

# TEXTUAL PROBLEMS IN THE POEMS OF THEOCRITUS

*Resumen:* Explicación de diversos pasajes de Teócrito  
*Palabras clave:* Teócrito. Crítica textual griega.

*Abstract:* Several passages of Theocritus are explained  
*Key words:* Theocritus. Greek textual criticism

## IDYLL VII

1. At line 1 ff. Simichidas explains that he once went with Eucritus and Amyntas to take part in a harvest festival to Demeter:

Ἦς χρόνος ἀνίκ' ἐγών τε καὶ Εὐκριτος εἰς τὸν ἸΑλευτα  
εἶροπομες ἐκ πόλιος, σὺν καὶ τρίτος ἄμμιν Ἀμύντας.  
τῇ Δηοί γὰρ ἔτευχε θαλύσια καὶ Φρασίδαμος  
κάντιγένης, δύο τέκνα Λυκωπέος, εἴ τί περ ἐσθλόν  
5 χαῶν τῶν ἐπάνωθεν ἀπὸ Κλυτίας τε καὶ αὐτῷ  
Χάλκωνος, Βούριναν ὅς ἐκ ποδος ἄννε κράναν.

In his commentary on line 2, Gow stated that the word πόλιος refers to «the town of Cos on a small harbour near the N.E. corner of the island (Pl. VI)». I would like to point out, however, that there is no evidence that Theocritus is referring here to the town of Cos. Simichidas cannot be walking «from the town» (Gow, line 2), «de la ville» (Legrand), i.e. from Cos, because Lycidas asks him (line 24) whether he is going to «a townsman's» place (ἀστῶν) —«quelque citadin» (Legrand). I would therefore like to suggest that we should understand that the adjective ἐκπόλιος<sup>1</sup> has been used by the poet to describe Amyntas. We should translate as follows: «Time was when Eucritus and I were going to the Haleis, and greyhaired (ἐκπόλιος) Amyntas<sup>2</sup> made a third with us». For the adjective ἐκπόλιος cf. ὀλιγοπόλιος, σπαρτοπόλιος, ἐπιπόλιος («going grey»), and μεσαιπόλιος.

2. At line 15 ff. Lycidas is described:

15 ἐκ μὲν γὰρ λασίοιο δασύτριχος εἶχε τράγοιο  
κνακὸν δέρμ' ὄμοισι νέας ταμίσιοιο ποτόσδον,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. LSJ s.v. ἐκ C, 2: «to express completion, like our utterly». Cf. also LSJ s.v. ἐκλευκος («very white»). Cf. moreover, *Odyssey* 24, 299 πολιοί = «greyhaired men». For the position of καί cf. Theocritus, *Idyll* 25, 44: τοῦ γάρ με καὶ ἤγαγεν ἐνθάδε χρεῖώ.

<sup>2</sup> At line 132 Amyntas is described as καλὸς Ἀμύντιχος. The diminutive Ἀμύντιχος is used as a term of

endearment. Evidently ἐκπόλιος is equivalent to σφόδρα πολίος (Plato, *Parm.* 127 B: Παρμενίδην σφόδρα πολίον, καλὸν κάγαθὸν τὴν ὄψιν): here Amyntas is said to be ἐκπόλιος and καλὸς in line 132.

ἀμφὶ δέ οἱ στήθεσσι γέρων ἐσφίγγετο πέπλος  
 ζωστήρι πλακερῶ, ροικὰν δ' ἔχεν ἀγριελαίω  
 δεξιτερᾷ κορύναν. καὶ μ' ἀτρέμας εἶπε σεσαρως  
 20 ὄμματι μειδιῶντι, γέλωσ δέ οἱ εἶχετο χεῖλεις·

Translation by Gow:

*«On his shoulders he wore the tawny skin of a thick-haired shaggy goat reeking of fresh rennet, and round his breast an aged tunic was girt with a broad belt; in his right hand he grasped a crooked club of wild olive. And with a quiet smile and twinkling eye he spoke to me, and laughter hung about his lip».*

According to Gow, Lycidas wore a broad belt. It is, however, also possible to imagine that Theocritus means that Lycidas held a club of wild olive «in his broad right hand» (πλακερῶ<sup>3</sup>... / δεξιτερᾷ).

