

# “Now I have forgotten all my verses”: Social Memory in the Eclogues of Virgil and Calpurnius Siculus

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## Abstract

This paper examines the use of social memory in the pastoral poetry of Virgil and Calpurnius Siculus. A comparison of the references to Rome’s social memory in both these works points to a development of this phenomenon in Latin bucolic poetry. Whereas Virgil’s *Eclogues* express a genuine anxiety with the preservation of Rome’s ancient customs and traditions in times of political turbulence, Calpurnius Siculus’s poems address issues of a different kind with the use of references to social memory. Virgil’s shepherds see their pastoral community disseminating: they start forgetting their lays or misremembering verses, indicating the author’s concern with Rome’s social memory and, thereby, with the prosperity and stability of the *Res Publica*. Calpurnius Siculus, on the other hand, has his herdsmen strive for the emperor’s patronage and a literary career in the big city, bored as they are by the countryside. They desire a larger, more cohesive and active urban community in which they and their songs will receive the acclaim they deserve and consequently live on in Rome’s social memory. Calpurnius Siculus’s poems are, however, in contrast to Virgil’s, no longer concerned with social memory in itself.

**Keywords:** social memory, *Eclogues*, Virgil, Calpurnius Siculus

### Abstrakt

Niniejszy artykuł omawia rolę pamięci zbiorowej w poezji idyllicznej Wergiliusza i Kalpurniusza Sykulusa. Rezultaty porównania między odwołaniem się obu autorów do rzymskiej pamięci zbiorowej wskazują na rozwój tego tematu w łacińskiej poezji bukolicznej. Podczas gdy *Bukoliki* Wergiliusza wyrażają szczerą obawę o podtrzymywanie starożytnych rzymskich obyczajów i tradycji w czasach niepokoju politycznego, wiersze Kalpurniusza Sykulusa omawiają inne zagadnienia, chociaż także czerpią z pamięci socjalnej. Idylliczny świat pasterzy Wergiliusza ulega rozpadowi: jego pasterze zapominają swoje pieśni lub myślą strofy w wierszach, co pokazuje troskę autora o rzymską pamięć zbiorową i o dobrobyt i trwałość republiki rzymskiej. Bohaterzy Kalpurniusza Sykulusa natomiast, starają się o mecenat cesarski i o karierę pisarską w wielkim mieście, ponieważ nudzi ich życie na wsi. Pragną wejść do większej, bardziej zjednoczonej i aktywnej społeczności miejskiej, w której zdobędą zasłużoną sławę poetycką i dzięki temu trwałe miejsce w rzymskiej pamięci zbiorowej. *Bukoliki* Kalpurniusza Sykulusa jednak, inaczej niż wiersze Wergiliusza, nie dotyczą pamięci zbiorowej samej w sobie.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Pamięć zbiorowa, *Bukoliki*, Wergiliusz, Kalpurniusz Sykulus

“Moribus antiquis res stat Romana virisque” (Skutch 156). Quintus Ennius, one of the first Roman authors to write in Latin, captures a key element in Roman Republican literature. “The commonwealth of Rome is founded firm on ancient customs and men of might” (trans. Keyes 1988, 245), he says according to Marcus Tullius Cicero, drawing attention to the relation between Rome’s ancient traditions and the state of the *Res Publica*. In fact, Rome would not be Rome without its traditions. Understanding Ennius’s statement is essential for the present investigation, in which we will compare references to social memory in three of Virgil’s *Eclogues* with its traces in three pastoral poems by Calpurnius Siculus. In order to do this, however, we must first get to grips with the Roman view on social memory, and social memory in general. The term “social memory” was first introduced by Maurice Halbwachs, who used it in combination with “collective memory” (Halbwachs 1952, 146–177). In the words of Elizabeth Minchin, this is “the communal store of shared experiences, stories, and memories that members of any social group acquire over time in their interactions with each other” (Minchin 2012, 77). Rome too had such a “communal store”, which, as Ennius stresses, was central to Rome’s

very existence. David Meban has, in his 2009 article *Virgil's Eclogues and Social Memory*, provided an excellent analysis of social memory in Roman literature and in Virgil's *Eclogues* in particular. Suffice it here, by way of introduction, to illustrate Rome's social memory with some of the most telling references to the phenomenon, and to summarize how Rome's greatest bucolic poet, Virgil, relates to the collective remembrance of the past in his *Eclogues*. Finally, after a study of social memory in Calpurnius Siculus' poems, we will come to a comparison of its appearance in the bucolic works of Virgil and Calpurnius Siculus, thereby shedding light on a possible development in the use of social memory in Latin pastoral poetry.

