

The Abundant Elysian Stream: Callimachean Poetics in the Pastoral Landscape of *Aeneid* 6

1. *Aeneid* 6.638-44, 652-75

deuenerē locos laetos et amoena uirecta
fortunatorum nemorum sedesque beatas.
largior hic campos aether et lumine uestit
purpureo, solemque suum, sua sidera norunt.
pars in gramineis exercent membra palaestris,
contendunt ludo et fulua luctantur harena;
pars pedibus plaudunt choreas et carmina dicunt.

....

stant terra defixae hastae passimque soluti
per campum pasuntur equi. quae gratia currum
armorumque fuit uiuis, quae cura nitentis
pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repostos.
conspicit, ecce, alios dextra laeuaque per herbam
uescentis laetumque choro paeana canentis
inter odoratum lauris nemus, unde superne
plurimus Eridani per siluam uoluitur amnis.
hic manus ob patriam pugnando uulnera passi,
quique sacerdotes casti, dum uita manebat,
quique pii uates et Phoebos digna locuti,
inuentas aut qui uitam excoluere per artis
quique sui memores aliquos fecere merendo:
omnibus his niuea cinguntur tempora uitta.
quos circumfusos sic est adfata Sibylla,
Musaeum ante omnis (medium nam plurima turba
hunc habet atque umeris exstantem suspicit altis):
'dicite, felices animae tuque optime uates,
quae regio Anchisen, quis habet locus? illius ergo
uenimus et magnos Erebi tranauimus amnis.'
atque huic responsum paucis ita reddidit heros:
'nulli certa domus; lucis habitamus opacis,
riparumque toros et prata recentia riuis
incolimus. ...'

They came to the glad regions and the pleasant green turf
of the groves of good fortune and the blessed abodes.
Here the air is more abundant and clothes the plains with
rosy light, and they know their own sun, their own stars.
Some exercise their limbs in grassy wrestling-places,
compete in sport and wrestle on golden sand; some beat
dances with their feet and chant songs.

Their spears stand fixed in the ground, and here and there
loosed horses graze throughout the plain. Whatever
pleasure they took while they lived in chariots and arms,
whatever care they had to pasture gleaming horses, the
same attends them buried in the earth. Behold, he
[Aeneas] catches sight of others to the right and left in the
grass, eating and singing a joyful paeon in chorus within a
grove fragrant with laurels, from which the stream of the
Eridanus, most abundant above, rolls through the wood.
Here is the band of those who suffered wounds in fighting
for their fatherland, and those who were pure priests
while life remained, and those who were pious bards and
spoke what was worthy of Apollo, or who improved life
through the arts they discovered, and those who earned a
place in the memory of others: all these are wreathed
about the temples with a snowy headband. As they
thronged around her, the Sibyl addressed them thus,
Musaeus before the rest (for he was in the middle of the
great crowd and rose above it with his high shoulders):
"Tell me, glad souls and you, most excellent bard, what
region, what place keeps Anchises? For his sake we have
come and crossed the great streams of Erebus." And the
hero answered her thus in a few words: "None has a fixed
abode; we dwell in shady groves, and we inhabit the
couches of riverbanks and meadows fresh with streams.

...."¹

¹ Translations are my own except where noted; I have tried to convey my reading of ambiguities in the text.

2. Strabo *Geography* 9.1.19

ὄσω δὲ πλέον ἐστὶ τὸ φιλότιμον περὶ τὰ ἔνδοξα καὶ πλείους οἱ λαλήσαντές τι περὶ αὐτῶν, τοσῶδε μείζων ὁ ἔλεγχος, ἐὰν μὴ κρατῆ τις τῆς ἱστορίας: οἷον ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ τῶν ποταμῶν ὁ Καλλίμαχος γελᾶν φησιν, εἴ τις θαρρεῖ γράφειν τὰς τῶν Ἀθηναίων παρθένους ἄφύσσεσθαι καθαρὸν γάνος Ἡριδανοῖο, οὐ καὶ τὰ βοσκήματα ἀπόσχοιτ' ἄν. εἰσὶ μὲν νῦν αἱ πηγαὶ καθαροὺ καὶ ποτίμου ὕδατος, ὡς φασιν, ἐκτὸς τῶν Διοχάρους καλουμένων πυλῶν πλησίον τοῦ Λυκείου: πρότερον δὲ καὶ κρήνη κατεσκευαστό τις πλησίον πολλοῦ καὶ καλοῦ ὕδατος; εἰ δὲ μὴ νῦν, τί ἂν εἴη θαυμαστόν, εἰ πάλα πολὺ καὶ καθαρὸν ἦν ὥστε καὶ πότιμον εἶναι, μετέβαλε δὲ ὕστερον;

