertius' loneliness. Furthermore, "echo here is merely an alternative to Acontius' useless expedient of carving Cydippe's name on the bark of trees".<sup>434</sup> This interpretation is reinforced at the end of the poem, where Propertius, again alluding to *Eclogue* 10 (as the underlined words indicate), continues to describe his lonely situation.<sup>435</sup>

pro quo dumosi montes et frigida rupes  
et datur inculto tramite dura quies;  
et quodcumque meae possunt narrare querelae  
cogor ad argutas dicere solus aves.  
sed qualiscumque es, resonent mihi "Cynthia" silvae  
nec deserta tuo nomine saxa vacent. Prop. 1.18.27-32

<sup>431</sup> Cf. *Ecl.* 10.26: *Pan, deus Arcadiae*; *Ecl.* 10.53-4: (...) *tenerisque meos incidere amores arboribus* | *arboribus*: *crescent illae, crescetis, amores*.

<sup>432</sup> The tree already occurs in the first line of the programmatic first poem of the collection: *Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi* ... "Tityrus, lying back beneath wide beechen cover ..." (tr. Lee). See e.g. Wright 1983; Kenney 1983, 49-50 on the programmatic, Callimachean dimension of the tree.

<sup>433</sup> See Ch. 2, Section 3.2 for the "pastoral echo".

<sup>434</sup> Hardie 2002, 128.

<sup>435</sup> Cf. *Ecl.* 10.47 (*Alpinas, a! dura nives et frigora Rheni*); 48 (*a! te ne frigora laedant!*); 56-7 (*non me ulla vetabunt* | *frigora Parthenios canibus circumdare saltu*); 58-9 (*iam mihi per rupes videor lucosque sonantis* | *ire*); 65-6 (*nec si frigoribus mediis Hebrumque bibamus* | *Sithoniasque nives hiemis subeamus aquosae*).

In return for this [*Cynthia's behaviour*] I am given overgrown mountains and chill rocks and uncomfortable rest on uncultivated land; and whatever tale my complaints can tell I am forced to utter in solitude to the singing birds. But, however you behave, let the woods echo my "Cynthia" and the deserted rocks never be empty of your name. (tr. Heyworth)

Just like Virgil's Gallus, Propertius tries to console himself in the countryside, but for an elegiac lover this landscape proves to be the end of elegiac poetry, a place where writing elegy, i.e. inscribing the name of the beloved on trees or using the bucolic echo, is useless: "In this elegiac version of the pastoral world echo is merely an empty consolation."<sup>436</sup>

Understandably, Propertius contemplates death in the next poem, the last one on Cynthia in the book. The poet fears that his Cynthia will not love him any more after his death:

non adeo leviter nostris puer haesit ocellis,  
ut meus oblito pulvis amore vacet Prop. 1.19.5-6

Not so lightly does the boy [*Cupid*] stick in my eyes that love would be forgotten and absent from my ashes. (tr. Heyworth)

As Cynthia and *amor* also denote Propertius' elegiac poetry, the poem can also be read metapoetically as Propertius fearing that his poetry will not survive his own death. This dimension of the poem is reinforced by the allusion to the first lines of the programmatic first poem of Propertius' *Cynthia*.<sup>437</sup> Although Propertius fears that Cupid will drag Cynthia away from him after his death (*quam verior, ne te ... | abstrahat a nostro pulvere iniquus Amor*, 21-2), he reassures himself with the thought that he cannot guarantee that this will not happen (24). The only thing left to do is to continue his life as elegiac lover and poet for as long as possible, which is never long enough:

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<sup>436</sup> Hardie 2002, 128.

<sup>437</sup> See e.g. Baker 2000, 168 (on 1.19.5): "We are reminded of the terms in which the beginning of the poet's love for Cynthia was described at 1.1.1-4 – the battle between his eyes and hers (...)."

quare, dum licet, inter nos laetemur amantes:  
non satis est ullo tempore longus amor. Prop. 1.19.25-6

So, while we may, let us love and be happy together: never, however long, does  
love last long enough. (tr. Goold)

What caused Propertius to contemplate his death as an elegiac poet was the solitude, symbolizing the end of elegiac poetry, that he encountered when he seemed definitively to lose his love by entering Virgil's bucolic world. As I will argue now, Propertius, in the next poem, uses these experiences to warn his elegiac rival Gallus.

## **6. A metapoetical reading of Propertius 1.20**

### *6.1. The warning: Propertius and Gallus*

Although Propertius' "Cynthia" has effectively dealt with Bassus' iambic poetry in poem 1.4,<sup>438</sup> and with Ponticus' epic poetry in 1.7 and 1.9,<sup>439</sup> it is Virgil's bucolic poetry that poses the real danger to elegiac poetry by removing the lover from his beloved, as Propertius has recently experienced in 1.18. At the end of 1.19, however, Propertius has apparently overcome the solitude of the elegiac lover in the bucolic world, which allows him to warn his colleague Gallus.

When we take a look at this warning again, it becomes clear that Propertius warns Gallus to protect his elegies against Virgil's *Eclogues*. It becomes clear because the

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<sup>438</sup> See e.g. Miller 2007, 408: "[W]hen Propertius presents Bassus trying to lure him away from Cynthia by praising the virtue of women of easy virtue, this is a recognizable iambic pose that can also be read as Bassus claiming the superiority of his own poetic genre to elegy/Cynthia (...). Propertius responds by telling Bassus that he should cease and desist or Cynthia will so blacken his name that he will be welcome at no girl's door. Cynthia will be transformed into an iambist (...) whose invective will reduce Bassus to the archetypal position of the effeminized elegiac lover, the *exclusus amator*. Elegy will show that it can beat iambic at its own game."