3. At line 24 ff. Simichidas is described as hastening to a banquet:

ἦ μετὰ δαῖτ' ἄκλητος ἐπέγειαι, ἦ τινος ἀστῶν  
 25 λαγόν ἐπι θρόσκεις; ὡς τοι ποσὶ νισσομένοιο  
 πᾶσα λίθος πταίοισα ποτ' ἀρβυλίδεσσιν αἰεῖδει.

line 24 δαῖτ' ἄκλητος Iunt. Σ v.l. δαῖτα κλητος codd. Σ v.l.

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 printed the reading ἄκλητος, in line 24, which he translated as «unbidden». I would like to point out, however, that ἄκλητος may also mean «much-invited». Thus Simichidas is imagined to be speeding to the banquet of somebody who eagerly awaits his arrival. For the employment of ἀ<sup>-4</sup> with intensifying force cf. «Arnd Kerkhecker, *Callimachus' Book of Iambi*, Oxford, 1999, 334 pp.», *Habis* 33, 2002, page 665. In other words, I favour the explanation given by the scholiast, who prefers the reading δαῖτα κλητος, only I read δαῖτ' ἄκλητος, taking ἄκλητος to mean «much invited». It is impossible to believe that Simichidas would go to a banquet without having been invited, and would, moreover, confess as much.

4. At line 37 ff. Simichidas states that he is a poet:

καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ Μοισᾶν καπυρὸν στόμα, κῆμὲ λέγοντι  
 πάντες ἀοιδὸν ἄριστον· ἐγὼ δέ τις οὐ ταχυπειθής,  
 οὐ Δᾶν· οὐ γάρ πω κατ' ἐμὸν νόον οὔτε τὸν ἐσθλόν  
 40 Σικελίδαν νίκημι τὸν ἐκ Σάμω οὔτε Φιλίταν  
 αἰείδων, βάτραχος δὲ ποτ' ἀκρίδας ὡς τις ἐρίσδω.  
 ὦς ἐφάμαν ἐπίταδες· ὁ δ' αἰπόλος ἀδὸν γελάσας,  
 'τάν τοι', ἔφα, 'κορύναν δωρύττομαι, οὔνεκεν ἐσσι  
 πᾶν ἐπ' ἀλαθεία πεπλασμένον ἐκ Διὸς ἔρνος.

<sup>3</sup> For the restriction of adjectives to two terminations cf. my *Studies in the Poetry of Nicander*, Amsterdam 1987, page 16. For the position of δέ cf. Theocritus, *Idyll* 9, 19: ἐν πυρὶ δέ κτλ.

<sup>4</sup> According to the ancient *scholia*, at Aratus, *Phaenomena*, line 1121 the adjective ἀχείμεροι means «very stormy» (πολυχείμεροι)

line 44 κεκασμένος v.l.

The reader will note that Gow printed the reading πεπλασμένον in line 44. I would like to suggest, however, that better sense is provided by the variant reading κεκασμένος. The goatherd states that Simichidas has in truth (ἐπ' ἀλαθεία) surpassed (ἔσσι; κεκασμένος<sup>5</sup>) all saplings (πάν; ἔρνος<sup>6</sup>) because of Zeus (ἐκ Διός). In other words, Zeus has caused Simichidas to become the best poet.

5. At line 130 ff. Theocritus mentions Pycha and Prasydamus's farm:

130 χῶ μὲν ἀποκλίνας ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ τὰν ἐπὶ Πύξας  
εἶρψ' ὁδόν· αὐτὰρ ἐγών τε καὶ Εὐκριτος ἐς Φρασιδάμῳ  
στραφθέντες χῶ καλὸς Ἀμύντιχος ἔν τε βαθείαις  
ἀδείας σχοῖνοι χαμευνίσιν ἐκλίθημες  
ἔν τε νεοτμάτοισι γεγαθότες οἰναρέοισι.

