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I, Stephen N. Self, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Classics.

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“I am One”: The Fragile/Assertive Self and Thematic Unity in the Theocritean Oeuvre

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“I am One”:
The Fragile/Assertive Self and Thematic Unity in the Theocritean *Oeuvre*

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Abstract

Since antiquity, critical reception of Theocritus has focused on *bucolic* as the poet’s quintessential domain, whether in the belief that the term designates a small, separable portion of his total corpus or more generally applies to many, most, or all of his hexameter works. As a result, many of Theocritus’ non-herding poems have received, on the whole, less critical attention than the herding ones. The book-length studies of Griffiths (1979b), Burton (1995), and Hunter (1996) attempt to redress this imbalance in treatment by dividing the non-herding works into various sub-genres, such as patronage poetry, mimes, hymns, and pederastic poetry, and dealing with each in relative isolation from the rest of the corpus. While this approach may finally give less scrutinized poems their due, it results in the same kind of tunnel vision *vis-à-vis* the figure of the poet as bucolic-centered studies. A more unitary view of Theocritus is called for. Analysis of the *Idylls* as a whole from the standpoint of themes and imagery, as opposed to genre, may hold the key to that view.
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Introduction

Tho Theocritus passes in common Esteem for no more than a Pastoral Poet, yet he is manifestly rob’d of a great part of his Fame if his other Pieces have not their Laurels. For (not to speak of the few little Epigrams) as the larger share of his Idylliums, cannot properly be call’d Songs of Shepherds, so they are in too great repute, to be banished from the character of their Author.¹

This statement by Basil Kennet, author of the first English life of Theocritus in Lives and Characters of the Ancient Grecian Poets from 1697 embodies two central ironies at the heart of Theocritus’ critical reception since antiquity. The first, of which Kennet shows conscious awareness, lies in the fact that the Theocritus’ enduring poetic fame, even judgments about his poetic essence,² rest on just one-third of his total corpus under traditional reckoning: on the so-called “bucolic” Idylls.³ The second, more encompassing irony, which escapes Kennet’s critical awareness only because its full implications have not been grasped until the twentieth century, stems from the fact that the exact definition and scope of the designation “bucolic” was rather fluid in antiquity and remains unclear for Theocritus’ own day.⁴ The poet’s earliest imitators, the authors of the spurious Idylls 8 and 9, most likely dated to his own century, must have understood

¹ Kennet, 146; the first sentence is quoted in Walker, 85.
² Cf. Hutchinson, 143: “The poems which deal with cowherds, goatherds, and shepherds have generally been seen as the essential part of Theocritus’ œuvre; they are most commonly treated in isolation from the rest.”
³ For reasons soon to be seen, the precise listing of these differs slightly from author to author. Six are undisputed: Idd. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; Idd. 2, 10, and 11 variously make and miss the lists. On bucolic as the source of Theocritus’ fame in antiquity, see the statement of the ancient γένος (Gow 1952: I, xv B): περὶ δὲ τῶν βουκολικῶν ποιητῶν ἐυφυής γενόμενος πολλὴς δόξης ἐπέτυχε; cf. Gutzwiller, (1996: 135): “Abundant evidence from antiquity indicates that from the second century BC Theocritus was thought first and primarily as a bucolic poet;” and eadem (1991: 3): “[F]rom ancient times his position as the first pastoralist has haunted critical assessments made of him.” For a good, quick survey of the history of those assessments, see ibidem, (1991: 175-200). Against the separability of bucolics from the rest of Theocritus’ poetry, see Bulloch, 579-80; Effe (1978), 48-9; Hutchinson 143-45, 200.
“bucolic” to refer to poetry about a cowherd, often in connection with the mythic figure Daphnis. Second-century poets Moschus and Bion, on the other hand, took as the chief definitive element equation of the poet with cowherd. In Bion in particular, this changed understanding of bucolic relaxes restraints on subject matter, such that poetry so designated need not deal explicitly with herders at all, only with aspects of the perceived pleasurable life of herders such as music and eroticism. Thus, when the Suda-life recognizes solely “bucolic” poems as certainly genuine, and Artemidorus, editor of the first documented edition of such poetry in the first century BC, appends to his collection an epigram evincing his gathering of the formerly scattered “Bucolic Muses,” we cannot necessarily assume that only herding poems are meant. The fact that a scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius 1.1236 reckons Idyll 13 on Hylas among Theocritus’ bucolic works (ἐν τοῖς βουκολικοῖς) and Aelian (NA 15.19) refers to Theocritus’ “iynx poem,” Idyll 2, as one of the “pastoral trifles” (νομευτικὰ παίγνια), seems evidence that the ancient designation βουκολικά was wider, or vaguer, in reference than its modern translation would suggest. That Pliny the Elder alleges Catullus to have imitated Idyll 2, and

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7 οὗτος ἔγραψε τὰ καλομένα Βουκολικά ἐπὶ Δαφρίδι διολέκτω. τινὲς δὲ ἀναφέρουσιν εἰς αὐτὸν καὶ ταύτα· Προύτιδας, Ἐλπίδας, Ἕμινους, Ἡρωίνας, Ἐπικήδεια, Μέλη, Ἐλεγείας, καὶ Ἰάμβους, Ἐπιγράμματα; Gow (1952) I lx, n. 1.
8 Βουκολικά Μοίσαι σποράδες ποικά, νῦν δ’ ἄμα πᾶσαι ἐντὶ μιᾶς μάνδρας, ἐντὶ μιᾶς ἀγέλας (AP 9.205).
10 Gow (1952), 123-24; pace Gow (1952), I lx.
11 Gow (1952) I lx, n. 2; Gutzwiller (1996), 124.
12 N.H. 28.19; see Gow (1952), I lx, n. 4. Gow (1952: I lx, n. 4; II 292, n. 100f.) also thinks Cat. 64.96 (quaque regis Golgos quaque Idalium frondosum) betrays knowledge of Id. 15.100 (Δέσποιν’ ᾧ Γολγόθα τε καὶ Ἰδάλιον ἐφίλησας).
Vergil in *Eclogues*, possibly working from Artemidorus’ bucolic collection, extensively imitates *Idylls* 2 and 11, might argue for a similar conclusion. In light of these facts, scholars who attempt to ascertain Theocritus’ own understanding of the term *bucolic* have championed wildly differing reconstructions of its meaning: Van Sickle contends that bucolic designates the herding poems plus *Idyll* 2, while Halperin argues that the term applies more broadly still to “the great majority of the hexameter Idyls,” signaling their opposition to traditional *epos* in matters of theme, form, and language. Gutzwiller, who repudiates the arguments and methodology of both of these attempts, maintains that the term serves to denote simply Theocritus’ hexameter poems as a whole, irrespective of subject matter, over and against his Aeolic works which were labeled παλιδικά whether pederastic in content or not. Complicating matters is the fact that the most general ancient designation of Theocritus’ non-epigrammatic verse, and the chief label by which it is known today, εἰδύλλιον or “little type,” appears attached in the scholia to all of the author’s poems: bucolic and non-bucolic, hexameter and Aeolic alike. Thus, the critical attention focused on a separable notion of pastoral as the

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12 Gow (1952) lxi-lxii; Van Sickle (1976), 36-7; Gutzwiller (1996), 125.
13 Gutzwiller (1996), 124. Even when Servius writes that, whereas Vergil composed seven “purely rustic” poems for *Eclogues*, Theocritus had ten (Comm. in Verg. Buc., Prooem, p. 3, 20-1 Thilo: *sane sciendum, VII, eclogas esse meras rusticae, quas Theocritus X. habet*), we cannot be sure, as Irigoin (27) was, that a collection of only ten Theocritean herding poems was meant; so Gutzwiller (1996: 120 and n. 5).
14 Van Sickle (1976), 24-5 and n. 81; he writes (24): “The critics invoke the simple conception of bucolic as a mimetic genre even here where it now appears that the generic idea would separate in theory what Theocritus in poetic practice joined ... Perhaps his criteria for similarity and difference – his conception of the parameters of a poetic group – was more complex, versatile than the critics’ simple mimetic scheme.”
15 Halperin, 254.
17 Gutzwiller (1996), 129, n. 34.
18 Gutzwiller (1996), 129; Hunter (1999), 3, n. 12; Gow (1952) xxi-xxii. As Gow (1952: I lxi) observes, the Younger Pliny’s apology for his choice of the title *Hendecasyllabi* for his collection of short occasional poems of eponymous meter indicates that in the Latin of the first century, the word *idyllium* “was in use for short poems of varied content and had no specifically bucolic implication....” *Epist.* 4.14.8-9: *Unum illud praedicendum videtur, cogitare me has meas nugas ita inscribere ‘hendecasyllabi’, qui titulus sola metri*
quintessentially Theocritean element may involve, in the words of Bulloch, something of
a “false distinction” among the poet’s authentic works.\textsuperscript{19}

The recent studies of Griffiths (1979b), Burton (1995), and Hunter (1996) have
attempted to counter the problematic over-privileging of pastoral by divvying up the rest
of the Theocritean corpus into a number of discrete sub-genres or sub-corpora,
consciously excluding the bucolics, and allotting to each separate treatment.\textsuperscript{20} While this
“divide-and-conquer” approach possesses the advantage of finally doing justice to the
great percentage of the poet’s work heretofore under-appreciated, it nonetheless
perpetuates the myopic view of Theocritus that has plagued earlier, bucolic-centered
scholarship. Largely constructing their treatments as conscious reactions against the
situation of earlier neglect, these recent studies have simply exchanged “Theocritus the
pastoralist, whom over the past four decades interpreters have increasingly assumed to be
the only Theocritus,”\textsuperscript{21} for, variously, “Theocritus the court poet,” “Theocritus the reviver
of archaic poetics,” or “Theocritus the writer of mimes.”\textsuperscript{22} Still missing is a unitary view

\textit{lege constringitur. Proinde, sive epigrammata sive idyllia sive eclogas sive, ut multi, poematia seu quod
aliiud vocare malueris, licebit voces; ego tantum hendecasyllabos praesto.} In the fourth century, Ausonius
applied the term to a similar collection of his own poetry.

\textsuperscript{19} Bulloch, 580; cf. Hutchinson, 143-4: “It is also rash to insist too strongly that the ‘bucolic’ poems form a
self-contained group. They were not designed by Theocritus to stand together as an independent work”;
\textit{idem} (200): “We have already questioned the desirability of viewing bucolic as a distinct genre or even the
‘bucolic’ poems of Theocritus as an indivisible entity. That conception is unhelpful in exploring the
relations of Theocritus to mime.”

\textsuperscript{20} So Griffiths (1979b), treats Theocritus’ “court poetry”; \textit{Idd.} 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 24, 26; Burton treats his
“urban mimes”: 2, 14, 15; Hunter (1996) treats \textit{Idd.} 22, 16, 15, 18, and 12, 29, 30 in different chapters on
encomiastic poetry, patronage poetry, mimes, lyric, and pederastic poetry.

\textsuperscript{21} Griffiths (1979b), 3; cf. Hunter (1996), ix: “The focus is not on the ‘bucolic Theocritus,’ but rather on
parts of the second half of the corpus as it is conventionally presented by modern editors..... I have tried to
open up some of the extraordinary richness and variety of these poems, which have on the whole received
less critical attention than the bucolics.”

\textsuperscript{22} Griffiths (1979b), 3, explicitly states the limited picture of the poet he seeks to paint: “There may,
therefore, be a side of the poet – and a force at the Ptolemaic court – which has never been systematically
studied.” Cf. Burton, 2: “Most recent studies of Theocritus concentrate on his bucolic poems. But in view of
the importance of Theocritu’s urban mimes to the cultural and literary history of the Hellenistic world,
and especially Ptolemaic Alexandria, a unified study of these mimes, with attention to social, cultural, and
literary issues, is long overdue.”
of “Theocritus the poet” more generally, the mere fact of whose authorship provides the chief source of unity for all of the twenty-two *Idylls* now generally accepted as authentic.

This study offers an approach to a broader conception of Theocritus via consideration of a confluence of related themes and images appearing throughout his poetic oeuvre. Such a theme-based approach necessarily effaces the distinctions of sub-corpus advanced in the current scholarly literature as well as the fragmented views of the author they tend to foster. Analysis of this confluence, or nexus, focuses on its relationship to the social context within which Theocritus lived and wrote. Inasmuch as literature begins and ends with individuals whose lives are subject to the facticity, as Heidegger put it, of time and place, such literary arguments from social circumstances are natural and entirely reasonable. Just as Burn argued that the rise of tyrants in the seventh century in some sense shaped the then-novel emphasis on individualism in Archilochus’ poetry, so numerous scholars of Hellenistic literature have insisted upon a direct connection between the details of the Greek culture and society of the day and the overt characteristics and typical concerns of Hellenistic poetry. Such approaches can, however, entail significant pitfalls from the related tendencies to over-generalize the time and to oversimplify the complex relationship between society and the literature it

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23 Hutchinson, 143-213 emphasizes such a unified view of the *Idylls*, though his approach differs drastically from the one offered here. Hutchinson (esp. 144-5) also largely denies the validity of attempts to subdivide the Theocritean oeuvre, whereas no such opposition is integral to my claims here. I wish simply to emphasize the novelty and possible benefit of viewing the poems without the distorting lens of generic distinctions.

24 If Gutzwiller’s (1996) argument as to early Theocritean poetry books is correct, the first edited collection of Theocritus’ poetry in the middle decades of the third century BC, which she thinks was comprehensive, will also have possessed this trait as its sole unifying characteristic, over and against continuity of form or theme.

25 Cf. Bulloch, 585: “The same taste and thematic concerns run through all of his poetry....”

26 Heidegger, 52.

27 Burn, 158-9.
produced.\textsuperscript{29} The social context in all its natural complexity must not be reduced to some static and amorphous \textit{Zeitgeist},\textsuperscript{30} nor the literature’s relation to it understood as purely or even primarily mimetic.\textsuperscript{31} A literary work, properly comprehended, is artificer as well as artifact.\textsuperscript{32} It does not merely reflect the social and poetic concerns of the day; it constructs them, and its constructions are such that they become moments within the time, not epiphenomena of it.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{28}See, for instance, Pfeiffer (1968: 87-90, 102-3), Bulloch (542-3), Hopkinson (6-11).
\textsuperscript{29}Cf. Dover (1971), lxvii: “The least profitable way of attempting to characterize Hellenistic poetry as a whole is to begin with second-hand generalizations about it (or about Greek morals, politics, or intellectual developments), find passages in Hellenistic poetry which bear out these generalizations, and omit to ask to what extent archaic and classical poetry bear out the same generalizations”; Hutchinson, 2-3: “The most dubious approach to the relation between this literature and its period is to postulate moods of the time, and then simply impose them on the literature and see them as the foundation of our understanding. Thus feelings of nostalgia are held to explain Callimachus’ interest in local festivals and Theocritus’ in the country [so Shipley, 238]. The growth of cities in number and size and the expansion of the Greek world through Alexander’s conquests must have caused (it is supposed) a yearning for escape to the country and a homesick preoccupation with the traditions of older Greek communities. However, even if such feelings really did hold sway in men’s minds, one ought not to make them key to the poems, when they are so little to be discerned in the poems themselves, and when to import them is so false to the tone and character of the works.” I should note here that I find Hutchinson’s rigid insistence on the absolute impossibility of relating Theocritus in particular to his historical context too extreme and nihilistic, as is his denial that the individual poems meaningfully inform one another. Cf. p. 213 (ibidem): “One result of this part of the chapter has been to remove the effect of Theocritus’ individual poems from a significance conferred by supposed debates of the time, and also from a significance conferred by each other. In this sense, the individual poem is strongly isolated.” What of the obvious connections between \textit{Idd.} 6 and 11, both treating the amorous Polyphemus, or between 11, 13, and 28, all with connections to Nicias?\textsuperscript{30}
\textsuperscript{30}Cf. Burton, 5: “A risk of privileging any artificial construct such as a static \textit{Zeitgeist} (e.g. elitism) is that readers may become inappropriately complacent through models that do not help them recognize the distinctive pleasures of the various poems.”
\textsuperscript{31}Cf. Hunter (1997), 51: “[L]iterary history is partly created within Hellenistic poetry in order to prove inadequate to explain the poems themselves.”; Selden, 407: “The relationship, therefore, between Callimachus’ work and its civic context is non- mimetic. His poetry is in no way a mirror of life in Alexandria nor a narration of it, but rather one of the city’s constitutive cultural components....”
\textsuperscript{32}Cf. Shipley, 236; Williams, 10-14; Snell, 1: “Poetry is influenced by social conditions. It is, moreover, a mirror for social conditions, as for life and emotions. But in ancient Greece, it was more. Poetry was a forerunner of philosophical, political, and sociological thinking. Poetry acquired sufficient status to become a determinant of social forms, a guide in political experimentation, an innovator in language, a catalyst in the evolution of Greece from a primitive to a sophisticated society.”
\textsuperscript{33}Cf. Selden, 408: “Whatever Alexandria’s cultural breach with the Greek – or Egyptian – past, Callimachus’ poetry constitutes one occasion for this ‘alienation,’ institutionalized everywhere as part of Alexandria’s modern design, not a mere epiphenomenon of it. To reify such poetic operations, metonymically reversing cause and effect, conveniently projects Callimachus’ work into a pseudo-historical scheme which, for all its pathos, is nonetheless ultimately reassuring and bland.” See also Greenblatt, 1-14.
Accordingly, I begin with a detailed examination of what is known of Theocritus’ life and of his larger Hellenistic context; then, taking my cue principally from the work of Goldhill, Burton, and Selden, I relate my consideration of this nexus to the prevailing issues of the “anxiety of influence,” to use Bloom’s phrase,34 and the notion of displacement or dislocation. These procedures form the contents of Chapters 1 and 2, respectively. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 apply the results of the first two chapters to complete readings of *Idylls* 2, 13, 16, and 28 with significant sidebars on *Idyll* 11. The conclusion briefly considers the implications of this study for the problem of the characters of Simichidas and Lycidas in *Idyll* 7. The purpose of the study is to highlight the diverse ways that Theocritus places at the center of his nexus of themes and images the figure of a fragile/assertive self whose perplexing and often self-defeating brand of assertiveness has long troubled critics and readers of the poems precisely because it is born of instability, displacement, and weakness. Through concentrating on the ambiguous plight of such figures, the author brings both his social and literary concerns into sharp relief.

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34 Bloom, xvii and *passim*. 
Chapter One: The Social and Political Background for Theocritus’ Construction of Character

Though his approximate dating seems relatively certain, Theocritus proves otherwise quite hard to situate as a poet. The competing biographical traditions of the ancient scholia and *Suda*-life place his birth on Sicily and Cos respectively. Yet Alice Lindsell’s oft-cited study of Theocritean flora concludes that the poet’s botany belongs principally to Greece and the Aegean, not to Sicily. *Idylls* 14, 15, and 17 attest to his close connection with the royal court of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (283-246 B.C.), and certainly much about the aesthetics of Theocritus’ poetry places it squarely in line with third century Alexandrian poetics. Such features include its abbreviated scope and length; generic, dialectical, and metrical diversity; tendency to sophisticated allusiveness and linguistic novelty; and elevation of sub-literary or “low” forms and subjects to new artistic prominence. There is no evidence, however, that Theocritus ever produced the scholarly prose works that were the hallmark of the poet who...
flourished under Ptolemaic patronage, and, from antiquity to the modern day, critics have observed a qualitative difference in the poet’s deployment of the features typical of Alexandrian poetics from the more “oppressive” manners of Callimachus and Apollonius. This distinction renders Theocritus’ work “sweeter than most Alexandrian poetry.” Indeed, since the time of his earliest critics during the late Republic and Augustan principate, Theocritus has been thought to stand out from other poets of his day not least of all for his unique role as founder, or at least first “modern” practitioner, of τὰ βουκολικά. And while the twentieth century has witnessed the increasing problematization of this appraisal, readers even today cannot escape recognizing in Theocritus’ poetic oeuvre, especially the so-called bucolic *Idylls*, something totally distinct: perhaps, in part, the reflection of a Sicilian cultural heritage and allegiance and, perhaps, in part, the workings of a truly novel literary genius.

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40 Hunter (1999), 2; idem (2002), ix; Bulloch, 570; cf. Dover (1971), lxxii; Pfeiffer (1968), 89-90.
41 Cf. Servius (Comm. in Verg. Buc., Prooem., p. 2 Thilo): *in qua re tantum dissentit [Vergilius] a Theocrito: ille enim ubique simplex est, hic necessitate compulsus aliquibus locis miscet figureis, quas perit e plurumque etiam ex Theocrito versibus facit, quos ab illo dictos constat esse simpercius;* Boccaccio (in a letter to Martino da Signa, quoted in Greg, 18, n.1): *Theocritus Syracusanus Poeta, ut ab antiquis accepimus, primus fuit, qui Graeco Carmine Buccolicum escogitavit stylum, verum nil sensit, praeter quod cortex verborum demonstrat. Post hunc Latine scrisit Virgilius, sed sub cortice nonnullos abscondit sensus, esto non semper voluerit sub nominibus colloquientum aliquid sentiremus.*; Lady Mary Wortley (in a letter to Alexander Pope, dated 1 April 1717; quoted in Arnott, 55; Segal (1981), 210): “Theocritus has only given a plain image of the way of life among the peasants of his country ... I don’t doubt, had he been born a Briton, but his Idylliums had been filled with descriptions of thrashing and churning.”
42 Gow (1953), xxiii. Related to this easy, natural manner is doubtless Theocritus’ often admired, characteristic high degree of realism: see Arnott, 58-61; Rist (1975), 103-4: “...the high standards of psychological realism...which may indeed be claimed to be, in this as in other poems, his chief interest.”
44 The *Suda* (s.v. Theocritus) names just three authors as writers of τὰ βουκολικά: Theocritus, Moschus, Bion. Some ancient versions attribute the actual origins of bucolic to Pan or Apollo and establish a line of descent therefrom through Daphnis to Theocritus; cf. Diom. *Art. gramm.* III 487 Keil (Wendel 17): *putant autem guidam hoc genus carminis primum Daphnin composuisse, deinde alios complures, inter quos Theocritum Syracusanum, quem noster [i.e.Vergilius] imitatur.* Even in such accounts, however, Theocritus constitutes the first actual, non-mythical practitioner of bucolic. See Gutzwiller (1991), 4-5; Van Sickle (1976), 18 and n. 1; Dover (1971), lx-lxi.
45 See, for example, Van Groningen (1958), 300; Van Sickle (1975; 1976); Halperin, 254; Gutzwiller (1991), 3-19; *eadem* (1996), 121.
46 Hunter, 5; Gutzwiller (1991), 3-9; Gutzwiller (1996), 121-23; Rist (1978), 11-12.
Theocritus the poet, then, entails some considerable ambiguities stemming from an apparent condition of dislocation in which he seems to have lived much of his life. Probably born in Syracuse, he clearly spent a significant number of his years in the Eastern Aegean, cultivating especially close ties with Cos and, whether directly or indirectly, Alexandria. Yet, although in many ways typical of the third-century Alexandrian poetic vanguard, Theocritus always cuts the figure of an outsider in that milieu, “not quite a full-fledged member of the ‘bird-cage.’” The evidence points to a man who lived his life as a displaced person in an era when displacement was the norm of existence.