<sup>439</sup> See e.g. Cairns 2006, 301, who speaks of Propertius' "elegiac transformation of another friend, the epic poet Ponticus, into a lover who abandons epic and becomes a humble adherent of Propertius erotic elegy (1.7 and 1.9)".

*duros montes* and the *frigida saxa* (13) that Gallus will face if he does not protect his elegiac poetry – his ὕλη, as symbolized by Hylas – recall the desolate landscape of *Eclogue* 10 and Propertius 1.18, there representing the end of elegiac poetry when confronted with the bucolic.

It is in this way that we can understand the motive of the warning, *pro continuo amore*, “to let love/elegiac poetry continue” (1), as it recalls the immediately preceding *longus amor* in the last line of 1.19 and at the same time refers to *Eclogue* 10, where Gallus has temporarily given up his *Amores*, his elegiac poetry.<sup>440</sup> This interpretation is reinforced at the end of the poem, where Gallus, warned by the story of Hercules and Hylas, is admonished to look after his *Amores* as one who has “been seen to entrust beautiful Hylas to nymphs” (*formosum nymphis credere visus Hylan*). This has happened (in the metapoetical sense) in the last *Eclogue*, but also, as the allusion of *formosum ... Hylan* to Alexis shows, in *Eclogue* 2, where Gallus’ elegiac poetry is tried but eventually abandoned by Corydon/Virgil, who prefers the bucolic life.

## 6.2. The narrative: Hercules and Hylas

The Hylas narrative within the poem alludes to the same Virgilian *Eclogues*, and there is a close link between frame and exemplum, as we have already seen. This suggests that the mythological story as told by Propertius also deals with Gallus’ elegiac poetry in relation to Virgil’s *Eclogues*. In fact, as I will now argue, the story, told in the past tense, can be read as a metapoetical allegory, describing what Virgil has done to Gallus’ poetry as symbolized by Hylas. His going to the Hamadryads, who symbolize the *Eclogues*, and – as a climax – his abduction into the pool, can be read as Gallus’ poetry being absorbed by Virgil’s bucolic poetry. This is reinforced by

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<sup>440</sup> Perhaps *vacuus animus*, “empty mind”(2), which in first instance refers to Gallus’ carelessness concerning his love, also refers to 1.18.32 (*nec deserta tuo nomine saxa vacent*) and 1.19.6 (*ut meus oblito pulvis amore vacet*) (translated on p. 146 above), where the adjective was associated with the definitive absence of Cynthia and elegiac *amor*.

the anaphora of verb in the phrase *ibat Hylas, ibat Hamadryasin* (32),<sup>441</sup> which seems to mark an allusion to *Eclogue* 10.50-1, where, as I argued earlier, Gallus started his announcement that he would turn his elegies into bucolic poetry with the word *ibo* (50).<sup>442</sup> Hylas then immediately enters a bucolic world, which recalls *Eclogue* 2 in particular, as the underlined words show (see also pp. 135-6 above):

fons erat Arganthi Pegae sub vertice montis,  
grata domus nymphis umida Thyniasin,  
quem supra nulli pendebant debita curae  
roscida desertis poma sub arboribus;  
et circum irriguo surgebant lilia prato  
candida purpureis mixta papaveribus.  
quae modo decerpens tenero pueriliter ungui  
proposito florem praetulit officio.

Prop. 1.20.33-40

There was a spring, Pegae, beneath the peak of mount Arganthus, a moist home, pleasing to the nymphs of Thynia, over which dewy apples, the result of no cultivation, hung from wild trees; and around in the water-meadow, rose white lilies mixed with crimson poppies. Now childishly picking these with youthful nail, he put flowers ahead of his intended task. (tr. Heyworth)

Understandably, because he symbolizes Gallus' elegiac poetry, the boy is attracted by that constituent of the landscape that the elegiac and the bucolic worlds have in common: flowers, which are as beautiful as he is himself, as the white lilies (*lilia* ... *candida*, 37-8) suggest (cf. *candore*, 45).<sup>443</sup> With these symbols of elegiac pursuit Corydon tried, but failed, to seduce Alexis in *Eclogue* 2, but it was the flowers that Gallus in *Eclogue* 10 liked about the bucolic world and that lured him into it.

Hylas is also attracted by the pool, which has a beauty (*formosis* ... *undis*, 41) in which he recognizes something of himself (cf. *formosum* ... *Hylan*, 52), as with the

<sup>441</sup> See p. 156 below for my divergence from the text of Heyworth 2007a here.

<sup>442</sup> See also Wills 1996, 104, who suggests that the repetition participates in "an idiom (or sequence of allusions) on common demise": Hylas goes towards certain death, as Gallus did in *Ecl.* 10 by entering the bucolic world.

