

Vergil Eclogue Critical Commentary

In this gobbet we will be trying to find out what make Vergil the author we know him as and what has influence his work, we will also be discussing what makes Vergil stand out from other ancient Roman authors, the style of writing that Vergil uses and finally what topics that Vergil writes about. To complete this gobbet, I will be using part of one of Vergil's books, *Eclogue 1*. The *Eclogue 1* cover a conversation between Meliboeus and Tityrus since Meliboeus have been forced off his land but Tityrus tells the story of his journey to Rome and of meeting a "god" who allowed him to remain on his land, Tityrus would then offer Meliboeus to spend the night on his land.

In the first part of Eclogue we can start to infer the idea of this text since it has Meliboeus partial describe the situation that he is in to Tityrus are in by saying "We are leaving our country's bounds and sweet fields. We are outcasts from our country"¹ from this we can infer that Meliboeus were removed from his land after Octavian have started to give land to veterans as a payment method and this led to Meliboeus loses his land. It just so happens that Vergil's family also lost land due to the Octavian paying off his veteran and I believe this to be the main reason why Vergil wrote the first part of the Eclogue because of his own personal situation of losing his family farming land due to the Veterans being given land.

In the next part of he dialogue between Tityrus and Meliboeus we have Tityrus starting to describe his journey to Rome and of his meeting with a god, with this god I believe that it is Octavian due to the deification of Julius Caesar and the bloodline connection between them², this is Vergil leading his text into a pastoral text using imagery of supposed godly beings. Another interpretation of this part the deity that Tityrus envisions is not Octavian but instead a vision where he experiences what he believes is a god that grants him permission to live on his land.

¹ (VIRGIL, & KRISAK, L. 2010)

² (Toynbee, 2020)

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In the next section of the Eclogue 1 Meliboeus questions Tityrus who his god is and is told by Tityrus that his god is that of the city of Rome by saying "The city which they call Rome,"³ from this we can infer that Tityrus has deified the city of Rome for allowing him the freedom of staying on his land, this is supported by the next piece of dialogue by Tityrus where he says, "Freedom, who though late, yet cast her eyes upon me in my sloth"⁴. From this quote we can also infer from this dialogue that Vergil might have saw Rome in the same light as his character Tityrus as Rome granted Vergil the same type of fortune that Tityrus had leading to Vergil creating the character in his likeness.

Continuing, after Tityrus proclaims about his freedom that he was granted in Rome his counterpart in the Eclogue 1, Meliboeus starts to tell Tityrus that the "the very orchards here were calling for you" from this we can see that Meliboeus is telling Tityrus that his place is not in Rome but in the countryside where they held land, the reason why Vergil could have wrote this is because he might have been in a similar situation due to his moving to Rome.

After this we have Tityrus respond by saying "what was I to do? I could not quit my slavery nor elsewhere find my gods so ready to aid."⁵ From this we can see that Tityrus viewed his life in the countryside as slavery which views might have been influenced by the author Vergil who also lived in the countryside. The other part of this piece of dialogue is leading back into religion and what made this a pastoral text, with Tityrus claiming that Rome is gifted by the gods because of the aid that he received there. At the end of this piece of dialogue Tityrus said that the answer to his plea was a youth who they light their altars twice for six days every year and that his answer was "Feed, swains, your oxen as of old; rear your bulls." From this we can made an inference that the youth told Tityrus to return to his land and to continue his life as a farmer in the countryside.

To conclude this gobbet, we have been able to made inferences on Vergil's Eclogue 1 and the contents of the pastoral text, in this we found out that Vergil's life influenced the decision in the

³ (VIRGIL, & KRISAK, L. 2010)

⁴ (VIRGIL, & KRISAK, L. 2010)

⁵ (VIRGIL, & KRISAK, L. 2010)

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story where the character Meliboeus was removed from his land like Vergil was when Octavian removed him from there lands when he gave the veterans of the war with Caesar's Assassins, there land in the north of Italy. Another aspect of this text we was able to infer, then confirm using scholarship was the type of text it was, because of the constant reference to a deity figure, we are able to make find out that the text is a pastoral text.

Bibliography

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