

1688[1044] ἀμηνυός: all his μένος has drained away, and he is 'tireless' (1656) no longer.

XIX

Moschus

Epyllion. The term 'epyllion' is sometimes applied by modern scholars to poems written in epic hexameters but on a small scale, dealing often with epic themes in novel, witty and surprising ways. Few complete examples survive in Greek (Theoc. *Idylls* 13, 22, 24, [Theoc.] 25, *Europa*), though Latin epyllia help to fill out the picture (Cat. 64, *Moretum*, *Ciris*; cf. Orpheus/Aristaeus in Virg. *Geo.* 4.315-558, Baucis and Philemon in Ovid, *Met.* 8.611-724). But so great were the differences in length (c. 75-c. 1500 lines), style, subject-matter and treatment that closer definition is hardly possible. The most famous poem of this type in antiquity was Callimachus' *Hecale* (p. 84).

Moschus and the Europa. Moschus (fl. c. 150 B.C.) was a grammarian from Syracuse in Sicily. Fragments of his bucolic poems, in the tradition of Theocritus, survive; but the *Europa* is his only extant complete work. It promises (1-15) to be an aetiological poem on the name of Europe; but in fact it consists in an elegant and witty narrative recounting the abduction of Europa by Zeus disguised as a bull. At the beginning of the poem we are told that Europa dreamt that two women, representing Asia and 'the land opposite', fought over her, and that the latter claimed Europa as her prize (1-15). Europa leaps out of bed and reflects on the dream in naive wonderment (16-27). She gathers together her companions and prepares to go to the seashore to pick flowers; her flower-basket's allegorical scenes are described at length (28-62). When Zeus sees Europa picking flowers he is overcome with desire. He changes himself into a beautiful white bull and gains the girls' confidence (63-107). Europa climbs on to his back and is rapidly borne away across the sea. She maintains an elegant pose as she reflects naively on her ravisher's ability to run over the waves (108-52). The rest of the story is dismissed summarily in a short coda (153-66), and the naming of Europa is not even mentioned (if the poem is complete - see 165-6 n.).

Sources. The Europa-myth was treated by, amongst others, Hesiod, Simonides and Bacchylides; but Moschus seems not to be indebted to

any particular source. The dream and the decoration on the flower-basket are probably his own invention. In a wider sense, however, Moschus is highly derivative. His language is very closely Homeric. The present commentary records some of the many verbatim borrowings; but syntax, rhythm and vocabulary are all traditional. There are several borrowings, too, from Apollonius (9, 31, 35, 48, 101 nn.). The general outlines of the following scenes are derivative: (1) Europa's dream and her trip to the meadow are inspired by Nausicaa's dream and her trip to the seashore in *Odyssey* 6, and by Medea's dream and her ride to meet Jason in *Argonautica* 3: in both cases a nubile young girl travels, accompanied by her handmaidens, to an erotic encounter. The reader is constantly aware of the poem's similarities to and differences from these two stories; and the narrative both challenges recognition of derivative elements and demands admiration for a fresh treatment of similar themes. (2) The personification of the two continents in Europa's dream (8-15) is based on Aesch. *Persae* 181-7, where the Persian queen Atossa sees Europe and Asia as two women in native dress. The general import of Europa's dream has something in common with that of Io in [Aesch.] *Prom.* 645-54, where Io is exhorted to go to the Λέρνης βαθύν | λειμῶνα to meet Zeus, who is in love with her. Io is an ancestress of Europa, and is depicted on the wondrous basket. (3) The theme of abduction whilst gathering flowers in a meadow is derived from the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 1ff., 406ff., where Persephone is snatched away by Hades whilst picking flowers with her attendant Oceanids. (4) Another traditional element is the set-piece ('ecphrastic') description of Europa's basket (37-62), which in layout appears to be directly modelled on Theocritus' famous description of a rustic beaker at *Idyll* 1.27-56. Moschus links the basket both thematically and genealogically with his heroine (39-42 n.); and this stress on lineage and pedigree provides an interesting parallel with the self-conscious literary ancestry of the ecphrasis itself, which is part of a venerable line stretching back to Homer's Shield of Achilles at *Iliad* 18.478-608.

The Europa and art. Europa's basket is an imaginary work of art, a wonder to behold (38 θηητόν, μέγα θαῦμα), itself depicting wonderment amongst the crowds who gaze on the swimming cow (49 θηεῖντο). But the poem's links with art go deeper than this. A large number of contemporary paintings and mosaics show various stages of Europa's 'seduction' by the bull: a favourite scene is of the girl sitting sidesaddle

and grasping one horn as she is borne across the sea in an elegant pose (see W. H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon der gr. u. röm. Mythologie* 1 (Leipzig, 1884-90) 1409-18). Io and Argus were popular subjects, too. Thus the poem is closely linked with contemporary taste in pictorial representation; and it is interesting that critics have often described its charm as 'rococo'.

