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The Programmatic *Idylls* of Theocritus

Jacqueline Klooster

Introduction

Scholars have consistently focused on *Idylls* 1 and 7 as “programmatic” poems. Cairns, in his discussion of the first *Idyll* as a programmatic poem, helpfully defines such poetry as follows:

A poem or part of a poem can be described as “programmatic” if it is consciously composed in such a way that it contains a very high concentration of material typical of its literary form. Such a piece can be regarded as even more obviously programmatic if it contains statements about poetry and the art of writing poetry, either implicit or explicit. Such statements can sometimes involve evaluations of poetry or of several different kinds of poetry. Pieces which are “programmatic” in one or more of these senses can sometimes use an agreed symbolic language.¹

This chapter analyzes *Idylls* 1 and 7 from a comparable angle. Both poems have been the focus of great amounts of scholarship (which will be referred to in the footnotes below). In *Idyll* 1 the interpretation of the visual program on the *kissybion* (1.27–60) and the interpretation of the mysterious song of Thyrsis about Daphnis’ suffering and death (1.64–142) have been at the forefront of the discussion. In this contribution, I will attempt to draw the interpretations of these two passages together, with a focus on the circularity of life from which Daphnis escapes, both by denying the force of *eros* and by becoming eternalised in poetry. I will also argue that we can understand the “lacunosity” of Thyrsis’ song as a programmatic feature, related to the Theocritean belief that poetry often results from the expression of feelings of love. This is a capacity Daphnis lacked, and since he could not sing about it, we cannot truly know his story.

In *Idyll* 7, the discussion has focused on the identities of Simichidas and Lycidas. Going beyond the guessing game, I argue that it is possible to see in Lycidas

¹ Cairns (1984) 89; Hunter (1999) 60–61.

multiple elements of divinity (the opposing forces of Pan and Apollo), which reflect different aspects of Theocritus' poetical program. I moreover pay attention to the programmatic importance of the embedding of songs within other songs.

1 *Idyll 1*²

1.1 *Place in the Collection and Title*

Programmatic passages in literature usually occur at or near the opening (or sometimes at other marked positions) of the work. What can we say in this respect about *Idyll 1*? From the *scholia* it appears that the poem was placed first in ancient collections.³ This does not necessarily mean that Theocritus placed it there, but it shows that from an early date scholars were aware that there was something special about the *Idyll*.⁴

The poem was known to the scholiasts under the alternative titles Θύρσις ἢ Ὠιδῆ, (“*Thyrsis*” or “*Song*”).⁵ Judging by the ancient titles, for readers the interest of the *Idyll* veered towards Thyrsis and his art, not so much towards the cup, or the exchange with the (significantly nameless) goatherd. Even so, the description of the artful cup precedes Thyrsis' song and takes up a substantial part of the poem (1.27–60). Interestingly, the *scholia* remark upon the fact that the *Idyll* is placed first despite recounting the death of the mythical cowherd Daphnis, who is later represented as alive (*Id.* 6).⁶ They attribute this to the fact that *Idyll 1* is “composed in a more lovely and artful way than the other poems” and cite Pindar on the necessity of creating a “far-shining front” at the opening

2 Modern discussions of the *Idyll* include Lawall (1967) 14–33; Ott (1969) 85–137; Edquist (1975) 101–108; Miles (1977) 145–156; Segal (1981) 25–56; Halperin (1983) 161–189; Cairns (1984) 89–113; Walsh (1985) 2–11; Schmidt (1987) 57–70; Gutzwiller (1991) 83–194; Calame (1992) 59–85; Griffin (1992); Zimmerman (1994); Stanzel (1995) 248–268; Hunter (1999) 60–107; Payne (2007) 14–17; 25–48; Klooster (2011) 99–104.

3 Sch. *Id.* 1. arg b. The poems were collected by Artemidorus in the first century BCE, cf. *AP* 9.205. Other attestations for a collection of Theocritus' poetry is *AP* 9.434 and Servius *Buc. Prooem.* 3.21.

4 Cairns (1984) 90. On the question of whether the *Idylls* were conceived of as a poetic collection, see e.g., Lawall (1967) who holds that the bucolic poems formed a distinct collection created by Theocritus. Gutzwiller (1996) 119–148 discusses the evidence for Theocritean poetry books. See also Sistakou, this volume.

5 Although some MSS also have the title Ποιμὴν καὶ Αἰπόλος, Θύρσις ἢ Ὠιδῆ is more frequent, and gives a better sense of what is important in the poem.

6 On this see Wilamowitz (1906) 136; Ott (1969) 121; Lawall (1967) 69; Dover (1971) 140; Bernsdorff (1994) 38–51; Stanzel (1995) 39–40.

of a literary work (*Ol.* 6.3),⁷ hinting at their appreciation of the *Idyll* as what we might call “programmatically.”

1.2 Overview of the Poem and Its Programmatic Aspects

The frame features the dialogue of Thyrsis and the goatherd and is characterized by the courtesy between the two men, and their exceptional musical harmony with surrounding nature. The *ekphrasis* of the cup is a veritable tissue of programmatic symbols and images, and functions as *ekphraseis* often do in ancient poetry, viz. as a synecdoche of the larger concerns of the literary work, in this case the bucolic collection.⁸ The song of Thyrsis, finally, represents actual bucolic poetry, being a song by a “master of bucolic song” about “The herdsman,” i.e., the legendary βουκόλος / βούτας Daphnis, who according to later *testimonia* was considered the archetypal bucolic musician or subject of bucolic song.⁹ In addition, the song of Thyrsis particularly exemplifies bucolic poetry by virtue of being embedded as inset in the larger framework of the poem, in the exchange with the *ekphrasis* of the cup. As the rest of the collection shows, bucolic poetry is practically always *poetry about poetry*, featuring embedded song, often in an agonistic or amoebaeon setting (4, 5, 6, 7, 10).¹⁰ Equally important is the content of the song, which features three major recurring themes. Desire, music, and nature are here all tragically elevated by the death of the protagonist.

