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INTRODUCTION

I BION'S LIFE

Our testimonia are few:

Suda II.697.22–4 Adler (s.v. Θεόκριτος): ἱστέον δὲ ὅτι τρεῖς γεγόνασι βουκολικῶν ἐπῶν ποιηταί, Θεόκριτος οὑτοσί, Μόσχος Σικελιώτης, καὶ Βίων ὁ Σμυρναῖος, ἔκ τινος χωριδίου καλουμένου Φλώσσης. The precision over Bion's home town commands credence. Phlossa, otherwise unknown (its name, with -ss-, sounds Anatolian), may have been one of the villages out of which Smyrna was reconstituted after the συνοικισμός by Antigonus and Lysimachus (cf. Strabo 14.1.37).

The Palatine corrector on *A.P.* 9.440 (= Moschus 1; text from P. Waltz and G. Soury, *Anthologie grecque* VIII (Budé, Paris 1974) 43): οὗτος ὁ Μόσχος ποιητής ἐστι τῶν καλουμένων βουκολικῶν ποιημάτων, ὧν πρῶτος Θεόκριτος, δεύτερος αὐτὸς ὁ Μόσχος, τρίτος Βίων Σμυρναῖος. The Palatine corrector and the compilers of the *Suda* (roughly a half-century later) no doubt drew on the same source.

The anonymous Ἐπιτάφιος Βίωνος ([Moschus] 3), written in commemoration of Bion's death,[1] implies that he died prematurely (cf. his ταχὺς μόρος in line 26) and states that he was poisoned (109–12). In lines 70–1 Bion is made a countryman of Homer, mourned by the river Meles; i.e. Smyrnaean.[2]

A fourth witness may be Diog. Laert. 4.58, where in a list of the "ten Bions" the seventh is a μελικὸς ποιητής. Since no other record exists of a lyric Bion, this may be a

[1] On this poem, wrongly attributed to Moschus in the Renaissance, see sections IV and VIII below.

[2] Bion's connexion with Sicily in [Moschus] 3 is of course a fiction generically marking his poetry as bucolic; cf. A. Barigazzi, *Maia* n.s. 19 (1967) 292.

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mistake for βουκολικὸς ποιητής (so Knaack in *RE* 3.482). Diogenes' list may come from Demetrius of Magnesia (cf. e.g. 1.38; see J. Mejer, *Hermes* 109 (1981) 449–51), who, as a contemporary of Cicero and Atticus (*Ad Att.* 8.11.7), lived late enough to include our Bion.

In sum: Bion's place of origin was the opulent merchant city of Smyrna, καλλίστη τῶν πασῶν (Strabo 14.1.37).[3] In addition to the testimonia given above he is Σμυρναῖος in the tituli to two of his fragments in Stobaeus. His date is uncertain. He is placed third and last in the canon of bucolic poets,[4] after Moschus, who as a colleague of Aristarchus must have been at Alexandria in the mid second century B.C.[5] Henry 3 warns that the list may not be chronological, but Bion's work does show the influence of Theocritus and Moschus. Around the turn of the century Meleager seems to show knowledge of the *Epitaph on Adonis* and the ninth fragment (see section VIII below).[6] The *Epitaph on Bion* alludes to the *Adonis* and at least to the sixteenth fragment (perhaps others; see section IV below) and is imitated in turn by Catullus.[7] Bion thus flourished sometime

[3] Another Bion of Smyrna, son of Philotas, is listed as a Panathenaic victor on *IG* II² 2314 col. I.19 and 25 (dated to 182 B.C. by S. Tracy, *Hesperia* 60 (1991) 218–20; cf. *SEG* 41.114). See also G. Petzl, *Die Inschriften von Smyrna* (Bonn 1982–91) nos. 524.1 (grave inscription for Apion, son of Bion) and 688.I.18 (contribution by Metrobius, son-in-law of Bion), both from the last two centuries B.C.

[4] On the ancient critical habit of codifying the standard authors in each field, which was established by the late second century B.C., see Pfeiffer 204–8; the bucolic triad was probably set in the mid to late first century B.C., the first period of major scholarly interest in bucolic.

