

NOTES ON THE TEXT OF THEOCRITUS' *IDYLLS*

Abstract: The author discusses and attempts to solve various textual problems which are contained in Theocritus' *Idylls*.

Key words: Theocritus, Greek textual criticism.

Resumen: El autor trata varios problemas textuales de los *Idilios* de Teócrito, a los que pretende dar solución.

Palabras-clave: Teócrito, crítica textual griega.

1. THE ROUT OF SPRING

At *Idyll* 13, line 25ff. Theocritus states that the Argonauts set sail for Colchis at the rising of the Pleiads, i.e. at the beginning of summer:

ἄμος δ' ἀντέλλονται Πελειάδες, ἐσχατιαὶ δέ
ἄρνα νέον βόσκοντι, τετραμμένου εἵαρος ἤδη,
τᾶμος ναυτιλίας μιμνάσκετο θεῖος ἄωτος
ἠρώων, κούλαι δὲ καθιδρυθέντες ἐς Ἀργῶ
Ἑλλάσποντον ἴκοντο νότῳ τρίτου ἄμαρ ἀέντι

Translation by Gow¹:

«And when the Pleiads rise, and, spring now turned to summer, the far uplands pasture the young lambs, then that noble band of heroes bethought them of their seafaring; and taking their places in the hollow Argo they came to the Hellespont with three days of fair wind from the south».

In his commentary on this passage, Gow discussed the meaning of the words τετραμμένου εἵαρος ἤδη, in line 26. I would like to suggest that Theocritus has employed a metaphor which is expressed by the participle τετραμμένου. Spring is imagined to be metaphorically routed by summer: cf. LSJ s.v. τρέπω III: «turn or put to flight». Thus the words τετραμμένου εἵαρος ἤδη mean «when spring is already being put to flight». For the fact that metaphors were often expressed by one word in Greek cf. *Mus. Phil. Lond.*, vol. 4, page 61ff. Dover's note *ad loc.*: «has

¹ Cf. A.S.F. Gow, *Theocritus*, Cambridge 1965.

been turned» = «has changed» is inaccurate. Cf. Manetho II, 72 κύκλος, ὅστε τρέπει πυριλαμπέος ὄρη: Thes. s.v., τρέπω 2384 B-C. τρέπειν = «*in fugam vertere*».

2. THE VOYAGE OF THE ARGO

At *Idyll* 13, line 32ff. Theocritus describes how the Argonauts left their ship and prepared a meal:

ἐκβάντες δ' ἐπὶ θίνα κατὰ ζυγὰ δαίτα πένοντο
 δειελινοί, πολλοὶ δὲ μίαν σπορέσαντο χαμεύναν.
 λειμῶν γάρ σφιν ἔκειτο μέγα στιβάδεσσιν ὄνειαρ,
 ἔνθεν βούτομοι δὲξὺ βαθύν τ' ἐτάμοντο κύπειρον.

Translation by Gow:

«And stepping out upon the beach they made ready their meal in the evening two by two, but one resting-place they laid for all, for there was a meadow with mighty store of litter for their couches, whence they cut sharp sedges and tall galingale».

The reader will note that according to Gow², the Argonauts prepared their meal «two, by two» (κατὰ ζυγά). It is, however, more likely that the Argonauts are said by the poet to have left the ship «two by two». Each bench of the Argo was imagined to have held two Argonauts: cf. Ap. Rhod., *Arg.* I, 396. Hence the Argonauts are said to have left the ship «in pairs», i. e. bench by bench.

3. HYLAS AND THE SPRING

At *Idyll* 13, line 39f. Hylas is said to have found a spring:

τάχα δὲ κράναν ἐνόησεν
 ἡμένω ἐν χώρω.

line 40 χώρω : χόρτω v. l.

Translation by Gow:

«Soon in a low-lying place he spied a spring».

In line 40 Gow printed the reading χώρω. I would like to point out, however, that better sense is provided by the reading χόρτω. Hylas is said to have found a spring «with pasture lying by it» (ἡμένω³ ἐν χόρτω).

² Followed by Dover *ad loc.* Why on earth should the Argonauts prepare «their meals in pairs»?

³ Cf. LSJ s.v. ἐνήμαι. Cf. also LSJ s.v. πρόσσημαι: «to be or lie near», νᾶσοι ;... τᾷδε γὰρ προσήμεναι (Aesch.

Pers. 881). For the dative cf. Gow's note on *Idyll* 13, line 29. The word ἡμενος (cf. Dover *ad loc.*) cannot mean «low-lying» (Gow) or «hidden away» (Dover).

4. A TEXTUAL PROBLEM IN THEOCRITUS' IDYLL 13

At Idyll 13, line 43ff. the poet mentions the nymphs who fell in love with Hylas:

ὔδατι δ' ἐν μέσσω Νύμφαι χορὸν ἀρτίζοντο,
 Νύμφαι ἀκοίμητοι, δειναὶ θεαὶ ἀγροιώταις,
 Εὐνίκα καὶ Μαλὶς ἕαρ θ' ὀρώσα Νύχεια.

