The opening of *Ecl.* 1 is one of the most famous surprises in ancient literature. Virgil and his readers will have known *Id.* 1 as the first poem in whatever collection of Theocritus’ poetry was familiar to them, and will have read that poem as both introductory and programmatic. Virgil alludes to the opening of *Id.* 1 in the sound of *λογία*, which mimics both the sound of the panpipes and the sound of *Id.* 1.1 (*Tityre tu ~ ἄδω τι τό*), but he replaces the Theocritean exchange of compliments, in which both characters speak only of the other’s matching accomplishments (*τύ … τύ … τέ; τέον … τύ … τύ*), by a speech contrasting the interlocutor’s situation with the speaker’s own (*tu … nos … nos … tu*), which is then followed by one entirely concerned with the second speaker’s situation (*nobis … mihi … nostris … meas*). The very sound of Virgilian ‘bucolic’ is both familiar and radically different, and not just because we are now hearing Latin rather than Greek.

Difference amidst the suspicion of sameness is the hallmark of Virgil’s intertextuality with Theocritus. Thus, for example, the first speaker in Theocritus is, as we learn from his interlocutor’s first verse (*Id.* 1.7), a shepherd; Tityrus, however, has sheep and cows. The second speaker in Theocritus is a goatherd (*Id.* 1.1); so is Meliboeus (*l.* 12). It is, however, a striking change that the opening Theocritean vocatives of occupation, *αἰπόλε … ὦ πομήν* (*Id.* 1.1, 7), are replaced by the characters’ names at the head of the first exchange, *Tityre … o Meliboe* (*l.* 1, 6). Both modes function to create a world, but the nature of that world is importantly different. Put very baldly, Theocritus’ fiction is of a new world of musical herdsmen, Virgil’s of a now familiar, textual ‘genre’; one might say that at the opening of *Id.* 1 we enter a world of bucolic mimesis,

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1 Cf. Gutzwiller (1996a), Hunter (1999) 60–61. Beyond the standard commentaries, I am conscious that my views of *Ecl.* 1 have been most shaped by Du Quesnay (1981) and Wright (1983); cf. also Cadili (2001) 26–34. I have tried not to overburden the notes of this short paper with references to the large modern bibliography on *Ecl.* 1, though I hope I have acknowledged debts where I am indeed conscious of them. A fuller version of this essay will appear in *The Shadow of Callimachus* (Cambridge UP, forthcoming).

2 On names as markers at the head of poems cf. Clausen on *Ecl.* 1.1.
whereas at the opening of *Ec.* 1 we enter a world of bucolic poetry, where all characters are given familiar or familiar-sounding names.\(^3\) This point is a familiar one, but the weight which “Tityrus” carries deserves repetition. τίτυρος can mean “reed, pipe” (Hesychius, *Lex.* τ 996–997 Schmidt), and the name thus forms a ring with *auena* around the opening couplet;\(^4\) as Theocritus had established the *syrinx* as the metonymic symbol of bucolic poetry, so Virgil goes one stage further and creates in “Tityrus” an almost eponymous figure who embodies his *Musa silvestris*, a figure of the contemporary world to match the legendary Comatas of *Id.* 7 (note *Id.* 7.88–89 ~ *Ec.* 1.1–2).

The opening of *Id.* 1 is strikingly free of close verbal allusion to earlier poetry: it is the Doric linguistic texture and the simple subject-matter which matter most. Virgil’s opening, on the other hand, combines (at least) Theocritus, Meleager (cf. *AP* 7.196 = *HE* 4066ff.),\(^5\) and Lucretius (*stuestrem … Musam ~ Lucr.* 4.589 etc)\(^6\) to emphasise the (partly) familiar poetic world we are entering. Tityrus is a name we know from Theocritus, Meliboeus is not, but it is of a familiar kind (and may, of course, have appeared in post-Theocritean Greek bucolic).\(^7\) If Theocritus writes a paradoxical sense of timeless oral tradition into *Id.* 1,\(^8\) Virgil makes explicit the pre-existing and complex poetic tradition in which he places himself. It is that tradition which gives a particularly bitter power to the language of Meliboeus, who is leaving the pleasance and who thus embodies *Id.* 1’s ending (ἀπόκεισθαι) of bucolic song (*carmina nulla canam*), as Tityrus embodies its beginning (ἀρχή). Shades of the Theocritean Daphnis’ death hover over the Latin goatherd’s exile (*Ec.* 1.75–78 ~ *Id.* 1.116–117): *Ec.* 5.43–44 is the Virgilian rewriting of Daphnis’ self-composed epitaph at *Id.* 1.120–121, but the whole of Meliboeus’ farewell is coloured by the sense of an ending. Meliboeus’ use of the ‘clichés’ of the bucolic world, with which we are (paradoxically) familiar but which he will know no more, shockingly brings the fantasies of pastoral into the real world and real time of the land confiscations. Thus,

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3 With the exception of the poetic voice of poems 4, 6, and 8 there are no anonymous characters in the *Eclogues*.


5 For Meleagrian echoes in the opening verses of *Ec.* 1 cf. Gutzwiller (1996b).


7 Its appropriately *βουκολικόν* nature is brought out particularly at *Ec.* 3.1–2, where *pecus … Meliboei … Aegonis* allude to the three principal pastoral animals (sheep, cattle, goats).