The Hellenistic age was a time of expansion, colonization, and mobility for Greeks. Under Alexander, Greek settlements spread from Egypt to India, the full extent of old Persian empire. The Greco-Macedonian ruling class, from the outset a minority in the areas they settled, clung fiercely to their Hellenic identity in the face of alien cultures and distant separations from the traditions of home. The promise of

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47 Gow (1952) I, xxv-xxvi: since Ptolemy II was born on Cos and favored the island considerably, it is not inconceivable that Theocritus’ Alexandrian connections arose solely from Cos; he need not necessarily have spent time in Egypt, though a stay of some brief duration seems likely. See Griffiths (1979), 51 and passim; Rist (1978), 9-10; Fraser, 309 and n. 26. cf. Burton, 123; “Theocritus, although attracted for a time by the splendors of Alexandria and its court, seems to have avoided attaching himself directly to the Ptolemaic institutions.”

48 Griffiths (1979), 3; Burton, 123; cf. Fraser I, 309; “[Theocritus] cannot be regarded as an Alexandrian poet in the strict sense.” At I: 65, Fraser refers to Theocritus and his countryman Archimedes as “Syracusan birds of passage.”


50 Burton, 7.

51 Price, 321-23; Burton, 7; Hornblower, 294-97. Alexander himself was said by Plutarch (Mor. 328) to have founded seventy cities, an obvious exaggerations (Hornblower, 296; Walbank, 43; Price, 321).

52 Walbank, 14.

53 Walbank, 60-78; Burton, 7. Famous evidence of such practices is the pillar erected in a shrine in the center of the Greek city of Ai Khanum on the northern frontier of what is now Afghanistan inscribed with 140 moral maxims copied from a similar pillar near the shrine of Apollo at Delphi; an adjoining inscription attributes the pillar’s dedication to one Clearchus, perhaps the Aristotelian Clearchus of Soli, who is said to have brought them from Pytho. Ai Khanum also boasted a gymnasion with dedicatory inscription and palatial scale administrative complex (Walbank, 60-2; Shipley, 269-70, 305-6; see Burton, 7, n. 3 for additional bibliography).
employment opportunities for itinerant professionals within a social order favoring 
Greeks helped encourage migration and settlement.\(^{54}\)

Of course, mobility and colonization were no new phenomena in the Greek world, 
nor social and economic inducements to migrate. The Greeks of the archaic age had 
undertaken widespread expansion and colonization, both for reasons of commerce and to 
cope with population pressure.\(^{55}\) With the rise and proliferation of tyranny beginning 
sometime in the seventh century, large groups of soldiers, builders, poets, and artists 
traveled in search of employment in tyrants’ courts.\(^{56}\) Bacchylides, Pindar, and 
Simonides all at one time benefited from the patronage of various Sicilian tyrants, while 
Polycrates of Samos and Pesistratus at Athens also gathered significant literary circles.\(^{57}\) 
Later, the increasing pressure of the Persians on eastern Greece, brought to a head in the 
Ionian revolt and Persian War, caused both individuals and entire city populations to 
relocate to the west.\(^{58}\) By the fourth century, the large-scale surplus and exile populations 
stemming from the significant social and political instability that prevailed in the several 
decades following the Peloponnesian War proved one of the key factors in the success of 
the Hellenistic kingdoms in gaining and maintaining power.\(^{59}\) The turbulent cascade of 
events such as Athens’ seizure of Samos in 365 BC and Philip II’s capture and 
destruction of Methone in 354 created an unsettled class of disenfranchised (and

\(^{54}\) Burton, 7: such professionals include soldiers, architects, physicians, actors, even prostitutes. Walbank (65) relates the statistic that in the Seleucid kingdom, after two generations, no more than 2.5 percent of a sample of one hundred individuals recorded to have held positions of authority comprised natives, and most of these were military officers commanding local units.

\(^{55}\) On mobility and colonization from the eighth to the sixth centuries BC, see Osborne, 119-29, 197-202; Burn, 41-156; Boardman \textit{passim}; Murray, 100-19.

\(^{56}\) Burton, 7. On tyranny in the Greek world, see Burn, 157-8; Murray, 132-52; Osborne, 192-7.

\(^{57}\) Fraser, I 305, 307 and II 462, n. 8; Osborne, 345-6 (on Pindar and Simonides); Hornblower, 44-5 (on Pindar and Simonides): Simonides had also enjoyed the patronage of both Polycrates and Pesistratus.

\(^{58}\) Burton, 7; Murray, 243-6, esp. 245, 267-79; Osborne, 322-30; Demand, 34-44.

\(^{59}\) McKechnie, \textit{passim}, esp. 1-3, 22-9; Shipley, 56. For a general account of the effects of the Peloponnesian War, see Hornblower, 184-209.
disenchanted) exiles who, in a predominantly agrarian economy where ties of citizenship were related to land holdings, lost their livelihoods along with their civic identity. The ambition for property and land among such peoples drove them to service in the armies of Alexander and the Diadochi, as well as in the massive bureaucracies of the Hellenistic kingdoms.

It is the synergy between widespread itinerancy from the political upheaval of the fourth century and the emergence of large, autocratic hegemonies under Philip II, Alexander the Great, and Alexander’s successors that distinguishes the Hellenistic period from other great eras of mobility in Greek history. The consolidation of Philip’s power with the battle of Chaironeia in 338 BC may not have exactly sounded the death knell for the Greek polis, but it undoubtedly hastened a decline in city-state autonomy which meant diminished public political power and loosened local ties for individual Greek males. With unprecedented wealth and resources at their disposal, Hellenistic kings “transformed the [socio-]political geography of the Greek world irretrievably,” building huge metropolises to which they induced migration through a combination of economic incentives and force. The results were impressive international and cosmopolitan

60 Shipley, 54-8 esp. 55; McKechnie, 22-28.
61 Shipley, 57.
62 Cf. McKechnie, 28-29: “The permanent presence in Greece of people whose service was available for money made a difference to politics and life throughout the fourth century, and the Hellenistic rulers proved to be masters at exploiting the services available to them – to the detriment of the cities.”
63 Shipley, 35, 106-7, is especially careful to emphasize this point.
64 Burton, 6-7; Walbank, 141; Grant, 105. Only the Rhodians and Aetolians remained continuously independent until the Roman conquest (Shipley, 106), and even Rhodes was closely linked to the Ptolemies (Walbank, 141). Cf. McKechnie, 3: “So at the moment of the Greek’s most sophisticated analysis of its nature and value [in Plato’s Republic and Aristotle’s Politics] the city-state suffered a loss of political freedom which proved irreversible. ... The late fourth century was the crucial moment when local power, the power of the city governments, ceased to be the sovereign power in most of the Greek world.”
65 Burton, 5.
66 Selden, 290 (specifically of Alexandria); cf. Fraser, chaps. 1-2: The Macedonians both imported a resident population for the city, and forcibly transferred there native Egyptians from nearby areas. For economic incentives employed to encourage immigration to Alexandria, cf. Theoc. Id. 14.58-9: ...εἰ δ’
centers, cobbled from motley associations of foreigners and Greeks of diverse Hellenic backgrounds, united not so much by common political goals as by the shared pursuit of personal advantage or by necessity.\(^{67}\) Such cities’ dominance of the political and cultural landscape, while long established in the Near East, was new to most Greeks.\(^{68}\) Only, perhaps, in Sicily had significant experience of comparable states of affairs been had before the Hellenistic period.\(^{69}\) Given Theocritus’ probable Sicilian background, that island’s history in this regard holds special relevance for this study.\(^{70}\)

Sicily boasts a long and rich history of social and political upheaval through colonization and migration.\(^{71}\) Syracuse, the city of Theocritus’ birth according to the ancient scholia,\(^{72}\) was founded in 734/3 BC by Corinthians, who, in the process of claiming the land, expelled and enslaved the native Sicels (Hdt. 7.155; Thuc. 6.3.2).\(^{73}\) In 485, the tyrant Gelon made Syracuse his capital, forcibly relocating there half the population of his former seat of Gela. Shortly thereafter, when Gelon destroyed the cities of Kamarina, Euboia, and Megara Hyblaia, he forced their populations, too, to migrate to Syracuse, where he sold the poorer Euboians and Megarians into slavery and

\(^{67}\) Guzwiller (1998), 13; Burton, 2.

\(^{68}\) Burton, 9-10. This dominance was all the greater at Alexandria, since the Ptolemies did not found cities outside their capital, as the Seleucids did in Asia; in Egypt, cities in general remained few (Shipley, 216, 213).

\(^{69}\) Hornblower, 44: “The tyrants of classical Sicily did indeed behave like the kings of hellenistic Greek history, intermarrying (with a vengeance: they practiced polygamy), shifting populations around..., and building on a heroic scale.” He goes on to note, however, ways in which the Sicilian tyrants also hearkened back to the archaic age of mainland Greece.

\(^{70}\) Cf. Burton, 8: “Theocritus’ Syracusan background gave him a special vantage on problems of relocation and immigration.”

\(^{71}\) Osborne (344), in fact, distinguishes “two special features of Sicilian history,” the second of which is “the capacity of the armies of powerful cities to sweep through whole swaths of Sicilian territory, subduing all before them. Populations are uprooted, cities wander homeless, individual rulers come to command vast resources.”

\(^{72}\) Gow (1952), I xv-xvi; Dover (1971), xix; Hunter (1999), 1 and n. 2.

\(^{73}\) Burton, 8.
enfranchised the rest (Hdt. 7.156). Gelon’s successor and brother Hieron moved the populations of Naxos and Catana to Leontini, then refounded Catana as Aetna and populated this new city and Naxos with settlers from the Peloponnesus and Syracuse (Diod. Sic. 11.49-1-3). When Syracuse managed to establish a short-lived democracy following the death of Hieron in 467 and the ousting of his son, Thrasybulus, in 466, relocated populations living within the city were encouraged to return to their home states, while Syracusan exiles were invited to return to Syracuse (Diod. Sic. 11.76). Timoleon of Corinth revisited this policy on a larger scale after 344, when he deposed the then-tyrant Dionysius II (Plut. Tim. 1, 22, 23, 35) whose father had revived the policy of forced migrations following his re-establishment of tyranny around 406 (Diod. Sic. 13.III.3-6, 14.15). In the period from 479 to 323 BC, autocratic rule was the norm in Syracuse, though it alternated with short, unstable periods of democracy.

Close to Theocritus’ own time, significant parallels existed between his home city and a large Hellenistic urban center. Syracuse was again under one-man rule: that of Agathocles, who had declared himself the city’s king in 304 BC. The first Sicilian tyrant to mint coinage bearing his own name, Agathocles displayed in his policies something more of the style of self-aggrandizement characteristic of Hellenistic kings than had previous tyrants of Sicily, who, as a rule, did not indulge the cult of personality as much as Alexander’s successors. In their benefactory dedications, earlier Sicilian

74 Osborne, 344; Dunbabin, 415-18; Demand, 46-50; Burton, 8 and n. 9.
75 Burton, 8 and n. 10.
76 Burton, 8; Hornblower, 47.
77 Burton, 8 and n. 13; Hornblower, 262-3.
78 Demand, 98-106; Burton, 8 and n. 12. See also McKechnie, 35-43, on the period from Dionysius I to Timoleon.
79 Hornblower, 47.
80 Burton, 8; McKechnie, 43-5. See Diod. Sic. 19.5-31.17.
81 Hornblower, 45.
rulers took care to identify themselves with their state or to “put themselves on a level with it.”

Like the Hellenistic monarchs, however, Sicilian tyrants before Agathocles still felt the competitive pressure of their displacement from the center of Greek culture. Accordingly, they strove to present themselves conspicuously as parallel in prestige to the elite of mainland Greece. Thus, while Pindar’s *Pythian Odes* from the 490’s and 480’s celebrate only two Sicilian victors and six from mainland Greece, those from the 470’s celebrate twelve Sicilians or South Italians as opposed to only seven victors from the mainland. Agathocles’ coinage aimed for a similar, if more personal, pluming effect. Like Alexandria, Agathocles’ Syracuse was a sizable city with an ethnically mixed and largely immigrant population. Indeed, the king’s own father, Carcinus, was a former exile from Rhegium, who had received Syracusan citizenship under Timoleon in 343/2. Agathocles himself had experienced exile when the oligarchy of six hundred that ruled Syracuse after Timoleon’s death banished him around 330. The Syracuse of Theocritus’ birth was a city of displaced persons, where Greek immigrants and former exiles “lived cheek by jowl” with foreign peoples, both native Sicels and Phoenicians. Unlike her home city of Corinth on the mainland, which became a symbolic focus of Panhellenism in the fourth century for its anti-barbarian struggles, Syracuse evidenced a daily life in which contacts with alien cultures were “frequent and intimate.”

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82 Hornblower, 45.
83 Osborne, 346-7.
84 Burton, 8.
85 Hornblower, 112: for example, the city featured a monument celebrating a famous victory over the Carthaginians (*SEG* 11.126a) erected from booty sent back by Timoleon who refounded Syracuse and defeated the Carthaginians at the battle of the river Krimisos in the late 340’s; Philip chose Corinth as the seat of his league formed in 338 for the purpose of fighting Persia.
86 Osborne, 346-7. Of Syracuse in the fifth century, Hornblower (49-50) writes: “…Syracuse was a multiracial society. It was not the only mixed city. Constant immigration to this relatively new country and population transfers meant that the citizen body of many west Greek communities was more fluid than the states of old Greece: this is the ‘mixed rabble’ of which Thucydides speaks (6.17.2, in the mouth of Alcibiades, and referring to the Sicilian cities generally).” Of course, this is not to say that the Greeks of
The new cities of the Hellenistic period also did not partake much of the intense fear of outsiders which characterized classical poleis.\textsuperscript{87} In the case of Alexandria, it is as if the Ptolemies consciously opposed Isocrates’ admonition that cities which recruited their citizens willy-nilly from all the peoples of the world should not be deemed happy:

\[\text{καίτοι χρή πόλιν μὲν εὐδαιμονίζειν μὴ τὴν ἐξ ὀπάντων ἄνθρωπον εἰκῇ πολλοὺς πολίτας ἄνθρωπους, ἀλλὰ τὴν τὸ γένος τῶν ἐξ ἀρχῆς τὴν πόλιν οἰκίσαντων μᾶλλον τῶν ἄλλων διασώζουσαν.}\textsuperscript{88} In the Lagid capital, a city Diodorus could describe as the largest in the world (17.52.6), probably some four to five hundred thousand people (including women and slaves), representing many or all of the major Mediterranean cultural stocks, made a home.\textsuperscript{89} At the time of the city’s foundation, the Macedonians had even uprooted native Egyptians from neighboring villages and forcibly transferred them to Alexandria.\textsuperscript{90} The resulting eclectic character of the city and its administration, which included non-Greeks in high priesthods, the army, and the royal court, even extending to several wives of Ptolemy I,\textsuperscript{91} constantly reminded its inhabitants that “everyone and everything in Alexandria was, in some way, out of place.”\textsuperscript{92} The “Oracle of the Potter,” an anonymous, Egyptian, anti-Hellenic tract cast in the form of an

\textsuperscript{87} Sedley, 291-2 with references; cf. Arist. Pol. 1326b20-21.
\textsuperscript{88} Isoc. 8.89 (On the Peace); cf Sedley, 291-2. Writing around AD 75, Plutarch confirms that Alexander himself intended his new capital to be “large and populous” (\textit{μεγάλην καὶ πολυάνθρωπον}), so as to “abound in resources and sustain men from every nation” (\textit{πολυαρκεστάτην γὰρ οἰκίζεσθαι πόλιν ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ, καὶ παντοδαπῶν ἄνθρωπον ἐσομένην τροφόν}) (Plut. Alex. 26; Shipley, 214).
\textsuperscript{89} Shipley, 215.
\textsuperscript{90} Selden, 290; Demand. 151-64.
\textsuperscript{91} Selden, 297 and n.58; Shipley, 222-23.
apocalypse, describes Alexandria derogatorily as “the nurse of all peoples”
(παντοτρόφος), where “every nation has come to settle.”93 The city’s title in Roman
times, “Alexandria-by-Egypt,” possibly enshrines the overarching sense of dislocation
that characterized its makeup, and its attempt to avoid being absorbed into Egyptian
culture.94

Displacement played a dominant role even in the early life of Ptolemy II’s second
queen, Arsinoe.95 As was customary for Hellenistic royal women, Arsinoe’s father
Ptolemy I sent her away to Thrace at age sixteen in order to marry his comrade at arms,
Lysimachus. When her husband died in battle in 281 BC, Arsinoe began a convoluted
series of disguised flights from the murderous rage of her half-brother, Ptolemy
Ceraunus, that ended in her return to Egypt after twenty years away, a widow, stripped of
her queenship. Following an attempt on then-king Ptolemy II’s life and suspicions
leveled against his first queen, resulting in her exile, Arsinoe married her full brother to
become queen and co-regent of Egypt. The “defiantly assertive”96 title she adopted to
indicate her scandalously unconventional relationship with her brother, Philadelphos,
perhaps served to soften the blow of the arrangement upon the Greek moral sensibility;97
however, it also provided a bold reminder of the unprecedented strangeness of both queen
and the city she ruled. The famous institutions of Ptolemaic patronage may have laid
claim to cultural parity with the classical mainland, particularly Athens,98 but Alexandria

92 Selden, 298.
93 Oracle of the Potter, P.Oxy. 2332 II 61-2; quoted in Selden, 290 and n. 11. Probably to be dated
between 1290 and 116 BC. See the edition of the text in Koenen, 178-209. See also Collins, 203-5.
94 Walbank, 113; Shipley, 214.
95 Burton, 3, 124; Selden, 312.
96 Burton, 3.
97 Fraser, I 217; Burton, 3.
98 Cf. the well-known stories connecting the foundation of the Library and early contents with the
Peripatetic tradition of the Lyceum (Pfeiffer, 95-102; Hopkinson, 5). See also Bulloch, 541: “The new
as a whole stood far apart from the city of Pericles, which had so prized the ethnic purity of her citizenry that no less than double endogamy could provide a sufficient legal touchstone.  

Certain of the programs and policies of the Ptolemaic regime all but "institutionalized heterogeneity at every level of the social order." For example, residents of Egypt were required to identify themselves in official transactions not just by their given name and patronymic, but also by their provenance. For citizens of Alexandria, that meant their deme name; for others, the name of their home city, state, or region; their ethnic background; or, in the case of Egyptians, their village or district in the *chora*. On the institutional side, the organization of the celebrated *Mouseion* and Library brought together both scholars and the raw materials of scholarship from every quarter of the ancient Mediterranean, including Greeks as well as native Egyptians and, assuming some kernel of truth in the "Letter of Aristeas," Jews. Indeed, with the

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100 Selden, 298.
101 Selden 298, where he cites this statute from Mitteis and Wilcken, no. 258, col. 7. Selden (299-300) proceeds to discuss the designation Πέρσης, τῆς ἐπιγονής, originally a label for personages of Persian descent that came to be used as a toponym for Greek citizens by the beginning of the third century B.C., thence as a legal fiction for indebted parties to civil contracts, and the seemingly confused practice in Demotic documents of identifying as Wynn ("Ionians," *i.e.* Greek) Egyptians whose primary language as Greek and as Αἰγόπτειοι Greeks living in the Nile valley. For a full discussion of the history and evolution of the designation Πέρσης, τῆς ἐπιγονής, see Oates, 1-129.
exception of Apollonius “Rhodius,” all the chief literary and scientific figures of third century Alexandria were resident aliens.\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{103} Interestingly, though, “Rhodius” refers specifically to Apollonius’ displacement from his native Alexandria. For a brief look at the ancient traditions behind this toponym, see Pfeiffer, 141 with references.

\textsuperscript{104} Fraser I 66; Selden, 300.
Chapter Two: Hellenistic Society in Hellenistic Literature

We turn now to the problem of the relationship between the social and institutional context outlined in Chapter 1 and the literature connected with it. In this chapter, we will consider how the changed social conditions of the Hellenistic world are reflected in the poetry of the age by highlighting the key themes of: 1) rupture with the past and elitism; 2) longing for the absent; and 3) self-assertiveness to overcome felt fragility and anxiety.

Since antiquity, a strain of critical interpretation has insisted upon representing Hellenistic poets and the poetry they produced as essentially divorced from the larger social context in which they lived. To some degree, the poets themselves foster such a view with their high degree of allusiveness and self-conscious displays of learning, which suggest an intimate audience of similarly learned, and, hence, socially privileged, peers. Taken together with their almost universal foreign provenance and programmatic avoidance of the monumental religious and political themes that dominated classical literature especially, a picture emerges of these poets as a coterie outside of culture and politics, disinterestedly turning to the contemplation and enjoyment of pure art. Historically the most important of the major Hellenistic poets, and, in some

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105 Griffiths (1979), 2 champions such a view, referring to “the hermetic isolation of the first disciples of ars gratia artis.” On the problems with this well-known view of the Museum community as elitist and the famous indictment thereof by Timon of Phlius, see, e.g., Pfeiffer, 97-8, 283; Hopkinson, 5; Burton, 1, 123-4.

