Calpurnius Siculus: Exploring pastoral en route to the city

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Year of submission: **2024**

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Master's Degrees by Examination and Dissertation

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Contents

Abstract

This discussion explores Calpurnius Siculus' contribution to and development of the pastoral genre. His incorporation of non-pastoral genres is discussed in relation to his concerns with pastoral succession, imperial recognition and personal remuneration. Calpurnius' intertextual relationship with the Augustan love elegists and Ovid is explored as evidence of his innovative treatment of the genre. The trajectory from optimism with the pastoral genre in *Eclogue* 1 to disillusionment in *Eclogue* 7 is explored with particular focus on his ambiguous use of language and his representation of 'unnatural' nature. His imperial panegyric is considered alongside contemporary writers of the early Empire to counter criticism that Calpurnius was a self-serving career poet. The contradictions of the *locus amoenus* are an important theme of the collection and are discussed in the light of the difficulty surrounding interpretations of Calpurnius' *Eclogues*.

Introduction. The pastoral tradition inherited by Calpurnius Siculus

"Pastoral is by Virgil out of Theocritus"[1]. The key features of the pastoral genre established by the Latin poet Vergil, writing his collection of *Eclogues* in the late 30s BCE, are: 1) eclogues self-consciously refer to issues of genre; 2) a poetic career is depicted in terms of genre i.e., a generic ascent from pastoral (with its ludic characteristics) to the more serious and "higher" genre of epic via didactic; 3) the creation of political pastoral with panegyric: recollections of the recent civil war highlighting the optimism at the beginning of Augustus' reign – the *iuvenis* ushering in a new Golden Age; 4) a neoteric "engagement with the traditional genres of Greek poetry seen through the filter of Hellenistic poetics, with their stress on erudite allusiveness and exquisite artistry"[2]; 5) use of hexameter and pastoral's relationship to epic; 6) pastoral as a personal narrative (Vergil's family having been evicted from their farm as a result of the post-Civil War land confiscations) allowing his *Eclogues* to reflect this experience.

Calpurnius was also writing at a time of change and hope, with a new emperor, Nero, more interested in peace and the creative arts than his predecessor, Claudius[3] (this discussion adopts the widely-held view of a Neronian dating for Calpurnius for which there is a good summary of the debate surrounding this in Nauta 2021: 179-189). The Neronian period, like the Augustan, enjoyed a period of literary flourishing with writers inheriting for the first time a canon of texts written in Latin. Hellenistic literature continued to be an influence (Nero, known for his Alexandrian predilections, composed light verse, satire, lyric and epic)[4] - especially through the prism of the Neoterics and, for Calpurnius, this is seen in his engagement with elegy.

Critics are not agreed on Calpurnius' contribution to the pastoral genre – if any. Are his *Eclogues* purely derivative with no significant development of the genre or do they take pastoral in new directions? Another area of contention is whether his panegyric is ironic or sincere, is he an "imperial toady"[5] turning Roman pastoral into court poetry? Was Calpurnius' sole concern to progress his literary career and pastoral was the ideal genre for achieving that ambition with its generic flexibility that would allow him to demonstrate his skill in hexameter

[1] Alpers, 1990, p.19.
[2] Tarrant, 2002, p.14.
[3] Dinter, 2013, p.3-4.
[4] Griffin, 1984, p.152-3.
[5] Martin, 2003, p.73.

verse as well as his deftness with elegiac, didactic and comic themes: a one-hit wonder that would bring him to the attention of Nero? Or, did he choose pastoral as an ideal hiding place for criticising the regime, the simple *rusticus* voicing urbane irony in pastoral language? His seventh *Eclogue* offers the final contradiction, a celebration of the city's theatre by a pastoral poet-singer who appears to despise the very countryside that he has now returned to from the city. There are numerous signposts throughout his poems that provide clues for these contradictions, and these will be discussed in the following chapters. Chapter One will look at Calpurnius' assimilation of non-pastoral genres in *Eclogues* 2, 3, 5 and 6 and will discuss whether his generic branching out maintains or disrupts the overall coherence of the collection. Chapter Two will focus on *Eclogues* 1 and 4 to discuss how the inclusion of politics and panegyric in the *locus amoenus* reflects Calpurnius' concerns with poetic succession and the efficacy of the pastoral genre for realising his ambition. Chapter Three will discuss how Calpurnius' treatment of nature in *Eclogues* 2 and 6 foreshadows the closure of his pastoral project and how the signs of discontent with the *locus amoenus* in *Eclogues* 4 and 6 culminates in the 'urban pastoral' of *Eclogue* 7.

Chapter 1. The pastoral genre: travelling in new directions?

a) Introduction

This chapter will argue that Calpurnius broadens the boundaries of the pastoral genre by integrating a range of non-bucolic genres within its framework and the discussion will consider if these non-pastoral elements are successfully assimilated or if they disrupt the coherence of the collection. The discussion will focus on *Eclogues* 2, 3, 5 and 6 to analyse how Calpurnius' intertextual engagement with Vergil, Ovid and the Augustan love elegists takes pastoral in new directions by way of "generic transcendence"[6] and, as Karakasis claims, "generic novelty."[7]

In *Eclogues* 2, 3, 5 and 6, the influence of Theocritus, Vergil and Ovid can be traced and in particular Theocritus as Magnelli comments, "with regard to variety, Calpurnius is undeniably closer to Theocritus"[8]. Theocritus employed a wide range of topics and forms in his breakout collection of *Idylls*, including, "versions of epic, epigram, mime, comedy, epithalamium, tragedy."[9] The Hellenistic poets challenged the accepted notions of genre where subject matter and style were the determining factors by combining "motifs from previously distinct genres"[10] to achieve *variato*. By the Augustan period, "genre exists as a form which can be identified through a particular generic repertoire, not rigid and unchanged in the passing of time"[11] and Vergil enjoyed utilising genre as a topic in its own right as Harrison comments, "though generic enrichment is clearly Theocritean, its highlighting as a theme for debate and dialogue is equally clearly Vergilian. … (and Vergil) makes great efforts to incorporate non-pastoral material into the book's overall pastoral content, and overtly flags potential 'deviations' from the straightforwardly 'pastoral'."[12] It is well documented that Vergil's *Eclogues* 4, 6 and 10 all incorporate non-pastoral material: the fourth *Eclogue* being a prophecy poem, "a variety of Hellenistic epithalamium, based on Catullus 64"[13]; the sixth is a Catalogue poem and similar to the fourth owes no direct debt to Theocritus; and the tenth *Eclogue* which is addressed to the elegist Gallus and engages with the elegiac genre. By the early Empire there was, "a renewed

[6] Karakasis, 2011, p.245.
[7] Karakasis, 2016, p.153.
[8] Magnelli, 2006, p.468.
[9] Harrison, 2007, p.35.
[10] Skinner, 2007, p. 39.
[11] Paraskeviotis, 2020, p.104.
[12] Harrison, 2007, p.35.
[13] Williams, 1996, p.106.

engagement with Hellenistic literary culture [and] Ovid, like his first-century successors, is equally self-conscious of the need to negotiate his relationship to the now canonical moments of Augustan literature, Virgil's poetry above all."[14] Furthermore, Calpurnius' engagement with expanding the boundaries of genre is in keeping with the Neronian poets "desire to outdo their literary predecessors"[15]

Calpurnius, writing in the mid-1st century CE, certainly benefitted from the generic experiments of the Hellenistic, Neoteric and Augustan poets and his eclogues are clearly influenced by the generic variety that Ovid displays in the *Metamorphoses.* Barchiesi[16] identifies three episodes in the *Metamorphoses* where Ovid foregrounds pastoral song and landscape: the story of Io and the origin of panpipes in *Met*. 1.68-746, Midas and Pan's story in *Met*. 11.85-93 and the story of Galatea and Polyphemus in *Met*. 13.738-897. This chapter will explore whether Calpurnius successfully assimilated other genres and created, "his own pastoral world" [17] (the latter being Vergil's intention as Paraskeviotis asserts) or whether these generic incursions overwhelmed rather than enhanced his pastoral verse.

b) *Eclogue* 2. Elegy, georgic and epic

Calpurnius, in his second *Eclogue*, sets out the thematic programme for his collection. Using the pastoral amoebaean framework, he engages with elegiac, epic and georgic traditions, all of which he will explore more fully in *Eclogues* 3, 5 and 6. In this eclogue, he situates the elegiac scenario within a conventional pastoral song contest where the two protagonists, Idas and Astacus, "formosus uterque nec impar/ voce sonans" ("both handsome and not ill-matched in song") (lines 3-4) compete for the absent Crocale. Well-matched in looks and song just as Vergil describes Corydon and Thyrsis in his seventh *Eclogue*, "ambo florentes aetatibus, Arcades ambo,/ et cantare pares et respondere parati" ("both with youthful vigour, both Arcadians and equal in song and in readiness to respond") (Verg. *Ecl*. 7.4-5), which takes the form of a singing competition remembered rather than performed (and is closely modelled on Theocritus' *Idyll* 8.3-4, "ἄμφω τώγ' ἤστην πυρροτρίχω, ἄμφω ἀνάβω/, ἄμφω

[14] Hardie, 2006, p. 38.
[15] Dinter, 2013, p.8.
[16] Barchiesi, 2006, p.405-6.
[17] Paraskeviotis, 2020, p.105.

συρίσδεν δεδαημένω, ἄμφω ἀείδεν" ("both had reddish hair, both were still boys; both were skillful pipers, both skillful singers"[18]). The intertext with Vergil and Theocritus is clear but Calpurnius, in the opening lines of *Eclogue* 2 challenges his reader's expectations of pastoral: "Intactam Crocalen puer Astacus et puer Idas,/Idas lanigeri dominus gregis, Astacus horti,/ dilexere diu" ("the young lads Astacus and Idas had loved chaste Crocale for a long while, Idas owned a wool-bearing flock and Astacus a garden") (lines 1-3). In these lines, Calpurnius introduces an elegiac love triangle convention between a shepherd and a gardener, the latter being a novel character in the pastoral tradition. Furthermore, Karakasis[19] points out that Calpurnius' use of "intactam" is an intertext with Propertius 2.34.73-4, "felix intactam Corydon qui temptat Alexin" ("lucky Corydon who trys (to steal) chaste Alexis") which is itself an allusion to Vergil, *Eclogue* 2.1. Propertius alludes to Vergil to convince the poem's addressee, Lynceus, that he should not spurn the idea of writing love poetry as Vergil had himself incorporated elegy in his eclogues. This window allusion links the elegiac content of Calpurnius' *Eclogue* 2 with the elegist Propertius' allusion to the elegiac content of Vergil's second *Eclogue* and establishes Calpurnius' claim to the elegiac pastoral tradition. Vergil's 2nd *Eclogue,* based on Polyphemus' lament for Galatea in Theocritus' *Idyll* 11, is strewn throughout with elegiac language, "ardebat" (2.1), "crudelis" (2.6), "demens" (2.60), "urit (2.68), "dementia" (2.69) – the elegiac theme to which he returns in his final eclogue. The intertextual mapping of these opening lines of Calpurnius' second *Eclogue* takes the reader on a journey from Neronian pastoral to Augustan love elegy, to Vergilian and Theocritean pastoral and, as will be discussed, to epic poetry in Ovid's re-telling of the Galatea/Polyphemus story in Book 13 of the *Metamorphoses*: pastoral's borders are indeed being expanded.

