ET IN AOTEAROA EGO

By R Matthews

"New Zealand" an Oxford classics don told me some time ago after a visit to that country and in connection with a passage out of the Theocritean corpus, "is certainly a Theocritean land". I mean in this paper to analyse certain implications of this remark for the study of New Zealand literature, and in particular for such New Zealand poetry as might reasonably be expected to show up certain features which can, if only for convenience, be labelled "Theocritean".

What are these features? What aspects of Theocritus' Idylls are peculiarly and distinctively his? A full answer to this question would comprise nothing less than a new study-in-depth of Theocritus, but I suggest that an informed layman's answer might revolve around the concepts of 'pastoral' (which our informed layman, unless he is for a layman unusually perceptive, will not distinguish from 'bucolic') and 'idyllic' - concepts of which certainly the latter, and very possibly the former as well, will in fact owe more to Vergil than to Theocritus. Further, New Zealand's agricultural base and scenic attractiveness may encourage in the unwary the presupposition that anything in New Zealand writing that touches on nature poetry must of necessity have bucolic or pastoral or idyllic properties.

This basic presupposition is neither justified nor true, as will be shown. It is also false to assume that 'bucolic' and 'pastoral' are synonyms, or that the Idylls are 'idyllic' in the modern, Vergil-mediated sense. An analysis of the terms involved will not only clear the conceptual air but also lead directly in to a consideration of the Theocritean (or anti-Theocritean) character of certain poems by three well-known poets of the Thirties (A.R.D. Fairburn, R.A.K. Mason, Denis Glover) and by one somewhat later contemporary of theirs who defies close classification, namely James K. Baxter.

I shall begin with 'bucolic'. Etymologically speaking, this word deriving from bous must mean 'concerning the raising of cattle'. It seems however also to have been used as a blanket term, in an inclusive sense, to cover not only boukoloi (cowherds) but also poimenes (shepherds) and aipoloi (goatherds); this is the hierarchy or ranking order that seems to emerge from Idylls IV, V, V111 and 1X, as indeed from Vergil's Eclogues. In particular we see boukoliasdesthai used a number of times as a technical term for something like 'engage in a singing contest', and boukolikoi aoidoi for the songs so produced.
We must assume that the term *boukoliasdesthai* has shifted from 'talk like cowherds' to 'sing like cowherds' and in particular 'sing in amoebaeic contest' as was, so it would appear, the frequent habit of cowherds. But the term has come into its own as a technical one for that particular type of song, even when no actual contest is in progress, e.g. in *Idyll* 1 (marked as 'bucolic' by the refrain) where the one song sung is indeed rewarded but has no rival, and the reward is arranged in advance; and in *Idyll* V11 (commonly recognised as one of the most 'bucolic' of all the idylls) where there are indeed two songs but they are non-competitive, leaving it an open question whether the *lagobolon* promised by Lykidas to Simichidas (who on any likely interpretation stands for Theocritus) is to be construed as a reward or as a token of initiation into poetry. In any case it has become clear since Gow that a 'bucolic' song may indeed be one sung by cowherds or other herdsmen whiling away the time with their herds or flocks, but the actual content of the songs thus sung need have nothing to do with the occupation of those who sing them.

If we make a brief survey of the content of the actual songs presented as *bukolikoi aoidai* in the Idylls of undisputed Theocritean authorship (in practice this means Idylls 1, 1V, V and V11), we find that they concern: a lament for the passing of a mythical figure, an assortment of riddles, sly digs, insults and challenges, various forms of sexual innuendo (including homosexual rape and, by implication, bestiality: see below), best wishes for a sea journey, pederastically tinged observations on a number of mythological figures, allusions to cultic practices smacking of sado-masochism (see below), and a form of curse. This not very appetising mixed bag is sealed, so to speak, with the spittle of a crone. The whole is hardly such as to whet the taste of a modern reader, but it is not hard to believe that it may well represent what goes on, or can go on, in the inner psyche of the lone individual, rural or urban, ancient or modern.

In particular the various erotic associations alluded to above should not be underplayed, distasteful though some of them may be, for love (of whatever sexual orientation) is a frequent theme of Greek bucolic in the broadest sense, as indeed of much New Zealand verse and perhaps of poetry *tout court*. In particular, New Zealand farm labourers are just as likely to be as adept in their amorous exploits, and as boastful in talking about them as anyone else, yet

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1 *Idyll* IX is clearly not by Theocritus; it is an imitation by another hand of the preceding idyll, itself doubtfully Theocritean. But the opening word *boukoliasdeo* of *Idyll* IX and the invocation to *boukolikai Moisai* near the end frame the imitation, and are doubtless intended to identify it as a poem in the Theocritean manner and thus facilitate its insertion into the corpus.


interestingly this does not seem to come out in New Zealand poetry. The 'Farmhand' in James K. Baxter's poem of that title feels the attraction of "the girls drifting like flowers" but he is sexually immature; his hairy hands were made for farm work, not lovemaking, he 'has no girl to run her fingers through his sandy hair' and finds fulfilment in hard work at harvest time. R.A.K. Mason in 'Lugete O Veneres' gives a comparable if rather more depressing picture of a "tortured boy" in the form of a lovesick farmhand whose girl has left the area: the boy has no other sexual outlet and can only bemoan his fate while the reader is invited to "laugh at the farce". Love, it would seem, is not a feature of New Zealand Bucolic, if the term may be permitted. Not that the topic of love in Greek Bucolic always reaches the fulfilment of actual or prospective conjugal bliss (Idylls 11, 111, V1, X1, X1V, XX - the last-named being pseudo-Theocritean) while the beginning and end of Idyll XV provide yet other very entertaining insights into the everyday realities of conjugal life. Yet love is an ideal, which in the Baxter and Mason poems cited above it is not.