The reader will note that Gow translated the participle στραφθέντες in line 132, as «turned». I would like to suggest that better sense can be made of this passage if we understand that Theocritus is referring to the fact that Simichidas and his friends lay «tossing and turning» on their couches. The aorist participle στραφθέντες<sup>7</sup> has been employed by Theocritus without any sense of anteriority. We should translate as follows: «But I and Eucritus and fair Amyntas at Phrasydamus's farm, tossing and turning (στραφθέντες) lay down rejoicing on deep couches of sweet rush and in the fresh-stripped vine-leaves».

## IDYLL VIII

1. At line 71 ff. Daphnis sings a song:

Δεύτερος αὖ Δάφνις λιγυρῶς ἀνεβάλλετ' αἰείδεν·  
ΔΑ.κῆμ' ἐκ τῷ ἄντρῳ σύνοφρυς κόρα ἐχθὲς ἰδοῖσα  
τας δαμάλας παρελάντα καλὸν καλὸν ἦμεν ἔφασκεν·  
οὐ μὰν οὐδὲ λόγον ἐκρίθην ἄπο τὸν πικρὸν αὐτᾶ,  
75 ἀλλὰ κάτω βλέψας τὰν ἀμετέραν ὁδὸν εἶρπον.

Translation by Gow:

*«And second Daphnis struck up his clear-voiced song:  
Da. Me too from out her cave a maid with meeting brows spied yesterday, as I drove past my heifers,  
and cried, «How fair, how fair he is.»  
Yet gave I not back even the bitter answer, but bent my eyes upon the ground and went my way».*

Daphnis states in this passage that he «drove his heifers». I would like to suggest that the poet has employed obscene puns. The verb ἐλαύνω<sup>8</sup> means both «drive» and βινέω. Moreover, the noun

<sup>5</sup> Cf. LSJ s.v. καίνυμαι. For the employment of the periphrastic construction cf. LSJ εἰμί B, 2: «periphr. with the participle to represent the finite verb».

<sup>6</sup> For the use of the poetic singular cf. «Observations on Greek poetic texts», *Orpheus* 23, 2002, page 144.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *MPhL* 11, 2002, page 133. Cf. also LSJ s.v. στρέφω B: «Pass. and Med., *twist or turn oneself* ... ἐστρέφετ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα, of one tossing in bed (*Iliad* 24, 5)».

<sup>8</sup> Cf. LSJ s.v. ἐλαύνω I, 5.

δαμάλη<sup>9</sup> means both «heifer» and «girl». Thus the words δαμάλας παρελάντα<sup>10</sup> mean both «driving my heifers», and «having sexual intercourse with girls».

2. At line 81 ff. the goatherd states that Daphnis is the winner of the singing-contest:

Ἵς οἱ παῖδες ἄεισαν, ὁ δ' αἰπόλος ᾧδ' ἀγόρευεν·  
 ἄδύ τι τὸ στόμα τοι καὶ ἐφίμερος, ᾧ Δάφνι, φωνά·  
 κρέσσον μελπομένω τευ ἀκουέμεν ἢ μέλι λείχειν.  
 λάσδεο τας σύριγγας, ἐνίκασας γὰρ ἀείδων.

85 αἰ δέ τι λησ με καὶ αὐτὸν ἄμ' αἰπολέοντα διδάξαι,  
 τήναν τὰν μύτιαν δωσῶ τὰ δίδακτρά τοι αἶγα,  
 ἄτις ὑπὲρ κεφαλᾶς αἰεὶ τὸν ἀμοργέα πληροῖ'

According to Gow, the goatherd offers to give Daphnis a goat «that always fills the milk-pail over the brim». I would like to suggest, however, that the goatherd says that he is willing to give to Daphnis a goat which always fills the milk-pail «on account of its life» (ὑπὲρ κεφαλᾶς<sup>11</sup>). The goat is humorously imagined to fear that if it does not provide milk, and thus satisfy the goatherd, it will be killed<sup>12</sup> and eaten.