### Excellent and Eminent Men

Ennius (ca. 239–169 BC) does not stand alone. Other writers have also stressed the importance of Rome's traditions for the prosperity of the *Res Publica*. Cicero (106–43 BC), commenting on Ennius's verse, emphasizes the significance of not only the traditions themselves, but also of their remembrance, which has been safeguarded by “eminent men”:

Our poet seems to have obtained these words, so brief and true, from an oracle. For neither men alone, unless a State is supplied with customs too, nor customs alone, unless there have also been men to defend them, could ever have been sufficient to found or to preserve so long a commonwealth whose dominion extends far and wide. Thus, before our own time, the customs of our ancestors produced excellent men, and eminent men preserved our ancient customs and the institutions of their forefathers. (*Rep.* 5, 1.1: trans. Keyes 1988, 245)<sup>1</sup>

The relevance of remembering ancient customs is again underscored by the Greek historian Polybius (ca. 200–118 BC), who focuses on an important effect such remembrance might have. In his discussion of funerary practice, Polybius mentions the speeches which are meant to recollect the accomplishments of the deceased. According to Polybius, however, these speeches do not merely effect the people attending the funeral, but reach the entire populace, thereby creating a sense of communion:

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<sup>1</sup> In the citations of primary source material, the numbers before the colon refer to the Latin or Greek originals. The number after the colon refers to the page (or pages) on which the translation can be found.

As a consequence the multitude and not only those who had a part in these achievements, but those also who had none, when the facts are recalled to their minds and brought before their eyes, are moved to such sympathy that the loss seems to be not confined to the mourners, but a public one affecting the whole people (6, 53.3: trans. Paton 1972, vol. III 389).

Thus, the state of the *Res Publica*, its prosperity and stability, are grounded in Rome's ancient traditions, which ought to remain in Rome's public memory. This memory is what serves to "promote Roman civic culture, strengthen social cohesion, and tie the individual more firmly to an enduring political community" (Gross 2000, 94–95). Not surprisingly, it is especially at times of change and crisis, when prosperity and stability are at stake, that one perceives a growing concern with social memory (Meban 2009, 102–103; also see Fentress and Wickham 1992, 122–123). Cicero, for instance, continues his comment on Ennius's verse by lamenting the current state of the *Res Publica*, which he connects to the people's neglect of Rome's ancient customs and thus to a breakdown in social memory:

But though the republic, when it came to us, was like a beautiful painting, whose colours, however, were already fading with age, our own time not only has neglected to freshen it by renewing the original colours, but has not even taken the trouble to preserve its configuration and, so to speak, its general outlines. For what is now left of the "ancient customs" on which he said "the commonwealth of Rome" was "founded firm"? They have been, as we see, so completely buried in oblivion that they are not only no longer practiced, but are already unknown. (*Rep.* 5, 1.2: 245–247)

Other instances in which the troubling state of affairs is directly or indirectly linked to a decline in social memory are to be found in the prefaces of the *Bellum Iugurthinum* by Gaius Sallustius Crispus (ca. 86–35 BC) and of the *Ab Urbe Condita* by Titus Livius Patavinus (ca. 59 BC–17 AD). Both authors signal the problems Rome is facing and argue that the preservation of memory, or the lack thereof, has an important role to play in their current situation.<sup>2</sup>

The Romans thus saw a clear connection between the wellbeing of the Roman state and the ways in which Rome's ancient customs and traditions were being remembered and handed down to future generations. Especially during the later years of the Republic, when Rome was facing many abrupt changes, anxiety about the preservation of Rome's

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<sup>2</sup> Sallust *Jug.* 4, 5–6 discusses the Romans' neglect of their imagines, which in the past ensured the wellbeing of the *Res Publica*. Livy *praef.* 3–10 expresses the will to provide the Roman people with examples from Rome's glorious past.

social memory rose significantly. One of the most important authors active at that time was Publius Vergilius Maro.

