

# FURTHER NOTES ON THE *IDYLLS* OF THEOCRITUS

*Abstract:* Several passages of Theocritus are explained.

*Key words:* Theocritus: textual criticism.

*Resumen:* Se explican diversos pasajes de Teócrito.

*Palabras-clave:* Teócrito: crítica textual.

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## I. ON THE MEANING OF εἰδύλλιον

According to ancient sources, εἰδύλλιον means «a little poem» (μικρὸν ποίημα). This term is used to describe Theocritus' poetry, because he sided with Callimachus and with those Hellenistic poets who wished to write short poems rather than long epic poems: cf. H. White, «A. Cameron, *Callimachus and his Critics*, Princeton, Princeton U.Pr. 1995», *Habis* 29, 1998, page 388ff. The *scholia* on Callimachus, *Hymn* 2, line 106 note that Callimachus was mocked because he did not write a long poem (μέγα ποίημα). Callimachus' critics argued that he did not have the ability to write a long poem. For the argument about whether a Hellenistic poet should write short poems or long poems, in the manner of Antimachus and Rhianus, cf. G. Giangrande, «On Callimachus' Literary View Concerning Epic», *Veleia* 15, 1998, page 389.

## 2. DAPHNIS AND THE MUSES

At *Idyll* I, line 64ff. Thyrsis begins his pastoral song:

Ἄρχετε βουκολικᾶς, Μοῖσαι φίλαι, ἄρχετ' αἰοιδᾶς.  
Θύρσις ὄδ' ὡς Αἴτνας, καὶ Θύρσιδος ἀδέα φωνά.  
πᾶ ποκ' ἄρ' ἦσθ', ὅκα Δάφνις ἐτάκετο, πᾶ ποκα, Νύμφαι;  
ἦ κατὰ Πήνειῶ καλὰ τέμπεα, ἦ κατὰ Πίνδω;  
οὐ γὰρ δὴ ποταμοῖο μέγαν ῥόον εἶχετ' Ἀνάπω,  
οὐδ' Αἴτνας σκοπιάν, οὐδ' Ἄκιδος ἱερὸν ὕδωρ.

Translation by Gow<sup>1</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. S. F. Gow, *Theocritus*, Cambridge 1965.

«Begin, dear Muses, begin the pastoral song.  
Thyrsis of Etna am I, and sweet is the voice of Thyrsis.  
Where were ye, Nymphs, where were ye, when Daphnis was  
wasting? In the fair vales of Peneius or of Pindus? For surely  
ye kept not the mighty stream of Anapus, nor the peak of  
Etna, nor the sacred rill of Acis».

Thyrsis refers here to the story of how Daphnis wasted away and died in Sicily. I would like to point out that better sense can be made of the transmitted text if we understand that the word Νύμφαι<sup>2</sup>, in line 66, refers to the Muses. Thyrsis addresses the Muses and asks them whether they were in Thessaly<sup>3</sup> when Daphnis died. He then adds that they were obviously not in Sicily. The implication is that, if they had been in Sicily, they would not have allowed Daphnis to die.

### 3. ON PAN AND ARCADIA

At *Idyll* I, line 123ff. Pan is addressed:

ὦ Πᾶν Πάν, εἴτ' ἔσσι κατ' ὄρεα μακρὰ Λυκαίω,  
εἴτε τύγ' ἀμφιπολεῖς μέγα Μαίναλον, εἴθ' ἐπὶ νᾶσον  
τὰν Σικελάν, Ἑλίκας δὲ λίπε ρίον αἰπύ τε σᾶμα  
τῆνο Λυκαονίδαο, τὸ καὶ μακάρεσσιν ἀγητόν.

Translation by Gow:

«O Pan, Pan, whether thou art on the high hills of Lycaeus,  
or ranged mighty Maenalus, come to the Sicilian isle and  
leave the mountain peak of Helice and that high tomb of  
Lycaon's son wherein even the Blessed Ones delight».