In line 45 Gow translated the phrase ἕαρ θ' ὀρώσα Νύχεια as «and Nycheia with her eyes of May». In other words, Gow regarded the words ἕαρ ὀρώσα as an internal accusative⁴. It is, however, possible to make better sense of the transmitted text if we understand that Nycheia is said to «attend to» (ὀρώσα) spring. For this meaning of ὀράω cf. Gow's note on *Idyll* 15, line 2. Cf. also LSJ s.v. ὀράω II, 2: «see to» (*Od.* 8. 443, ἴδε πῶμα). The nymphs, like the Hours, were connected with flowers and spring. Cf. *Orph. Hymn* 51, 15 Νύμφαι ... εἰαροτερπεῖς («rejoicing in spring»).

5. THE NYMPHS AND THE GADFLY

At *Idyll* 13, line 48f. the Nymphs are said to have fallen in love with Hylas:

πασάων γὰρ ἔρωσ ἀπαλὰς φρένας ἐξεφόβησεν
 Ἄργείω ἐπὶ παιδί.

Gow noted that the critics⁵ have been puzzled by the meaning of the verb ἐξεφόβησεν. I would like to suggest that better sense is provided by the variant reading ἀμφεδόνησεν. The poet is alluding to *Od.* 22, line 300 where the gadfly (ὄλστρος) is said to have «disturbed» (ἐδόνησεν) cattle. For the gadfly and love cf. also *Ap. Rhod.*, *Arg.* 3, 276.

6. HYLAS AND THE NYMPHS

At Theocritus, *Idyll* 13, line 49ff. Hylas is said to have been dragged down into the water by the nymphs:

κατήριπε δ' ἐς μέλαν ὕδωρ
 ἄθροος, ὡς ὅτε πυρσὸς ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἤριπεν ἀστήρ
 ἄθροος ἐν πόντῳ

The critics have been puzzled by the meaning of this passage: cf. Gow's note *ad loc.* The comparison with a star, however, suggests that Theocritus has used the adjective ἄθροος (i.e. «noiseless, silent»).

⁴ Dover follows Gow. Gow (*ad loc.*) admits that the internal accusatives governed by ὀράω *et sim.* denote a manner (Ἄρην «murderously»; πῦρ «in a fiery manner», etc.), whereas ἕαρ does not fit into this category («much more imaginative than the nouns elsewhere so used»).

⁵ Cf. also Dover *ad loc.*, who thinks that ἐξεφόβησεν must mean here «put to flight», without being able to quote any parallels.

Hylas is said to have fallen «without noise» (ἄθροος) into the water, just as a shooting star falls «without noise» (ἄθροος) from the sky. Cf. LSJ s.v. εὐθροος («loud-sounding») and πολύθροος («clamorous»).

According to Apollonius Rhodius, however, Hylas cried out when he fell: cf. *Arg.* I, 1240. Note the felicitous *oppositio in imitando* between Theocritus and Apollonius.

7. A MOUSE AND PITCH

At *Idyll* 14, line 50f. Aeschinas states that he wishes that he could fall out of love:

κεῖ μὲν ἀποστέρξαιμι, τὰ πάντα κεν ἐς δέον ἔρποι.
νῦν δὲ πόθειν; μῦς, φαντί, Θυώνιχε, γεύμεθα πίσσης.

line 51 πόθειν : ποθ' ὡς v. l.

Translation by Gow:

«If only I could fall out of love all would go as it should; but as it is, how can I say? I'm like the mouse in the pitch-pot, as they say, Thyonichus».

The reader will note that Gow printed the reading πόθειν in line 51. Better sense can, however, be obtained from the transmitted text if we print the variant ποθ' ὡς and translate as follows: «As it is (νῦν δὲ), like, they say, a mouse once upon a time (ποθ'), we have tasted pitch, Thyonichus». Cf. LSJ s.v. πότε III, 1 : «esp. in telling a story, *once upon a time*, οὕτω ποτ' ἦν μῦς καὶ γαλῆ *Ar.* V. 1182».

8. PERSEPHONE AND HADES

At *Idyll* 15, line 94f. Praxinoa states that she only wishes to have one master:

μὴ φύη, Μελιτώδες, ὅς ἀμῶν καρτερὸς εἶη
πλὰν ἑνός. οὐκ ἀλέγω. μὴ μοι κενεὰν ἀπομάξης.

Translation by Gow:

«Persephone, don't let us have any master but the one. So there; don't level an empty pot for me».

According to Gow, Praxinoa is alluding to «the king, rather than her husband, for whom she has scant respect (8ff.)». It should be noted, however, that the reference to Persephone makes it obvious that Praxinoa is alluding to Hades, who was regarded to be all-powerful. Cf. *Iliad* 13, 415 "Αἶδος ... κρατεροῖο. Cf., for epithets such as πανδαμάτωρ, παντοκράτωρ, κρατερός, etc., Bruchmann, *Epith. Deor.*, s.v. "Αιδης.

9. ON THEOCRITUS' GRACES

At *Idyll* 16, line 5 Theocritus asks who would like to be a patron for his poetry:

Τίς γάρ τῶν ὀπόσοι γλαυκὰν ναίουσιν ὑπ' ἡῶ
 ἡμετέρας Χάριτας πετάσας ὑποδέξεται οἶκῳ
 ἀσπασίως, οὐδ' αὔθις ἀδωρήτους ἀποπέμψει;

Translation by Gow:

«Who, of all that dwell beneath the bright daylight, will gladly with open house receive our Graces, nor send them back without a guerdon?»