Further, in at least two poems (The Cave, and The Hollow Place), Baxter dwells on the theme of a hillside cave as a place of retreat from the sexual hurly-burly of the outside world, a place of recollection to be freed from "the black knot in the thighs" or from "age's enmity and love's contagion": caves, together with certain other features of the landscape (beaches, tunnels, cliffs, mountains) seem to have held a particular fascination for him. At the same time, his sojourn in the cave must be temporary: "not knowing I would come again"; "pressed through and came to dazzling daylight out".

This would seem to be in open contrast to the cave as the dwelling of the beloved, most notably in Idyll 111, where Amaryllis' cave is her refuge from the unnamed suitor, who wishes he were a bee so as to penetrate the ivy with which her cave is festooned (lines 12-14), invokes Adonis held in a love-embrace by Aphrodite (here named Kythereia) even in death (46-48), and himself threatens suicide while being careful to remove his clothes first (25-27). The suitor is basically a ridiculous figure, but the elements mentioned clearly have erotic overtones whose proper locus is, precisely, the cave. If only the absurd suitor could gain access, "great things (would be) achieved" to quote (out of context) a pleasing euphemism from the largely rather unpleasant Idyll 11.143. With Baxter however it is quite the reverse.

One New Zealand poet who does use the cave in this way is A.R.D. Fairburn, in a poem likewise entitled The Cave which begins negatively: "From the cliff top it appeared a place of defeat", but passes rapidly in a first-person-plural narration to transfiguration and redemption "in the brief eternity of the flesh", which is anything but defeatist, and will serve as a model for "lovers straying from the picnic two worlds hence". When the speakers have "left and returned to (their) lives", their act is "entombed, its essence caught for ever in the wind, and in the noise of the waves, for ever mixed with lovers' breaths".

There is a paradox in that of the three New Zealand poets mentioned in this connection Fairburn is the only one not to have had a classical education: Mason and Baxter both had Latin but not Greek, so that Baxter's extensive familiarity with Greek mythology and the Homeric legends had to be acquired
through translation. Further, in a squib fired, and entitled, 'On R A K Mason', Fairburn showed himself ignorant of, or at the very least indifferent to, which of the classical languages was used by the writer Epictetus. Yet it is Fairburn whose cave-imagery is most closely in the classical tradition. The image of the cave as a love bower is itself Homeric, going back to the Odysseus-Calyxpo encounter in Odyssey V. But Fairburn too was attracted by the Odysseus legend, with one long and one short poem in this topic, both entitled Odysseus the longer one attempting a deliberately antipodean setting though with dubious success.

But to return to the preoccupations of this section, the appellation 'bucolic' in its Theocritean sense as applied to New Zealand is itself dubious: some elements, not entirely laudatory, are present: coarseness of style in interpersonal relationships, earthiness, absence of pretensions, a certain defensive touchiness; while others: widespread sexual deviation, widespread musicality, and the tradition of the troubadour or creator of love-ditties, are not.

One area where comparison is difficult is that of language: in post-classical Greece dialect choice and dialect variation are part of the tools of the poet's trade, and from the thirty extant idylls we know that Theocritus was competent in at least three dialects, none of which need strictly have been his mother tongue (Sicily was traditionally Doric territory but Syracuse at least would surely have been koine-speaking in the third century), yet he consistently uses one literary dialect (Doric) for all the recognisably 'bucolic' idylls; it is however a literary Doric without significant differentiation between the narrative sections of an idyll and the parts actually put into the mouths of the speakers; moreover the comments that emerge in Idyll XV (lines 87-93) on the Doric of the Syracusan women in Alexandria suggest that actual spoken Doric was 'broader' and 'chattier' than the language of the idylls themselves permits us to perceive.

Unlike Greek (but like Latin) English has - with the very limited exception of certain high-status regional dialects within the British Isles - no concept of dialect manipulation as a literary device, so that any search for a New Zealand 'Doric' will be completely vain. What does emerge, at least to one who studies the poems from the printed page, is a vague awareness of the creeping Americanisation of New Zealand speech, as is illustrated in Baxter in particular by the relatively high frequency of such words as track, bush, range, creek, and many others. This should neither surprise nor offend, nor of course should it be thought exclusive either to poets or to country characters. Further, by calling this process 'Americanisation' no claim is being made that the New Zealand usage originates in the United States: rather, as Turner 6 has shown, similar or

5 The claim that New Zealand English has a lot in common with North American English tends to surprise because most people subsume all regional linguistic variation under 'accent' alone, and it is true that the New Zealand accent, while distinct, is not noticeably American. But the position with vocabulary, grammar, register, colonialisms etc is vastly different. See my 'Colonial Features in New Zealand English' in World Language English 31 83. But why the same claim should offend has never been completely clear.

