

MENALCAS

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*Me.* Cur non, Mopse, boni quoniam conuenimus ambo,  
tu calamos inflare leuis, ego dicere uersus,  
hic corylis mixtas inter consedimus ulmos?  
*Mo.* Tu maior; tibi me est aequum parere, Menalca,  
siue sub incertas Zephyris motantibus umbras 5  
siue antro potius succedimus. aspice, ut antrum  
silvestris raris sparsit labrusca racemis.  
*Me.* Montibus in nostris solus tibi certat Amyntas.  
*Mo.* Quid, si idem certet Phoebum superare canendo?  
*Me.* Incipe, Mopse, prior, si quos aut Phyllidis ignis 10  
aut Alconis habes laudes aut iurgia Codri.  
incipe: pascentis seruabit Tityrus haedos.  
*Mo.* Immo haec, in uiridi nuper quae cortice fagi  
carmina descripsi et modulans alterna notauī,  
experiar: tu deinde iubeto ut certet Amyntas. 15  
*Me.* Lenta salix quantum pallenti cedit oliuae,  
puniceis humilis quantum saliuca rosetis,  
iudicio nostro tantum tibi cedit Amyntas.  
sed tu desine plura, puer: successimus antro.  
*Mo.* Exstinctum Nymphae crudeli funere Daphnin 20  
flebant (uos coryli testes et flumina Nymphis),  
cum complexa sui corpus miserabile nati  
atque deos atque astra uocat crudelia mater.  
non ulli pastos illis egere diebus  
frigida, Daphni, boues ad flumina; nulla neque amnem 25  
libauit quadripes nec graminis attigit herbam.  
Daphni, tuum Poenos etiam ingemuisse leones  
interitum montesque feri siluaeque loquuntur.  
Daphnis et Armenias curru subiungere tigris  
instituit, Daphnis thiasos inducere Bacchi 30  
et foliis lentas intexere mollibus hastas.  
uitis ut arboribus decori est, ut uitibus uuae,  
ut gregibus tauri, segetes ut pinguibus aruis,

*Me.* Why don't we, Mopsus, meeting like this, good men both,  
You to blow the light reeds, I to versify,  
Sit down together here where hazels mix with elms?  
*Mo.* You're senior, Menalcas; I owe you deference,  
Whether we go where fitful Zephyrs make uncertain  
Shade, or into the cave instead. See how the cave  
Is dappled by a woodland vine's rare grape-clusters.  
*Me.* Only Amyntas in our hills competes with you.  
*Mo.* What? He might just as well compete to outplay Phoebus.  
*Me.* Then, Mopsus, you start first – with Phyllis' flames perhaps  
Or Alcon's praises or a flyting against Codrus.  
You start, and Tityrus will watch the grazing kids.  
*Mo.* No, I'll try out the song I wrote down recently  
On green beech bark, noting the tune between the lines:  
Then you can tell Amyntas to compete with me.  
*Me.* As surely as tough willow yields to the pale olive,  
Or humble red valerian to the crimson rose,  
So does Amyntas in our judgement yield to you.  
But no more talk, lad: we have come into the cave.  
*Mo.* The Nymphs for Daphnis, cut off by a cruel death,  
Shed tears (you streams and hazels witness for the Nymphs),  
When, clasping her own son's poor body in her arms,  
A mother called both gods and stars alike cruel.  
In those days there were none who drove their pastured cattle  
To the cool rivers, Daphnis; no four-footed beast  
Would either lap the stream or touch a blade of grass.  
The wild hills, Daphnis, and the forests even tell  
How Punic lions roared in grief at your destruction.  
Daphnis ordained to yoke Armenian tigresses  
To chariots, Daphnis to lead on the Bacchic rout  
And twine tough javelins with gentle foliage.  
As vines are glorious for trees, as grapes for vines,  
As bulls for herds, and standing crops for fertile fields,

tu decus omne tuis. postquam te fata tulerunt,  
 ipsa Pales agros atque ipse reliquit Apollo. 35  
 grandia saepe quibus mandauimus hordea sulcis,  
 infelix lolium et steriles nascuntur auenae;  
 pro molli uiola, pro purpureo narcisso  
 carduus et spinis surgit paliurus acutis.  
 spargite humum foliis, inducite fontibus umbras, 40  
 pastores (mandat fieri sibi talia Daphnis),  
 et tumulum facite, et tumulo superaddite carmen:  
 'Daphnis ego in siluis, hinc usque ad sidera notus,  
 formosi pecoris custos, formosior ipse.'  
*Me.* Tale tuum carmen nobis, diuine poeta, 45  
 quale sopor fessis in gramine, quale per aestum  
 dulcis aquae saliente sitim restinguere riuo.  
 nec calamis solum aequiperas, sed uoce magistrum:  
 fortunate puer, tu nunc eris alter ab illo.  
 nos tamen haec quocumque modo tibi nostra uicissim 50  
 dicemus, Daphninque tuum tollemus ad astra;  
 Daphnin ad astra feremus: amauit nos quoque Daphnis.  
*Mo.* An quicquam nobis tali sit munere maius?  
 et puer ipse fuit cantari dignus, et ista  
 iam pridem Stimichon laudauit carmina nobis. 55  
*Me.* Candidus insuetum miratur limen Olympi  
 sub pedibusque uidet nubes et sidera Daphnis.  
 ergo alacris siluas et cetera rura uoluptas  
 Panaque pastoresque tenet Dryadasque puellas.  
 nec lupus insidias pecori, nec retia ceruis 60  
 ulla dolum meditantur: amat bonus otia Daphnis.  
 ipsi laetitia uoces ad sidera iactant  
 intonsi montes; ipsae iam carmina rupes,  
 ipsa sonant arbusta: 'deus, deus ille, Menalca!'  
 sis bonus o felixque tuis! en quattuor aras: 65  
 ecce duas tibi, Daphni, duas altaria Phoebo.  
 pocula bina nouo spumantia lacte quotannis  
 craterasque duo statuam tibi pinguis oliui,