Idyll 1 notably “inscribes into itself a sense of tradition,”¹¹ suggesting that the subject matter of the song is age-old, even though its elevation to literature is “new” (1.28; 60, discussed below). The goatherd asks for the song of Thyrsis, as if the story of Daphnis’ woes was well known to the rustic world; Thyrsis is named a master of “the bucolic muse” (1.20), as if this were a recognized genre. The song’s recurrent invocation to the Muses to “begin, carry on and end the bucolic song” confirms these suggestions.¹² But mainly it is the way the story of Daphnis is recounted in the song: allusively, starting at the completion of the

7 Sch. *Id.* 1.1. arg b: ὁμῶς τοῦτο προτέταχται διὰ τὸ χαριέστερον καὶ τεχνικώτερον τῶν ἄλλων μᾶλλον συντετάχθαι.

8 For literature on *ekphrasis* see Fowler (1991) and Squire (2009) 139–146, and the special issues of *Ramus* (2002, vol. 31. 1–2) and *Classical Philology* (2007, vol. 102. 1).

9 Parthenius 29: Daphnis as a syrinx player; Diod. Sic. 4.48: Daphnis invented bucolic poetry; Aelian VH 10.18: Daphnis as the first subject of bucolic song.

10 Bucolic poetry always embeds and frames the songs of the herdsmen, either in mimetic dialogue or monologue (3, 6, 10), or by framing the songs in a diegetic narrative with a third-person narrator (7, 11).

11 Hunter (1999) 61–63; Gutzwiller (1991) 1–5.

12 Hunter (1999) 87.

story (Daphnis' death), and throughout lacking enough detail to allow (modern) readers to reach an entirely satisfactory understanding of the plot. This may well be deliberate. Scholarship has consistently shown that the details do not adequately represent any of the known versions of the myth of Daphnis.¹³ Precisely by leaving open spaces and creating mysterious ambiguities, Theocritus provides the sense that we are listening in on an age-old, vaguely familiar, yet tantalizingly elusive rural classic.

1.3 *The Frame*

The opening words of the *Idyll* introduce characteristic elements of bucolic poetry. One is the sense of all-encompassing natural musicality, created by the repeating series of sharp vowels (i and u), which onomatopoeically imitate the "clear and sharp" sound of the herdsman's instrument of choice, the syrinx (Ἀδὺ τι τὸ ψιθύρισμα καὶ ἃ πίτυς ... ἀδὺ δὲ καὶ τὸ / συρίσδεις, 1–3).¹⁴ This sound is metaphorically "sweet" (ἄδύ), the opening word of the entire poem, and perhaps therefore, the collection.¹⁵ It is picked up in priamel-like fashion by the goatherd (7–11). Significant is the Doric coloring, which indicates the Sicilian associations of bucolic song.¹⁶

The remarkable syntactical structure of the entire opening, its parataxis, repetitions, internal rhyme, and anaphora create the impression that nature and music mutually echo: the pine sings a sweet whispering, which is like the sweet piping of the goatherd, while the song of Thyrsis streams down more sweetly than echoing (not cold, clear) water. Music and landscape blend into what has been termed a "soundscape."¹⁷ The herdsmen exist in symbiotic harmony with nature and with each other: their exchange of compliments and songs/gifts in the poem represents an idealized amoebae exchange (cf. 4, 5, 6, 7, 10), to which only the mention of goats and sheep (1.4–6; 9–11, 151–152) provides an earthy and slightly comical touch.

13 Gow (1952) 11.1, Ogilvie (1962) 106–110; Goldhill (1991) 242–243; Hunter (1999) 67–68; Klooster (2011) 101–103.

14 Hunter (1999) 69.

15 It recurs in 1.65, 145, 148, and cf. also Call. fr. 1.11, Mimnermus as γλυκύς. See Hunter (1999) 70–71 on how the emphasis on sweetness fits theories on pleasure in Greek poetics.

16 The scholia believe the Doric dialect of Theocritus' *Idylls* mimetically renders the dialect of Sicilian countryfolk (cf. *prol.* p. 7, 8–10 Wendel); more subtly also *prol.* p. 12. 4–25. Ruijgh 1984 thought the dialect was Cyrenean. But see Hunter (1996) 37 and (1999) 21–24, and Tribulato, this volume.

17 Segal (1981) 228, 229. On this passage, see further Elliger (1975) 326, Hunter (1999) 68–71, Klooster (2012) 105–106.

On a metapoetical level, the animals allude to the aetiology of “tragedy” as a song for which a goat was the prize. This fits the Dionysiac overtones in the name of Thyrsis (cf. θύρσος, the ivy-crowned staff of Dionysiac rite), the woodland deities Pan and the nymphs, the vineyard on the goatherd’s κισσύβιον with its ivy decoration (and ivy implied in its name), perhaps even the goat’s name Cissaetha (1.151), and finally the “tragic” flavour of the song, *The Woes of Daphnis*. This suggests a relation between the mimetic genres of drama and bucolic, of bucolic as a rural version, or even predecessor of Attic drama.¹⁸

1.4 *The Cup*¹⁹

Unlike its forebears, the epic *ekphraseis* of Homer (18.478–608), Ps-Hesiod (*Scutum*), and their contemporary in Apollonius (1.721–768),²⁰ the *ekphrasis* of the κισσύβιον, rather than being expressed by the narrator, is put into the mouth of one of the characters, and a goatherd at that, suggesting that this is epic in a rural guise. Unlike the shields of archaic epic, or the sensuous cloak of Apollonius’ love-hero Jason, the object described here is a humble utensil of the bucolic world, a wooden cup. It has the unpretentious and peaceful associations of the herdsman’s world: its value is expressed in cheese, it can be used to drink milk from, and its iconographical program reflects the daily concerns of ordinary people: love, work, and play, portrayed as the three ages of men. The cup is sealed in sweet wax, which links it to Daphnis’ mythical syrinx in the song (1.128) and thus to poetry (1.27; 149).²¹ Its name not only hints at Dionysiac ivy (symbol for poetic immortality), which decorates its rim, but also brings to mind the cup of another mythical Sicilian herdsman, who turns up as a character in the bucolic *Idylls* repeatedly (6, 7, 11), the Cyclops in *Od.* 9.346.²² This again suggests that bucolic poetry has ties with epic, as with tragedy.

The goatherd’s description of the cup is predicated on the characteristics of the poetry it symbolizes: it is a “goatherd’s marvel” (αἰπολικόν θάημα), a “wonder (τέρας) that will strike your heart” (1.56); “newly fashioned” (νεοτευχές); it “still

18 Cairns (1984) 100 notes but does not explain the Dionysian allusion; Hunter (1999) 62 (with bibliography) points to the link it establishes with tragedy.