106 See, e.g., Arnott; Shipley, 247-8 (on Lycophron); Hutchinson, 6-7.

107 For the appeal of epigram in this regard, see Gutzwiller (1998), 13.

108 Cf. Griffiths (1979), 2: “Such isolation should facilitate the job of the modern interpreter, who may then assume that these poems were written in libraries to stay there and composed by scholars for people like ourselves, that is, for an audience whose cultural limitations and political motives need hardly have concerned the poet as he advanced the cause of art.”

109 Hopkinson, 83; Bulloch, 549.
sense, spokesman for the Alexandrian poetic movement as a whole,\textsuperscript{110} Callimachus declares: ινικχαίνω πάντα τὰ δημόσια.\textsuperscript{111}

Past scholarship on Hellenistic Literature has focused attention on the elitist, aestheticist aspect of Hellenistic poetry, as derived principally from its close association with the private world of the imposing Museum and Library and the scope of the scholarly enterprises undertaken therein. The preservation and careful study of ancient literature carried on under Ptolemaic patronage awoke in the poets a critical consciousness of their “rupture with the literary past,” which, in turn, motivated both a “preoccupation with the literary dead” and an “ardent desire to bridge the gulf and establish a link...commensurate to the needs and expectations of the age.”\textsuperscript{112} “The anxious awareness of the effects of the monuments of the past on the possibilities of the creative act is, of course, not limited to the Hellenistic poet in the ancient world; but with the growth of the library, that is, with the new, systematic collection and awareness of the enormity of preceding literary works, the search for newness, the anxiety of the literary epigonos, becomes an especial concern of the Alexandrian writer.”\textsuperscript{113} Both the poets’ withdrawal into the past, evidenced by the dense allusiveness that so complicated and sophisticated their verse, and their avoidance of a putatively mainstream, common poetics derived from their “profound desire to compensate for a perceived epigonality and artistic disjunction.”\textsuperscript{114} In Callimachus fr. 1 (Pfeiffer), Lycian Apollo himself commands the poet to travel “untrodden paths” (κελεύθερος ἀτρίπτους, 27-8).

\textsuperscript{110} Bing, 46; Selden, 301-3; cf. Hopkinson, 7, on the term ‘Callimachean aesthetics.’
\textsuperscript{111} Epigram 28 (Pfeiffer); Selden, 302. Note that even this remark is couched in a personal, erotic poem.
\textsuperscript{112} Bing, 56, 64.
\textsuperscript{113} Goldhill, 30.
\textsuperscript{114} Bing, 75.
This “remorseless deepening of self-consciousness before the rich and intimidating legacy of the past”\textsuperscript{115} at once betokens the Hellenistic poets’ literary dependence on earlier literature, while, at the same time, motivating their ironic distancing from it in search of a distinct voice of their own. For new poets, to commune so closely with literary greatness through scholarly study became, in addition to a fantastic strength, a dangerous liability, insofar as comparison thereto became all but inevitable, the difficulty of emerging from its shadow, that much greater. The traits that Goldhill adduces as two chief attributes of Hellenistic poetry in general—an “ironic and deliberately ambiguous attitude to the assertion of truth and to the status of poet as teller of truth” and “deliberate fragmentation of any divinely inspired, proclamatory, didactic status of the poet’s voice into a multiplicity of citations, different levels of enunciation and conflicting or ambiguous attitudes”\textsuperscript{116}—constitute a response to this danger. As a result, Hellenistic poets often appear in their verse with an “oblique, ambiguous assertiveness.”\textsuperscript{117} Callimachus, for instance, writes that thundering is not his, but belongs to Zeus (βροντάν οὐκ ἔμον, ἀλλὰ Διός, fr.1.20), that he merely “obeyed” the charge of Apollo (τῷ πιθόμην, fr. 1.29), even as he evinces a robust, new poetics. Theocritus describes himself as just one of many poets whom the daughters of Zeus fancy (εἶς μὲν ἐγώ, πολλοὺς δὲ Διός φιλέοντι καὶ ἄλλους / ἑναγατέρες, Ιδ. 16.101-2).\textsuperscript{118}

\textsuperscript{115} Bate, 4.
\textsuperscript{116} Goldhill, 29-30.
\textsuperscript{117} Goldhill, 31: “The oblique, ambiguous assertiveness of the Hellenistic poets may be seen, then, as a response to that danger, that anxiety.”
\textsuperscript{118} Of course, since Theocritus seems never to have found employment in the great Library like the other two major Hellenistic poets, Callimachus and Apollonius, one might incline to devalue the influence the Museum and its literary scholarship could have upon his work; see Burton, 178, n. 4; for Callimachus and Apollonius as Library figures, see Pfeiffer, 123-48. However, Theocritus shows in his verse unmistakable signs of remarkable erudition, and his direct connections with the literary circle of Callimachus and Apollonius are well-known, despite the fact that the precise vectors of influence remain to be worked out.
Yet while elitism and a concomitant amount of aestheticism form undeniably important facets of Hellenistic poetry, more recent studies of the literature have begun to question the isolability of these aspects from the larger social situation of Alexandria.¹¹⁹ Timon of Phlius’ roughly contemporary¹²⁰ satire of the Museum scholars, a chief ancient corroboration of the strictly elitist view,¹²¹ emphasizes in its attack precisely the elements of Alexandria’s larger social predicament surveyed in the previous chapter, namely the overwhelming size and multiethnic character of the populace:¹²²

\[\text{πολλοὶ μὲν βόσκονται ἐν Ἀἰγύπτῳ πολυφύλαι\}

\[\text{βιβλιακοὶ χαρακτίαι ἀπείριτα δημιουργοί} \]

\[\text{Μουσῶν ἐν παλάρῳ.} \]

Ath. 22d.

This image of the scholars as squabbling, kept birds in Ptolemy’s zoo bears obvious similarity to that of the bourgeois matrons depicted in Theocritus’ *Idyll* 15, vying with half of Alexandria for a prime position from which to view Arsinoe’s festival of Adonis¹²³ and disdainfully characterizing the crowd now as “innumerable, immeasurable ants” (μὺρμικές ἀνόρθοις καὶ ἀμετροὶ, 45), now as “pigs jostling” around a feeding trough (...ὀχλος ἀλαθεῶς· / ὀθεῦνθ' ὀσπερ ὕες, 72-73).¹²⁴ To characterize Alexandrian poetry as “court poetry” does little to effect its complete separation from this public sphere, given that, as we have seen, the social context that obtained there derived directly from the ideology, policies, and practices of the Ptolemaic regime. In a court so committed, “court poetry” of necessity dealt with the concerns of

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¹¹⁹ See, e.g., Burton, 1;
¹²⁰ Diog. Laert. IX.110 states that he was known to “King Antigonus” and Ptolemy Philadelphus. See also Shipley, 239-40.
¹²¹ So, at least, for Griffiths (1979), 2.
¹²² See Clayman, 11, 93.

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On Theocritus’ erudition, see, e.g., Arnott, 62-4; on Theocritus’ connections to Callimachus and Apollonius, see n. 38 above.
society. Callimachus of Cyrene, himself an expatriate member of Alexandria’s expatriate society, established in the Lagid capital a foundation for Greek literary culture in Egypt by recasting classical poetics as a “poetics of displacement” with “heavy emphasis...on the conditions of remove.” “By grounding his poetry on the principle of estrangement, Callimachus effectively embodies in his work the same social predicament that...was fundamental to the Alexandrian civic enterprise as a whole.”

Theocritus’ choice to adapt for Alexandrian poetic tastes the literary mime tradition of his fifth-century countryman Sophron forms another facet of this same novel practice in poetry. “In Alexandria, his mimes would have seemed exotic insofar as they recalled Syracuse in genre and perhaps also in dialect (Doric). But their hexameter meter accommodated the taste for Homer prevalent at this time” Insofar as the court poets were eminent thinkers of surpassing education whose livelihoods were guaranteed and completely provided, they necessarily possessed something of an elitist perspective on the society they reflected and helped shape, and this distinction accounts for their different interests and occasional declarations of separation from “the people.” Yet the very fact of divorcing oneself implies conscious, even detailed, awareness of that from which one seeks divorce.

123 See especially lines 60-95.
124 On this image, see Gow (1952: I 285 ad 73).
125 Cf. Selden, 406: “Callimachus’ writing takes shape as part and parcel of the Prolemaic reorganization of society and state; the same protocols, in fact, that define Alexandria’s civic apparatus – variety, displacement, collocation – likewise...provide the compositional framework for the poet’s work....”
126 Cameron, 1-11; Selden, 300.
127 Selden, 307.
128 Selden, 306.
129 Selden, 306.
131 See Strabo 17.793-4.
Theocritus’ “curiously ambivalent characters who have the power simultaneously
to evoke sympathy and to arouse a sense of dispassionate superiority”\textsuperscript{132} betoken this
thematic tension within the literature between elitism and connection to the civic sphere.
The fine interplay between the dissimilarity and similarity of the protagonists from/to
“ordinary people,” that is, between the distance and proximity of the characters from/to
the audience, characterizes most all of Theocritus’ \textit{Idylls}. This feature of the characters’
representation allows them, from their lowly stations, to speak the common feelings and
universal truths relevant for a more sophisticated, urban readership.\textsuperscript{133} Yet, by
maintaining an unequal ratio of distance to proximity, Theocritus is still able to align
himself with the reader over and against his characters, thereby joining the former in
submitting the latter to a gaze “from above and beyond.”\textsuperscript{134} Theocritus achieves this
unequal ratio by insinuating into his mimetic poems discordant notes, usually consisting
of some central element of dislocation, that “act as rends or tears in the mimetic fabric of
the poem where a certain amount of seriousness shows through.”\textsuperscript{135} Through this
technique, like Brecht with his Epic Theater, the poet lays bear something of his artifice,
a practice which invites two sorts of reading at once, or rather a simultaneous reading on
two different levels.\textsuperscript{136} For example, whereas \textit{Idyll} 3 announces itself as a \textit{kômos}
(Κωμάσδω, 1) and presents the expected \textit{paraklausithyron topos},\textsuperscript{137} the patent absurdities
of its rural setting,\textsuperscript{138} sophisticated techniques of high-flown Alexandrian poetry in the

\textsuperscript{132} Bulloch, 585.
\textsuperscript{134} Isenberg and Konstan, 303.
\textsuperscript{135} Gutzwiller (1991), 116.
\textsuperscript{136} Cf. The concept of “fusion” in Gutzwiller (1991), 86.
\textsuperscript{137} See, for example, Lawall, 35; Hunter, 107-110; Goldhill, 32.
\textsuperscript{138} Lawall, 35: “He...creates an evidently absurd situation, humorous in its incongruity.”; Walker, 43-44; Hunter (1999), 107-110; Goldhill, 32.
mouth of its rustic speaker,\(^{139}\) and mingling of comic and serious elements,\(^{140}\) together with the “lament for lost wholeness” and “sense of loss and desire” that pervade the lover’s song,\(^{141}\) all belie any claim the idyll makes for pure mimesis and, so, force a wedge of ironic distance between the poem and its external reader. So also the learned reader cannot escape the fact that Idyll 11’s singing Polyphemus, who expresses many of the erotic commonplaces found on the lips of human lovers in Hellenistic poetry, all the while cleverly alluding to Homeric epic, is quintessentially a monster, paradigm of the uncivilized barbaros and foil for the polis-dwelling Greeks.\(^{142}\) Indeed, elements in the text of the poem like his comparison of his beloved Galateia to cream (λευκοτέρα ποιτιδείν, 20) and his mention of the “best milk” he gets from his thousands of cattle (βοτά χίλια βάσκω, / κήκ τούτων τὸ κράτιστον ἀμελγόμενος γάλα πίνω, 34-35)\(^{143}\) underscore the character’s inherent bestiality and enormous appetites.\(^{144}\) When he boasts in lines 77-78 that many girls wish him to play with them at night, all giggling as he gives them attention, thereby making clear that he is somebody (79), the scholiast argues that the girls merely wish to make sport of him.\(^{145}\) Τις in line 79 clearly means to evoke Odysseus’ joke in Odyssey 9, one Polyphemus never got, but the poem’s learned

\(^{139}\) Similar in impact in the discrepancy between Simaetha’s high-flown poetic style (consider, for example, her use of Homeric-style tmesis in 54 (κατ’ ἄγριῳ ἐν πυρὶ βάλλω) and 56 (ἐκ βδέλλα πέπωκας) and epic form ἐέρας in 107’s νοτίωσιν ἐέρας, as well as her use of learned allusion, i.e. Sappho 31) and the depiction of her setting and station. See Griffiths (1979), 84; Rist, 34; Segal (1984), 204-7. The women of Idyll 15 also break the mimetic surface with their “pretentious, often Homeric diction” (Griffiths (1979), 82; Garson, 296.

\(^{140}\) Gutzwiller (1991), 115-6: such as the goatherd’s repeated, unfulfilled threats to end his life, especially line 25’s threat of leaping into the sea, since the goatherd adds the detail that he will first take off of his cloak. See Isenberg and Konstan, 308.

\(^{141}\) Isenberg and Konstan, 303.


\(^{143}\) Milk-drinking was a mark of barbarianism in Greek society; cf. Hdt. 4.2: the Scythians are milk-drinkers.

\(^{144}\) Gutzwiller (1991), 111.

\(^{145}\) Holtsmark, 258, n. 9, rejects the common, ironic reading of these lines.
audience most definitely would.\textsuperscript{146} It is precisely the conflict between the Cyclops’ “true identity” as revealed by the history of his character within Greek literary history, on the one hand, and the portrait of him painted by Theocritus as a very human character, possessed of the same emotions and emotional responses as any passionate Greek youth of the day, on the other, that creates the “broad humor” so apparent in \textit{Idyll} 11.\textsuperscript{147}

Thus, displacement or dislocation and a changing conception of the position of the writer owing largely to scholarly awareness of past literature forged through its intensive collection and study are two facets of Hellenistic society that especially inform its poetry.\textsuperscript{148} These facets find concrete expression in the literature of the period through concentration on the motif of longing for that which is absent. In some ways “the most characteristic of Hellenistic poetic forms,”\textsuperscript{149} epigram provides a particularly good case in point, so a small digression in that direction may help to shore up our argument thus far.

Though the popularity of epigram in the Hellenistic period rested in no small measure on its ability to elide “the larger social, religious, and political themes dominating earlier Greek literature,”\textsuperscript{150} ironically the form’s “focus on individuals, in their particularity, in their personal relationships with family, friends, and deities, in the crucial moments of their professional and personal lives”\textsuperscript{151} grounds it most of all in the changing conditions of life in Hellenistic urban centers. “As a minor form elevated to major status, a marginal type brought to the center, epigram, matching form to content,

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item\textsuperscript{146} Goldhill, n. 60; Gutzwiller (1991), 110.
\item\textsuperscript{147} Gutzwiller (1991), 108-9; Spofford, 24-5. That this tension forms a central conceit of the poem is evidenced at the outset in lines 7-8, where the narrator introduces his protagonist as \textit{ό Κύκλωψ ο παρ’ ύμιν / ὀρχαίος Πολύφαμος}, the sharply enjambed invocation of the character’s actual name, together with the adjective \textit{όρχαίος}, undercutting the familiar tone created by \textit{ό παρ’ ύμιν} in the previous line, thereby jarringly awakening the reader to the reality the Cyclop’s identity (Spofford, 26).
\item\textsuperscript{148} Cf. Bulloch, 543.
\item\textsuperscript{149} Gutzwiller, 3.
\item\textsuperscript{150} Gutzwiller (1998), 13.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
could represent individuals as they now were—marginal, drifting, fragmentary and fractured selves.”

The three major types of epigram—dedicatory, sepulchral, and erotic—all share a central and characteristic focus on dislocation or displacement. In dedicatory poems, this focus finds expression in an explanation of the current presence of an object originating from far away; in the case of sepulchral and erotic poems, by contrast, it appears as a lamentation for the current absence of a subject ordinarily present. The sepulchral and erotic epigrammatic types thus share a particular affinity in that they add to the dominant theme of dislocation a “pathos of desire,” which grounds them in the subjective psychological experience of individuals and, thereby, heightens the sense of alienation and isolation they express. Erotic and sepulchral epigrams, therefore, represent particularly well the ethos of the era in which they became most popular.

If, however, “[o]ne of the definitive achievements of hellenistic epigram was its liberation from epigraphy, leaving the text free to circulate from hand to hand,” then erotic-symphotic epigrams, which are “only vestigially locative,” are perhaps the definitive Hellenistic epigrammatic type. Unlike dedicatory and sepulchral epigrams, “which are tied to a specific place and tend to take that fixture as their subject,” erotic epigrams follow lovers who move in circles of social relations like the readers of the

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152 Gutzwiller (1998), 13; cf. Selden, 306-7: “...[T]o characterize Callimachus’ writing as ‘out of place’ does no more than recenter it within the horizons of official Ptolemaic ideology.”
154 Selden, 314: “Whereas dedicatory inscriptions explain the position of an object which is present, though originating elsewhere, what sepulchral and erotic epigrams record is the absence of their subject, which is in each instance normally a person.” See also idem, 316.
155 Selden 316.
156 Selden, 318.
157 Selden, 318.
159 Selden, 317.
poems that feature them. Over and against other epigrammatic types, erotic epigrams uniformly ground the predominant sense of displacement and isolation common to all Hellenistic epigram in the conscious recognition of the overwhelming presence of others, most often compounding erotic with sympotic themes.160 These poems dwell on the ephemeral nature of erotic experience, usually attributing it explicitly to the abundance of new objects of desire to entice old lovers apart. Erotic-symphotic epigrams reveal at their cores a rejected, isolated, and fragile lover whose subjective experience becomes at once unique, as the particular focus of each discreet poem, and common, as the characteristic, shared focus of a poetic form. The individual’s personal experience is thus revealed as a part of the greater cycle of love and loss that touches all. The following epigram by Callimachus, the most famous and admired of Greek epigrammatists,161 provides an especially apt example:

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'Ελκος ἔχων ὁ ξεῖνος ἐλάνθανεν· ὡς ἀνιηρὸν πνεῦμα διὰ στηθέων (εἴδες;) ἀνηγάγετο,
tὸ τρίτον ἦνικ’ ἔπινε, τὰ δὲ ρόδα φυλλοβολεῦντα
tόνδρος ἀπὸ στεφάνων πάντ’ ἐγένοντο χαμάι.
ὠπτηται μέγα δὴ τι· μὲ δαίμονας, οὐκ ἀπὸ ῥυσμοῦ
εἰκάζω, φωρὸς δ’ ἱχνια φὼρ ἐμαθον.162
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The speaker’s observation slides from perceiving the subject as an individual, in the forcefully inner-subjective experience of emotional pain, to perceiving him as a mere collocation of images and events: the excessive third drink, the falling of rose petals from his garland crown. The speaker’s gaze thus depersonalizes his subject into a series of bare signifiers, a poetic code, a metaphor. He then proceeds to interpret the signs by appealing to his own, personal experience (εἰκάζω, ἐμαθον), which is, in turn,

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departicularized through application to the behavior of another. As an act of induction, the epigram extrapolates from unique experience a common rule, expressed proverbially as applicable to all; hence, the poem concludes by violating the integrity of its fictive setting, the symposium. As a result, the reader is invited by the second person singular verb ἐίδες in line two to construct the narrative voice simultaneously on two different plains: the two observers may be either individuals co-present at the symposium with their subject or poet and reader external to the poem’s action, watching from an unbounded, omniscient vantage. On reflection, they are both. Like the theme, therefore, the setting is both particular and intimate and public and universal. The bonds that obtain between the poem’s characters, like those between many residents of a city like Alexandria, consist in little more than shared humanity brought out through common emotional experience. As this text demonstrates, the theme of unfulfilled or impossible desire provides a particularly suitable arena in which to explore the new and complex social dynamic of the Hellenistic period. As a result, it appears as a dominant theme in other genres of poetry as well.

Love so conceived seems a special concern of Theocritus. Some thirteen\textsuperscript{163} of his twenty-two genuine \textit{Idylls} make it their primary focus. Bulloch writes of the poet: “A more constant preoccupation [in Theocritean poetry] than pastoral is the agony of unfulfilled love and the strangely distracting and disorienting effect of love-sickness;

\textsuperscript{162} No. 43 (Pfeiffer).
\textsuperscript{163} As I read them: \textit{Idylls} 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 29, and 30. Hutchinson (145), seeking to demonstrate the thesis that Theocritus exhibits no especial concern for the theme of love, provides a list of only ten (2, 3, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 29, 30). I fear Hutchinson’s tendentious desire to make a point has impaired his judgment as regards \textit{Idylls} 1, 4, and 7.
Theocritus more than any other Hellenistic writer is the poet of love, but of love as pain rather than lyrical experience.\textsuperscript{164}

At the center of his explorations of the Hellenistic erotic ethos lie wounded lovers whose essential inner fragility stems from a fundamental sense of isolation, dislocation, and ambiguity as a result of their misadventures in love. Thus, although Theocritus alters the tone and register of his poems freely from light, low, and humorous to heavy, high, and serious,\textsuperscript{165} a pervasive, if understated, sense of sorrow underlies most. At the same time, Theocritus develops in his fragile lovers a certain self-assertiveness, which arises as a defense mechanism from a desire to buffer their fragile selves from lovelorn isolation. True to the conventions of the erotic-sympotic setting, these self-assertions always involve and depend on others for their effect. The characters’ expression of their assertiveness often relies on what Holtsmark calls the “time-honored theme in Greek literature” of the “possible-impossible pursuit,” constants of which include “(1) the use of the participle παρόν (or an equivalent) to indicate a present certainty which is rejected in favor of (2) the pursuit (note some of the words of “pursuit” employed: ἔρων, διώκειν, θηρεύειν, etc.) of impossibles (frequently used words are: ἀλλος, ὑπόν, φεύγων, ὀμήχανος, etc.)\textsuperscript{166} It is this motif which the Cyclops of \textit{Idyll} 11 invokes in attempting to console himself over the impossibility of his erotic situation in lines 75-6 (τὰν παρεοίσαν ἁμέλγε· τί τὸν φεύγοντα διώκεις; / εὐρησείς Γαλάτειαν ἵσως καὶ καλλίον’ ἄλλαν).\textsuperscript{167} In \textit{Idyll} 14, too, Aeschinas angrily shouts at his former mistress: οὐ τοι

\textsuperscript{164} Bulloch, 585.
\textsuperscript{165} As Hutchinson (146, 148-9) notes, such “jarring and piquant” juxtapositions constitute a central aspect of Theocritus’ poetry; their vigor creates much of the emotional force in his verse.
\textsuperscript{166} Holtsmark, 257 and n. 7; Gow \textit{ad} 11.75: he gives archaic and classical, as well as Hellenistic, examples.
because of the origins and nature of this style of self-assertiveness, its expressions appear
often fraught and abortive. It is a childish form of self-assertion, whose vehemence
mounts conspicuously in direct proportion to the deepening of the fragility that it seeks to
cover. 

