THE
GREEK BUCOLIC POETS
THE GREEK BUCOLIC POETS

TRANSLATED WITH BRIEF NOTES

BY

A. S. F. GOW

FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE
CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1953
To
D. and M.
C.
PREFACE

The translations of the Greek Bucolic Poets contained in this volume are intended for readers of two sorts. For those who, reading the Greek text, would yet welcome some assistance short of a full commentary, they are meant to show clearly how I understand the Greek; but I have tried to achieve this object without resorting to a version so literal that a Greekless reader seeking acquaintance with the poems would be repelled by its clumsiness. I may be judged to have failed in both these objects, for a stone aimed at two birds may well hit neither, but, however that may be, it is time for a new prose translation of the whole corpus, for, so far as I am aware, none has appeared in England since Andrew Lang’s frequently reprinted version of 1880; and since 1880 papyri have contributed much to the text of Theocritus, and scholarship much to its interpretation. In the Introduction, the prefaces prefixed to each poem, and the occasional footnotes I have tried to supply the sort of aid a Greekless reader may welcome, and some of it at least will be found superfluous by others.

The text translated is that of the Bucolici Graeci edited by me for the Bibliotheca Classica Oxoniensis (1952). I have however omitted lines which are plainly interpolated; and where, though the text is corrupt, the general sense is clear, I have added it in square brackets. I have not translated the fragmentary poem from a papyrus printed on p. 168 of the Bucolici Graeci; nor the Technopaegnia, which are bucolic in no sense of the word and of which two at least defy translation.

The versions of Theocritus and of the poems erroneously ascribed to him differ only in minute details from those printed in my Theocritus (Cambridge, 1950), and in that book must be sought the supporting arguments for a good many conclusions here stated categorically. The other translations,
PREFACE

the introduction, prefaces, and notes are new. At one stage or another old and new alike have benefited from the criticisms of friends, who will, I am sure, forgive me if their names are not set out here.

The coin reproduced on the cover bears a portrait of Hiero II of Syracuse, to whom Theocritus addressed his sixteenth Idyll.

A.S.F.G.

Cambridge
July 1952
CONTENTS

* denotes that the ascription is false or dubious

INTRODUCTION

(i) Greek Bucolic Poetry page xiii
(ii) Theocritus xix
(iii) Moschus xxiv
(iv) Bion xxvi

Theocritus:

I Thyrsis or The Song 3
II The Sorceress 9
III The Serenade 15
IV The Herdsman 18
V Goatherd and Shepherd 21
VI The Rustic Singers 27
VII The Harvest Festival 29
VIII *The Rustic Singers (ii) 35
IX *The Rustic Singers (iii) 39
X The Labourers or Harvesters 41
XI The Cyclops 44
XII The Beloved 47
XIII Hylas 49
XIV Aeschinas and Thyonichus 52
CONTENTS

Theocritus (cont.):

XV The Syracusans or Celebrants of the Adonia  page 56
XVI The Graces or Hiero  63
XVII In Praise of Ptolemy  67
XVIII Helen's Epithalamium  72
XIX *The Honey-Thief  74
XX *The Young Netherd  75
XXI *The Fishermen  77
XXII Hymn to the Dioscuri  80
XXIII *The Lover  88
XXIV The Infant Heracles  90
XXV *Hercules the Lion-Slayer  95
XXVI The Bacchants  104
XXVII *The Lovers' Talk  106
XXVIII The Distaff  110
XXIX Love-Poem (i)  112
XXX Love-Poem (ii)  114
Fragment  116
Epigrams  117

Moschus:

I Love the Runaway  126
II Europa  128
CONTENTS

Moschus (cont.):

III *Lament for Bion  page 133
IV *Megara  138
  Fragments  142

Bion:

I Lament for Adonis  144
II *Epithalamium for Achilles  148
  Fragments  150

Adonis Dead  156
INTRODUCTION

(i) GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

In a lost treatise on the invention of Bucolic, of which the contents are preserved in the ancient commentary on Theocritus and in various other places, three accounts are given of the origin of Bucolic. One is that it was invented in Sparta during the Persian invasion, when, since the girls were in hiding, rustics in their place entered the temple of Artemis Caryatis and sang their own songs to the goddess; the second, that it arose from songs sung by the people of Tyndaris in Sicily when Orestes arrived there with the statue of Artemis stolen from Tauri; the third, and according to this authority the true, story is that the Syracusans gave the credit for having allayed a civil dissension (or, as we are elsewhere told, a murrain among the herds) to Artemis, and the countryfolk therefore brought her gifts. Hence arose a custom of peasants competing in song for a loaf, a bag of seed, and a skin of wine, brought and staked by each competitor, and of the vanquished going about the country-side asking for gifts and singing songs, a specimen of which is quoted.