19 On the *ekphrasis* of the cup, see Gallavotti (1966) 421–436; Cairns (1984) 96–99; Manakidou (1992) 51–82; Hunter (1999) 76–77; Zanker (2004) 12–15; Payne (2007) 28–40; Klooster (2012) 111–113; Koopman (2018) 167–207. Cf. Ambühl and Kwapisz, this volume.

20 On the vexed question of the relative chronology of these two poets and their work, see Köhnken (2008) 83–94.

21 Cairns (1984) 94 n. 19. For the poetic symbolism of bees and honey, see Waszink (1974).

22 κισσύβιον is a Homeric hapax, which makes the association even more significant. In Call. fr. 78.12 Harder the word is also used. Here the paradoxical description of it as “small” has been interpreted as metapoetically significant, e.g., Hunter/Fantuzzi (2005) 80.

smells of the knife" (1.28) and has remained "untouched" (ἄχραντον, 1.60) until now. The cup has been "washed in sweet wax" (1.27) and smells "beautifully, as if it had been washed in the spring of the Horae (Ὡρᾶν πεπλύσθαι ... κράναισι)" (1.150).²³ A transformation through art seems hinted at: the simple, perishable, organic material (the cup is made of wood, which would be Greek ὕλη, a word with strong metapoetic connotations), first finely worked and then sealed in the sweet substance of poetry (wax; the spring of the Horae), a goatherd's marvel, thus becomes "forever young," immortal. Like the song of Thyrsis, the rustic cup elevates humble material to new, amazing, and immortal art.

Its iconographical program consists of three scenes from everyday life, suggesting the three ages of men (youth, old age and childhood respectively), in what might be three settings (city—although not explicitly characterized as such, seaside, and countryside), and three types of "labor" (πόνος: love's (lost) labor, the struggle for subsistence, and the playful absorption of the child plaiting a cage for crickets). A border of blooming *helichryse* and ivy encircles the scenes, much as the refrains invoking the Muses encompass the song of Thyrsis. Both devices indicate the immortal quality of the art through the iterative quality of refrains and the connotations of (poetic) immortality inherent in evergreen plants like ivy.²⁴

Reading the shield of Achilles as a depiction of the world of mankind from which the hero is forever separated by his choice of a brief but glorious life, Cairns suggests a similar interpretation for the scenes on the cup. They depict the concerns of everyday life from which Daphnis has been cut off by his wasting away and death. Unlike the figures on the cup, he is unwilling or unable to give in to erotic love, unable to work, or to find peace in his own art. And if Daphnis is a bucolic Achilles, then Thyrsis, or by implication Theocritus, is the bucolic Homer, and the cup is a bucolic shield (1984, 107–113).

The fact that the scene with the child comes last emphasizes its importance in a priamel-like buildup: it is the key to bucolic poetry (Cairns 1984, 103). At the same time, the anachronistic representation by the goatherd also underlines the special place art has in human life. Whereas natural order evolves from childhood through youth and old age (and death), only (poetic) art has the power to freeze a particular moment and eternalize it, as is likewise illustrated by the song immortalizing the death of Daphnis, who exits from the cycle

23 Cairns (1984) invokes the parallel of Call. fr. 7, 13 Harder, where the Graces wipe the perfume from their hands on Callimachus' elegies and anoint them with everlasting charm.

24 On the fictionality of the cup and the song, and their programmatic value for pastoral, see Payne (2007) 28–40.

of human life at an “untimely moment,” paradoxically becoming immortal (in recurrent song) at that very moment and by virtue of it.

The final image on the cup is a child seated in a vineyard, while two foxes are eating the grapes and preying on his lunch—but the boy is engrossed in the little cricket cage he is plaiting from rushes and asphodel. The child, the weaving, the reed with its musical associations, and the crickets are all easily paralleled images of poetry. The scene symbolizes the all-consuming pleasure of poetic creation on a small scale. The containment of songful creatures in a finely crafted container furthermore echoes the way in which singing herdsmen are contained in finely crafted songs (within finely crafted songs ...) in the Chinese box-like structure of the bucolic *Idylls* themselves (especially 7); at the same time, the image might also hint at the embedding of poetry and poets from the great tradition in this new genre.²⁵

The scenes on the cup are described in the typical way of *ekphrasis*: the interpretation of the goatherd explains more than could actually be depicted. For example, he reports the movements of the woman standing between the two men and the thoughts of the fox preying on the child's food.²⁶ In this way, the *ekphrasis* forms the complement to Thyrsis' allusive song about Daphnis, where not enough information is provided to form a complete picture.

1.5 *The Song of Thyrsis*

The details of Daphnis' story are ambiguously and allusively told, suggesting to (modern) readers of the poem that they are listening in on a classic of the rustic world.²⁷ The gradations of ignorance the visitors to Daphnis demonstrate are thematically important: the mute animals simply come to mourn him, the humans do not know *what the cause of his pain is*, Hermes asks with whom he is *so much in love*, Priapus fails to understand why he will not take *pleasure where it is offered*, and finally Aphrodite *knows* what the matter is, without it being explicitly explained to the listeners. The death of Daphnis has baffled critics: it is impossible to say what finally happens when “Daphnis went to the stream” (1.140). This seems deliberate.²⁸

While representing “the bucolic song” inside the world of the *Idyll*, the song of Thyrsis features a number of unique aspects such as the refrain, the death of the herdsman, his enigmatic resistance to love, the wild animals mourn-

25 Cf. Cairns (1984) 103 on the image in Tim. *SH* 775 and *Ecl.* 10.70–72.

26 Koopman (2018) 189–204.

27 See Hunter (1999) 63–68, with ancient sources and bibliography on this issue.

28 For various views on the manner of Daphnis' death, see Prescott (1899) 176–187; White (1979) 578–579; Segal (1981) 50–53; Van Erp Taalman Kip (1987) 249–251; Hunter (1999) 67.

ing him, and his direct interaction with divine beings. Daphnis is “exemplary” for the internal bucolic audiences in the same way heroes from myth were for the audiences of Greek epic or tragedy. He is initially stubborn and silent like a proverbial Aeschylean hero, when, like an epic Achilles, he receives divine and human embassies. He is close to the Muses and nymphs like some bucolic Orpheus, and like him, or like a tragic Hippolytus, dies for (resistance to) love. He is apparently the equal of divine Pan, to whom, without a hint of *hubris*, he hands over his syrinx at the moment of death.

