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NOTES ON THEOCRITUS

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Summary: An analysis of several passages of Theocritus, which were judged by certain critics to be corrupt or incomprehensible, shows that they are textually sound.

The Spring of the Hours

At *Idyll* I, lines 146-152. The goatherd thanks Thyrsis for his song:

ΑΙΠΟΛΟΣ

πλήρες τοι μέλιτος τὸ καλὸν στόμα, Θύρσι, γένοιτο,
πλήρες δὲ σχαδόνων, καὶ ἅπ' Αἰγίλω ἰσχάδα τρώγοις
ἀδεῖαν, τέττιγος ἔπει τύγα φέρτερον ἄδεις.

ἦνίδε τοι τὸ δέπας· θᾶσαι, φίλος, ὡς καλὸν ὄσδει·

᾿Ωρᾶν πεπλύσθαι νιν ἐπὶ κρᾶναισι δοκησεῖς.

᾿ὦ δ' ἴθι, Κισσαίθα· τὸ δ' ἄμελγέ νιν. αἱ δὲ χίμαιραι,

οὐ μὴ σκιρτασῆτε, μὴ ὁ τράγος ὕμμιν ἀναστῆ.

Translation by A.S.F. Gow (*Theocritus*, Cambridge, 1965, rep., vol. I, p.

15):

GOATHERD

Filled may thy fair mouth be with honey, Thyrsis, and with the honeycomb; and mayest thou eat the sweet figs of Aegilus, for thy singing outdoes the cicada. See, here is the cup; mark, friend, how sweet it smells; thou wilt think it has been dipped at the well of the Hours. Come hither, Cissaetha; and do thou milk her. And you she-goats be not so frisky lest the he-goat rouse himself.

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Gow noted¹ that the Hours are "associated with dew and rain but not elsewhere with springs". I would like to point out that Theocritus is alluding here to the fact that springs were sometimes associated with a divinity². Thus *A.P.* 6, 170 mentions a fountain that has been dedicated to Pan:

Αἱ πετέλαι τῷ Πανὶ καὶ αἱ ταυνομήκεες αὐταὶ
 ἰτέαι, ἢ θ' ἱερά κάμφιλαφῆς πλάτανος
 καὶ λιβάδες, καὶ ταῦτα βοτηρικὰ Πανὶ κύπελλα
 ἄγκειται, δίψης φάρμακ' ἄλεξικακά.

Translation by Paton (*The Greek Anthology*, vol. I, p. 387):

*The elms, and these lofty willows, and the holy spreading plane,
 and the springs, and these shepherds' cups that cure fell thirst,
 are dedicate to Pan.*

It should, moreover, be noted that κράναισι is a poetic plural³. Accordingly, the bowl is said to have been washed in a spring that had been dedicated to the Hours. The spring is fragrant because the Hours are connected with flowers: cf. Orphic Hymn 43, 3 where the Hours are described as πολυάνθεμοι. Cf. also Nonnus, *Dion.* 48, 578:

... χαριζόμεναι δὲ Λυαίῳ
 δμῳίδες Ἡελίοιο κατέγραφον ἄνθεσιν ὦραι
 πίδακος ἄκρα μέτωπα, καὶ εὐόδοισιν ἀήταις
 ἀρτιφύτου λειμῶνος ἰμάσσετο νήδυμος ἀήρ·

Translation by Rouse (*Nonnus*, Loeb edition, vol. 3, p. 467):

*The Seasons, handmaids of Helios, to do grace to Lyaios, painted
 with flowers the fountain's margin, and fragrant whiffs from the
 newgrowing meadow beat on the balmy air.*

A Textual Problem in Theocritus' Idyll 3

At lines 28ff. A goatherd complains that Amaryllis, his beloved, does not love him:

ἔγνω πρᾶν, ὅκα μοι, μεμναμένῳ εἰ φιλέεις με,
 οὐδὲ τὸ τηλέφιλον ποτεμάξατο τὸ πλατάγημα,
 ἀλλ' αὐτως ἀπαλῶ ποτὶ πάχει ἐξεμαράνθη.
 εἶπε καὶ Ἀγροῖῳ τάλαθέα κοσκινόμαντις,

¹ *Op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 32.

² Cf. D.L. Page, *Further Greek Epigrams*, Cambridge, 1981, p. 92.

³ For other examples of the employment of the poetic plural, cf. G. Giangrande, *Scripta Minora Alexandrina*, vol. I, Amsterdam, 1980, p. 181. Cf. also Sophocles, *Ant.* 844: Διρκαῖαι κρῆναι.

ἀ πρᾶν ποιολογεῦσα παραιβάτις, οὔνεκ' ἐγὼ μὲν
τιν ὄλος ἔγκριμαι, τὸ δέ μευ λόγον οὐδένα ποιῆ.

Line 29 ποτιμαζάμενον πλατάγησεν v. l.

Translation by Gow (*Theocritus*, vol. I, p. 33):

I learnt the truth of late when I bethought me didst thou love me, and the smack caused not the love-in-absence to cling, but idly it shrivelled on my smooth forearm. And Agroëo too, that divines with her sieve –she that was lately cutting grass by my side, told me truth, how that my heart was wholly thine while thou madest no account of me.

Gow was puzzled by the meaning of line 29: cf. *Theocritus*, vol. 2, p. 70. I would like to point out that perfect sense can be restored to this passage if we follow Kiessling⁴ and print line 29 as follows: οὐδὲ τὸ τηλεφίλον ποτιμαζάμενον πλατάγησεν. The goatherd states that the love-in-absence (τὸ τηλεφίλον) did not make a noise (οὐδὲ ... πλατάγησεν). The *scholia* explain that, according to ancient divination, if the love-in-absence made a noise when it was struck, that was a good sign for a lover. It meant that his beloved was in love with him⁵: τηλεφίλον· τηλεφίλον ἔστι τὸ φύλλον τῆς μήκωνος. ἄλλοι δὲ βοτάνην ἑτέραν λέγουσιν εἶναι τὸ τηλεφίλον. εἶτε δὲ τοῦτο εἶτε ἐκεῖνό ἐστιν, ἀναλαμβάνεται παρὰ τῶν ἐρώντων τὸ τηλεφίλον, καὶ πληττόμενον εἰ ψόφον ἀπετέλει, ἐδίδου αὐτοῖς σημειοῦσθαι, ὅτι ἀντερῶνται ὑπὸ τῶν ἐρωμένων. Moreover, the *scholia* state that love-in-absence was a plant, or a leaf.