Calpurnius, whilst acknowledging the pastoral pedigree of *Eclogue* 2, is not only making a statement about his elegiac intent but also, by introducing a gardener into the mix, his originality. He reminds the reader again of his generic novelty in lines 40-1, "non minus arte mea mutabilis induit arbos/ ignotas frondes et non gentilia poma" ("no less changeable by my skill, the tree is clothed in unfamiliar foliage and alien fruit") where his use of the grafting image can be read metapoetically, as Karakasis suggests, "as denoting a new 'generic artistic formation'"[20] – i.e., Astacus' horticultural skill enables a tree to bear foliage and fruit from another species just as Calpurnius' poetic skill effects the mutability of his chosen genre. By

[18] All translations of Theocritus are taken from Loeb Classical Library 28; all Latin translations are my own.
[19] Karakasis, 2011, p.216
[20] Karakasis, 2016, p.206.

introducing georgic content into the song competition, he effectively moderates pastoral's ludic tone and is able to claim in lines 30-31, "ille etiam parvo dixit mihi **non leve** carmen:/ 'iam levis obliqua crescit tibi fistula canna'" ("while I was a boy, he told me a prophecy of no light importance: 'already the slender pipe grows on the sloping reed'"). This, as Magnelli[21] comments, is a claim that, "bucolic poetry may be *levis* with regard to style, but its relevance is not *levis* at all."

A third of the way through the song exchange, the tone changes – very briefly - from pastoral to elegiac with Astacus' exclamation in line 56, "urimur in Crocalen" ("I burn with love for Crocale") to which Idas responds in line 61, "rusticus est, fateor, sed non et barbarus Idas" ("I admit that Idas is a rustic, but he is not a savage"). Idas insists that he may be a countryman of modest means but he is not uncouth which is a metapoetical statement that pastoral poetry is not rough or uncultured. Calpurnius then neatly envelops the pious and the elegiac in line 63 using the verb "palpitat" to describe the lamb's trembling heart where it might have been a more appropriate description for the lovelorn Idas' throbbing heart. However it's a passing nod to love elegy as, having dipped his toes in elegiac waters and, finding it a bit hot, he returns in line 64 to the *terra firma* of pastoral with a sequence of exchanges that are boastful bucolic statements, interspersed with a few reminders of the elegiac love triangle, for example, the refrain in line 71, "si venias Crocale, totus tibi serviet hornus" ("if you should come, Crocale, all the year's produce will be in your service"), repeated in line 75 (with *hortus* replacing *hornus*) with its use of the elegiac *servitium amoris* motif.

In lines 84-87, Idas describes *his* appearance (noting that, unlike the Augustan elegists, there is no mention of Crocale's appearance – Calpurnius therefore restrains the elegiac content) and in the following verse Astacus is described looking at his reflection in the water, "fontibus in liquidis quotiens me conspicor, ipse/ admiror totiens" ("as often as I look at myself in the clear waters, as many times I wonder at myself") (lines 88-89). These lines allude to the Theocritean (*Id*. 11.30-33) and Ovidian (*Met*. 13.767) Polyphemus who reflects on his appearance as an explanation for Galatea's disinterest in him. In a neat inversion of Ovid's technique of introducing pastoral to epic in his description of Polyphemus cutting his beard with a pastoral tool, "libet hirsutam tibi **falce** recidere barbam" ("you like to cut your shaggy beard with a pruning knife") (Ov. *Met*. 13.766), Calpurnius has introduced an epic subject to his eclogue.

[21] Magnelli, 2006, p.473.

However, the epic allusion is contained within the pastoral framework in line 91 when Astacus remarks on his youthful features as being like, "cerea sub tenui lucere Cydonia lana" ("the waxy quinces shining beneath their fine down"). This line is an intertext with Vergil's 2nd *Eclogue* where the impassioned Corydon is describing the apples he will pick for his beloved Alexis, "ipse ego cana legam tenera lanugine mala … / addam cerea pruna" ("I myself will pick soft downy quinces … and I will add waxy plums" (*Ecl*. 2.51, 53) so Calpurnius not only maintains the pastoral framework, but he also sustains the elegiac tone.

The poem concludes with both Idas and Astacus winning, "este pares" and with an exhortation to, "concordes vivite." The second *Eclogue* is set up as an amoebaean contest and although the shepherd and the gardener vie with each other to champion their superior pastoral and horticultural techniques, it lacks the competitive ludic content of Vergil's singing matches (e.g., *Eclogue* 3). Geue comments that, "this is emphatically not bucolic verse versus georgic, the one in opposition to the other. The "genres" of CS 2, like their representatives, are not so much in conflict but in harmony."[22] And this 'harmony' allows Calpurnius to assimilate the genres successfully within the bucolic frame. Calpurnius' engagement with expanding the boundaries of genre is in keeping with the Neronian poets' "desire to outdo their literary predecessors"[23] and, in his second *Eclogue*, he experiments successfully with the notion of a pastoral genre incorporating georgic and elegiac themes which, given that he returns to these themes in *Eclogues* 3, 5 and 6, is a programmatic statement of intent early on in his collection.

c) *Eclogue* 3. Elegy, comedy

If the second *Eclogue* was a taster of Calpurnius' generic novelty, then his third *Eclogue* does not disappoint with Ovidian, Vergilian and Theocritean allusions woven throughout the poem. Pastoral motifs in an elegiac setting and elegiac motifs in a pastoral setting are **interwoven** inextricably just as the lovers Phyllis and Mopsus engage in a pastoral activity, "sibi cum Mopso calamos **intexere** cera/ incipit" (she along with Mopsus begins to join the reeds with wax") (lines 26-7). The third *Eclogue* beguiles the reader into a pastoral scene where the herdsman Iollas is looking for his lost heifer but by line 4, the reader is quickly alerted that this is no typical bucolic scenario by Iollas' complaint of suffering: "duris ego perdita ruscis/ iam dudum nullus dubitavi crura rubetis/ scindere, nec quidquam post tantum sanguinis egi" ("for

[22] Geue, 2019, p.175.
[23] Dinter, 2013, p.8.

a long while my legs have been destroyed by the rough butchers' broom, and now I have not hesitated for them to be torn by the bramble bush – after all this blood, I have achieved nothing.") (lines 4-6). A full-scale elegiac (and at times comic) drama ensues with Lycidas declaring his inability to help Iollas due to his all-consuming passion for Phyllis. The pair settle down to discuss this whilst Tityrus (the attendant) is dispatched to look for the missing heifer. As Karakasis points out, "delegating the care of the flock from one bucolic figure to another has been convincingly read in the case of Calpurnian pastoral as a meta-poetic sign suggesting an interaction between various pastoral poets"[24] and suggests that Tityrus here represents Vergil who is tasked with looking for the missing heifer: in other words, pastoral has stepped off stage whilst the elegiac characters come onstage. (Noting that, as Geue conjectures, "pastoral names, in general, have a strained rapport with referentiality … we are never sure how much continuity there is between *that* Tityrus and *this* Tityrus or *this* Meliboeus and *that* Meliboeus"[25] so the name cannot always be taken as a direct association with Vergil but it is certainly synonymous with pastoral verse.)

The third *Eclogue* blends elegy, comedy and pastoral to such an extent that the pastoral genre is at risk of being submerged, its bucolic framework breached. But Calpurnius *does* contain the elegiac and comic content by ensuring that the pastoral conventions of the *locus amoenus* - herdsmen, leisure, love and song - all feature *in response to* the elegiac motifs of the love triangle (violence, suffering, alienation as well as the comic conventions of a wealthy woman and the servant go-between - in the form of Iollas, lines 38-9). He uses the pastoral framing device of the lost and found heifer to contain the elegiac and comic content within the eclogue and whilst the heifer is not only a generic marker of pastoral[26] it is also used elegiacally by Ovid in *Amores* 3.5, as Baraz notes, "it is this runaway heifer following someone else's bulls that serves as the closest link between this intertextual strand and the starting point of Calpurnius' poem."[27] Baraz further points out that, "the analogy between lovers and cattle itself has a long pedigree encompassing both Vergil and elegy."[28] Whilst the heifer is synonymous with elegy as well as pastoral, Calpurnius deploys the pastoral heifer (i.e., one of Iollas's herd) to contain the elegiac content of the poem.

[24] Karakasis, 2011, p.260.
[25] Geue, 2019, p.168.
[26] Rosenmeyer, 1969, p.131.
[27] Baraz, 2023, p.240.
[28] Baraz, 2023, p.239.

The third *Eclogue* is most striking not only for its conversation between pastoral and elegy but also for its dialogue with Vergil and Ovid. As Karakasis comments, "Ovidian allusions are thus far from coincidental, since Ovid appears to function as a distinct and specific poetic model of reference and comparison in Calpurnian poetics, betraying the 'generic comprehensiveness' of the Calpurnian pastoral world."[29] The heifer/bullock is not just a creature belonging to the pastoral world and a symbol of pastoral wealth, it is also a shapeshifting mythological creature in the form of Io (a priestess seduced by Zeus, transformed into a white cow by Hera and guarded by the all-seeing Argos who is eventually lulled to sleep by Mercury's pastoral pipe playing); Pasiphae (wife of Minos who is made to fall in love with a bull and gives birth to the Minotaur); and the daughters of Proteus whose divine punishment for insulting Hera or Dionysus was to imagine that they were cows. The plight of Io, Pasiphae and the Proetides all feature in the *Metamorphoses* (in 1.568-746, 8.136-68 and 15.326 respectively) and the latter two both feature in the Song of Silenus in Vergil's *Eclogue* 6. Vergil depicts the *iuvencus/a* in both of these guises throughout *The Eclogues* e.g., as a purely pastoral creature (2.66, 7.11, 7.44 and 8.2) and as a mythological creature born out of divine punishment (6.46-7 and 6.52). Calpurnius does not feature the mythological *iuvencus/a* - instead the lost heifer initiates the poem's 'plot' and the found heifer concludes it. The *inventa iuvenca* is also deployed as an omen, a sign that Phyllis will return to Lycidas, "nam bonus a dextrum fecit mihi Tityrus omen" ("for good Tityrus has brought me a favourable omen") (line 97) and the pastoral motif of the heifer resolves the elegiac love triangle drama (between Lycidas, Phyllis and Mopsus) which is being played out in the poem. The animal (here, a heifer) as a symbol for an omen is more commonly used in comedy than pastoral and has a good exemplar in Plautus, who uses animal omens as a comic and dramatic plot device, from parodying the woodpecker augury, "ex augurio eius pici" ("from the omen of this woodpecker") (Plaut. *As*. 2.1.263), to a goat as an omen of a threatened castration, "neque omen illuc mihi neque auspicium placet,/ quasi hircum metuo ne uxor me castret mea" ("I do not like either that omen or the augury/as I fear that my wife will castrate me just like the goat") (Plaut. *Merc*. 2.2.275-6).