In his commentary on these lines, Gow noted that the critics have been puzzled by the text of line 125. Perfect sense can, however, be restored to this passage if we understand that the poet has employed the collective<sup>4</sup> singular. Pan is told to leave «the peaks of Helice (Ἑλίκας ... ρίον)», i. e. the mountains of Arcadia. According to myth, Helice, or Callisto, was changed into a bear and wandered over the mountains of Arcadia. It should, moreover, be noted that τῆνο in line 126, means «famous». Thus the words αἰπύ τε σᾶμα / τῆνο Λυκαονίδαο mean «the famous high tomb of Lycaon's son». The tomb of Arcas was located on Mount Maenalus: cf. Pausanias 8. 9. 3.

### 4. DELPHIS' LAURELS

At *Idyll* 2, line 1 Simaetha orders Thestylis to bring bay-leaves to her:

Πᾶ μοι ταῖ δάφναι; φέρε, Θεστυλί. πᾶ δὲ τὰ φίλτρα;

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Idyll* 7, line 92 where Νύμφαι = «the Muses». Cf. also H. White, «Notes on Hellenistic Poetry», *Orpheus* 19-20, 1998-1999, page 428ff.

<sup>3</sup> Pindus, a mountain in Thessaly, was the seat of the Muses: cf. Lewis & Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s. v. *Pindus*.

<sup>4</sup> For another example of the collective singular in Theocritus cf. S. Hatzikosta's commentary on *Idyll* 7, line 74 (Amsterdam 1982).

Gow was puzzled by the reference to bay-leaves, and noted that normally bay-leaves are not associated with spells and love-charms. I would like to suggest that the bay-leaves mentioned by Simaetha belonged to Delphis, who wore them in a garland<sup>5</sup>. In order to carry out the magic spells, Simaetha burns objects that belonged to Delphis. Thus at line 53ff. she burns a fringe from Delphis' cloak. Similarly at line 23 Simaetha states that she will burn bay-leaves «on behalf of Delphis»: ἐπὶ Δέλφιδι δάφναν / αἴθω. She hopes that Delphis will burn with passion for her just as the bay-leaves burn in the fire.

## 5. MAGIC SPELLS IN THEOCRITUS

At *Idyll* 2, line 2f. Simaetha states that she will use magic in an attempt to regain the love of Delphis:

στέφον τὰν κελέβαν φοινικέω οἶδς ἀώτῳ,  
ὡς τὸν ἐμὸν βαρὺν εὔντα φίλον καταδήσομαι ἄνδρα

line 3 καταδήσομαι P3 Τουρ ε Σ καταθύσομαι codd.

Translation by Gow:

«Wreath the bowl with fine crimson wool that I may bind a spell upon my love, so hard to me».

The reader will note that, in line 3, Gow printed the reading καταδήσομαι. I would like to point out, however, that better sense is provided by the mss reading καταθύσομαι. Simaetha states that she will cause Delphis to rage with love for her. Cf. LSJ s. v. θύω B: «rage, seethe». Cf. also Apollonius Rhodius, *Arg.* 3, 685 θῦεν ἐνισπεῖν («she desired eagerly to speak»). At line 10 Simaetha states that she will cause Delphis to rage by means of sacrifices: ἐκ θυέων καταθύσομαι.

Finally, at line 159, Simaetha says that she will make Delphis rage by means of love-magic: τοῖς φίλτροις καταθύσομαι. Note that μαίνομαι («to rage») can also be used in a causal sense. Cf. LSJ s. v. μαίνομαι II: «in causal sense, *madden*».

## 6. ON HECATE AND HADES

At *Idyll* 2, line 12f. Theocritus mentions Hecate:

τῆ χθονία θ' Ἑκάτα, τὰν καὶ σκύλακες τρομέοντι  
ἐρχομέναν νεκύων ἀνά τ' ἠρία καὶ μέλαν αἶμα.

In this passage Simaetha invokes the powers of Hades. Note that the poet has employed the accusative<sup>6</sup> together with a verb of motion. Even dogs are said to fear Hecate when she «returns» (ἐρχομέναν ... ἀνά) from Hades «to the graves of the dead and to the dark blood» (νεκύων ... ἠρία καὶ μέλαν αἶμα).

<sup>5</sup> The fact that Delphis was in the habit of wearing garlands is mentioned at line 121.

<sup>6</sup> For the employment of the accusative after a verb of motion cf. Gow's note on *Idyll* I, line 140.

## 7. SIMAETHA'S SICKNESS

At *Idyll 2*, line 92 Simaetha mentions how ill she became when she fell in love with Delphis:

ἀλλ' ἦς οὐδὲν ἐλαφρόν, ὁ δὲ χρόνος ἄνυτο φεύγων.