6 G W Turner. The English Language in Australia and New Zealand Longman 1966, esp pp 56-57, also the article cited therein from Te Reo (v 6, 1963)
convergent uses can arise spontaneously in different colonial or post-colonial situations, of which by far the most dominant has been that of the North American continent. In the spoken medium this impression largely vanishes even though to my ear none of the four New Zealand poets touched on in this study has a pronounced New Zealand accent; on the basis of taped material I would however rate only one (Baxter) as endowed with a particularly good reading voice, and only one other (Glover) as being anything more than mediocre in this regard. On a rather different level we might note Baxter's frustrated ambitions to acquire a better linguistic medium for his poetry in the shape and form of Maori 7; in this however he would seem to have been mistaken, falling into the common trap of transferring to the language certain qualities, imagined or real, of the people who speak it. While this is indeed an error, it is no greater than that perpetrated by the heteros xenos in *Idyll* XV. 87-88.

I pass now to 'pastoral'. For most people, including many classicists, 'bucolic' and 'pastoral' are synonymous, and indeed the two words are often used interchangeably. However, David Halperin draws a very useful distinction between *bucolic* as a genre-name referring to the circumstances of a song's composition (practically all the genuinely Theocritean poems in the corpus are, or might be, bucolic), and *pastoral* as a strictly descriptive term referring to a given song's content: only about twelve at most of Theocritus' poems can be so described. Thus 'bucolic' is necessarily a literary term, whereas 'pastoral' can be (and is) applied to painting, music, sculpture and the arts generally, in a sense that spills over into the agricultural.

Now there is some truth in describing New Zealand as a pastoral country: as a matter of economic fact, as a matter of landscape, as a matter of national myth-formation and in popular imagination the description fits. We must of course add the rider that its pastoral character notwithstanding, New Zealand is inhabited predominately by city- and town-dwellers; few New Zealanders know from direct experience "the smell of saddle leather" or are in a position to "calm the bleating ewe in birth travail" (James K. Baxter: *The Homecoming* - an Odysseus-related poem). Exactly the same is true for Theocritus, who was by profession a man of literature, not a farmer, as indeed were Vergil and, much later, Milton. In Theocritus the animals being pastured are cows, sheep and goats in that hierarchical order, though numerically goats would seem to outnumber sheep. In New Zealand the same status ranking might be held to obtain for the Waikato, while for most of the country sheep would clearly precede cows both in status and in numbers, with goats coming in a very poor third. Theocritus makes no mention of pigs as farm animals, nor of horses, though the latter occur in non-agricultural contexts, and both pigs and donkeys tend to recur frequently in Greek proverbs.

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7 See the eleventh, 'Poem for Colin' in *Jerusalem Sonnets*, 1970.
Bee-keeping is implicit in pseudo-Theocritus X1X (subtitled kenokleptes - the honey is stolen, while bees several times come into the genuinely Theocritean idylls: I.107, V.46 (= an almost verbatim repetition of the preceding), III.13, VII.84 (both with erotic undertones) and from pseudo - or doubtfully Theocritean poems: VIII.45, IX.34, XIX.7 (above) and XXII.42. The erotic function of the ivy-penetrating bee in the third idyll has already been mentioned; those in the seventh idyll have the function of preserving the life of Komatas with a view to furthering his erotic association with the singer, namely Lykidas (lines 85-89).

But erotic associations with animals go further than bees. Despite the inhibitions which even sexually amoral Greeks seem to have felt on the subject it seems to have been a commonplace that the sexual frustrations of male herdsmen were alleviated, if that is the right word, not only by pederastic relationships (idylls V, VII, VIII, XII, XIII) but also on occasion by the ugly phenomenon of copulation with their female animals. This is not explicitly attested in the idylls, though in two places there seems to be an indirect allusion. At the beginning of idyll III the unnamed suitor for the hand of Amaryllis sets the scene, in which his nanny goats tai de moi aiges are browsing on the hill and Tityros elaunei them. Now elaunein basically means to 'drive', which at first sight seems fully innocent, but the word also means 'to mount' sensu obscaeno katelaunein, is so used quite unambiguously in idyll V.116, also by Aristophanes at pax 711 and ecclesiazusae 1082, (in the latter instance with emphasis on the purely animalistic side of sex), and there are reasons for preferring this sense here: the animals are already grazing and do not need to be driven anywhere else, and the suitor's instruction to Tityros is "graze them, don't elaunein them, or the buckgoat enorchas will be after you" evidently out of sexual jealousy both on the part of the buckgoat (who wants to elaunein his nannies) and on the part of the suitor (who would like to do the same to Amaryllis).