Since the love-in-absence made no noise, the goatherd infers that his beloved Amaryllis does not love him in return.

The love-in-absence is mentioned again at *A.P.* 5, 296:

Ἐξότε τηλεφίλου πλαταγήματος ἠχέτα βόμβος
γαστέρα μαντώου μάξατο κισσυβίου,
ἔγνω, ὡς φιλέεις με· τὸ δ' ἄτρεκές αὐτίκα πείσεις
εὐνῆς ἡμετέρης πάννουχος ἀπτομένη.
τοῦτό σε γὰρ δεῖξει παναληθέα· τοὺς δὲ μεθυστάς
καλλείψω λατάγων πλήγμασι τερπομένους.

Translation by Paton (*The Greek Anthology*, Loeb edition, vol. I, p. 287):

Ever since the prophetic bowl pealed aloud in response to the touch of the far-away love-splash, I know that you love me, but you will convince me completely by passing the night with me.

⁴ Cf. T. Kiessling, *Theocriti Reliquiae*, Lipsiae 1819.

⁵ Cf. C. Wendel, *Scholia in Theocritum Vetera*, Stuttgart, 1967, p. 125.

This will show that you are wholly sincere, and I will leave the tipplers to enjoy the strokes of the wine-dregs.

The poet Agathias states that the noise made by the love-in-absence is a sign that he is loved in turn by his beloved. It should be noted that Agathias did not, however, place the love-in-absence on his arm before he struck it. Instead he placed it on the "belly" (γαστέρα) of his drinking-cup. Hence he states that the noise made by the love-in-absence "clung to (μάξατο) the belly of the prophetic drinking-cup". In lines 5-6, Agathias says that he will leave the other drinkers to enjoy playing the game of *cottabos*, while he spends the night with his beloved. For the game of *cottabos*, cf. Callimachus, *frag.* 69 (Pfeiffer):

πολλοὶ καὶ φιλέοντες Ἄκοντιῳ ἦκαν ἔραζε
οἰνοπόται Σικελᾶς ἐκ κυλικῶν λάταγας

Translation by Trypanis (*Callimachus*, Loeb edition, p. 53):

And many lovers of Acontius, when drinking, tossed from the cup to the ground in his honour the last drops of wine in the Sicilian manner.

Trypanis explained that "*cottabos*" was a game "played in a variety of ways with the last drop of wine in the cup, which was cast in reference to some beloved person, at the drinking parties of antiquity". Since Agathias has discovered by means of the love-in-absence that he is loved, he will not play the game of *cottabos* with the other drinkers.

A Textual Problem in Theocritus' Idyll 4

At *Idyll* 4, lines 26ff. Battus states that Aegon's pipe now lies neglected since its owner has gone off to compete in the Olympic games. Corydon denies this and says that he has been using Aegon's pipe to play the tunes of Glauca and of Pyrrhus:

{BA.} φεῦ φεῦ βασεῦνται καὶ ταὶ βόες, ᾧ τάλαν Αἴγων,
εἰς Ἀΐδαν, ὅκα καὶ τὸ κακᾶς ἠράσσαιο νίκας,
χὰ σῦριγξ εὐρῶτι παλύνεται, ἄν ποκ' ἐπάξα.

{KO.} οὐ τήνα γ', οὐ Νύμφας, ἐπεὶ ποτὶ Πῖσαν ἀφέρπων
δῶρον ἐμοί νιν ἔλειπεν· ἐγὼ δέ τις εἰμὶ μελικτάς,
κεῦ μὲν τὰ Γλαύκας ἀγκρούομαι, εὐ δὲ τὰ Πύρρω.
αἰνέω τάν τε Κρότωνα—"Καλὰ πόλις ἅ τε Ζάκυνθος ..."-
καὶ τὸ ποταῶν τὸ Λακίνιον, ἄπερ ὁ πύκτας
Αἴγων ὀγδάκοντα μόνος κατεδαίσατο μάζας.

Translation by Gow (*Theocritus*, vol. I, p. 37):

BA. Wretched Aegon, your cows too will come by their deaths because you, like others, have fallen in love with a cursed victory. And the pipe that once you made yourself is getting flecked with mildew.

CO. Nay, by the Nymphs it is not, for as he was going off to Pisa he left it me for a present. I am something of a player myself, and can strike up Glauca's tunes, or Pyrrhus's, well enough. I sing the praise of Croton -'A bonny town Zacynthus is'- and of the Lacinian shrine that fronts the dawn- where boxer Aegon devoured eighty loaves all by himself.

The text of line 32 has puzzled the critics⁶. I would like to point out that sense can be restored to this passage if we understand that the words *καλὰ πόλις ἄτε Ζάκυνθος* form a parenthesis. The meaning is "It is a beautiful city like (ἄτε) Zacynthus". Corydon states that he praises Croton and the Lacinian shrine. The parenthesis explains that Croton is beautiful like the island of Zacynthus. For the fact that Zacynthus was famous in antiquity for its beauty *cf.* Gow, note *ad loc.* The poet has used ἄτε as the equivalent of ὡς; *cf.* LSJ s.v. Note also the ellipse of the *verbum substantivum*: *cf.* my *Studies in the Poetry of Nicander*, p. 21. Finally it should be added that Theocritus has made use of *asyndeton* in line 32. For such explanatory *asyndeta* *cf.* Lapp, *De Callimachi Cyrenaei Tropis et Figuris*, p. 81. In other words, Corydon first states that he plays the tunes of Glauca and Pyrrhus on Aegon's pipe. He then says that he admires Croton because it is a beautiful city.