[5] Μόσχος, Συρακούσιος, γραμματικός, Ἀριστάρχου γνώριμος. οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ δεύτερος ποιητὴς μετὰ Θεόκριτον, τὸν τῶν βουκολικῶν δραμάτων ποιητήν (*Suda* III.413.19–21 Adler); cf. A. Blau, *De Aristarchi discipulis* (diss. Jena 1883) 24–5. See Pfeiffer 211 for Aristarchus' dating.

[6] On the date of Meleager's *Garland*, most likely to be set in the 90s B.C., see now Cameron (1993) 49–56.

[7] Catull. 5.5–6 "nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux | nox est perpetua

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between the mid second and mid first century B.C., probably in the earlier part of this period.

That Bion's anonymous eulogist calls his own poem one of "Ausonian grief" ([Moschus] 3.94) – in contrast to the laments of other nations, including Syracuse – has led many to believe that the poet was Italian and had met his subject during a sojourn of the latter in Italy. Henry 4–6 thus connects Bion with Greek poets like Philodemus and Crinagoras who found patronage in Rome; this movement is first visible in the later second century (Archias and perhaps Antipater of Sidon came to Rome a little before 100 B.C.). The Smyrnaeans were early and strong supporters of Rome in the East, and doubtless cultivated clientships with prominent Roman families, motivating visits westward. It is unknown, however, whether the "Ausonian" eulogist knew Bion personally, and if so whether Bion travelled to Italy or he to Bion.

II BION BUCOLICUS

Of our poet's work there survive the ninety-eight lines of the *Adonis* and seventeen fragments ranging from one to eighteen lines; all are written in hexameters and in a poetic Doric. These last-named formal characteristics recall Bion's status in the ancient canon of bucolic poets and the label βουκολικά given to his anthologized fragments. Hexameters and Doric dialect are typical of the poems that have come down to us under the label "bucolic"; yet other features of that type have eluded Bion's modern readers. Pastoral themes, for example, have seemed absent

una dormienda" reproduces not just the idea but the wording and phrasing of [Moschus] 3.103–4 ὁππότε πρᾶτα θάνωμες, ἀνάκοοι ἐν χθονὶ κοίλᾳ | εὕδομες εὖ μάλα μακρὸν ἀτέρμονα νήγρετον ὕπνον. Cf. section VIII below.

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from his poetry.[8] His major surviving poem, the *Epitaph on Adonis*, is an emotive mythological vignette; of his fragments only the second is cast, in typical bucolic manner, as a dialogue between (presumably) rustic characters. To the consternation of critics one could counter that Bion's excerptors took the quotable bits out of context; as we shall see, a close reading of the fragments discloses their thematic, as well as formal, affinity to the bucolic poetry of Theocritus and his followers. But qualms over Bion's status as "bucolic" result more fundamentally from a misunderstanding of the poetic tradition instigated by Theocritus and carried on, with evolution in style and subject matter, for two centuries. Modern criticism of Greek bucolic, looking back through the spectacles of the modern genre of pastoral, has suffered first from a blindness to the range of Theocritus' work and secondly from an almost complete neglect of the poetry of his followers, the remains of Moschus and Bion and the pseudo-Theocritean idylls in our collections. This must stop, if study of bucolic and of its development from Theocritus to Virgil is to be historically and contextually based. Theocritus did create a new type of poetry, but the range of its subject matter and mood is greater than most critics have allowed; furthermore later poets, emulating Theocritus, used the same formal characteristics (notably dactylic hexameter and poetic Doric) for a still wider, yet defined, range of poems. It will be the work of this section to vindicate for Bion, through a study of his fragments, his place in the bucolic tradition.[9]

The origins and usage of βουκολικός as a generic label

[8] Cf. Knaack in *RE* 3.1009 "es sind nur erotisch-sentimentale Tändeleien und Spielereien"; E. A. Barber in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*[2] (Oxford 1970) 168 "The bucolic element is very slight"; Gutzwiller 176 "only a veneer of country matters remains".

[9] The length of the *Adonis* and its divergence from typical bucolic themes merit separate discussion for it; see section III below. Fr. 1, on the myth of Hyacinthus, will be dealt with in section IV.