Elegiac and comic motifs and scenarios proliferate in this eclogue which begins with a stock comic character - the 'wealthy woman' (e.g., Artemona in Plautus' *Asinaria*, Nausistrata in Terence's *Phormio*) in the form of Callirhoe whom Lycidas has rejected. The comedic scene soon dissolves into elegy with Lycidas expending his passion violently upon Phyllis. Lycidas'

[29] Karakasis, 2011, p.218.

hands become instruments of elegy in line 29 when he beats Phyllis, "diduxi tunicas et pectora nuda cecidi" ("I stripped off her dress and I beat her bare breast"). This alludes to Ov. *Am*. 3.9.10, "pectoraque infesta tundat aperta manu!" ("he beats his bare chest with hostile hand"), and again in Ov. *Am*. 1.8.110-112, "manus, … distraherent" ("hands that want to tear apart"). His hands are also elegiac symbols of surrender and punishment, the *militia amoris* motif, in line 37, "victas tende manus", Iollas suggests that Lycidas offers his hands to Phyllis as an act of surrender and again this alludes to Ov. *Am*. 1.2.20, "porrigimus victas ad tua iura manus" ("I stretch out my hands capitulating to your laws"). In line 71, Lycidas surrenders his hands to Phyllis, "tradimus ecce manus" and in line 75, he claims that both hands deserve punishment, "meruit manus utraque poenas." Again, Calpurnius is alluding to Ovid's *Amores*, for example, Ov. *Am*. 1.7.27, "debita sacrilegae vincla subite manus!" ("impious hands submit to the deserving chains") and, Ov. *Am*. 1.7.1, "Adde manus in vincla meas – meruere catenas –" ("place my hands in chains – they have deserved the shackles"). However, he is careful to maintain the pastoral frame by toning down the elegiac content in line 76, where Lycidas' hands are also capable of the gentle handling of a dove, "his isdem manibus tibi saepe palumbes", an image blending elegy and pastoral in its depiction of tender love and animal husbandry. The love triangle is a conventional elegiac scenario and one which Calpurnius employs comedically too, using Mopsus as his 'fall-guy' throughout the poem, describing his pastoral failings, "torrida Mopsi/ vox et carmen iners et acerbae stridor avenae" ("Mopsus' parched voice, expressionless song and the grating shrill pipe") and his pastoral poverty in lines 81-85. While Lycidas' hands have been symbols of elegy, Mopsus' hands are instruments of pastoral reality, "vilia cum subigit manualibus hordea saxis" ("when he grinds cheap barley by hand-mill") (line 85).

Calpurnius' use of the tree in *Eclogue* 3 is a good example of his generic assimilation and his exploration of the relationship between the 'host' genre and the 'guest' genre. The oak tree (line 27) is the pastoral setting where Phyllis betrays Lycidas [pastoral host; elegy guest]; the cherry tree (line 43) provides the bark upon which Lycidas will write his love letter to Phyllis [elegy host]; the olive tree (line 48) is used as a metaphor for suffering [pastoral host; elegy guest]; and in lines 88-89, he returns to the oak tree which is represented elegiacally as the cause of Lycidas' suffering and the threatened instrument of his death. The pastoral tree playing host to an elegiac letter was introduced by Callimachus in his tale of Acontius and Cydippe, "it was typical of lovers to write the names of their beloveds on walls [or on trees] or on the bark of trees in this way: 'He is very beautiful!' And in Callimachus, 'On your bark may you bear

as many engraved letters as will say "Cydippe is beautiful.'" (*Aet*. fr. 73 Pf.). The bark-inscribing trope was embraced by the Augustan elegists, for example, Propertius, "scribitur et teneris Cynthia corticibus" ("the name Cynthia is written on the soft bark") and Ovid, "incisae servant a te mea nomina fagi, / et legor Oenone falce notata tua." ("the beech trees preserve my name, carved by you and I am read there Oenone written with your blade") (*Her*. 5.21). Letter-writing is not only an elegiac topos but, as Breed notes, "one thing that gives Virgil's pastoral its oomph is the confrontation it enacts between an oral culture (the world of the shepherds it represents) and the textuality required to make those representations."[30] Theocritus in *Idyll* 18, an epithalamium for Helen, introduces the writing motif to the pastoral genre, "γράμματα δ' ἐν φλοιῷ γεγράψεται, ὡς παριών τις/ ἀννείμη Δωριστί· "σέβευ μ'· Ἑλένας φυτόν εἰμι." ("and on its bark we'll write, in Dorian, for every passer-by to read: 'Worship me: I am Helen's tree'") (lines 47-8). Vergil deploys both pastoral and elegiac motives for his characters inscribing on bark, in his fifth *Eclogue*, Mopsus recalls a song that he wrote down earlier on green beech bark, "in viridi nuper quae cortice fagi/ carmina descripsi" (lines 13-14) and his tenth *Eclogue* includes an elegiac inscription, "tenerisque meos incidere amores/ arboribus" ("carve my love on the young trees") (lines 53-4). Calpurnius not only employs this elegiac topos in his third *Eclogue* but he replaces the pastoral beech tree with a cherry tree, the latter making its first appearance in this context. The cherry tree lends itself well to its ardent setting, Phyllis will receive a letter on a tablet cut from its red-coloured bark - the red suggesting passion - and the alliterative 'c' which is emphatic and passionate, "cerasi ... cortice … decisa … carmina" (lines 43-4) will introduce the main thrust of the poem, Lycidas' sorry tale of unrequited love carved on the bark in the form of a letter.

Throughout the third *Eclogue* Calpurnius has extended the reach of the pastoral framework but he maintains its coherence and restores the bucolic theme in the final verse with the return of the lost heifer – thereby bringing the reader back from the (elegiac) brink.

d) *Eclogue* 5. Didactic

The opening lines of the fifth *Eclogue*, "Micon senior Canthusque, Miconis alumnus" ("old Micon and Canthus, Micon's foster-son") picks up on the theme of succession from the closing

[30] Breed, 2006, p.367.

lines of the fourth *Eclogue*, "'spreto', dixit 'ovili,/ Tityre, rura prius, sed post cantabimus arma'" ("he said, 'Tityrus, spurn the sheepfold, first we will sing of the land, and later, arms'") (lines 162-3). The theme of succession is reiterated in line 3, "cum iuveni senior pracepta daturus alumno" ("when the old man on the point of giving advice to his young foster-son") and provides a programmatic statement of intent, the metapoetic interpretation of which the reader is in no doubt when, in lines 9 to 11, Micon says to Canthus: "hos tibi do senior iuveni pater: ipse tuendos/ accipe. iam certe potes insudare labori,/ iam pro me gnavam potes exercere iuventam." ("these your aged father gives to you in your youth: take them in your safekeeping. Without doubt you can sweat at work, now you can exercise your active youth on my behalf"). In other words, Micon is handing down his flocks to his foster-son as Vergil has handed down the didactic line of succession to Calpurnius. And, to further impress upon the reader that this is didactic, he signals the genre with the "student-teacher constellation"[31] in the form of *Micon senior* and *Miconis alumnus*.

However, whilst this fifth *Eclogue* of Calpurnius picks up on Vergil's poetic career by launching into a poem of agricultural advice, he pauses in line 2 to remind the reader that he's still writing in the pastoral genre, "torrentem patula vitabant ilice solem," i.e., the two protagonists are sheltering from the sun under the spreading oak. The pastoral *umbra* becomes a setting not for music making but for a didactic excursus and, similar to *Eclogue* 3, the pastoral framework is stretched very thin to encompass the georgic content.

The poem is suffused with borrowings from the *Georgics*, in particular the second half of Book 3 which deals with sheep and goat husbandry. Vergil introduces this section by stating how difficult it is to dignify such a narrow topic but his love of the subject and of innovation will inspire him. Lucretius makes similar statements in *De rerum Natura* 1.139, expressing the difficulty of his task on account of, "propter egestatem linguae et rerum novitatem" ("on account of poverty of the language and novelty of affairs"). Lucretius (*De rerum natura* 1.926), Vergil (*Georg*. 3.292-3) and *Horace* (*Epist*. 1.19.21) amongst others all make claims to be the first to tread new literary paths in their respective works. By contrast in the closing lines of his fourth *Eclogue*, Calpurnius claims a desire to *follow* in Vergil's footsteps, he does not overtly state a desire to tread *new* Parnassian paths. *Eclogue* 5 is key to understanding Calpurnius'

[31] Karakasis, 2016, p.160.

poetic programme, he is pursuing a well-marked out literary career path, and his legacy will be innovation on a tried and tested theme.

The fifth *Eclogue* is a celebration of the shepherd and goatherd, it unapologetically delights in the seasonal tasks of caring for the flocks, indeed Calpurnius writes, "te quoque non pudeat … hanc umeris portare" ("do not be ashamed to carry this [ewe] on your shoulders") (lines 39-41), which responds to Vergil's exhortation to Gallus in his final eclogue, "nec te paeniteat pecoris" ("do not be ashamed by the flock") (Verg. *Ecl*. 10.17); but whereas Vergil is encouraging Gallus to embrace pastoral verse, Calpurnius remains firmly focused on the shepherd's life. So much so that he immerses the reader in a calendar of the agricultural year to the exclusion of all the other themes that have populated his previous eclogues, and instead he reminds the reader of the importance of "pastoria virtus" ("shepherd's manliness") (line 105) for the accomplishment of all the shepherd's tasks. Tasks are described as, "regas" ("rules") (line 14) that Canthus must learn, implying a professional discipline rather than just undertaking menial jobs. The fifth *Eclogue* does not follow Vergil's and Hesiod's tendency to pause for philosophical or ethical digressions nor does it adopt a moral tone. Yet, despite no authorial statements of novelty, this eclogue is a novelty itself. For Calpurnius has written a poem with a didactic subject matter set within a pastoral narrative and included it in a collection of bucolic verse and, as Karakasis suggests Calpurnius, "avails himself of the didactic mode only to evoke the poetic didactic genre but not to adopt all its 'generic assets.'"[32] If an evocation of the didactic genre is all he is attempting then it allows him the space to experiment and introduce new ideas and topics as Garthwaite and Martin comment, "there is a new emphasis on proof of ownership and profit as part of the shepherd's concern."[33] In lines 84-5, Canthus is advised to brand the sheep to prove ownership and therefore avoid any disputes. The use of *lites* in line 84 referring to a potential legal dispute is a reminder of the complex urban world beyond pastoral and contrasts with Vergil's use of *lites* in *Ecl*. 3.108 for a dispute between competitors in a bucolic singing match – a theme which Calpurnius picks up on in his sixth *Eclogue*.