There is, then, no need to doubt that rustic singers and singing competitions had a part in certain ancient cults, and it may safely be assumed not only that singing and pipe-playing were common diversions of Greek herdsmen but that they were frequently competitive. And it may be noted that singing plays a large part in the rustic poems of the so-called Bucolic poets. There are singing competitions in the fifth and sixth Idylls of Theocritus, and in the eighth, wrongly ascribed to him; songs sung in friendly rivalry if not in competition in the seventh and tenth, and in the spurious ninth; a song repeated

\[x\]

\[\text{Herdsmen playing panpipes appear already on the shield of Achilles in } \text{Iliad xviii, 525.}\]
INTRODUCTION

from an earlier competition in the first and perhaps in [Bion] Id. ii; songs in the third and eleventh. The only rustic poems devoid of songs are thus the fourth Idyll of Theocritus and the spurious twenty-seventh. On the other hand Artemis plays no part in bucolic poetry, and cult-practices, 1 if they had any share in its creation, have left no recognisable mark upon it.

Here it is proper to note that when songs are found in these poems, whether the songs of rustic, as in the poems mentioned, or the epithalamium in Id. xviii, the Adonis-hymn which forms part of Id. xv, and the Laments for Adonis (Bion I) and for Bion ([Mosch.] i), they are presented to us in dactylic hexameters, which, as Aristotle says, 2 is a solemn metre, and had been consecrated from remote antiquity to Epic and Didactic poetry and the responses of oracles. It is a metre suitable not for singing but for recitative. 3 Theocritus also reports in hexameters such prosaic and everyday conversations as may be found in Id. iv, v, x, xiv and xv; and when his characters break from conversation into song his metre makes no corresponding change. It is plain therefore, and borne out by the small existing fragments of popular and rustic song, which are in singing metres, that when his characters sing he gives only the contents of their songs. Some attempt he perhaps makes by the use of refrains, as in Id. i, or by articulating his hexameters in couplets and triplets, as in Id. iii and elsewhere, to suggest the stanza-structure of a song, but that is all. The gap between the ritual singing adduced as the origin of Bucolic and the real songs of peasants on the one hand, and on the other the songs of the bucolic poets, is profound, nor does our information suffice to bridge it.

We know that in earlier times Diomus, inventor of βουκολοσκυφός—rustic song combined no doubt with piping

1 According to Philargyrius (on Virg. Ed.: p. 11 Hagen) some connected Bucolic not with Artemis but with Apollo, Dionysus, Hermes, or Pan.

2 Rhet. 1408 b 32, Poet. 1459 b 34.

3 This is not so plainly true of elegiacs, which make a unique appearance in [Theocr.] Id. viii, but even there the second exchange of songs is in hexameters.

xiv
GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

—appeared or was mentioned in two comedies written in the fifth century B.C. by Theocritus's fellow-townsmen Epicharmus.1 We hear of Daphnis, the chief hero, and as some said inventor, of bucolic song, that his broken vow to a Nymph and consequent blinding were the first theme of bucolic poetry, of which Stesichorus of Himera, who flourished in the first half of the sixth century, was the earliest exponent.2 We know also that two poets of the second dithyrambic school, active about 400 B.C., introduced into their choric lyrics figures which appear in the bucolic poetry of Alexandria. Philoxenus's most famous dithyramb dealt with the love of Polyphemus, the Cyclops, for Galatea—a theme capable of bucolic handling, and so handled twice by Theocritus (Idd. vi, xi) and also by Bion3—and Lycophronides had in one of his4 a lovesick goatherd. Nearer to Theocritus's own time Anyte, a poetess of Tegea in Arcadia, had written epigrams with a bucolic colour, and it is noteworthy that Virgil, full as he is of Theocritus and Sicily, has Arcadian rusticities also in his Eclogues.5 Finally, in Hermesianax, who seems to have been nearly contemporary with Theocritus, Daphnis appears as the lover of Menalca,6 but in Euboea, not Sicily or Arcadia. Nothing however explains how such subjects came to be treated in dramatic form yet in the verse not of drama but of Epic. It should therefore be noted that Theocritus's dramatic pastoral poems do not differ except in theme from those of urban life (Idd. ii, xiv, xv), which may be called mimes. Mimes—dramatic scenes or character sketches—had in the fifth century been written in Doric prose by the Syracusan Sophron, whose works were Plato's favourite bedside book; and they were