3. Strabo *Geography* 5.1.9

τῆς δὲ τοῦ Διομήδους δυναστείας περὶ τὴν θάλατταν ταύτην αἴ τε Διομήδειοι νῆσοι μαρτύρια καὶ τὰ περὶ Δαυνίους καὶ τὸ Ἄργος τὸ Ἴππιον ἱστορούμενα: περὶ ὧν ἐροῦμεν ἐφ' ὅσον πρὸς ἱστορίαν χρήσιμον, τὰ δὲ πολλὰ τῶν μυθευομένων ἢ κατεψευσμένων ἄλλως ἢ δεῖ, οἷον τὰ περὶ Φαέθοντα καὶ τὰς Ἡλιάδας τὰς ἀπαιγειρομένας περὶ τὸν Ἡριδανόν, τὸν μηδαμοῦ γῆς ὄντα, πλησίον δὲ τοῦ Πάδου λεγόμενον, καὶ τὰς Ἡλεκτρίδας νήσους τὰς πρὸ τοῦ Πάδου καὶ μελεαγρίδας ἐν αὐταῖς; οὐδὲ γὰρ τούτων οὐδὲν ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς τόποις.

4. *Georgics* 1.481-92

proluit insano contorquens uertice siluas
fluuiorum rex Eridanus camposque per omnis
cum stabulis armenta tulit. nec tempore eodem
tristibus aut extis fibrae apparere minaces
aut puteis manare cruor cessauit, et altae
per noctem resonare lupis ululantibus urbes.
non alias caelo ceciderunt plura sereno
fulgura nec diri totiens arsere cometae.
ergo inter sese paribus concurrere telis
Romanas acies iterum uidere Philippi;
nec fuit indignum superis bis sanguine nostro
Emathiam et latos Haemi pinguescere campos.

The greater men's fondness for learning about things that are famous and the greater the number of men who have talked about them, the greater the censure, if one is not master of the historical facts. For example, in his Collection of the Rivers, Callimachus says that it makes him laugh if anyone makes bold to write that the Athenian virgins "draw pure liquid from the Eridanus," from which even cattle would hold aloof. Its sources are indeed existent now, with pure and potable water, as they say, outside the Gates of Diochares, as they are called, near the Lyceium; but in earlier times there was also a fountain near by which was constructed by man, with abundant and excellent water; and even if the water is not so now, why should it be a thing to wonder at, if in early times the water was abundant and pure, and therefore also potable, but in later times underwent a change? (trans. H. L. Jones)

As for the dominion of Diomedes in the neighbourhood of this sea, not only the "Islands of Diomedes" bear witness thereto, but also the historical accounts of the Daunii and Argos Hippium, which I shall relate insofar as they may be historically useful; but I must disregard most of the mythical or false stories, as, for example, the stories of Phaethon, and of the Heliades that were changed into poplar-trees near the Eridanus (the Eridanus that exists nowhere on earth, although it is spoken of as near the Padus), and of the Electrides Islands that lie off the Padus, and of the guinea-fowls on them; for not one of these things is in that region, either. (trans. H. L. Jones)

The Eridanus, king of rivers, washed away the woods, tearing them up with its mad crest, and over all the plains carried away the herds with their stalls. Nor at that same time did threatening omens cease to appear in the sad entrails or gore to trickle from the springs, and high cities to echo through the night with the howling of wolves. At no other time have more lightning bolts fallen from a cloudless sky, nor have grim comets blazed so often. Therefore Philippi once again saw Roman battle lines clash with the equal weapons of civil war; nor did the gods on high think it unfit for Emathia and the wide plains of Haemus to fatten a second time on our blood.

5. *Georgics* 4.363-73

iamque domum mirans geneticis et umida regna
speluncisque lacus clausos lucosque sonantis
ibat, et ingenti motu stupefactus aquarum
omnia sub magna labentia flumina terra
spectabat diuersa locis, Phasimque Lycumque,
et caput unde altus primum se erumpit Enipeus,
unde pater Tiberinus et unde Aniena fluenta
saxosusque sonans Hypanis Mysusque Caicus
et gemina auratus taurino cornua uultu
Eridanus, quo non alius per pingua culta
in mare purpureum uiolentior effluit amnis.

6. *Eclogue* 1.1-2

Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi
siluestrem tenui Musam meditaris auena...

7. *Eclogue* 4.1-3

Sicelides Musae, paulo maiora canamus!
non omnis arbusta iuuant humilesque myricae;
si canimus siluas, siluae sint consule dignae.