You are all glory to your folk. But since fate took you,  
 Apollo's self and Pales' self have left the land.  
 From furrows we have often trusted with large barleys  
 Are born unlucky darnel and the barren oat.  
 For the soft violet, for radiant narcissus,  
 Thistles spring up and paliurus with sharpened spines.  
 Scatter the ground with petals, cast shade on the springs,  
 Shepherds, (that such be done for him is Daphnis' will),  
 And make a mound and add above the mound a song:  
*Daphnis am I in woodland, known hence far as the stars,  
 Herd of a handsome flock, myself the handsomer.*  
*Me.* For us your song, inspired poet, is like sleep  
 On meadow grass for the fatigued, or in the heat  
 Quenching one's thirst from a leaping stream of sweet water.  
 You equal both your master's piping and his voice.  
 Lucky lad! From now on you'll be second to him.  
 Yet we, no matter how, will in return recite  
 This thing of ours, and praise your Daphnis to the stars —  
 Yes, to the stars raise Daphnis, for Daphnis loved us too.  
*Mo.* What greater service could you render us than that?  
 The lad himself deserved singing, and Stimichon  
 Some time ago spoke highly of your song to us.  
*Me.* Daphnis in white admires Olympus' strange threshold,  
 And sees the planets and the clouds beneath his feet.  
 Therefore keen pleasure grips forest and countryside,  
 Pan also, and the shepherds, and the Dryad maids.  
 The wolf intends no ambush to the flock, the nets  
 No trickery to deer: Daphnis the good loves peace.  
 For gladness even the unshorn mountains fling their voices  
 Toward the stars; now even the orchards, even the rocks  
 Echo the song: 'A god, a god is he, Menalca!'  
 O bless your folk and prosper them! Here are four altars:  
 Look, Daphnis, two for you and two high ones for Phoebus.  
 Two goblets each, frothing with fresh milk, every year  
 And two large bowls of olive oil I'll set for you;

et multo in primis hilarans conuiuia Baccho  
 (ante focum, si frigus erit; si messis, in umbra) 70  
 uina nouum fundam calathis Ariusia nectar.  
 cantabunt mihi Damoetas et Lyctius Aegon;  
 saltantis Satyros imitabitur Alpheisiboeus.  
 haec tibi semper erunt, et cum sollemnia uota  
 reddemus Nymphis, et cum lustrabimus agros. 75  
 dum iuga montis aper, fluuios dum piscis amabit,  
 dumque thymo pascentur apes, dum rore cicadae,  
 semper honos nomenque tuum laudesque manebunt.  
 ut Baccho Cererique, tibi sic uota quotannis  
 agricolae facient: damnabis tu quoque uotis. 80  
*Mo.* Quae tibi, quae tali reddam pro carmine dona?  
 nam neque me tantum uenientis sibilus Austri  
 nec percussa iuuant fluctu tam litora, nec quae  
 saxosas inter decurrunt flumina uallis.  
*Me.* Hac te nos fragili donabimus ante cicuta; 85  
 haec nos 'formosum Corydon ardebat Alexin',  
 haec eadem docuit 'cuium pecus? an Meliboei?'  
*Mo.* At tu sume pedum, quod, me cum saepe rogaret,  
 non tulit Antigenes (et erat tum dignus amari),  
 formosum paribus nodis atque aere, Menalca. 90

And best of all, gladdening the feast with Bacchus' store  
 (In winter, by the hearth; at harvest, in the shade),  
 I'll pour Ariusian wine, fresh nectar, from big stoups.  
 Damoetas and the Lyctian Aegon will sing for me;  
 Alpheisiboeus imitate the Satyrs' dance.  
 These offerings ever shall be yours, both when we pay  
 The Nymphs our solemn vows and when we purge the fields.  
 So long as fish love rivers, wild boar mountain heights,  
 So long as bees eat thyme, and the cicada dew,  
 Always your honour, name and praises will endure.  
 As farmers every year to Bacchus and to Ceres,  
 So they will vow to you; you too will claim their vows.  
*Mo.* What can I give you, what return make for such song?  
 For neither does the whistling of Auster coming  
 Sound so pleasant to me, nor beaches beaten by waves,  
 Nor rivers rushing down the valleys among rocks.  
*Me.* We shall present you first with this frail hemlock pipe.  
 This taught us 'Corydon burned for beautiful Alexis';  
 This also taught us 'Whose flock? Meliboeus his?'  
*Mo.* You take the crook, then, which Antigenes failed to get  
 For all his asking (lovable as then he was),  
 A handsome thing, with matching knobs and brass,  
 Menalcas.