1 Fr. 4, 105.
2 Ael. V.H. x. 18. But 'bucolic' in this context perhaps means 'concerning Daphnis', who was the neitherd par excellence.
3 Fr. 16.
4 Fr. 2 Bk.
5 Hence the popularity of 'Arcady' with Sannazaro and the subsequent writers of Pastoral.
6 Fr. 2, 3 Powell.

XV
INTRODUCTION

written, probably in Theocritus’s own day, by Herodas in the choliambic metre which Hipponax had used for satire and in an Ionic dialect distantly modelled on his. The strictly bucolic Idylls, when dramatic, may fairly be called mimes of rustic life, and though the tendency they show to include an agon or competition seems to require explanation, and calls to mind both the Syracusan competition mentioned as the origin of Bucolic and the agon of the Athenian Old Comedy, it may be that the appropriate question to ask is not who first wrote bucolics as we know them in Theocritus, but who first wrote mimes, on whatever subject, in dactylic hexameters. Neither question admits of certain answer, but one who should answer to either ‘Theocritus’ cannot on the available evidence be shown to be wrong.

Whether or not however Theocritus’s strictly bucolic poems have a long history behind them, it is not surprising that work of the kind should have appealed to Greeks of the Hellenistic age, and sketches of idyllic scenery are not confined to the pastoral poems. Theocritus’s epic Idylls (xiii, xii), one of his addresses to a patron (sixvi), his epitalamium for Helen (xvii), the anonymous epic Idyll xxv, the Europa and first fragment of Moschus, contain vignettes of rustic settings which, though differently presented, approximate in feeling to passages in pastoral poems, and they have their counterparts in other arts also. The landscapes, an invention of this age, even when they are settings for heroic scenes, are idealistic and romantic, tranquillised often by rustic shrines and farms. The same tendency, though now with emphasis on the figures, appears in Hellenistic reliefs. The young huntsman with his dog, the countryman driving his cow, a sheep with her lamb, and so on,1 evince the same taste for genre, and this, though in another form, may be found in Epic, at least as it was written by Callimachus, Theocritus, and their im-

1 The first three Theocritean epigrams, whether by Theocritus himself or not, are probably inscriptions for paintings or reliefs of this kind.
GreeK Bucolic Poetry

mediate following. These poets are at pains to lessen the heroic and emphasise the homely elements in their theme. Pallas returns to her bath in Callimachus¹ like a lady returning from an afternoon’s exercise. Theocritus (in *Id.* xxiv) reduces the infant Heracles’s strangling of the snakes to the picture of a happy family disturbed at midnight, and in the *Megara* ([Mosch.] *Id.* iv) Heracles and his adventures are subordinated to their effect upon the minds of the two women through whose eyes they are viewed. And in *Id.* xxv and Theocritus’s handling of the Rape of Hylas (Id. xiii) or of the Amycus scene in *Id.* xxii the landscape is not a mere accessory but an integral and important part of the picture. A nostalgia for the country and for the simple life of the countryman was not a new thing in Greece. It was felt, for instance, in Athens when the inhabitants were cut off by war from access to their farms, and it then inspired more than one memorable passage of Aristophanes, particularly in his *Peace*. In earlier literature however such emotion is not common. In Alexandria it would seem to be a reaction after the great events of the preceding age, when Greeks had seen the horizon of the world rolled back by Alexander, and a revolt against the complex and over-cultivated life of the great new cities, in which rich and jaded patrons, forgetting their Hesiod, fancied, like the usurer in Horace’s satirical second *Epode*, that they would be happier if they were simple rustics, or envied, as Ptolemy Philadelphus himself is said to have done,² the Egyptians stretched at their ease on the banks of the Nile to eat their humble meal. From such emotions springs a demand for more or less idealised pictures of the life which seems from afar so desirable; and idealised, in varying degrees, they all are. The nearest approaches to realism are in Theocritus’s fourth and fifth Idylls and in one of the characters in the tenth, and from these he ascends gradually to the highly idealised herdsmen of *Id.* i.