Daphnis’ connection to (bucolic) music is underlined by the singer’s question about where the Nymphs were (1.66–69), by Daphnis’ symbolic handing over of his syrinx to Pan at death, and by the “epitaph” provided to him by Thyrsis: “... the man who was beloved to the Muses and no enemy to the Nymphs” (1.141). Finally, we may wonder whether Daphnis’ (no doubt traditional) name may not be pressed for some poetic significance. This becomes attractive in connection with the strong Dionysian symbolism in the name of the singer Thyrsis and the predominance of ivy-related references in the poem. Daphnis is of course (as the first words of *Id.* 2 $\pi\acute{\alpha}\ \mu\omicron\iota\ \tau\alpha\iota\ \delta\acute{\alpha}\varphi\eta\alpha\iota$ —deliberately?—remind us) related to $\delta\acute{\alpha}\varphi\eta\eta$ (bay, laurel), the Apollonian counterpart to Dionysian evergreen ivy. That Daphnis symbolizes the immortality of (bucolic) poetry by means of an allusion to Apollonian poetics seems likely and attractive in view of the Apollonian symbolism in the other programmatic *Idyll* (7).

As noted, it remains remarkably unclear what exactly causes Daphnis’ suffering and eventual death—with whom was he so in love? Why was this such an unhappy love? What happened—or did not happen—between him and the girl? But it is certain that it is an unhappy love story. The *communis opinio*, as noted (cf. n. 27), is that the incomplete and elliptic presentation of Daphnis’ love story in the poem is deliberate.

There are two crucial elements in the song about Daphnis’ unhappy love in *Idyll* 1. One is that it is presented as a foundational myth for bucolic poetry, in what is clearly a programmatic poem. This means that singing about “experiences in love” is presented as central to Theocritus’ poetics. The second issue is that Daphnis does not sing about his own feelings, and dies. We may relate this observation to the fact that Theocritus’ characters are often in some way able to manage their erotic feelings by singing about them (2, 3, 6, 7, 11). We could even say that the poetic *raison d’être* of these characters lies in their songs about their experience of love. What’s more, none of these characters actually dies as an effect of his/her unrequited love. So why is Daphnis here dying? As Aguirre

de Zarate has proposed, the answer seems to be: *because he does not sing about his love*, even though he is presented by others as well as by himself as a poet.²⁹ Indeed, as we saw, Daphnis' remarkable silence is pointed out repeatedly in Thyrsis' song. Daphnis never speaks to the gods Hermes and Priapus or to his human visitors. Only when Aphrodite ultimately provokes him, does he lash out against her, but even though he speaks at this point, he still remains silent about his own experiences.

A metapoetic reading could effectively explain Daphnis' silence by relating it to the elliptic way in which the story about his love is told: we do not know exactly what happened to Daphnis. But we do know that Daphnis could not cure himself, and dies. This happens, we might assume, *because* he did not sing about his feelings. And this, in turn, might actually explain why we do not know—and cannot know—what *really* happened to him.

1.6 *Closure*

The song ends with the death and “epitaph” of Daphnis. After the final repetition of the refrain enjoining the Muses to end the bucolic song (1.142), Thyrsis abruptly requests the goat (to milk) and the cup to make a libation to the Muses (1.143–144). Practically in the same breath, he expresses a hymnic farewell to the Muses, promising “a sweeter song next time” (1.145). The last seven lines are spoken by the goatherd, who, overcome by the beauty of the song, elaborately compliments Thyrsis on the sweetness of his singing, with a slightly awkward wish for a mouth full of honey, honeycomb, and sweet figs in recompense for his sweet voice, and with a bucolic analogy, comparing his singing positively to that of a cicada, the ultimate musical insect (1.146–148). He hands over the cup, pointing out its sweet smell “as if it had been washed in the spring of the Horae” (1.150), and finally tells the goats not to gambol, lest the he-goat rouse himself. The abrupt descent into matters of animal physicality contrasts oddly with the poetic expressions of sweetness and immortality, confirming the central importance of this opposition to the distinctive aesthetics of bucolic poetry.³⁰ At the same time, the spring of the Horae/Seasons and animals coupling both symbolize cyclical natural renewal, reminiscent of the renewal of song Thyrsis has just promised to the Muses. This contrasts with the finality of Daphnis' death and his refusal to join in the cycle of life and *eros*.

29 Aguirre de Zarate (2012) 13–41.

30 See Ott (1969).

2 *Idyll 7*2.1 *Place in the Collection and Title*

In the ancient collections, *Idyll 7* seems to have been placed second, perhaps also pointing to its perceived importance. Modern scholarship has sometimes suggested that it may rather have formed the end of a collection of the bucolic *Idylls*.³¹ This is attractive for several reasons. In the first place, the fictional occasion, brought into prominence by its ancient title, is the harvest festival on the island of Cos in honor of Demeter, the *Thalysia* organized by Simichidas' noble friends Phrasidamus and Antigenes. The symbolism of a poetic "harvest," marking a closure of some kind, is borne out by the ending of the poem, with its elaborate description of abundantly fruitful nature appealing to all senses (7.131–157) and its Odyssean image of the speaker placing a winnowing fan on the threshed heap of corn (7.155–156). "Harvesting" constitutes both an ending and a recurrent marker in a perpetual agricultural cycle; this is why the speaker wishes that he may place his winnowing fan in the future *again* (αὖτις) on the threshing heap of smiling Demeter, in the manner of the hymnic poet promising another, sweeter song next time (cf. the end of Thyrsis' song, *Id.* 1.145).

Apart from this imagery of a poetic harvest, the resumption in the poem of characters, themes, and motifs from the other (bucolic) *Idylls* (the references to Daphnis, Comatas, Polyphemus, and Heracles, the amoebaeon bucolic contest, and the theme of song as remedy for unfulfilled desire) may also be metapoetically referenced by the speaker who speaks of the "mixing up of a special draught of wine" at this harvest festival by the "Castalian Nymphs living on the slopes of Parnassus" (7.148–155). The poem presents a sampler of the fruits of bucolic themes all mixed together, and subsequently immortalized by poetry, just as the goatherd's cup had been by its washing in the spring of the Horae.