The critics have been puzzled by the meaning of the participle πετάσας, in line 6. I would like to suggest that the poet is alluding here to the fact that his poetry was written on a papyrus roll, which had to be unfolded by the reader. We should therefore translate as follows: «Who, having spread out (πετάσας) our Graces (i. e. my poems), will receive them gladly in his house?»

10. ON THE FAME OF SIMONIDES

At Theocritus, *Idyll* 16, line 44 the poet refers to Simonides of Ceos:

εἰ μὴ θεῖος ἀοιδὸς ὁ Κῆιος αἰόλα φωνέων

In his commentary on this passage, Gow stated that the readings «θεῖος and δεινός are both plainly preferable to κείνος... and there is little to choose between them». I would like to point out however, that the reading κείνος makes perfect sense. The words κείνος ἀοιδός mean «that famous singer»: cf. Nicander, *Alex.*, line 105 λαγγείης πόμα κέινο («the famous spring of Langea»). Cf. also my *Studies in the Poetry of Nicander*, page 39 and G. Giangrande in *Sic. Gymn.* 1989, vol. 42, page 26.

The adjective θεῖος, as a mere *epitheton ornans* (so Gow *ad loc.*) and δεινός (platitudinous) are contextually inferior readings to κείνος, which, in the sense «celebrated», «famous» underlines that the famous Simonides made famous those whom he sang and who, without his poetry, would have remained obscure.

11. ON THEOCRITUS AND THEBES

At *Idyll* 16, line 104 ff. Theocritus addresses the Graces of Orchomenus:

ὦ Ἐτεόκλειοι Χάριτες θεαί, ὦ Μινύειον
 Ὀρχομενὸν φιλέοισαι ἀπεχθόμενον ποτε Θήβαις
 ἄκλητος μὲν ἔγωγε μένοιμί κεν, ἐς δὲ καλεύντῳ
 θαρσῆσας Μοῖσαισι σὺν ἀμετέραισιν ἴοιμ' ἄν.

The passage has caused difficulties to the critics because they have connected Θήβαις with ἀπεχθόμενον and not with μένοιμι. This would indicate that «the Graces are enemies of Thebes», a fact which, not surprisingly, puzzled Dover, and moreover, if we connect ἀπεχθόμενον with Θήβαις μένοιμι must be made to mean «I will stay (at home)» (Dover) or to be equivalent to οὐκ ἴοιμι (Gow), both of which suggestions are untenable. If we remember that Egyptian Thebes was, in

Hellenistic times, a literary centre where Posidippus resided (D. L. Page, *Select Papyri*, vol. III, Loeb edition 1970, page 471), all these difficulties are eliminated. Θήβαις, in line 105, denotes Egyptian Thebes, and accordingly Theocritus means that if he is not summoned by anybody he will stay at Thebes (Θήβαις, locative dative). We should put a comma after ποτε and translate as follows: «O Graces, goddesses whom Eteocles adored, O ye that love Minyan Orchomenus, hated of old, when no man summons me I will stay at Thebes (Θήβαις), but to the houses of them that call I will take heart and go, together with the Muses». The phrase ἀπεχθόμενον ποτε means «hated of old», and refers to the fact that Heracles hated and defeated the Minyae (cf. *RE VI*, 433, quoted by Gow). Note the elegant *enjambement* Θήβαις / ἄκλιτος ... μένοιμι.

The position of μέν is of course perfectly normal.

Theocritus is patently alluding to Homer, *Iliad* 9, 381-2: Ὀρχομενόν ... Θήβας Αἰγυπτίας.

12. THE MARRIAGE OF HELEN AND MENELAUS

At *Idyll* 18, line 1ff. Theocritus describes the wedding of Helen and Menelaus:

Ἐν ποκ' ἄρα Σπάρτα ξανθότριχι πᾶρ Μενελάω
 παρθενικαὶ θάλλοντα κόμαις ἰάκινθον ἔχουσαι
 πρόσθε νεογράπτω θαλάμῳ χορὸν ἐστάσαντο,
 δώδεκα ταὶ πρᾶται πόλιος, μέγα χρῆμα Λακωνᾶν,
 ἀνίκα Τυνδαρίδα κατεκλάξατο τὴν ἀγαπατάν
 μναστεύσας Ἐλέναν ὁ νεώτερος Ἀτρέος υἱῶν.

The critics have been puzzled by the meaning of line 4. Perfect sense can, however, be restored to the transmitted text if we place a full stop after πόλιος in line 4, and translate as follows:

«Once, then, in Sparta, at the palace of golden-haired Menelaus, maidens with blooms of hyacinth in their hair formed a choir before the newpainted bridal chamber - twelve in number were they, the foremost in the town. There was⁶ a mighty crowd⁷ of Spartan women (μέγα χρῆμα Λακωνᾶν) when Atreus' younger son had closed the doors on his beloved Helen, Tyndareus' daughter, whom he had woo'd and won».