¹ *Hymn* v.
² Ath. xii. 536ε. The King however was suffering from gout at the time.
INTRODUCTION

But Theocritus, though he idealises, does so with tact, and few readers are likely to ask themselves whether ancient rustics really talked or sang like this; he is far from the patent artificiality of some of his imitators—Bion and the author of *Id.* xxvii. Here illusion is hardly even aimed at, and though the poems are not devoid of charm, it is the rococo charm of Sévres or Dresden porcelain.

Before considering what is known of the three named poets in this collection it may be well to say that the title ‘Bucolic’, if it is understood as equivalent to ‘Pastoral’, is misleading, for in this strict sense only a small proportion of the poems here translated are entitled to it. Theocrit. *Idd.* i, iii–vii, x and xi may fairly be called bucolic, and so may some of the poems wrongly ascribed to him—*Idd.* viii, ix, xx and xxvii; the *Lament for Bion* ([Mosch.] *Idd.* iii), and one or two fragments of Moschus and Bion might be added without serious incongruity, but that is all; and in number it is less, in bulk much less, than half the collection. Theocritus’s genuine poems include the non-bucolic mimes already mentioned (*Idd.* ii, xiv, xv), hymns, in the ancient sense of the word (*xxii, xxiv, xxvi*), encomia (*xvi, xvii*), a love poem in hexameters (*xii*), an epistle with an epic narrative (*xiii*), an epithalamium for Helen (*xviii*), lyrics (*xxviii–xxx*), and epigrams; and there is a similar diversity in the poems by other authors in the book. We know however that in ancient collections of Theocritus’s poems the strictly bucolic came first, and since *Idd.* xiii, which is essentially epic, is cited as ‘in the Bucolics’,” it is reasonable to conclude that the whole book, whatever it may have contained, took its title from its opening section. Similarly the fragments both of Moschus and Bion are cited as from their ‘Bucolics’ though, as was said above, there is little trace of pastoral in them. In the first century B.C. Artemidorus of Tarsus, a grammarian, made a collection of all ‘bucolic’ poetry, and headed it with an epigram which survives.

* In the ancient commentary on *Apollonius Rhodius* (i. 1234).
GREEK BUCOLIC POETRY

Whether this collection included non-pastoral poems by ‘bucolic’ poets we do not know, but at any rate it must have included their pastorals, and the three poets known in antiquity as ‘bucolic’, as we are told in the life of Theocritus preserved in the Lexicon of Suidas, were Theocritus, the Sicilian Moschus, and Bion of Smyrna.

(ii) THEOCRITUS

Two lives of Theocritus have come down to us, one in the ancient commentary to his poems, the other, already mentioned, in the Lexicon of Suidas. They tell us that he was the son of Praxagoras and Philinna, names which mean nothing to us. The statements in the first of them that he was a Syracusan, or as some said a Coan, and that he was a pupil of Philetas and Asclepiades, like those made elsewhere in the commentary that he went to Cos on his way to Alexandria and wrote Id. xv in the latter, seem, though not necessarily false, to be merely inferences from the poems, and we shall be prudent to content ourselves with the secure evidence which these supply.

Theocritus himself treats Sicily as his country and Syracuse as his native town;¹ and an inscription for a statue at Syracuse,² if rightly ascribed to him, would show that he was not wholly without honour there. Of this however it is the only indication, and, apart from an appeal to its ruler Hiero II, the other indications connect him with Egypt and the Levant. In the appeal to Hiero, which may be dated with some certainty to 275/4 B.C., Theocritus implies that he has addressed other patrons in vain. Not more than three or four years later however we find him, in Id. xvii, writing a eulogy of Ptolemy Philadelphus andcommending his generosity, and it is reasonable to infer either that the appeal to Hiero was unanswered or that its answer was forestalled by an invitation to Alexandria.