The second indirect allusion comes in idyll IV. 51-54, where the goatherd Battos gets a thorn in his foot while 'gaping' chasmaumenos after one of the heifers of his cowherd companion Korydon. Now urban children might well find the sight of a real live cow fascinating and gape-occasioning but this can hardly be true of post-puberty herdsmen, and the only likely explanation seems to be that Battos is sexually attracted towards the animal in question.

This interpretation coheres not only with Battos' lowly status as a mere goatherd while the object of his attentions is a cow, but also with his somewhat prurient interest in a human love affair (not his own) just a few lines later (IV.59-60). As well as that, there are other points at which close parallels between human and animal sexuality are drawn: 1.87-88, IV.11-12, V.41-42, V.145-150, VI.13-15, VIII.49-50, VIII.72-76, IX.3. Taken singly, none of these latter references is conclusive, but together they represent an interest in the reproductive processes of farm animals that goes beyond what we might expect in an ordinarily healthy

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9 I owe these allusions respectively to Heather White, 'A case of Pastoral Humour in Theocritus' in Museum Philologicum Londinense (1986) and to Gilbert Lawall, Theocritus' Can Pastoralis A Poetry Book, Cambridge Massachusetts (1967)
farm worker, who indeed must be close to the 'facts of life', but just because he is close to them, feels no need to bring them up continually in song, contest, warning or threat. New Zealand pastoralism presumably does not extend so far, nor can it easily be imagined that anybody might desire that it should.

A lighter side to herdsmen's relationships with their animals comes out in the names they are given: Lepargos/Kymaitha (apparently the object of Battos' gaping) Konaros/Kinaitha (similar to but not identical with the second-named) Phalaros/Leukitas (this last certainly not a name). The Loeb edition of J.M. Edmonds (1912/1928) gives these respectively as Snowdrop, Goodbody (an allusion to Battos?), Crumple, Browning, Piebald and Whitecoat. Edmonds was not blind to the innuendoes of Idyll V in particular, whence most of these names are taken, and twice in that idyll resorted to a Latin translation rather than an English one, in the belief that by doing so he was giving decent camouflage to crude acts portrayed in equally crude language.

Studies have also been made of the language in which farm animals are addressed: use of nominative for vocative, use of plural nominative/vocative with or without article, etc., of a kind that rather suggests a pattern of stylised language of animal address, not unknown in English and indeed being a specialised development among New Zealand sheep farmers, together with the equally specialised language of command (by voice, whistle and gesture) to highly trained New Zealand sheepdogs.

By contrast, Theocritus' (or pseudo-Theocritus', the attribution of Idyll VIII is uncertain) only reference to a sheepdog functioning as such (VIII.65-66) shows him (named as Lampoulos White-tail) to be lazy, indisciplined and quite literally asleep on the job. The dog portrayed in VI.9-14 must in fact be a sheepdog too, but the lines describe it in quite another context in which it is undisciplined but certainly not lazy or asleep.

Pastoral as a concept has of course travelled a very long way since Theocritus, firstly and most importantly at the hands of Vergil, all of whose Eclogues, though several had a non-pastoral purpose, are in an unmistakably pastoral setting, then through the Christian Pastoral of Late Latin Antiquity that itself drew on Calpurnius Siculus and Nemesianus as well as Vergil, to the Renaissance and subsequent re-emergence of Pastoral in several national tongues: in English the best-known names are those of Edmund Spenser, Michael Drayton, Philip Sidney and John Milton. But Pastoral in and since Vergil has changed: it has become a genre-name, thus usurping that of Bucolic and thereby obliterating the distinction drawn by Halperin. We might almost say it has been purged or at least purified: henceforth there is to be no uncouth speech or behaviour, no delight in purple patches, no unpleasant innuendo or salacious curiosity. 'Pastoral' as a term has also become more diffuse: interestingly it occurs somewhere in the title of most recent generic English studies on Theocritus, largely the work of North American scholars, even where their principal

10 For instance, L. Rossi, 'Mondo pastorale e poesia bucolica di maniera: l'idilio ottavo del corpus teocriteo' in Studi italiani di filologia classica 43 (1977b) 5-25.
emphasis is in fact more bucolic than pastoral; amazingly this is true even of Hilperin himself.

It would be neither uncharitable nor unrealistic to assume that publicity and marketing requirements have had a role to play here: without checking extensively I have the distinct impression that the occurrence of 'Pastoral' in titles where 'Bucolic' would be the more precise designation is more frequent in the case of booklength studies (where titles must catch the eye and fire the imagination) than in articles in scholarly journals, where this need is less pressing. I further take the American trend to be evidence of idealisation of the genre, ably abetted by the near-coincidence to the ear of 'ideal' and 'idyll', to which the cynics might like to add 'idle' (or even 'idol').

Moreover, this is supported by a rather subtle observation concerning the metaphorical or non-literary uses of the terms in question. Just as 'monkey' and 'ape', though generically related terms, have vastly different connotations when applied to people ('monkey' is a term of endearment, 'ape' an outright insult), so it is with 'pastoral' and 'bucolic'. Outside literary contexts, 'bucolic' in modern English suggests uncouthness, boorishness and irredeemable rusticity; it is an essentially pejorative term. 'Pastoral' on the other hand carries notions of sweet primeval innocence, bliss and care-free existence se-curitas (in the Latin sense).