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are unclear and largely irrelevant to a modern study of ancient practice (as opposed to a study of its reception by ancient critics).[10] Theocritus gives us no clues; nowhere in his work are we required to take the term and its cognates in any but their literal senses, referring to the herdsmen who are his characters, their musical activity, and so on.[11] The ancient grammarians sometimes use it for any poem ascribed to a "bucolic" writer, regardless of style or content; sometimes they restrict it to works displaying pastoral or rustic matter. This inconsistency is to be expected. New types of poetry, emerging from the heat of Alexandrian inventiveness after literature had already been categorized and named, were often not given new generic labels; it has been left to modern scholars, with their special needs and modern notions of literary genre, to name them (e.g. the "epyllion"). In any case, we are not talking about an essential category of literature like the "pastoral" studied by twentieth-century literary critics, determined by subject matter and mood. Recent scholars have criticized the ahistorical folly of looking at Theocritus' pastoral idylls (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11) separately from the equally Doric and mimetic *Id.* 2, 10, 14, and 15 (and from his other works) and thereby studying a single theme at the price of ignoring his Alexandrian preoccupations with generic mixture and unheroic subject matter.[12] Likewise, among Theocritus'

[10] I do not mean, of course, that practice and reception – let alone poets and critics – can always be distinguished so sharply.

[11] See the refrain in Theoc. 1; 1.20; 5.44, 60; 7.36, 49. Likewise in [Theoc.] *Ep.* 2.2 = *A.P.* 6.177.2 βουκολικοὶ ὕμνοι are just the songs played by Daphnis while he tended his cows. See commentary on fr. 10.5.

[12] See esp. D. Halperin, *Before Pastoral: Theocritus and the Ancient Tradition of Bucolic Poetry* (New Haven 1983) and G. O. Hutchinson, *Hellenistic Poetry* (Oxford 1988) 142–6; cf. A. Bulloch, *TAPA* 122 (1992) 333: "If we want to understand how Theocritus works as a poet we are going to have to drop notions of a pastoral genre ... and follow the signals which Theocritus gives us throughout his oeuvre."

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followers we should look not just at the pastoral [Theoc.] 8, 9, 20, and 27, but at the poems showing the same formal features but with entirely different themes, like [Theoc.] 19 and 23, Moschus 1, and Bion's *Epitaph on Adonis*.

In the present study we are interested in Bion's stance within a tradition of poetry whose practitioners looked back particularly to certain works of Theocritus[13] and marked their affiliation by certain formal features, particularly a poetic Doric dialect (always evolving) and a particular metrical style (always evolving). "Late bucolic", as used here, comprehends Moschus (the fragments and *Runaway Love*, not *Europa*), Bion, and poems showing strong similarity to them in metre, dialect, and diction: [Moschus] 3, [Bion] 2,[14] [Theoc.] 19, 20, 23, and 27.[15] In those features they form quite a coherent group – but not in theme. Pastoral represents perhaps the strongest strain; indeed, that pastoral motifs found a special home in bucolic is shown by the habitual influence of bucolic poets on other writers of pastoral, e.g. in the numerous epigrams that use the dialect and themes of bucolic, or in Longus' borrowings from Theocritus and Bion. On the other hand, poems like Moschus 1, [Theoc.] 19, and [Theoc.] 23 concern erotic themes totally unconnected with the countryside. We need a terminology to reflect the different traditions being per-

[13] Notably *Id.* 1–7, 10–11, 14–15 – all in poetic Doric, all in hexameters, all dealing with rustic or everyday life. I accept *Id.* 8–9 as the work of a follower or followers of Theocritus. Of course, later bucolic poets also show influence from other idylls of Theocritus, as from other Greek poets.

[14] On the authorship of this poem, the *Epithalamius of Achilles and Deidameia*, see section IV below.

[15] Although I should hesitate to press the strict chronological value of the label "late bucolic", the likelihood is that these poems all belong to the hundred years between the mid second and mid first centuries B.C. The dates of Moschus, Bion, and [Moschus] 3 have been established in section 1 above; Ovid imitates [Bion] 2 (*A.A.* 1.681–704; see Hollis (1977) *ad loc.*) and [Theoc.] 23 (*Met.* 14.698–761; see Copley 138–9), which themselves imitate Bion.