<sup>443</sup> Cf. Petr. *Sat.* 83.3: *candidus Hylas*. Cf. also *Idyll* 13.49, Ἀργεῖω παιδί ("Argive boy"), with the suggestion of Bonanno 1990, 203-6 that the adjective should be read as ἀργεῖω, "gleaming".



flowers. In effect, Hylas is depicted as Narcissus, another figure suffering an elegiac type of love in a bucolic landscape, who falls in love with himself.<sup>444</sup>

et modo formosis incumbens nescius undis  
errorem blandis tardat imaginibus. Prop. 1.20.41-2

and now leaning unawares over the fair water he delays his wandering with the charming images. (tr. Heyworth, adapted)

Like Narcissus, Hylas does not really see what he thinks he sees, i.e. an elegiac reflection of himself, but he is unwarily (*nescius*, 41) cheated by an illusion (*imaginibus*, 42), for the pool appears to be the home of Virgil's bucolic nymphs, by whom he is then abducted (47-8).<sup>445</sup> As a consequence, Hercules becomes a frustrated elegiac lover, for whom the countryside is transformed into an inhospitable landscape – a situation comparable to that in Theocritus' *Idyll* 13<sup>446</sup> –, and for whom the bucolic echo, as in 1.18, symbolizes solitude by returning only the name of the beloved.<sup>447</sup>

cui procul Alcides ter "Hyla" respondet; at illi  
nomen ab extremis montibus aura refert. Prop. 1.20.49-59

To him from a distance Hercules thrice replies "Hylas"; and the breeze brings back the name to him from the far-off mountains. (tr. Heyworth)

It is exactly this that has happened in *Eclogue* 10, and which Propertius warns Gallus not to let happen again: Gallus has let Virgil rewrite his elegies into bucolic poetry,

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<sup>444</sup> Cf. Hardie 2002, 163: "Narcissus, like the Gallus of Virgil's tenth *Eclogue*, suffers the frustration of an elegiac lover in a pastoral landscape." For the "Narcissistic" dimension of Propertius' Hylas, which is reinforced by the intertextual contact with Ovid's Narcissus in *Met.* 3 (and even further by Valerius Flaccus' allusions to Ovid's Narcissus in his Hylas episode), see e.g. Heerink 2007b. See also Ch. 4, Section 5.1 for Valerius' Hylas and Ovid's Narcissus.

<sup>445</sup> The elegiac nature of Hylas is emphasized by the mention of his *error*, which can function as a kind of technical term denoting (the writing of) elegiac poetry. See e.g. Prop. 1.13.35, Ov. *Am.* 1.2.35, 20.9. Cf. also Milanion in Prop. 1.1.11 (on the literary significance of whose *error* see also Booth 2001a, 72): *Partheniis amens errabat in antris*. "He wandered distraught in the glens of Parthenius." (tr. Goold), and Gallus' "elegiac wandering" in *Ecl.* 6. and Prop. 2.13.

<sup>446</sup> See Ch. 2, Section 3.3.3.

<sup>447</sup> See also Introduction, Section 2 for the echo in Prop. 1.20.

which caused him to wander in a lonely and grim version of the countryside without his beloved, bereft of his poetry.

## 7. Propertius' elegiac Hylas

As in Apollonius' *Argonautica* and Theocritus' *Idyll* 13, Hylas' switch from the homosexual affair with Hercules to the heterosexual union with the nymphs can be interpreted as a metapoetical transition, in this case of Gallus' poetry from elegiac to bucolic poetry. The difference from Apollonius and Theocritus seems to be, however, that Propertius seems at first sight not to associate his own kind of poetry with Hylas. But is this in fact the case? Before Hylas goes to the bucolic spring, he is depicted as the elegiac beloved of Hercules, and even of his fellow Argonauts Zetes and Calais, the sons of Boreas, which is not how he is represented in the Hellenistic versions of the myth. Whether or not Gallus wrote an elegiac poem about Hercules and Hylas we cannot know, and in what follows I will argue that regardless of this question, which cannot be answered, it is clear that Propertius has carefully rewritten Theocritus' bucolic reworking of Apollonius' Hylas in an elegiac form.

### 7.1. Propertius, Apollonius and Theocritus

*Idyll* 13 of Theocritus is one of the most important intertexts of 1.20, but its impact has nevertheless received very little attention. Not only does 1.20 have the format of *Idyll* 13, in which the Hylas story is told to a fellow poet as an exemplum, but it also contains specific allusions to the Hellenistic poem. Immediately at the start of the Hylas exemplum, Propertius imitates Theocritus in concisely summarizing the first two books of Apollonius' *Argonautica* in one sentence:<sup>448</sup>

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<sup>448</sup> See Ch. 2, Section 3.3.1 for Theocritus' summary of Apollonius, *Arg.* 1-2.

namque ferunt olim Pagasae navalibus Argo  
egressam longe Phasidos isse viam,  
et iam praeteritis labentem Athamantidos undis  
Mysorum scopulis applicuisse ratem.

Prop. 1.20.17-22

For they say that once Argo set out from the dock at Pagasa, and went far away on the journey to Phasis, and gliding on, having already passed the waters of the daughter of Athamas [Helle], the boat put in to the rocks of Mysia.  
(tr. Heyworth)

The “Alexandrian footnote”<sup>449</sup> *ferunt* (“they say”) immediately makes the reader aware of the allusions that follow. *Minyis* in line 4, for example, immediately recalls Apollonius, who often uses this word to denote the Argonauts and who even gives an etymological explanation for the word in his first book (229-32). Furthermore, the five-syllable patronymic *Athamantidos* in line 19 and in fact the whole line, with its wordy description of the Hellespont and the passing through it, is a clear allusion to the first book of Apollonius’ epic (926-8):

(...) ἰστία δ’ οὐρῶ  
στησάμενοι κούρης Ἀθαμαντίδος αἰπὰ ῥέεθρα  
εἰσέβαλον. (...)

Arg. 1.926-8

(...) and they raised their sails to the following wind and entered the choppy currents of Athamas’ daughter. (tr. Race)

After his summary of Apollonius’ *Argonautica*, Theocritus provides his own Callimachean, bucolic version of the *Argonautica*, starting with the “bucolic preparations” of the Argonauts in Mysia, as we have seen in the previous chapter.<sup>450</sup> Propertius also describes the Argonauts’ preparations for the night:

hic manus heroum, placidis ut constitit oris,  
mollia composita litora fronde tegit.