Indeed, an element of infantilism characterizes many fragile selves throughout the
Theocritean corpus, often taking the form of the of an impossible wish. Polyphemus’
fantastic wish in Idyll 11 that his mother had born him with gills (όμοιοι ὅτε οὐκ ἐτεκέν
μέτρον βράχων ἔχοντα, 54), so that he might swim down and kiss his beloved
Galatea’s hand (55), bespeaks his infantile fragility, as does the displacement of his
angry frustration onto Thoösa at 67–68 (ἀ μάτηρ ἀδικεῖ με μόνα, καὶ μέμφομαι αὐτῆς /
οὐδὲν πῆποχ’ ὁλος ποτὶ τὸν φίλον ἐπεν ὑπέρ μευ...). In Idyll 3, the speaker’s
unrealizable desire to become a bee in lines 12-14 (αἴθε γενοίμαν/ ἀ βομβεύσα
μέλισσα καὶ ἐς τέον ἄντρον ἱκοίμαν...) likewise partakes of this motif. That the
goatherd’s wish is grounded in his fundamental fragility of self emerges from the remark
which prefaces his wish: θυμολαγεῖς ἐμίν ἄχος (12). Idyll 1 presents an impossible wish

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167 Similar language characterizes Galatea’s behavior toward Polyphemus in Idyll 6
(καὶ φεύγει φιλέοντα καὶ οὐ φιλέοντα διώκει, 17).
168 Cf. Gutzwiller (1991), 112: “His infantilism explodes into a tantrum of frustration in 67-71....”;
Holtsmark, 256: “The censure of his mother (67-71) displays his immaturity in that it shows him wanting,
like a child, to enjoy maternal protection against the cruel impingement of adult reality”.
169 Cf. Isenberg and Konstan, 306: “...[Bees’] capacity to fly may also be significant (compare the wish of
the Cyclops, in Idyll XI, that he might swim, in order to enter the domain of his beloved, in this case, a sea-
nymph). Within her cave, Amaryllis inhabits another realm, attainable to things that can fly...” McKay,
171-2, reads the image as sexually charged in a tongue-in-cheek manner; cf. Isenberg and Konstan, 306.
170 His list of mythological exempla in lines 40-51, including most notably Adonis, Endymion, and Iasion,
further connects the goatherd to the theme of infantilism. As so many commentators have suggested (Gow
(1952), II ad 50; Walker, 46; Lawall (1967), 40), the list provides evidence of his childish naivety and
incompetence with the “sophisticated use of myth” (Lawall (1967), 40) characteristic of the Alexandrian
practice of “learned allusion” (Walker, 46). Also, as the speaker himself alludes to with ζαλωτός μὲν ἐμίν
scenario as indicative of a fragile self as well in Priapus’ speech to Daphnis, where the salacious god explains why he likens the love-sick cowherd to a goatherd: Daphnis weeps that he is not among the dancing girls when he sees how they giggle, just as goatherds weep that they were not born he-goats when they see their female goats walking about.\(^{171}\)

In *Idyll 15*, the motif of infantile regression plays a prominent role in characterizing a fragile self *without* the *topos* of the impossible wish: here, Praxinoa reveals her essential fragility when directly confronted with the many dangers of the road at 51-55.\(^{172}\) The women’s near trampling by the king’s war-horses at 51-55 immediately casts Praxinoa’s thoughts back to the helplessness of childhood, first in her declaration that she did well not to bring her babe along ( ὀνάθην μεγάλως ὅτι μοι τὸ βρέφον μένει ἕνδον, 55), then in her recollection of a childhood fear of horses and snakes ( ἵππον καὶ τὸν ψυχρὸν ὦφιν τὰ μάλιστα δεδοίκω / ἐκ παιδός, 58-59).\(^{173}\) The heavy enjambment of ἐκ παιδός calls special attention to the overall motif.

The essentially fragile mode of affirmation so often found in Theocritus’ poems is also the self-assertiveness that characterizes a bully, who seeks to reproduce his own

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\(^{171}\) βούτας μὲν ἕλεγεν, νῦν δ’ αἰτόλῳ ἄνδρι ἐοίκος.
ellites, ὅκκ’ ἐσφόρη τὰς μηκάδας οὐ ἔχειν, τάκεια ὁφθαλμῶς ὃτι οὐ τράγος αὐτὸς ἔγεντο.
...καὶ τὸ δ’ ἐπεὶ κ’ ἐσφόρης τὰς παρθένους οὐ λέγαντε, τάκεια ὁφθαλμῶς ὃτι οὐ μετὰ ταΐς χορεύεις (86-91).

\(^{172}\) ἀδίστα Γοργώ, τί γενώμεθα; τοὺς πολεμισταῖς ἵπποι τῷ βασιλῆς, ἄνερ φίλε, μὴ με πατήσῃς,
όρθος ἄνεστι ο πυρρός. ἱδ’ ὡς ἄριστος, κυνοθαρσής
Εὐνόα, οὐ φευξῆ; διαχρησίεται τὸ ἄγαντα,
ὦνάθην μεγάλως ὅτι μοι τὸ βρέφος μένει ἕνδον.
inner weakness in the experience of others by taking the offensive with taunts, threats, and even more physical intimidations.\textsuperscript{174} It is a largely un- or only semi-conscious process: a conditioned, automatic, and primal response, even if not wholly unreflective. This brand of self-assertiveness thus problematizes and even undercuts itself as to its own strength and conviction.

In so constructing his treatment of alterity, Theocritus is able to exploit and explore a double-edged conception of the populousness and heterogeneity characteristic of Hellenistic society through a view of “others” as both the central dilemma and a principal means of its solution.\textsuperscript{175} This treatment lays bare the paradox in the Greek way of coping with life in ethnically mixed Hellenistic cities. As we saw in the previous chapter, in such environments, where Hellenic identity was most overtly threatened by distance from the homeland and the proximity of alien cultures, Greeks clung most fiercely to the external marks and trappings of their Hellenism, excluding foreigners from participation in the most peculiarly Greek social and political institutions like gymnasias.\textsuperscript{176} Such a socio-political policy of nativism fully exposes its subjects’ fragility through the felt need to assert a strong but narrow sense of self in the face of others. For example, in Idyll 15, when Praxinoa lays bare her bourgeois prejudice against native

\textsuperscript{173} Griffiths (1981), 249, reads this statement as frankly sexual in nature. Here and elsewhere, I reject much of his overly gendered reading.

\textsuperscript{174} As when, in Idyll 6, Polyphemus threatens to sick his dog on the fickle Galateia (σίξα δ’ ώλακτείν νυν καὶ τῷ κυνί, 29) or, in Idyll 11, to lie to his mother about his condition, so that she will share in his emotional pain (φασᾶ τῶν κεφαλῶν καὶ τῶς πόδας ὄμφοτέρος μεῦ / σφύσειν, ὅς ἀνιαθῇ ἐπεὶ κήγων ἀνιώματι, 70-1). In Idyll 14, when the speaker Aeschinas feels wronged by his wayward beloved, he actually punches her in the head: τάμιος ἐγώ, τῶν ἱσαί τύ, θωνίζε, πυξ ἐπὶ κόρρας / ἥλισσα, κἄλλαν αὐθίς, 34-5.

\textsuperscript{175} Cf. Burton, 40, who writes of “a negative side of the Hellenistic world’s mobility: the loneliness and powerlessness that can come...from the absence of kinship ties within a community.”

\textsuperscript{176} Cf. Hornblower’s (39) remarks as to Greek south Italy: “The hellenism of Magna Graecia was to be amazingly tenacious. As late as the 1960’s AD, there were Greek speaking enclaves in south Italy (Apulia
Egyptians in a discussion of the dangers of the street, then later censures a male bystander at the festival of Adonis for his ridicule of her and Gorgo’s particular manner of Greek speech, the assertions arise directly out of confrontations with alien others in the midst of whom she is in danger of becoming lost or overwhelmed. Praxinoa appeals to a sharply defined and increasingly restrictive sense of self to combat the overwhelming presence of “other” and, in the process, forges a conscious distinction between those “others” who are like herself and exist for her as a source of strength (i.e. first, Greeks generally; second, Gorgo and fellow Syracusans in particular) and those who exhibit greater difference, in the face of whom as a perceived threat these strengths become salient (i.e. first, Egyptians; second, non-Syracusan Greeks). Such moments remind us that in the artificially heterogenous environments of cities like Alexandria, where Greeks, in both their panhellenic and local affiliations, themselves formed but a single, though predominant, pattern in the all-encompassing fabric of alterity, such a defense mechanism ultimately only enhances its employers’ alienation and isolation.

The conception of the Self’s relation to others Theocritus proffers reveals a psychological depth and complexity that approximates in important ways Heidegger’s examination of inauthenticity, beginning with what he calls *distantiality*

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177 Lines 47-50; see Shipley, 219-20.
178 Lines 87-93; see Burton, 56-7.
179 Note that while the bystander is also Greek, his ridicule of the women’s manner of speech marks him immediately as alien to their particular version of Hellenism.
180 It is tempting to read Gorgo’s initial complaint about the remoteness of Praxinoa’s home (τὰ δ’ ἐκοστέρῳ ὁποίκετες, 7) and Praxinoa’s response as to her husband’s motivation in choosing such a location (ὅπως μὴ γείτονες ὁμές, 9) as self-reflectively expressive of the Ptolemaic experience itself: Greeks stationed so far from fellow Greeks, cut off from the rest of Hellenic culture, isolated, displaced. It thus functions to forge at the poem’s outset the two women’s common bond and shared strength. The depiction of the women in lines 66-71 as they try to enter the palace, clasping tightly to one another, hand in hand, provides another dramatic representation of this feature. Gorgo’s and Praxinoa’s anxiety may also
(Abständigkeit). As an existential characteristic of “being-with-one-another,”

distantiality consists in the Self’s disquieting obsession with its relation to “others.”

But “others” here is an indefinite designation, serving to cover one’s own essential
belonging to the class so designated. It does not consist in one or several or even the sum
of the whole, but constitutes an existentially distinct entity: the they (das Man).

In its subservience to the they through distantiality, one’s Self-being becomes unknowingly
cought up in the averageness (Durchschnittlichkeit) of “others,” the existential character
of the they that defines and shapes the norm: what is proper, permissible, successful, and
their opposites. In its concern for averageness, the they confines and restricts the Self’s
existential possibilities, which thus undergo a levelling down (Einebnung). Together,
distantiality, averageness, and levelling down form facets of “publicness,” that is, the
more or less conspicuous social pressure that exercises control over one’s interpretation
of the world and one’s own Self-being and is encoded in normative statements whose
subject is “they” or “one” (Man, in German). Thus, “we” constantly invoke “them” in
determinations of how “we” should be. “We” become like “them.” “They” become
responsible for “our” actions. “They” always “did it.” In this way, the they conveniently
unburdens the Self of concern for its own being, and the very ease and convenience of
this process ensures and entrenches its dominance. Publicness ensnares the Self in the


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  \item Reflect tension between societal changes and traditional gender roles and the novel displacement of women from the strictly private into the increasingly public sphere.
  \item For the following, see Heidegger, 118-21.
  \item This not being primarily a work of philosophy, I allow myself the liberty of substituting for Heidegger’s somewhat opaque Da-sein, that being which we ourselves are, a being that makes an issue of its own being – that is, self-reflexive being, the locus for the disclosure of being – the term Self, which, nonetheless, maintains the same relation to individual “selves” that Da-sein maintains to individual human beings; each self is a phenomenal instance of Self. See Heidegger, 10, 39, 108.
  \item Of this entity’s odd power, Heidegger writes: “The more openly the they behaves, the more slippery and hidden it is, but the less it is nothing at all” (italics added).
  \item As in “What would they think/say?” or “One does/must not do that.” (cf. Man sagt or das soll man wissen).
\end{itemize}
they by “obscur[ing] everything, and then claim[ing] that what has been thus covered is familiar and accessible to everybody.”\textsuperscript{185} The They becomes the Self, and self-assertions become in fact “other-assertions” which, as they mount in strength and frequency, only deepen the Self’s entanglement in the they. This entanglement breeds dependency of the Self on the they and, thus, inauthenticity, which is both “tempting and tranquillizing,” because it relieves the Self of responsibility, and alienating, because it results in the Self’s becoming dispersed in the they as they-Self.\textsuperscript{186} Due to its origin, this alienation paradoxically produces in the Self a keener turning toward itself, leading to self-entangling entanglement, the Self plunging out of and back into itself in an eddying movement.\textsuperscript{187} In so falling prey (Verfallen) to the world and turning away from authentic Self-being, one encounters a “groundlessness and nothingness,” because the act of falling prey has deprived the Self of its possibilities for being. The world sinks into insignificance and irrelevance and takes on an uncanniness, in the face of which one experiences anxiety (Angst).\textsuperscript{188} The recalcitrance of anxiety draws the Self back from its entanglement in the world and shatters the tranquil feeling of being-at-home in publicness. “Everyday familiarity collapses,” and the Self is brought “in an extreme sense precisely before its world as world, and thus itself before itself as being-in-the-world.”\textsuperscript{189} Anxiety individuates the Self, reveals it as “solus ipse,” and brings it into “the existential ‘mode’ of not-being-at-home.”\textsuperscript{190} This process of inauthenticity and anxiety is

\textsuperscript{185} Heidegger, 119.
\textsuperscript{186} Heidegger, 121, 166.
\textsuperscript{187} Heidegger, 166-7.
\textsuperscript{188} Heidegger, 174-7, 315.
\textsuperscript{189} Heidegger, 176.
\textsuperscript{190} Heidegger, 176.
inevitable and, in part, constitutive of being-in-the-world itself, insofar as the world is always shared with others; “[b]eing-in is being-with others.”¹⁹¹

Theocritus weaves throughout the various sub-corpora of his poetry a string of interconnected themes and images which collectively reveal a conscious concern with the issues raised by being ever in the presence of and in competition with others as a dislocated sojourner in a major Hellenistic urban center, as a poet in search of patronage, and as a student of past literature. As depicted mimetically, the nexus involves the interdependent elements of an “oblique, ambiguous assertiveness,” consisting in the juxtaposition of images of fragility and of self-assertiveness; an explicit recognition of the impinging presence of competing others; the “mania” of erotic desire that causes forgetfulness of more quotidian tasks; and the mockery of outside observers as a sign of their failure to understand. Not simply relegated to mimetic depictions of frustrated desire, however, Theocritus’ network of images and elements centering on the inauthentic, fragile-assertive self applies as well to explicit discussions of poetic craft, which appear principally in *Idylls* 7, 16, and, to a lesser degree, 22. By so displacing his thematic and imagistic nexus from its “etymologically” proper realm, Theocritus clearly signals what he hints at by fracturing the mimetic surfaces of his erotic *Idylls*: an expansion of the nexus’s poetic significance and extension of its meaning from the realm of the purely mimetic to a more analogueical mode.¹⁹² Like the speaker in Callimachus’

¹⁹¹ Heidegger, 111-12
¹⁹² In antiquity, there existed two methods of conceiving the connection of Theocritus’ verse to the cultural realities of his own experience. One of the two major interpretive positions advanced by the ancient commentators, the one Van Sickle (1976: 24, 35) dubbed the “simple mimetic” view, held that the pastoral poems provide a mimesis of rustic characters and settings, shunning grandiloquence in poetry: εἰς ὄσον δ᾿ οὖν τὲ ἐστι, τὰ τῶν ἄγροικων ἢ ἐκμάζεται αὐτή ἡ ποίησις, τερπνὸς πάνυ τοὺς τῇ ἄγροικῃ σκυθροποὺς κατὰ τὸν βίον χαρακτηρίζομαι· ἐκπέφυγε δὲ τὸ ἄγαν ἄδρον καὶ ὑπέροχον τὴς ποίησεως (Proleg. D, p. 5 Wendel). Gutzwiller (1991, 180 and n. 19) traces this view to Artemidorus’ son, Theon; Van Sickle (1976, 34-5) traces it back to Artemidorus himself. When the Latin commentators on Vergil’s
Epigram 43 discussed above, Theocritus openly converts his own confluence of erotic themes and images into an explicit metaphor for understanding poetic craft, then himself applies this metaphor to discussions of his own conception of that craft. In so doing, he implies a specific interpretation of the metaphor within the narrow horizons of a poet’s self-definition qua poet. The centrality within this complex of the tension between self-effacement and self-assertion helps to clarify a puzzling diffidence apparent in the tone of Theocritus’ pronouncements on poetic practice in Idylls 7 and 16.

Eclogues adopted this conception of Theocritus, they made it the dominant one and, in turn, bequeathed it to the humanist scholarship of the renaissance and beyond. The other main position was that of Herodes Atticus’ instructor, Munatius of Tralles, who read Theocritus’ poetry as a form of allegory in which the author presented himself and his friends in the guise of rustic characters. This view, which Gutzwiller (1991: 18-9, 85-6) labels “analogical” and is the forerunner to Reitzenstein’s (193-243) “bucolic masquerade” theory, requires that, for full impact, the poetry’s meaning extend into the world external to the poem itself. For a complete discussion of the critical history, see Gutzwiller (1991), 179-200.
Chapter Three: A First Case-Study of the Fragile/Assertive Self: *Idyll* 2’s Simaetha

On the surface, Theocritus’ second *Idyll* comprises a dramatic monologue that depicts in lurid detail a young woman who, spurned by the man whose affections she once pursued and obtained, performs magical rites to bewitch her unfaithful lover and then recounts before an audience of heavenly bodies the tale of their troubled affair. Yet the poem contains several central ambiguities which mar its otherwise seamless mimetic surface. Though often explained or argued away in the secondary literature, these ambiguities are sufficiently numerous and intractable as to suggest deeper, thematic significance. This chapter will show that they derive from the workings within the poem of the thematic nexus outlined in Chapter 2 and, thus, serve to underscore and dramatize its central theme—in effect, the central theme of all Theocritean treatments of love: the perturbations wrought by unfulfilled *erôs* on the individual psyche. In *Idyll* 2 that psyche belongs to the young woman, whose status as a Theocritean fragile-assertive self reveals itself precisely through the “tears in the mimetic fabric”193 created by the many forms of ambiguity that surround her. Three sources of ambiguity are of chief concern: 1) the poem’s setting; 2) the character and social status of its female speaker; and 3) the purpose and import of her conjuring.

Unlike the “highly dramatic” *Idyll* 3 whose five line introduction clearly and without complication sets the scene for the audience in a manner more characteristic of a Greek tragedy or the magodic performance which it approximates in form,194 *Idyll* 2 is

thoroughly mimetic,\textsuperscript{195} beginning in mediis rebus.\textsuperscript{196} The reader merely finds himself suddenly thrust into the midst of a lurid, firelight incantation and must glean elements of the setting piecemeal from the monologue as it progresses.

The macro-elements of that setting, while never made overtly obvious owing to Theocritus’ subtle and believable brand of realism, are nevertheless not overly uncertain; the broad outlines of the larger social context remain perceptible. Line 35 (\ldots ταὶ κῦνες ἄμιν ἀνὰ πτόλιν ὄρφονται) clearly situates the action in a city. Lines 8 (βασεῖμαι ποτὶ τὰν Τιμαγήτου παλαιόστραν) and 97 (τήρησον ποτὶ τὰν Τιμαγήτου παλαιόστραν) indicate that it is a large enough city to possess a palaestra.\textsuperscript{197} That this city is located on Cos, rests on several likely inferences. First, the speaker describes her paramour, Delphis, as being from Myndus (ὅ Μῦνδιος...Δέλφις, 29), a town situated on the coast of Caria, just opposite Cos.\textsuperscript{198} Next, in line 115, as she reports Delphis’ seduction speech, the speaker places in his mouth the boast of an athletic victory for running against one Philinus (πρᾶν ποκα τὸν χαρίεντα τράχων ἔφθασα Φιλίνον), a character homonymous with an actual celebrated Coan runner who won, inter alia, Olympic victories in 264 and 260 BC.\textsuperscript{199} Finally, there are the more obscure details of, first, the oath νοὶ Μοίρας in line 160, the three occurrences of which in Herondas\textsuperscript{200} lead Gow to believe it a

\textsuperscript{195} Hopkinson, 154.
\textsuperscript{196} Segal (1985) 103.
\textsuperscript{197} Gow (1952) II 33. Gow suggests that line 80 (ἀς ἀπὸ γυμνασίου καλὸν πόνον ἀρτι ἁπόντων) also indicates the existence in the town of a gymnasium, but the word occurs only here, in a simile. The men are probably just coming from Timagetus’ palaestra and look as if they were coming from the gymnasium.\textsuperscript{198} Gow (1952) I xx and n. 2; Gow (1952) II ad 29; Dover (1971) 96; Hopkinson ad 29.
\textsuperscript{199} Paus. 6.17.2; Euseb. Chron. 1.208; Gow (1952) I xx and n. 2; Gow (1952) II ad 115; Dover (1971) 96; Hopkinson ad 29.
\textsuperscript{200} Once in the fourth Mimiamb (line 30), Women making a dedication and sacrifice to Asclepius, where a Coan setting is made explicit in the first two lines (χαίροις, ἄναξ Παίην, ὃς μέθεις Τρίκης καὶ Κῶν), and twice in the first, the Procuress (lines 11 and 66), where the setting, clearly outside of Egypt, could conceivably be Cos.
particularly Coan formula; and, second, the speaker’s mention in line 162 of an “Assyrian” from whom she learned her potions, which may reflect common associations between Babylonian transplants and the island of Cos. Thus, Theocritus more or less clearly situates the action of his poem in a recognizably Hellenistic milieu: a sizable city with a population of mixed ethnicity. In fact, since Cos was the birthplace of Ptolemy II and, according to the Suda-life at least, of Theocritus as well, it is an island rife with resonances for the particular themes under discussion.

