

The Conditions for Poetic Immortality: Epicurus, Daphnis, and Hagnon

An allusion to Vergil's *Eclogue 5* in his didactic *Cynegetica* allows Grattius to correct the cultural attitudes of both Vergil and Lucretius. The description of Hagnon (211-252), a *primus*-figure in Grattius credited with first using a leash (213-215), echoes the language used by Vergil about Daphnis (e.g. leashing animals, Verg. *Ecl.* 5.29-30), and both men are promised poetic immortalization. The language describing Daphnis also recalls Lucretius' on Epicurus (*deus ille*, *DRN* 5.8, *Ecl.* 5.67), language which Grattius uses to describe another *primus*-figure, Dercylon (96). An examination of the differences between the figures, however, demonstrates Grattius' efficient use of allusion to promote his ideal of Romanness contrary to his predecessors—the individual who is able to impose physical order on the world.

The bucolic hero Daphnis and the hunter Hagnon are strange bedfellows. Coleman (1977) points out that Daphnis' praise involves the realm of hunting (Verg. *Ecl.* 5.76), but I clarify that Daphnis is no hunter. Daphnis did not hunt with deceitful nets (5.60-61), while Hagnon and Grattius' project as a whole attempt to glorify hunting and the use of nets, or *arma Diania* (252, cf. 24-60 and 75-94 on nets). It is no surprise then that Enk (1918) and Henderson (2001) connect Hagnon instead to the praise of Nisus and Euryalus from the *Aeneid* (9.446-449). The Trojan Nisus was a hunter who prayed to Diana (9.404-409), and both Grattius and Vergil appeal to the power of their own poetry (*carmina*) in the pleas for immortality for Hagnon and Nisus (Grat. 251, Verg. *Aen.* 9.446). Daphnis, on the other hand, is an Epicurean figure: when Vergil alludes to Lucretius' depiction of Epicurus in *Eclogue 5*, readers are encouraged to reevaluate Daphnis in such a way (cf. Mizera 1982, Hubbard 1995). Scholars recognize that Grattius alludes to Epicurus with Dercylon (cf. Henderson 2001, Gavaille 2008), but by alluding to Epicurus through Daphnis as the main allusive figure with Hagnon as well, Grattius neatly critiques both models.

In *Eclogue 5*, Menalcas sings of Daphnis, ending with the man's worship: *Haec tibi semper erunt, [...] / Dum iuga montis aper, fluuios dum piscis amabit, / dumque thymo pascentur apes, dum rore cicadae, / semper honos nomenque tuom laudesque manebunt* (Verg. *Ecl.* 5.74-78). Daphnis is also deified and given real religious worship (5.65-80). Grattius also ends his discussion of Hagnon with the immortalization of his memory: *hoc ingens meritum, haec ultima palma tropaei, / Hagnon magne, tibi divom concessa favore: / ergo semper eris, dum carmina dumque manebunt / silvarum dotes atque arma Diania terris* (Grat. 249-252). Hagnon obtains only immortal memory, not deification and worship. In their relationships to divinity, they differ: Daphnis is likened to Bacchus and Ceres in terms of worship (5.79-80), whereas Hagnon is likened yet subservient to Diana (cf. 217-219 and 13-15). The *arma Diania* must remain as a condition for Hagnon's immortalization (252); the condition for Daphnis is simply the natural order of the world (76-77).

Through a *double* allusion, Grattius challenges not only Vergil's bucolic world but also Lucretius' philosophy: Epicureanism is not the key to peace of mind, Daphnis' *otium* is not a superior lifestyle, and men are not to be deified by poets. Grattius poses *deus ille* as a question regarding Dercylon ("was that one a god?") and immediately adds *an proxima divos mens* ("or a mind closest to the gods," 96-97), contrary to the declarations of Lucretius and Vergil (*deus ille, DRN 5.8, Ecl. 5.67*). Grattius is more conservative than Lucretius and Vergil with Dercylon and with Hagnon. The difference sheds light not just on Grattius' rehabilitation of hunting but on poetic priorities: here is not Lucretius' revolutionary Epicureanism nor the peace valued in the fifth *Eclogue*, but an individual who can impose order on the world through hunting and respect to Roman gods.

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