Theocritus means that when the twelve maidens sang the wedding-song for Helen and Menelaus, a large number of Spartan women were also present to witness the occasion.

13. A WEDDING-SONG IN THEOCRITUS

At *Idyll* 18, line 7f. the poet describes how girls sang a wedding-song for Helen and Menelaus:

ἄειδον δ' ἅμα πᾶσαι ἐς ἓν μέλος ἐγκροτέουσαι
 ποσὶ περιπλέκτοισι, ὑπὸ δ' ἴαχε δῶμ' ὑμεναίῳ.

⁶ Note the ellipse of the *verbum substantivum*: cf. my *Studies in the Poetry of Nicander*, page 51. The asyndeton is of course common in Theocritus.

⁷ «A mighty host», Gow *ad loc.*

Translation by Gow:

«And all in unison they sang, beating time with weaving feet to their song, while the house rang with the bridal hymn».

Gow noted that the adjective περιπλέκτους has puzzled the critics⁸. I would like to suggest that we should print the variant reading περιβλέπτους⁹. We are faced here with an example of adjectival *enallage*. The chorus are said to beat time with their «admired» feet. It is, of course the girls themselves who are looked at from all sides. For other cases of adjectival *enallage* in Theocritus cf. my commentary on Theocritus, *Idyll 24* (Amsterdam 1979), page 92.

14. A HYMN TO CASTOR AND POLYDEUCES

At *Idyll 22*, line 1ff. Theocritus announces that he is going to sing a hymn to Castor and Polydeuces:

Ἵμνέομεν Λήδας τε καὶ αἰγιόχου Διὸς υἱῶ,
Κάστορα καὶ φοβερὸν Πολυδεύκεα πύξ ἐρεθίζειν
χεῖρας ἐπιζεύξαντα μέσας βοέοισιν ἱμάσιν.

line 3 μέσας Reiske: μέσοις codd.

Translation by Gow:

«We hymn the two sons of Leda and of aegis-bearing Zeus, Castor and Polydeuces, grim to challenge in boxing when he has strapped his palms with the oxhide thongs».

The reader will note that Gow printed Reiske's alteration μέσας in line 3. Textual alteration is, nevertheless, not necessary. The mss. reading μέσοις¹⁰ refers to the fact that boxing-matches took place in the midst of men. Thus the poet states that Polydeuces is grim to challenge when he has joined his hands to oxhide-thongs in the midst of a crowd of men.

15. POLYDEUCES AND WINE

At *Idyll 22*, line 34f. Theocritus describes how Castor and Polydeuces wandered apart from their comrades:

Κάστωρ δ' αἰολόπῳλος ὃ τ' οἰνωπὸς Πολυδεύκης
ἄμφω ἐρημάζεσκον ἀποπλαγχθέντες ἐταίρων

In his commentary on this passage, Gow discussed the possible meanings of the adjective οἰνωπός. I would like to add that Theocritus is alluding here to the fact that the name Polydeuces

⁸ «The figure is somewhat violent» Gow *ad loc.*

⁹ Gow regards περιβλέπτους as «plainly inferior» because he is not acquainted with *enallage adjectivi*.

¹⁰ Cf. LSJ s.v. μέσος III: «μέσον, τό, *midst*». Cf. also *Iliad* 4, 444 ἐμβαλε μέσῳ. Note the use of the poetic plural: cf. my *Studies In The Poetry Of Nicander*, page 8.

was connected etymologically¹¹ with the noun δέυκος, i. e. «sweet wine». The implication is that Polydeuces' face was flushed with the effects of much sweet wine. Accordingly, οἰνωπός means here «wine-coloured».

16. AMYCUS' LION-SKIN

At *Idyll* 22, line 51f. Theocritus describes Amycus' lion-skin:

αὐτὰρ ὑπὲρ νώτοιο καὶ ἀυχένος ἤωρεῖτο
ἄκρων δέρμα λέοντος ἀφημμένον ἐκ ποδεώνων.

Translation by Gow:

«A lion-skin fastened by the paws swung on his back and neck».

Gow was puzzled by the meaning of this line. All becomes clear when we realize that Theocritus has employed the verb ὑπεραίρω¹² in *tnesis*.

We should translate as follows:

«A lion-skin fastened by the paws, rose above (ὑπὲρ ... ἤωρεῖτο) his back and neck».

The lion-skin is imagined to have covered Amycus' head as well as his body.

17. WATER FOR POLYDEUCES

At *Idyll* 22, line 62f. Polydeuces asks Amycus for water:

ΠΟ. δαιμόνι', οὐδ' ἂν τοῦδε πιεῖν ὕδατος σύγχε δόλης;
ΑΜ. γνώσσει, εἴ σευ δίψος ἀνειμένα χεῖλεα τέρσει.

Translation by Gow:

«PO. Nay, Sir, wilt thou not even give us leave to drink of this water?
AM. That shalt thou know when thirst shall parch thy blistered lips».

In his commentary on line 63, Gow noted that ἀνειμένα normally means «relaxed». However, Gow argued that this meaning «is unsuitable for the effects of thirst». I would like to point out that the poet has employed adjectival *enallage*¹³. He means that Polydeuces' body will be enervated, i. e. «relaxed», by the effects of thirst.