Prop. 1.20.21-2

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<sup>449</sup> The term, which was coined by Ross 1975, 78, when dealing with this very example, is defined by Hinds 1998, 1-2 as “the signalling of specific allusion by a poet through seemingly general appeals to tradition and report, such as ‘the story goes’ (*fama est*), ‘they relate’ (*ferunt*), or ‘it is said’ (*dicitur*)”. Cf. Wills 1996, 31 on “external markers of allusion”.

<sup>450</sup> See Ch. 2, Section 3.3.2.

Here the band of heroes, when they set foot on the calm shore, covered the beach and made it soft with a pile of foliage. (tr. Heyworth)

At first sight, Propertius seems to allude to both Apollonius and Theocritus, whose descriptions allude to each other, as the underlined words indicate:

ἐνθα δ' ἔπειθ' οἱ μὲν ξύλα κάγκανα, τοὶ δὲ λεχαίην  
φυλλάδα λειμώνων φέρον ἄσπετον ἀμήσαντες  
στόρνυσθαι (...) Arg. 1.1182-4

Thereupon some of the crew were bringing dry wood, while others were bringing leaves that they gathered in abundance from the meadows to spread for beds. (tr. Race)

(...) πολλοὶ δὲ μίαν στορέσαντο χαμεύναν.  
λειμών γάρ σφιν ἔκειτο μέγα στιβάδεσσιν ὄνειαρ. Id. 13.33-4

But they prepared one sleeping-place for all, because there was a great store of stuff for their beds. (tr. Verity)

When we take a closer look, however, Propertius appears to allude to Apollonius, for both mention the *gathering of leaves*, two elements that are missing in Theocritus' version. Moreover, the adverbs *hic* and ἐνθα, which Propertius and Apollonius have placed at the beginning of their respective lines, are comparable. Just like Theocritus, Propertius is rewriting Apollonius, but with a crucial difference. Whereas the hexameter (21) still describes an epic context with *manus heroum* ("the band of heroes"), at the beginning of the pentameter, the *versus elegiacus* (22), we seem to enter elegy with *mollia* ("soft"), a word with a strong elegiac ring.<sup>451</sup> In fact, the entire line alludes to the symbol of Propertius' elegiac poetry, Cynthia, lying on the beach of Baiae in elegy 1.11: *molliter in tacito litore compositam* ("elegantly resting on the silent shore"; tr. Heyworth). On the basis of the symbolic interpretation of Cynthia as

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<sup>451</sup> I am grateful to Professor Nauta for sharing his ideas on this passage. For the elegiac association of *mollis*, see e.g. Baker 2000, 102 (on 1.7.19): "The epithet *mollis* ('soft', 'gentle') is regularly applied to poetry by the elegists, to indicate their own sort of poetry. It corresponds to *durus* ('hard', 'rough'), which they just as regularly use to describe epic poetry."

the poet's elegiac poetry, which is often triggered by Propertius,<sup>452</sup> McNamee has read this line metapoetically as referring to Propertius' "delicately composed", i.e. Callimachean, poetry.<sup>453</sup> The allusion suggests that the Argonauts have landed in a poetical landscape that is Callimachean. Contrary to that of *Idyll* 13, however, it is not bucolic but elegiac. In what followed in *Idyll* 13, as I have argued in the previous chapter,<sup>454</sup> Theocritus' landscape and what happened in it can be read as a metapoetical allegory, defining Theocritus' bucolic poetry *vis-à-vis* the Homeric, heroic-epic tradition.<sup>455</sup> In passing, Theocritus rewrote Apollonius' Hylas episode, in which the epic poet revealed the Callimachean direction in which the *Argonautica* was going. Propertius, rewriting his Hellenistic predecessors, now seems to be presenting a poetical allegory of his own kind of Callimachean poetry, elegy, which is reinforced by what follows. Immediately after the "elegiac preparations" of the Argonauts Hylas is off to fetch water:

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<sup>452</sup> See e.g. Commager 1974; Wyke 1987 (≈ 2002, 46-77) for this symbolical meaning of Cynthia as poetical construct, a "*scripta puella*". See McNamee 1993 for the ways in which this dimension of Cynthia makes metapoetical readings of poems in the first book possible: "Superficially Cynthia may be his [*i.e. Propertius*'] mistress, but in the allegorical dimension the mistress is poetry. (...) When a lover in these poems laments the lapses of the beloved, it is inspiration lost temporarily to the poet. When he discusses her appearance, his subject is poetic style. When he recalls his efforts at seducing her and the exhilaration of success, he describes a poet's exertions for perfection and his exalted feelings when the right words finally come." (215-6) In Prop. 2.24.2, *Cynthia* refers to Propertius' first book (cf. 1.1.1: *Cynthia prima*), but (Heyworth 1995, 177) "equally it is the first work of the corpus and so might refer to all (...) books. Moreover, *Cynthia* is not only the *incipit* but also the subject matter of the Propertian corpus: cf. Ov. *Rem.* 763-4 *carmina quis potuit tuto legisse Tibulli | vel tua, cuius opus Cynthia sola fuit?*". Cf. Keith 1994 on the literariness of elegiac *puellae* in Ovid's *Amores*.