Theocritus and Winter Storms

At *Idyll* 7, lines 52 ff. Lycidas states that Ageanax is going to sail to Mitylene:

Ἔσσειται Ἀγεάνακτι καλὸς πλόος ἐς Μιτυλήναν,
 χῶταν ἐφ' ἑσπερίοις Ἐρίφοις νότος ὑγρὰ διώκη
 κύματα, χῶρίων ὄτ' ἐπ' ὠκεανῶ πόδας ἴσχει,
 αἶ κα τὸν Λυκίδαυ ὀπτεύμενον ἐξ Ἀφροδίτας
 ῥύσσηται· θερμὸς γὰρ ἔρωσ ἀντῶ με καταίθει.

Translation by Gow (*Theocritus*, vol. I, p. 59):

Fair voyage to Mitylene shall Ageanax have when the Kids stand in the evening sky and the south wind speeds the wet waves, and when Orion stays his feet upon the Ocean, if he save Lycidas from

⁶ *Cf.* Gow, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 84.

the furnace of Aphrodite, for hot is the love of him which consumes me.

In his commentary, Gow noted⁷ that the adjective ἔσπεριος, in line 53, "has usually been understood to mean *in the west*". He then added that "when Orion sets the Kids are in the western sky before dawn". Gow was, however, unable to explain exactly what month of the year Theocritus is referring to in this passage.

I would like to point out that the solution to this problem is given by Aratus. At *Phaenomena* lines 665 ff. Aratus describes the stars which rise and set together with the zodiacal sign *Sagittarius*⁸ (Τόξω). According to Aratus, Orion is setting at this time, and the Kids are still visible (*cf.* lines 676-682):

ἦμος καὶ μέγαλοιο Κυνὸς πᾶσαι ἀμαρυγαὶ
 δύνουσιν, καὶ πάντα κατέρχεται Ὀρίωνος,
 πάντα γε μὴν ἀτέλεστα διωκομένοιο Λαγωῦ.
 Ἄλλ' οὐχ Ἠνιόχῳ Ἐριφοὶ οὐδ' Ὀλενίῃ Αἰξί
 εὐθὺς ἀπέρχονται· τὰ τέ οἱ μέγαλῃν ἀνὰ χεῖρα
 λάμπονται, καὶ οἱ μελέων διακέκριται ἄλλων
 κινήσαι χειμῶνας, ὅτ' ἡελίῳ συνίωσιν.

Translation by Mair (*op. cit.*, p. 259):

What time all the rays of the mighty Dog are sinking and all of Orion setting, yea, all the Hare, which the Dog pursues in an unending race. But not yet depart the Kids of the Charioteer and the Arm-borne (Olenian) Goat; by his great hand they shine, and are eminent beyond all his other limbs in raising storms, when they fare with the sun.

Note that these stars are said to cause storms: *cf.* line 682: κινήσαι χειμῶνας. By mentioning the Kids together with the setting of Orion, Theocritus fixes the time of the year for us as November 23rd-December 20th (i.e. the period which coincides with the zodiacal sign of *Sagittarius*). Orion and the Kids are mentioned together again at Propertius II 26, 56. In other words, Theocritus and Aratus both mention Orion and the Kids in connection with the winter storms which occur during the zodiacal sign of *Sagittarius*⁹.

Theocritus and the Halcyons

⁷ *Op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 146.

⁸ *Cf.* G.R. Mair, *Aratus* (Loeb edition), London, 1921, p. 202 f.

⁹ *Cf.* also Cholmeley, *Theocritus*, p. 241, who noted that "the Kids -a cluster of stars in Auriga- are low down in the north-west sky about one hour before sunrise on Nov. 28". For the stars of *Sagittarius*, *cf.* also Aratus lines 300 ff.

At *Idyll* 7, lines 57 ff. Theocritus mentions the mythical halcyons:
 χάλκυνες στορεσεῦντι τὰ κύματα τάν τε θάλασσαν
 τόν τε νότον τόν τ' εὐρον, ὃς ἔσχατα φυκία κινεῖ,
 ἀλκύνες, γλαυκαῖς Νηρηῖσι ταῖ τε μάλιστα
 ὀρνίχων ἐφίληθεν, ὅσοις τέ περ ἐξ ἄλός ἄγρα.

line 60 ὅσοις Greverus : -αις codd.

Translation by Gow (*Theocritus*, vol. I, p. 59 ff.):

And the halcyons shall lay to rest the waves and the deep, the south wind and the east, that stirs the seaweed in the lowest depths, the halcyons, birds most dear to the green Nereids and to them whose prey is from the sea.

In line 60 Gow printed the textual alteration ὅσοις which he argued means "fishermen". Thus the halcyons are said to be dear to the Nereids and to fishermen¹⁰. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. The halcyons are said to be dear "to those females whose prey is from the deep". The poet is alluding to the goddesses Aphrodite and Athena who were both connected with fishermen and sea-faring. For Aphrodite's connection with the sea, *cf. A.P.* 5, 16. For Athena and the sea, *cf. Lycophron* line 359 where Athena the "Sea-gull" is referred to: Αἴθυσίαν Κόρην. It will be noted that the Nereids were also considered to be goddesses: *cf. Statius, Silv.* I 5, 15: *deae virides*. For the fact that the halcyon was "sacred to the Sea-goddess Aphrodite", *cf. R. Graves, The Greek Myths*, vol. I, p. 164. Graves pointed out (*op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 289) that one of Aphrodite's titles was "Alcyone"¹¹.