Importantly, the poem is a first-person account of a personal experience, which gives it the flavor of a poetic autobiography, a looking-back on a past career, or, considering the intriguing and quite emphatic naming of the narrator, of a *sphragis*. This makes a final, capping position in a hypothetical ancient collection likely.³²

2.2 *Overview of the Poem and Its Programmatic Aspects*

Scholarly discussion about the programmatic significance of Theocritus' "enigmatic masterpiece" (Gow) *Idyll 7* is huge.³³ The issues singled out for discussion

31 Lawall (1967) 1–13; Gutzwiller (1996) 119–148.

32 Cf. Klooster (2011) 195–208.

33 Weingarth (1967) provides a full bibliography up to that date. Hunter (1999) is a useful

are primarily the respective identities of Simichidas (the text-internal narrator) and the mysterious goatherd he encounters, Lycidas, and hence the interpretation of their statements about poetry and the appreciation of their respective bucolic songs as successful or otherwise samples of bucolic. The complexity resides in the fact that the *Idyll* is presented as a personal memory of a first-person speaker, identified as “Simichidas” at 7.21, by Lycidas. This immediately begs the question about the relation of Simichidas to Theocritus, the “historical author” of the poems. Are they to be identified, as the first-person narration invites us to do, or are they different in some subtle way, as the different name indicates? What does their similarity and difference consist of, and what does that mean for the interpretation of the poem as a whole?

Related is the identity of the goatherd Lycidas, introduced by Simichidas somewhat paradoxically as “a goatherd looking extraordinarily like a goatherd,” whose looks and smell are described in great detail (7.15–20). This has prompted scholars to believe that he is more than just a simple goatherd. In the past, this led to the theory of the so-called *masquerade bucolique*.³⁴ The question of identification turns on recognition of the fact that the encounter of Simichidas and Lycidas has all the characteristics of a poetic initiation with Hesiod’s initiation by the Muses as a template, especially the handing over of the crooked stick as a “guest gift from the Muses” on the part of Lycidas (7.129).

2.3 *Formal Aspects of the Idyll*

Idyll 7 is presented as a personal reminiscence about a summer afternoon once upon a time on Cos.³⁵ Apart from the question of the identities of Simichidas and Lycidas, the poem has some remarkable formal features. First, its characterization as a memory of an occasion at a considerable remove from the present perspective of the speaker deserves mention. Scholars debate the exact significance of the opening words ἤς χρόνος ἀνίκα (“there was a time when,” 7.1), but it seems certain that it “implies that the epoch referred to is closed, or the state of

update. Recent discussions include Clauss (2003), Payne (2007), Morrison (2007), Klooster (2011), and Foster (2016).

34 Reitzenstein initiated the theory of the *masquerade bucolique* (1893). Proposed identifications for Lycidas (see Reitzenstein): Aratus (Bergk); Dosiadas (Wilamowitz); Leonidas (Legrand); Callimachus (Gercke); Astakides (Ribbeck), Rhianus (Legrand), or merely “an eccentric poet going about in herdsman’s outfit.” The characters in the *Eclogues* of Virgil were later interpreted similarly, which implies that even in antiquity the intuition existed that herdsmen were analogues of the poets. The scholia do not remark upon possible hidden identities of Lycidas, but they do discuss the identification of Simichidas.

35 Hunter (1999) 145 has pointed out the remarkable structural similarities to certain Platonic dialogues (*Lysis*, *Republic*), in particular the *Phaedrus*.

affairs no longer existing,” whether or not that also means that the time referred to is presented as “*märchenhaft*.”³⁶

The setting of the poem seems much more tangible, detailed, and real than in *Idyll* 1, which contributes to the autobiographical feel: the scene is set on Cos, in the company of Eucritus and Amyntas, late in the summer season, one hot afternoon, on the way from the city (Cos?) to the Haleis, where the farm of Phrasidamus and Antigenes, the sons of Lycopeus and descendants of legendary Coan noble ancestors Clytia and Chalcon, is located. The ancient spring of Bourina under its roof of elms and poplar trees, the midway grave marker of Brasilas, Mount Horomedon, and the road to Pyxa are all mentioned as landmarks on the island. Presumably these topographical details would have evoked a precise setting in the mind of the ancient reader familiar with Cos, and so a primary audience of (honorary) Coans cannot be ruled out—it may be significant to remember that Ptolemy Philadelphus was born there.³⁷ At the same time, it is more than likely that the choice for this setting metapoetically points to the works of the literary model named at 7.40, Philitas of Cos.³⁸ This is supported by the position of honour for Demeter in the *Idyll*, protagonist of Philitas’ most admired elegy in antiquity (cf. Callimachus *Aetia* prologue, 1.9–12).

The structure of the poem is unique among Theocritus’ bucolic *Idylls*: a first-person narrative about the past, which embeds a dialogue and an exchange of songs between the narrator and Lycidas, the goatherd he encounters. The other bucolic poems all either use a diegetic frame (6, 11) or present a mimetic dialogue without a frame (1, 3, 4, 5). Taking this formal observation as her cue, Gutzwiller argues that Theocritus’ poems work through “pastoral analogy,” which means that their significance lies in the analogies constructed by the poet between the herdsman characters in the main body of the poem and the figures of the narrator and his addressees in the frame. In the purely mimetic poems, there is only an implied frame, formed by the readers’ experience, and the analogy remains implicit, but in the diegetic frames of 11 and 13 this analogy is explicit. In *Idyll* 7, the situation is different because there is an internal narrator who exists in the frame as well as in the narrative, as his younger self. Gutzwiller suggests that this holds the key to the significance of both Simichidas and Lycidas, since

36 Resp. Gow (1952) 2.131; Wilamowitz (1924) 11.142. Clauss (2003) 289 notes that the parallels Gow adduces support both Wilamowitz’ interpretation and his own.

37 Wilamowitz (1924) 11.136.

38 For Philitas’ fragments see CA 90–96 and the editions of Sbardella (2000) and Spanoudakis (2002). Further see Kuchenmüller (1928), Pfeiffer (1968) 88–93, Knox (1993) and Hunter (1996) 17–19.

the poet himself is implied in all the relationships of his autobiographical projection in the form of Simichidas. And so, as Simichidas is an analogue of Lycidas, the poet may be viewed as Lycidas' analogue of as well.

1991, 160

In other words, there are two sides of the poet represented in this *Idyll*, and both are in some way an expression of "Theocritus'" bucolic poetics. Keeping Gutzwiller's remark at the back of our heads, let us take a chronological look at the development of critical theorizing about the identities of Simichidas and Lycidas.