The final verse of *Eclogue* 5 asserts his allegiance to pastoral, "plura quidem meminisse velim, nam plura/ supersunt" ("indeed I wish I remembered more things, for more remain") i.e., he

[32] Karakasis, 2016, p.161.
[33] Garthwaite and Martin, 2009, p.310.

could continue at length with the didactic theme, but he remains true to the pastoral tradition and when night falls the poem must end. Or, in other words, as Magnelli suggests, Calpurnius is attempting to, "*bucolicise* georgic, thus reasserting his allegiance to the genre and absorbing didactic poetry into the context of his own pastoral world."[34] As Fowler explains, "to have any artistic significance, to mean anything distinctive in a literary way, a work must modulate or vary or depart from its generic conventions and consequently alter them for the future."[35] Calpurnius has taken the didactic tradition and absorbed it into a pastoral frame, he has transformed the notion of poetic succession with which he opened the poem by playfully hinting that he can bypass producing a collection of didactic verse (as the stepping stone to epic) and, instead, demonstrate his skill in one poem only. However, he is also expanding upon Vergil's innovative sixth *Eclogue* with its cosmogony in the *Song of Silenus* which, as Coleman posits, "was intended to evoke the grand didactic manner of the *de Rerum Natura*."[36] Calpurnius has extended his pastoral reach beyond an *evocation* of the didactic genre but, while the fifth *Eclogue* successfully maintains a bucolic framework, its bucolic *topoi* are almost extinguished.

e) Eclogue 6. Epic

Calpurnius engagement with epic material continues in his sixth *Eclogue* where he deploys a stag as the stake in a singing competition (a competition that never takes place). Calpurnius' stag alludes to the stag in Ovid's *Met*. 10.110ff which had been loved by the boy Cyparissus who accidentally killed him and, in his grief, resolved to die. Apollo pitying Cyparissus, turns him into a tree. In the *Aeneid* Book 7, the source of Ovid's description is apparent, this stag belonging to Tyrrhus, herdsman of the Latinus tribe is wounded by Ascanius which sparks off the war between the Trojans and the Italian tribes. Each poet's stag shares similar features, of size, of widespread antlers, of gleaming forehead, a bejewelled collar and they are all tame and loved by a human. Vergil's and Ovid's poems both deal with the consequences of love: for Vergil, love of a fallen stag results in war; for Ovid, it results in metamorphosis. But Calpurnius places this epic intertext in *Eclogue* 6 in the midst of a bantering quarrel between the two competitors, Astylus and Lycidas. The effect is startling for the reader who is plucked out of a pastoral scene (which is already promising to be unconventional with a singing competition

[34] Magnelli, 2006, p.475.
[35] Fowler, 1982, p.23.
[36] Coleman, 1977, p.183.

that fails to get started) and dropped into an epic one. Astylus boasts that he will stake a prize mare which leads Leach to suggest that both stakes are, "so foreign to the conventional norm as to seem almost a parody of pastoral prizes."[37] Is this a parody or, as Rosenmeyer states a, "straining of the limits of the genre"[38]? It is both, the comic element that featured in *Eclogue* 3 is picked up in *Eclogue* 6 with its epic intertexts heightening the ludic content of the amoebaean discourse. In this way, the epic digression harnesses an essential element of the pastoral genre (i.e., amoebaean) and Calpurnius successfully contains it within the overarching bucolic framework.

f) **Conclusion**

In *Eclogues* 2, 3, 5 and 6 Calpurnius develops and renews the generic conventions of the pastoral tradition. He assimilates elegy, didactic and epic genres within a pastoral framework and maintains his programmatic theme of hierarchy and poetic succession throughout. Whilst Vergil had already introduced many of these elements into his collection of *Eclogues*, Calpurnius pushes out the boundaries of pastoral even further and the results are at times startling but, mostly, successful. He responds positively to the challenge of finding a new post-Augustan voice and does not seem to be inhibited by the so-called 'anxiety of influence'. In Calpurnius' second and third *Eclogues*, "the intergeneric confrontation and tension (is) the source of the poem's literary energy"[39] and while Harrison is reflecting on Conte's assessment of Vergil's tenth *Eclogue*, this rings very true for Calpurnius. Of the three eclogues that engage most dynamically with other genres (2, 3 and 6), the second concludes ambiguously for the pastoral genre, the third optimistically with the omen of the found heifer i.e., the pastoral setting promises to entice the lover back to the metaphorical fold, and the disputatious sixth ends pessimistically with the failure of the pastoral setting to provide the ambience for an amoebaean competition. The third *Eclogue* marks the point in the collection, where Calpurnius has most intensely and positively explored the interaction of other genres with pastoral, and from which point on the pastoral project sets its sights more determinedly upon the city.

[37] Leach, 1975, p.139.
[38] Rosenmeyer, 1969, p.164.
[39] Harrison, 2013, p.11.

Chapter 2. The *locus amoenus*: a compromised space?

a) Introduction

Halperin states that pastoral, "is defined by opposition because it was conceived out of a reaction against existing literary formulas. Can't say what bucolic poetry is without saying what it is not."[40] These oppositions or confrontations range, for example, from the urban incursions in the *locus amoenus* (city vs. countryside) to the treatment of sound vs. silence and spoken vs. written word; and also to the variety of genres confronting the 'host' pastoral genre. Skoie is not convinced by these "sweeping statements" about the contrasts between the city and country and suggests that, in Vergil's *Eclogues* at least, the city is "inscribed not as a unified antithesis to the countryside, but as an integral part of the pastoral world-view."[41] Spencer also privileges a less oppositional reading, "in the *Eclogues*, Pastoral inhabits the city just as *otium* itself is taking on an increasingly political dimension."[42] Vergil was writing his pastoral collection at a point in time when the countryside was in turmoil during the civil war and his first *Eclogue* reflects upon these external threats as Roman comments, "the *rus* (countryside) was subject to the political exigencies of the *urbs* (city). The result is a constant, defining tension between internal and external, pastoral's idyllic *locus amoenus* and the powerful outside forces that constantly intrude upon it."[43] Roman regards the contrast between city and country in more discrete terms as being one of urban intrusion upon the rural idyll – an intrusion which is political in Vergil's first *Eclogue*. Indeed, as Sluiter and Rosen comment, "from the age of Augustus … pastoral explored the possibilities offered by the contrast between city and countryside"[44] and it is these possibilities that Calpurnius fully exploited in his pastoral collection.

In *Eclogues* 1 and 4, Calpurnius uses the incursions of the city upon the *locus amoenus* (in the form of a prophecy and imperial panegyric) as a foil for his ambition to be acknowledged as Vergil's successor in the pastoral tradition. Hutchinson states that there is in Calpurnius, "a more significant opposition than in Virgil between Rome as a locale and the countryside"[45] and

[40] Halperin, 1983, p.250.
[41] Skoie, 2006, p.310.
[42] Spencer, 2006, p.250.
[43] Roman, 2014, p.114.
[44] Sluiter and Rosen, 2006, p.9.
[45] Hutchinson, 2023, p.310.

this chapter will explore how Calpurnius negotiates the 'internal' world of pastoral with the 'external' world of politics.

b) *Eclogue* 1. Politics, panegyric and the prophetic cave

Calpurnius begins his pastoral collection with two herdsmen seemingly content, their cattle resting in the shade, the *locus amoenus* enveloped in a late summer haze of heat. If, as Wheeler states, "a typical strategy of continuation in ancient literature is to begin by alluding to the end of the work that is to be continued"[46] then Calpurnius' first *Eclogue* is confronting the closure of Vergil's book of *Eclogues*. Vergil's *Eclogue* 10 begins with "extremum" and ends in an atmosphere of "gravis umbra": Vergil is clear that this was to be his last pastoral poem. So, when Calpurnius opens his pastoral collection with, "nondum" he appears to be saying that the pastoral project is not finished yet, "madidis incumbant prela racemis" ("the wine presses press down on the moist clusters") (line 2) - the season is changing as is pastoral poetry and a new pastoral poet has arrived on the scene.

In Vergil's first *Eclogue* the world beyond pastoral infringes upon its boundaries and the *locus amoenus* is threatened by the aftermath of the civil war and in his fourth *Eclogue* Vergil establishes his non-pastoral theme from the outset, "Sicelides Musae, paulo maiora canamus" ("Sicilian Muses, let us sing about a slightly greater subject" (Verg. *Ecl*. 4.1). In Calpurnius' first *Eclogue* he responds to both of Vergil's eclogues with a politically loaded prophecy. The poem opens with a conventional pastoral scene that Calpurnius begins to dismantle with a signal that something unusual is about to happen when the pastoral *umbra* that Corydon and Ornytus seek is not the Vergilian shady grove but an *antra* (albeit a woodland 'cave' of pine and beech trees). Vergil had used a cave as a setting for a song contest in his fifth *Eclogue* and as a shelter for the dispossessed Meliboeus in his first *Eclogue* but Calpurnius' cave, at first, a place of shelter (from the sun - not the political fallout afflicting Meliboeus), is revealed to be the setting for Faunus's prophecy. There is a well-established poetic tradition of using the cave as a numinous setting, for example in the *Metamorphoses* where Aeneas visits the Cumaean Sibyll's cave, "antra Sibyllae" (Ov. *Met*. 14.104), and in Propertius's invocation for poetic inspiration, "quo pariter carmen tenuastis in antro" ("in what grotto did you together spin out a slender poem") (Prop. 3.1.5). Calpurnius combines both these traditions to imbue the cave

[46] Wheeler, 2002, p.371.

with greater significance than Vergil had done in his *Eclogues* and this establishes the significance of not only the prophecy but also his poetic programme as Corydon comments in the closing lines of the eclogue, "iam dudum velut ipso numine plenum/ me quatit" ("for a long while it is as if I have been filled with divine inspiration, it has shaken me" (lines 89-90). And it is this latter point that unveils Calpurnius' poetic programme: he is a poet inspired and intends his verses to be read by Nero, "forsitan augustas feret haec Meliboeus ad aures" ("perhaps Meliboeus will bring these to sacred ears") (line 94). Having established this in the first poem of his collection, Calpurnius' next two poems reveal where his 'divine' inspiration is taking him and in the fourth *Eclogue* he returns with more intensity to the themes of the first *Eclogue*. The cave returns in his sixth *Eclogue* as the shepherds' preferred setting for their song contest, the failure of which signals the beginning of the end of Calpurnius' pastoral project: the *antra* is therefore presented as the optimistic starting point in *Eclogue* 1 and as the pessimistic closing point in *Eclogue* 6.

The cave is not only an alternative pastoral *umbra* but it is also the site of the towering beech tree upon which the prophecy is inscribed. As Baraz notes, "for Calpurnius, whose book of eclogues opens with the singing of a prophecy found incised on a tree, the prominence of writing is an important marker that distinguishes his bucolic from Vergil's."[47] As discussed in Chapter 1, Vergil introduced the bark-inscribed letter as a pastoral topos in his fifth *Eclogue* and Calpurnius introduces this topos in his first *Eclogue* by utilising a beech tree to host Faunus' prophecy: the pastoral tree, which has a prophecy that includes several epic intertexts (Lucan, Vergil, Ovid), is generically elevated to become an epic tree. The epic intertexts within the prophecy and the cave setting introduces the reader to Calpurnius' ambitions for his pastoral programme early on in the collection. In this first *Eclogue*, the city and imperial politics are inscribed, "as an integral part of the pastoral world-view"[48] but Calpurnius deploys these themes for the purpose of personal expediency as his final line discloses, "forsitan augustas feret haec Meliboeus ad aures."

This first programmatic poem whose eulogistic prophecy celebrates the return of the Golden Age under Nero (with a reminder of the dark days of the end of the Republic) is not just a response to Vergil's first but also his fourth Messianic *Eclogue*. With his first *Eclogue*,

[47] Baraz, 2023, p.242.
[48] Skoie, 2006, p.310.