It will be noted that my explanation accounts for the repeated τε (Valckenarius saw himself compelled to print ὅσαις γέ περ). Gow's defence of the conjecture ὅσοις is ungrounded: *cf. Hatzikosta's* commentary *ad loc.* To Hatzikosta's arguments I would like to add that, whereas mortal women did not practise fishing, the two goddesses Aphrodite and Athena certainly did. The variant ταῖ τὰ (*cf. Legrand's* and *Pisani's* apparatuses), accepted by Rumpel, (*Lex. Theocr.*, s.v. μάλιστα) is an evident trivialization, aimed at eliminating the repeated τε objected to by Valckenarius, as well as the enigmatic mortal women supposedly acting as fishermen.

¹⁰ *Cf. op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 147.

¹¹ For the connection of Athena with the halcyon, *cf. D'Arcy Thompson, A Glossary of Greek Birds*, Oxford, 1936, p. 48.

Demeter and the Poppies

At *Idyll* 7, lines 151 ff. Theocritus mentions the wine that was drunk by those celebrating Demeter's festival:

ἄρα γέ πα τῆνον τὸν ποιμένα τὸν ποτ' Ἀνάπῳ,
τὸν κρατερὸν Πολύφραμον, ὃς ὤρεσι νᾶας ἐβαλλε,
τοῖον νέκταρ ἔπεισε κατ' αὐλία ποσσὶ χορεῦσαι,
οἶον δὴ τόκα πῶμα διεκρανάσατε, Νύμφαι,
βωμῶ παρ Δάματρος ἀλωίδος; ἄς ἐπὶ σωρῶ
αὐτίς ἐγὼ πάξαιμι μέγα πτύον, ἃ δὲ γελάσσαι
δράγματα καὶ μάκωνας ἐν ἀμφοτέραισιν ἔχοισα.

Translation by Gow (*Theocritus*, vol. I, p. 67):

Was it such nectar that set that shepherd by the Anapus dancing among his sheepfolds, even the mighty Polyphemus, who pelted ships with mountains?—such nectar as ye Nymphs mingled for us to drink that day by the altar of Demeter of the Threshing-floor. On her heap may I plant again the great winnowing-shovel while she smiles on us with sheaves and poppies in either hand.

Gow commented as follows on line 157 (*op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 169): "Poppies in Cos flower in April (*cf. Il.* 8, 307) and it is now some months later (134 n.)". Consequently Gow argued that the statue of Demeter will therefore be holding "stalks with the capsules attached, and δράγματα of barley saved from the threshing for this purpose".

I would like to point out, however, that we hear elsewhere of poppies which are said to flower during the summer. *Cf. A.P.* 9, 226 where poppies are mentioned together with the fruits of summer:

Αἱ δ' ἄγετε ξουθαὶ σιμβληίδες τᾶκτρα μέλισσαι
φέρβεσθ' ἢ ἐ θύμων ρικνὰ περικνίδια,
ἢ πετάλας μάκωνος, ἢ ἄσταφιδίτιδα ῥῶγα,
ἢ ἴον, ἢ μάλων χνοῦν ἐπικαρπίδιον·
πάντα περικνίξασθε, καὶ ἄγγεα κηρώσασθε,
ἔφρα μελισσοσόος Πᾶν ἐπικυψέλιος
γεύσεται τὸ μὲν αὐτός, ὃ δὲ βλιστηρίδι χειρὶ
καπνώσας βαιῆν κῦμμα λίπη μερίδα.

Translation by Paton (*The Greek Anthology*, Loeb edition, vol. 2, p. 119):

Hie ye, ye tawny hive-bees, to feed on... or the crinkled leaves of the thyme, or the petals of the poppy, or the sun-dried berries of the vine, or violets, or the down that covers the apple. Take a pick at all, and mould your waxen vessels so that Pan, the saviour of

the bees and keeper of the hives, may have a taste himself, and the beeman, smoking you out with his skilled hand, may leave a little portion for you also.

Cf. moreover Theocritus' *Idyll XI*, lines 57 f. and Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe* II 1, 4: θέρους μήκωνες καὶ ἀχράδες καὶ μῆλα πάντα.

We may therefore conclude that the statue of Demeter is imagined to be holding the flowers of the poppy in either hand.

Theocritus and the Centaurs

In *Idyll 14*, lines 34 ff. Aeschinas describes how he reacted when he discovered that Cynisca has fallen in love with another:

τᾶμος ἐγώ, τὸν ἴσαις τύ, Θυώνιχε, πῦξ ἐπὶ κόρρας
ἦλασα, κάλλαν αὐθις. ἀνειρύσασα δὲ πέπλωσ
ἔξω ἀποίχετο θᾶσσον. "ἔμὸν κακόν, οὐ τοι ἀρέσκω;
ἄλλος τοι γλυκίων ὑποκόλπιος; ἄλλον ἰοῖσα
θάλπε φίλον. τήνῃ τεὰ δάκρυα; μᾶλα ῥεόντω."
μάστακα δοῖσα τέκνοισιν ὑπωροφίοισι χελιδῶν
ἄσπορον ταχινὰ πέτεται βίον ἄλλον ἀγείρειν·
ὠκυτέρα μαλακᾶς ἀπὸ δίφρακος ἔπτετο τήνα
ἰθὺ δι' ἀμφιθύρω καὶ δικλίδος, ᾧ πόδες ᾄγον.
αἰνός θην λέγεται τις "ἔβα ποκά ταῦρος ἀν' ὕλαν".

Translation by Gow (*Theocritus*, vol. I, p. 105):

Then I -you know what I am like, Thyonichus- got her with my fist on the temple, and then one more; and she caught up her skirts and was off as fast as she could go. 'Plague that you are, I don't please you then?' said I; 'you prefer some other darling, do you? Go and cuddle your other friend. Your tears are for him, are they? Then let them flow as big as apples'. The swallow brings her nestlings beneath the eaves a morsel and is off again like a flash to gather a fresh supply, but quicker than the swallow Cynisca flew from her soft seat straight through the porch and house-door, wherever her feet carried her. 'The bull once went to the wood', so runs the tale.