## A World Falling to Pieces

As Virgil (70–19 BC) says in his fourth *Eclogue*, times are changing. He foresees *Saturnia Regna* and announces that “the great line of centuries begins anew” (*Ecl.* 4, 5: trans. Fairclough 1999, 48). But although Virgil speaks of “a new generation” (*Ecl.* 4, 7: 49), his so-called Golden Age also harks back to a distant past, in which “the Virgin” Astraea or Iustitia (*Ecl.* 4, 6: 49; also see *Aen.* 13, 321–327) and Saturn still dwelt upon the earth. Virgil wishes the land to be at peace, not troubled by man’s labour:

Earth will not suffer the harrow, nor the vine the pruning hook; the sturdy ploughman, too, will now loose his oxen from the yoke. (*Ecl.* 4, 40–41: 51)

The characteristics of these renewed *Saturnia Regna* thus recall the lifestyle of the shepherds Virgil usually describes: these do still tend their flock, but spend most of their time singing songs and making love. What Virgil is hoping for, in other words, is *otium*, peace and quiet.<sup>3</sup> This is not at all surprising, considering the political and social circumstances of Virgil’s time. When Virgil wrote the *Eclogues*, probably from 42 to about 35 BC (Clausen 1994, xxii; also see Coleman 1977, 14–21), Rome had already been in a state of civil war for many years on end. Additionally, life in the country was experiencing some quite dramatic changes, since many Romans were faced with land confiscations (Scullard 2011, 146–147). Virgil himself may have been a victim of these confiscations, something the first and ninth *Eclogues* could perhaps bear witness to.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Many have argued that the nature of Virgil’s Golden Age in the fourth *Eclogue* is in fact quite different from the nature of country life as Virgil describes it in the rest of the *Eclogues*. See, for instance, Schmidt 2008, 36 and Clausen 1994, 126, who points to the lack of typically bucolic elements in the fourth *Eclogue*. This may be so, but it does not mean that Virgil’s *Saturnia Regna* are principally different from the idyllic lives of the shepherds in most of the other *Eclogues*. In both cases, *otium* is an unmistakably characteristic feature of the bucolic world Virgil has in mind.

<sup>4</sup> There is no consensus as to the interpretation of the first and ninth *Eclogues*. See, for the discussion, Hardie 1998, 18–19. For supposed politics in Virgil’s *Eclogues* in general see Martindale 1997, 107–124. Whether or not Virgil is referring to himself, it is clear that the land confiscations of the time are a key element to understanding the first and ninth *Eclogues*.

In short, then, Rome was in trouble. As has been argued above, times of turbulence meant anxiety about the preservation of social memory. So how is this anxiety visible in Virgil's *Eclogues*? The following brief analysis will revolve around three of the *Eclogues*, namely 1, 5 and 9, since these are the poems in which Virgil's concern with social memory is most clearly visible. As it is *Eclogue 9* which illustrates best the above points, it is only natural that the argument should begin here. *Eclogue 9* focuses on the consequences of the land confiscations after the Battle of Phillipi (42 BC) and "is about absence, dispossession and a world falling to pieces" (Papanghelis 2006, 387). Indeed, two shepherds, named Moeris and Menalcas, have been evicted from their farms by "strangers" (*Ecl. 9, 3: 83*) and are lucky to be alive. The fact that things are looking particularly badly is further emphasized by "the disintegration of the social frameworks of the pastoral community" (Meban 2009, 109). This disintegration is crucial when it comes to the notion of social memory and its preservation. Social cohesion and the possibility of exchanging songs and thus memories with other members of society lie at the heart of the preservation of ancient customs and traditions.