¹¹ For similar etymological explanations of names cf. my *Studies in the Poetry of Nicander*, page 76.

¹² Cf. LSJ s.v. ὑπεραίρω: «Med., *lift oneself* or *rise above*, πάντων».

¹³ For other cases of adjectival *enallage* cf. my *Studies in the Poetry of Nicander*, page 51f.

18. A BOXING-MATCH IN THEOCRITUS

At *Idyll 22*, line 65 Amycus challenges Polydeuces to a fight:

AM. εἷς ἐνὶ χεῖρας ἄειρον ἐναντίος ἀνδρὶ καταστάς.
ΠΟ. πυγμάχος ἢ καὶ ποσσὶ θένων σκέλος. ὄμματα δ' ὀρθά;

line 66 ὄμματα : ἄμματα Iunt.

The critics¹⁴ have been puzzled by the meaning of line 66: cf. Gow's note *ad loc.* Perfect sense can, however, be restored to the text if we print the reading ἄμματα, which has been preserved for us by the Iunt. This edition was printed in 1516: cf. Gow, *Theocritus*, vol. I, page xlv. We should therefore translate as follows:

«Are¹⁵ you a boxer or do you kick (θένων)¹⁶ legs with your feet? And are clinches (ἄμματα)¹⁷ fair?»

Polydeuces asks Amycus whether they are going to box or to wrestle, in which latter case ἄμματα would be licit, «correct» (cf. LSJ, s.v. ὀρθός III, b); Moulton-Milligan, *Vocab. Gr. Test.* s.v. ὀρθῶς («right and fair»).

19. A BOXER'S THONGS

At *Idyll 22*, line 68 Polydeuces mentions the thongs which were worn by a boxer:

ΠΟ. τίς γάρ, ὅτω χεῖρας καὶ ἐμοὺς συνερείσω ἱμάντας;

Translation by Gow:

«PO. Who, then, is he with whom I shall join my thong-bound hands in fight?»

The critics have been puzzled by the meaning of this line: cf. Gow's note *ad loc.* It is clear that Theocritus is referring here to the fact that thongs were wound round the arms of a boxer: cf. *Idyll 22*, line 81. We should therefore translate as follows:

«Who, then, is he for whom I shall join arms (χεῖρας¹⁸) and my thongs?»

¹⁴ Dover states that ὄμματα δ' ὀρθά «makes no sense», and accepts a violent conjecture.

¹⁵ Note the ellipse of the *verbum substantivum*: cf. my *Studies in the Poetry of Nicander*, page 51.

¹⁶ The participle θένων has been employed instead of a finite verb: cf. my *New Studies in Greek Poetry* (Amsterdam 1989), page 20.

¹⁷ Cf. LSJ s.v. ἄμμα (5): «in pl. *clinches* in wrestling». The ἄμματα mentioned in line 66 are the συμπλοκαί

used in the *pankration* (cf. Philostr. *Imag.* 348 K, quoted by Gow). For a similar case where the correct reading has been preserved for us by an early edition cf. my *New Essays in Hellenistic Poetry* (Amsterdam 1985), page 48.

¹⁸ Cf. LSJ s.v. χεῖρ (2): «hand and arm, arm».

20. THE HOLLOW SHELL

At *Idyll* 22 line 75ff. Amycus is said to have blown a shell in order to summon his men:

Ἦ ῥ' Ἀμυκος καὶ κόχλον ἑλὼν μυκήσατο κοῖλον.
οἱ δὲ θοῶς συνάγεσθαι ὑπὸ σκιερὰς πλατανίστους
κόχλου φυσηθέντος αἰεὶ Βέβρυκες κομόωντες.

line 75 κοῖλον M: ἄλην D line 77 κόγχου v. l.

Translation by Gow:

«So said Amycus and took and blew a hollow shell; and at the blast of the shell the Bebryces, whose hair is ever unshorn, swiftly gathered beneath the shady planes».

In his commentary on line 75, Gow stated that κόχλος «is occasionally fem. in later writers, but κοίλην cannot be right here unless κόγχου is to be read in 77».

It is, however, perfectly possible that Theocritus did in fact consider that κόχλος is feminine in gender. It should be noted that there are several examples of participles treated as having two terminations only: cf. Gow's note on *Idyll* 15, line 119, quoting Nicander, *Ther.* 329 καταψηχθέντος ἀκάνθης. Thus Theocritus may well have written κόχλου φυσηθέντος in line 77 and κόχλον ... κοίλην in line 75.

21. PREPARATIONS FOR A BOXING-MATCH

At *Idyll* 22, line 80ff. Theocritus describes how Amycus and Polydeuces prepared for their boxing-match:

οἱ δ' ἐπεὶ οὖν σπεύρησιν ἐκαρτύναντο βοείαις
χεῖρας καὶ περὶ γυῖα μακροὺς εἴλιξαν ἱμάντας,
ἔς μέσσον σύναγον φόνον ἀλλήλοισι πνέοντες.
ἔνθα πολὺς σφισι μόχθος ἐπειγομένοισιν ἐτύχθη,
ὀπότερος κατὰ νῶτα λάβοι φάος ἠελίοιο.