In his discussion of this passage, Gow noted (*op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 256) that "the fable or proverb plainly relates to the bull which deserts the herd (ἀτιμαγελεῖ: see 9, 5 n.) and cannot be found". Gow then added that "the v. 1. Κένταυρος is therefore out of court". I would like to point out, however, that the word Κένταυρος makes perfect sense in the context. In lines 34 ff. Aeschinas

boasts that he hit Cynisca and that she immediately fled: *cf.* lines 41 ff. At line 43 Aeschinas says that there is a story that a Centaur went to the wood. He is alluding to the myth concerning how Heracles routed the Centaurs: *cf.* R. Graves, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 114. Aeschinas means that he hit Cynisca hard and made her flee from him, just as Heracles had once routed the Centaurs and caused them to flee (as far as Sicily: *cf.* Lycophron line 670). Centaurs often appear in proverbs (*cf.* Pape-Benseler, *Wört. Eigenn.*, s.v. Κένταυρος). The scholiast on Theocritus explains that the proverb refers to the fact that, once the Centaurs have escaped into the ὕλη, they are impossible to catch (ἀλήπτους). The Centaurs (*cf.* Apollod., *Bibl.* II 83-86) lived not in towns, but in the wild, more precisely on mountains, which were of course wooded (Erymanthus, Malea, etc.). Heracles could not catch and kill all the Centaurs, because many escaped ἄλλος ἀλλαχῆ (εἰς ὄρος Μαλέαν... , ὄρει κατεκάλυψεν, Apollod., *loc. cit.*). The proverb concerning the ταῦρος, which Gow champions, is inapposite, because ἀτιμαγελεῦντες (*Id.* IX 5) means "quitter le troupeau *par dédain*", as Legrand (*Bucol. Grecs*, vol. II, p. 30, note 2) correctly underlines, which behaviour does not apply to Cynisca: Cynisca and the Centaurs made themselves scarce for fear. The proverb quoted by Aeschinas probably refers to the fact that the Centaurs (Κένταυρος is a collective singular), after being routed by Heracles, took refuge in woods, which were their natural habitat (*cf.* *Oxf. Class. Dict.*, s.v. Centaurs) and virtually disappeared from human sight (*cf.* Lempriere, *Class. Dictionary*, London, 1951, s.v. *Centauri*, quoting Plutarch and Pliny).

Theocritus and Hiero II

At lines 76 ff., of *Idyll* 16, Theocritus refers to the rout of the Carthaginians:

ἦδη νῦν Φοίνικες ὑπ' ἡελίῳ δύνοντι
οἰκεῦντες Λιβύας ἄκρον σφυρὸν ἐρρίγασιν·
ἦδη βαστάζουσι Συρακόσιοι μέσα δούρα,
ἀχθόμενοι σακέεσσι βραχίονας ἰτεῖνιουσιν·
ἐν δ' αὐτοῖς Ἰέρων προτέροις ἴσος ἠρώεσσι
ζώννυται, ἵππειαι δὲ κόρυν σκιάουσιν ἔθειραι.
αἰ γάρ, Ζεῦ κύδιστε πάτερ καὶ πότνι' Ἀθάνα
κούρη θ' ἢ σὺν μητρὶ πολυκλήρων Ἐφυραίων
εἰληχας μέγα ἄστυ παρ' ὕδασι Λυσιμελείας,
ἐχθροὺς ἐκ νάσοιο κακαὶ πέμπειαν ἀνάγκαι
Σαρδόνιον κατὰ κῦμα φίλων μόρον ἀγγέλλοντας
τέκνοις ἠδ' ἀλόχοισιν, ἀριθμητοὺς ἀπὸ πολλῶν.

ἄστεα δὲ προτέροισι πάλιν ναίειτο πολίταις,
 δυσμενέων ὅσα χεῖρες ἐλωβήσαντο κατ' ἄκρας·

line 85 κακῶ πέμπει ἐν ἀνάγκῃ v. 1.

Translation by Gow (*Theocritus*, vol. I, p. 127):

Even now beneath the setting sun the Phoenicians that dwell in the outmost skirts of Libya tremble for fear; even now Syracusans grip their spears by the middle and charge their arms with shields of wicker, while Hiero, in their midst, girds himself like the heroes of old with crest of horsehair shadowing his helm. Ah Zeus, our father far renowned, and Lady Athena, and thou, Maiden, to whom, with thy mother, has fallen the mighty city of the rich Ephyraeans by the waters of Lysimeleia, grant that ill constraints may drive our enemies from the island over the Sardinian sea with tidings of the death of dear ones to children and wives, messengers easy to number from out that host. Grant that towns which the hands of foes have wasted utterly be peopled again by their ancient masters.

In his commentary on this *Idyll*, Gow explained (*op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 305) that "Hiero II rose to power after Pyrrhus's departure from Sicily in 276/5 B.C.". Hiero had distinguished himself under Pyrrhus and helped to drive the Carthaginians out of Sicily. I would like to point out that better sense can be made of the text if we accept the reading κακῶ πέμπει ἐν ἀνάγκῃ in line 85. It should, moreover, be noted that αἶ, in line 82, has been employed as an interjection of astonishment: *cf.* LSJ *s.v.* αἶ. Thus lines 82 ff. should be translated as follows: "For behold (αἶ) Zeus, renowned father, and Lady Athena, and thou Maiden, to whom, with thy mother, has fallen the mighty city of the rich Ephyraeans by the waters of Lysimeleia, he (i.e. Hiero) has driven (πέμπει) the enemy over the Sardinian sea, with harsh compulsion (κακῶ ἐν ἀνάγκῃ)". Note that πέμπει is an example of the historical present¹². We may therefore conclude that *Idyll* 16 celebrates the fact that Hiero II had helped Pyrrhus to drive the Carthaginians from Sicily.