Calpurnius begins positively with the prophecy establishing a tone of optimism, as Ntanou comments, "the restoration of the Golden Age is no longer set in the future, but in the dramatic present ... (and) is no longer a prophecy but a living reality for the inhabitants of the pastoral world."[49] The optimism at the beginning of the prophecy is conspicuous with the repetition of "gaudete" in lines 36 and 37: an idyllic picture of a peaceful and safe countryside is promised. Yet, although Faunus' prophecy is enclosed within a pastoral framework and is addressed to "praecipue nemorum … coloni" ("especially you woodland settlers") (line 36), its content soon begins to jar with the *locus amoenus* of pastoral. Just over ten lines into the foretelling of peace in the land, the prophecy deals with current politics beginning in lines 44 - 45 with Nero's advocacy on behalf of the citizens of Troy exempting them from Roman taxation, "iuvenemque beata sequuntur/ saecula, maternis causam qui vicit Iulis" ("blessed ages accompany the young man who prevailed on behalf of his maternal Iulii"). Vergil's reference to Troy in *Eclogue* 4, "atque iterum ad Troiam magnus mittetur Achilles" ("and again the great Achilles will be sent to Troy") (line 36) is a reminder of the wars that need to be fought for peace to return and he uses Achilles as the heroic exemplar, the notorious "expers terroris" of Cat. 64.338. In contrast, Calpurnius maintains the focus on the present – the promising early years of Nero's reign - in order to stress the horrors of the past with which the prophecy from line 64 takes a darker turn as it looks back to the Civil War.

Reminders of the Republican period and the Civil War serves not only to emphasise the optimism surrounding the accession of Nero but also a warning that the *status quo* is a fragile state. Calpurnius' description of the vanquished *impia Bellona* whose gruesome punishment is to "secum bella geret" ("wage war upon herself") (line 50) which, as several critics[50] have noted, eclipses in its grisly language Lucan's description of the Roman people turning swords upon themselves in *Bellum civile*. 1.3. Ntanou suggests that "the language of repetition" (e.g., *renascitur*, line 42, *redit*, line 43, *alter*, lines 64 and 65) "adds a negative tone to the prophecy. The Golden Age prophesised by Virgil did not come, or at least did not last … The ominous tone is also accentuated in the image of the frenzied Bellona."[51] This shift in mood from optimism to warning responds to and expands upon Vergil's fourth *Eclogue* where the poet foretells, "te duce, si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri,/ inrita perpetua solvent formidine terras" ("under your leadership any trace of our sins that remain will be nullified and will

[49] Ntanou, 2023, p.120-1.
[50] Garthwaite and Martin, 2009, p.313., Ntanou, 2023, p.116.
[51] Ntanou, 2023, p.118.

release the lands from everlasting fear") (Verg. *Ecl*. 4.13-14). While Vergil does not dwell upon the "perpetua formidine", Calpurnius does. As Gowing points out, "the regime's theme was innovation, not restoration so celebration of the Republican past had no place in its agenda." Calpurnius' treatment of the Republican period reflects these early imperial attitudes but it also allows him to write ambiguously about these events: an example of which can be seen in his treatment of *Clementia* in lines 58-62. Seneca's ethical treatise, *de Clementia* was published a few years after Nero's accession speech and, as Griffin remarks, "this is a eulogy that is also an exhortation: the Emperor is warned that his clemency must be maintained."[52] Calpurnius picks up on this 'exhortation' in his description of the achievements brought about by *Clementia* and a subtler reading discerns warnings about the vulnerability of the Golden Age for example, the juxaposition of *Clementia* with "insanos" in line 59, "et insanos Clementia contudit enses" ("and Clementia has smashed the crazed swords") – the placing of these two antithetical words emphasizes the ease with which the rational (*Clementia*) can transgress into the irrational (*insanos*). "insanos" (as in the elegiac topos of *furor amoris*) also presages the elegiac incursions in his second *Eclogue* as well as neatly inverting Gallus's plea in Vergil's final eclogue, "nunc insanus amor duri me Martis in armis/ tela inter media atque adversos detinet hostis" (now my crazed love for pitiless Mars detains me in arms amidst weapons and opposing enemies") (*Ecl*. 10.44-45) – where Gallus is going mad in the thrall of love, in Calp. 1.59, *Clementia* is destroying the maddened swords. Whilst a straightforward reading of these lines is one of overt propaganda for the new regime as posited by Davis, "Faunus' prophecy is full of specific political detail. Clearly it represents a political programme rather than a genuine prediction"[53] – an alternative reading reveals ambiguity and presentiment.

Another example of his use of ambiguous language can be seen in lines 72-3, "moremque fori vultumque priorem/ reddet" ("he will restore the former appearance and tradition of the Forum"). The contradictory meaning of "vultus" is picked up on by Garthwaite and Martin who suggest that it, "denotes the deceptiveness of appearances, namely a peace that is treacherously superficial [and] the return to a former reality."[54] This ambiguity appears again in lines 84 to 88: "scilicet ipse deus Romanae pondera molis/ fortibus excipiet sic inconcussa lacertis,/ ut neque translati sonitu fragor intonet orbis/ nec prius ex meritis defunctos Roma penates/ censeat, occasus nisi cum respexerit ortus" ("certainly a god himself will take up the

[52] Griffin, 1974, p.22.
[53] Davis, 1987, p.43.
[54] Garthwaite and Martin, 2009, p.314.

weight of massive Rome in his strong arms so that, unshaken, the world transfers with no resounding crash of thunder, nor will Rome rate the dead deservedly as household Gods unless a rising reign looks back upon the setting of the previous one"). This alludes not only to Ovid's description of the Golden Age under Numa, "Quaeritur interea qui tantae pondera molis/ sustineat tantoque queat succedere regi" ("meanwhile he is sought who can sustain the weight of such greatness and succeed so great a king") (Ov. *Met*. 15.1f) but also to the beginning of the *Aeneid*, "tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem" ("so great was the effort to found the Roman race") (Verg. *Aen*. 1.33) in what appears to be a warning about the vulnerability of the Nero's Golden Age if Nero is found to be looking back to the previous reign (i.e., Claudius) as his model. As Hubbard argues these lines (77-86) reveal Calpurnius' ambivalence towards Nero, in particular the reference to the comet in line 78 which evokes Lucan's ironic description of the deified Nero in *Bellum civile* 1.45-50 and suggests that, "Lucan's ironic encomium of Nero and Calpurnius' own warnings about false appearances gives us pause concerning the present encomium of the new emperor."[55] This first *Eclogue* reminds the reader that the peaceful status of the *locus amoenus* is vulnerable and at the mercy of Nero's benevolent rule and, as Martin posits, Calpurnius, "sounds a note of warning"[56] in Corydon's reflection after hearing the prophecy that he "feels **terror** mixed with joy", "et mixtus subit inter gaudia **terror**." (line 90).

In this opening poem of his collection, Calpurnius maintains the pastoral setting as a framework for the political content rather than the central focus and, to some extent, this is how he continues throughout his collection, most notably *Eclogue* 3 where elegy takes centre stage, *Eclogue* 5 with its georgic content and *Eclogue* 7 with its focus on the amphitheatre in Rome. The point being that he is indeed "taking pastoral in new directions by way of generic transcendence."[57] *Eclogue* 1, as the programmatic opening poem of the collection, initiates the political themes that Calpurnius will pursue in *Eclogues* 4 and 7. He has introduced a note of warning on the vulnerable state of the Golden Age through his ambiguous language in the prophecy and in the final line he introduces the theme of *Eclogue* 4: literary ambition. The status of the *locus amoenus* in *Eclogue* 1 is not so much as a compromised space – but rather, as a contradictory space, one that allows Calpurnius to express the uncertainties of the age and the challenges facing an ambitious pastoral poet.

[55] Hubbard, 1996, p.77.
[56] Martin, 2003, p.79.
[57] Karakasis, 2011, p.245.

c) *Eclogue* 4. 'carmina non quae nemorale resultent'

Imperial politics make another incursion in Calpurnius' central poem of his collection, *Eclogue* 4. This central eclogue, positioned as the pivot in his cyclical arrangement and framed by his two most generically experimental poems, is ostensibly a panegyric for Nero in the form of a song contest. But it is also the point where the contradictions of the *locus amoenus* as an idyllic space are considered – it is an unresolved space of poverty and abundance, safety and exile, leisure and labour. *Eclogue* 4 begins with a dialogue between a silent singer and his patron and raises the key issues that will be addressed in the poem: is pastoral panegyric worthy of an emperor and how pastoral poverty impedes a poetic career (i.e., issue of pastoral succession). Corydon sets up the debate in lines 14-15, "nunc mea rusticitas, si non valet arte polita/ carminis, at certe valeat pietate probari") ("now my uncouthness, if not capable of the polished art of song, must win favour for its loyalty") (lines 14-15) with the negative representation of pastoral, *rusticitas* which translates here as uncouthness. Will his loyalty to the regime compensate for his lack of poetic polish? The answer to which, after 60 lines of imperial panegyric, is given when Meliboeus resoundingly affirms that Corydon's *rustica carmina* are not worthy of 'cloddish ears', "obsesis auribus" (line 148) i.e., they are deserving of sophisticated listeners in the city. Calpurnius pursues this theme throughout *Eclogue* 4 as Corydon explores the restrictions that his *rusticitas* places on his ambition.

In the opening verse, Meliboeus' depiction of the pastoral setting is, as Davis comments, "curiously unsympathetic."[58] The location is, "insueta" "unusual*"* (line 3) and the water is, "garrulus adstrepit" "noisy" and *"*chatters" (lines 2-3). Ironically, the countryside is revealed to be an unsuitable setting for the pastoral poet whilst the recently rejuvenated countryside of the new Golden Age is considered to be a highly suitable subject for his panegyric with its celebration of the ending of pastoral poverty, exile and hard labour. Whilst these are resolved issues in the restored *locus amoenus*, a new (to pastoral poetry) issue is raised: the difficulty of gaining a financial reward as a pastoral poet. In line 23, Meliboeus quotes Corydon's earlier exhortation his brother, "frange, puer, calamos et iananes desere Musas" ("break your reeds, lad, and abandon the empty Muses") and in lines 26-7, "quid enim tibi fistula reddet,/ quo tutere famem?" (what will the pipe bring you to ward off hunger?"). Both statements highlight the reality of pastoral poverty and in lines 155f, Corydon reiterates this with, "vellit nam saepius

[58] Davis, 1987, p.44.

aurem/ invida paupertas et dicit: 'ovilia cura!'" ("too often envious poverty pulls my ear and says, "look after the sheepfold!"). As Gibson suggests, "it seems that Corydon is being pessimistic and has no confidence in the efficacy of poetry, which is of course a Virgilian topic, rehearsed, for example in *Eclogues* 1 and 9."[59] In Vergil's ninth *Eclogue*, Lycidas and Moeris discuss the poet Menalcas who has tried and failed to save his farm on the strength of his poetry with the rueful conclusion that, "sed carmina tantum/ nostra valent, Lycida, tela inter Martia quantum/ Chaonias dicunt aquila veniente columbas" ("but our songs, Lycidas, avail among weapons of war as much as Chaonian doves, they say, when the eagle comes") (Verg. *Aen*. 9.11-13) And as Coleman comments, "the protest here is more specifically against the impotence of poetry and the civilised arts in time of war."[60] In contrast, Calpurnius is writing in a time of peace and his issue is not about the power of poetry to protect farmsteads but how to make a living from poetry and this leads to, as Boyle remarks, "a movement from innocence to corruption."[61]

