NOTES ET DISCUSSIONS

Verg., *Ecl*., II, 60-62: Paris' Judgement
or Paris' and Oenone's Love Story?

Résumé. — Le réexamen de l'exemple mythologique employé par Corydon chez Virgile (en *Buc*., II, 60-62) suggère que celui-ci ne renvoie pas au jugement de Pâris (comme l'écrivent Coleman, Clausen et Cucchiarelli) mais à la passion amoureuse entre Pâris et Œnone.

Abstract. — This note re-examines the mythological *exemplum* used by Corydon in Verg., *Ecl*., II, 60-62, suggesting that these verses do not refer to Paris' *iudicium* (cf. Coleman's, Clausen's and Cucchiarelli's commentaries) but to Paris' and Oenone's love story.

Eclogue II is concerned with the herdsman Corydon who is in love with the urban boy Alexis, trying in vain to convince the scornful erotic object to enter the countryside. Corydon soon will realise that this attempt is not going to be successful and his self-consciousness is emphatically expressed through a self-address followed by two country metaphors which underline his return to the harsh reality (cf. *Ecl.*, II, 56-59). Nonetheless, Corydon attempts once again by using two brief mythological *exempla* [1] in order to persuade Alexis to leave the city and join him in the coun-tryside:

> *quem fugis, a! demens? habitarunt di quoque siluas*
> *Dardaniusque Paris. Pallas quas condidit arces*
> *ipsa colat; nobis placeant ante omnia siluae.*
> (*Ecl.*, II, 60-62.)

Commentators unanimously argue that Corydon implicitly refers to Paris' judgement [2]. They claim that *Paris* and *Pallas* create a strong antithesis which refers

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1. Cf. I. M. Du Quesnay, "From Polyphemus to Corydon. Virgil, *Eclogue* 2 and the *Idylls* of Theocritus", in D. West, and T. Woodman (ed.), *Creative Imitation and Latin Literature*, Cambridge, 1979, p. 42 and 211 with n. 78.

2. Cf. R. Coleman, *Vergil. Eclogues*, Cambridge, 1977, p. 104-105, W. V. Clausen, *Virgil. Eclogues with an Introduction and Commentary*, Oxford, 1994, p. 82-

to the famous *iudicium*, according to which Paris judged Venus as the fairest god-dess rejecting Hera and Athena [3]. More than that, however, Paris has a long history as the most notorious adulterer in antiquity and thus he also stands in strong opposi-tion to the very chaste Athena. Finally, he is associated with the country environment and is usually called *pastor* [4] in emphatic contrast to Pallas Athena, who is closely related to the urban setting [5]. In view of that, *Paris* and *Pallas* reflect the strong op-position between country and city [6] that runs through the *Eclogue* (cf. pastor *Corydon* vs formosum *Alexin* [*Ecl.*, II, 1]). Most significantly, they correspond to the antithesis between Corydon's *rusticitas* and Iollas' *urbanitas*, used by Corydon to convince (in vain) Alexis to choose a *rusticus* (i.e. Corydon) over an *urbanus* lover (i.e. Iollas). In other words, the argument that Corydon's words refer to Paris' judgement is based on the central antithesis between country and town that runs through the *Eclogue*; hence, it seems to be arbitrary since any reference to Paris' *iudicium* would have included a reference to the three goddesses or to Venus who won the beauty contest. This short note aims to provide an alternative interpretation by arguing that these Vergilian verses do not refer to Paris' *iudicium* but to Paris' and Oenone's love story, thereby shedding new light on another way in which *Eclogue* II can be read.