<sup>453</sup> McNamee 1993, 218. Cf. Booth 2001b, 543, n. 46, on Prop. 1.3.33: *compositos ... ocellos*. For the metapoetical dimension of Cynthia, cf. Wyke 2002, 73, on Prop. 2.13.7: "At this point the text even encourages the reader to interpret the title Cynthia as a key Callimachean term in Propertian poetics ... Mount Cynthus on Delos was linked with Apollo as tutelary divinity to the Callimachean writing-style, and that association too is reproduced in *Eclogue* 6 where the god who directs Virgilian discourse is given the cult title *Cynthius* (*Ecl.* 6.3)."

<sup>454</sup> See Ch. 2, Section 3.3.3.

<sup>455</sup> That Propertius (and his readers) regarded *Idyll* 13 as a bucolic poem is reinforced by the likelihood that Theocritus was known in the Augustan age through a single edition including both bucolic and non-bucolic *Idylls* like the Hylas poem (see e.g. Gutzwiller 1996, 124). As a scholion on Apollonius, *Arg.* 1.1236, which included *Idyll* 13 in Theocritus' bucolic poems (ἐν τοῖς βουκολικοῖς), suggests, a sense of unity was consequently seen in the oeuvre of Theocritus, who was regarded a bucolic poet and whose non-bucolic poems were even denoted as bucolic.

at comes invicti iuvenis processerat ultra  
ram sepositi **quaerere** fontis aquam.

Prop. 1.20.23-4

The squire of the invincible hero had gone further afield, to seek the choice water of a secluded spring. (tr. Heyworth)

As Petrain has argued, line 24 is “an affirmation of Callimachean aesthetics in miniature”,<sup>456</sup> for, as we have already seen, Propertius here alludes to two well-known metapoetical passages of the Hellenistic poet’s water imagery:<sup>457</sup> *rara aqua* (“choice water”) recalls the pure (καθαρή) and undefiled (ἀχράαντος) spring in Callimachus’ *Hymn to Apollo* (111). Propertius’ *sepositi fontis*, on the other hand, brings the κρήνη, the “spring” in *Epigram* 28, to mind, which Callimachus dislikes, because everyone drinks from it.

So Propertius continues to describe the landscape in Callimachean terms, and again he alludes to Hylas episode of Apollonius, who, in his turn, alluded to Callimachus’ poetics when describing Hylas:<sup>458</sup>

δίζητο κρήνης ἱερὸν ῥόον

[Hylas] sought the sacred flow of a spring.

Arg. 1.1208

The scene that follows the programmatic lines 23-4 suggests, however, that Propertius is not following but again transforming the Callimachean epic of Apollonius into elegy. The passage describes the harassment of Hylas by the Boreads Zetes and Calais:

hunc duo sectati fratres, Aquilonia proles;  
nunc superat Zetes, nunc superat Calais;  
oscula suspensis instabant carpere plantis,  
oscula et **alterna** ferre supina **fuga**:  
ille sed extrema pendentes ludit in ala  
et volucres ramo submovet insidias.

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<sup>456</sup> Petrain 2000, 414.

<sup>457</sup> See Ch. 1, Section 2.5 for these texts with translation (and interpretation). Cf. Ch. 2, Section 3.4.4.

<sup>458</sup> See Ch. 1, Section 3.3 for the Callimachean statement of Apollonius in this line.

iam Pandioniae cessit genus Orithyiae:  
a dolor! ibat\* Hylas ibat Hamadryasin.

Prop. 1.20.25-32

\* ibat NAT, *S p.c. IC*: unus Heyworth

Him two brothers followed, the sons of the north wind: now Zetes overtakes him, now Calais; on hovering feet they pressed hard to snatch kisses, and, alternating in retreat [*or by turns in their flight*], to give kisses upside down. But he mocks them as they hang on wing tip, and drives off the flying threat with a branch. Now the family of Pandion's granddaughter Orithyia gave way: ah, woe! Hylas was going, he was going to the Hamadryades.

(tr. Heyworth, adapted)

In no other known version of the story Hylas is chased by the two Boreads, and so it is generally thought that either Propertius had a lost source,<sup>459</sup> or that he invented the episode.<sup>460</sup> There is another possibility, however, which holds the middle ground between these two extreme positions. Zetes and Calais have a crucial role in Apollonius' Hylas episode.<sup>461</sup> After an angry Telamon has accused Jason of leaving Hercules behind in Mysia on purpose, the Argonauts would have returned, "had not the two sons of Thracian Boreas restrained Aeacus' son with harsh words" (εἰ μὴ Θρηκίοιο δῶν υἱες Βορέαο | Αἰακίδην χαλεποῖσιν ἐρητύεσκον ἔπεσιν, *Arg.* 1.1300-1). Apollonius goes on to relate that Hercules will kill the brothers in revenge later. Because Propertius clearly evokes Apollonius' Hylas episode in what precedes his own Boreads episode (17-24) – the immediately preceding line 24 is even a virtual translation of Apollonius – it is very likely that the scene is meant to recall the crucial Apollonian passage. As with the earlier allusions to Apollonius, however, Propertius reworks his epic predecessor. In the light of my interpretation of Apollonius' Hylas episode (see Chapter 2), Zetes and Calais, who are partly responsible for Hercules' departure from the epic, could be seen as Callimachean. Propertius goes a step

<sup>459</sup> See e.g. Cairns 2006, 246-9 (= 2004, 93-6), who thinks that Parthenius, in a hypothetical Hylas poem based on Apollonius, invented the episode, and that Propertius in turn based his own version on this. Butler & Barber 1933, 184-5 (on 1.20.25ff.), adduce the interesting pictorial parallel of a vase depicting "a boy pursued or carried off by a two-winged figure, perhaps a representation of the story of Zephyrus and Hyacinthus".