Whilst *Eclogue* 4 celebrates the return of the Golden Age to the countryside, it seems far removed from Tacitus' envisioned Golden Age where poets withdrew to the countryside to write, "sed secedit animus in loca pura atque innocentia fruiturque sedibus sacris" ("but the soul withdraws into the places of purity and innocence, and delights in these sacred abodes") (Tac. *Dial*. 12.2). For Calpurnius, the countryside may be a *locus amoenus* for the shepherds and herdsmen but not so for an ambitious poet as Davis notes, "like Virgil's infatuated lover Calpurnius' Corydon in attempting to move beyond the confines of the pastoral world discovers that what is valued in the pleasance is despised elsewhere."[62] Furthermore, Calpurnius is setting up Corydon as the prototype of the mercenary poet who would be derided later in the century, for example: "nam lucrosae huius et sanguinantis eloquentiae usus recens et ex malis moribus natus" ("for this profit-seeking and blood-thirsty eloquence is a recent practice and is derived from depraved morals") (Tac. *Dial*. 12.2). When Juvenal describes the corruption of the *locus amoenus*, "omnis enim populo mercedem pendere iussa est/ arbor et eiectis mendicat silva Camenis" ("for every tree has been ordered to pay the people and now the Muses have been evicted, the wood goes begging") (Juv. *Sat*. 3.15-16), he is revealing what has been lost, as Roman comments, "the spaces of poetry, according to an established tradition, are pure,

[59] Gibson, 2004, p.3.
[60] Coleman, 1977, p.259.
[61] Boyle, 1991, p.37.
[62] Davis, 1987, p.44.

sacrosanct, cut off from the spaces of buying, selling, and everyday business."[63] This idea of the *locus amoenus* as a corrupted space can be seen in in lines 117-121 of the song exchange where Amyntas extols the new laws that have been passed to allow a ploughman to retain any treasure he digs up, "iamque **palam** presso **magis** et **magis** instat/ aratro" ("now the ploughman openly presses on more and more, ploughing more deeply") (line 121). The repetition of *magis* emphasises the relentless pursuit of wealth that is now **openly** carried out and the *presso aratro* points to the deep furrows of wealth that are now being sought. As Ntanou comments, "(this) imagery of greediness and corruption problematises the new Golden Age and possibly points towards Nero's extravagant lifestyle as well as being a general note of ethical corruption during Calpurnius' age."[64] However, the irony is that while the subject matter of Corydon's song - ambition, blandishments and blatant desire for ownership and remuneration - risks polluting the *locus amoenus*, the pastoral language is judged to be worthy of **Ovid**: "verum, quae paribus modo concinuistis avenis,/ tam liquidum, tam dulce cadunt, ut non ego malim,/ quod Paeligna solent examina lambere nectar" ("in truth, what you have sung just now on well-matched pipes, is so pure, falls so sweetly that I would not prefer to sip the nectar that the **Pelignian** swarms are accustomed to sip") (lines 149-51). Calpurnius seems to be suggesting that epic verse can successfully incorporate non-epic themes, just as his pastoral verse has assimilated non-pastoral genres. Throughout *Eclogue* 4, Calpurnius maintains the focus on his pastoral career and reveals the *locus amoenus* to be an unsatisfactory space for the realisation of his (Corydon's) poetic ambitions. As Boyle, concludes, "though Calpurnius' political eclogues appear to eulogize Nero's golden age, what they in fact present is the gradual corruption of a pastoral figure and pastoral values by the urban world of Rome, politics and power."[65] The outcome of these urban incursions on the pastoral space will be revealed in *Eclogue* 7.

d) **Conclusion. Pastoral succession in *Eclogues* 1 and 4**

Fantuzzi and Papanghelis note that, "the core pastoral texts make no secret of their preoccupation with issues of literary imitation, succession and inheritance, especially in their programmatic pronouncements."[66] Calpurnius certainly makes no secret of his preoccupation with the issue of succession when four lines into his first *Eclogue*, he affirms his position as

[63] Roman, 2014, p.332.
[64] Ntanou, 2023, p.122.
[65] Boyle, 1991, p.36-7.
[66] Fantuzzi and Papanghelis, 2006, p.xi.

the pastoral heir to Vergil, "cernis, ut ecce **pater** quas tradidit, Ornyte, vaccae" ("look, Ornytus, do you see the cows that father entrusted to us"), i.e., **pater** (Vergil) entrusting the pastoral genre (i.e., the cows) to Corydon and Ornytus (pastoral successors). Karakasis comments that the autumn setting of *Eclogue* 1 (as opposed to the Vergilian and Theocritean summer) is, "a further metapoetic indication of the epigonal character of Calpurnius' pastoral production."[67]

The theme of poetic succession provides the framework for *Eclogue* 4 where Calpurnius is making his point that he can't be the next Vergil without imperial patronage and financial reward. He suggests, through his panegyric on the peace and prosperity that Nero has brought to the empire, that the times are ideal for literature to flourish, "licet et cantare choreis/ et cantus viridante licet mihi condere libro" ("I can make music for dances and I can write songs on the green bark") (4.129-131). Whilst claiming to have been handed Vergil's *avena* (lines 60-63), Calpurnius entrusts his poetic advancement to Meliboeus, "scimus enim, quam te non aspernetur Apollo" (for I know that Apollo does not disdain you") (line 72). Hubbard comments that Calpurnius, "seems self-consciously to stand Vergil's valuations on their head: where Meliboeus was for Vergil a symbol of dispossession and despair, Calpurnius makes him the rich and influential patron"[68] – noting that Seneca has been identified[69] as a possible candidate for Calpurnius' patron as characterised by Meliboeus in *Eclogue* 4. Not only is Seneca possibly his patron but both he and his nephew Lucan, are two of the most influential writers of Nero's early reign and Calpurnius includes allusions to both of their works in *Eclogue* 4: towards the end of *Eclogue* 4, Corydon's and Amyntas' song contest concludes with an entreaty to the gods to grant Nero the "perpetuo caelestia fila metallo" ("the heavenly threads of eternal metal") (line 140) in order that he remains as a god on earth. Lines 139-141 intertext not only with Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*, "mutatur vilis pretioso lana metallo,/ aurea formoso descendunt saecula filo" ("cheap wool transformed into precious metal, the Golden Age comes down from a beautiful thread") (Sen. *Apocol*. 4 vv. 8-9) where Nero's reign is celebrated as the new Golden Age, but also with Lucan's proem, celebrating the divine Nero, "Te, cum statione peracta/ astra petes serus, praelati regia caeli/ excipiet gaudente polo" ("you, when your watch is finished and you seek the stars at a late hour, the heavenly palace you prefer will welcome you with the heavens rejoicing") (*Bellum civile* 1.45-7). Calpurnius ensures that there is no doubt about who he wishes to be associated with in his attempt to gain imperial recognition.

[67] Karakasis, 2021, p.725.
[68] Hubbard, 1998, p.151.
[69] Griffin, 1984, p.148.

The closure of the fourth *Eclogue* at midday and with the day's work not yet completed offers, as Gibson posits, "a positive approach to the tradition which has gone before, and allows for the possibility of poetry continuing."[70] But *Eclogue* 4, whilst maintaining the theme of poetic succession from its opening to closing lines, does not resolve its central issue and irony – how can a pastoral poet thrive and sustain a livelihood in the *locus amoenus*? Corydon and Amyntas have sung of the new Golden Age in the hope that Meliboeus will bring Corydon's verse to the attention of Nero but the *locus amoenus* is presented as a contradictory space, an abundant land for the shepherd yet a barren land for the poet.

[70] Gibson, 2004, p.8.

Chapter 3. Arrival in the city and discord en-route

a) Introduction

"Serus ades" signals the beginning of the end for Calpurnius' pastoral project in the opening lines of *Eclogue* 6. The pastoral journey is nearing the city where it culminates in *Eclogue* 7 and this penultimate poem reveals the *locus amoenus* not to be conducive to the creation of song. Silence is posited as an essential requirement for the pastoral project, picking up on nature's silence in *Eclogue* 2 which presages an innovative song contest. Silence is also used to signal discontent with the pastoral genre - for example in *Eclogue* 4 when Meliboeus asks Corydon, "Quid tacitus?" to which he responds that he is unable to sing a song of praise to the emperor using pastoral lyrics. Corydon's next appearance is in *Eclogue* 7 where he has found his voice, a voice that celebrates the city and disparages the countryside which he no longer regards as a *locus amoenus*. Cordon's journey from a herdsman who is in harmony with his surroundings in *Eclogue* 1, to a growing awareness of the limitations of the pastoral environment in *Eclogue* 4 culminates in a rejection of pastoral in *Eclogue* 7, as Garthwaite and Martin suggest, "the fragmentation of the natural environment and the growing disunity of its inhabitants ... parallel Corydon's change in the three political eclogues from a sense of harmony ... to disaffection and frustration."[71] This chapter will explore how Calpurnius' treatment of nature in *Eclogues* 2 and 6 foreshadows the closure of his bucolic project and how *Eclogue* 7's celebration of the city is the culmination of the signs of discontent with the *locus amoenus* throughout the collection, "portraying an ever-increasing disharmony between the different characters and between man and nature."[72]

b) *Eclogues* 2 and 6. Silence

The quarrelsome sixth *Eclogue's* failure to start its song contest is due not only to the unfavourable conditions of the pastoral environment but also due to the competitive hostility of the two singers. *Eclogue* 6 returns to some of the issues highlighted in *Eclogue* 2 – the latter with its reversal of the natural order (the gathering of wild beasts on the pastureland, the pausing of the river's flow and the still breezes whilst the bees stop gathering nectar) all of

[71] Garthwaite and Martin, 2009, p.310.
[72] Martin, 2003, p.76.

which creates a dramatic and foreboding sense of awe that overwhelms the countryside in preparation for the singing contest between Idas and Astacus. The *locus amoenus* is silenced so that the singing contest can be heard, "altaque per totos fecere silentia montes" ("and made a profound silence over all the hills") (*Ecl*. 2.17). The end of the contest is signalled by the sounds of the countryside returning, "iam resonant frondes, iam cantibus obstrepit arbos" ("now the leaves are sounding again, now the trees drown our song") (line 95). At the beginning of his eighth *Eclogue,* Vergil describes nature being in awe of the music of the shepherds, Damon and Alphesiboeus, "stupefactae lynces" ("the lynxes were spellbound") (line 3) and "mutata suos requierunt flumina cursus" ("the rivers changed their courses and were still") (line 4). As Nauta observes, "the motif of the silence of nature is … closely bound up with the theme of the amoebaean as a whole, which celebrates in ever new variations the beneficial effects of the emperor's numinous power on the herdsman's world."[73] Whilst Vergil limits his use of the motif to three lines (*Ecl*. 8.2-4), Calpurnius expands on the theme over ten lines (lines 10-20) thereby building up the momentum for the singing match: his first amoebaean contest of his collection. In line 9, he leaves the reader in no doubt about his ambitions for his pastoral singer-poets, "et magnum certamen erat" - the singing match will be great, an intertext with the 'great match between Corydon and Thyrsis' in Vergil's seventh *Eclogue* (line 16).