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petuated in this poetry, so in this study "bucolic" refers to the tradition signalled by formal features, "pastoral" to themes of herdsmen and rustic life. "Bucolic" thus includes Moschus 1, but not *Europa* (Moschus 2); [Moschus] 3, but not *Megara* ([Moschus] 4); [Theoc.] 23, but not [Theoc.] 25. It typically includes pastoral and rustic themes, but also others that for one reason or another its practitioners saw fit to arrogate or assimilate to their poetic line. It excludes pastoral literature that is not *formally* marked as part of that line, e.g. Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* and certain parts of Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* (let alone Hesiodic or Near Eastern poetry dealing with herdsmen); these are valuable for tracing the development of pastoral motifs, but our emphasis is different. It is hoped that this distinction in terminology will not seem too artificial and will prove useful for distinguishing the different lines of influence converging in our poet's work.

Late bucolic presents a controlled diversity, poems of several thematic types united by their metre, their dialect, and their common retrospection to the mimetic Doric idylls of Theocritus. Bion's own surviving work is a cross-section of this tradition; with care we can see how his fragments and the poems from which they were taken continue the bucolic line. First, pastoral is a major theme. In fr. 5 someone is told that it is best to know how to fashion one's panpipe oneself: we probably have a bit of dialogue between an older herdsman and a less experienced one. In fr. 11 the speaker, on his way to serenade a shepherd, looks up and prays to the evening star to give him light. The blankness that surrounds other fragments – only the thirteenth is likely to be a complete poem (see below) – may once have set pastoral scenes. Over and over we meet unidentified speakers, ungrounded utterances, unexplained references, and other signs that we are dealing with excerpts chosen for their rhetorical niceties, or for other reasons apart from representativeness. In frr. 9 and 10, details

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like the conventionally rustic name Lycidas and the terms βοῦτα and βουκολίασδον warn us to imagine fictional rustic contexts for the first-person narration. This point must be made forcefully, since many critics are too ready to take these two context-less snippets, with undue positivism, as the programmatic declarations of Bion himself.[16] They come rather from the mouths of herdsmen explaining why they now sing only of love, and we should beware of identifying those personae with that of the poet who created them.[17]

At least frr. 5, 9, 10, and 11, then, are demonstrably pastoral. That their herdsmen–speakers are not heavily characterized as such is in Bion's style. Take the comast in fr. 11. In his third idyll Theocritus had a goatherd keep a κῶμος at the door of his cave-dwelling beloved; the romantic theme was humorously incongruous in the countryside, and Theocritus made much of this contrast by emphasizing the rusticity of the goatherd's surroundings without diminishing his genuine ardour (cf. lines 1–2 κωμάσδω ποτὶ τὰν Ἀμαρυλλίδα, ταὶ δέ μοι αἶγες | βόσκονται κατ' ὄρος). Bion plays down the rustic realism and plays up the romance (at least in this prayer, which is likely to have set the tone for the κῶμος, if the poem went on to describe it).[18] The speaker is less of a character; that

[16] Especially fr. 10: see commentary on fr. 10.5. Most recently, Gutzwiller 179 sees Bion's fragments as "revelations of his private creed", even imagining fr. 16, clearly the Cyclops' lament over his love for Galatea, as a heartfelt utterance by the poet in the Cyclops' persona. There is little difference between her approach and W. Morton Fullerton's naive biographical reading of Bion in *The Nineteenth Century* 28 (1890) 410–24.

[17] As does the author of the *Epitaph on Bion*, casting the βουκολικὸς ποιητής as a βουκόλος; but his purposes are not ours. In [Theoc.] 9.29, where the narrator is a practitioner of rustic song, we should still see him as a construction of the poet, not the poet himself.