## IDYLL X

At line 42 ff. Milon sings a song concerning harvesters:

Δάματερ πολύκαρπε, πολύσταχυ, τοῦτο τὸ λᾶον  
 εὐεργόν τ' εἶη καὶ κάρπιμον ὅττι μάλιστα.  
 σφίγγετ', ἀμαλλοδέται, τὰ δράγματα, μὴ παριῶν  
 τις

45 εἶπη ἴη σύκνιοι ἄνδρες· ἀπώλετο χούτος ὁ μισθός.'

Translation by Gow:

*«Demeter, rich in fruit and rich in grain, grant this crop be easy harvested and fruitful exceedingly. Binders, bind up the sheaves, lest someone pass and say, 'Here be fig-wood fellows; here's more wages wasted.'»*

Gow noted that scholars have been puzzled by the text of line 45. I would like to suggest that better sense can be made of this passage if we print line 45 as follows:

εἶπ' ἴη σύκνιοι ἄνδρες· ἀπώλετο χούτος ὁ μισθός.'

The binders are told to bind the sheaves of corn, lest somebody passes by and says, «Surely (ἴη<sup>13</sup>) the men are<sup>14</sup> useless (σύκνιοι ἄνδρες)».

<sup>9</sup> Cf. LSJ s.v. δάμαλις II: «girl». Cf. also Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s.v. *iuvenca*. Propertius mentions the «fashioned girl of sacred Cybele» (*sacrae fabricata iuvenca Cybelae*): cf. my *Studies in the Text of Propertius*, Athens 2002, page 113.

<sup>10</sup> At Theocritus, *Idyll* 5, 89 the words τας αἶγας παρελάντα mean both «driving the goats», and «having sexual intercourse with female goats»: cf. «Further

notes on the *Idylls* of Theocritus», *Veleia* 21, 2004, page 152.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. LSJ s.v. κεφαλή (3): «life».

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Idyll* I, line 6, where it is stated that the flesh of a kid is sweet.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Idyll* 18, 21: ἴη μέγα κά τι τέκοιτ' κτλ.

<sup>14</sup> For the ellipse of the *verbum substantivum* cf. my *Studies in the Poetry of Nicander*, page 51.

## IDYLL XVIII

## 1. Lines 1-3:

Ἐν ποκ' ἄρα Σπάρτα ξανθότριχι πὰρ Μενελάω  
 παρθενικαὶ θάλλοντα κόμαις ὑάκινθον ἔχουσαι  
 πρόσθε νεογράφω θαλάμῳ χορὸν ἐστάσαντο,

According to Gow,<sup>15</sup> Theocritus is referring in line 2 to maidens with blooms of hyacinth in their hair. I would like to suggest, however, that the participle ἔχουσαι<sup>16</sup> means «holding». The maidens are said to be holding hyacinth, which had been plucked, and which was flourishing with foliage (θάλλοντα κόμαις<sup>17</sup>).

## 2. Lines 32-34:

οὐδέ τις ἐκ ταλάρῳ πανίσδεται ἔργα τοιαῦτα,  
 οὐδ' ἐνὶ δαιδαλέῳ πυκινώτερον ἄτριον ἰστῶ  
 κερκίδι συμπλέξασα μακρῶν ἔταμ' ἐκ κελεύωντων.

Gow translated the verb πανίσδεται as «winds off». It is, though, possible to obtain good sense from this passage if we understand that πανίσδεται means here «spins». Cf. LSJ s.v. ἐκπηνίζομαι: «spin a long thread». Theocritus says that nobody spins due to her wool-basket such yarn as Helen. He then adds that she also excels at weaving. Cf. LSJ s.v. ἐκ III, 6: «*of Cause, Instrument, or Means by which* a thing is done». The wool-basket held the wool before it was spun.