Gow noted that the critics have been puzzled by the meaning of this line. I would like to suggest that Simaetha states that time, as it flew by, «was destroying her» (ἄνυτο φεύγων). Cf. LSJ s. v. ἀνύω (2): «*make an end of, destroy*, φλόξ σε ἦνυσεν (*Od.* 24. 71)». For the form ἄνυτο cf. *Odyssey* 5, 243 ἦνυτο.

## 8. SIMAETHA'S LOVERS

At *Idyll 2*, line 118f. Delphis tells Simaetha that he had planned to visit her house at night:

ἦνθον γάρ κεν ἐγώ, ναὶ τὸν γλυκὺν ἦνθον Ἔρωτα,  
ἢ τρίτος ἢ ἑ τέταρτος ἐὼν φίλος αὐτίκα νυκτός.

Gow noted that the text of line 119 has perplexed the critics. I would like to point out that perfect sense can be restored to the transmitted text if we understand that φίλος means «lover». We should translate as follows:

«For I would have come, by sweet Love, I would have come presently (αὐτίκα), being the third or fourth lover of the night».

Delphis attempts to flatter Simaetha by stating that several lovers would have come to her house at night in order to try to win her affection.

## 9. A MAIDEN'S GIRDLE

At *Idyll 2*, line 121f. Delphis states that he would have come to visit Simaetha wearing a garland of white poplar:

κρατὶ δ' ἔχων λεύκαν, Ἡρακλέος ἱερὸν ἔρνος,  
πάντοθι πορφυρέαισι περὶ ζώστραισι ἐλικτάν.

Translation by Gow:

«and on my brows the white poplar, the holy plant of Heracles, twined all about with crimson bands».

Gow noted that the critics have been puzzled by the text of line 122. I would like to suggest that the poet is referring here to crimson girdles. Delphis alludes to the fact that he wished to make love with Simaetha and to untie her girdle. We should therefore translate as follows: «and on my brows the white poplar, the holy plant of Heracles, everywhere twined on account of crimson girdles».

Cf. LSJ s. v. περί B, 3: «generally, of the cause or occasion, *on account of, by reason of*».

## 10. SIMAETHA'S SECRET

At *Idyll* 2, line 142f. Simaetha tells the moon about her love for Delphis:

ὥς καί τοι μὴ μακρὰ φίλα θρυλέοιμι Σελάνα,  
ἐπράχθη τὰ μέγιστα, καὶ ἐς πόθον ἤνθομες ἄμφω.

Translation by Gow:

«And, to tell thee no long tale, dear Moon,  
all was accomplished, and we twain came to our desire».

The critics have been puzzled by the text of line 142: cf. Gow's note *ad loc.* It should be noted that perfect sense can be made of these lines if we understand that Simaetha means that she was paid a lot of money so that she would not talk much about her affair with Delphis. We should therefore translate as follows:

«And so that I would not chatter (θρυλέοιμι<sup>7</sup>) much, dear Moon, the greatest payment was exacted (ἐπράχθη<sup>8</sup> τὰ μέγιστα) and we both became desirous (ἐς πόθον<sup>9</sup> ἤνθομες ἄμφω)».

In other words, Simaetha stresses that Delphis desired her as much as she desired him.

## 11. SIMAETHA'S PROMISE

At *Idyll* 2, line 163f. Simaetha bids farewell to the night:

ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν χαίρουσα ποτ' ὠκεανὸν τρέπε πώλως,  
πότιν'. ἐγὼ δ' οἰσῶ τὸν ἐμὸν πόθον ὥσπερ ὑπέσταν.

Translation by Gow:

«But do thou farewell, Lady, and turn thy steeds towards the Ocean.  
And I will bear my longing as till now I have endured it».

According to Gow, Simaetha finally resigns herself to suffering for love. I would like to suggest another interpretation of this passage. Simaetha states that she will obtain her desire (οἰσῶ<sup>10</sup> τὸν ἐμὸν πόθον) just as she promised (ὥσπερ ὑπέσταν<sup>11</sup>). Simaetha means that she will cause Delphis to return to her. Cf. line 3 where Simaetha states that she is going to drive Delphis mad with love through her use of magic. Simaetha is, in other words, confident that her magic spells will be successful.