In *Eclogue 9*, however, it would seem that the pastoral community is facing heavy weather. Lycidas mentions he "slyly caught" songs from Menalcas (*Ecl. 9, 21: 85*) and says he heard Moeris "singing alone" (*Ecl. 9, 44–45: 87*). Thus the three shepherds involved seem not to form a cohesive group, but rather to be members of a community which is having trouble avoiding division (109). Additionally, the herdsmen's memory is not what it used to be. This has three different implications, which are however closely connected to one another (110–113). Firstly, it leads to the shepherds literally forgetting songs, as is told by Moeris:

Time robs us of all, even of memory; oft as a boy I recall that with song I would lay the long summer days to rest. Now I have forgotten all my songs. Even voice itself now fails Moeris; (*Ecl. 9, 51–54: 89*).

Secondly, there are multiple occasions where certain verses are wrongly attributed to other shepherds and which thus make for a "systematic misremembering of Menalcas/Vergil's verse" (Hubbard 2001, 124).<sup>5</sup> Thirdly, the element of silence may add to the breakdown of social memory. For not only do Moeris's words mean that he has lost the ability of sharing his songs with others, they may also suggest that there will be no

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<sup>5</sup> For instance, when Lycidas recalls songs of Menalcas, the verses he recollects are in fact more similar to Theocritus's third *Idyll* than to any of the poems in Virgil's *Eclogues* (*Ecl. 9, 21–25*).

singing whatsoever (Meban 2009, 112).<sup>6</sup> It is thus reasonable to assume that the problems the herdsmen are having in reciting their poetry to one another is related to their troublesome situation concerning the confiscation of their land. In fact, there may be a certain reciprocity between the two aspects: the abrupt changes the herdsmen are facing are causing the decline in social memory and vice versa (113–115).

*Eclogue 5* has a less apparent political and historical framework (see Coleman 1977, 173), but it too breathes an anxiety with social memory. It tells how two shepherds, Mopsus and Menalcas, sing of the death of Daphnis, echoing both Moschus’s *Lament for Bion* and Theocritus’s first *Idyll*, and perhaps the death of Caesar as well. However, the most important purpose of *Eclogue 5* seems not to lament the dead, but to commemorate him (Meban 2009, 118). What is particularly interesting for the present purposes, is that Mopsus, who is first to sing, has written down his song, instead of remembering it:

No, I will try these verses, which the other day I carved on the green beech-bark and set to music, marking words and tune in turn (*Ecl.* 5, 13–15: 55).

This “unprecedented reference to literacy in the world of pastoral” (Coleman 1977, 172) ties in with the assertions made in the previous section. What better way for a shepherd to preserve his songs, which he fears may be forgotten, than to write them down? Furthermore, an additional advantage of writing is, of course, that one can reach a far greater public than by oral transmission alone (Meban 2009, 119–121). Something similar is at work in the song of Menalcas, although he does not seem to be reading his composition. Instead, Menalcas’s song focuses on the “communal and communalizing character” (Casey 2000, 235–236) of the funerary ritual, thereby either celebrating the community as it is, or expressing the hope for a more cohesive community in which the transmission and preservation of ancient customs and traditions, including songs, is more likely to be successful (Meban 2009, 122).<sup>7</sup> Thus, the commemoration of Daphnis

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<sup>6</sup> Meban goes on to cite Lycidas in *Ecl.* 9, 57–58: 89, but these verses actually contradict his argument, since Lycidas tells Moeris that “Now the whole sea plain lies hushed *to hear you*” (“Et nunc omne *tibi* stratum silet aequor”). Moeris may still sing a song after all.

<sup>7</sup> For example, at *Ecl.* 5, 58–64: 59 Menalcas stresses that “all the countryside” is involved. Furthermore, Meban argues, “The rites Menalcas describes (...) demand direct and collective participation”, since at *Ecl.* 5, 72–73 Damoetas, Aegon and Alphesiboeus are urged to join Menalcas. However, whereas Meban states that *Eclogue 5* is primarily about the positive effects of a solid social memory, it could also once again express an anxiety with social memory: Mopsus seems concerned about the preservation of his poetry, while Menalcas may feel a more cohesive community is needed.

in *Eclogue 5* is a poetic example of how social memory can be preserved, but because of this, it also shows an anxiety with that same social memory.