<sup>460</sup> E.g. Newman 1997, 354.

<sup>461</sup> The parallel has been noted by Butler & Barber 1933, 184 (on 1.20.25ff.).

further and turns the Boreads into elegiac lovers, chasing after, but not able to conquer their beloved Hylas.<sup>462</sup> Implicitly, Propertius has thus also given another, more amorous, motive for Hercules' killing of the Boreads: jealousy. The elegiac character of the scene is underlined by the occurrence of the word *alternus* ("alternating") in the description of the assaults of the Boreads (*alterna fuga*, 28), for *alternus versus* is the technical term of the elegiac couplet, referring to the alternation between hexameter and pentameter,<sup>463</sup> and elegiac poets often use the word to refer to their poetry on a secondary, metaphorical level. The first ten lines of poem 1.10, for instance, on a primary level seem to deal with a description of Gallus' making love to his mistress, witnessed by Propertius, but the scene also clearly has a metapoetical dimension, "in which Propertius, late at night, has read Gallus' love poetry, written so vividly that he can experience the reality of Gallus' love."<sup>464</sup> Thus, *in alternis uocibus* in line 10 in first instance refers to a conversation between the two lovers – *tantus in alternis vocibus ardor erat*. "Such was the passion in your alternating voices" (tr. Heyworth) – but metapoetically also means "in your elegiac verse".<sup>465</sup> The elegiac dimension of the Boreads episode is further enhanced by the use of the verb *ludere* (29), which "is equally applicable to love-play (...) and to love-poetry", as Baker notes on Propertius 1.10.9, where, as part of the metapoetical dimension of the poem, both meanings are evoked: <sup>466</sup> *non tamen a uestro potui secedere lusu*, "yet I could not part from your play/love poetry" (9; tr. Heyworth, adapted).<sup>467</sup>

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<sup>462</sup> That Propertius erotically rewrites Apollonius was suggested by Heslin 2007.

<sup>463</sup> See Keith 1994, 34, adducing Hor. *AP* 75; Ov. *Am.* 2.17.14, 21-2; 3.1.37 as parallels.

<sup>464</sup> Benjamin 1965, 178. For this interpretation, see also e.g. Skutsch 1906, 144-6; Ross 1975, 83-4; Cairns 1983, 101, n. 73.; Sharrock 1990; Baker 2000, 115.

<sup>465</sup> Sharrock 1990, 570. See Benjamin 1965 and O'Hara 1989 for a different interpretation of the words, as referring to "amoebaeon verse": "The occasion, then, that prompted Propertius' poem 10 can be reconstructed as follows: Propertius had read the love poetry of Gallus and has been aroused to reply with his own elegy 10." (Benjamin 1965, 178)

<sup>466</sup> Baker 2000, 117 (on Prop. 1.10.9), who, however, states that "the former sense is the one predominant here". I do not agree: the literal and metapoetical meanings are both evoked at the same time and are equally important.

<sup>467</sup> Cf. also Cat. 50, a poem very reminiscent of 1.10 (see e.g. Pasco-Pranger 2009), in which the two poets Catullus and Calvus are writing poetry together far into the night, and in which the metapoetical meaning of *ludere* as "writing love poetry" is very explicit: *hesterno, Licini, die otiosi* |



7.2. *Beyond Virgil and Gallus*

After the elegiac Boreads scene, Hylas is going further inland, into the bucolic world of Virgil.<sup>468</sup> The rewriting does not stop there, however, for Propertius incorporates Virgil's bucolic landscape of *Eclogue* 2 into elegy, as we have seen, as part of his warning as elegiac *praeceptor amoris*. Furthermore, whereas Corydon and Virgil tried but failed to seduce Alexis in the *Eclogues* with a garland of flowers, which resulted in a return to bucolic poetry that implicitly claimed the superiority of that genre in dealing with love, Propertius shows that he, as an elegiac poet, *is* able to seduce Hylas with the same flowers. The most important way in which Propertius tries to outdo Virgil, however, concerns the echo, which is a precondition for the existence of Virgil's bucolic poetry, where it symbolizes harmony between the bucolic and a sympathetic, responding landscape that reveals supernatural presence.<sup>469</sup> Although the close link between bucolic song and the sound of nature is also essential in Theocritus' bucolic poetry,<sup>470</sup> the echo only features in *Idyll* 13, where Hylas' abduction transforms him into the natural phenomenon. As I have suggested in the previous chapter, however, this transformation also symbolized the origin of (Theocritus') bucolic poetry. Possibly Virgil has taken Theocritus' cue, basing his bucolic echo on *Idyll* 13. This is suggested by the occurrence of Hylas' echo in *Eclogue* 6, which clearly reacts to Theocritus:

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*multum lusimus in meis tabellis*. "Yesterday, Licinius, we made holiday and played many a game with my tablets." (tr. Cornish & Goold)

<sup>468</sup> The progression of the Argonauts, and Hylas in particular, can perhaps also be read in generally metapoetical, generic terms, from the open sea (epic), to the coast (elegiac poetry), and finally to the countryside (bucolic). Cf. Sharrock 1990, 571 on Prop. 3.3.23-4, where a Callimachean Apollo uses similar imagery to recommend elegiac poetry to Propertius: *alter remus aquas alter tibi radat harenas, tutus eris: medio maxima turba mari est*. ("Let one of your oars skim the water, the other the sand: you will be safe; the greatest storm [and crowd] is in mid sea."; tr. Heyworth): "The high sea which Propertius is to avoid by staying close to the shore is epic poetry. Could it be that the image is quite precise? One line of his poetry (*alter remus*) touches the open sea (epic); the other touches the shore (elegy). One line (the hexameter) is 'epic', in that it is common to both epic and elegy; the other line (the pentameter) is peculiar to elegy and so is the element which defines the poetry's generic status."