It is clearly a favourable term that has become idealised and through associations of both sound and literary history tends to run into 'idyllic' as noted above, with the ensuing blurring of the pastoral/bucolic distinction. How valid this last observation is for languages other than English I am not fully competent to say, but am tempted to think not particularly: for one thing, in French and Italian the poems known in English as the Eclogues are still referred to as Vergil's Bucolics. Confusion is thus rampant, as if to suggest that between Theocritus and Vergil, editors are reluctant to acknowledge that the scene has changed.

It has also changed geographically. Theocritus' Idylls are variously sited: the courts of Alexandria (XVII) or Syracuse (XVI), urban street scenes (XV), pubs (XIV) or domestic settings (II). One presupposes a sea journey (XXVIII). Several have mythological settings (XVIII, XXII, XXIV, XXV) or no obvious setting at all. Of the strictly pastoral idylls some can be pinned down to a known locality: Sicily (VIII), Southern Italy (IV/V), Kos (VII); while for others (I: Sicily; VI: Kos) the attribution is tentative rather than certain. But what is clear is that Theocritus had actual, identifiable places in mind, whereas for Vergil the pastoral landscape, like the pastoral concept, has become idealised: his 'Arcadia' no longer specifically connotes the mountainous core of the Peloponnese but a mythical landscape which is not anywhere in particular. It exists conceptually rather than geographically.

11 Three French editions of the Eclogues, dated 1897, 1948 and 1967, all make use of the term 'bucoliques'. In Italian editions they are 'egloghe' in 1971 but 'bucoliche' in 1976 and 1979
It is interesting to speculate on why Vergil chose Arcadia as his pastoral locus and not for instance Sicily, or the South of Italy, or Kos. There could have been numerous reasons: Sicily and the Italian South were perhaps too closely within the Roman orbit, while the associations of ‘Kos’ had been pre-empted for medicine and besides the name would have been metrically inconvenient.

Arcadia occurs several times in Theocritus in catalogues of geographical features of no particular importance; the one instance where an Arcadian reference is singled out and dwelt upon is of difficult interpretation (VII.106-108) but seems to involve some kind of cultic practice whereby the image of a deity was beaten with squills in a ritual symbolising either punishment (so both Gow 12 and Dover 13) or vicarious self-chastisement (akin to dishevelment or even self-mutilation in mourning14) - or of course both. While Theocritus does seem to underline the pain involved, Gow rightly remarks that squills are hardly the most effective instrument - and least of all, Dover observes, when one is a statue.

Vergil does not exploit this particular passage at all, but it may be significant that the deity in question is Pan: Arcadia is his haunt (or rather, one of his many haunts) and it is apparently considered his duty to keep it well stocked with food. Lack of the means of physical sustenance is not a Vergilian preoccupation except in Eclogues I and XI, where the motivation is political and thus unsuited for ‘pastoralisation’, whether in Arcadia or anywhere else. Robert Coleman 15 in his edition of the Eclogues accumulates a number of references to Arcadia in Greek literature: it emerges as an area rich in sheep (Hom. Hymn 19.30 and Theocr. XXII.157), its inhabitants are characterised by isolation (Thuc.1.2.3), eating acorns (Hdt.1.66.2) and poverty impelling mercenary service abroad (Xen. Hell. VII.1.23). To these we may add the ‘Arethousa connection’ as portrayed in the undersea river linking Arcadia and Sicily, described in the poem by Moschos beginning Alpheios meta Pisan and variously enumerated as fragment no 3, or 6, or 7: it is in fact a non-fragmentary eight-line poem.

The passages cited by Coleman establish the suitability of Arcadia as a ‘pastoral’ venue in the sense elaborated above, while the Moschos poem provides us with a point of juncture between pastoral Arcadia and Theocritean Sicily, and was explicitly so exploited by Vergil at the beginning of Eclogue X, a poem more ‘Arcadian’ than any other Eclogue.

What does not derive directly from our sources but is nonetheless most probably a relevant truth is the linguistic isolation of Arcadia: it was perhaps the last area of mainland Greece to succumb to the koine and even before this was to happen it stood out as a dialect ‘island’ in a sea (both metaphorical and in good

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12 op cit. ad loc.
14 I detect traces of this in minor bucolic, the Epitaphios Adonidos (lines 20-22) and the Epitaphios Bionos (lines 31-35).
15 Robert Coleman, Vergil Eclogues (ed.), C U P. 1977, esp pp 22-32 and his comments on Ecl VII 4
part literal) of Doric. It may be too much to posit a comparative linguistic interpretation of line 5 of Eclogue X (May bitter Doris never taint you Arethusa with her brine) but the survival to this day of traces of ancient Arcado-Cypriot in certain features of the Greek of modern Cyprus testifies to the stubbornness of this dialect despite successive inundations by Doric, by koine and by subsequent linguistic developments.