In conclusion: it would be very strange indeed if, in an *encomium*, Theocritus were to refer to possible future military successes instead of praising actual victories already achieved (*cf.* G. Giangrande, *GGA* 223, 1971, p. 211 ff., for the genre). This difficulty is eliminated if we realize that the reading κακῶ πέμπει ἐν ἀνάγκῃ is correct, and is meant to praise a victory already achieved by Hiero. Our conclusion is supported by R. Petroll, *Die Äusserungen Theokrits*

¹² *Cf.* G. Giangrande, *Scripta Minora Alexandrina*, Amsterdam, 1980, vol. I, p. 13.

über seine Person und seine Dichtung, Diss. Hamburg 1965, who has underlined that *Idyll* 16 is "ein Preislied auf Hieron" and as such must be posterior to 276-275 B.C. (p. 84 ff.). Even W. Meincke, *Untersuch. Zu den Enkomiaistischen Gedichten Theokrits*, Diss. Kiel 1965, p. 76, must admit that *Idyll* 16 is "ein Enkomion auf Hieron". On ἐν ἀνάγκη "under compulsion", cf. e.g. LSJ, s.v. ἀνάγκη, 3, c.

In Praise of Ptolemy

In his commentary on *Idyll* 17 Gow noted¹³ that lines 86 ff. are connected with the First Syrian War:

καὶ μὴν Φοινίκας ἀποτέμνεται Ἄρραβίας τε
καὶ Συρίας Λιβύας τε κελαινῶν τ' Αἰθιοπῶν·
Παμφύλοισί τε πᾶσι καὶ αἰχμηταῖς Κιλικεσσι
σαμαίνει, Λυκίοις τε φιλοπολέμοισί τε Καρσί
καὶ νάσοις Κυκλάδεσσιν, ἐπεὶ οἱ νᾶες ἄριστα
πόντον ἐπιπλώοντι, θάλασσα δὲ πᾶσα καὶ αἶα
καὶ ποταμοὶ κελάδοντες ἀνάσσονται Πτολεμαίῳ,
πολλοὶ δ' ἵππηες, πολλοὶ δὲ μιν ἀσπιδιῶται
χαλκῶ μαρμαίροντι σεσαγμένοι ἀμφαγέρονται.

Translation by Gow (*Theocritus*, vol. I, p. 137):

Aye, and of Phoenicia he takes himself a part, and of Arabia, and Syria and Libya and of the swart Ethiopians. In all Pamphylia his word is law, and with the spearmen of Cilicia, the Lycians and the warlike Carians; in the Isles of the Cyclades also, for the best ships that sail the seas are his –aye, all the sea and the land and the roaring rivers admit the lordship of Ptolemy, and about him gather horsemen and shielded warriors in hosts, harnessed in flashing bronze.

The First Syrian War ended in 273 or 272 B.C. However, according to Gow, "it cannot be inferred from Theocritus' poem whether the war is over or not". He then added that "the tense of ἀποτέμνεται (86)... suggests that it is not". I would like to point out that it is more logical to imagine that *Idyll* 17 was written after the First Syrian War had been successfully won by Ptolemy. Accordingly, we must understand that Theocritus has made use of the historical present in line 86. Thus lines 86-7 list the countries that Ptolemy annexed (ἀποτέμνεται) during the First Syrian War. For other examples of the historical present, cf. G.

¹³ Cf. *Theocritus*, vol. 2, p. 339.

Giangrande, *Scripta Minora Alexandrina*, vol. I, p. 13, and *Minerva* 1993, p. 91. We may therefore conclude that *Idyll* 17 was written at some time between the end of the First Syrian War (273/2 B.C.) and the death of Arsinoe¹⁴ in 270 B.C. It is, moreover, possible to explain the verb ἀμφαγέρονται in line 94 as a historical present. Theocritus means that many horsemen and foot-soldiers gathered round Ptolemy during the Syrian War. My argument is fully confirmed by the historical background as explained by Meincke¹⁵.

A Textual Problem in Theocritus' Idyll 17

At lines 121 ff. Theocritus states that Ptolemy built shrines for his father and mother:

Μοῦνος ὄδε προτέρων τε καὶ ὦν ἔτι θερμὰ κονία
 στειβομένα καθύπερθε ποδῶν ἐκμάσσειται ἶχνη,
 ματρὶ φίλα καὶ πατρὶ θυάδεας εἴσατο ναούς·
 ἐν δ' αὐτοὺς χρυσῶ περικαλλέας ἠδ' ἐλέφαντι
 ἴδρυνται πάντεσσιν ἐπιχθονίοισιν ἀρωγούς.

line 121 τε καὶ ὦν Briggs : τεκέων K : τοκέων cett.

Translation by Gow (*Theocritus*, Cambridge, 1965, repr., vol. I, p. 139):

*Of men of old and of those the imprint of whose steps still warm
 the trodden dust holds beneath the foot, Ptolemy alone has
 founded fragrant shrines for his dear mother and his father, and
 there, resplendent in gold and ivory, he has set them to succour
 all mankind.*

In line 121 Gow printed Briggs' alteration τε καὶ ὦν. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. Perfect sense can be restored to the transmitted text if we print the reading τεκέων and understand that the poet has made use of a parenthesis. Lines 121-123 should therefore be translated as follows: "He alone of former men -the trodden dust holds still warm the tracks of his children's feet- has set up fragrant shrines for his dear mother and father".

The poet stresses that Ptolemy's children are still alive, whereas his parents are both dead. For similar cases of parenthesis, cf. Lapp, *De Callimachi Cyrenaei Tropis et Figuris*, Diss. Bonn, 1965, p. 52. For the "Preis der Pietät" in the *encomium*, cf. Meincke, *op. cit.*, p. 136 ff.