Lastly, *Eclogue 1* has both a troublesome and a positive message. For although this poem too, like *Eclogue 9*, is about the land confiscations after the Battle of Phillipi, in this case the herdsmen involved have not both been victimized. In fact, the unfortunate Meliboeus has been evicted from his land, much like Moeris and Menalcas had been evicted from theirs, while Tityrus is found to be relaxing “under the canopy of a spreading beech” (*Ecl. 1, 1: 25*). By now, it will be no surprise that whereas Meliboeus’s memory seems to be faltering, Tityrus’s memory is serving him very well. For while Meliboeus ends by saying “No more songs shall I sing” (*Ecl. 1, 77: 31*), Tityrus appears to have a vivid memory of the man responsible for his safety:

Sooner, then, shall the nimble stag graze in air, and the seas leave their fish bare on the strand – sooner, each wandering over the other’s frontiers, shall the Parthian in exile drink the Arar, and Germany the Tigris, than that look of his shall fade from my heart. (*Ecl. 1, 59–63: 29*)

Meliboeus, who is faced with serious problems, at the same time as losing his land has also lost his ability to preserve and share his songs, meaning he and his songs are excluded from social memory. Tityrus on the other hand is faring far better and therefore remains capable of using his memory, for example for preserving his songs and passing them on to other herdsmen. Thus, it has been shown that Virgil has incorporated his concern with social memory into multiple of his *Eclogues*. Now that the key elements of Virgil’s references to social memory have become apparent, it is time to see if and how Calpurnius Siculus has gone about the topic of social memory.

## Silent Woods and Humble Homes

In *Eclogue 10*, Virgil’s friend and elegiac poet Gaius Cornelius Gallus (ca. 70–26 BC) is found heartbroken over his lover Lycoris in Arcadia. As Gallus fails to find his way in this new and strange pastoral world and thus cannot be comforted by nature, this last *Eclogue* illustrates the discrepancy between the bucolic ideal and the real, harsh world both Virgil and Gallus lived in (Leach 1974, 158–170; also see Conte 2008, 216–244). However, although Gallus’s attempts at finding peace in Arcadia may have failed, Virgil is still there, sheltered by his pastoral dream. For whereas Gallus eventually leaves Virgil’s countryside and thus goes back to writing ‘urban’ elegies, Virgil hangs on to his ideal:



“On the one hand there is history (the town) and on the other its negation (the country)” (Conte 2008, 243). Virgil remains, one might say, a believer.

It is especially for this reason that a comparison between the social memory in Virgil’s and Calpurnius Siculus’s *Eclogues* is so interesting. History has left us with seven *Eclogues* written by Calpurnius Siculus, four of which are typically bucolic, but three of which are rather more political in nature. These three *Eclogues*, *Eclogues* 1, 4 and 7, express a growing desire of the shepherds, particularly one Corydon, to leave the countryside and to head for the big city in the hope of starting a true literary career. Calpurnius Siculus’s Corydon thus embodies everything Virgil’s herdsmen most definitely do not want: to endure the hustle and bustle of the city. Corydon, in truth, seems bored by Virgil’s peace and quiet. Where does this leave social memory in Calpurnius Siculus’s poetry? Are his herdsmen not troubled by such grievous circumstances as were Virgil’s shepherds and is Calpurnius Siculus, as a consequence, not anxious about Rome’s social memory?

One important complicating factor is the mystery surrounding the person of Calpurnius Siculus. In fact, virtually nothing is known about him. Discussion concerning the date of his *Eclogues* has as yet not provided any undisputed evidence in favour of one date or the other and covers a period of over two hundred years, ranging from the reign of Nero (54–68 AD) to the times of Probus (276–282 AD).<sup>8</sup> This makes it considerably harder to interpret references to social memory in Calpurnius Siculus’s poems, since a potentially helpful parallel with historical reality is, unlike in the case of Virgil’s *Eclogues*, practically impossible.