¹ Id. xi. 7, xxviii. 16. ² Epigr. xviii.
INTRODUCTION

from Ptolemy. *Idyll xv* was written for an Alexandrian audience between 276 (probably) and 270 B.C., the *Berenice*, of which only a fragment survives, most likely within the same limits, and to this group of poems belongs also *Id. xiv* which contains a eulogy of Ptolemy. The evidence is insufficient to prove that *Idd. xviii*, xxii and xxiv, were also addressed to Egyptian audiences, but it is, in varying degrees, not improbable. There is no further evidence for the absolute dating of the poems, though if the *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius is ever securely dated it may provide some. For in *Id. xiii* and the second part of *Id. xxii* Theocritus, apparently with his eye upon Apollonius, handles episodes recounted in the first and second books of that poem in accordance with the principles which he shared with Callimachus and professed through the mouth of Lycidas in *Id. vii.*

A few further facts are known or deducible from the poems. For various reasons it is probable that the strictly bucolic poems, which seem to be among his earliest works, were not written until he had left, or at any rate been away from, Sicily.² The seventh Idyll is a record of a day’s outing in the island of Cos, and discloses that the author had aristocratic friends there; also that his reputation as a pastoral poet had already reached the ears of Ptolemy.³ *Id. xxviii* shows him visiting in Miletus his friend Nicias, a doctor and poet, for whom he wrote *Epigr.* viii, and to whom, probably at an earlier date, he addressed the eleventh and thirteenth Idyls. The medical school of Cos was famous, and though it is not known that Nicias studied there, this friendship may well have been formed during Theocritus’s stay in the island. Not remote from Cos and Miletus are Teos on the coast of Asia

¹ 41ff.
² The scenery is Greek rather than Sicilian, and the geographical names (which Theocritus uses not to locate the scene of an Idyll but to impart verisimilitude to his characters) suggest acquaintance with Cos and with the Greek-speaking parts of southern Italy.
³ vii. 1ff., 9ff.
THEOCRITUS

Minor, and Camirus in Rhodes. For these towns, if, as is probable, the epigrams\(^1\) are genuine, Theocritus wrote inscriptions for statues of the chief local poets, Anacreon and Pisander; and these commissions, like that for Syracuse already mentioned, and a fourth from an unnamed patron for a statue of Archilochus, are not likely to have been received before his reputation as a poet was well established. Whether Theocritus ever returned to Sicily from the East there is nothing to show. His extant poems, varied as they are, neither call for nor suggest a long life of writing, and though some may well have been written after 270 B.C. none can at present be proved to have been so. The supposition that he was born about 300 B.C. and died or ceased to write about 260, though not necessarily true, would cover the available facts; and those four decades, in which Callimachus, Apollonius, and Aratus were all at work, were the heyday of Hellenistic poetry.

There is no evidence that Theocritus ever collected his own poems, and, if he did so, our collection plainly does not go directly back to his, for it includes two spurious poems (Idd. viii and ix) and does not include the Berenice (see p. 116), of which a fragment is known from a quotation. It is perhaps not likely that very much has perished, but it is certain that the Berenice is not the only piece missing, for the Antinoe papyrus,\(^2\) which discloses the loss of about thirty lines from the end of Id. xxiv, preserves a few letters of a fourth lyric poem; and that book contained originally more pages than the known poems suffice to fill. Of the spurious poems other than Idd. viii and ix (vi\(\text{r.}\) xix–xxi, xxiii, xxv, xxvii), Id. xxv owes its ascription to Theocritus only to Triclinius in the early fourteenth century, the others to still later authorities.

\(^1\) Epigr. xvii, xxii.
\(^2\) This book, of about 500 A.D., is the most extensively preserved of the nine Theocritus papyri at present known and contains some parts of eighteen Idylls.
INTRODUCTION

The traditional order of the poems, which mixes these in with the rest, dates only from the collection of Greek poetry printed in 1566 by H. Stephanus, but in Idd. i–xviii he followed the arrangement of the least valuable of the three families of mss.

The poems of Theocritus are called Idylls (ἰδύλλια) in the ancient commentary, and the Greek word does not occur elsewhere. In Latin Idyllia had no specifically bucolic colour but was applied to short poems of varied content, and the Greek word was presumably used in the same sense. How it acquired such a meaning is doubtful, but though the word Idyll owes its modern connotations to its connexion with Theocritus’s pastorals, it is unlikely that he himself attached it to his works. He may well have given each separate poem a title, and the titles attached to them in the papyri and mss may sometimes therefore be original, but the numerous alternative titles which the mss present undermine confidence in their authority.