A Textual Problem in Theocritus' Idyll 17

¹⁴ Theocritus refers to Arsinoe in line 128 as the wife of Ptolemy.

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 126.

At lines 131 ff. Theocritus mentions the marriage of Zeus and Hera:

ᾧδε καὶ ἀθανάτων ἱερὸς γάμος ἐξετελέεσθη
οὓς τέκετο κρείουσα Ῥέα βασιλῆας Ὀλύμπου·
ἔν δὲ λέχος στόρνυσιν ἰαύειν Ζηνὶ καὶ Ἥρῃ
χεῖρας φοιβήσασα μύροις ἔτι παρθένος Ἴρις.

Translation by Gow (*Theocritus*, vol. I, p. 139):

After this fashion was accomplished the sacred bridal also of the immortals whom Queen Rhea bore to rule Olympus; and single is the couch that Iris, virgin still, her hands made pure with perfumes, strews for the sleep of Zeus and Hera.

In his commentary on this passage, Gow noted (*op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 346) that the description of Iris has puzzled the critics. I would like to point out that previous critics have failed to understand that we are faced here with an example of the historical present. The poet states that Iris prepared (στόρνυσιν) the bridal bed for Zeus and Hera when she was still a virgin (ἔτι παρθένος), i.e. when she was a young girl. The reader may recall that Iris became the wife of Zephyrus: *cf.* Nonnus, *Dion.* 31, 110:

Ἴρις, ἀξιφύτου Ζεφύρου χρυσόπτερε νύμφη,
εὐλοχε μήτηρ Ἔρωτος, ἀελλήεντι πεδίλῳ
σπεῦδε μολεῖν ζοφρέντος ἐς Ἑσπέριον δόμον Ὑπνου·

Translation by Rouse (Loeb edition):

"Iris, goldenwing bride of plantnourishing Zephyros, happy mother of Love! Hasten with stormshod foot to the home of gloomy Sleep in the west".

Thus Gow was wrong to imagine that "it is Iris's daily task to make the bed". The marriage bed of Zeus and Hera was obviously only prepared once by Iris, i.e. on the occasion of their wedding. At this time, Iris was still a young girl and had not yet married Zephyrus. Accordingly, she is described by Theocritus as ἔτι παρθένος. For other cases of the historical present, *cf.* G. Giangrande, *Scripta Minora Alexandrina*, vol. I, p. 13.

The Moon and Shellfish

At *Idyll* 21, lines 19 ff. Theocritus describes how two poor fishermen awoke before dawn to start their work:

κοῦπω τὸν μέσατον δρόμον ἄνυεν ἄρμα Σελάννας,
τοὺς δ' ἀλιεῖς ἤγειρε φίλος πόνος, ἐκ βλεφάρων δέ
ὑπνον ἀπώσάμενοι σφετέραις φρεσὶν ἤρεθον αὐδάν.

{ ΑΣΦΑΛΙΩΝ }

ψεύδοντ', ὦ φίλε, πάντες ὅσοι τὰς νύκτας ἔφασκον
τῷ θέρεος μινύθειν, ὅκα τάματα μακρὰ φέρουντι.

Translation by Gow (*Theocritus*, vol. I, p. 153):

*Not yet was the chariot of the Moon traversing her midmost
course, yet their accustomed toil roused the fishermen, and,
clearing their eyes of sleep, from thought they fell to speech.*

ASPHALION

*They lied, my friend, all such as said the nights grew short in
summer when the days they bring are long.*

In his commentary on this passage, Gow (*op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 375) stated that "it appears from 22 ff. that the author means that it was not yet midnight". There is, however, no reason why the poet should have mentioned midnight here. The fishermen went to bed early (*cf.* lines 39 ff.) and woke up early in order to start work at dawn: *cf.* line 24. I would like to point out that better sense can be made of the text if we understand that the poet is referring to the fact that the moon was still waxing. Thus the chariot of the Moon is said to have not yet reached its middle course (τὸν μέσσατον δρόμον). Theocritus is alluding to the fact that shellfish were said to grow fat when the moon was waxing and to grow thin when it was waning. *Cf.* Oppian, *Hal.* 5, 589 ff.:

Ἔθνεα δ' ὀστρακόρινα, τὰ θ' ἐρπύζουσι θαλάσση,
πάντα φάτις μήνης μὲν ἀεξομένης κατὰ κύκλον
σαρκὶ περιπλήθειν καὶ πίονα ναιέμεν οἶκον·
φθινούσης δ' ἐξαῦτις ἀφαυροτέροις μελέεσσι
ρικνουῦσθαι· τοίη τις ἐνὶ σφισιν ἐστὶν ἀνάγκη.
τῶν δὲ τὰ μὲν δύνοντες ὑπόβρυχα χερσὶ λέγονται
ἀνέρες ἐκ ψαμάθοιο, τὰ δ' ἐκ σπιλάδων ἐρύουσι
νωλεμές ἐμπεφυῶτα, τὰ δ' ἥοσις ἐπτυσαν αὐταῖς
κύματα καὶ βόθροισι λαχαινομένης ψαμάθοιο.

Translation by Mair (*Oppian*, Loeb edition, p. 507):

*As for the Testacean tribes which crawl in the sea, report tells
that all these in due cycle are full of flesh when the moon is
waxing and inhabit a rich dwelling, but when she wanes, again
they become more meagre and wrinkled of limb: such compelling
force resides in them. Of these men gather some from the sand
with their hands, diving under the sea; others they pull from the
rocks to which they stubbornly cling; yet others the waves cast up
on the very shores or in trenches digged in the sand.*

Cf. also Aelian 9, 6 and Manilius, *Astronomica* 2, 93 ff.

Thus the poet means that at the time of the month when the moon was still waxing, the fishermen woke up early to start work collecting shellfish.