2.4 *Simichidas and Lycidas*³⁹

The scholiasts predominantly read *Idyll* 7 as a biographical statement and assume that Simichidas is an alias, either patronymic or sobriquet, of Theocritus.⁴⁰ Yet some are baffled by the use of the name and think that it cannot refer to Theocritus.⁴¹ Despite such half-hearted reservations, the biographical reading of *Idyll* 7 dominates until the first half of the 20th century, sometimes in the vein of the *masquerade bucolique*. A metapoetical or symbolic interpretation was only considered once scholars hesitantly recognized that the use of the name "Simichidas" rather than "Theocritus" might convey a difference between the narrator of the poem and the historical author (e.g., Gow 1940, 47). Subsequent scholars went further. Sanchez-Wildberger, for instance, regards Simichidas and Lycidas as "*eine Doppelspiegelung des einen Theokrit*" (1955, 68). However, for this to be the case, would it not be more natural to have presented the dialogue as a mime, without singling out, and so giving more weight to,

39 What follows builds on Klooster (2011) 196–208.

40 Argumentum C ad 7.1 προλογίζει ὁ Θεόκριτος; the Byzantine epigram appended after *Id.* 18 in the scholia addresses the poet as Σιμιχίδα Θεόκριτε; cf. also the pseudo-Theocritean *Syrinx*, where the poet is called Paris Simichidas (Paris being the κριτής in the beauty contest of the goddesses, θεῶν). Nickau (2002) 389–304 considers the *Syrinx* genuine and thinks the choice of the name is a tribute on the part of Theocritus to the master of *technopaegnia*, Simias. The *Vita* explains that Theocritus' father was named "Simichus," in contradiction to the information that the name of this father was Praxagoras, as an alternative tradition in the *Vita*, the *Suda*, and *AP* 9.434.3 reports. *Prol.* 3, schol. 21a explain that the name refers to Theocritus' physiognomy (snub nosed), which was considered typical for herdsmen, fauns, and satyrs (cf. *Id.* 3.8). It was considered a sign of arrogance and pertness, which fits Simichidas' characterisation well. Suggestive, in light of the general drift of the *Idyll*, is also Hesychius' gloss σιμός· τυφλός (*LSJ* s.v. 111).

41 Surprisingly, they point to 7.96 to support this (οἱ δὲ ἑτερόν τινα τῶν σὺν αὐτῷ καὶ οὐ Θεόκριτον διὰ τὸ Σιμιχίδα μὲν "Ἐρωτες ἐπέπταρον) and ignore the fact that the name Simichidas is already introduced at 7.21 by Lycidas.

Simichidas as narrator in control of the representation of this encounter (Segal 1981, 125, cf. Gutzwiller 1991, 160)? Händel interprets the *Idyll* as an encounter between Theocritus (Simichidas) and one of his own creations (*“einer jener idealisierten hoch-poetischen Hirten wie man sie auch sonst in den bukolischen Idyllen findet,”* 1960, 216). Essentially, this thesis of the “fictionality” of Lycidas has recently been reiterated by Payne 2007, who moreover sees Simichidas as a heteronym in the manner of the heteronyms of a modern poet like Pessoa, i.e., a branching off from the poet’s persona.

Whereas scholars more or less agree on the fact that Simichidas represents some aspect of Theocritus’ poetic persona, the arguably more difficult quest for the identity of Lycidas has continued undauntedly.⁴² The first to make the important observation that *Idyll* 7 contains elements of the so-called *Dichterweihe* on the template of Hesiod’s *Theogony* was Van Groningen (1959, 24–53).⁴³ Puelma 1960 then contributed the insight that the encounter of Simichidas and Lycidas resembles meetings between humans and gods as represented in the Homeric epics. This idea was refined and elaborated by Cameron (1963, 291–307) and Williams (1971, 137–145). Williams provides suggestive textual grounds to assume that the god in question is Apollo. Equally suggestive with entirely different arguments is Clauss (2003, 289–302) who, with important elaborations of and additions to elements provided by Brown (1981, 59–100), among them an acrostic in lines 7.135–138, argues that Lycidas is Pan. Several other intriguing identifications have been proposed.⁴⁴ Segal (1981, 122) remains agnostic, stating: “Lycidas’ divinity remains a hint only, a suggestion which the alert reader will keep in the back of his mind.” He also creates a range of new possibilities by dispensing with exclusive identifications and calling Lycidas “a symbol” (1981, 114):

A symbol cannot mean whatever the critic wants it to mean, but it is important to recognize that a symbol may have several related and interconnected meanings. Precisely because of the range of such interrelated meanings we can return to a literary work again and again and never fully exhaust its significance. (...) Thus there is no necessary contradiction in

42 Cf. Petroll (1965) 32.

43 These elements are: a meeting, the ironic/abusive tone of the greeting, and the reference to springs (Bourina as the bucolic equivalent of Hippocrene). Most important is the handing of the stick by Lycidas to Simichidas as a “guest gift from the Muses” (7.129), which equals the handing of a laurel branch to Hesiod by the Muses. See Kambylis (1963) on the Hesiodic *Dichterweihe* and Theocritus’ interpretation of it.

44 Lawall (1967): a satyr; Bowie (1985) 67–97 a character from Philitas’ (lost) poetry.

regarding Lycidas as a god, as an aspect of Theocritus' poetic personality or (...) as a symbol of bucolic inspiration in general.

While to some readers this may seem like the easy way out, it has the advantage of allowing that Theocritus may have hinted at more than a singular identification. It seems possible that Theocritus deliberately made Lycidas *combine* elements of the earthy Pan and the sublime Apollo, just as the first *Idyll* combines Dionysian and Apollonian elements and just as the *Idylls* in general derive much of their peculiar effect from oppositions between the bathetic and the sublime. Perhaps Lycidas is a Pan-like Apollo, or an Apollo-like Pan? At the same time, it remains undeniable that, as Gutzwiller states (1991, 160), the two poets represented in the *Idyll* are analogues of each other (as their names with similar endings already suggest), even if "Simichidas" is closer to the poet's "I" on formal grounds. The two of them represent a series of oppositions: between young and old, naive and experienced, city dweller and countryman, and self-important and modest.

