

**A TRANSLATION OF VIRGIL'S
ECLOGUES INTO RHYTHMIC
PROSE, WITH NOTES, BY
R.M. MILLINGTON**

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Publius Vergilius Maro

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ECLOGUES INTO RHYTHMIC
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A TRANSLATION
OF
VIRGIL'S ECLOGUES

INTO RHYTHMIC PROSE.

With Notes,

BASED ON THOSE IN PROFESSOR CONINGTON'S EDITION.

BY
R. M. MILLINGTON, M.A.,
TRANSLATOR OF HORACE.

FOR THE STUDENT.

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THE Author of this translation believes that Classical Poetry should not be rendered into the same kind of prose as Classical Prose, if intended to aid the student. It may appear to some unnecessary to say this, but it is to be feared there is good reason for the remark with regard to this part of Virgil, and other portions of classical poetry.

This is an attempt to provide the student with a translation which, though literal, may not give him, at all events, awkward English.

THE BUCOLICS.

ECLOGUE I.

ARGUMENT.

THE poet introduces two shepherds speaking alternately, one of whom is enjoying rustic life and singing the praise of his love, and contemplating his cattle browsing undisturbed, when he meets the other, who has just been expelled from his farm, and is driving his goats before him, with nothing but exile in prospect. Virgil alludes, under cover of the shepherd's character, to his own dispossession by the victorious soldiers of Antony and Octavianus, as Augustus was then called. The scenery is, as in other Eclogues, confused; the trees, rocks, caves, &c., belonging to Sicily, the marshy river (probably the overflow of the Mincius) referring to Mantua. The names *Tityrus*, *Galatea*, and *Amaryllis* are borrowed from Theocritus, but in other respects the poem is original.

MELIBŌEUS. 'You, Tityrus, reclined beneath the spreading beech-tree's shade, compose the pastoral lay upon the simple oaten pipe, while I am exiled from my country's boundaries and pleasant fields. Yes; I my country as an exile quit, while Tityrus, you, 'free from care, in shady bowers, instruct the woods to echo beauteous Amaryllis' name.

¹ 1—5. How is it, Tityrus, that, while I am wandering an out-cast from my native fields, you play the happy shepherd, lying in the shade and singing the praises of your mistress?

² *Lentus* = *securus*.

Forbiger observes that the Italians pasture their cattle in summer among the woody slopes of the mountains.

TITYRUS. 'Dear Melibœus, 'twas a god who gained for me this peaceful life, for surely he by me shall aye be honoured as a god; his altar many a tender lamb shall stain with blood from fold of mine. He, as you see, both let my oxen 'roam (*in safety*) and myself play on the shepherd's pipe whate'er I pleased.

MELIBŒUS. 'Indeed I envy not (*thy lucky lot*), but am astonished more, so dreadful is the tumult all the country through. See, I myself in body faint and sick at heart, the she-goats onward drive. Nay, Tityrus, this one 'I scarce can drag along. For here just now, amid the hazel's thickest shade, with many a labour-throe, she brought forth twins, and cruel! left them, hope of all the flock, upon the naked flinty soil; and well I recollect that oft the oaks by lightning struck were warning me of this mishap, had but 'my mind been then from folly free. But tell me, Tityrus, what sort of god that is you talk about.

TITYRUS. 'Why, Melibœus, in my folly I thought

¹ 6—10. This rural liberty I owe to one who will ever be as a god to me, *i.e.*, Octavianus, as Augustus was then called.

² The infinitives *errare* and *ipsum ludere* are used as accusatives. *Turbatur*, *i.e.*, *a militibus*.

³ 11—19. Well, I do not grudge you your lot. I only wonder that such peace can exist amid such troubles. You see me weary with driving my flock, one of which has just dropped her young dead; although I might have foreseen this from the warning I have had. But about this god of yours?

⁴ The kids would naturally soon die when dropped on stony ground instead of soft grass.

⁵ *Non* goes with *lacva*, not with *fuisset*.

The striking of a person or thing by lightning was regarded as an omen of evil.

If Pomponius be right in supposing that the blasting of the oak foreboded banishment, *malum hoc* will refer to the exile of Melibœus instead of the loss of the twins.

⁶ 19—25. Why, I used to suppose that Rome was different from our Mantua merely as a dog differs from a puppy, but I found it much more like the difference between a cypress and an osier. The difference was not in degree, but in kind.

that the town which men call Rome was like this Mantua of ours, to which we shepherds are accustomed oft 'to drive our tender lambs (*for sale*). For thus I knew that puppies were like dogs, kids like their dams; thus used I to 'compare great things with small. But Rome 'rears her proud head as high 'mid other towns as 'cypresses in beds of pliant osiers would.

MELIBŒUS. 'And what so strong a reason had you for this visit paid to Rome?