Whilst the silencing of nature is a dramatic device to build up the suspense before the singing match begins, it also creates a sense of unease and foreboding that the *locus amoenus* is supporting, as Karakasis points out, "activities opposed to the ideals of the pastoral tradition."[74] Baraz also picks up on this pastoral discordance in the "combative, military" description of the silencing of the trees, "desistunt tremulis incurrere frondibus Euri" [*Ecl*. 2.16], where the "winds are attacking the leaves and the trembling of the leaves is a result of fear."[75] The second *Eclogue* is picking up on the uncertainty in the pastoral world that Calpurnius introduced in his first *Eclogue* where the singer-poets are reminded of the fragility of peace in their *locus amoenus*. Calpurnius' contemporary, Lucan, also employs the imagery of a disrupted countryside as a presentiment, for example Caesar's impious disregard for the sacred grove where nature is in disarray, "Illis et volucres metuunt insistere ramis/ et lustris recubare ferae; nec ventus in illas/ incubuit silvas" ("birds feared to perch on those branches and wild beasts

[73] Nauta, 2022, p.219-20.
[74] Karakasis, 2016, p.200.
[75] Baraz, 2015, p.102.

feared to lie down in that haunt; no wind settled on that wood") (*Bellum civile* 3.407-9). Augoustakis comments that, "Lucan indirectly attributes a role to divine retribution by foreshadowing Caesar's own death, thus pointing to the inescapable punishment following a sacrilege."[76] Nauta[77] observes that the Flavian writer Silius Italicus also uses the silencing of nature motif in his bucolic section in Book 14 of *Punica*, to introduce the *infelix* combatant Daphnis who dies in battle, "hauserunt flammae" ("consumed by flames"). He is the descendant of the pastoral Daphnis who is described as playing on his pipe to a countryside silenced by the command of Apollo: "et iussit, proiectus in herba/ si quando caneret, laetos per prata, per arva/ ad Daphnin properare greges rivosque silere" ("and commanded the streams be silent and the joyful flocks to hurry across the meadows and fields to Daphnis whenever he sang as he was lying stretched out on the grass") (lines 468-470). In these two examples above, silence is used by Lucan as an emphatic tool to foreshadow danger and by Silius as a dramatic device to set the scene for an awe-inspiring event.

In Calpurnius' *Eclogue* 2, nature silences itself in readiness for the pastoral singing match, a genre-charged competition between a gardener and a herdsman that ends harmoniously. Two thirds of the way into *Eclogue* 6, the singers break off their quarrelling to seek out somewhere quiet for their singing match; unlike *Eclogue* 2, nature does not silence itself to hear the match, instead the sounds of the countryside obstruct the singers. The pastoral sounds reflect the argumentative protagonists, the sound of the river threatens to "obstrepat" "drown out" their music (line 62) and its currents **echo** hoarsely "raucum … **respondent**" (lines 64-5). The alliteration in "gramina linquamus ripamque" (line 63) along with the hard consonants reinforces the singers' negative treatment of the countryside. The echo trope is employed by Juvenal in his first *Satire*, "Frontonis platani convolsaque marmora clamant/ semper et adsiduo ruptae lectore columnae" ("these are continually shouted aloud by the plane trees and shattered marble of Fronto and the columns broken by the unremitting reciter") (Juv. *Sat*. 1.12-13). Roman comments that, "Juvenal here inherits a well-known bucolic trope, the responsive 'echo' of poetry in the surrounding natural environment, but adapts it to a scene of city sociability: a wealthy residence known as a popular locale for reciting poets."[78] While Calpurnius uses the echo trope to express dissatisfaction with the *locus amoenus* as a setting for a singing match, Juvenal uses the echo trope to express dissatisfaction with being, "just

[76] Augoustakis, 2006, p.634.
[77] Nauta, 2022, p.219.
[78] Roman, 2014, p.324.

another cog in the imperial literary machine."[79] The failure of the *locus amoenus* to be a favourable environment for the singing contest in this penultimate eclogue is a harbinger of the final eclogue's pessimistic approach to the countryside. As Baraz concludes, "we have moved into a very different world in which nature, from being an active, responsive participant in the creation of poetry and song, has become obstructive."[80]

c) *Eclogue* 6. Discord

Discord or competitive banter is a feature of the bucolic tradition (for example, the fifth *Idyll* of Theocritus and Vergil's third *Eclogue*) but what is unprecedented is the total failure of a competition to get started which is what occurs in Calpurnius' sixth *Eclogue*. The reader is lured in by the raillery in the opening lines where Lycidas, incredulous that a previous song contest has been won by "untrained Alcon" exclaims, "credible est, si vincat acanthida cornix,/ vocalem superet si dirus aedona bubo" ("it is believable, if a crow could beat a goldfinch, if the ill-omened owl could excel the nightingale's song") (lines 7-8). As Gibson remarks, "this passage recalls two famous passages: Theocritus, *Idyll* 7.40-1 … and Vergil *Ecl*. 9.35-6. … (where) the comparison with nature is used in a statement of poetic modesty."[81] Calpurnius manipulates these allusions to emphasise the boastful discord between the singers – a far cry from the Theocritean and Vergilian modest avowals of talent. Karakasis observes that Calpurnius' sixth *Eclogue*, "seems to operate on the basis of a dichotomy between a traditionally pastoral past, where fixed 'generic rules' of amoebaean βουκολιασμὸς hold true, and an unconventional bucolic present, which tends towards a 'generic transcendence.'"[82] This dichotomy is played out in the quarrelsome dialogue of Astylus and Lycidas.

At the point where the contestants along with their judge, Mnasyllus, find the silent cave, "tacito antro" (line 70), they break out again into argument. Mnasyllus is defeated in the face of their "insania" and retires as judge. Calpurnius has given indications of the vulnerability of pastoral throughout his collection, for example, the prophecy in *Eclogue* 1 that recalls the impact of the civil war on the countryside, Corydon's concerns in *Eclogue* 4 re. achieving his ambition to be the next Vergil whilst being a pastoral poet and in *Eclogue* 6 where the *locus amoenus* is an obstruction rather than a pleasant backdrop to the singing match. In *Eclogue* 6

[79] Roman, 2014, p.325.
[80] Baraz, 2015, p.113.
[81] Gibson, 2004, p.9.
[82] Karakasis, 2016, p.224.

a successful singing match is mentioned in the opening verse (lines 1-5) but, significantly for Calpurnius, it is a past event – and this sense of the belatedness of his pastoral project is how *Eclogue* 6 begins, "Serus ades" and ends in line 93, "finem". The breakdown in *Eclogue* 6 of the sequence of harmonious amoebaean competitions achieved previously in *Eclogues* 2 and 4 prepares the reader for the 'anti-pastoral' final eclogue.

d) *Eclogue* 7. "lentus ab urbe"

As the collection draws to a close the woods are silent at last, "taciturnis silvis" (line 8) but the irony is that it is now too late for the singing competition to begin and the shepherd Stimicon has had to sing alone, "solus Stimicon caneret" (line 9). From the opening lines of *Eclogue* 7, the city is championed over the countryside and the language of the *locus amoenus* is subdued, "maerentes tauri" ("saddened bulls") (line 3), "taciturnis silvis" ("silent woods") (line 8), "pallente corymbo" ("pale ivy") (line 9) and "maesti" ("sorrowful") (line 10) contrasting with Corydon's exuberant description of Rome with the repetition of the verb *mirari* ("mirabar" (line 38) and "miraris (line 41) - the latter being a rebuttal to the "mirabar" in line 7, whilst Lycotas was wondering why Corydon was so slow to return **from the city**, Corydon was in a state of wonderment **in the city**.

Calpurnius' final *Eclogue* is a response to Vergil's first *Eclogue* in a neat rounding up of Calpurnius' bucolic collection. Calpurnius' Corydon is "**lentus** ab urbe", Vergil's Tityrus is "**lentus** in umbra", Tityrus rests, "**patulae** sub tegmina **fagi**" (*Ecl*. 1.1), where in contrast Corydon has witnessed the city's "**patula** harena" (line 6) and accuses his fellow countryman Lycotas of preferring "veteres **fagos**" to "nova **spectacula**". The new sights of the city are privileged over the old *locus amoenus* symbolised by the beech tree. Vergil's "veteres fagos" in *Eclogue* 3 is the scene of two shepherds taunting each other and in *Eclogue* 9 the old beeches belong to the recently confiscated land. Newlands observes that in Vergil's *Eclogues* (3.12 and 9.9), "the phrase *veteres fagos* is associated with activity that is antithetical to pastoral harmony … it is the negative aspect of the wood that Calpurnius chooses to bring out."[83] Whereas Karakasis posits, "Calpurnius is distancing himself from older pastoral models, as symbolised by the *veteres fagos*, and is following new poetic directions, as suggested by the *nova*

[83] Newlands, 1987, p.221.

spectacula."[84] Given the "emblematic status of the beech as a symbol for Vergilian pastoral"[85] the use of *veteres* emphasises Corydon's negative attitude towards the countryside as Garthwaite and Martin comment, "the trees now symbolize the loss of rustic harmony. Calpurnius captures the same decline from optimism to disillusionment, unity to discord, from the beginning to the end of his own series of poems."[86]

Eclogue 7's negative treatment of the *locus amoenus* and its celebration of the city and the emperor - an urban Golden Age - has invited much critical attention and a range of interpretations. It has been mined[87] for its subversive commentary on Nero's regime or, as Bartsch describes it, 'double-speak.' Bartsch defines this as, "the appropriation of the ideological language of the court in such a way that, thanks to the peculiarities of the context in which it appears, allows its use to be understood as its opposite or at least as an uncomplimentary version of the original."[88] As Ahl points out, "however much old traditions of the Saturnian Golden Age may have been based on the rural and pastoral, the rural and pastoral are now synonymous with poverty and stupidity."[89] So, when Corydon describes the amphitheatre in pastoral language, e.g., "resupinis silvis" ("sloping woods") (line 31) and "continuos montes" ("uninterrupted hills") (line 32), the bucolic comparison could be interpreted negatively especially as the countryside has already been described in terms of its "sordida tecta, casas et sola mapalia" ("squalid buildings, huts and cottages" (line 42) and "sordes pullaque paupertas" ("squalor and dusky poverty") (line 81). On the one hand this pastoral imagery could be read as subtle criticism of the emperor (as the amphitheatre's architect) or, perhaps Geue's more literal reading is applicable, "Corydon struggles to drum up the language to describe all this in detail … he's a *rusticus* … this kind of spectacle makes no sense within the terms of his knowledge and experience."[90] Newlands also takes a more straightforward approach by suggesting that Corydon describes the amphitheatre in pastoral language, "in part because his experience is so limited, and in part because he needs to make his description vivid and comprehensible to Lycotas."[91] Yet this view belies the fact that Corydon, the rustic singer-poet of *Eclogue* 4, impressed Meliboeus so much that he exclaimed:

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[84] Karakasis, 2016, p.92.
[85] Hubbard,1998, p.176.
[86] Garthwaite and Martin, 2009, p.311.
[87] Karakasis, 2016, p.10[27].
[88] Bartsch, 1994, p.115.
[89] Ahl, 1984, p.69.
[90] Geue, 2019, p.193.
[91] Newlands, 1987, p.221-2.