Paris' and Oenone's erotic affair is not attested in the epic or the tragic tradition and it is only implicitly referred to Lycophron (*Alexandra*, 57-68) and Bion (fr. II, 11) [7]. Its summary is given by Parthenius of Nicaea who brought Callimachus to Rome [8] and whose influence on some Latin poets and especially Vergil was strong enough to reaffirm that Vergil was familiar with the Parthenian teachings and writ-ings [9]. Parthenius relates that when Alexander was herding flocks on Mt Ida he fell in love with the Nymph Oenone whom he married but later abandoned for Helen (cf. *Erot. Path.*, IV). Oenone was well aware of Paris' unfaithful behaviour since she could tell the future; she also foretold that he would be wounded in the war and she only would be able to cure him, something that she first refused to do, changing her

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83 and A. CUCCHIARELLI, *Publio Virgilio Marone. Le Bucoliche. Introduzione e Commento. Traduzione di Alfonso Traina*, Rome, 2012, p. 197. See also Serv., *Ecl.*, 2, 60 *etiam is habitauit siluas, qui de dearum pulchritudine iudicauit*.

3. Cf. R. COLEMAN, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 104; W. V. CLAUSEN, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 83. See also T. D. PAPANGHELIS, Από τη Βουκολική Ευτοπία στην Πολιτική Ουτοπία, Athens, 1995, p. 52-53.

4. Cf. e.g. *Aen.*, VII, 363-364 *at non sic Phrygius penetrat Lacedaemona pastor, / Ledaeamque Helenam Troianas uexit ad urbes*? See also S. KYRIAKIDIS, *Catalogues of Proper Names in Latin Epic Poetry. Lucretius-Virgil-Ovid*, Cambridge, 2007, p. 18-19.

5. Cf. R. COLEMAN, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 83.

6. Cf. S. KYRIAKIDIS, *op. cit.* (n. 4), p. 18-19. See also W. V. CLAUSEN, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 62-63.

7. Cf. also Hellanicus *FGRH* 4 F 29. See also P. E. KNOX, *Ovid's Heroides: Select Epistles*, Cambridge, 1995, p. 140-141.

8. Cf. W. V. CLAUSEN, "Callimachus and Latin Poetry", *GRBS* 5 (1964), p. 181-196 and esp. p. 187-188.

9. Cf. Macr., *Sat.*, V, 17.18 *Versus est Parthenii, quo grammatico in Graecis Virgilius usus est:* Γλαύκῳ καὶ Νηρῆϊ, καὶ Ινῴῳ Μελικέρτῃ. *Hic ait: Glauco et Panopeae et Inoo Melicertae et: Tritonesque citi, et: Inmania cete*. For Parthenius' in-fluence on Vergil see also C. FRANCESE, "Parthenius *Grammaticus*", *Mnemosyne* 52.1 (1999), p. 63-71.

mind when Paris was dead [10]. Keeping in mind this love story that does not have a happy ending, we may now turn to the Vergilian verses under examination in order to investigate whether or not Paris' and Oenone's mythological story can lie behind Corydon's words.

   Both Corydon and Oenone are country characters who are in love with erotic objects that have the same name (i.e. Alexis-Alexander) [11] and are situated in an urban setting (Alexis is in town with Iollas and Paris returns to Troy or sets off for Sparta). Moreover, these erotic objects and their current lovers are urban characters. Alexis is described as *formosus* and *delicias domini* which suggest that he is a *puer delicatus* and thus a city-dweller (i.e. *urbanus*) [12]. In contrast, Paris, who is very often called *pastor* because he grew as a shepherd on Mt Ida [13] is only passing through the pastoral world, given that he has been acknowledged as Priam's legitimate son later and has been restored to the Trojan palace [14]. Iollas, on the other hand, constitutes the *diues amator* who is with Alexis in the city while Helen, for whom Paris abandoned Oenone, is traditionally found into an urban environment (i.e. Sparta or Troy).