The Europa as art. Unlike a picture, the poem has temporal progression: it relates the metamorphosis of Europa from virgin (7 ἐτι παρθένος) to mother (166 μήτηρ), from mortal girl to continental eponym. Four tableaux make up the story: Europa in bed, in the meadow, crossing the sea, canonized as mother. But in addition to this temporal progression the poem is constructed with the same harmony and symmetry which characterize the basket itself, ostensibly a 'real' work of art: (1) The poem is framed by prophecy: Europa's prophetic dream is complemented by Zeus's forecast of her future at the close. (2) Within the prophecy-frame stand two speeches of Europa (21-7, 135-52), enclosing the main part of the narrative. Both consist of questions and exclamations expressive of naive wonderment, and both end with a prayer beginning ἀλλά... (27, 149-52). (3) Within this inner frame are two set-piece descriptions, of the basket (37-62) and of Europa crossing the sea on the Zeus-bull (115-30). The latter is directly inspired by contemporary art; the former purports to reproduce in words a real work of art. (4) In addition to this formal symmetry the lengthy ecphrasis of Europa's basket stands in counterpoint to the main narrative by retailing the parallel story of Io, ancestress of Europa: in both stories love is the motive for a bovine transformation of beloved (Io) or lover (Zeus); Io crosses the sea from Europe to Asia, Europa from Asia (Phoenicia) to Europe; both stories end with a return to human form; and both are implicitly aetiological.

The whole ethos of the poem - small-scale, Homeric in diction, unhomeric in treatment, ecphrastic, pictorial, pseudo-naive - is, so far as we can judge, typical of the Greek epyllion.

Bibl.: Edn: W. Bühler (*Hermes Einzelschrift* 13, 1960). Gen.: R. Schmiel, 'Moschus's Europa', *C.Ph.* 76 (1981) 261-72; K. Gutzwiller, *Studies in the Hellenistic epyllion* (Königstein/Taunus, 1981) 63-73.

> Hor. *Odes* 3.27; Ovid, *Met.* 2.836-3.2, *Fasti* 6.603-20.

1-5[1045-9] Night. A young girl sleeps sweetly. Aphrodite is at work.

δτε... δτε... εὔτε elaborate the opening statement, and dreams frame the whole (1 δνειρον, 5 δνειρων).

1[1045] Εὐρώπη: the first word provides the poem's title. ἐπὶ... ἦκεν: tmesis. Cf. *Od.* 2.395 (Athene on the suitors) ἐπὶ γλυκύν ὕπνον ἔχευε.

2[1046] τρίτατον λάχος: <A.R. 3.1340. The division of night into three parts is Homeric (*Il.* 10.251-3). ἐγγύθι δ' ἡώς: <*Il.* 10.251.

3[1047] Cf. *Il.* 10.26 ὕπνος ἐπὶ βλεφάροισιν ἐφίζανε. γλυκίων μέλιτος: <*Il.* 18.109.

4[1048] Doubly oxymoronic: sleep both loosens and binds, and his bonds are soft ones. The line is compounded from *Od.* 23.342-3 γλυκὺς ὕπνος | λυσιμελῆς (cf. *Od.* 20.56-7) + *Od.* 23.16-17 ἐξ ὕπνου... | ἡδέος, ὃς μ' ἐπέδησε φίλα βλέφαρ' ἀμφικαλύψας (M. therefore derived ἐπέδησε from πεδάω, not ἐπιδέω) + *Il.* 10.2, etc. μαλακῶι δεδμημένοι ὕπνωι. πεδάαι... κατὰ = καταπεδάαι: 317 n. φάεα 'eyes', as occasionally in Homer (LSJ 1.3); cf. 223.

5[1049] ἀτρεκέων... δνειρων: dreams seen just before daybreak were thought to be true ones. ποιμαίνεται 'is roaming afield' - an apt metaphor, considering the importance of cows and bulls in this poem: cf. 82.

6[1050] ὑπωροφίοισιν ἐνὶ... δόμοισι = ἐν ὑπερώοις, the women's quarters located upstairs, 'under the roof' (ὑπωρόφιος < ὑπό + ὄροφος, with 'metrical lengthening').

7[1051] Φοίνικος θυγάτηρ: Phoenix gave his name to Phoenicia, where the poem is set.

8[1052] ὠίσαι: this augmented form of ὀϊσμαι is first attested in Hellenistic poetry. Homer has ὀίσαιτο.

9[1053] ἀντιπέρην: not named, of course - the poem is indirectly an αἴτιον of why Europa is so called. ἀντιπέραν / -ας is elsewhere an adverb, 'opposite'; but here it must be a fem. adj. (= ἀντιπεράλαια) used substantivally. Aesch. has πέρα as a noun at *Ag.* 190 and *Supp.* 262. οἶα γυναῖκες: M. has borrowed the expression from Ap. Rh. 4.1189 αἱ δὲ πολυμήτους ἑανούς φέρον, οἶα γυναῖκες, where οἶα has its idiomatic meaning 'as X tend to' (974 n.); but in adapting the phrase M. has integrated it into the syntax of the sentence so as to mean 'they had an appearance like women' (sc. ἔχουσι). One would have expected οἶην or γυναικῶν.