A Textual Problem in Theocritus' Idyll 26

In this *Idyll* Theocritus describes how Pentheus was killed because he refused to worship Dionysus. At lines 27 ff., the poet states that he does not think that Pentheus' murder was morally wrong:

Οὐκ ἀλέγω· μηδ' ἄλλος ἀπεχθομένω Διονύσω
 φροντίζοι, μηδ' εἰ χαλεπώτερα τῶνδε μογήσαι,
 εἴη δ' ἔνναετῆς ἢ καὶ δεκάτῳ ἐπιβαίνοι·
 αὐτὸς δ' εὐαγέοιμι καὶ εὐαγέεσσιν ἄδοιμι.
 ἔκ Διὸς αἰγιόχῳ τιμᾶν ἔχει αἰετὸς οὕτως.
 εὐσεβέων παιδεσσι τὰ λώια, δυσσεβέων δ' οὔ.

Translation by Gow (*Theocritus*, vol. I, p. 217):

I care not. And let not another care for an enemy of Dionysus – not though he suffer a fate more grievous than this and be in his ninth year or entering on his tenth. But for myself may I be pure and pleasing in the eyes of the pure. So has the eagle honour of aegis-bearing Zeus. To the children of the righteous, not of the unrighteous, comes the better fate.

The critics have been puzzled by the meaning of lines 27-32¹⁶. I would like to point out that the obvious solution to this problem is that Theocritus is alluding here to the legend of the daughters of Minyas. The reader will recall that the daughters of Minyas refused to worship Dionysus. Consequently they were driven mad by the god and tore the son of Leucippe to pieces¹⁷. Thus the nine year old boy who is mentioned in line 29 is to be identified with Hippasus, the son of Leucippe.

Gow noted that this solution was proposed by Reitzenstein, who, however, could not account for the poet's reference to the boy's age of nine or ten years. Reitzenstein argued that "a verse was lost after 28". There is, though, no need for us to imagine that a verse has been lost. As Professor G. Giangrande has frequently underlined, Hellenistic poets often preferred to allude¹⁸ to legends rather than to narrate them in full¹⁹. Accordingly, Theocritus alludes here to the fate of Hippasus by mentioning the death of a boy who was nine or ten years old.

¹⁶ Cf. Gow, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 481.

¹⁷ Cf. R. Graves, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 105.

¹⁸ Cf. also *MPhL*, vol. X, p. 51.

¹⁹ Cf. my *Studies in Theocritus and other Hellenistic Poets*, Amsterdam, 1979, p. 68.

He means that the fate of Hippasus was even worse (χαλεπώτερα) than that of Pentheus²⁰, because he was still a boy when he was torn apart and eaten by his own mother.

It should also be noted that the legends concerning the death of Pentheus and the daughters of Minyas were traditionally linked in antiquity. Thus Ovid tells the story of Pentheus at *Met.* 3, 513 ff. and immediately afterwards mentions the legend concerning the daughters of Minyas, who were turned into bats: *cf. Met.* 4, 1 ff. In other words, the fate of Hippasus mirrors that of Pentheus since they were both torn apart by women who had been driven mad by Dionysus.

Finally, the expression παῖδες... δυσεβέων, in line 32, fits Hippasus perfectly, because he was the child of an impious woman (τὸν τῆς Λευκίππης παῖδα, Aelian, *VH* 3, 42). We can conclude that the young person alluded to by Theocritus is Hippasus. On the other hand, line 29 refers to a "young novice of Dionysus", as was already perceived by Cholmeley, in his commentary on Theocritus, sec. ed., p. 364 and 409, and as was proved with mathematical accuracy by Giangrande²¹: the line refers to the minimum age requirement for novices. How can we fit Hippasus into such a requirement? Antoninus Liberalis X, does not offer a solution to the problem. According to him, Hippasus was not a novice killed in a religious Bacchic ceremony: the Minyads, scared by Dionysus' threats, upon deliberation drew lots and offered as a sacrifice to the god the boy Hippasus, whom they tore to pieces. Only after this did the Minyads acquire the habit of acting like Bacchantes in the mountains (ἐβάκχευον ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσι, X 4).

The version of the legend attested in Aelian, *VH* 3, 42 enables us to solve the problem under discussion. According to Aelian, the Minyads did not want to become Bacchantes (τὰς δὲ οὐδὲ ταῦτα ἀνέπειθεν ἐλθεῖν εἰς τὴν λατρείαν τοῦ δαίμονος), but Dionysus transformed them into mad Bacchantes (τῆς μανίας ἀρξάμεναι), so that they reproduced the dreadful Bacchic ritual which the Bacchantes had performed on Cithaeron (ἐνταῦθά τοι καὶ πάθος εἰργάσαντο ἔξω Κιθαίρωνος, οὐ μείον τοῦ ἐν Κιθαίρωνι), namely the Minyads tore to pieces, during their frenzied Bacchic ritual, the young son of Leucippe, as if he were a νεβρός (οἷα νεβρόν), exactly as the Bacchantes tore to pieces Pentheus, whom they believed to be a νεβρός (τὸν γὰρ τῆς Λευκίππης... αἱ Μινυάδες). Afterwards, the Minyads continued acting as Bacchantes (εἶτα ἐντεῦθεν κτλ.). Now, Pentheus was old enough to be able to spy on the secret rites, but a young

²⁰ My solution thus explains how "the fate of Pentheus could be made much worse", *cf.* Gow, *op. cit.*, p. 481.

²¹ *Scripta Minora Alexandrina*, I, p. 52 ff.

child such as Hippasus could hardly do so: the Minyads evidently initiated him and allowed him, as a young novice, to take part in the Bacchic ritual, during which they, in their madness, took him to be a νεβρός and tore him apart. Hippasus probably wore, during the ritual, a δορῆν... νεβροῦ, like the child participating in the Bacchic ritual who is mentioned in *A.P.* XI 40 (*cf.* Cholmeley, *op. cit.*, p. 364).

H. White