Tremendous ambiguity, however, attends the more specific elements of the Idyll’s scene, that is, those that border directly on its central fragile-assertive self. In line 10 and the second of the two repeated refrains, first occurring at 69 (φράζεό μεν τόν ἔρωθ᾽ ὀθεν ἔκετο, πότνια Σελάνα), the speaker of the poem directly addresses herself to Selene; in lines 165-66, she addresses the stars as well. The night sky must, therefore, be visible to her. This fact, combined with the description of the sea’s sudden silence in 38 (ήνιδε στυγή μὲν πόντος), prompts Gow to posit an open air scene for the poem, “in, or near,” the speaker’s home, “perhaps the courtyard of the house or an open upper room.” Rist, apparently sharing something of this view, goes farther, suggesting that the speaker is “out by the seashore at night....” Heather White, however, judging it improbable that a Greek woman would be allowed to exit her house at night or that she and her maidservant would carry all of the requisite magic paraphernalia out of doors, counters that the scene “is clearly inside” the house, the speaker watching the moon and stars through

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201 Gow (1952) I, ad 160; Gow (1952) I xx and n. 2.
202 Vitruvius (9.6), for instance, reports that Berosus (fl. 290 BC), the Babylonian scholar who dedicated his history of his homeland to Antiochus I Soter (ca. 324-261 BC), had a school on the island. See Gow (1952) II 62 ad 162; Gow (1952) I, xx and n. 2.
203 On Cos, see the introduction, p. 9 and n. 45.
204 Gow (1952: II 33).
In support of her contention, White adduces the rather unconvincing parallel of *AP* 5.123, ascribed to Philodemus, where a lover invokes the moon while clearly beholding it through the windows of a home:

νυκτερινὴ δίκερως φιλοπάννυχε φαίνε, Σελήνη,
φαίνε δι’ εὐτρήτων βαλλομένη θυρίδων.

(1-2)

She also adduces the slightly more suggestive Oxyrhynchus papyrus fragment usually attributed to Sophron and possibly constituting a source for *Idyll* 2 which portrays a dramatic dialogue concerning preparations for a magical ceremony. Possibly devoted to Hecate, the ceremony takes place within a house whose doors are thrown open at the ritual’s climax in order to let the moonlight in:

...ἄγετε δή
πεπάσαθων μοι ταῖ θύραι
πάσαι· ύμεῖς δὲ ἐνταῦθα
ὁρήτε.

(10-13)

The problem with this comparandum, though, is that *Idyll* 2’s speaker never mentions windows in her home and makes only one reference to doors in line 6 (οὐδὲ θύρας ᾧραξεν), devoid of any deictic marker or indication of whether they are open or closed. Hence, although the speaker “can be imagined to address the moon and stars [and to hear the sea] as she looks at them through the window of her house,” the text is far from

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205 Rist (1978), 34.
206 White, 17-18.
207 White, 19.
208 Fr. 4 *PCG* (Kassel/Austin); cf. Gow (1952) II 33-35; Dover (1971), 97; Hopkinson, 155. The scholia to *Idyll* 2 claim that Theocritus derived the name of its protagonist’s slave-girl and her mission with some herbs (l 59-62) from a work of Sophron perhaps identifiable with that quoted in Athenaeus 11.480b by the title Ταί γυναικεῖς αἱ τάν θεάν φαντὶ ἐξελάν. Whether this Oxyrhynchus fragment (reprinted in Gow (1952) II 34) in fact derives from the mime in question is far from certain. The reference in the enigmatic title is almost universally understood as pertaining to exorcism.
209 White, 20.
clear on this point. Furthermore, although the speaker’s use of the preposition ἐς and deictic demonstrative τὸδε in her wish at line 50 to see her lover come for her in a mad frenzy appear to strengthen the contention that she is at least quite near her home, if not actually in it (ἂς καὶ Δέλφιν ἴδομι, καὶ ἐς τὸδε δῶμα περάσασι), Rist correctly observes that the ἐς may not bear the full semantic weight of into here at all. Rather, it may simply be equivalent to ποτὶ in the first of the two repeated refrains: Ἰουνξ, ἔλκε τὸ τῆνον ἐμὸν ποτὶ δῶμα τὸν ἄνδρα (first at line 17). Thus, while it is quite true that the Idyll establishes a spatial dynamic wherein the speaker’s fixed location at her home throughout the poem contrasts as a symbol of an interior, female world with the exterior, public life of her absent male lover, embracing the “contrasting but complimentary components” of centripetal movement, in which she seeks to draw her lover to her home, and centrifugal movement, in which she sends emissaries from her home out to him, there is no indication of an actual “interior of the house.” White, of course, suggests that the magic paraphernalia constitute prima facie evidence of such a setting, but I do not believe the text entitles us to make such a conclusion. However appropriate and “natural” it may be for the speaker to “bind” her lover through magic in the same interior of the same house where she first lay with him and to which he has not returned for some time, Theocritus omits the crucial decisive details, allowing, and even inviting, the ambiguity to stand.

Just as the precise physical location of the poem’s only speaker remains to some extent ambiguous, so, in ways more pronounced, does the speaker herself, suggesting

210 Rist (1975), 107.
211 Segal (1985), 105.
212 Pace Segal (1985), 104.
some thematic connection between the two areas of uncertainty. Theocritus simultaneously presents two contrasting pictures of the young woman, the one fashioned indirectly from subtle hints in the narratological background, the other, more directly, from the speaker’s carefully crafted narrative of her own behavior and emotions. The first mode of depiction paints her as a provocatively assertive self; the second, as an extremely fragile one. This central tension makes of the poem’s heroine the perfect embodiment of a soul twisted and tortured by the pangs of erôs; it also renders deeply ambiguous her social standing and her character.

The question of the speaker’s precise social status and standing belongs to the mimetic level of the poem, where, again, the relevant clues must be gathered from her monologue, the only direct speech act in the entire poem. First of all, she seems to live alone. This fact receives some corroboration in lines 100-143, where the girl describes her fateful first sexual encounter with Delphis, a meeting which clearly takes place in her home:

...α δ’ ἤνθε καὶ ἁγαγε τὸν λιπαρόχρον
εἰς ἔμα δόματα Δέλφιν· ἐγὼ δὲ νιν ὡς ἐνόησα
ἀρτι θύρας ὑπὲρ οὐδὸν ἀμειβόμενον ποδὶ κούφῳ....

(102-104)

No mention, direct or otherwise, is ever made of parents or relatives or of any other party resident in the domicile. Her household apparently consists only of herself and a single

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213 White, 20.
214 Gow (1952) II 33; Hopkinson, 154-155.
215 Dover (1971), 95.
female slave with whom her relationship is both conventional and more intimate, the slave constituting the only one, save Selene, in whom the speaker can confide (χουτω τῇ δώλῃ τὸν ἄλαθέα μῷθον ἔλεξα, 94). In terms of the ancient Greek social system, then, the speaker constitutes an anomaly, for she seems to lack the usual kyrios or male guardian responsible for the management of both her person and of any public affairs which might involve her, duties usually undertaken by a girl’s father until her marriage and her husband thereafter or by another male relative in the event of widowhood or divorce following her father’s demise. Even in the Hellenistic period, women needed kyrioi for legal transactions. The speaker of Idyll 2, however, seems to reside outside of this “canonical” social system. She occupies a liminal and ambiguous position, which, in the traditional Greek male view, was a dangerous one, belonging particularly to women and children, who, most likely by virtue of the symbolic associations of birth, were perceived as somehow closer to nature and the wild. Thus, while the speaker may simply be an orphan, as has been often assumed, the cultural assumptions that cluster around her peculiar set of circumstances would immediately suggest hetaira.

The fact that she later refers to the flute girl Philista as “ours” (τὰς ἀμάς ἀγάλητηρίδος,

216 That is, marked by the abuse typical of masters toward slaves, particularly in Comedy and mime (…δειλαια, πὰ τὰς φρένας ἐκποτάσαι; ἢ ὁ ἄνὴν, μυσταρά, καὶ τὴν ἐπίχαρμα τέτυμας; 19-20). See Dover, 103 ad 19f.; cf. Praxinoa’s treatment of Eunoe in Id. 15, esp. ll. 27-32; Herondas 4.41.
217 Gow (1952) II 33 and 57 ad 124.
218 Burton, 63; for kyrioi in fifth-century Athens, see Harrison, 109-115; Just, 26-27.
219 Shipley, 104; Pomeroy, 89-90; Burton, 55, 63, 77.
220 Ortner, 67-87. Hence derives the application of the adjective ἀδημήτος (“untamed”) to unmarried girls and the role of Artemis kourotrophos to lead young women from nature’s periphery to culture’s center. See Vernant, 112, 197-198, 216, 219; Segal (1985), 106.
221 Gow (1952) II 33; Dover, 95-6; Griffiths (1981), 264. Underneath line 5’s surface expression of the speaker’s all-consuming obsession with the object of her desire (οὔτε ἔγενναν πότερον θεοκαμες ἢ ζοοὶ εἰμίς), may even lie a hint of the stark cultural realities that attach to her liminal position, implying that, without a male to ratify her being, she exists outside of the very facticity of human life.
222 Dover, 95.
146) may strengthen this association, suggesting that the pair know each other from symposia where each supplied part of the entertainment. What is more, the speaker’s name, which is suppressed until line 101, is, in fact, identical with that of Aristophanes’ Megarian harlot in *Acharnians* 524. While such a name might find application in the mimetic context of a Theocritean *Idyll* solely because of its Doric form, its prior association with harlotry is also of prime importance.

Simaetha’s strongly assertive behavior toward Delphis can only reinforce this association. Throughout the poem, she displays overt and aggressive behavior toward Delphis that is atypical of traditional Greek women. The majority of the description of her relations with him, in fact, carefully inverts the standard modes of male-female interaction in the Greek world. For example, the *Idyll* opens with Simaetha lamenting the absence of her lover for the past eleven days, including the conspicuous detail that he has not, in that time, come knocking at her door:

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ός μοι δωδεκαταίος ἄφ᾽ ὁ τάλας οὐδὲ πωθίκει,
οὐδ᾽ ἔγινο πότερον τεθνάκομεις ἥ ζοοὶ εἰμές
οὐδὲ θύρας ἀροξεν ἄνάρσιος....
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(4, 6).

Simaetha thus presents the *topos* of the *paraklausithyron* turned on its head and glimpsed from the female perspective; here, we have not to do with a *lacrimans exclusus amator*, as we see in *Idylls* 3 and 11 and the *locus classicus*, Lucretius 4.1177-1184, but with a *querens inclusa amatrix*, if you will. Comparison with *Idyll* 14 casts the novelty of this

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223 Thanks to Barbara Breitenberger for pointing this possibility out to me in private conversation. Gow (1952: II 60 *ad* 145), who denies that the speaker is a *hetaira* (1952: II 33), maintains that the adjective indicates that the speaker employed Philista during a private rendezvous with Delphis, which is nonetheless commensurate to her being a *hetaira*. Cf. Dover (1971), 96: “...the status of ‘the mother of Philisto, our flute-girl, and of Melixo’ (146) turns on a point which admits of no clear answer, the meaning of ‘our.’”

224 Gow (1952) II 54 *ad* 101; Rist (1978), 34.

225 The scholiast to *Ach*. 524 describes it as Δωρικότερον (Gow (1952) II 54 *ad* 101; Rist (1978), 34).

situation into specific relief, for there the rejected male lover Aeschinas echoes

Simaetha’s words here almost exactly:

εἶκατι· ταί δ’ ὀκτώ, ταί δ’ ἐννέα, ταί δὲ δέκ’ ἀλλαί·
σάμερον ἐνδεκάτα· ποτίθες δύο, καὶ δύο μήνες
ἐξ ὧν ἀπ’ ἀλλάλων· οὐδ’ εἰ Ὑβρικιστὶ κέκαρμαι
οἶδε. Λύκος νῦν πάντα, Λύκω καὶ νυκτὸς ἀνώκται.

This novel representation of an erotic commonplace at the Idyll’s very beginning
emphasizes a general inversion throughout the poem’s action of the gender roles typical
for amorous encounters. To Simaetha belongs the narrative of love at first sight (76-84),
a prerogative usually reserved for a male lover.227 As we learn at lines 96-101, in the
very scene which reveals to us her name, Simaetha is the pursuer in the relationship,
summoning Delphis to her home for a liaison,228 an action Griffiths describes as “the
frankest sort of invitation” that “flouts even courtesan etiquette.”229 As Andrews has
suggested, this passage probably reworks Iliad 3.390, where Aphrodite, having rescued
Paris from the battlefield, approaches Helen to persuade her to go to him, saying:

ʿΑλέξανδρος σε καλεῖ οἶκονδε νέεσθαι.230 By having Simaetha instruct Thestylis to
play Aphrodite for her and Delphis, Theocritus highlights the incongruity of her situation,
casting her in the role of Paris. Later, Delphis likens Simaetha’s bold invitation to a foot
race, wherein she essentially beat him to the chase: ἦ ρά με, Σιμαίθα, τόσον ἐφθασας,

227 Griffiths, Poetry, 83. Contrast Idyll 11.25-27, where a corresponding account issues from the mouth of Polyphemus.

228 ἀλλὰ μολοίσα

tήρησον ποτὶ τὰν Τιμαγήτου παλαιόστραν·
tηνεὶ γὰρ φοιτη, τηνεὶ δὲ οἱ οὐκ αὐθήσθαι...κηπεῖ καὶ νῦν ἐόντα μάθης μόνον, ἀσυχα νεύον,
κεῖφ’ ὅτι “Σιμαίθα τυ καλεῖ”, καὶ ὑφαγέο τείδε (96-101).


230 Andrews, 33.
In his analogy, Simaetha assimilates to the male competitor, Philinus. When he responds to her invitation, Delphis appears to attempt to “normalize the situation by claiming that he was already in the process of taking the initiative...and by pretending that she remains to be seduced.”

Hence derive his protestations that he would have come to Simaetha’s home had she not anticipated him (ἐφθασας... / ἐς τὸ τεὸν καλέσασα τόδε στέγος ἦ 'μὲ παρῆμεν... / ἦνθον γὰρ κεν ἐγώ... / ἦ τρίτος ἦ τέταρτος ἐὸν φίλος αὐτίκα νυκτός / μᾶλα μὲν ἐν κόλποις Διωνύσιοι φυλάσσον, 114, 116, 118-120) and would have broken down her door with axes and torches had he found it barred (εἰ δ’ ἄλλα μ’ ὀθείτε καὶ ἄ θύρα εἶχε το μοχλῷ, 1 πάντως καὶ πελέκεις καὶ λαμπάδες ἦνθον ἐφ’ ὑμέας, 127-128). However, his words here seem “patently insincere” with their “suspiciously high-flown” στέγος for what Simaetha herself has dubbed a mere δῶμα (17 etc., 103). Furthermore, his ex post facto erotic commonplaces sound hollow, as if spoken for form’s sake, but lacking in real conviction. The persistent homoerotic overtones running throughout the speech also undercut the force of Delphis’ words. For example, when boasting of his prowess in running (114-115, quoted just above), he refers to his former opponent Philinus with the adjective χαρίεις, hardly a suitable description of the latter’s athletic ability, but perfectly apt for an estimation of erotic value.

Delphis’ further boast at 124-125 that he is considered nimble and handsome among all the young men (...καὶ γὰρ ἐλαφρός / καὶ καλὸς πάντεσσι μετ’ ἄιθεοις καλεδιμαι)

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231 Griffiths (1981), 262.
232 Hopkinson, 164 ad 130-138; Segal (1973), 38 and n. 23.
233 Burton, 84; cf. Idyll 3.6: 'Ω χαρίεις' Ἀμαρυλλί; Idyll 11.30: γινώσκω, χαρίεισα κόρα, τίνος σύνεκα φεύγεις.
likewise convicts itself by its inappropriateness to the context. Indeed, the ambiguity of Delphis’ desire is twice brought to the fore explicitly in comments of the irrelevance or uncertainty of his new love’s gender: εἶτε γυνὰ τήνω παρακέκλιται εἶτε καὶ ἀνήρ (44) and κεῖτε νῖν αὕτη γυναικὸς ἔχει πόθος εἴτε καὶ ἀνδρός, / ὀὐκ ἔφατ’ ἀτρεκές... (150-151). One wonders, then, whether Delphis’ conspicuously half-hearted comastic self-presentation in his speech to Simaetha does not more reflect her desires than his; after all, she is the one telling the story. Simaetha presents her adoption of the male roles as stemming from Delphis’ refusal to undertake them himself. When she vows at line 160 that Delphis “will knock on the gate of Hades,” should he ever cause her more grief (...αἱ δ’ ἐτι κά με / λυπη, τὸν Ἀἴδαο πύλαν, ναὶ Μοίρας, ἀφαξεί, 159-160), the striking violence of the image and fact that it precisely reverses the substance of her lament in the enklausithyron scene of line 6 emphasize this point. She will make Delphis perform the typical male role of exclusus amator in Hell if he will not of his own accord on earth. Simaetha’s mission for Thestylis to rub magical herbs on the threshold of Delphis’ house earlier in the poem (59-60) may be seen as her provision of a female substitute for the absentee exclusus amator. In this respect, she approximates the unbridled females of Euripidean drama, like Phaedra, whose depiction directly approaching Hippolytus in the first version of the play by that name won the characterization ἀπρεπὲς καὶ κατηγορίας ἀξίων from the hypothesizer.

234 Burton, 83-4; Griffiths (1981), 266.
235 Burton, 84.
236 Andrews, 42. She suggests that the words might even be Simaetha’s invention.
237 Griffiths (1981), 266. On Simaetha’s masculinity generally, see also ibid., p. 262.
238 Burton, 67.
239 Andrews, 44.
240 Hutchinson (157, n. 23) cites Phaedra in Euripides’ Hippolytus, Medea in Apollonius, and Ariadne in Catullus 64.86ff. precisely as evidence that Simaetha’s behavior is not surprising in its initiative.
Another method by which Theocritus portrays Simaetha’s usurpation of male prerogatives is through descriptions of ways, both literal and symbolic, that she and her female friends invade traditionally male spaces. The first instance occurs just after her initial complaint of Delphis’ absence, when she declares her intent to leave the seclusion of her home and actually go to the palaestra her male lover frequents in order to censure him personally for what she perceives as his mistreatment of her:

\begin{quote}
βασεύμαι ποτὶ τὰν Τιμαγήτου παλαίστραν
αὐριον ὡς νῦν ἴδω, καὶ μέμψομαι οἶά με ποιεῖ.
\end{quote}

Like most such institutions, Delphis’ particular palaestra is a privately owned club, as the genitive case name Τιμαγήτου indicates.\textsuperscript{241} Furthermore, as an exclusively male institution,\textsuperscript{242} Timagetus’ palaestra stands at the center of “a male-dominated elitist Greek world.”\textsuperscript{243} In proposing entry into this world, Simaetha envisages penetrating the barriers that separate male and female in Greek culture, appropriating something of the former group’s domain and power for herself. When, at the outset of her magical conjuring, Simaetha orders her maidservant to wreathe a bowl with crimson wool (στέψον τὸν κελέβαν φοινικέῳ οἰώς ἀῶτῳ, 2), she employs for “bowl” the term κελέβα, a word commonly used to designate the drinking vessels utilized in symposia and, thus, a token of male-dominated symposiastic culture.\textsuperscript{244} Therefore, the women’s act of garlanding

\textsuperscript{241}Gow (1952) II 38 ad 8; Dover (1971), 102 ad 8; Hopkinson, 157 ad 8.
\textsuperscript{242}Gow (1952) II 38 ad 8: it has been suggested that the latter were for boys in particular while the former served the elders, though Gow feels the distinction is overly rigid and perhaps false.
\textsuperscript{243}Burton, 65.
\textsuperscript{244}Burton, 65 and n. 74; Gow II 36 ad 2.
constitutes a figurative entry into the male symposium and a symbolic κατάδεσσεις of Delphis the man. The following declaration of the actual act of binding (ὡς τὸν ἐμὸν βαρὸν εἶντα φίλον καταδήσουμεν ἄνδρα, 3) reinforces this symbolism with its unusual syntax. The fronting of the object complements, beginning with the possessive, while postponing the direct object itself until line’s end, where it hangs starkly indefinite just after the verb, serves to underscore the inversion of roles Simaetha envisions. What is hers (τὸν ἐμὸν), a source of grief (βαρὸν εἶντα) but (or because!) beloved (φίλον) she will “tie down” (καταδήσουμεν): a man (ἄνδρα). Simaetha participates in a further invasion of the symposium indirectly, when her friend and gossip, the mother of Philista and Melixo, brings her the report of Delphis’ infidelity:

...αἰὲν Ὄρωτος
ἀκράτω ἐπέχειτο καὶ ἐς τέλος ὄχετο φεύγων,
καὶ φάτο οἱ στεφάνοις τὰ δόματα τήνα πυκαξεῖν. (151-153)

The references to garlands and the pouring of wine indubitably identify the symposium as the realm of Delphis’ activity and source of Philista’s mother’s information. Presumably she acquired this information from her daughter, the flute girl, who must have been employed there. Through the chain of gossip thus created, three different women have managed to infiltrate the male-only domain of the symposium and spy on its goings on. Under the circumstances, it becomes difficult not to read Idyll 2 as, in many respects, giving concrete expression to men’s deep-seated fears and insecurities in a culture where women were gaining increased prominence in public life. Indeed, as Burton has

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245 Gow (1952) II 37 ad 2.
246 So Gow (1952) II 60 ad 145.
247 Burton, 63 and n. 69; Shipley, 104-5. Of course, the Ptolemaic queen is the most dramatic example of this phenomenon. Cf. also Idyll 15.
observed, on one level, the poem certainly does reflect male anxiety about the increasing visibility of women in Hellenistic society, about unbridled female passion and desire, and about alien “others” actively engaged in subverting male dominance and authority.248