In his commentary on this passage, Gow argued that the two boxers wound straps of oxhide round their own hands. It is, however, possible to make better sense of the transmitted text if we imagine that the Bebryces and the Argonauts wound straps of oxhide round the hands of Amycus and Polydeuces. They then led them into their midst and watched the fight. We should translate as follows:

«Now when they had fortified their hands with straps of oxhide and wound long thongs about their arms, they led them into their midst breathing slaughter against each other. In their eagerness, much toil they had to see who should get the light of the sun behind him».

Note that the poet has employed *Subjektswechsel*¹⁹.

¹⁹ For similar cases of *Subjektswechsel* cf. my *New Studies in Greek Poetry* (Amsterdam 1989), page 92.

22. THE GIANT BOXER

At *Idyll* 22, line 90f. Theocritus describes how Amycus attacked Polydeuces:

σὺν δὲ μάχην ἐτάραξε, πολὺς δ' ἐπέκειτο νευευκῶς
ἐς γαῖαν.

Translation by Gow:

«he (i. e. Amycus) confused the fighting and, head down, fell on with all his force».

Theocritus is describing here how Polydeuces fought against a mighty opponent. Thus πολὺς means «mighty»²⁰. Amycus is imagined to stoop towards the earth as he attacked (ἐπέκειτο²¹). We should translate as follows:

«he confused the fighting and the mighty man attacked bending towards the earth».

23. POLYDEUCES THE BOXER

At *Idyll* 22, line 112ff. Theocritus states that, as the fight with Amycus proceeded, Polydeuces grew stronger:

σάρκες δ' ᾧ μὲν ἰδρῶτι συνίζανον, ἐκ μεγάλου δέ
αἰψ' ὀλίγος γένητ' ἀνδρός. ὃ δ' αἰεὶ πάσσονα γυῖα
αὐξομένου φορέεσκε πόνου καὶ χροιῆ ἀμείνω.

line 114 αὐξομένου Meineke : ἀπτομένου codd.

Translation by Gow:

«And as he sweated the flesh of Amycus fell in, and from a giant in a little while he became small; but as the work waxed hotter the other's limbs grew ever stronger and of better hue».

In his commentary on this passage, Gow argued that Meineke's alteration αὐξομένου is necessary²². I would like to point out, however, that the mss. reading ἀπτομένου makes perfect sense. Gow failed to understand that the poet has employed the present²³ participle with a sense of anteriority. Thus he states that «when the work had started» (ἀπτομένου ... πόνου) Polydeuces grew stronger.

24. THE MIGHT OF AMYCUS

At *Idyll* 22, line 118ff. Theocritus describes how Amycus boxed with Polydeuces:

²⁰ Cf. LSJ s.v. πολὺς 2, b: «rarely of a single person, great, mighty, μέγας καὶ πολλὸς ἐγένεο, Hdt. 7. 14».

²¹ Cf. LSJ s.v. ἐπίκειμαι (2): «attack», Βοιωτοῖσι (Hdt. 5. 81).

²² Dover follows Gow.

²³ For the employment of the present participle with a sense of anteriority cf. *Mus. Phil. Lond.*, vol. X, page 39.

Ἦτοι ὄγε βέξαι τι λιλαιόμενος μέγα ἔργον
 σκαιῆ μὲν σκαιὴν Πολυδεύκεος ἔλλαβε χεῖρα,
 δοχμὸς ἀπὸ προβολῆς κλινθείς, ἑτέρῳ δ' ἐπιβαίνων
 δεξιτερῆς ἤνεγκεν ἀπὸ λαγόνος πλατὺ γυῖον.

line 120 ἑτέρῳ Toup: -ρη D

Translation by Gow:

«Verily Amycus, eager for a great coup, grasped in his left hand the left of Polydeuces, leaning slantwise forward from his guard, and stepping in on the right foot swung his mighty fist upward from the right flank».

The reader will note that Gow printed Toup's alteration in line 120. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. Amycus is described as «attacking with his other hand» (ἑτέρῳ ἐπιβαίνων²⁴) and he is said to «bring his broad arm (πλατὺ γυῖον) up from his right flank». Cf. *Idyll* 22, line 81 where γυῖα means «arms».

25. THE CRUELTY OF AMYCUS

At *Idyll* 22, line 123ff. Theocritus describes how Polydeuces attacked Amycus' temple:

ἀλλ' ὄγ' ὑπεξανέδου κεφαλῆ, στιβαρῆ δ' ἄμα χειρὶ
 πληῆξεν ὑπὸ σκαιὸν κροτάφον καὶ ἐπέμπεσεν ὤμῳ.
 ἐκ δ' ἐχύθη μέλαν αἷμα θοῶς κροτάφιο χανόντος.

Translation by Gow:

«but Polydeuces slipped his head aside and with his stout fist struck below the left temple and put his shoulder into the punch; and from the gaping temple swift flowed the dark blood».