## 3. Lines 35-37:

35 οὐ μὰν οὐδὲ λύραν τις ἐπίσταται ὧδε κροτῆσαι  
 Ἄρτεμιν αἰείδοισα καὶ εὐρύστερνον Ἄθάναν  
 ὡς Ἑλένα, τὰς πάντες ἐπ' ὄμμασιν ἴμεροι ἐντί.

Scholars have been puzzled by the meaning of line 37: cf. Gow's note *ad loc.* I would like to suggest that the girls mean that they yearn for Helen. Translate as follows: «Nobody is so skilled to strike the lyre and hymn Artemis as Helen, for whom (τὰς) all desires are in our eyes». Similarly at line 42 the girls are said to long for (ποθέοισαι) Helen.

## 4. Lines 43-44:

πρᾶταί τοι στέφανον λωτῶ χαμαὶ αὐξομένοιο  
 πλέξασαι σκιερὰν καταθήσομεν ἐς πλατάνιστον·

The girls state that they intend to make a garland for Helen. I would like to suggest that the words στέφανον λωτῶ ... αὐξομένοιο<sup>18</sup> mean «a wreath of the praised water-lily». Gow pointed out that the

<sup>15</sup> Cf. A.S.F. Gow, *Theocritus*, Cambridge 1965, vol. I, page 141.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Longus, Book II, 4: παῖς μύρτα καὶ ρόιας ἔχων.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. LSJ s.v. κόμη II: «*metaph., foliage of trees, Od.* 23, 195».

<sup>18</sup> Cf. LSJ s.v. αὐξάνω (2): «*exalt by praise, extol, ἐπαινεῖν καὶ αὐξεῖν τινά, Pl. Ly.* 206 a».

water-lily was used for garlands in Egypt. We should translate as follows: «We first will twine for you a wreath of the praised water-lily and set it on a shady plane on earth». In other words, the water-lily will be placed on dry land and removed from its natural habitat.

## IDYLL XIX

Τὸν κλέπταν ποτ' Ἔρωτα κακὰ κέντασε μέλισσα  
 κηρίον ἐκ σίμβλων συλεύμενον, ἄκρα δὲ χειρῶν  
 δάκτυλα πάνθ' ὑπέλυξεν. ὃ δ' ἄλγее καὶ χέρ' ἐφύση  
 καὶ τὰν γὰν ἐπάταξε καὶ ἄλατο, τᾷ δ' Ἀφροδίτα  
 5 δεῖξεν τὰν ὀδύναν, καὶ μέμφετο ὅττι γε τυτθὸν  
 θηρίον ἐντὶ μέλισσα καὶ ἀλίκα τραύματα ποιεῖ.  
 χὰ μάτηρ γελάσασα· τὴ δ' οὐκ ἴσος ἐσσι μελίσσαις,  
 ος τυτθὸς μὲν ἔεις τὰ δὲ τραύματα ἀλίκα ποιεῖς;

Translation by Gow:

*«A cruel bee once stung the thievish Love-god as he was stealing honey from the hives, and pricked all his finger-tips. And he was hurt, and blew upon his hand, and stamped and danced. And to Aphrodite he showed the wound, and made complaint that so small a creature as a bee should deal so cruel a wound. And his mother answered laughing, 'Art not thou like the bees, that art so small yet dealest wounds so cruel?'».*

In this poem Theocritus describes how Eros was stung on his finger when he stole honey from the bees. The critics<sup>19</sup> have been puzzled by the meaning of the words χέρ' ἐφύση, in line 3. I would like to suggest that, since φυσάω can be used in the sense «blow out», «extinguish» something which is on fire (LSJ, s.v. I, 4), and since the sting of the bee was, as a *topos*, compared with fire, here the sense is «he blew out» his hand, which was, metaphorically, on fire.

The imperfect of φυσάω / φυσέω (here spelled ἐφύση or ἐφύσει: both variants are attested) is conative. Eros «tried to blow out» his burning hand. The *pointe* is felicitous: the δῆγμα of the bees, which Eros suffered, is just as πυρίσπαρτον as the δῆγμα of Eros himself (*A. Plan.* 408).