The mimetic introduction to the *Idyll* (lines 1-16) sets the stage for this reading by carefully constructing through the gradual accumulation of minute details a menacing, topsy-turvy quality for the world Theocritus depicts. The very first line, with its pair of rapid questions in anaphoric π.getRequestDispatcher("π\textregistered") (“where”) and clipped imperative (φेρε) interposed, serves to create a feeling of unease; the tone is urgent, perhaps even angry. For the audience, the abusive question π useDispatcher("π\textregistered") within the mime becomes a quite earnest one in the external world: *where* are we? The first name mentioned in the poem, that of Simaetha’s maidservant, Thestylis, just six words into the first line, provides a preliminary answer to this question, establishing something of a general context for the unfolding action, which can only add to a male audience’s sense of discomfort. Because the name obviously belongs to a servant or minion and is overtly feminine in form, probably borrowed from a mime of Sophron249 and possibly hypocoristic for the name of a sister of Dionysius I of Syracuse,250 it evokes the three fringe elements of the feminine, the foreign, and the low-born.251 The final word of the first line, φίλαρτρα, denoting drugs and other substances

248 Burton, 69.
249 See above, n. 15.
250 That is Θέσπη (Gow (1952: II 36)).
251 These elements are again linked together near the poem’s end (154), as Simaetha refers to her symposium informant, Phistia’s mother as ἀ ζέινα, a word that at once betokens the inappropriateness of the woman’s prying into a male symposium, on the one hand, but also her inclusion in the same marginal demimonde of women and foreigners as the Assyrian “stranger” (Ἀσσορία...παρὰ ζέινα, 162), who taught Simaetha her magical charms, on the other. Cf. Burton, 65: “Delphis is at the center of a male-dominated Greek world, defined by gymnasia and symposia. To counter his position, Simaetha is relocating herself into an alternative world of magic that privileges women rather than men.”
used in love charms,” completes this image of negative alterity, importing into the world of the poem the complex associations attendant upon the collocation of femaleness, foreignness, and magic in ancient Greece, where “[w]itchcraft offered one countercultural, private source of psychological power to women who were seemingly without resource.” The classical embodiment of such a complex of elements is Euripides’ Medea, who represented a clear, violent threat to the stability of male hegemony. The present context underscores the self-assertiveness involved in Simaetha’s use of magic as she proceeds to recount in lines 4-9 Delphis’ betrayal of her and the anger it has provoked, neatly encompassing her statements in a miniature inclusio (3, 10) achieved with the resolute καταδήσσωμαι. Once she finally reiterates her intent to ensorcell the wayward Delphis in line 10 (νῦν δὲ νῦν ἐκ θυέων καταδήσσωμαι) and then invokes Selene for the first time in 10-11, Hecate immediately thereafter in 11-14, a complete image comes into focus. Though using the archaic form of three separate addresses to three divine names, Simaetha is here invoking the triform goddess of the cross-roads, an act completed in line 33 with the abortive address to Artemis and accompanied by a triple libation and triple prayer at 43 (ἐς τρὶς ἄποσπένδω καὶ τρὶς τάδε, πότνια, φωνῶ), the goddess’ appearance “at the triple cross-roads” intervening at 36 (ἄ θεος ἐν τριόδοισι). The symbolic associations of the goddess include darkness,
the secret, the feminine, and magic. With her entrance into the *Idyll*, the unconventional Simaetha consolidates her position as Medea, who displayed special devotion to Hecate (Eur. *Medea* 395-398).\(^{256}\) Indeed, whereas the Assyrian stranger taught Simaetha her use of φάρμακα (161-162), in the preparation of which she invokes Hecate as a co-conspirator (χαίρ’, Ἐκάτα δοσπλήτη, καὶ ἐς τέλος ὁμοίν ὀπάδει, ἰ φάρμακα ταῦτ’ ἔρδοισα, 14-15), in Apollonius’ *Argonautica*, Hecate herself taught Medea:

κούρη τις μεγάροισιν ἐνιτρέφετ’ Αἴτταο, 
τὴν Ἐκάτη περίαλλα θεὰ δἀ τεχνήσωσθαι 
φάρμαχ’ ....

(III 528-530)

Thus, when Simaetha concludes the *Idyll*’s introduction by drawing an explicit comparison between herself, on the one hand, and Circe and Medea, on the other,\(^{257}\) she merely confirms what the audience has already come to suspect. Simaetha, a woman outside the bounds of conventional womanhood, invokes a deity outside the traditional Olympian pantheon\(^{258}\) for secret, conspiratory acts against the male establishment. We note that she will sing her charms to the goddess “quietly” (ποταείσομαι ὂςυχα, 11), just as Thestylis is to nod “quietly” to get Delphis’ attention and solicit him for Simaetha (κηπεῖ κα’ νιν ἐόντα μάθης μόνον, ὂςυχα νεῦσον, 100). This shared discretion unites the women in a cabal, moving in the shadows toward the illicit.\(^{259}\) The fact that, during all of this, Simaetha remains unnamed, hence somehow hidden from full view, adds to

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\(^{256}\) Hunter, 155; Dover (1971), 100; Burton, 64.

\(^{257}\) On the vexed question of “Perimede,” see Gow (1952) II 39 ad 15f.; Dover, 102-103 ad 15f.; Hopkinson, 158 ad 16.

\(^{258}\) Burton, 69.

\(^{259}\) I would submit that, given its connection with that same word in line 100, ὂςυχα in line 11 provides some evidence that Simaetha may indeed be outside her home during her conjuring. Why else would she have need of such discretion? Surely she would not, were she safely ensconced within her own domicile.
the tense, sinister atmosphere of darkness and secrecy. She exists merely as an unidentified voice of female anger, lashing out in vengeance at the man who spurned her.

The contrasting language of physical description Simaetha applies to herself and Delphis throughout the rest of the poem underscores the disjunction between the secretive, interior world of the woman and the external, public world of the man for whom she aims. When Simaetha prays in lines 50-51 that Delphis pass back into her house “out of the shining palaestra” (λιπαρός ἐκτοσθε παλαίστρας), she establishes an equation between the external as betokened by the emphatic compound preposition ἐκτοσθε in favor of a simplex form, the public world of Delphis as symbolized by the male institution of the palaestra, and a brightness which properly pertains to the sheen of oil smeared over the surface of the skin. This same equation appears again at line 79, in Simaetha’s description of Delphis’ and his companion Eudamippos’ appearance on the day when she first saw them (στήθεα δὲ στίλβοντα πολὺ πλέον ἦ τύ, Σελάνα / ὡς ἀπὸ γυμνασίῳ). In her description of Delphis alone at 102-103 (τὸν λιπαρόχρονον ...Δέλφιν), we again find this emphasis on his shiny exterior. Simaetha associates herself and her own condition, by contrast, with the dark and internal, portraying her condition in a way that precisely opposes her descriptions of Delphis. In her depiction at line 39 of the inner turmoil within her breast (ἀ δ᾽ ἐμὰ ὡ στερνὸν ἑντοσθεν ἀνία), the emphatic preposition ἑντοσθεν anticipates its converse, ἐκτοσθε, in line 51 in

260 Cf. ...ἔγὼ δ᾽ ἐπὶ Δέρπην δόρφῳ | οἰθω (23-24); ἄλλα ἐπὶ τήνω πᾶσα καταίθομαι... (40).
261 Segal (1985), 110.
262 Griffiths, Poetry, 87.
connection with Delphis. Whereas, in Delphis’ case, Simaetha’s vision sees no deeper than his shiny skin, in considering her own predicament, her gaze penetrates within:

\[ \alpha\lambda\in\hat{\in} \kappa\epsilon\phi\omicron\varsigma \delta\nu\iota\alpha\iota\kappa\omicron\phi\rho\omicron\varsigma \alpha', \; \tau'i\; \mu\iota\nu\mu\iota \alpha\nu \epsilon\kappa\rho\omega\varsigma \alpha\iota\mu\alpha \\epsilon\mu\phi\varsigma \omega\varsigma \lambda\iota\mu\iota\alpha\iota\zeta \iota\pi\iota\alpha \epsilon\kappa \beta\delta\epsilon\lambda\lambda\iota \pi\epsilon\pi\tau\omega\kappa\iota\varsigma. \]

She also closely associates her divine partner-in-crime, Hecate, with internal physiology, with blood and darkness, describing the goddess “going among the tombs of the dead and (their) black blood” (ἐρχομέναν νεκύων ἀνά τ’ ἡρία καὶ μέλαν αἴμα, 13). Here, the word “blood” again occurs in emphatic, final position.

Yet, despite the fact that so much in the portrayal of Simaetha marks her as either an obvious and unabashed hetaira or a “suburban Medea,” actively impinging on male prerogatives, there remains a curious dissonance in the form of inconsistencies which problematize her characterization and might suggest, in fact have suggested to many critics, a modicum of ironic humor about her. To begin with, her behavior notwithstanding, Simaetha is no great, tragic heroine, no Euripidean Phaedra or Medea. She is a contemporary woman of apparently humble means, who must borrow from a friend finery in which to attend a religious festival (κόμψισταλμένα ταν ξυστίδα

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263 This same line, contrasting Simaetha’s condition as it does with the calm of the sea and wind noted in the preceding line, further emphasizes the sense of isolation about Simaetha, of being trapped within. See Burton, 67.

264 Andrews, 37: “...Delphis turns out to be only a gleaming external surface....” Andrews (37, n. 70) dissents from Segal’s emphasis that Simaetha is all interior.

265 Segal (1985), 111.

266 Dover (1971), 95.

267 These critics read Simaetha as a naive simpleton from whom the audience remains separated by the same sort of ironic distance operative in these other two Idylls: so Hopkinson, 156; White, 20-22; cf. C. Segal, “Underreading and Intertextuality: Sappho, Simaetha, and Odysseus in Theocritus’ Second Idyll,” Arctura 17 (1984) passim.
The fact that she has a female servant suggests that Simaetha is not completely indigent, however; rather, she seems solidly bourgeois. Moreover, whatever prurient overtones her name and lack of a male guardian may carry, Simaetha claims to have been a virgin before her affair with Delphis, marriage her “respectable aim”:269 ...ός με τάλαιναν / ἄντι γυναικὸς ἔθηκε κακόν καὶ ἀπάρθενον ἦμεν (40).270

Despite her apparent freedom to leave her house spontaneously for the fateful festival of Artemis (66-85)271 as well as, perhaps, to perform her magical rites and make the visits to other conjurers described at 90-91 and, presumably, 162, Simaetha remains somehow restrained within her home from going forth to Delphis once their affair has begun.272

Her threat at lines 8-9 to go to Timagetus’ palaestra and rebuke the man in person remains just that, a threat; it is Thestylis who actually makes the trip at 96-101.273

Simaetha’s house becomes a locus of some passivity and a fulcrum point around which others move within the mime. When she asks, at the outset of the narrative of her affair, “Who brought me this evil?” (τίς μοι κακόν ἔγαγε τοῦτο; 65), Simaetha emphasizes this aspect of her situation.274 The inversion of the paraklausithyron topos in the Idyll’s introduction, whereby Simaetha becomes an inclusa amatrix, passively pining for her absent lover’s return, similarly bespeaks this view, even as Theocritus is setting her up in the role of a powerful and shameless witch. Idyll 3 features a similar paradox in that the goatherd who is the poem’s sole speaker stands before his beloved’s cave performing a

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268 Gow (1952) II 33; Griffiths (1981), 260; Dover (1971), 96; Hopkinson, 155.
269 Rist (1978), 34.
270 Gow (1952: II 33) and Dover (1971: 95) take these lines as evidence that she is not a hetaira.
271 Lines 71-3 (κατεύξατο καὶ λιπάνεσε / τῶν πομπῶν θάσσοθι η ′ ἐγὼ δὲ οἴ ἄ μεγάλοιτος / ὀμάρτειν) indicate that, as she represents it, Simaetha had no prior plans to attend the festival and that the decision was spur of the moment. On this, see Andrews, 29-30.
272 Segal (1985), 104 and n. 2, 105; Segal (1973), 42 and n. 30.
more or less “standard” paraklausithyron as if an urban suitor, despite the fact that, far from being barred by a locked door, the only barrier between himself and the object of his desire is a covering of ivy (14), which he should very well be able to penetrate.

Moreover, just as there remains in that Idyll the humorous suggestion that the goatherd’s unresponsive Amaryllis is in fact the statue of a nymph, incapable of responding to him in the way that he desires, so in Idyll 2, as we have seen, Delphis’ self-flattery in his speech to Simaetha might indicate a keener interest in the boys of the palaestra and gymnasium than in a woman like her. There is even present in her name, perhaps derived from the adjective σμός or “snub-nosed,” the hint that Simaetha is physically unattractive to Delphis. If such a reading is intended, however, Theocritus does not nearly exploit the situation for its full humorous potential, as he so clearly does in the case of Polyphemus in Idyll 11.30-33 or the goatherd in Idyll 3, who actually whines pathetically: “Is it that I appear to you snub-nosed from up close?” (ἡ ῥά ἡς τοι σμός καταφαινομαι ἐγγύθεν ἡμεν...; 8). That Theocritus restrains himself from such a moment in Idyll 2 should give pause to any search for consistent ironic humor in the

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273 Note that she never actually invades a symposium either. Id. 14.34-6 dramatizes the possible violence that might have awaited her physical disruptions in that sphere.
274 Segal (1985), 105.
275 Griffiths, Poetry, 84.
277 In her complete silence throughout the poem, fantastic choice of living quarters, and name, from the verb ὑμαρφόσσο, “to sparkle,” suggestive of her “characteristic activity” of peering out from her cave at the speaker, the object of the goatherd’s passion “seems little more than a disembodied figure – the essence of a flashing glance, or the personification of the seductiveness inherent in that glance” (Gutzwiller (1991: 119). Thus, some commentators suggest that Amaryllis may actually be a statue of a nymph commonly worshipped in caves throughout the Greek countryside; see Gutzwiller (1991), 120; Walker, 47-48. Interestingly, in the first scene depicted on the goatherd’s cup Idyll 1, where two men wrangle with words over a girl, who flippantly turns her attention now to the one, now to the other, the goatherd says of the men that they struggle in vain (ἐτώσια μοχθιζοντι, 38), for the girl is fickle. Hunter (1999: ad 38, 80) even notes how meter reinforces sense here: “The first spondeiazon of the poem completes the scene; the heavy rhythm is mimetic of the men’s wasted labor” (see also Halperin, 178). The scholiast remarks: τὸ δὲ ἐτώσια μοχθιζοντι· μάτην κάμνουσιν. τὶς γὰρ ἂν ἀγάλματι πεῖσαι δινήσεται; (Σ 38e, Wendel).
Insofar as much of Simaetha’s speech is directed at a divinity, the first part of it comprising a performance of magical rites, her high-flown Homeric diction may even well match the mimic context, as the “intrusion of poetic language, characteristic of ritual utterances.” Simaetha’s portrayal thus fails to produce the same degree of broad, ironic humor in *Idyll 2* as *Idyll 3*’s goatherd or *Idyll 11*’s Polyphemus. Griffiths writes: “The mixture of the higher sort of style and the lower sort of setting characterizes *Idyll 2* no less [than *Idyll 3, inter alia*], though not to humorous effect. Nor do we feel the same sense of ironic detachment from Simaetha as from the other vain lovers.”

We do not feel this detachment because of the unique manner of narrative control Simaetha exerts over the entirety of the poem, filtering other characters, their words, and deeds through her perspective. As Segal’s interpretation demonstrates, a reading of Simaetha as ultimately a “naive, inexperienced, and eager young girl” depends upon the assumption that her record is impartial, that, for instance, in her report at lines 112-43 of her first sexual experience with Delphis, “[s]he quotes his words verbatim, even though it is at least two weeks since the event...as if she remembers every syllable of that fateful hour.” On three separate occasions, though, the narrator emphasizes that truth and accuracy arise in the poem as functions of the speech and judgment of herself or her friends:

- χοῦτο τῷ δόλῳ τὸν ἁλαθέα μῆθον ἐλεξα (94); οὐκ ἐφατ’ ἀτρεκὲς ἴδεν (151);
- ἰδον ὃς ἐμάνην (82; cf. *Iliad* 14.294: ὃς δ’ ἴδεν ὃς μην Ἕρως πυκνῶς φρένας ἀμφεκάλυψεν), εἰ δ’ ἀγε (95), νοτάσσον ἑρείν (107), ὑπατοῦ μῆθον (113), ἀνέκα πέρ τε ποτ’ ὕπαντ’ ἐπεροχὸν ἦποι Ἐδώ τὰν ῥοδόδεσσαν ἀπ’ ἁκεανοῦ φέροισα (147-148).

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278 In particular, lines 115 and 124-5. See Burton 83-84.
279 Dover (1971), 95.
280 Some of the more obvious epicisms include: τέτρυσαι (20), Δίς (46), κατ’...βάλλω (54), ἐκ...πέπωκας (56), ἐκ τίνος ἀρξομαι; (65), χώς ἴδον ὃς ἐμάνην (82; cf. *Iliad* 14.294: ὃς δ’ ἴδεν ὃς μην Ἕρως πυκνῶς φρένας ἀμφεκάλυψεν), εἰ δ’ ἀγε (95), νοτάσσον ἑρείν (107), ὑπατοῦ μῆθον (113), ἀνέκα πέρ τε ποτ’ ὕπαντ’ ἐπεροχὸν ἦποι Ἐδώ τὰν ῥοδόδεσσαν ἀπ’ ἁκεανοῦ φέροισα (147-148).
281 Dover, 95.
283 Andrews, 21-53 is alone in stressing this point. In the narratological terms Andrews appropriates from De Jong, we have only the *text*, the whole poem, and the *story*, Simaetha’s internal narration of the events, but not the *fabula*, the events themselves.
These lines look back to Hesiod’s Muses, who “know how to speak many falsehoods as though they were true” (ἰδμὲν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἑτύμοισιν ὀμοῖα, Theog. 27). They indicate that Simaetha’s quotations of direct speech contain her particular focalization of that speech, that she is not simply replaying others’ words disinterestedly for the record, but reconstructing them in specific ways, so as to ensure a particular interpretation.

Throughout the Idyll, Simaetha acts as a Homeric narrator, carefully stage managing her narrative so as to maintain a believable and sincere voice of naive innocence and to define and interpret her erotic experience in a manner sympathetic to herself. Her use of the conspicuous epic speech formula φάτο μῦθον (113) precisely at the moment that she quotes the apparent ipsissima verba of Delphis’ persuasive speech emphasizes this narrative role.

When Simaetha describes Delphis at the beginning of their first encounter as having his “eyes fixed upon the ground” (ἐπὶ χθονὸς ὀμματα πῆξις, 112), recalling the quite similar description the Trojan Antenor provides of the wily Odysseus in the Teichoskopia of Iliad 3, she establishes an analoguey between Delphis and polymetis Odysseus that is designed to color herself as simple and straightforward by contrast. In her telling, Delphis becomes a cunning, predatory...

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284 Segal (1984), 201.
285 For an opposing reading of these lines, see Segal (1984), 203.
286 On the significance of this scene to Theocritus’ pastoral poetry, see Gutzwiller (1991), 31-2.
287 Andrews, 31; Gross, 55, who speaks of “Simaetha’s recollection and recreation of that [i.e. Delphis’] address.”
288 Andrews, 21-22.
291 So Segal (1984), 204. Andrews, 36-41, invokes the further Homeric passage of Od. 6.136-85, where Odysseus first appears to Nausicaa, to suggest that the intent behind Simaetha’s echoes of Homer are not to cast Delphis as Odysseus the wily, but to highlight the differences between Delphis, who at first seems...
character; the high poetic diction and skillful deployment of erotic commonplaces she places in his mouth bolster this effect. The violent and destructive image of erôs “he” presents in the climax of “his” speech, as a force that can “rout with its evil madness a maiden from her bedchamber and impel a bride to leave the still warm bed of her husband” (σὺν δὲ κακάίς μανίασι καὶ παρθένον ἐκ θαλάμῳ καὶ νύμφαν ἐφόβησ’ ἔτι δέμνια θερμὰ λιποίσαν / ἀνέρος, 133-138), drives home the predatory stance Simaetha attributes to him. The harsh enjambment of the final word “husband” (ἀνέρος) at a rare first foot diaeresis with large hyperbaton from νύμφαν provides a verbal reenactment of the deleterious effect such erotic desire can have on conventional male-female relationships. In her final summation of the encounter, Simaetha sharply contrasts Delphis’ aura of control and manipulation with her own naïveté: she was “quick to believe” him (ταχὺς ἐπιθής, 138) and “quickly” (τὰχυ, 140) yielded to his skillful suasion. These editorial comments seek to mitigate Simaetha’s sense of responsibility for what happened by attributing it to akrasia on her part and to Delphis’ rhetorical disingenuousness that consciously played upon the genuineness of her feelings.
Whereas he speaks frankly of *erôs’* brute sexual force, Simaetha resorts to gentle euphemisms.296 In her words, she and Delphis “whispered sweetly” (καὶ ἔψυχοςδόμες ὀδό, 141) during their encounter, where “the greatest things were done” (ἐπράχθη τὰ μέγιστα, 143). This last turn of phrase, conspicuous in its avoidance of specifying the actors and, hence, attributing responsibility, recalls the cryptic language adherents of the mysteries use and makes of Simaetha’s pledge to Selene to “make a long story short” (ὡς καὶ τοὶ μὴ μακρὰ φίλα θρυλέοιμι Σελάνα, 142) almost an oath to the presiding deity not to divulge secret rites.297 As a result, “[a] scene that should show...[Simaetha] being corrupted in fact serves above all to establish her unassailable purity of heart.”298 True to the subtlety of Theocritean realism, however, not all of the details of Delphis’ speech adhere to Simaetha’s focalization. For, as we have seen, subtle hints that Delphis’ primary interest lies with boys, which might betray rather cool feelings on his part toward Simaetha, run throughout. The fact that her editorial control over the discourse is incomplete renders the overall phenomenon all the more apparent and suggests that it consists not so much in outright lies as spin.299

Simaetha begins creating that spin much earlier in the poem, in the form of three allusions to Sappho fr. 31 *LP* (Voigt),300 each of which exhibits a rupture between surface and latent meaning, allowing Simaetha’s redactorial hand to show through the resulting gaps. All three allusions occur in contexts directly touching her relations with Delphis, and all three seek to establish for her a position of childlike innocence and traditional

296 Hopkinson, 165 *ad* 143.
297 Lawall (1961), 293.
299 We could, and perhaps should, simultaneously read Simaetha’s commentary as indicative of her inner self-reproach for believing and giving in too quickly.
300 See Segal (1984), 201-209.
womanly passivity. Insofar as they derive from Sappho’s φαίνεται μοι, however, the allusions also inevitably import into the Idyll evocations of intense, jealous passion and frustrated erotic desire, not at all commensurate with the self-conception Simaetha seeks to advance.