As was the case with Virgil’s *Eclogues*, the analysis of Calpurnius Siculus’s poems will focus on three of his works, namely the political *Eclogues* 1, 4 and 7. The references to social memory in these *Eclogues* are more likely to be meant to be read as such and are therefore less probable to be mere instances of *imitatio* of, for instance, Virgil’s bucolic poetry. Since the order in which the three *Eclogues* have come down to us is probably the actual chronological arrangement of the poems, discussion will begin with *Eclogue* 1. This *Eclogue* contains a prophecy of Faunus, which recalls Virgil’s description of the Golden Age in his *Eclogue* 4 and the song of Silenus in Virgil’s *Eclogue* 5 (see Friedrich 1976, 122–148).

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<sup>8</sup> Most scholars have opted for either the reign of Nero (54–68 AD) or the reign of Alexander Severus (222–235 AD). For arguments in favour of Nero see Mayer 1980, Townend 1980, Wiseman 1982, Küppers 1985, Amat 1991 and Fugmann 1992. For arguments in favour of Alexander Severus see Champlin 1978 and 1986, Armstrong 1986 and Courtney 1987. Horsfall 1997 argues in favour of a date in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, but also believes the *Eclogues* are about the reign of Nero.

The opening, for example, in which one of the shepherds is convinced by the other to join him in song, strongly resembles the opening of Virgil's *Eclogue 5*, and the overall peace and rejoicing which traditionally accompanies the arrival of a Golden Age, are to be found in Calpurnius Siculus's poem as well. The two shepherds, Corydon and Ornytus, are about to sing to each other, when Ornytus stumbles upon a "legend (...) inscribed upon the hallowed beech" (*Ecl.* 1, 20: trans. Duff & Duff 1982, vol. I 221). He goes on to say that "the letters still preserve the fresh greenness of their cutting and do not yet gape with sapless slit" (*Ecl.* 1, 22–23: 221). A comparison with Virgil's *Eclogue 5*, 13–15, where Mopsus claims to have carved his verses "in the green beech-bark", must for the moment be postponed, since the rest of Calpurnius Siculus's poem will prove essential for the interpretation of Ornytus's find. The legend, he says, could not have been written by a herdsman:

These be no verses in wayside style by shepherd or by traveler; 'tis a very god who sings. No ring here of cattle-stall; nor do alpine yodellings make refrains for the sacred lay. (*Ecl.* 1, 28–30: 221)

Again, the similarity with Virgil's opening of *Eclogue 4*, in which he wishes to "sing a somewhat loftier strain" (*Ecl.* 4, 1: 49), is obvious, but there is an important difference here as well. The way in which Ornytus seems to scorn bucolic themes may be a portent of the straight contempt with which the other two political *Eclogues*, and especially *Eclogue 7*, look upon pastoral poetry in general. As the song reveals, it was written by the god Faunus, who foresees the coming of a Golden Age, which will be "amid untroubled peace" (*Ecl.* 1, 42: 221). Faunus calls upon everyone to join in the blessed times to come:

Let all peoples rejoice, whether they dwell furthest down in the low south or in the uplifted north, whether they face the east or west or burn beneath the central zone (*Ecl.* 1, 74–76: 225).

Thus, it appears that Faunus is hoping to bring the people more closely together and to form a communion which will celebrate the Golden Age.

As was shown in the previous section, a call for a cohesive community can be a reference to social memory, since ancient customs and traditions, including songs, are best preserved within such a community. It may well be that Faunus believes such a community is badly needed, since he has chosen to write his song down, thus rescuing it from oblivion. Furthermore, when Ornytus decides, after having read Faunus's song, to make music to the god's words and to send it to their "prince" (*Ecl.* 1, 94: 227) by one Meliboeus, he may thereby cause an unforeseen spreading of Faunus's song. Could Calpurnius Siculus be feeling anxious about Rome's social memory after all?

*Eclogue 4*, the longest of Calpurnius Siculus’s *Eclogues*, is a continuation of roughly the same story. This time, however, the brothers Corydon and Amyntas join in what seems to be a singing contest, but what is in fact a panegyric to their “god” (*Ecl.* 4, 7: 245). Additionally, their singing is heard by Meliboeus, who appears to be acting as a Maecenas, willing to introduce both brothers to the imperial court (see Friedrich 1976, 149–155). But whereas *Eclogue 1* had a hopeful tone, things are not, at first sight, looking so well in *Eclogue 4*. Unlike Tityrus in Virgil’s first *Eclogue*, Corydon sits “silent” and “in an unwonted place” (*Ecl.* 4, 1–3: 245), not singing and rejoicing, nor conversing with other herdsmen, thereby not sharing in the social memory of the community. He reveals to Meliboeus that he has been working on a song “of no woodland ring but fit to celebrate the golden age” (*Ecl.* 4, 5–7: 245), but it seems his efforts are to no avail, since his verses “seem boorish to a critic’s ears and worthy of record only in my own village” (*Ecl.* 4, 12–13: 245).