## 12. A SONG FOR AMARYLLIS

At *Idyll* 3, line 38 a goatherd decides to serenade his beloved in order to win her affection:

<sup>7</sup> Cf. LSJ s. v. θρυλέω: «chatter, babble».

<sup>8</sup> Cf. LSJ s. v. πράσσω VI: «exact payment from one».

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Musaeus 29, quoted by Gow, *ad loc.*

<sup>10</sup> Cf. LSJ s. v. φέρω VI, 3.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Hesiod, *Theogony* 402 ὥσπερ ὑπέστη («as he promised»).

ἀσεύμαι ποτὶ τὰν πίτυν ᾧδ' ἀποκλιθεῖς,  
καὶ κέ μ' ἴσως ποτίδοι, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἀδαμαντῖνα ἐστίν.

Translation by Gow:

«I will step aside under the pine here and sing, and maybe she will look on me, for her heart is not of adamant».

The reader will note that Gow translated the words ᾧδ' ἀποκλιθεῖς as «I will step aside... here». I would like to point out, however, that better sense can be obtained from the transmitted text if we understand that the participle ἀποκλιθεῖς means «upset». Cf. LSJ s. v. ἀποκλίνω<sup>12</sup> II: «Pass., *to be upset*, D. 55. 24 etc.» The goatherd means that since he is «so upset (ᾧδ' ἀποκλιθεῖς)» at the behaviour of Amaryllis, who is ignoring his advances, he will sing her a serenade. Cf. *Il.* 5, 897 ᾧδ' αἶδηλος.

13. AN OBSCENE PUN IN THEOCRITUS

At *Idyll* 5, lines 86-87 Lacon boasts that he has had sexual intercourse with a boy:

ΛΑ. φεῦ φεῦ, Λάκων τοι ταλάρως σχεδὸν εἴκατι πληροῖ  
τυρῶ, καὶ τὸν ἀναβον ἐν ἄνθεσι παῖδα μολύνει.

Translation by Gow:

La. «Ho ho, near twenty baskets Lacon fills with cheese,  
et puerum impuberem in floribus inquinat».

Comatas then states, in lines 88-89, that Clearista throws apples at the goatherd while he passes with his flock:

ΚΟ. βάλλει καὶ μάλοισι τὸν αἰπόλον ἅ Κλεαρίστα  
τὰς αἶγας παρελάντα καὶ ἀδύ τι ποππιλιάσδει.

Co. «With apples too Clearista pelts the goatherd as he passes with his flock, and sweetly she whistles to him».

I would like to point out that Theocritus has employed an obscene pun in line 89. The verb ἐλαύνω means both «drive» and βινέω: Cf. LSJ s. v. ἐλαύνω I, 5: «= βινέω, *Ar. Ec.* 39, *Pl. Com.* 3. 4». Thus the implication is that the goatherd is engaging in sexual intercourse with his female goats. For the fact that goatherds had a notorious inclination towards bestiality cf. *MPhL* 7, page 147ff.

14. A BANQUET IN THEOCRITUS

At *Idyll* 7, line 24 Lycidas asks Simichidas why he is in a hurry:

<sup>12</sup> The verb has, of course, been used in a metaphorical sense by the poet.

ἦ μετὰ δαῖτ' ἄκλητος ἐπέιγεται, ἢ τινος ἀστῶν  
 λανόν ἐπι θρώσκεις; ὡς τοι ποσὶ νισσομένοιο  
 πᾶσα λίθος πταίοισα ποτ' ἀρβυλίδεσσιν αἰεῖδει.

Translation by Gow:

«Art hastening unbidden to some banquet or speeding to some townsman's winepress, for as thou goest each pebble spins singing from thy shoes?»

The reader will note that Gow translated the word λανόν, in line 25, as «winepress». Better sense can, however, be made of the text if we understand that λανόν means here «coffin». Cf. LSJ s. v. ληνός (5): «coffin, Pherecr. 5». Simichidas is imagined to be rushing to a funeral-feast. Cf. LSJ s. v. τάφος: δαινύναι τάφον «to give a funeral-feast» (*Il.* 23, 29; *Od.* 3, 309). Note, moreover, that Theocritus refers to death at line 10 (σᾶμα) and line 23 (ἐπιτυμβίδιοι).