This is not the place to attempt a critical estimate of Theocritus’s poetry, but there is one aspect of it which deserves mention here since it must largely escape the attention of those who read him in a translation. Like that of his contemporaries, it is highly artificial. In the first place, as did Callimachus, he wrote in several dialects. His strictly bucolic poems, the urban mimes, and Idd. xviii and xxxvi are in Doric; Id. xii in Ionic; xxii in the language of Epic; xiii, xvi, xvii and xxiv in Epic with an admixture of Doric; and xxviii–xxx attempt to reproduce the Aeolic of Lesbos as it had been written by Sappho and Alcaeus three centuries and more earlier. Theocritus lived in an age when Greek as spoken by educated people was rapidly becoming standardised all over the Greek world, and though he himself must have been familiar with the Doric of his native Sicily and of Cos, it is not likely that he spoke Doric among his literary friends in Alexandria; and it is certain that, if he did so, it was not the Doric he employs...
THEOCRITUS

in his poems. There the dialect is artificial. He uses at one time forms not found together in the spoken Doric of any one place, his own Doric is not consistent even in the same poem, and he mixes with it forms not Doric at all but borrowed from Epic or from Aeolic. A partial parallel is provided by Robert Burns, whose Ayrshire Scots is combined with forms drawn from other parts of Scotland and from literature, but Theocritus carries his eclecticism far beyond Burns. His Doric is an invented dialect, his other dialects assumed for literary purposes. In the second place his vocabulary is often far-fetched, drawn from diverse literary forms, and full, for those who could detect them, of reminiscences, particularly reminiscences of Homer. In the third place he constantly strains his language in search of novelty in idiom and construction. No doubt these verbal gymnastics were admired by Theocritus’s contemporaries, as they might have been again in the sixteenth century; but Euphuism and Gongorism are passing fashions, and since they tend to obscure qualities of more importance, it is perhaps as well for Theocritus’s literary reputation that the lapse of two thousand years has blunted our powers of observing them. His erudition however is not confined to language. Many poets of the Alexandrian school were also learned scholars and all were expected to display scholarship and learning, nor does Theocritus fail. Learning is not fatal to poetry, as almost any page of Milton will show, but in Callimachus and Apollonius its display, at least to modern taste, is often oppressive; in Theocritus it is very rarely so. His talent or inspiration may be judged less robust than theirs; his taste is unquestionably secure, and has kept his work sweeter than most Alexandrian poetry. He has often been looked on as an unsophisticated singer of the countryside, immortalising the artless ditties of his rustic friends. Nothing could be further from the truth, but it is a high tribute to his tact and skill that it should have been thought.

xxiii
INTRODUCTION

Among the anonymous poems included in this volume, two, or perhaps three, should be mentioned here before we pass into another atmosphere. *Id. xxv* displays the attitude to Epic shared by Theocritus and Callimachus. It is by a poet of conspicuous accomplishment, and, as is pointed out in the preface to it, its plan, whether original or not, is highly ingenious. If Triclinius’s ascription to Theocritus should one day prove to have been more than a guess, it would appreciably enlarge that poet’s stature. Meanwhile it must be regarded as a notable work by an anonymous poet who can hardly be far removed in date from Theocritus. To the third century too it is reasonable to assign *Id. viii*, a poem of considerable merit which would seem to be by a skilful imitator of Theocritus. [Mosch.] *iv* (*Megara*) is harder to place. The poem is not an unqualified success. It is rhetorical and somewhat monotonous, but its conception is interesting and it is not devoid of merit in detail. It lacks close parallels elsewhere in Greek literature, but to suppose that it was written in the third century B.C. seems a reasonable guess. The author is at least far in spirit if not in date from the elegant sophistications of Moschus and Bion.

(iii) MOSCHUS

The Life of Theocritus cited above calls Moschus a Sicilian, as do the headings to two excerpts from him in the anthology of Stobaeus. The *Palatine Anthology*, in the heading to his first poem,¹ describes him as a Syracusan, and a note on that poem in the same hand as the heading adds: ‘I do not know when Moschus lived, nor have I met with other poems of his.’ The entry under his name in the Lexicon of Suidas also calls him a Syracusan but tells us in addition that he was a grammarian, and an acquaintance² of Aristarchus. Aris-

¹ *IX.* 440.
² Γνώριμος: the word might, but need not, mean pupil.
MOSCHUS

tarchus, librarian of the library at Alexandria and perhaps the most famous of its scholars, seems to have died not long after 150 B.C., and the entry in Suidas entitles us to date Moschus in the middle of the second century B.C. His connexion with Aristarchus points to residence at some time east of Sicily, whether in Alexandria or in Cyprus, where Aristarchus died; and if he is the Moschus whose glossary of the Rhodian dialect is cited by Athenaeus\(^1\) he is likely to have lived also in Rhodes.