"verum, quae paribus modo concinuistis avenis,/ tam liquidum, tam dulce cadunt, ut non ego malim,/ quod Paeligna solent examina lambere nectar" ("in truth, what you have sung just now on well-matched pipes, is so pure, falls so sweetly that I would not prefer to sip the nectar that the Pelignian swarms are accustomed to sip") (lines 149-51). As noted in Chapter 2, Calpurnius could be suggesting that epic verse can successfully incorporate non-epic themes, just as his pastoral verse has assimilated non-pastoral genres. In *Eclogue* 7, Corydon's description of the theatre in pastoral language is not because of his rustic limitations, but because of the pastoral genre's lack of limitations which he has already fully exploited throughout his collection. This reading however does not exclude the possibility that Corydon is also a subversive voice and that his rustic description of the theatre is also a subtle criticism of the regime.

Pursuing this idea of 'Corydon the subversive', Green views the inclusion of a Vergilian intertext in the opening lines of Corydon's description of the theatre as an example of an ironical comment on the regime. He argues that, "trabibus … textis" ("interwoven beams") (line 23) is an intertext with the description of the Trojan Horse in *Aen*. 2.112, "trabibus contextus acernis" ("interwoven maple beams") and this alludes to "ominous signs"[92] that Rome is heading towards the same fate as Troy. Martin regards the depiction of the parade of animals in the arena as having a subtext, "where several of the allusions also refer to hideous and terrifying monsters like Charon, the dread ferryman of the dead … and the Harpies"[93] for example, bulls with misshapen humps, "deformis scapulis" (line 61); "silvestria monstra" ("monsters of the forest") (64); and "deforme pecus" ("hideous beasts") (line 67). In particular, the "silvestria monstra" which encapsulates the oppositional treatment of the *locus amoenus*, the bucolic *silva* is traditionally a place of shelter or rest but in *Eclogue* 7 the *silva* shelters monsters. Karakasis disagrees that these intertexts are "concealed disapproval" instead the intertexts, "may simply further increase the impression of a pastoral branching out towards poetic discourses of the *genus grande*."[94] This is a valid point given that Calpurnius has experimented consistently with other genres throughout his collection but his 'generic branching out' has been employed to enrich the pastoral genre in previous eclogues, whereas in *Eclogue* 7, the epic intertexts embellish the urban space at the expense of the *locus amoenus*.

[92] Green, 2009, p.64.
[93] Martin, 2003, p.89.
[94] Karakasis, 2016, p.111.

Another example of potential 'double speak' can be found in Corydon's enthusiastic description of the amphitheatre, "sic undique fulgor/ percussit" ("such was the glitter that dazzled everywhere") (lines 36-7); "ad tantas miraris opes" ("you should wonder at such great magnificence") (line 41); its lavish decorations, "gemmis", ("jewels") "auro", ("gold") "radiant", ("shining") "marmoreo", ("marble") "ebur admirabile" ("wonderful ivory") and "auro torta refulgent retia" ("shining nets entwined with gold") (lines 47-54). On the one hand, it can be read as a flattering description of the theatre. On the other hand, by describing the opulence in such detail, it could be taken as a veiled criticism, sparked by a 'revulsion of taste' as Wallace-Hadrill comments, "the acceleration in extravagance of his [Nero's] reign produced a revulsion of taste within the court circle itself, among men from municipal and provincial backgrounds."[95] In lines 80-1, Corydon's dismissal of Lycotas' *rusticitas* could be ironic. Is he really disparaging the poverty and simple dress (lines 80-1) that kept him to 'restricted view seating' or, is he making a comment about Roman standards of virtue and morality that the regime does not uphold. In *Epistle* 18, Seneca advises Lucilius to experience poverty, to wear coarse and rough clothing, to eat the cheapest food in order to learn, "quam non sit grave pauperes esse" ("that poverty is no burden") (Sen. *Ep*.18.8). To further illustrate his point to Lucilius, Seneca includes a quote from Book 8 of the *Aeneid*, the scene where Aeneas visits the humble home of Evander (an Arcadian) who greets Aeneas with, "aude, hospes, contemnere opes et te quoque dignum/ finge deo" ("dare, my guest to despise riches, and mould yourself to be worthy of the god") (Sen. *Ep*.18.12). Given the intertextual relationship with Seneca already noted, it is plausible that Calpurnius was influenced by Seneca's Stoic sympathies which would support an ironic reading of these lines. The final couplet of *Eclogue* 7 encapsulates the prevailing ambiguity and difficulty in interpreting this eclogue, "ac, nisi me visus **decepit**, in uno/ et Martis **vultus** et Apollinis esse putavi" ("unless my sight deceived me, I thought that Mars and Apollo were in that one face"). The ambiguous phrasing of "nisi me visus **decepit**" can be read literally given that Corydon has already mentioned he was sitting in the cheap seats and therefore had a restricted view, or it can be read ironically as, 'of course my eyes deceived me, Nero is neither Mars nor Apollo!' The contradictory meaning of ***vultus*** has been commented on in Chapter 2 (re. *Ecl*. 1.72) with its implication of "deceptiveness of appearances"[96] and its inclusion in the final line of the final eclogue suggests that Calpurnius is saying, "all is not what it seems."

[95] Wallace-Hadrill, 1996, p.293.
[96] Garthwaite and Martin, 2009, p.314.

Whilst *Eclogue* 4 deals with pastoral poverty and the limitations it places upon Corydon's poetic ambitions, in this final eclogue Corydon does not mention his career, his ambition to be the next Vergil or his desire for financial reward. Instead, Corydon the singer-poet has become an onlooker rather than performer. This passive and reflective role of Corydon has led several critics to consider Calpurnius' *Eclogues* in the light of early imperial attitudes towards memories of the Republican period. Gowing suggests that lines 44-6 reflect, "the early imperial (post-Tiberian) ambivalence about the Republic"[97]: "certe/ vilia sunt nobis, quaecumque prioribus annis/ vidimus, et sordet quicquid spectavimus olim" ("for sure, we regard as cheap everything we saw in former years, and despise anything that we once watched") (*Ecl*. 7. 44-6). Spencer also quotes these lines in her discussion on Lucan and posits, "for Corydon's interlocutor in Calpurnius *Eclogue* 7, the amphitheatre has created a world in which all memory has become a kind of ruin, and in which to contemplate the present is to be forced to confront the squalor of the past."[98] Calpurnius' first *Eclogue* remembered the devastation of the Civil War, his fourth *Eclogue* recalled the rural hardship and threat of political exile and both these poems used negative representations of the past to emphasise (and to warn about the vulnerability of) the new Golden Age under Nero. The seventh *Eclogue* does not discuss the past, except in lines 44-6 quoted above where the *prioribus annis* are viewed in terms of 'shows' and perhaps this is the point that Calpurnius is trying to make: Nero has reduced the empire to a spectacle - a spectacle in which he is not only a spectator but a performer.

e) Conclusion

Calpurnius' pastoral project has drawn to a close and this final eclogue has ended in a *locus amoenus* that is no longer *amoenus*, the beech trees are old, the bulls are sad, the woods are silent and the pastoral simplicity has been reduced to a pastoral indigence. The seventh *Eclogue* is the culmination of all the signs of discontent that Calpurnius has revealed in *Eclogues* 4 and 6 – from the anxiety about the *locus amoenus* obstructing his career to the undercurrent of ambiguity about Nero's Golden Age. The journey has ended in the loss of pastoral innocence: now Corydon can only see the *locus amoenus* through the prism of the glittering city.

[97] Gowing, 2005, p.98.
[98] Spencer, 2005, p.49.

Conclusion

Calpurnius' *Eclogues,* in their response to and intertexts with, are not only a prism through which to read the pastoral collections of Vergil and Theocritus, but they also question the efficacy of being a pastoral poet in the early empire. For Calpurnius, pastoral poetry appears to have run its course, whether this was because the genre had become an anachronism in the mid-1st Century CE, its association with the idealised, uncorrupted countryside no longer meeting favour in the literary circles at Rome or, his ambiguous language courted danger – or, he failed to secure a patron and imperial recognition. Although as Slater[99] remarks, Calpurnius may be a 'minor poet', but his writing survived when much of Neronian literature vanished. Given the absence of biographical information on Calpurnius and the ensuing issue of dating his collection, there is no straightforward answer and, as Dinter comments on the Neronian literary output, "it is impossible to pin down within easy categories of definition or periodization."[100]

But what is clear is that Calpurnius refreshed and developed the pastoral genre, his generic branching out was more expansive than either Vergil or Theocritus with his inclusion of love elegy, didactic and epic genres along with comic themes. His collection is ordered coherently, with the three political poems 1, 4 and 7 framing and pivoting the non-political poems of 2, 3, 5 and 6. He varies the range of poems from amobaean contests (2 and 4), dialogue poems (3 and 6) and a monologue (5). His readers are taken on a journey that begins in a *locus amoenus* recognisable from Vergil's *Eclogues* and ends in a celebration of the city that has no pastoral precedence. Calpurnius has challenged the pastoral tradition by questioning the suitability of the pastoral environment for the creation of poetry. His *locus amoenus* is not an idealised space but one that is a harsh and uncompromising environment for the shepherds and herdsmen who inhabit it.

Scholarship is divided as to whether Calpurnius' panegyric is sincere or not i.e., is he merely a court poet or is he a subtle critic of the regime. For example, Fear supports a literal reading and suggests that Calpurnius was motivated by, "the politics of his day. Nero was young, progressive, and proud of it … (and Calpurnius) was a skilful and enthusiastic supporter of the

[99] Slater, 1994, p.78.
[100] Dinter and Buckley, 2013, p.12.

young emperor's attempted Roman cultural revolution."[101] Or, was Calpurnius' flattery of the emperor just frivolous court poetry, as Dewar suggests, "the Roman eulogist was clearly perfectly prepared to say ten impossible things before breakfast, but neither he, nor his honorand, nor his audience was expected to take them literally."[102] Whereas Karakasis concludes that Calpurnius exploits the pastoral genre for his political panegyric with the result that "pastoral in the Calpurnian political poems largely loses its function as a fictional discourse … it is on its way to become a straightforward instrument of political (panegyric) discourse."[103] However, the final couplet of *Eclogue* 7 with its strongly suggestive phrasing of deceptive appearances - "visus decepit … vultus", implies that Calpurnius was inviting more than one interpretation of his poetry.

Throughout the collection, Calpurnius has allowed for contradictory readings of his poems: *Eclogue* 1 is both a celebration of Nero's accession but also a warning about the vulnerability of imperial rule; *Eclogue* 4 is a celebration of the new Golden Age whilst revealing discontentment with the *locus amoenus*; *Eclogue* 7 is either a celebration of the city or veiled criticism of the emperor. But to counter these contradictions, Calpurnius has consistently and successfully maintained a pastoral framework to control the non-pastoral content: *Eclogue* 1's prophecy is contained within a woodland cave; in *Eclogue* 3 and 5 the pastoral framework just about manages to keep control of its 'alien' content; and in *Eclogue* 7 the urban content that dominates the poem is described in pastoral language.

This discussion has shown that Calpurnius' treatment of the pastoral genre does respond to the key features of the tradition handed down to him by Vergil and Theocritus: he self-consciously refers to issues of genre; his poetic career is depicted in terms of genre; he incorporates both politics and panegyric; and he engages with non-pastoral genres. Calpurnius inherited a Hellenistic genre that had been reshaped in the late Republic and which he then successfully updated and refreshed to ensure its relevance in the early Empire. The collection is small but expansive in its ambition – the realisation of which remains an enigma.

[101] Fear, 1994, p.277.
[102] Dewar, 1994, p.209.
[103] Karakasis, 2016, p.253.

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