#### 15. THE STORY OF DAPHNIS

At *Idyll* 7, line 73 Theocritus mentions how Daphnis fell in love:

ὡς ποκα τᾶς Ξενέας ἠράσσατο Δάφνις ὁ βούτας

τᾶς Ξενέας: τᾶς Ξενίας v.l.

Gow noted that the name Ξενέας is otherwise unknown, and that it does not occur in real life. I would like to point out that perfect sense is provided by the variant reading ξενίας. According to Parthenius (29), Daphnis led a solitary life on the slopes of Etna. However, he was entertained by a Sicilian princess who made him drunk and caused his ruin by sleeping with him. Theocritus states that Daphnis «desired» (ἠράσσατο<sup>13</sup>) «hospitality» (ξενίας). In this way, he alludes<sup>14</sup> to the story of the Sicilian princess.

#### 16. THE LOVE OF SIMICHIDAS

At *Idyll* 7, line 96f. Simichidas states that he is in love:

Σιμιχίδα μὲν Ἔρωτες ἐπέπταρον. ἦ γὰρ ὁ δειλός  
 τόσσον ἐρᾷ Μυρτοῦς ὅσον εἶαρος αἴγες ἔρανται.

Translation by Gow:

«For Simichidas the Loves sneezed, for he, poor soul, loves Myrto as dearly as goats love spring».

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Callimachus, frag. 508 Pfeiffer: ὅσον βλωμοῦ πίοιος ἠράσατο («as much as he desired a rich morsel of bread»).

<sup>14</sup> For the fact that Hellenistic poets preferred to allude to well known legends rather than to narrate them in detail cf. *MPHL* 10, 1996, page 51.

Gow was puzzled by the «term of comparison» in line 97, which he states «is oddly chosen». I would like to suggest that the adjective δειλός<sup>15</sup> means here «frightened». Accordingly, Simichidas states that despite the fact that he is «afraid of Myrto» (δειλός ... Μυρτοῦς) nevertheless he is in love as dearly as the goats love spring (τόσσον ἐρᾶ ... ὅσον εἶαρος αἶγες ἔραυται).

#### 17. THEOCRITUS AND WITCHCRAFT

At *Idyll* 9, line 30 the poet mentions pimples which are growing on the tip of his tongue:

μηκέτ' ἐπὶ γλώσσας ἄκρας ὀλοφυγγόνα φύσης.

«May you no longer cause pimples to grow on my tongue-tip».

The critics have been puzzled by the meaning of this line. They have been unable to explain why exactly pimples are mentioned here by the poet: cf. my *Essays in Hellenistic Poetry* (Amsterdam 1980), page 44. I would like to suggest that Theocritus is referring to witchcraft (βασκανία). He implies that the shepherds are jealous of his ability in singing. Therefore in the past they have caused pimples to grow on the tip of his tongue. He then adds that since he is loved by the Muses, even Circe cannot harm him with her magic potions.

#### 18. FLOWERS FOR A GARLAND

At Theocritus, *Idyll* 10, line 26ff. Bucaeus praises the beauty of Bombyca:

Βομβύκα χαρίεσσα, Σύραν καλέοντί τυ πάντες,  
 ἰσχνὰν ἀλιόκαυστον, ἐγὼ δὲ μόνος μελίχλωρον.  
 καὶ τὸ ἴον μέλαν ἐστί, καὶ ἄ γραπτὰ ὑάκινθος.  
 ἀλλ' ἔμπας ἐν τοῖς στεφάνοις τὰ πρᾶτα λέγονται

The critics have been puzzled by the meaning of line 29: cf. Gow's note *ad loc.* I would like to suggest that Theocritus has employed an ellipse of the *verbum substantivum* in line 29. We should therefore translate lines 28-29 as follows:

«Dark is the violet and the lettered hyacinth, yet they are<sup>16</sup> in garlands (ἀλλ' ἔμπας ἐν τοῖς στεφάνοις). They are picked first (τὰ πρᾶτα λέγονται)».