<sup>469</sup> In the words of Hardie 2002, who speaks of "pastoral presence" vs. "elegiac absence" (121-128; 163-5). See also Ch. 2, Section 3.2 on the "pastoral echo".

<sup>470</sup> See Ch. 2, Section 3.2.

his adiungit, Hylan nautae quo fonte relictum  
clamassent, ut litus "Hyla Hyla" omne sonaret.

Ecl. 6.43-4

[Silenus] adds at what fountain mariners for Hylas lost | shouted till all the  
shore re-echoed *Hylas, Hylas*. (tr. Lee)

First of all, the echo is, like that of Theocritus, mimetically reflected in the text. Whereas Hylas' words literally "echoed" those of Hercules (τρίς – τρίς; ἄνυσεν – ὑπάκουσεν, 58-9), Virgil has reproduced the echo in the prosody in a way that creates the fading effect of an echo (*Hylā Hylā*). Furthermore, as Bonanno has argued, Virgil has reproduced Hercules' triple cry and echo in *Idyll* 13 with *Hylan* and the repeated *Hyla Hyla* in the next line, for although *Hylan* differs morphologically from the two vocatives, it is phonetically equivalent to them because of the subsequent *nautae*.<sup>471</sup> These allusions, but also the emphasis in Virgil's two lines on the spring and the echo,<sup>472</sup> suggest that Virgil is, like his intertext, treating the myth as an aetiology for the echo, and thus as an essential bucolic myth. This reading is reinforced by the context of the lines, the meta-bucolic sixth *Eclogue*, and more specifically, Silenus' song (31-81), which is equally metapoetical.<sup>473</sup> Like its model, Orpheus' song in Apollonius' *Argonautica*,<sup>474</sup> the song starts with a cosmogony (31-42),<sup>475</sup> which is as much about the origin of the world as it is about the origin of

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<sup>471</sup> Bonanno 1990, 197. See further Introduction, Section 2 for these echoes.

<sup>472</sup> Cf. Williams 1979, 116 (on Ecl. 6.43-4) on *quo fonte*: "It is an unusual way of introducing the subject, as the emphasis must be on Hylas not the fountain."

<sup>473</sup> See e.g. Elder 1961 and esp. Deremetz 1995, 287-314, e.g. 301: "Ainsi, la bucolique virgilienne dit-elle son origine et décrit-elle sa propre genèse : elle est un *carmen deductum – ab origine* –, un chant qui remonte, d'écho en écho, à l'aube de l'humanité, et, comme tel, capable de mobiliser et de transformer tous les matériaux poétiques antérieurs." Cf. Hardie 1998, 15: "Through his poetic shaping and appropriation of disparate themes Virgil ensures that the Song of Silenus also functions as a 'poetic' genealogy' for his own, as well as for Gallus', poetry."

<sup>474</sup> See e.g. Knox 1986, 11; Clausen 1994, 176 on the intertextual contact.

<sup>475</sup> That the cosmogony continues to line 42 (and not 40, as is more generally accepted) is argued by Jachmann 1923, 292-4 and Ross 1975, 27, n. 1: "The cosmogony should include lines 41-2 (after which – *his adiungit* – a new *carmen* begins: cf. Orpheus' song in Apollonius, which continues in the same way with Cronos and Zeus (Arg. 1.503-11))."

poetry, bucolic poetry in fact.<sup>476</sup> After the earth has been formed, the first life that comes into being is the *silvae*, followed by the animals:

incipiant silvae cum primum surgere cumque  
rara per ignaros errent animalia montis. Ecl. 6.39-40

(...) when first the forest trees begin to rise, and when | rare creatures wander  
over unfamiliar hills. (tr. Lee)

The mention of these *silvae*, evoking the *Eclogues* themselves,<sup>477</sup> suggests that the cosmogony describes the origin of a *bucolic* world. This observation, combined with the very Lucretian language of the passage,<sup>478</sup> recalls the programmatic prologue of *Eclogue* 6, where Virgil, in the guise of Tityrus, admonished by Callimachus' Apollo to stick to writing bucolic poetry, says that he will do so in words that offer a virtual definition of bucolic poetry: *agrestem tenui meditabor harundine Musam*. "Now will I woo the rustic Muse on slender reed." (8) This line alludes to a passage in Lucretius' history of civilization in book 5 of the *De rerum natura*, where he describes the bucolic world of early mankind: *agrestis enim tum musa vigeat*. "For then the rustic muse was in its prime." (1398). These countrymen were the first to learn how to make music. By imitating birds, they learned how to sing, and the blowing wind taught them how to make a musical instrument: the pastoral reed-pipe (1379-87). In a related passage, to which Virgil alludes in the second line of the equally programmatic first *Eclogue*, with a phrase similar to that in *Eclogue* 6,<sup>479</sup> Lucretius also deals with early mankind and his music, in his treatment of the echo (4.573-94). The poet gives a rational explanation for the phenomenon of echo and dismisses the bucolic world with its

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<sup>476</sup> See e.g. Deremetz 1995, 300: "La valeur étiologique de ce début est double : il dit la naissance du monde, du monde bucolique d'ailleurs, et, en même temps, il est la naissance du chant, rappelant par là qu'un chant poétique ne peut commencer lui-même qu'en chantant l'origine, que la genèse du monde et celle de la poésie sont nécessaires l'une à l'autre. (...) En même temps qu'il dit l'union des atomes, la formation des éléments, des êtres, des choses et des espaces, le chant, en effet, se forme lui-même, les mots s'unissant aux mots, atomes d'une langue poétique qui naît dans la bouche du *uates*."