It should, moreover, be noted that Theocritus has employed the poetic plural. The bee is said to have «secretly stung» (ὑπέλυξεν<sup>20</sup>) the whole tip of the finger of Eros' hand (ἄκρα δὲ χειρῶν / δάκτυλα<sup>21</sup> πάνθ'). Eros is said by the poet to have shown this wound to Aphrodite and complained to her.

## IDYLL XX

1. At lines 26-27 an oxherd describes his mouth and his voice:

τὸ στόμα δ' αὖ πακτᾶς ἀπαλώτερον, ἐκ στομάτων δέ  
 ἔρρεέ μοι φωνὰ γλυκερωτέρα ἢ μέλι κηρῶ.

line 26 ἀπαλώτερον Valckenaer γλυκερώτερον mss.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. A.S.F. Gow, *Theocritus*, vol. 2, page 362.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. LSJ s.v. ὑπό F, III: «*underhand, secretly*, as in ὑποθέω, ὑποθωπεύω, ὑποκορίζομαι, ὑπόρνημι».

<sup>21</sup> For the poetic plural cf. my *Studies in the Poetry of Nicander*, page 39. Gow pointed out that «a bee leaves its sting in the wound and can therefore sting only once».

The reader will note that Gow printed the alteration ἀπαλώτερον in line 26. Textual alteration is, however, not warranted. Gow, like Legrand, thinks that γλυκερώτερον in line 26 is a scribal error caused by γλυκερωτέρα in line 27, but repetition is common in Theocritus (and in Hellenistic poetry: cf. my note 22). Moreover, the πακτά was decidedly sweet (*admixto melle*, *Thes.* s.v. πηκτός, 1042, D).

The oxherd states that his mouth is «sweeter» (γλυκερώτερον, i.e. more pleasant) than curds (πακτας), and that his voice is sweeter (γλυκερωτέρα<sup>22</sup>) than honey. Cf. Ovid, *Met.* 13, 796 where the words *mollior et cycni plumis et lacte coacto* mean «more pleasant (*mollior*<sup>23</sup>) than swan's down and curdled milk».

2. At line 34 ff. the poet refers to the fact that Aphrodite loved Adonis and Selene loved Endymion:

οὐκ ἔγνω δ' ὅτι Κύπρις ἐπ' ἀνέρι μήνατο βούτα  
35 καὶ Φρυγίοις ἐνόμεισεν ἐν ὄρεσι, καὶ τὸν Ἄδωνιν  
ἐν δρυμοῖσι φίλασε καὶ ἐν δρυμοῖσιν ἔκλαυσεν.  
Ἐνδυμίων δὲ τις ἦν; οὐ βουκόλος; ὃν γε Σελάνα  
βουκολέοντα φίλασεν, ἀπ' Οὐλύμπω δὲ μολοῖσα  
Λάτμιον ἂν νάπος ἦλθε, καὶ εἰς ὄμα παιδὶ κάθειυδε;

line 39 Λάτμιον Iunt. Cal. λάθριον v.l.

Translation by Gow:

«Nor knows she that Cypris lost her wits for a neatherd and tended herds upon the hills of Phrygia, and loved Adonis in the thickets, and in the thickets mourned him. Who was Endymion? was not he a neatherd —whom Selene loved as he tended his kine, and came from Olympus through the glades of Latmus to lie with her darling?»

The reader will note that Gow, following Legrand, printed the reading Λάτμιον in line 39. It should be noted, however, that Λάτμος is the name of a mountain. According to Theocritus, Selene came from Olympus to a glade (νάπος). I would therefore like to suggest that the correct reading in this passage is λάθριον. Selene is said to have come «secretly» (λάθριον) to a glade (νάπος) in order to make love with Endymion. The adverb<sup>24</sup> λάθριον alludes to the fact that Selene wished to keep her illicit union with Endymion secret from the gods. Similarly Aphrodite tried to hide her sexual adventures: cf. *MPhL* 10, 1996, page 50. Cf. also *Odyssey* 8, 269 λάθρη.