2.5 *Polemical Poetics and Initiation*

The exchange between Lycidas and Simichidas is entirely focused on poetics, and has an agonistic as well as a mildly polemical slant, a typical hallmark of bucolic (cf. 4, 5, 6, 10). As Giangrande and Segal have shown, Lycidas is older and wiser and in all likelihood the better poet.⁴⁵ Simichidas is young and self-important (7.30–41; 91–95) and condescending towards Lycidas (7.27–29; 94–95), the "rural nobody" (Hunter), who answers him with an amused smile always playing around his lips (7.19–20; 42; 128). Since there is a distinct possibility that Lycidas is not simply what he appears to be, the youthful arrogance of Simichidas gains a humorous edge, which at the same time is turned into a refined statement about poetry, since the poem as such invites readers to look *beyond* what Simichidas knew at the time he is portraying in his narrative. Such implicit and layered irony is the work of the subtle poet that Simichidas has apparently developed into by the time of his reminiscing about this poetical initiation—the mature Theocritus?

The poetical and friendly polemical tone of the meeting and subsequent exchange of songs is set when Simichidas as narrator declares that they met Lycidas σὺν Μοίραισι (7.12). Next Lycidas, remarking on Simichidas' unseasonable haste at the noontime, declares that every stone *sings* as it flies from Simichidas' boots (7.26). Simichidas, who is aware of the reputation of Lycidas

45 Giangrande (1968) 491–533; Segal (1974) 128–136.

as syrinx player, invites him to a bucolic exchange (7.36), claiming that he is likewise a “clear mouthpiece of the Muses” and has the reputation of being “an excellent singer” (7.37–38). With a show of pretend humility he claims that he knows that he is “not yet as good as Sicelidas from Samos or Philitas, vying like a frog with crickets” (7.39–41). His choice of poetic models reveals his aspiration, because these were the poets most *en vogue* at the time Theocritus was young: Philitas, the Coan poet and critic, was the tutor of the Ptolemaic princes, and Asclepiades (who is referred to here as Sicelidas) is a well-known epigrammatist and a voice clearly heard in Alexandrian poetic debates.⁴⁶ We do not learn that these poets ever engaged in bucolic poetry; it may well be their fame that principally attracts Simichidas.

Lycidas’ reply shows that he has the measure of Simichidas: ‘τάν τοι ... κορύναν δωρύττομαι, οὐνεκεν ἐσσί / πᾶν ἐπ’ ἀλαθείαι πεπλασμένον ἐκ Διὸς ἔρνος’ (“I give you my stick since you are a shoot of Zeus all fashioned for truth,” 7.43–44). The surface meaning here is clear: Lycidas laughs at Simichidas’ transparent pretend humility. But as scholars have argued, there might be a metapoetical meaning in these words, since the word πλάττομαι is the technical term for “making up fictional stories/characters.” What Lycidas could therefore be saying is “you are a successful fiction.” This in turn might mean several things: that Simichidas is a “pretend” bucolic poet (he is after all not really a herdsman); or, more complexly, that the whole poem is inherently about fiction, and that fiction is at the basis of bucolic poetry.⁴⁷

After his intriguing statement Lycidas approves of Simichidas’ poetical alliances, Philitas and Sicelidas, by using an elaborate simile with bucolic elements:

Just as I hate the builder who seeks to build a house as high as the peak
of Mount Horomedon, so also the birds of the Muses who labor in vain,
crowing against the Chian bard.

7.45–48

The poetics Lycidas here espouses in a bucolic mode are clearly akin to Callimachus’ ideas in the *Aetia* prologue and the *Hymn to Apollo*. Modest and small poetry deserves more praise than overblown Homerizing constructions. It is surprising to hear a goatherd on Cos expressing these advanced Alexandrian

46 See the *Scholia Florentina* at PSI 11.1219, Harder (2012) 1.121–122.

47 For different views see: Segal (1981) 170–171; Walsh (1985) 19; Goldhill (1991) 232; Hunter (1999) 163–164; Gutzwiller (1991) 166; Payne (2007) 118–123, 128.

poetics of *leptotes*, and this too has fueled the search for Lycidas' hidden identity: is he perhaps meant to represent Callimachus, or a Callimachean Apollo?

After his words Lycidas is ready to start singing what he modestly calls 'τοῦθ' ὅτι πρᾶν ἐν ὄρει τὸ μελύδριον ἐξεπόνασα' ("This little song I worked out earlier on the mountain," 7.51). The mountain may constitute a gesture towards the initiation of Hesiod, on Mount Helicon; Simichidas tries to cap this claim in the introduction to his own song. Lycidas' song (7.52–89) starts out with a *propemptikon* for Ageanax, combining the themes of Lycidas' burning erotic desire and the calm that detachment through poetry can bring. It cleverly works this detachment into the structure of the song itself, by means of the embedding of songs within songs.

The opening evokes a miraculously calm winter sea, symbolizing the emotional peace desired by the singer, over which Ageanax may sail to Mytilene (home of archaic Lesbian love poetry). Lycidas continues to describe a rustic symposium at which he will preside, lying on a leafy couch, drinking wine, eating roasted beans, and listening to the bucolic song of Tityrus about Daphnis' tragic love and about the blessed divine goatherd Comatas, who was enclosed in a box and fed by bees on account of his sweet voice.⁴⁸ The song ends with a wish that Lycidas could have been a contemporary of Comatas and herded his beautiful goats, listening to his sweet song. Daphnis could not save himself by song, Comatas could; the song in the song about these herdsmen in turn implicitly saves Lycidas from his burning desires, bringing him detachment and peace. Ageanax seems all but forgotten, once the song is over.

Simichidas takes over. He does not comment upon Lycidas' achievement, but likewise says he was taught his song—among many other songs!—by the Nymphs while herding cows on the mountain (ἀν' ὧρεα βουκολέοντα, 7.92). In view of his provenance from the city and his distinctly urban outfit (7.24–26), this sounds unlikely.⁴⁹ Simichidas moreover claims that his songs have reached the throne of Zeus—usually understood to refer to Ptolemy Philadelphus, who was, we may remember, born on Cos.

The song (7.96–127) purports to give erotic advice to Aratus, who is in love with Philinus. Again, the theme of freedom from erotic desire is key (ἀσυχία, here explicitly mentioned at 7.126), but it seems less integrated in the song, which appears to strive—not entirely convincingly—to imitate Lycidas' complex embedding of voices. It opens confusingly by referring to Simichidas in the third person ("the Loves have sneezed for Simichidas," 7.96). The mention of

48 The scholia ad loc. claim that this story was made up by Theocritus.

49 Giangrande (1968) 491–493.

Aristis at 7.99 suggests that the song is really (meant to be performed) by Aristis, “a noble man, outstanding, whom even Phoebus himself would not deny to sing by his tripods (7.100–101).” The mention of Apollo is, suggestively, followed closely by a prayer to Pan, who is threatened and wheedled by means of obscure ritual (bucolic) threats to make Philinus, the object of Aratus’ affections, give in to him. The poem ends with a direct address to Aratus, counseling to give Philinus up, as he is overripe,⁵⁰ and the wish for peace of mind.