Cf. Vergil, *Ecl.* 2, 18: *alba ligustra cadunt, vaccinia nigra leguntur.*

#### 19. NEW SHOES FOR BUCAEUS

At Theocritus, *Idyll* 10, line 32ff. Bucaeus states that if he was as rich as Croesus, he would have gold statues made of himself and Bombyca:

<sup>15</sup> Cf. LSJ s. v. δειλός: «c. gen., δειλός μνάγρης afraid of... AP 9. 410».

<sup>16</sup> For the ellipse of the *verbum substantivum* cf. Gow's note on *Idyll* 14, line 3. Cf. also my *Studies in the Poetry of Nicander*, Amsterdam 1987, page 51.



αἶθε μοι ἦς ὅσσα Κροῖσόν ποκα φαντὶ πεπᾶσθαι.  
 χρύσει ἀμφότεροί κ' ἀνεκείμεθα τᾷ Ἀφροδίτῃ,  
 τῶς αὐλῶς μὲν ἔχουσα καὶ ἡ ρόδον ἢ τύγε μάλον,  
 σχῆμα δ' ἐγὼ καὶ καινὰς ἐπ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἀμύκλας.

line 35 σχοῖμι δ' Σ lemma.

Translation by Gow:

«Would I had such wealth as Croesus, in the tales, once owned. Then should we both stand in gold as offerings to Aphrodite —thou with thy pipes, and a rosebud or an apple, and I with raiment new and new shoes of Amyclae on either foot».

In line 35 Bucaeus mentions shoes of Amyclae. Better sense can be made of this passage if we print the reading σχοῖμι δ'. Bucaeus states that he would have a pair of new shoes on his feet (σχοῖμι δ' ἐγὼ καὶ καινὰς ... ἀμύκλας) if he was a rich man. In other words Bucaeus would like to have statues made of himself and Bombyca, and he would also like to have a new pair of shoes for himself.

## 20. ON THE BEAUTY OF BOMBYCA

At Theocritus, *Idyll* 10, line 38ff. Milon states that Bucaeus makes beautiful songs:

ἦ καλὰς ἄμμε ποῶν ἐλελάθει Βοῦκος αἰοιδάς.  
 ὡς εὖ τὰν ιδέαν τᾶς ἀρμονίας ἐμέτρησεν.  
 ὦμοι τῷ πώγωνος, ὄν ἀλιθίως ἀνέφουσα.

Translation by Gow.

«MI. Truly Bucaeus was a maker of lovely songs, and we never knew it. How well he measured out the pattern of his tune - beshrew the beard I've grown to so little profit».

According to Gow, Milon refers in line 39 to Bucaeus' poetic style. However, it makes better sense if we understand that Milon is referring to Bombyca's beauty. Milon states that Bucaeus has scanned (ἐμέτρησεν<sup>17</sup>) the form of Bombyca's frame (τὰν ιδέαν τᾶς ἀρμονίας<sup>18</sup>). He means that Bucaeus has studied her physical form in detail and is therefore able to describe her beauty with complete ease.

## 21. THE LIFE OF A FROG

At *Idyll* 10, line 52ff. Milon praises the life of a frog:

<sup>17</sup> Cf. LSJ s. v. μετρέω (1): μετρούμενον ἔχνη τὰ κείνου «*measuring them with the eyes*», (S. Ai. 5). Cf. also LSJ s. v. διαμετρέω (4) «*measure with the eye, scan*» (Nonnus, D. 5. 306).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. LSJ s.v. ἀρμονία (4): «*esp. of the human frame*».

Εὐκτὸς ὁ τῷ βατράχῳ παῖδες βίος· οὐ μελεδαίνει  
τὸν προπιεῖν ἐγχεῖντα· πάρεστι γὰρ ἄφθονον αὐτῷ.  
Κάλλιον ὦ ἴμιλητὰ φιλάργυρε, τὸν φακὸν ἔψειν·  
μὴ τι τάμης τὰν χεῖρα καταπρίων τὸ κύμνον.

In line 54 Milon states that the steward is stingy. I would like to suggest that better sense can be made of this passage if we understand that Theocritus has employed *enjambement*<sup>19</sup> in lines 53-4. We should therefore translate as follows:

«A jolly life has the frog, my lads. No care has he for one to pour out his drink, for he has better by him unstinted (πάρεστι γὰρ ἄφθονον αὐτῷ) / κάλλιον). Boil the beans, stingy steward, lest you cut your hand with cummin-splitting».