## IDYLL XXIX

At line 19 ff. Theocritus advises a youth not to act in a fickle manner:

ἴανδρων τῶν ὑπερανορέων δοκέης πνέην·  
20 φίλη δ' ἄς κε ζόης, τὸν ὕμοιον ἔχην ἄει.†  
αἰ γὰρ ὦδε πόης, ἄγαθος μὲν ἀκούσεαι

<sup>22</sup> Cf. LSJ s.v. γλυκός: «mostly metaph., even in Hom., *pleasant, delightful*». For similar cases of verbal repetition cf. my commentary on Theocritus' *Idyll* 24 (Amsterdam 1979), page 106.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s.v. *mollis* II, B: «*Soft, pleasant*».

<sup>24</sup> For the employment of the neuter singular as an adverb cf. D. Kidd, *Aratus, Phaenomena*, Cambridge 1997, page 499. The neuter form λάθριον is here adverbial, and is equivalent to λαθρίως (like λάθρια: cf. LSJ, s.v. λάθριος).

ἐξ ἄστων· ὁ δὲ τοί κ' Ἔρος οὐ χαλέπως ἔχει,  
ὅς ἀνδρῶν φρένας εὐμαρέως ὑπαδάμναται  
κάμε μόλθακον ἐξ ἐπόησε σιδαρίω.

Translation by Gow:

«(Thou art too fickle, and shouldst cling ever to thy like). If so thou dost thou shalt be of fair repute in the town and Love shall not deal hardly with thee —Love that lightly tames the hearts of men, and has robbed me, that once was iron, of all my strength».

Gow<sup>25</sup> noted that lines 19-20 «present desperate difficulties». I would like to suggest that perfect sense can be restored to the transmitted text if we place a full stop after φίλ', in line 20, and translate as follows: «You seem, my dear (φίλ'<sup>26</sup>) to be redolent of arrogant men. But surely (ἦ δ') always keep (ἔχην<sup>27</sup>) the same person for as long as you live».

For elision followed by a full stop cf. e.g. *Idyll* I, 116.

#### IDYLL XXX

At line 16 ff. Theocritus mentions aged lovers and young boys:

καὶ μὰν ἄλλο σε λάθει· τὸ δ' ἄρ' ἦς λώιον ἔμμεναι  
ξέννων τῶν χαλέπων παίδος ἐρώκτων προγενέστερον».   
τῷ μὲν γὰρ βίος ἔρπει ἴσα γόννοις ἐλάφω θόας,  
χαλάσει δ' ἀτέρα ποιντοπόρην αὐριον ἄρμενα.

line 18 γόννοις Buecheler γόνους C θόας Bergk θοαῖς C

Translation by Gow:

«Ay, and this too hast thou forgotten: better it is for him who is older to hold aloof from the painful love of lads. For one, life speeds on the hoof of the swift deer; to-morrow he will cast loose his tackle and set forth to sail another course».

The reader will note that Gow, following Legrand, printed the alterations γόννοις and θοαῖς in line 18. Textual alteration is, however, not warranted. Theocritus states that life hastens like «the swift offspring of the deer» (γόνους<sup>28</sup> ἐλάφω θοαῖς<sup>29</sup>).

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. his commentary *ad loc.*

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Theocritus, *Idyll* 15, 74 and 24, 40 φίλ' ἀνδρῶν.

<sup>27</sup> The infinitive ἔχην has been employed instead of the imperative. Cf. my commentary on Theocritus' *Idyll* 24, page 72.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. LSJ, s.v. γόνος: «ὅ, and (in signf. 1), ἦ, E. *IA* 793... that which is begotten, *child... offspring*».

<sup>29</sup> Gow compared *AP* 15, 27, 13 (Simias) θοαῖς ἴσ' αἰόλαις νεβροῖς κῶλ' ἀλλάσσω, ὀρειπόδων ἐλάφω τέκεσιν.