The first allusion, actually two allusions in one, comes in lines 82-3, when Simaetha first glimpses Delphis and describes how the sight affected her:

χῶς ἴδον ὡς ἐμύνην, ὡς μοι τυρί θυμὸς ἱφθη
dειλαίας, τὸ δὲ κάλλος ἐτάκετο.

A strikingly similar turn of phrase in fr, 31 describes Sappho’s reaction to watching her beloved converse “sweetly” with a man:

301 ως γὰρ ἐς σ’ ἴδω βρόξε’, ὡς με φάναι-
σ’ οὐδ’ ἐν ἐτ’ εἴκει

(7-8).

In context, these lines preface Sappho’s account of her jealous desire as though a form of sickness. The passivity inherent in the basic notion of love as disease, however, opens up to Simaetha a divergent interpretational possibility which she attempts to exploit through her use of the intertext. Simaetha proceeds in the following lines of Idyll 2 to relate the physical effects of the erotic “mania” which the sight of Delphis has kindled in her. In essence, the description stands in epexegetical relation to the central notice of line 83, set off between the trithemimeral caesura and bucolic diaeresis: τὸ δὲ κάλλος ἐτάκετο.302

Simaetha experiences erôs primarily as a wasting sickness,303 a shared characteristic of

301 Hopkinson, 161-2 ad 82; neither Gow (1952: II 51-2) nor Segal (1984) note this line as a Sapphic reference.
302 Gow (1952: II ad loc.) makes a good point in distinguishing the sense of κάλλος here, “color, vivacity, brightness of the eye, and so forth,” from a more permanent notion of “beauty.” The phrase describes an immediate effect of seeing Delphis and anticipates the description at 88-90 without saying exactly the same thing.
303 ...ἀλλά με τις καπνυρά νόσος ἐξεσάλοξεν
Theocritean fragile selves. She identifies her disease in line 85 as “some drying sickness” (τις καπωρά νόσος), recalling discussions in the Hippocratic corpus of sexual intercourse as a precautionary measure against the “drying out” of the womb, a condition which leads to the madness of “hysteria.” This connection places Simaetha in direct relation to conventional Greek notions of womanhood as essentially passive in the sexual sphere and requiring the stabilizing effect of a man through marriage. Her command to Thestylis in line 95 to “find a cure” (εὑρέ τι μήχος) helps bolster this association with “a phrase reminiscent of the Homeric epic formula οὐδὲ τι μήχος and implying that Simaetha feels ἀμήχανος, that is, helpless against the disease that has assailed her and as if there is no relief.” Simaetha’s self-diagnosis also emphasizes, however, her nature as a sexual being, especially when considered in the light of the sensational account Plato provides in Timaeus 91, where the potentially wandering womb is described as a

κείμαι δ’ ἐν κλιντήρι δέκ’ ἄματα καὶ δέκα νύκτας.
...
καὶ μεν χρός μὲν ὀμοίος ἑγίνετο πολλάκις θάψα
ἐρρευν δ’ ἐκ κεφαλᾶς πάσσαι τρίχες, αὐτὰ δὲ λοιπὰ
ὀστὶ’ ἐτ’ ἥς καὶ δέρμα... (85-90).

304 The exact same word, ἐτάκατο, characterizes the fate of Daphnis in Idyll 1 (66). Polyphemus in Idyll 11 suffers the same condition: καὶ ταῦτ’ ἄμασ ἐπ’ ἄμαρ ὅρεινδα με λεπτύνοντας (69). In the section of Idyll 4 depicting the cows as suffering lovers, for example (12-27), Korydon observes that as a result of their longing for the absent Aigon, the heifers no longer wish to eat (οὐκέτι λώντι νέμεσθαι, 14). Battus picks up on this remark and makes repeated reference to the cows’ thinness: λεπτὸς μὲν χό ταῦρος ὁ πυρρίχος (20) and, before that, τήνας μὲν δὴ μοι τάς πόρτος αὐτὰ λέξεις / τόστια, μὴ πρόκας στίζεται ὰστερὸ τεττίξ; (15-16; see Lawall (1967) 44-5). Notice that this characteristic transcends lines of gender, as if to suggest the destructive effects of erōs make no distinction. Cf. Faraone (1999), 165: “This startling flexibility in the victim’s constructed gender seems to presuppose a belief that men and women are essentially the same species and partake of the same nature.” The fact that a man, Theocritus, is the author of this astonishing woman’s speech in the first place underscores the melting of male and female.

305 On the Seed (4) recommends sexual intercourse as beneficial to women. On the nature of woman (8) makes it clear that one such effect is the curing and prevention of “the wandering womb,” a condition, discussed also in Plato’s Timaeus (91), brought on by a ‘drying out’ of the womb stemming from a lack of intercourse (On the diseases of women (1.7)). Such ancient testimonia as these underline the inherited concept of hysteria. See Blundell, 100-1; Lefkowitz, 12-25.

306 Cf. Blundell, 101: “[T]he restlessness of the womb is suggestive of a basic physiological instability to which a woman inevitably falls victim unless a man intervenes in her life.”

307 Andrews, 32; Gow (1952) II ad loc also notes the similarity to the Iliadic line.

70
“desirous animal within” (ζῷον ἐπιθυμητικὸν ἐνόν). Like the male member, it is
“rebellious and masterful, as an animal heedless of reason and maddened with the sting
of lust” (ἀπειθές τε καὶ αὐτοκρατές γεγονός, οὗν ζῷον ἀνυπήκοον τοῦ λόγου, πάντων
dι’ ἐπιθυμίας οἰστρώδεις, 91b-c). Moreover, when Simaetha prefaces the declaration of
her sickness with the lines: οὐκέτι πομπᾶς / τήνας ἐφρασάμαν, οὐδὲ ὡς πάλιν οὐκαδ’ ἄπηνθον / ἔγνων, 2.83-85), τήνας ἐφρασάμαν and ἔγνων, both in initial, enjambed
positions, emphasize that her lonely suffering results from a fundamental neglectfulness
on her part, just as οὐδὲ ἔγνω in line 5 was emblematic of Delphis’ act of neglect. Since
the description of her physical symptoms proceeds upon these statements, the surface
context suggests that we interpret her neglectfulness as a failure of normal mental
functioning, resulting in a loss of attention to considerations of time and place. As
Simaetha lay on the couch for ten days and ten nights (86), she presumably took little to
no thought for the care of her body, its health and grooming, like Aeschinas in Idyll 14,
whom Thyonichus jocularly taunts for gaunt countenance and the girlish appearance of his
long hair, neglected as a result of his similar lovelorn state (ταῦτ’ ἄρα λεπτός, / χῶ
μύστος πολὺς ὦτος, ἀνυσταλέοι δὲ κίκιννοι, 3-4).\footnote{308} However, given that the object of
ἐφρασάμαν is the festival of Artemis (πομπᾶς τήνας), who, as the wild mistroess of
beasts and perpetual Parthenos,\footnote{309} has connections in the poem both with the secret, inner
world of females\footnote{310} and with Simaetha’s avowed maidenhood prior to being with
Delphis, Simaetha’s failure to pay attention to the procession as a result of her erotic
desire in effect symbolizes that she has turned her back on the religious and social

\footnote{308} See Gow (1952) II ad 4. Note again the blurring of male and female attributes in this depiction.
\footnote{309} See Vernant, e.g., 196.
expectations of her behavior as a conventional Greek girl. “She is punished emotionally for transgressing the spatio-sexual boundaries of the female role.”

The second allusion in lines 82-3 also cleaves two ways and derives from the fact that Sappho fr. 31.7-8 itself reworks Iliad 14.294 (ὡς δ᾽ ἤδεν ὡς μιν ἔρως πυκνῶς φρένας ἀμφεκάλυψεν), describing how Zeus lost his wits over the sight of Hera under the influence of erōs in the famous Διὸς ἀπάτη. While, on the surface, the intertext helps depict the havoc deceptive erōs can wreak in a sufferer’s mind, underneath, it suggests that Simaetha, like Hera, is being untruthful; she is the seducer, not the seduced.

310 See Burton, 68.
311 Indeed, as Arist. Lys. 1189-93, evidence, it was customary for Greek women of the classical age to lend one another clothes for festival occasions, especially to the daughters of prominent families selected as basket-bearers for Artemis (Dover (1971), 106). So Simaetha’s borrowing of clothing from Klearista may not so much indicate her poverty as that she is to be a basket-bearer, too, along with Anaxô, who is described as heading the procession of the festival Simaetha regards as the start of her woes (so Gow (1952: II 49 ad 66), just before the stanza in which the Thracian nurse invites Simaetha herself to come along, and is characterized as ἂμμιν (66). In this case, Simaetha’s getting sidetracked by desire for Delphis on the way to the festival constitutes not only a neglect of traditional womanly roles, but a sacred offence. However, juxtaposed to Anaxô, the obvious virgin, and Theumaridas’ Thracian nurse, who, described as μακαρίτις, the equivalent of our “may she rest in peace,” died since the time she proffered her invitation to the festival, Simaetha forms the center of a pantheon of three women just as Selene, with whom she is especially connected through her narrative refrain, forms the center of a pantheon of three goddesses, together with Artemis, the virgin, and Hecate, whom Hesiod (Theog. 450, 453) describes as a nurse (κούροτρόφος) and is associated, at least from the Homeric Hymn to Demeter on, with the underworld. Given Selene’s love for Endymion and the significance of her story to the Theocritean conception of unfulfilled love (cf. Id. 3.50), the reader perhaps expects Simaetha to be a sexual being, rather than a chaste basket-bearer for Artemis. This ambiguity and conflict of representations could again result from the discrepancy between Simaetha’s self-presentation and her reality. On Artemis, virginity, and marriage, see, e.g., Vernant, 217-9.
312 Segal (1985), 114.
313 Hopkinson, 161-162 ad 82.
314 Cf. Id. 3.42, describing Atalanta’s “falling for” Hippomenes: ὡς ἦδεν ὡς ἐμάνη, ὡς ἐς βοθὺν ὅλατ’ ἔρωτα. The structure of this line mimics exactly that of 2.82, with only the minor change of the person of the two initial aorist verb forms to reflect the change in subject (ἦδεν vs. ἦδον and ἐμάνη vs. ἐμάνην) and the significant difference in substance for the second exclamation. Both lines, though, display the same metrical structure (ddsd), and both final exclamations, while different, yet describe the identical passion of falling in love.
The second and longest of the Sapphic allusions in *Idyll 2* forms the climax of Simaetha’s self-presentation as passive sufferer of *erōs* in lines 106-110, where she recounts her physical reaction to seeing Delphis cross the threshold of her house:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{πάσα} & \text{ μὲν} \; \text{ἐνυψώθη} \text{μεν} \; \chiλόνος \; \piλέον, \; \epsilon\kappa \; \delta' \; \muετώπω \\
\text{idρώς} & \text{ μεν} \; \kοχύδεσκεν \; \iotaσσον \; νοτίασιν \; έéραις, \\
\text{oυδέ} & \text{ τι} \; \φωνήσαι \; \dυνάμαιν, \; \oυδ' \; \os̄σον \; \epsilonν \; \υπίνω \\
\text{kυνυζώνται} & \text{φωνεύ}οντα \; \phiλιαν \; \piοτι \; \muατερα \; \τέκνα·} \\
\text{άλλο} \; & \; \epsilon\pάγην \; \dαγύδη \; \kαλόν \; \chiρό\a \; \pάντοθεν \; \iotaσσα.
\end{align*}
\]

These lines clearly echo Sappho’s experience of watching the “godlike man” speaking with her beloved:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{άλλο} \; & \; \α\kα\kαν \; \μὲν \; \γλώ\sα\a \; \tau' \chiαγε' \Rightarrow \; \lambda\epsilon\pτον \\
\text{δ'} & \; \omega\uμ\kτικα \; \chiρό \; \piυρ \; \uπαδεδρόμηκεν, \\
\text{οππάτεσσι} & \; \δ' \; \oυδ' \; \epsilonν \; \ορημι', \; \epsilonπιρρόμ- \\
\text{βεισι} & \; \delta' \; \ακουαι, \\
\text{kάδ'} & \; \delta' \; \mu' \; \iotaδρως \; \ψυχρος \; \epsilonχει, \; \tρόμος \; \delta' \\
\text{παίσαν} & \; \alpha\gρει, \; \chiλωροτέρα \; \delta' \; \piο\iας \; \\
\text{εμμι....} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

(9-15).

A key difference between the two passages, though, lies in the fact that Simaetha’s words combine Sappho’s “reckless passion” with evocations of girlhood innocence.\(^{315}\) Her self-comparison to a wax doll, unable even to say as much as a sleeping babe whimpering for its mother (108-110), seeks to emphasize Simaetha’s complete passivity. Inasmuch as the legal system of classical Athens required women to be represented in the public eye by male *kyrioι*, treating them, for all intents and purposes, as children,\(^{316}\) this image, too, is a traditional one. In this context, the aorist *passive* finite verb *ἐπάγην* in 110 contrasts pointedly with the aorist *active* participle *πὴξας* in 112 in the description of

\(^{315}\) Segal (1984), 202-3.

\(^{316}\) Just, 26. See Dem. 47.69; Pl. Leg. 937a-b.
Delphis as wily Odysseus. In *Idyll* 14, the woman Cynisca, present at a symposium in the socially sanctioned role of hetaira, is also described as a child at the moment when she bursts into tears once her rival affection for “Lycus” is revealed, whereupon her jilted lover Aeschinas punches her in the head:

...ά δὲ Κυνίσκα
ἐκλαεν ἔξαπτίνος θαλερώτερον ἢ παρὰ ματρί
παρθένος ἐξαιτής κόλπῳ ἐπιθυμήσασα.
τάμος ἐγὼ, τὸν ἰσαίς τύ, Θυώνιχε, πιῦ ἐπὶ κόρρας
ήλασσα, κάλλαν αὐθίς.

(31-5)

In invoking the image of a whimpering child, Simaetha seeks to portray herself as plausibly victimized by similar male violence on the part of Delphis. Yet the physical disturbance Simaetha narrates first firmly roots her affectation of innocence in the Sapphic context of frustrated desire, and when we recall that Sappho fr. 31 begins with the word φαίνεται, “seems,” the allusion becomes almost a covert conviction of Simaetha’s deception.

The final Sapphic echo coming in line 113 (ἐξετ’ ἐπὶ κλιντήρι καὶ ἐξόμενος φάτο μῦθον), then, forming the introduction, as it were, to Delphis’ seduction speech, creates a double perspective on the encounter, marking simultaneously the scene’s slightly ironic distance from but also poignant similarity to that of Theocritus’ literary model. For Theocritus has his Simaetha play both sides of the field, as both seducer

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317 Segal (1985), 112.
318 Gow (1952) II ad 14.21; Dover (1971), 189.
319 See Segal (1984), 206.
320 Cf. Sappho 31.1-4 (LP):
φαίνεται μοι κήνος ἰσος θεοσιν
ἐμμεν ἀνηρ, ὅτεις ενάντιος τοι
ἰσδάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἀδυ φωνεῖ-

321 Segal (1984), 205.
and seduced, both Sappho’s beloved participating in the romantic conversation and the poet herself witnessing the moment and suffering the physical pangs of erôs. Thus, if the discombobulatory affect of erôs forms the central theme of Idyll 2, this double Simaetha constitutes one of the most complex and inventive representations thereof in all of extant Greek literature.

Simaetha’s imperfect command of Hellenistic intertextuality stems from the complete inner fragility that underlies both her assertive behavior toward Delphis and the veneer of innocence and passivity with which she attempts to cover it. Simaetha’s being is completely entangled in that of Delphis. In line 96, she identifies as the specific cause of her “difficult sickness” (χαλεπᾶς νόσω, 95) his total possession of her (πᾶσαν ἔχει με τάλαίνον ὁ Μύνδιος). The cure she then outlines in the following lines, that Thestylis summon Delphis to her, merely fetches the cause of disease and embroils Simaetha in a hopeless circularity, like Heideggerian eddying. Both times her name appears in the text (101, 114), she is the subject of an action that has Delphis as its direct object. As the first of these instances hints at, however, with its juxtaposition Σιμώιθα το, “Delphis” is not himself, but an expression of Simaetha’s desires for him, distorted through the lens of her (mis)perception. When she first notices his shining exterior (79), “as if” he had just come from a good workout in the gymnasium (ὡς ἀπὸ γυμνασίοιο καλὸν πόνον ἀρτι λιπόντων, 80), she interprets the glistening quality as stemming from the man himself, choosing not to recognize the causal connection implicit in the following simile that

322 The truth (τάλαθεα, 31) that the sieve-diviner speaks of the relationship of Idyll 3’s enamored goatherd to his beloved Amaryllis reveals a similar subsumption: he is “all wrapped up” (τὸν ὅλον ἔγκειμαι, 33) in her.
323 Andrews, 32.
324 Heidegger, 166-67.
would make of her paramour a mere mortal.\textsuperscript{325} As we have seen, the first section of Delphis’ speech may betray more of Simaetha’s “frustrated desires for an ideal lover” than his actual apology for having missed the opportunity to play the comastic lover.\textsuperscript{326}

The second section, too, displays primarily her focalization, with its image of Eros as a martial enemy (ἔφοβησ’, 137) and focus on the deleterious effects it has on the lives of women (παρθένον...καὶ νόμφον, 136-7).\textsuperscript{327} “Delphis” even frames this final portion of “his” speech with the words γύναι (132), a respectful epic form of address utilized by a man to his wife, and ἀνέρος (138), which means “husband” in context, reflecting Simaetha’s desire for a permanent, proper relationship.\textsuperscript{328} Yet her desire is impatient.

The breakdown of the cinquain structure punctuated by the φράζεο refrain in this last portion of her narrative (136-166) betokens her lack of self-possession and control.\textsuperscript{329} The “quickness” that characterizes Simaetha’s feigned gullibility in line 138 (ταχυπειθής) also characterizes the initiation of sexual intercourse in line 140 (ταχύ),\textsuperscript{330} where she makes the first move, taking Delphis by the hand and lying back on the bed (χειρός ἐφαψαμένα μαλακών ἐκλιν’ ἐπὶ λέκτρων, 139). Under the power of her narration, Simaetha’s and Delphis’ assertions become one and the same, all covertly

\textsuperscript{325} Andrews, 37; she, though, characterizes Simaetha’s inclusion of the simile as “sly,” as though, at the time of her telling of the story, Simaetha realizes the real cause of Delphi’s sheen. I think this interpretation underestimates Simaetha’s fault of perspective due to her basic inner-fragility. Significantly, when Delphis left Simaetha, he left behind his “Doric oil-flask” (τὸν Δωρίδα...Δόλπαν), symbolically leaving Simaetha with only the evidence of his failure to live up to her fantastic image of him.

\textsuperscript{326} Andrews, 45. On Delphis’ speech falling into two halves, see LeGrand, 118.

\textsuperscript{327} Andrews, 46 and n. 101.

\textsuperscript{328} Andrews, 44-5. 46.

\textsuperscript{329} Griffiths, Poetry, 85.

\textsuperscript{330} Segal (1984), 201-1; Hopkinson, 165 \textit{ad loc}. 

76
reflective of “her activities and passionate emotions, not his.” Her description of the indistinguishable mingling of bodies in coitus emphasizes this point: χρώς ἐπὶ χρωτὶ πεπαίνετο, καὶ τὰ πρόσωπα / θερμότερ’ ἦς ἦ πρόσθε, (140-1). The sexual encounter, then, takes place both literally and figuratively in a deeply internal space: Simaetha’s home and the narrow strictures of her own tortured mind. In this connection, it is informative to note that Sappho’s indefinite ὄττις...ἰσδάνει in lines 2-3 of fr. 31 could reflect a generalized action; inasmuch as the subject is never expressly named, the entire experience could simply be taking place in Sappho’s own contemplation, not an actual act of jealousy upon seeing a real amorous conversation between her beloved and a specific man, but the consideration of a possible scenario, perhaps on the basis of repeated empirical observation.332 Simaetha’s experience was certainly, at some point, real, but the reader’s experience of it through her re-experience misses something of that grounding in concrete reality. Her ambiguous setting and ambiguous character reflect this groundlessness in the tension between fragility and assertiveness within herself.

Even as Simaetha’s involvement in magic empowers and emboldens her, it nonetheless reveals her anxiety and feelings of vulnerability, that is, her status as an image of a fragile self, resorting to magic to ease her erotic woes.333 The similar magical and incantatory practices of the goatherd in Idyll 3, with his use of the τηλέφιλον (28-30) and consultation of Agroio the sieve-diviner (31), serve the same end.