In Eclogue V11 the two contestants described as Arcades ambo (line 4) turn out to be resident in Vergil's home region, near the River Mincius (lines 12-13); their 'Arcadian' properties are presumably to be related to their prowess at amoebaeic exchange as evinced in line 5. The expression 'Arcadians both' echoes Arkades amphoteroi in a short poem by Erucius contained in the Garland of Philip (Anth.Pal.VI.96); Erucius most probably composed between the years 50 and 25 B.C. but whether before or after Vergil cannot be known. One of the two Arcadians so designated is called Korydon, as in Vergil, suggesting that literary borrowing is going on, though we cannot know in what direction; or, as Gow-Page remark, both may be echoing a common source lost to us. The poem is otherwise remarkable only for its reference to 'Cyllenian Pan the mountain-lover'. Arcadia and Pan are also mentioned together in Eclogue IV.58-59. These and the several allusions to Arcadia in Eclogue X comprise practically all Vergil's references to a little-known part of Greece, but they have sufficed to establish a firm literary tradition that newcomers to Greek Bucolic are generally surprised to discover not to be of Greek origin.

Regarding the 'pastoral landscape' in New Zealand poetry, not very much can be said. The Latin line O Fons Bandusiae placed somewhat awkwardly at the beginning of Baxter's The First Forgotten can only be intended to evoke such a landscape, with its conscious allusion to Hor. Od. 111.13, but it is far from obvious that Horace’s landscape here is what Baxter actually wants. Much more to the point is the locus of a fine poem of the mature Baxter, namely Poem in the Matukituki Valley. This poem is in no sense pastoral, but much of it concerns the attempt, presumptuous, dangerous and unsuccessful, on the part of puny man who is only "half aware" and "stumbling" to approach the "remote...land's heart" and through it (located in a remote region of the Southern Alps) glimpse at least a reflection of him "who gave the mountain strength/And dwells in holy calm, undying freshness". The attempt fails because (in paraphrase) our souls are too dull, the glass too blinding, our obscure daydreams too familiar, for us to be able to "Endure the hermit's peace/And mindless ecstasy". Instead, "we turn...to...the lawful city/Where man may live and no wild trespass/Of what's eternal shake his grave of time." And that is the point: despite appearances, and despite the appearance of much of Baxter's best poetry, the lawful place of man is the city, not the pastoral ideal. There are echoes here of the opening of

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16 I cannot vouch for the absolute accuracy of this claim, but analogous remarks are to be found in Robert Browning, Medieval and Modern Greek, Hutchinson, Univ Lib 1969, pp. 127-132

17 See A.S.F Gow and Denys Page, The Garland of Philip, 2 vols, C U P 1968, on this poem, the first dealt with under the name of Erucius, and on the floruit of its author.
Eclogue IX as a conscious refutation of the corresponding section of Idyll VII (lines 221 ff.), earning for that Eclogue the appellation ‘Thalysia in Reverse’.

Something comparable can be detected in the final stanza of The Climber by Alistair Campbell, Baxter’s contemporary, in which “the mountain is a lie” and those that “Climb hopefully towards nothing, and yearn/For summits that are bare” are tempted, not without reason, to succumb to the rhetorical question “Why not return/To the fat plains below?”, though in the end the climber whom the poem celebrates climbs up, not down. I refrain from commenting in any depth on other ‘landscaped’ poems emanating from New Zealand, though both Glover and Mason were past masters at these (as well as Baxter), since they are not on the whole within the scope of this paper, though one such poem that merits attention by classical scholars is Mason’s Wayfarers and indeed its little-known imitation or derivation entitled Versiculi Ronaldo by E.M. Blaiklock.

If we turn now to ‘idyllic’ we can see that this term too, like ‘bucolic’ and ‘pastoral’, can in some sense be predicated of New Zealand, though in manner that borders on the trivial: the image of New Zealand that obtains in some Continental European countries (less so today in England, and since ‘Rainbow Warrior’ less so in France) is more or less that of an ‘idyllic’ land. One has however to look rather hard to find ‘idyllic’ elements in New Zealand poetry, or indeed in any recent New Zealand creative writing: the emphasis has been on self-scrutiny and social criticism in a tradition that has its roots in the Angry Young Men of the Thirties. However I find an interesting relic, if one may call it that, of an ‘Idyll’ in a pastoral key, coming from Denis Glover, one of the better-known thirties writers, and though possibly written a long time before his death, published only posthumously. It bears the title Pastoral from the Doric and purports to be a poetic rendering of Theocritus VIII.53-56. It was first published in Islands 30 (Oct. 1980) and subsequently in Denis Glover: Selected Poems (Penguin 1981) with an introduction by Allen Curnow. The poem is short and I quote it here in full:

Not for me fat far-off lands
Nor guarantee of meat money
Nor even a medal gained
Trimming seconds off the wind.

No. Beneath this rock I sit
You in my arms, fond
Watching my sheep graze,
The rolling blue beyond.