   These analogies (Paris-Alexis, Oenone-Corydon, Helen-Iollas) show that Corydon's words should refer to Paris' and Oenone's love story rather than to Paris' *iudicium*; hence, *Ecl.*, II, 60-62 and, in general, *Ecl.*, II explore Corydon's attempt to convince the urban erotic object not to enter the countryside for the first time but just to come back. In other words, Corydon and Alexis had a love relationship in the country sometime in the past but Alexis has now abandoned Corydon for Iollas who is situated in the town. This suggestion can further be reinforced by the Vergilian verses under consideration where Corydon reproaches Alexis for abandoning him (cf. *quem fugis, a! demens?*) [15]. This reproach is followed by the mythological *exempla* that even gods come to dwell in the country and Dardanius Paris (*habitarunt di quoque siluas / Dardaniusque Paris*) and is used by Corydon to idealise the country setting in which the urban Alexis is again invited. In view of that, the first *exemplum* is strong enough to persuade the urbane beloved [16]. On the other hand, the example of Paris, who is described as *Dardanius* to stress that it refers to the time when he herded Priam's cattle on Mt Ida [17], is very allusive. Moreover, it

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10. Cf. Parth., *Erot. Path.*, IV. See also Apollod., *Bibl.*, III, 12.6 and Con., *Narr.*, XXIII.

11. Cf. Var., *L.*, VII, 82 *quapropter Parim pastores nunc Alexandrum uocant*.

12. Cf. I. M. DU QUESNAY, *op. cit*. (n. 1), p. 47.

13. Cf. e.g. Eur., *IA*, 180-181 Πάρις ὁ βουκόλος ἂν ἔλαβε / δῶρον τᾶς Ἀφροδίτας and Verg., *Aen*., VII, 363-364 *at non sic Phrygius penetrat Lacedaemona pastor, / Ledaeamque Helenam Troianas uexit ad urbes?*

14. Cf. e.g. S. H. LINDHEIM, "*Omnia uincit amor*: or, Why Oenone Should Have Known It Would Never Work Out (Eclogue 10 and Heroides 5)", *MD* 44 (2000), p. 93.

15. See also P. A. PEROTTI, "*Quem fugis?* (Verg. ecl. 2, 60; Aen. 5, 742; 6, 466)", *Orpheus* 25 (2004), p. 13-14 who nicely observes that *quem fugis*? could be translated as 'why do you flee me?' rather than 'whom do you flee?'.

16. Cf. R. COLEMAN, *op. cit*. (n. 2), p. 104 who argues that Corydon should not only refer to traditional country gods (i.e. Apollo Nomios, Ceres, Nymphs, Pan, Silvanus etc.) but also to those who had come to dwell in the country pursuing mortal erotic objects (i.e. Adonis, Attis, Endymion, Ganymede etc.).

can refer to Oenone's request to Paris to leave the city and Helen [18], something which Corydon is doing by asking Alexis to leave the urban setting and Iollas (*Pallas quas condidit arces* / *ipsa colat;*) and re-enter the countryside. Corydon uses the first mythological *exemplum* in order to idealise the country reminding to Alexis what he has abandoned and the second to urge Alexis not to follow the adulterous behaviour of Paris, who left Oenone and the countryside for Helen with terrible consequences (Trojan War and Paris' death).

Nonetheless, Oenone is the abandoned heroine who never managed to get Paris back and in that sense the mythological *exemplum* used by Corydon is doomed to fail. Corydon does not seem to know or to understand fully this love story, something reasonable for an uneducated and uncultivated herdsman and the mythological *exemplum* he employs here actually gets the better of him. This causes laughter and humour to us (i.e. the readers) but especially to the characters of the text (i.e. Alexis and apparently Iollas), who realise that the herdsman's literary background is incongruous with the use of rhetorical instruments. More than that, the brief and allusive way in which this love story is manipulated shows Alexis' erudition and thus confirms that the love object is a learned character. An erudite beloved would surely read this mythological *exemplum* as an indirect invitation to choose, as Paris did, for his own Helen and not for Oenone, thereby causing further laughter and humour to us and to the characters of the text. Furthermore, the hard-hearted (cf. *O crudelis Alexi* [*Ecl*., II, 6]) and adulterous Alexis who has left the country and Corydon for Iollas recalls Paris who has left the country and Oenone for Helen showing *duritia* and *leuitas*, two features of the elegiac *puella*. In other words, the elegiac spectre of Paris who cannot live with the pastoral Oenone can actually push Alexis to abandon the pastoral Corydon for the elegiac Iollas, confirming that Alexis is an elegiac character and that the *exemplum* fails to convince. On the other hand, Oenone constitutes a country character (i.e. Nymph) who, however, behaves similarly to an elegiac figure mourning for the strayed lover Paris; and in that sense, she recalls the herdsman-lover Corydon who also shows elegiac behaviour in order to win Alexis back by retiring to the solitude of the countryside to assuage his erotic passion and delivering a sad monologue (i.e. *Waldeinsamkeit*) [19]. Finally, the mythological *exemplum* indirectly stresses the analogy between Helen and Iollas that shows that Iollas is not only a *diues amator* but a handsome erotic rival who is in strong contrast with the ugly Corydon (cf. *nec sum adeo informis* [*Ecl*., II, 25]). Corydon does not want Alexis to realise that there are strong analogies between Iollas and Helen which would weaken the herdsman's argument. This selective treatment of the story confirms that the *exemplum* fails to convince and, most significantly, that the herdsman does not know the ultimate outcome, thereby reinforcing once again the laughter and humour caused by his words, which is also evidenced more emphatically by the cross-gender parallels that emerge (i.e. Corydon as Oenone and Iollas as Helen).