TITYRUS. 'Twas liberty, which late 'tis true; yet still looked on me, idling thus, when now my beard, whene'er I shaved, fell somewhat gray; yes, looked on me, and when long years had rolled by, came, when Amaryllis held my love, and Galatea had now gone. For, to confess the truth, while Galatea swayed my heart, no hope of liberty had I, no thought for the slave's private gains; though many a victim left my cattle-pens, and many a cheese was pressed for the 'ungrateful town, my hands were ne'er with money filled when I came back again.

MELIBŒUS. I used to wonder, Amaryllis, why

¹ *Depellers*. The preposition has the same form as in *deducere*, *demittere* (*naves in portum*).

² *Componere magna*. This means to compare the larger member of a class with the smaller.

³ *Extulit* has a present force and *—clatum gerit*, or why not translate as a perfect, and imply that she still retains the eminence?

⁴ We learn from Pliny that the cypress, though not indigenous to Italy, was common enough in Virgil's time.

⁵ 26—35. What took you to Rome? I went to buy my freedom, to provide for which in earlier years I had neglected, as I had an extravagant mistress.

⁶ *Ingratas*. So called because it paid him nothing in return for his trouble.

⁷ 38—39. I remember well how you were missed, both by Amaryllis and by the property under your charge, though I did not then know you were away.

you called so sadly on the gods; what swain it was for whom you let each fruit hang still upon its tree. It was because your Tityrus was gone. The very pine-trees, Tityrus, the very springs, ay, e'en these shrubs, here called on thee.

TITYRUS. 'What could I do? I neither was allowed to gain my liberty, nor could I hear elsewhere of gods so powerful to aid. Here, Meliboeus, I beheld that youthful hero in whose honour smoke my altars twelve days in each year that comes: here was it that he first gave me this answer to my prayer for help: "Slaves, let your cattle graze as erst; raise bulls for breeding as before."

MELIBOEUS. 'O blest old man, this strip of country, then, is yours, and yours will ever be, and amply does it satisfy your wants, though it is covered with bare rocks, and all the pasturage with bulrush and with marsh. No pasturage to which they are not used will give distemper to your sheep with 'lamb, and no malignant 'shab, caught from your neighbour's flock, will injure them. O blest old man, for here, between 'the streams you love, and 'springs,

¹ 40—45. "I could not help leaving them. My only chance was eget to Rome. And there I saw this god of mine: a youthful warrior with glory crowned, to whom I pay the honours due to gods. From his mouth I received assurance of protection." The present *funant* is used because the sacrifice has already begun, and Tityrus means it to be annual.

² 46. *Tus* and *manebunt* are both predicates.

46—58. You, then, are blest; for though your land is poor, you may enjoy it undisturbed, and be content. Your flocks will all be healthy; you will live 'mid shady groves, or by some stream, lulled by the hum of bees, the cooing doves, or the vine-dresser's song.

³ 49. *Gravis* = graves = gravidas.

⁴ Probably the same sort of disease as the modern scab or shab.

⁵ Probably the Mincius and the Po.

⁶ 52. *Fontis* = fontes. They are called "sacros" from the idea that a divinity of some kind haunted every source and spring.

loved haunts of deities, you with the swains will eagerly 'enjoy cool shade. 'From hence, this neighbouring boundary—I mean the hedge—cropped, as 'tis ever wont to be, of willow-blossoms by the bees of 'Hybla, will, as oft ere this it has, lull you to sleep with buzzing and with whispering leaves. From hence, beneath some lofty rock, the 'woodman, as he strips the trees of leaves, shall fill the air with song, nor shall meantime the doves, your joy, with their hoarse notes, nor turtle, cease to coo, perched on some lofty elm.

TITYRUS. 'Ay, sooner shall the nimble stag browse in the sky, the seas leave fish all bare upon the shore, and sooner, straying o'er the boundaries of both, shall Parthians in exile drink from 'Arar's stream, or German tribes the Tigris' flood, than shall this heart of mine forget his gracious look.

MELIBŒUS. 'Yet some of us will have to leave this spot for Afric's arid clime, some will arrive at Scythia and Crete's swift stream, Oaxes, and those Britons totally cut off from all the world? 'What!

¹ *Ceptabis*. The frequentative may mean that others besides him enjoyed the shade.

² 53. As Weise says, *quae semper* is an elliptical relative clause for *ut semper*. *Vicino ad limite* is merely explanatory of *hinc*.

³ Hybla, a mountain in Sicily, with a city of the same name.

⁴ The *frondator* dressed the trees by stripping them of their leaves, which were used for the fodder of cattle.

⁵ 59—63. Ay, nature herself will change, and nations change their country, ere I forget my benefactor.

⁶ The *Arar*, now the Saône, is a river of Gaul.

⁷ 64—78. Yet we have to migrate thus, and be exiled to remotest lands. Perhaps I may never see my old home again, or, if I do, it will be possessed by a brutal alien. I have laboured for another, and I must now bid farewell for ever to the joy of a shepherd's life.

⁸ *Post=posthâc*. *Aliquot mirabar aristas* is to be translated, "Shall I see with wonder a few ears of corn?" The soldiers were bad farmers, and therefore always ready for new civil wars.