As a consequence, Corydon has even advised his younger brother Amyntas to stop singing, as his songs do not “ward off famine” (*Ecl.* 4, 27: 247) and making music has not earned them any renown: “Of a truth, no one repeats my lay save the windsped echo from yonder crags” (*Ecl.* 4, 27–28: 247). In short, then, Corydon is unable to find an audience for his songs and may fear to be forgotten by future generations. Luckily for him, Meliboeus is around to lend him a hand. He has already saved him from eviction or exile and may now be able to support his literary career. In order for this to happen, Corydon has written down his compositions and is asking Meliboeus to correct them where needed: yet another sign that the shepherd is desperately looking for recognition and wishes to participate in the people’s social memory.<sup>9</sup> Next, when Corydon and Amyntas are busy reciting their songs about a new Golden Age, Amyntas describes how peace will help preserve his lays:

In choral dance too may I sing, and I may preserve my songs on the green bark; and no more do boisterous trumpets drown our reed-pipes’ note (*Ecl.* 4, 129–131: 255).

The two brothers hope that the emperor will provide the means for their songs to be preserved and, judging by their other comments, to be spread throughout society. It

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<sup>9</sup> In addition, Corydon identifies himself with Tityrus at *Ecl.* 4, 62–63, when he claims to have obtained Tityrus’s pipe. Since Calpurnius Siculus seems to identify Tityrus with Virgil (*Ecl.* 4, 158–163), this may mean that Calpurnius Siculus was planning on a similar career as Virgil’s. However, just as Calpurnius Siculus may have been wrong in thinking Tityrus stands for Virgil (see Hardie 1998, 20), so we too must be careful not to jump to any conclusions.

follows that the herdsmen simply lack the opportunity to share their compositions with others and are thus excluded from Rome's social memory. This is emphasized again at the end of the *Eclogue*, when Corydon and Amyntas have finished their panegyric. Corydon acknowledges the lowliness of his current existence as a simple shepherd, but also expresses the hope that Meliboeus will react benevolently:

Too often does malicious poverty pluck my ear and say: "The sheepfold is your task." But you, Meliboeus, if in spite of all you think that any of my poems are not to be disdained, then take them to the Emperor-God (*Ecl.* 4, 155–158: 257).

*Eclogue* 4 thus ends with a similar sense of hope as *Eclogue* 1, a hope which this time seems to have more chance of succeeding, since Meliboeus's response is notably friendly (*Ecl.* 4, 147–151). However, both Corydon and Amyntas are well aware that their wish is far from fulfilled. They are as yet still excluded from participating in the larger Roman community and are therefore denied the opportunity to share in that community's social memory. Only if their "god" succeeds in making that community larger or more cohesive, much like Faunus wished in *Eclogue* 1, will Corydon and Amyntas have a chance of joining in Rome's social memory and of building up a literary career as well.

Thus, what the herdsmen may be looking for is imperial patronage (see Newlands 1987, 230–231). But in addition to this patronage it seems they are also opting for a more general, public awareness of their work. They want to be a part of the community of Rome, not merely of the community of their small village. Lastly, the story of Corydon and the other shepherds reaches its climax in *Eclogue* 7. Corydon follows in Tityrus's footsteps as he has come back to the countryside from his visit to Rome, narrating his experiences to his friend Lycotas (see Friedrich 1976, 155–159). Corydon is baffled by the spectacle he witnessed in the Roman arena and, as a consequence, finds the countryside utterly boring. He is back, however, and it looks like his situation, which in *Eclogue* 4 seemed so promising, is not about to change after all. There is only one reference to social memory in this final *Eclogue*, but it is an important one, since it may bring closure to the question at hand. After Corydon has explained to Lycotas why he has been away for so long, Lycotas answers that he had been wondering

(...) why your pipe was idle in the silent woods, and why Stimicon, decked in pale ivy, sang alone: to him, for want of you, we have sadly awarded a tender kid. For while you tar-

ried from home, Thyrsis purified the sheepfolds and bade the youths compete on shrill-toned reed (*Ecl.* 7, 8–12: 279).

