

don's Homeric line is a foil to Battus' engagingly bombastic query, more in the tragic style (cf. esp. Aesch. *Ag.* 657), about Aegon's whereabouts: αὐτὸς δ' ἐς τίν' ἄφαντος ὁ βουκόλος ᾤχετο χώραν; (4. 5). Later on Battus' tragic line αἰαὶ τῷ σκληρῷ μάλα δαίμονος ὅς με λελόγγει (40) follows immediately after a rustic simile in which he had compared his affection for the dead Amaryllis to the affection he felt for his goats! Even at this point rustic naïveté is given a tinge of grandiloquence through ἀπέσβης (39), applied metaphorically to Amaryllis. Just before the *Idyll* degenerates into obscenity the animals become very restless; and Battus' threat to one of them has a distinctly comic effect, as he has used the lament of Amphimedon's ghost, ἡμετέρου θανάτοιο κακὸν τέλος, οἶον ἐτύχθη (*Od.* 24. 124), as the basis of his own euphemism κακὸν τέλος αὐτίκα δωσῶν (47). His use of διδόναι is, moreover, typically Homeric (cf. *Il.* 9. 571, 19. 270, etc.), except insofar as it is applied to the dispensations of gods rather than men in Homer—a further touch of bombast on Battus' part which is presumably deliberate.

Idyll 5. 68–71 offers an example of parody from the law courts when both Lacon and

Comatas appeal for impartiality from Morson, the judge of their songs. Comatas introduces a hint of chiasmus by balancing Lacon's first appeal μήτ' ἐμέ, Μόρσων, / ἐν χάριτι κρίνης (68–69) with μήτ' ὦν τύγα τῷδε χαρίξῃ (71) as his own second appeal. His unique phrase (70–71) μήτε Κομάτα / τὸ πλεόν ἰθύνῃς (“direct the advantage towards”) reads like an attempt at parodying the bombastic legal jargon. It comes as a surprise from Comatas, particularly after the appeal ποτὶ τᾶν Νυμφᾶν (70). These Nymphs are not forgotten by Comatas triumphant, and his scrupulous concern for ritual propriety is gently made fun of by Theocritus through the use of καλλιερῆσαι (148) instead of the expected θῦσαι. The ponderous line ending matches Comatas' self-importance. But the incontinent billy goat has things other than purity in mind, and the *Idyll* ends delightfully with Comatas threatening it with a vital excision and, in his earnest oath, invoking upon himself the fate of his Homeric predecessor, the goat-herd Melanthius (*Od.* 22. 476).

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THE MESSAGE OF IDAIOS: FORMULAIC DEPARTURE?

A significant departure from formulaic application in *Iliad* 7 emphasizes the inequality of Paris and Menelaos with respect to Helen. In most places where a message is first commissioned and then delivered, the oral law of economy would seem to dictate verbatim repetition. Examples abound. In Book 9, Odysseus lists Agamemnon's gifts with precisely the same phrasing Agamemnon himself had used to relate his offer to the ambassadors (9. 125 ff. = 9. 266 ff.). The opening of Book 2 is another instance, where the same message is delivered by Zeus to Dream, Dream to Agamemnon, and Agamemnon to his council (2. 11 ff. = 2. 28 ff. = 2. 65 ff.). In these instances the pattern holds even though particular words may be changed grammatically to fit the speaker. This makes the departure in Book 7 seem even more unusual.

Paris advises the assembled Trojans that

although he will offer gifts to Menelaos he will not in any case give back his wife (γυναιῖκα, 7. 362). Idaios is commissioned to deliver the message to the Achaeans. But, by departing from the usual practice of parallel phraseology, Idaios reveals the dissension in Troy. First he declares parenthetically that he wishes Paris had perished (7. 390). Then, after duly describing Alexandros' offering of gifts, Idaios significantly alters Paris' simple mode of reference to Helen (7. 392–93): κουριδίην δ' ἄλοχον Μενελάου κυδαλίμοιο / οὐ φησιν δώσειν (“But the very wedded wife of glorious Menelaos he says that he will not give”). Implicit in Idaios' idiosyncratic comment is the Trojan recognition of the impropriety of Alexandros' self-appointed marriage.

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