

## VERGIL'S *ECLOGUE* 9: *IDYLL* 7 AND *ECLOGUE* 1 IN REVERSE

by

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ABSTRACT: *Eclogue* 9 has long been considered by William BERG a reversed *Thalysia* (i.e. *Idyll* 7). The following article intends to move BERG's view one step further suggesting that *Eclogue* 9 is not only *Idyll* 7 in reverse but also *Eclogue* 1 in reverse, given that it combines both reversed Theocritean and Vergilian elements by using the *oppositio in imitando* technique.

Vergil's *Eclogues* continue to receive a great deal of scholarly and critical attention<sup>1</sup> which has clearly culminated during the late twentieth and early twenty-first century<sup>2</sup>. These years have seen the publication of numerous books and articles which have advanced and developed the literary studies concerning Vergilian pastoral poetry. One of the many issues which these books and articles covered and still continue to cover is Vergil's relationship with his literary sources and above all with Theocritus<sup>3</sup>. Nonetheless, very little have been written concerning *Eclogue* 9<sup>4</sup> and more specifically concerning its relationship with Vergil's main literary source Theocritus<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, while scholars offered satisfactory explanations for each *Eclogue* in the collection<sup>6</sup>, they in fact failed to offer a convincing explanation for *Eclogue* 9. William BERG is the only scholar, as far as I know, who offered a satisfactory explanation for *Eclogue* 9 suggesting that it is a reversed *Thalysia* (i.e. *Idyll* 7)<sup>7</sup>. The aim of this article is to move

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. COLEIRO 1979: 103–105 who offers a brief summary of the scholarly approaches to Vergil's collection, which ranges from the period of its composition to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed and extensive bibliographical catalogue of Vergil's *Eclogues*, see e.g. DONLAN 1978 and BRIGGS 1981, along with the bibliography which is annually published in *Vergilius*. Furthermore, see the more recent bibliography compiled by Niklas HOLZBERG, available online in <http://www.klassphil.uni-muenchen.de/worddokumente/vergbucbibl.doc>.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. e.g. BRIGGS 1981: 1297–1301 and esp. 1298–1299.

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. BRIGGS 1981: 1333 f.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. e.g. BRIGGS 1981: 1333 f.

<sup>6</sup> Outstanding examples are *Eclogues* 3 and 7 which constitute conventional rustic singing contests or *Eclogue* 1 which has long been considered programmatic.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. BERG 1974: 139–142 and esp. 140.