8. *Eclogue* 6.1-11

Prima Syracosio dignata est ludere uersu
nostra neque erubuit siluas habitare Thalea.
cum canerem reges et proelia, Cynthius aurem
uellit et admonuit: 'pastorem, Tityre, pinguis
pascere oportet ouis, deductum dicere carmen.'
nunc ego (namque super tibi erunt qui dicere laudes,
Vare, tuas cupiant et tristia condere bella)
agrestem tenui meditabor harundine Musam:
non iniussa cano. si quis tamen haec quoque, si quis
captus amore leget, te nostrae, Vare, myricae,
te nemus omne canet...

And now, marveling at his mother's house and watery realms and lakes shut in caves and sounding groves, he made his way, and dumbstruck by the huge rush of waters he beheld all the rivers flowing beneath the great earth in different directions, both the Phasis and the Lycus, and the source from which the deep Enipeus first bursts forth, the sources from which father Tiber and the flowing Anio come and the rocky crashing Hypanis and the Mysian Caicus and the bull-faced Eridanus, its twin horns gilded, than which no other stream flows forth through rich cultivated lands more violently into the purple sea.

Tityrus, you, lying back under the cover of a spreading beech, are rehearsing your woodland Muse on a slender oaten stalk...

Sicilian Muses, let us sing of things a bit greater! Not everyone takes pleasure in shrubs and lowly tamarisks; if we sing of woods, let the woods be worthy of a consul.

My Muse is the first who has thought fit to play in Sicilian verse and has not blushed to dwell in the woods. When I was singing of kings and battles, Cynthian Apollo plucked my ear and admonished me: "Tityrus, a shepherd should feed his sheep fat, but sing a fine-spun song." Now I (for you'll have many others who will want to sing your praises, Varus, and set down grim wars) shall rehearse a Muse of the fields on a slender reed. I sing of things not unbidden. But if anyone reads these things too, anyone seized by love, our tamarisks will sing of you, Varus, the whole grove will sing of you...

9. Callimachus *Hymn to Apollo* 105-12

ὁ Φθόνος Ἀπόλλωνος ἐπ' οὐατα λάθριος εἶπεν ·
 'οὐκ ἄγαμαι τὸν αἰοιδὸν ὃς οὐδ' ὅσα πόντος ἀεῖδει.'
 τὸν Φθόνον ὠπόλλων ποδί τ' ἤλασεν ὧδέ τ' ἔειπεν ·
 'Ἀσσυρίου ποταμοῖο μέγας ῥόος, ἀλλὰ τὰ πολλὰ
 λύματα γῆς καὶ πολλὸν ἐφ' ὕδατι συρφετὸν ἔλκει.
 Διοῖ δ' οὐκ ἀπὸ παντὸς ὕδωρ φορέουσι μέλισσαι,
 ἀλλ' ἥτις καθαρὴ τε καὶ ἀχράαντος ἀνέρπει
 πίδακος ἐξ ἱερῆς ὀλίγη λιβὰς ἄκρον ἄωτον.'

10. *Aeneid* 7.41-45

dicam horrida bella,
 dicam acies actosque animis in funera reges,
 Tyrrhenamque manum totamque sub arma coactam
 Hesperiam. maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo,
 maius opus moueo.

11. *Aeneid* 6.679-85

At pater Anchises penitus conualle uirenti
inclusas animas superumque ad lumen ituras
 lustrabat studio recolens, omnemque suorum
 forte recensebat numerum, carosque nepotes
 fataque fortunasque uirum moresque manusque.
 isque ubi tendentem aduersum per gramina uidit
 Aenean...

12. *Aeneid* 6.179

itur in antiquam siluam, stabula alta ferarum...

Envy said secretly into Apollo's ear: "I don't admire the singer who sings not even as *much* as the sea." Apollo kicked Envy and said: "Great is the stream of the Assyrian river, but it drags the many offscourings of the earth and much refuse upon its water. But the bees bring water to Deo not from every source, but whichever small spring trickles up pure and undefiled from a holy fountain, the surface blossom."

I shall tell of dreadful wars, I shall tell of battle lines and kings driven to death by their proud spirits, and the Tyrrhenian band and all Hesperia driven together into arms. A greater order of things is being born for me, I am setting in motion a greater work.

But father Anchises was surveying the spirits shut deep in a green valley and soon to go to the upper light, going over them zealously, and as it happened was counting over the whole number of his descendants, both his dear grandsons and the fates and fortunes of the men and their characters and might. And when he saw Aeneas coming to meet him through the grass...

A journey is made into an ancient wood, the high steadings of wild beasts...

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