Apparently, the herdsmen had a singing contest while Corydon was away, but as Corydon is the most talented singer among them, it proved to be not much of a contest and another shepherd, Stimicon, snatched away victory. Of course, it is only logical that Corydon’s “pipe was idle”, but is remarkable that Lycotas calls the woods “silent”. Was there really no singing during Corydon’s trip to Rome, apart from Stimicon’s? Is that how small Corydon’s community and thus the reach of his fame is?

Furthermore, it seems that Corydon and his friends are finding it hard to interact with the larger Roman community, as Corydon experiences in the arena, when an old man tells him he is a “stranger to gold” and he only knows “the cottages and huts” which are his “humble homes” (*Ecl.* 7, 41–42: 281). In the end, Corydon is unable, in contrast to Virgil’s Tityrus, to have a good look at the emperor (*Ecl.* 7, 79–80) and he thus feels he has failed to reach his ultimate goal: to make himself known to the imperial court and thereby to the Roman people. He is unlikely to get his patronage and with that his chance to join in Rome’s social memory by becoming part of the larger Roman community. He must remain a simple shepherd.

## Conclusion

What, then, does this tell us about the similarities and differences between Virgil’s and Calpurnius Siculus’s usage of social memory and what can these similarities and differences in turn tell us about a possible development of social memory in Latin pastoral poetry? Virgil has made regular use of references to social memory, thereby connecting his *Eclogues* to current political and social issues, and tying in with the overall literary reactions to times of turbulence. Virgil’s shepherds forget songs, misremember verses or desperately try to immortalize their lays by carving them into trees. Their pastoral community is falling apart.

In contrast, Calpurnius Siculus’s herdsmen have no trouble remembering their songs, although at times they do not appear to be at ease on the countryside. Whereas Virgil’s shepherds are trying to escape the town and live a life of peace in the country, the herdsmen of Calpurnius Siculus are aiming for the exact opposite. Corydon in particular wants to break free from his boring life on his farm and is desperate to start a literary career

in Rome. The three political *Eclogues* thereby express the need for a larger and more cohesive community, one which will provide the means for a social memory in which the shepherds can find their place.

The emperor's patronage is central to Corydon's desire. Unfortunately for him, however hard he tries, he is still a simple shepherd in the end. Thus, the concern with social memory both authors have is in fact quite different. While Virgil's anxiety seems to originate from general problematic circumstances that threaten to change the lives of many thousands of Romans, Calpurnius Siculus's concerns with social memory appear to be acting on a much smaller scale: they are of relevance only to the question of patronage, not to civil wars and systematic land confiscations. In fact, one could say that Calpurnius Siculus's herdsmen wish to be a part of the community which according to Virgil is disseminating. For whereas Virgil seems to be lamenting the general state of Rome's social memory, Calpurnius Siculus has his shepherds strive to share in that same social memory. Calpurnius Siculus's shepherds fear that exclusion from Rome's social memory will cast them and their poetry into oblivion.

To conclude, then, Virgil's *Eclogues* refer to social memory in a way which easily connects these poems to other works of literature with a genuine concern with Rome's social memory. Calpurnius Siculus, on the other hand, has inserted several of the commonplaces associated with social memory into his *Eclogues*, but has decided to use these in a different way: his message is not one addressing the general issues which effect Rome's entire population and thus Rome's social memory, but one which is aimed at the question of patronage and the possibilities unknown writers have of starting a literary career. Instead of writing *about* social memory, then, Calpurnius Siculus is writing about other issues *with the use of* references to social memory. Care for Rome's social memory has turned from a goal in itself into a means towards achieving another goal. Social memory itself has, in Calpurnius Siculus's case, become a non-issue.

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