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17. Cf. Verg., *Aen*., VII, 363-364 *at non sic Phrygius penetrat Lacedaemona pastor,* / *Ledaeamque Helenam Troianas uexit ad urbes?* with W. V. CLAUSEN, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 82-83 who observes that Paris is usually described as *Phrygius pastor*.

18. Cf. Ov., *Her*., V.

19. Cf. e.g. M. ROTHSTEIN, *Die Elegien des Sextus Propertius*. Berlin, 1898, p. 67. See also Call., *Aet*., fr. LXVII, 1-4 Pf. (Acontius); Phanocl., fr. I, 1-6 Powell (Orpheus); Theocr., *Id*., XI, 7-18 (Polyphemus) and Verg., *Ecl*., X, 52-54 (Gallus).

      To sum up, the suggestion that *Ecl.*, II, 60-62 refer to Paris' and Oenone's love
story rather than to Paris' *iudicium* enables us to infer that Corydon and Alexis had a
relationship in the country sometime in the past but Alexis is now with Iollas in the
town. In other words, the urban (elegiac) character Alexis in a similar way to Gallus
in *Eclogue* X enters the idealised pastoral world enjoying its country pleasures and
its idyllic love. Nonetheless, Alexis is leaving the shepherd Corydon for the rich
urban lover Iollas showing typical elegiac behaviour through the erotic triangle
(Corydon-Alexis-Iollas) which is a literary subject traditionally identified in Roman
comedy and love elegy [20]. This places special emphasis on the strong contrast
between pastoral and elegiac love, since the pastoral environment and its idyllic love
are the idealised happy alternative, which is strongly contrasted to the urban envir-
onment and its unhappy elegiac love [21]. Alexis' short visit to the pastoral world has
great influence on Corydon who is not actually trying to conquer but to win the
strayed beloved back, thereby displaying typical elegiac behaviour (i.e. exclusive de-
votion to a love object); and though this will end shortly, the herdsman will carry on
searching for love objects outside the pastoral world (cf. *inuenies alium, si te hic
fastidit, Alexin* [*Ecl.*, II, 73]), confirming the strong relation between pastoral and
elegiac genre (cf. *Ecl*., VIII and X). On the other hand, Corydon's elegiac behaviour
is also emphatically incongruous with his pastoral origin, causing laughter and hu-
mour to us and the characters of the text; humour, however, which is elegant and
witty and therefore far from the coarse and obscene Theocritean humour.

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      20. Cf. E. KARAKASIS, *Song Exchange in Roman Pastoral*, Berlin - New York,
2011, p. 116.
      21. See M. FANTUZZI, "Pastoral Love and 'Elegiac Love' from Greece to Rome",
LICS 2.3 (2003), 1-11 esp. 11, who suggests that there is a kind of erotic-pastoral po-
etry of the pastoral environment, which is emphatically contrasted with the erotic-
elegiac poetry of the urban environment.