The reader will note that Gow translated the words ἐπέμπεσεν ὤμῳ as «he put his shoulder into the punch». He admits, however, that «the language is odd». This difficulty is eliminated when we realize that Theocritus has employed the adjective ὠμός²⁵, i. e. «cruel». Thus Polydeuces is said to have «attacked the cruel man»²⁶, i. e. Amycus. For ἐπεμπίπτω + *dat. personae* = «attack» cf. Thes. s.v.; in lines 123-24 we are of course faced with *hysteron proteron*.

26. THE DEATH OF LYNCEUS

At *Idyll* 22, line 203f. Theocritus describes the death of Lynceus:

²⁴ Cf. LSJ s.v. ἐπιβαίνω II, b: «c. dat. pers., set upon, assault, τιμί X. *Cyr.* 5. 2. 26».

²⁵ Cf. LSJ s.v. ὠμός, II: «metaph., savage, fierce, cruel».

²⁶ The absence of the article before the substantivized adjective ὠμός is not surprising in Theocritus, as we can learn from the standard monographs by Ameis and Leutner.

ὁ δ' ἔς στόμα κέϊτο νενευκῶς
 Λυγκεύς, κὰδ δ' ἄρα οἱ βλεφάρων βαρὺς ἔδραμεν ὕπνος.

line 203 στόμα D: χθόνα TrM

Translation by Gow:

«and Lynceus bowed him and fell on his face, and heavy the sleep that sped down upon his eyes».

In line 203 Gow printed the variant στόμα. I would like to suggest, however, that better sense is provided by the variant χθόνα. Lynceus is imagined to bend towards the earth before dying. We should translate as follows:

«and Lynceus lay dead (κέϊτο²⁷), having bent towards the earth (ἔς χθόνα ... νενευκῶς²⁸), for (δ²⁹) heavy sleep sped down upon his eyes».

27. ON THE BIRTHPLACE OF DIONYSUS

At Theocritus, *Idyll* 26, line 33f. Dionysus is said to have been born on «snowy Dracanus»:

χαίροι μὲν Διόνυσος, ὃν ἐν Δρακάνῳ ιψόφειντι
 Ζεὺς ὕπατος μεγάλην ἐπιγουνίδα κάτθετο λύσας

Gow was puzzled by the reference to Dracanus. He stated that «two places of the name are known: (i) a hill on the island of Icaros; (ii) an island west of the Thracian Chersonese (see RE 5. 1645)». I would like to suggest that Theocritus has located the birth of Dionysus on the island of Icaros. Dracanus is mentioned together with the island of Icaros at *A. P.* 7. 651, line 3 Δολίχης (=Icaros) τε καὶ αἰπείνης Δρακάνοιο. Nonnus followed Theocritus and also located the birth of Dionysus on the hill called Dracanus (i. e. on Icaros). Cf. *Dion.* 9, 16 Δρακάνοιο λεχώιον ἀμφὶ κολώνην.

In a fragment of a hymn quoted by Diod. Sic. 3, 66 Dracanus is named and grouped together with Icaros and Naxos among the reputed birthplaces of Dionysus:

οἱ μὲν γὰρ Δρακάνῳ σ', οἱ δ' Ἰκάρῳ ἡμεροέσση
 φάσ', οἱ δ' ἐν Νάξῳ, δῖον γένος, εἰραφιῶτα κτλ.

Probably the author of this fragment is referring to the Thracian island of Dracanus. For the connection of Dionysus with Thrace cf. Ovid, *Met.* 9, 641f. where the poet mentions the Ismarian worshippers of Bacchus.

28. FAREWELL TO SEMELE

At Theocritus, *Idyll* 26, line 35ff. the poet bids farewell to Semele and her sisters:

²⁷ Cf. LSJ s.v. κέϊμαι (4): «*lie dead*, Il. 5. 467».
²⁸ Cf. LSJ s.v. νεύω (3): «*generally, nod, bend forward*, of warriors... v. ἔς τὴν γῆν Ar. V. 1110».

²⁹ For δέ = γάρ cf. my *New Studies in Greek Poetry*, page 109.

χαίροι δ' εὐειδῆς Σεμέλα καὶ ἀδελφεαὶ αὐτᾶς,
 Καδμείαι πολλαῖς μεμελημένοι ἡρώιναις,
 αἱ τόδε ἔργον ἔρεξαν ὀρίναντος Διονύσω
 οὐκ ἐπιμωματόν. μηδεὶς τὰ θεῶν ὀνόσαιτο.

Translation by Gow:

«Farewell to comely Semela and her sisters, Cadmean dames honoured of many a heroine, who, at Dionysus' instigation, did this deed, wherein is no blame. At the acts of gods let no man cavil».

The reader will note that Gow translated the words πολλαῖς μεμελημένοι ἡρώιναις as «honoured³⁰ of many a heroine». But who are the «heroines»? Dover thinks that the word denotes «women in other cities in the “heroic” age», which is lexically impossible: mortal women are not heroines. Gow writes that «the ἡρώιναι are presumably the anonymous Maenads in their θίασοι», but such Maenads were mere women, not heroines. The resultative perfect participle μεμελημένοι gives us the correct explanation of the phrase: the literal sense is «who *have been* honoured by many women now dead». The word ἡρώϊνη can denote deceased women, cf. e. g. LSJ s.v. II. The poet wants to underline that Semele and her sisters have been worshipped by a long line of female devotees reaching far back into the past.