[18] See Arland 46: "Diese Gegenüberstellung zeigt, wie Bion alles in eine andere Sphäre versetzt und seinen Vorbildern ihre Wirklichkeit nimmt." Cf. his suspicion (p. 38) that in the bucolics of Moschus "das

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is, Bion de-emphasizes the features that differentiate him from Bion's readers and emphasizes the role with which all can identify, that of the romantic lover. This style of characterization may be typical of late bucolic: it is that of the speakers of Moschus fr. 1 and [Bion] 2, and is already discernible in [Theoc.] 8 and 9.[19] In the age of Louis XIV, Longepierre contrasted the porcelain suavity of Moschus and Bion with the rude vitality of their forerunner: "[I]l seront plus du goust de nostre siecle, qui auroit peine, je croy, à s'accoûtumer à l'extrême simplicité qui regne en plusieurs endroits de Theocrite."

The only fragment that shows the dialogue-form familiar in bucolic is the longest, fr. 2, a discourse on the seasons between Cleodamus and Myrson, presumably rustic characters. Myrson's answer to Cleodamus' question – which season he likes best – is a series of generic reflections. The aphoristic line 9, κρίνειν οὐκ ἐπέοικε θεήια ἔργα βροτοῖσι, suggests pastoral dialogue or monologue as the original context of the aphorisms in frr. 4, 5, 6.2, 7, 12.1, 15, and 17. In Theocritus' idylls such proverbs simulate the ordinary conversation of ordinary people, humorously emphasizing their reliance on clichés and the like[20]; in the lack of strong characterization Myrson's solemnity sounds merely gently pious (contrast the colourful superstitions of the goatherd in Theoc. 3.28–39). Lines 7–8 are richly, even absurdly epic ("tell me what thy heart chooseth"), but where the rusticity of a Theocritean character would contrast sharply with the high-flown diction, Cleodamus is all blandness.

Leben der kleinen Leute vom Lande keine, oder wenigstens keine wesentliche Rolle gespielt hat." Or at least was not the centre of dramatic attention, as in Theocritus.

[19] But the rustic speakers in [Theoc.] 20 and 27 are quite pungently characterized.

[20] Cf. Aristot. *Rhet.* 1395a6–7 οἱ γὰρ ἀγροῖκοι μάλιστα γνωμοτύποι εἰσί. Not surprisingly, proverbs were a staple of that ancestor of bucolic, literary mime (Fabiano 521).

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As in fr. 11, the distance between Bion's characters and the reader is diminished; they are hardly characters, but mouthpieces for rhetorically expressed commonplaces.

Bion's poem on the Cyclops' courting of Galatea (known from both fr. 16 and lines 58–63 of the *Epitaph on Bion*) may also fall in the category of "pastoral" because of its presumptive rustic setting; in any case, Theocritus in *Id.* 11, adapting the theme from fourth-century dithyramb,[21] had sanctified it as "bucolic". Bion must have somehow made it his own, since his version seems to have gained some fame,[22] and was perhaps the source of some of our other fragments. The proverbs in frr. 4 and 17 comport well with the persistence of the Cyclops' hopes (fr. 16.3–4); fr. 14, as Schmitz 39 notes, expresses the kind of complaint that the Cyclops we know from Theocritus might make over his love. Fr. 3 celebrates song as a cure for love, a theme that was specially part of this story since Philoxenus, and it may be Polyphemus who calls upon the Muses to "bear up" (i.e. help him to endure) Love in line 1; compare fr. 3.2 μοι ἀεὶ ποθέοντι with fr. 16.3–4 τὰς δὲ γλυκείας | ἐλπίδας ὑστατίῳ μέχρι γήραος οὐκ ἀπολείψω (the φάρμακον in fr. 3.3 will then be a balm for one who will never fall out of love rather than a final cure). One hesitates to assign any of these fragments to Bion's *Cyclops* when one considers the emphasis in all bucolic – indeed in all Greek poetry – on perseverance and unrequited love, but fr. 3 seems likely to be Bion's new twist on the old theme.

We can thus account for all of these fragments as speeches from the mouths of country folk or other of the typical creations of a bucolic poet; but themes other than pastoral are codified in the late bucolic tradition. Fr. 13,

[21] See Philox. *PMG* 815–24; Didymus on Demosth. *Phil.* 11, col. 12.59–62.

[22] In addition to [Moschus] 3, [Bion] 2.2–3 may refer specifically to Bion's version.

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