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18 The expression ‘Thalysia in Reverse’ appears first to have been used, in English at any rate, as recently as 1974, by W Berg in Early Vergil Athlone Press, Univ. of London, but the idea was certainly in vogue some time before then
This fine poem is rightly picked out by Curnow in his introduction to the *Selected Poems* for special comment on its pastoral character, but from a scholarly if not a poetic point of view Glover has unwittingly created as hornets' nest by his selection of this particular quatrain in this particular idyll. It will be instructive to compare the Greek text:

\[
\begin{align*}
\mu\eta \ \mu\omicron \ \gamma\alpha\nu \ \Pi\epsilon\lambda\omicron\omicron\omicron\zeta, \ \mu\eta \ \mu\omicron \ \Κ\rho\omicron\omicron\epsilon\sigma\epsilon\alpha \ \tau\alpha\lambda\alpha\nu\tau\alpha
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
e\iota\eta \ \epsilon\chi\epsilon\ivin, \ \mu\iota\delta\epsilon \ \pi\rho\omicron\sigma\theta\eta \ \theta\epsilon\epsilon\ivin \ \alpha\nu\epsilon\omicron\omicron\nu
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\alpha\lambda\lambda ' \ \upsilon\omicron \ \tau\acute{\alpha} \ \pi\epsilon\tau\rho\acute{\alpha} \ \tau\acute{\alpha}\delta ' \ \xi\omicron\omicron\mu\acute{\iota} \ \alpha\gamma\kappa\acute{\alpha} \ \epsilon\chi\omicron\nu \ \tau\omicron.
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
s\omicron\upsilon\nu\omicron\omicron\nu\omicron \ \mu\iota\mu ' \ \xi\omicron\omicron\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron \ \Sigma\iota\kappa\epsilon\lambda\iota\kappa\omicron\nu \ \tau \ ' \ \epsilon\omicron \ \alpha\lambda
\end{align*}
\]

As is immediately evident the metre is the elegiac couplet, not found elsewhere in the Theocritean *corpus* than in the eight *Idyll*, and here only for the actual exchanges of the singing-contest (lines 33-60), thus accounting for only about a third of the whole poem. Partly for this reason the *Idyll* is commonly, though not universally, held to be spurious; it is followed by a shorter ninth *Idyll* forming a kind of appendage to it and certainly not by Theocritus, being commonly held to be quite devoid of any poetic merit (see footnote 1).

In the context of the amoebaeic exchange of song it is likely that the *tu* of line 55 is one or the other of the two contestants, though which of them is in fact speaking this quatrain is unclear, as *prima facie* at least one quatrain has been lost (but see below). If this is the case, then either Menalkas is addressing Daphnis or vice versa, so that in either case the relationship is pederastic.

On the less likely but not altogether implausible hypothesis that *tu* is the previously addressed companion of the speaker of lines 53-56, then it becomes necessary to clarify who that speaker is. In the text as received it is Daphnis, whereas the hypothesis of a lost quatrain matching 49-52 would give 53-56 to Menalkas. If the attribution to Daphnis is right and if *tu* is *ex hypothesi* not Menalkas, then it can only be Daphnis' previously mentioned companion, Milon, who is of course male, and thus we finish up with a pederastic relationship as before. If 53-56 are however assigned to Menalkis (and assuming correspondingly that *tu* is not Daphnis), then his previously mentioned companion turns out to be indeed female, though further textual difficulties in line 43 make it unclear whether she is in fact a real person; moreover it is on balance less likely that Menalkas' other companion is being invoked in line 55.

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19 The Greek text is as printed by Gow, *op cit*. Discussion of relevant conjectures follows in my text.

20 The MSS read ἀ καλὰ παῖς Meineke, followed by Wilamowitz and Gow but not by Gallavotti, preferred Ναίς το παῖς. But in neither case is it clear that the lady in question is supposed to be physically present, or even existing outside Menalkas' imagination. See also note 23 in this connection.
Yet another point in favour of the pederastic interpretation is the conjecture
*synnome kai'* for *synnome mai'* in line 56, proposed initially by Graefe and
Although this conjecture has now been discarded by both Gow and Gallavotti, it is
highly probable that the text Denis Glover had in front of him when he first
made the acquaintance of Theocritus in the early thirties was in fact Wilamowitz’
text, or one deriving from it. Thus we may reasonably infer that Glover knew
(or could or should have known) that he was dealing with an all-male love affair.

Finally, for those who believe that *emendationes textuales non sunt
multiplicandae sine necessitate* the matter has been clinched by Heather
White, who in a recent article argues convincingly both for the seven-quatrain
and thus asymmetrical exchange of songs and for their distribution and
attribution as in the received text: the relationship thus transpires to be either
Daphnis-Menalkas or Daphnis-Milon. The upshot of all this is that
overwhelmingly the odds remain stacked in favour of a pederastic reading of the
lines, which even in today’s permissive climate necessarily alters the reception
of these lines by the modern reader, and further raises the question of how
perceptively Glover was able to read between them.