Of the four poems commonly printed under his name the first two alone are genuine; the third and fourth were, with no sufficient cause,\(^2\) joined to them in the sixteenth century by Fulvio Orsini, who was followed by Stephanus in his collected edition of the Greek poets (1566). This has had the unfortunate result that since the Lament for Bion was labelled as his, he has been regarded as a pupil of Bion; and despite the statement that he was the second of the bucolic poets, Bion and Moschus are commonly named in that incorrect order.

Moschus is an accomplished versifier; his first poem an ingeniously pretty trifle, the *Europa*, if devoid of serious content, decorative, like the pictures or tapestries from which it borrows. The fragments maintain the same sort of standard. The description of Europa's basket obviously derives from the cup in Theocr. *Id.* 1, but otherwise Moschus shows little influence of Theocritus. [Theocr.] xix, xx and xxvii have sometimes been ascribed to him though without serious reason; xix has some resemblance in theme to Mosch. 1, to which, being much inferior, it may serve as a foil.

\(^1\) xi. 481fr.
\(^2\) One ms (Laurent. xxxii. 16) presents *Idd.* 11, 1, 17 together and iii in close proximity, and one worthless ms (Vindob. 311) ascribes iii to "Moschus Theocritus" in accordance with the belief mentioned in the Life of Theocritus contained in the scholia that these two poets were the same.
INTRODUCTION

(iv) BION

The Life of Theocritus already quoted calls Bion a native of Smyrna, and says that he came from 'a small place named Phloessa', of which no more is known. Smyrna is mentioned as his native place also in the Palatine Anthology,¹ and in the heading to two of the fragments in Stobaeus, and it is implied by the reference to the river Meles in the Lament for Bion.² Some obscure lines in the same poem³ appear to assert that his death was due to poison. The Lament is by a poet who professes himself an Italian pupil of Bion, and it is therefore possible that Bion spent at least some part of his life in the West. If so, it would explain the appeals to the Muses of Sicily and other references to that island in the Lament, though these, like Virgil's Sicelides Musae,⁴ may be accounted for by the facts that Sicily was the traditional home of bucolic poetry and that Bion's predecessors Theocritus and Moschus were both Sicilians. Nothing more is known of Bion's life, and nothing of his date except that he was younger than Moschus. He is commonly placed towards the end of the second century B.C.

Except for the fragments no poem has come down to us as Bion's, but the ascription to him of the Lament for Adonis (q.v.) is generally, and no doubt rightly, accepted. The so-called Epithalamium of Achilles, assigned to him without external evidence by Fulvio Orsini, is somewhat in his manner, but would seem to be rather a work of his school. [Theocr.] xx, xxxiii and xxvii have been thought to be of similar origin. The Lament for Bion, as has been said, is by a pupil.

The Lament for Adonis with its shrill tones and heated erotic colour is a somewhat distasteful poem, though these qualities perhaps reflect the character of the cult of Adonis in Bion's

¹ IX. 440. ² [Mosch.] iii. 70ff.
³ 109ff. ⁴ Ecl. iv. 1.

xxvi
native Asia. Its construction and versification are however competent, and as a whole it compares very favourably with the Lament for Bion himself. The fragments, though cited from Bion's 'Bucolics', to which the poet himself refers in fr. 10, and though Bion is called a neatherd by himself and in the Lament, are mostly concerned with love, and in their trifling artificial way are not devoid of charm. They show also a certain sententiousness which may have commended Bion to the anthologist who has preserved them.

Most of the poems included among the Bucolic Poets' works have now been mentioned, and the three which remain may be taken in order. Theocr. Id. ix is by a foolish and incompetent imitator of Theocritus, whose date however is probably early since the poem was regarded as genuine in antiquity, possesses an ancient commentary, and seems to have been imitated by Virgil. Id. xxi, a dialogue between two old fishermen, though it has sometimes been over-praised, is a work of some interest which has been variously dated from the third century B.C. to the first A.D. The moralising tone is somewhat reminiscent of Bion,1 and perhaps the first century B.C. is as likely a date as any. The Dead Adonis, a wretched poem which owes its place in the collection only to its community of subject with Theocr. xv and Bion 1, may be as late as the fourth or fifth century A.D.

1 Cf. fr. 2, 8.