29. THEUGENIS AND THE DISTAFF

In *Idyll* 28 Theocritus describes a distaff, which he is sending as a present to Theugenis. Gow noted that the critics have been puzzled by the meaning of lines 24f.:

κῆνο γάρ τις ἔρει τῶπος ἴδων σ'. ἥ μεγάλη χάρις
 δῶρω σὺν ὀλίγῳ. πάντα δὲ τίματα τὰ παρ φίλων.'

The solution to the problem posed by these lines is obvious once we realise that χάρις, in line 24, means «pleasure, delight»: cf. LSJ s.v. IV. Theocritus means that somebody who sees the distaff will say that «great pleasure» (μεγάλα χάρις) comes to Theugenis together with a little gift. He is alluding to the fact that Theugenis is destined to produce beautiful garments with the distaff: cf. line 10ff. In other words, Theugenis will spend many happy hours working with her distaff.

30. THE SHRINE OF APHRODITE

At *Idyll* 28, lines 3-4 Theocritus refers to Miletus together with the shrine of Aphrodite:

θήρσεισ' ἄμμιν ὑμάρτη πόλιν ἐς Νείλεος ἀγλάαν,
 ὄππα Κύπριδος Ἴρον καλάμῳ χλῶρον ὑπ' ἀπάλῳ.

³⁰ «Admired by many heroines» Dover.

Translation by Gow:

«attend me without fear to the splendid town of Neileus, where green amid its soft rushes lies the precinct of Cypris.»

The critics have been puzzled by the reference to a shrine of Aphrodite in line 4. Gow argued that «the reference to a temple of Aphrodite at Miletus has no seeming relevance here, and accords somewhat ill with the mention of Athena (1)». It should be noted, however, that the story of the unhappy love-affair of the children of Miletus (i. e. Caunus and Byblis) was famous in antiquity: cf. Parthenius XI and Ovid, *Met.* 9, 453ff. Moreover, the shrine of Aphrodite at Miletus is mentioned by the *scholia* on *Idyll*, 7, line 115. Theocritus therefore mentioned the shrine of Aphrodite together with the town of Miletus in order to allude³¹ to this famous story. Athena, the chaste goddess of spinning, is purposely mentioned by the poet together with Aphrodite, who caused ruin for the children of Miletus. Thus the story of the children of Miletus serves as a foil to the chaste behaviour of Theuigenis, who is devoted to spinning.

31. ON SPINNING AND WEAVING

At *Idyll* 28, line 10f. Theocritus refers to cloaks for men and women:

σὺν τᾷ πόλλα μὲν ἔργ' ἐκτελέσης ἀνδρείους πέπλους,
πόλλα δ' οἶα γυναῖκες φορέουσ' ὑδάτινα βράκη.

Gow noted that most editors have treated πέπλους as the Aeolic accusative, like 12 πόκοις, 16 δόμοις, 20 νόσοις, etc. Gow argued, moreover, that «a distaff is for spinning raw wool into yarn, not for weaving yarn into cloth». According to Gow, ἔργα ἐκτελεῖν must mean «spin» and πέπλους must be dative not accusative. I would like to point out, however, that better sense can be made of the transmitted text if we understand that Theocritus has employed the verb συνεκτελέω.

We should translate as follows:

«whom (τᾷ³²) you will help in completing (σὺν ... ἐκτελέσης³³) many tasks (πόλλα ... ἔργ'), men's garments (ἀνδρείους πέπλους), as well as many flowing cloaks such as women wear».

32. THE SHEEP OF MILETUS

At *Idyll* 28, line 12f. the poet mentions the famous wool of Miletus:

δὺς γὰρ μάτερες ἄρνων μαλάκοις ἐν βοτάνῃ πόκοις
πέξαιντ' αὐτοῦται, Θευγένιδός γ' ἔννεκ' ἔυσφύρω.

³¹ For the fact that Hellenistic poets preferred to allude to well known legends rather than to narrate them in full, cf. *Mus. Phil. Lond.*, vol. X, page 51.

³² Cf. *Idyll* 2, line 67 τᾷ δὴ τόκα κτλ.

³³ Cf. LSJ s.v. συνεκτελέω: «help in completing», τὰ πράγματα Aristid. I. 442J».

Gow translated as follows:

«for twice in the year for aught fair-ankled Theugenis would care might the mothers of the lambs be shorn of their soft fleeces in the pastures».

I would like to suggest that better sense can be made of these lines if we understand that the words μάτρες³⁴ ἄρνων refer to Miletus. Theocritus states that «the mother of sheep (i. e. Miletus) might shear (πέξαινε³⁵) soft fleeces in the pasture twice a year on behalf of fair-ankled Theugenis».

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³⁴ Cf. LSJ s.v. μήτηρ (2): «of lands, μ. μήλων, θηρῶν mother of flocks, of game, Il. 2. 696, 8. 47 etc.» For other examples of the poetic plural cf. my *Studies in the Poetry Of Nicander*, page 8.

³⁵ Note the employment of the middle form of the verb instead of the active: cf. my commentary on Theocritus' *Idyll 24* (Amsterdam 1979) page 105.