But we have not yet altogether finished with Denis Glover, whose chequered
career included both extensive naval and marine experience, and classical
scholarship, including Greek. Allen Curnow remarks that he was much taken by
the notion of ‘rolling’, whether applied to the sea (as in his poem) or to the Doric
of the original (as indicated by Glover in an accompanying note, originally
published with the poem). In fact the sea plays a relatively unimportant part in
most of Theocritus, though there are evocative passages in Idylls V1, V11 and
XIII, as well as a spurious item entitled *The Fisherman* (ps. Theocr. XX1).

For two and a half thousand lines of verse produced mostly either on a small
island (Kos) or on a rather larger one (Sicily) this is somewhat odd, and may
indicate that Theocritus did not share Glover’s enthusiasm for the sea,
seascapes and sea experience. Indeed the Ancient Greeks, though a sea-
faring people, were at the same time a sea-fearing people with a strange kind
of mistrust of the sea and a reluctance to venture on it more than necessary.
The same has been said of an even more sea-girt people, namely the New
Zealanders, though here Glover himself is an illustrious exception. And while

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1955.

22 Since writing this I have unearthed an earlier English edition of the more popular idylls that
prints *synnome mai'* in line 56 of *Idyll* VIII and uses the phrase as a pretext for giving the whole
quatrain, tentatively, to Menalkas, even though printed under the name of Daphnis. The
argument from *gynaikophlias* however in line 60 is vacuous, as bisexuality was not uncommon.
The edition in question is that of Herbert Kynaston (formerly Snow), Clarendon Press Oxford,
1892. It cannot be excluded that Glover may have used this edition and not one based on
Wilamowitz’ Oxford text.

23 Heather White, ‘On the Structure of Theocritus’ *Idyll VIII*’ in *Museum Philologicum Londiniense*
(1981) 181 190
the language of Theocritus VIII is unmistakeably Doric, it is not obvious that Doric 'rolls' more than any other Greek dialect, nor that the Doric of this idyll is any less artificial than that of the genuinely Theocritean idylls: indeed the only unmistakeably Doric (as against generally non-Attic) feature of this quatrain is the use of *tu* as an accusative in line 55.

Glover's first stanza is less productive of controversy, but we might note that "trimming seconds off the wind" is in fact very close to *prosthe theein anemon* literally 'running before the wind', and that the English expression very possibly derives from the Greek one. In Greek however it is of general application, not specifically of yachting or boat-racing, which the Greeks of post-Homeric times did not practice. Further, it is tempting to think that the "fat far-off lands" that guarantee meat money (by selling beef?) are in fact no further off than the North Island, as seen from the viewpoint of one who lived most of his life in the South, and whose south-island identity comes out quite clearly in other poems, most notably *Dunedin Revisited, Holiday Piece, Towards Banks Peninsula*, and the series *River Poems* referring to the Clutha.

It has been the purpose of this last section to show that the lines from Theocritus VIII that Glover chose as the basis of his *Pastoral from the Doric* are beset with textual and interpretative difficulties whose solution, principally in the matter of who exactly is reclining in whose arms, must tend to reduce the 'idyllic' character of the pastoral scene chosen for illustration. It was of course Glover's purpose to write a poem in English, not a scholarly comment on one in Greek, and in this he undoubtedly succeeded. At the same time many poems of a broadly pastoral kind show a much more feet-on-the-ground attitude towards life in the country: the *Arawata Bill* sequence, the *Sings Harry* poems, and most notably and brilliantly *The Magpies* which is utterly realist, harshly non-idyllic, and in some ways reminiscent of the dispossessed Meliboeus in Vergil's first Eclogue.

If Arcadia can be 'invented' for poetic creativity, so can Aotearoa; in neither case will the resultant poetic landscape necessarily reflect either the geophysical or the socioeconomic realities of the region so chosen. Halperin 24 notes the phenomenon in contexts quite outside those of any European literature, leaving us no cause to be surprised by its re-emergence in yet more distant lands which, to quote R.A.K. Mason's *Sonnet of Brotherhood*, are

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{here in this far-pitched perilous hostile place} \\
\text{this solitary hard-assaulted spot} \\
\text{fixed at the friendless outer edge of space}
\end{align*}
\]

24 David Halperin, *op cit.* ch 6 Pastoral Origins and the Ancient Near East, pp 85 117
not because New Zealand is distant from Europe but because it is part of a human world where spatial relationships are secondary to the stresses and tensions of a post-pastoral (and perhaps neo-bucolic) urban civilisation.  

ILIAD III 141-244: Perspective

By E M Watson

Upon the ramparts life lingered; gazing beneath a familiar sun riding in the low west of the tenth year, she watched the woven tapestry of the turf and was accounted a thing of beauty, desirable for ever. And she saw Death stride upon the shivered plains and knew him not. It took blind eyes to see him pacing; while ancient cicadas from the oak tree beneath the Skaian gates whispered 'Let her go, let her go, lest Death see her terrible smiling. Woe, woe, woe to us and to the children wakened to an endless mourning.' Blind eyes only saw the shifting balance and the dream which ran swiftly in the shade of the cicadas' dry murmur red beneath the slow dying ramparts.

25 Many of the poems in English referred to in this article may be found in R Matthews, Classical NZ Poetry, Dunedin, 1985