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Title of my lecture: “Generic Experiments in Calpurnius Siculus”

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Final abstract:

It is often discussed if Calpurnius Siculus keeps within the boundaries of bucolic genre as conceived by Virgil, or if, by means of extending those boundaries, he aims to undermine them utterly. Both views assume that Calpurnius displays only one consistent poetic programme throughout the whole collection. Our paper suggests the emergency of at least two poetic programmes within the book: the first one, highly engaged with panegyric and Virgilian tradition, comprises the “political” eclogues 1, 4 and 7; the second one, heavily indebted to Theocritus, aims to recover the original force of generic contamination as a source of innovative poetry and underlies mainly eclogues 2, 3, 5 and 6. By proposing this double poetic programme, Calpurnius’ book features a generic experiment on the rules of bucolic poetry.