<sup>477</sup> See n. 380 above for *silvae* as metonym of the *Eclogues*.

<sup>478</sup> For the many parallels, see e.g. Coleman 1977, 183-6; Clausen 1994, 189-92.

<sup>479</sup> Cf. *Ecl.* 1.2: *silvestrem tenui Musam meditaris avena* ("You [Tityrus] are wooing the woodland Muse on slender reed") with *Lucr.* 4.589: *silvestrem ... musam* ("woodland muse").

satyrs, nymphs, fauns and Pan as a fantasy invented by early, “pastoral” man to explain the echo. In his *Eclogues*, however, Virgil, as Hardie puts it, “strives to reenchant the landscape, where echo is the sign of nature’s sympathy with man, and where supernatural and legendary singers, a Silenus, an Orpheus, a Hesiod, have magical powers.”<sup>480</sup>

The programmatic position of the mention of Hylas and his echo in *Eclogue 6*, as the first mythological story after the cosmogony that describes the origin of the bucolic world and its inhabitants,<sup>481</sup> thus suggests that Hylas features here as the aetiology of the echo and thus of (Virgil’s) bucolic poetry. This importance of Hylas for Virgil’s bucolic poetry is reinforced by the pervasiveness of the echo in *Eclogue 6*. At the end, for example, Silenus’ song itself is presented as a metaphorical “echo” of previous song, which in its turn is literally echoed in the bucolic world.<sup>482</sup> As a parallel which further strengthens this interpretation, book 1 of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* may be adduced, where the first mythological story after the cosmogony, which is clearly modelled on *Eclogue 6*,<sup>483</sup> also presents an aetiology of a poetic genre. Whereas Virgil deals with bucolic poetry, however, Ovid tells the story of Daphnis and Apollo to explain the origin of the genre most dear to him, love elegy, significantly alluding to his own investiture as an elegiac poet in *Amores 1.1* along the way.<sup>484</sup>

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<sup>480</sup> Hardie 1998, 11.

<sup>481</sup> Cf. Knox 1986, 13: “As the first mythological tale after the opening cosmogony in the Sixth *Eclogue*, the story of Hylas acquires programmatic significance.” Knox derives this significance, however, from his belief that the story is characteristically neoteric and elegiac. I cannot agree, especially because of the bucolic associations of the story in general and the bucolic context of *Ecl. 6* in particular.

<sup>482</sup> *Ecl. 6.82-4: omnia, quae Phoebus quondam meditante beatus | audiit Eurotas iussitque ediscere lauros, | ille canit, pulsae referunt ad sidera valles; | cogere donec ouis stabulis numerumque referre | iussit et invito processit Vesper Olympo.* “All, that from Phoebus’ meditation, in old days, blest | Eurotas heard and bade his laurels memorize, | he sings (the smitten valleys tell it to the stars), | till Vesper came to view in a reluctant sky | and bade the flock be folded and their number told.” (tr. Lee) On the various manifestations of echo in *Ecl. 6*, see Deremetz 1995, 295-6; 298-304.

<sup>483</sup> On the intertextual contact, see Knox 1986, 10-14; Deremetz 1995, 308-9.

<sup>484</sup> See Hardie 2002, 45-50; 128-30, e.g. 129: “The story of Daphne is the foundational narrative of the inaccessible elegiac *dura puella*, to be possessed by the elegist and his readers only in the form of a *scripta puella*.” On Ovid’s reworking of *Amores 1.1* in this episode, see Ch. 4, Section 5.4 (where the passages are also quoted).

Propertius has transformed Virgil's bucolic Hylas into an elegiac boy, and the echo, as in poem 1.18, is not reproduced by Hylas, but is demythologized into a natural phenomenon that only symbolizes elegiac absence of the beloved, not bucolic presence. By transforming bucolic material into elegy, Propertius has capped Virgil, who had not only claimed that his bucolic was the most original kind of poetry, but also that it could include and surpass elegy.

But that is not all. By inverting what happened to Gallus and his elegy in the *Eclogues*, and by putting Hylas in service of that typically elegiac activity of the *praeceptor amoris* to warn Gallus, Propertius has also outdone his elegiac rival. After this poet has been a fierce competitor in the course of the first book, in poems which "can be read as Propertius' attempt to define his own poetic niche that is apparently vulnerable to incursions by Gallus and his amatory elegies",<sup>485</sup> Propertius is, after his experiences in 1.18 and 1.19, finally able to beat one his most important rivals, at the end of a book in which he has shown that his elegies can deal with every genre, even Virgil's dreaded *Eclogues*. I wonder if it is a coincidence that Gallus occurs only once more as a character in Propertius' elegies, in the following epigrams (1.21-2), which "mirror the love poems that come before them",<sup>486</sup> and in which he is represented as a soldier (of love?),<sup>487</sup> dying in the Etruscan mountains, the territory of Propertius, who was born there, as is thematized in 1.22. At any rate, after the first book, Gallus is no rival for Propertius any more. He will appear once more at the end of the last poem of book 2, but only as a figure from literary history.

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<sup>485</sup> Petrain 2000, 418.

<sup>486</sup> Miller 2004, 69.

<sup>487</sup> See e.g. Holzberg 2006, 16 on the elegiac topos of the *militia amoris* ("military service in love").