Afterwards, Lycidas, ever smiling, hands Simichidas the crooked staff (λαγω-βόλον, 7.128) as a guest gift from the Muses (ἐκ Μοισᾶν, 7.129). This act is laden with metapoetical significance: it replaces the Hesiodic laurel branch of Apollo with the *lagobolon* (stick to catch hares) traditionally associated with Pan, toning down the sublimity of a poetic initiation to the level of the rural and bucolic, in a way reminiscent of the *kissybion* in 1. Besides, it shows Lycidas as the host granting guest gifts to the passer-through Simichidas, the city dweller. The gift’s provenance “from the Muses” suggests Lycidas’ special relation with these divinities; he is their servant or companion. After taking his leave, Lycidas takes a different road, and is not mentioned again, but his influence still hovers over the description of the rural symposium.

2.6 *The Blending of Bucolic Voices*

Before looking at this last section of the poem, I first analyze the structure of the two songs of Lycidas and Simichidas, which both feature a central structural element of bucolic song, the embedding of songs, here combined with the blending of poetic voices (polyphony).⁵¹

Bucolic poetry is poetry *about* herdsmen and *by* herdsmen; it has its origins in Theocritus’ own poetry while inscribing in itself a sense of tradition. Structurally, this is underlined by the fact that the bucolic *Idylls* represent poetry made out of poetry and about poetry. The poems consistently embed other voices, other songs. In *Idyll* 1, Daphnis is both the (original) herdsmen poet and the (original) subject of bucolic song; he is embedded in Thyrsis’ song, which is in turn embedded in Theocritus’ poetry.

In *Idyll* 7, a poem by Theocritus, but reported by “Simichidas,” both Lycidas and Simichidas sing songs in which other (bucolic) singers feature. Lycidas sings about a rural symposium at which “Tityrus will sing about how Daphnis the cowherd loved Xenea ... and he will sing how once a wide coffer received the goatherd [Comatas] alive by the impious presumption of a king ...” (7.71–79).

50 Echoes of Archilochean iambus have been noted here, cf. Hunter (1999) 188.

51 The following builds on Klooster (2011) 200–207.

Finally, Lycidas even addresses this legendary goatherd directly: “Oh blessed Comatas, you too suffered this fate ...” (7.83). Both Daphnis and Comatas repeatedly feature in Theocritus’ poetry, both as singers and subjects of song.⁵² Ultimately, this means that the multiple voices of Theocritus, who gives a voice to his alter ego Simichidas, and Simichidas, who recounts the song of Lycidas, and Lycidas, who sings of the song of Tityrus, and Tityrus, who addresses the mythical goatherd-poet Comatas, all converge. The poem is even more convoluted thanks to the fact that Lycidas’ song visualizes a future, addresses a legendary and already ancient poet, and is simultaneously recalled by Simichidas as something he heard “once upon a time.” Through this conflation of voices and layers of time, the elusive Comatas is ultimately addressed by Theocritus the poet, or by whosoever of his readers is reciting the poem. Bucolic song thus simultaneously stresses the distance and elusiveness of its origins and brings them to life in the present through performance.

Something similar applies to the song of Simichidas. Simichidas sings about one Aristis (7.99), who sings about the love of Aratus, who is finally apostrophized, like Comatas.⁵³ It would enhance the structural similarity between the songs of Lycidas and Simichidas if the intended Aratus is to be identified with the poet of the same name.⁵⁴ In any case, Aratus also features in *Idyll* 6 and 13, in the addresses by the narrator. Instead of spiraling into the bucolic legendary never-never land of the past, then, the song stays in the present and in “the real world.” Simichidas is closer to the actual world of the poet, whereas Lycidas is closer to the mythical world of bucolic poetry. Still, both complement each other as bucolic singers, caught in bucolic song, the invention of Theocritus.

2.7 Closure

Before rounding off with a farewell to Demeter, *Idyll* 7 impressionistically sketches a lush, rural symposium in a place which has all the characteristics of a *locus amoenus* (or “songscape”): soft beds made of reeds and vines, shady trees, a holy spring, humming bees, songful insects and birds, sweet smells, fruits of the season aplenty, and finally an excellent wine; all five senses are gratified

52 Daphnis: *Id.* 1, song of Thyrsis; *Id.* 5, mentioned by Comatas; *Id.* 6; Comatas is a singer in *Id.* 5.

53 See Hunter (1999) 180–182; Klooster (2011) 202.

54 The scholia (*arg. ad. Id.* 6) suggest identifying him with the poet from Soloi. Wilamowitz (1894) 182 questioned this. For arguments *pro* see Hubbard (1998) 27; *contra* Gow (1951) 1.118–119; Hunter (1999) 243. Some Aratean echoes in Theocritus which strengthen the case for identification can be found in Pendergraft (1986) 47–54.

(7.131–155). Numerous elements of this symposium are by now recognizable as poetic symbols: reeds and vines; poetry and the Dionysian element; songful animals symbolizing the harmony between bucolic poets and nature; water and wine as two opposing ideals (Apollonian and Dionysian?) of poetry; bees as a symbol of the poet; and the plentiful fruits that symbolize the harvest of bucolic poetry, which this poem may have capped in antiquity. Many of these elements are recognizably taken from the song of Lycidas (the rural couches, the shady trees, the bees, and the songful harmony of nature). The enraptured description of the wine on the other hand evolves into a series of ironically learned hyperbolic rhetorical questions, which seems much more akin to the style of Simichidas' song:

Castalian Nymphs, ye who haunt the Parnassian ridges, was it, then, a similar draught old man Chiron mixed for brawny Heracles in the stony cave of Pholus? Was it such nectar as this that persuaded the herdsman of the Anapus, brawny Polyphemus, who aimed rocks at ships, to dance on his feet in the folds, such as the one you then mixed together, Nymphs, by the altar of Demeter of the threshing floor?

7.148–155

And so the poem ends with a blending of the two samples of poetry that made up its core in the form of the reported songs, and with a wish for many happy returns, symbolized by the Odyssean planting of a great winnowing fan on the heap of smiling Demeter: the bucolic harvest is done.

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