The steward is told to make lentil- porridge (φακῆ), by boiling the beans, so that he will not risk cutting his hand by splitting cummin for seasoning. Obviously the porridge will not need to be seasoned by cummin. Those who split cummin were proverbially mean.

## 22. ON THEOCRITUS AND BUCAEUS' MOTHER

At *Idyll* 10, line 56 Milon states that workmen should not sing of love:

ταῦτα χρὴ μοχθεύοντας ἐν ἀλίῳ ἄνδρας αἰεῖδεν,  
τὸν δὲ τεόν, Βουκαίε, πρέπει λιμηρὸν ἔρωτα  
μυθίσδεν τᾷ ματρὶ κατ' εἰνάν ὀρθρευοῖσα.

Translation by Gow:

«That's the stuff for men that work in the sun to sing. And as for your starveling love, Bucaeus —tell it your mother when she stirs in bed of a morning».

According to Gow, Theocritus means that «Bucaeus's love-affair belongs to dreamland, and that he is like a little boy who sleeps with his mother and tells her his dreams in the morning». However, better sense can be made of these lines if we understand that the verb μυθίσδεν refers to Bucaeus' mother. We should therefore translate lines 57-58 as follows:

«And it is fitting, Bucaeus, for your mother to mention (μυθίσδεν) your starveling love when she lies in bed in the morning before dawn».

Bucaeus is not imagined by Theocritus to sleep with his mother like a little boy. Milon means that only a woman should waste her time talking about love.

## 23. ON THEOCRITUS AND PIMPLES

*Idyll* 12 is addressed to a beautiful boy who is loved by the poet. At lines 23-24 Theocritus refers to pimples (ψεύδεα):

<sup>19</sup> For similar cases of *enjambement* cf. G. Giangrande (ed.), *Corolla Londiniensis*, vol 1, Amsterdam 1981, page 175.

ἐγὼ δέ σε τὸν καλὸν αἰνέων  
 ψεύδεα ῥινὸς ὑπερθεὺν ἀραιῆς οὐκ ἀναφύσω.

The critics have been puzzled by the meaning of this passage: cf. Gow's note *ad loc.* I would like to suggest that Theocritus is alluding here to the pimples which accompany adolescence. Cf. LSJ s. v. ἰονθος II: «eruption on the face, which often accompanies the first growth of the beard». It should, moreover, be noted that the verb ἀναφύσω has been used in a transitive sense. Cf. LSJ s. v. φύω A: τρίχες ... ἄς πρὶν ἔφυσεν φάρμακον («made the hair grow», *Od.* 10. 393). Theocritus does not want the boy to reach puberty since this would spoil his beauty. For the hairs of adolescence cf. my *New Studies in Greek Poetry* (Amsterdam 1989), page 73. We should therefore translate lines 23-24 as follows:

«But I, when I praise your beauty, shall not cause pimples to grow above your slender nose (i. e. on your forehead)».

#### 24. A KISSING-CONTEST IN THEOCRITUS

At *Idyll* 12, line 34ff. the poet mentions a kissing-contest

ὄλβιος ὅστις παισὶ φιλήματα κείνα διαιτᾷ.  
 ἦ που τὸν χαροπὸν Γανυμήδεα πόλλ' ἐπιβῶται  
 Λυδίη ἴσον ἔχειν πέτρῃ στόμα, χρυσὸν ὁποῖη  
 πεύθονται, μὴ φαῦλος, ἐτήτυμον ἀργυραμοιβοί.

The critics have been puzzled by the meaning of lines 36-37. I would like to point out that perfect sense can be restored to the transmitted text if we understand that ἐτήτυμον, in line 37, is an adverb, and means «in truth». Cf. LSJ s. v. ἐτήτυμος II: «as Adv., in neut. ἐτήτυμον, truly, really, *Od.* 4. 157 etc.» We should therefore translate lines 35-37 as follows:

«and surely long he prays to radiant Ganymede that his lips may be as the Lydian touchstone whereby in truth (ἐτήτυμον) money-changers try gold to see it be not false».

In other words, the judge of the kissing-contest prays that he will be able to tell whether the kisses he receives are genuine, just as money-changers are able to tell whether or not gold is genuine.

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FINIS CORONAT OPUS

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