Unfortunately, much of the impact of of Simaetha’s incantation has been lost in the secondary literature, which has too often concerned itself with explaining away the

331 Andrews, 45.
332 Segal (1984), 206.
ambiguities carefully constructed within the incantatory sequence. The scene, which occupies the first half of *Idyll 2* (lines 17-63) with nine self-contained quatrains punctuated by the refrain, repeated ten times in all, ἵνα γῆ κεῖ τῷ τῆνον ἔμοιν ποτὶ δῶμα τὸν ἄνδρα, has proven one of the aspects of the poem most rife with contention.\(^{334}\)

The seeds of the strife lie in a disagreement between the superior manuscript tradition of the thirteenth century Ambrosian codex K and Antinoe papyrus, on the one hand, and the editions from the sixteenth century on, based on the Laurentian and Vatican families of manuscripts, on the other, over the placement of lines 28-32. On the basis of the superior tradition’s authority, the two twentieth century editions of Gallavotti\(^{335}\) and Gow rejected the traditional placement of this passage after line 27 and, instead, made it follow line 42. Gallavotti provided a justification of his decision based on the idea that Simaetha’s conjuring could be broken down into two halves, black magic and white magic, and the problem quatrain marked a shift from the one the other.\(^{336}\) Lawall rejects Gallavotti’s decision as well as the reasoning behind it, maintaining that it “forces on the incantation an overly simplified schematization which does not exist in reality.”\(^{337}\) The theme of revenge, Lawall argues, becomes dominant in the *second* half of the incantation, not the first.\(^{338}\) He thus sees in the sequence as a whole a logical movement through four groups of two “strophes” each from 1) Simaetha attempting to reawaken in Delphis the fires of erōs through sympathetic magic (23-26 and 28-31) to 2) the goddess’ theophany and

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333 Cf. Devereux, 25-6: “Also, her magic-making, though culturally routine, necessarily reflects stress and anxiety... Simaetha is not simply amorous, but also conflict- and anxiety-ridden, and Theocritus so describes her in this poem....”
334 See Lawall (1961) 283-294; Rist (1975), 103-111; White, 22-30. For considerations of time and length, I will not treat White’s arguments here; for them, I refer you to her work.
335 Gallavotti (1946).
337 Lawall (1961) 286.
338 Lawall (1961) 286.
Simaetha’s statement of her plight (33-36 and 38-41) to 3) the “imaginative vagrancy” of Simaetha as she prays for Delphis’ return under the form of the Ariadne-Theseus-Dionysus myth (43-46 and 48-51) to 4) Simaetha’s release of her anger and desire for revenge (53-56 and 57-61), the first and last quatrains (18-21 and 57-61) providing a frame for the entire incantation with certain verbal parallels, such as the vocative Θεστυλή in the initial position of the second line of each quatrain; καὶ λέγε at or very near the initial position in the final line of each; and the concluding incantatory phrases which differ only in the choice of verbs: τὰ Δέφιδος ὀστία πάσσω (21) and τὰ Δέλφιδος ὀστία μάσσω (62). While Lawall’s schema has much to commend it, it nonetheless suffers as much as Gallavotti’s from oversimplification. As Lawall himself acknowledges, the imagery of fire in the incantation is wholly and deliberately ambiguous. When Simaetha states in line 40 “I am all aflame for that man” (ἐπὶ τήνος πᾶσα καταίθομαι), her words constitute a double entendre: she burns both with anger at the man who deflowered and then abandoned her, as the following, perhaps causal, relative clause makes plain (...ός με τάλαιναν ἵνα τῆν θυσία κακὰν καὶ ἀπάρθενον ἤμεν, 40-41), and with passion for him still, despite what Delphis has done. With this double referent of “fire” in mind, we cannot conclude, with Lawall and even

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340 For instance the restoration of the uninterrupted sequence «33-36, 37-41, 43-46», representing a “deliberate conjuring of Artemis to do Simaetha’s bidding, expressed in a formal prayer accompanied by libation” (Rist (1975), 106; Lawall (1961) 288).
341 Rist (1975), 107.
343 Cf. the description of destructive ἐρῶς in Delphis’ speech: ἔρως δ’ ἀρα καὶ Λυπαραίω / πολλάκις Ἀφαίστου σέλας φλογερότερον αἴθει (133-8).
Gow, 344 that the burning of the barley and laurel in the first two quatrains represents solely sympathetic magic aimed at reawakening passion in Delphis; the ambiguous ἐπὶ Δέλφοι in line 22, like the ἐπὶ τήνφι in 40, can mean both “with a view to (reclaiming) Delphis” and “against Delphis.” 345 As we have seen, “Simaetha is not simply amorous, but also conflict- and anxiety-ridden, and Theokritos [sic] so describes her in this poem....” 346 Thus, everywhere in the incantation, the twin motives of passion and revenge are present side by side; unfulfilled erōs itself encompasses both poles of this janus-headed conception, as two halves of the controversial quatrain makes clear:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ώς τούτον τὸν κηρόν ἐγὼ σὺν δαίμονι τάκω,} \\
\text{ός τάκοιθ' ὑπ' ἔρωτος ὁ Μύνδιος αὐτίκα Δέλφος.} \\
\text{χώς δίνειθ' ὄδε ρόμβος ὁ χάλκεος ἐξ Ἄφροδιτας,} \\
\text{ός τήνος δινόιτο ποθ' ἀμέτρασι θύρασιν.}
\end{align*}
\]

(28-31)

In line 30, Simaetha describes the bull-roarer (ῥόμβος) 347 whirled under the influence of Aphrodite as “brazen” (ὁ χάλκεος), just like the cymbal (τὸ χαλκέον, 36) she instructs Thestylos to sound for apotropaic purposes at the presence of the triform goddess. 348 For Simaetha, in her present state of mind, there is little difference between her two motivations; Hecate and Aphrodite form a single fever pitch of emotion. The erōs of which Theocritus so often writes is a vast circularity that begins and ends with the pain of isolation. Thus, the neat and orderly arrangement of these incantatory quatrains that many modern commentators so desire, with a clean and logical progression of thought from A to B to C to D, may not only be quite beside the point, but, indeed, may miss the

344 Gow (1952) II 40: “The refrain sets the tone and purpose of the whole poem, and makes the idea of personal injury somewhat out of place here.”
345 Rist (1975), 107.
346 Devereux, 26.
347 On this object, see Gow (1952: II 44 ad loc. and plates IV A, V.
348 See Gow (1952: II 43 ad loc.)
point altogether. Rather, Simaetha “directs potent spells toward both revenge and restitution without resolving the contradictoriness of her impulses.”

The confusion and emotional desperation in her own mind finds its reflection in the jumbled word order of her magical refrain, with its juxtaposition of τῆνον and ἐμὸν, then the mention of δῶμα and, like a mere appendage at the end, τὸν ἀνδρα.

In point of fact, the single most sustained and pervasive, not to mention dramatic, illustration of the cyclical quality of erôs in Idyll 2 centers on this very repeated refrain, ἴνα, ἔλκε τὸ τῆνον ἐμὸν ποτὶ δῶμα τὸν ἀνδρα, each repetition accompanied by a turn of the iynx-wheel to which its command is addressed. Originally, in magical practice, the bird known as “iynx” or the wryneck was spreadeagled on a wheel, which was spun round, thereby drawing near a person one desired to attract. Later, as in Idyll 2, the wheel was used alone, without the attached bird. The particular suitability of the wryneck to seduction magic was supposed to have been due to the odd, writhing movements the bird makes with its neck in order to attract a mate; the movement suggested sensuality and sex. In mythology, the name “Iynx” is variously given to a concubine of Hades named Mintha, who seeks to destroy her lord’s legitimate union with Persephone, and to an enchantress, either the daughter of Echo or Peitho, who attempts to seduce Zeus and receives as punishment from an angry Hera transformation into a wryneck. The figure of Ixion in Pindar’s second Pythian 33-44, punished for his attempted seduction of Hera by being attached to a revolving wheel, functions similarly.

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349 Griffiths, Poetry, 85.
350 Gow (1952) II 39 ad 17-63.
351 Gow (1952) II 41 ad 17. For an artistic representation of a iynx-wheel, see Pl. IV A; cf. Pl. V.
352 Gow (1952) II 41 ad 17.
353 See Σ ad 2.17.
354 Détienne, 159-72; Segal (1973), 32-43; Σ ad Theocritus 2.17; Σ ad Pindar N. 4.35.
These various tales depict an archetypal image of unrestrained desire endeavoring to subvert a lasting union for its own erotic ends. In them, Iynx/Ixion constitutes “the focal point of an antithesis between marriage and seduction, legitimate and illegitimate union.” Of greater relevance to the present context is Pindar’s fourth Pythian, which mythologizes the iynx-wheel itself, recounting how Aphrodite first bestowed it upon mankind as a love charm for Jason, so that he could “take away Medea’s shame (σιδός) toward her parents and a yearned-for Hellas might whirl her, burning in mind, under the whip of Persuasion” (Pind. P. 4.214-19):

`όφρα Μηδείας τοκέων ἀφέλοιτʼ αἰδῆ, ποθείνα δʼ Ἕλλας
 αὐτόν
 ἐν φρασὶ κατομέναν δονέοι μάστιγι Πειθοῦς.

Moreover, in his De natura animalium 15.19, Aelian observes that the term “iynx” can refer to an aphrodisiac scent or cry of animals. The most potent iynx, he reports, is that of the land tortoise, the male of which species is known for abandoning his mate. Thus, “the iynx is not only a potent erotic charm [as in Pythian 4], but is also specifically a charm which results in the seduction and cruel abandonment of the beloved.” By having Simaetha utilize this particular charm in her magic ritual, Theocritus injects into Idyll 2 all the symbolic associations that object possesses. How ironic, then, that Simaetha should imprecate upon Delphis the same forgetfulness Theseus displayed toward Ariadne (τόσσον ἔχοι λάθας ὀσσον ποκὰ Θησέα φαντὶ / ἐν Δίας λασθήμεν

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355 Segal (1973), 33.
356 Aelian, De Natura Animalium 15.19; Segal (1973), 35.
357 Segal (1973), 35.
When it is just such forgetfulness that has caused her own grief (η ρ’ οὐκ ἄλλο τι τερπνόν ἔχει, ὡμόν δὲ λέλασται, 158).

Though we may be tempted to glimpse in this irony a naïveté on the part of Simaetha, her “puzzling” mention of the lioness in her description of the animal parade at Artemis’ festival (...τὰ δὴ τόκα πολλὰ μὲν ἄλλα / θηρία πομπεύεσκε περισταδόν, ἐν δὲ λέαινα, 67-68) indicates that she understands the workings of erôs all too well. For while the notice makes perfect sense on the mimetic surface for a festival of for Artemis in her ancient guise as πότνια θηρῶν, it seems likely that, underneath, the image of the animal, ominously lurking in emphatic, final position at the scene of Simaetha’s fall to the erotic sickness, is destructive erôs itself. Simaetha is not ignorant of the truth, as her skillful manipulation of Delphis’ seduction speech makes clear; she is just blinded to its full import by the madness of erôs, “and her blindness enhances the pathos.” Thus, introduced by the same interrogative / asseverative particle combination (Ἡ ρα) as her declaration that erôs has transported Delphis’ “fickle thoughts” elsewhere (...Ἡ ῥα οἱ

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358 Griffiths, Poetry, 85. Idyll 11’s Cyclops also wishes forgetfulness for his beloved: that she might come out of the sea and, having done so, forget to return (ἐξένθοις, Γαλάτεια, καὶ ἐξένθοις λάβοι /...οἰκαδ’ ἀπενθεῖν, 63-4). Earlier in his song, Polyphemus has set up the sea as a competing lover of sorts (τὰν γλαυκῶν δὲ θάλασσαν ἐκ ποιτι χέρσον ὤρεχθεῖν ἔ ἀδιόν ἐν τῶν παρ’ ἐμῖν τῶν νύκταν διαξεῖς, 43-4), whose “angry beating” upon the shore (Hunter (1999: 235 ad 11.43) so glosses ὄρεχθεῖν) is reminiscent of Delphis’ absent implacable knocking on Simaetha’s door (οὐδὲ θόρας ἀράζεν ἄνάρσιος, 6) and, hence, of the exclusus amator of a paraklausithyron.

359 Segal (1973), 37, n. 19.

360 Iliad 21.470; for more on this, see Lawler, 88-98.

361 Cf. the complaint of the singing goatherd in Idyll 3 that Eros “suckled the breast of a lionness” (Ἡ ρα λευάνας / μαζῶν ἐθήλαζεν, 15-16). Pl. Charm. 155d cites a fragment of Kydias which presents the power of love as a lion, the hapless lover, a fawn: εὐλαβεῖσθαι μὴ κατέναντα λέοντος νεβρὸν ἐλθόντα μοίραν αἱρέσθαι κρεῖν. The same symbolism informs Theognis 949-50; see Dover (1971), 187 ad Id. 13.62-65. Given Simaetha’s portrayal in the poem, Theocritus may also imply a transference of the image, such that the lioness, a change in gender from earlier representations, here symbolizes Simaetha in her role as pursuer of Delphis.

362 Segal (1973), 37.

363 Denniston, 284, III.i,ii.
Simaetha’s moment of anagnorisis in line 158 has all the more sting. The shifting references in the mythical quatrains of Simaetha’s incantation (43-46 and 48-51),—casting Delphis first in the role of Theseus forgetting Ariadne on Dia (45-6), second as Dionysus (μαίνομένοι ἱκέλος, 51) coming to rescue her, and finally in the role of Ariadne herself stranded in her own home (τόδε δώμα, 50)364—remind us that for every lover whose erotic desire finds fulfillment, another’s meets with frustration. The antithesis between memory and forgetting cleaves both ways, simultaneously accepting one and rejecting another.

Hence, while some commentators have been concerned to find in Idyll 2 evidence of a healing aspect to Simaetha’s literal pharmaka similar to that of Polyphemus’ figurative pharmakon (romantic song) in Idyll 11,365 the mention of stars and their association with notions of fate and uncertainty must cast doubt on the possibility of any cure.366 The latter half of the compound epithet λιπαρόθρονε (165) describing Delphis may even recall the herbs (Θρόνα) which Simaetha bids Thestylius rub on his door-post (59).367 Her recapitulation and reversal in line 160 of the paraklausithyron motif from the poem’s beginning (6) likewise suggests that Delphis and his lengthening absence remain foremost on Simaetha’s mind. Even the final word of the poem, ὀπαδοί (166), describing the stars as “companions” of the night, looks back to Simaetha’s command to Hecate in line 14 to “accompany” her to the end of her magical rites (ἐς τέλος ἄμμιν

364 On this section, see Lawall (1961) 290-291.
365 Most notably, Griffiths, Poetry; see also Burton, 68.
366 Indeed, the fact that, in line 79, Simaetha already compared Delphis’ shine to that of the moon strengthens this point. See Segal (1985), 115; cf. Segal (1973), 43: he notes in n. 32 that Virgil’s eighth Eclogue, which presents an “adaptation” of Idyll 2, significantly does not resolve the speaker’s passions: credimus? an qui amant ipsi sibi somnia fingunt? (108). With Walker, 98, I feel that “there may be some irony in the final lines.”
plunging the supposedly placid conclusion of the poem right back into the full intensity of Simaetha’s passion at its inception. At most, like Polyphemus, who “shepherded his love by performing music” (ἐποίμαινεν τὸν ἔρωτα μουσίσδων, 11.80-81), Simaetha “will endure” her desire as she has already has (ἐγὼ δ’ οἰσῶ τὸν ἐμὸν πόθον ὀσπερ ὑπέσταν, 164). And, by bidding farewell to her heavenly witnesses and allies, she ensures that she will have to deal with her pain alone.

367 Segal (1985), 115, n. 33.
Chapter Four: A Second Case-Study of the Fragile/Assertive Self: *Idyll* 13’s Heracles

*Idyll* 13 narrates Heracles’ passion for the delicate boy Hylas, whose rape by three water-nymphs plunges the hero into a consuming grief, resulting in his temporary abandonment of the Argonauts in favor of a frantic search for his lost love. The story of Hylas seems little known to earlier Greek literature. In the *Argonautica* (1.1187-1357), Apollonius provides a longer rendition, from which Theocritus’ brief *Idyll* differs considerably, most of all in making the theme of love, principally the pederastic love between Heracles and Hylas, its central focus. Comparison of these two Hellenistic versions and attempts to assign priority and greater artistic merit to one or the other constituted the foci of many early studies of *Idyll* 13, obscuring in the process much of the poem’s complexity. A prominent view first advanced in Wilamowitz’ lectures and later picked up by Gow, among others, held that the piece formed part of the putative polemic between Callimachus and Apollonius Rhodius by seeking to “correct” perceived inadequacies in the latter’s treatment of the Hylas episode. Because

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368 Gow (1952: II 231-2); Dover (1971), 179-81.
369 Apollonius has Hylas as a squire (ὄψαγων, I.132, 1209) and most commentators regard his treatment as omitting any tender feelings between the boy and Heracles: so Gow (1952: II 232); Serra, 564; Mastronarde, *passim*; Dover (1971), 179; Hutchinson, 193. White (63-6), however, argues that Apollonius does, in fact, present an amorous relationship between the two characters, though an “allusive” and understated one. Even if one accepts her arguments, the fact remains that the heavy and obvious emphasis on frustrated desire is unique to Theocritus.
370 White’s treatment is instructive in this regard: her final chapter advertised as “devoted to the explanation of various textual and interpretive problems in Theocritus’ Idyll XIII” (63), spends a little less than half of its total length, twelve of twenty-five pages, discussing only Gow’s interpretation of the Apollonian treatment and her refutation thereof. See Mastronarde (273-4 and n. 2) for a good survey of previous scholarship on the poem. To their credit, more recent studies avoid this quagmire: so Segal (1981: 54-61); Gutzwiller (1981: 19-29); Campbell; Griffiths (1996).
371 Gow (1938), 10; Mastronarde, 273, n. 2.
372 Gow (1938), 10-17; *idem* (1952: II 231-3): essentially a repetition of his 1938 article.
373 Otis, 398; see also *idem*, 401-3.
374 The current, majority view on this issue has wisely jettisoned subjective aesthetic appraisal of the poems and holds that Theocritus is probably responding to, though not necessarily correcting, Apollonius’
adherents of this approach asked only the question of Theocritus’ intent in reworking Apollonius, not how the poem as an independent unity in its own right relates to and reflects uniquely Theocritean poetic goals, they tended to overlook or dismiss as superfluous many of the work’s peculiar details. Serrao even attributes several moments of what he perceives to be “incoerenze nel racconto teocriteo” to Theocritus’ shift of emphasis “solo ad Eracle e al suo tormento d’amore,” as though the theme of love were some narratological red-herring.

Mastronarde, however, effected a paradigm shift in critical emphasis by abandoning the comparative approach altogether and concentrating instead on interpreting Idyll 13 as an exploration of the relevance of epic to the poetic sensibilities of a post-heroic era. As Mastronarde correctly emphasizes, displacement of the epic and heroic into the realm of the rustic and romantic forms a key conceit of the poem and is connected to the work’s thematic movement. Idyll 13 transitions between the two realms both literally, by depicting the sea voyages of the Argo (22-4, 28-9) and its landing at a sort of locus amoenus in Propontis (lines 30-5), and, more importantly,
figuratively, by depicting Heracles as an erastēs made to suffer the discombobulation of desire, which sets him apart from the rest of the Argonauts. The result is a picture of Heracles as “anti-hero.”

Mastronarde goes too far, though, in hypostatizing this displacement and questioning of epic as the theme of the poem. This supposition leads him to posit a too-tidy dichotomy at work in the piece, whereby “Theocritus shows that success and fulfillment in the real or in the pastoral world are attainable only by characters who fit in with their environment, while frustration awaits the epic-heroic character who tries to function in a world foreign to his nature.”

Thus, he claims, the Nymphs and Hylas, who “fit the idyllic setting” of the land of the Ciani, “attain their desire,” whereas Heracles, whose “strength and violence...[do] not fit in,” is “frustrated and humiliated.”

Yet, as Mastronarde himself observes, the Nymphs can easily be seen as a second exemplification, beside Heracles, of the poet’s proposition in the introductory frame that all fall victim to love. Moreover, the “strong,” in fact “martial,” verb employed in line 48 to characterize the psychological affect of their desire upon them, ἐξεφόβησεν, hardly denotes action befitting a romantic or idyllic context. Nor, for that matter, does Hylas’ reaction to the Nymphs’ advance in lines 53-54 betoken the kind of joy one would

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384 Mastronarde, 274-80, 288-90.
385 Mastronarde, 275; Segal (1981: 56) also erects an overly rigid structure: “In 13 the contrast between the human and the supernatural realm forms part of a larger contrast between the active, heroic sphere of the Argonauts and Heracles on the one hand and the static, remote world of the Nymphs on the other” (my italics).
386 Mastronarde, 275; the other Argonauts, he posits, “exist successfully” in the changed environment “[s]ince their actions no longer remain heroic.”
387 Mastronarde, 276.
388 Mastronarde, 276.
expect from one attaining the fulfillment of his desire. The poet explores and even questions the heroic ideal, but the poem itself possesses more than this one facet; the designation *epyllion* may cover many of the formal and stylistic elements of *Idyll 13*, yet it does not encompass or define all of the poem’s thematic possibilities. The present chapter will show that consideration of the work from the viewpoint of the uniquely Theocritean nexus under examination not only exposes a richer set of significances and more coherent explanation of certain recalcitrant details than previous studies, but reveals strong thematic linkages to other parts of the Theocritean oeuvre as well, precisely *because* of its focus on the central element of Heracles’ and others’ “tormento d’amore.”

The poem begins with an introductory frame and direct address to the same figure as *Idyll 11*, the doctor and poet Nicias. Because Theocritus narrates *in propria persona*, biographical readings of the poem earlier enjoyed great currency, though most have now been rejected as overly presumptuous and unhelpful. It would be a mistake, however, to disregard the frame as merely a loose, formal nicety introduced for variation’s sake. Rather, precisely because ποικιλία through mixing of genres

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390 I submit that this verb choice alone destroys any claim the Nymphs’ world could have to being “static.”
393 Cf. *Id.* 11.5-6: γινόσκειν δ’ οίμαί τι καλός ιατρόν έόντα καί ταῖς ἐννέα δή περιλημένον ἕξοχα Μοίσαις.
On Nicias, see Gow (1952: II 208) and Hunter (1999), 215, 221. As a result of this device, Mastronarde (275) dubs the work a “didactic epistle.” Hunter (1999: 261) argues against applying the term “epistle” to the poem, since there is no focus on writing or sending; he emphasizes instead the frame’s similarity to the use of addressees in archaic poetry. Hutchinson (196, n. 90), too, finds little merit in the notion that *Id.* 13 “contaminates” the “genres” of epistle and epyllion.
394 Wilamowitz, (1905), 161; *idem* (1906), 174-7, advanced an understanding of the poem primarily as Theocritus’ defense of a noble ideal of pederasty in response to his friend Nicias’ exhortation that he abandon pederastic relations; against this, see also Gow (1938: 16-7); *idem* (1952: II 245). Wilamowitz’ is one of the two points of view against which Mastronarde (273-4 and n. 2) explicitly reacts. Webster, 81-2, 85-6, proposed that the poem was a consolation piece for Nicias’ loss of a love. See also Hunter (1999), 261.
(Kreuzung der Gattungen) forms an integral feature of Hellenistic epyllia, and, in *Idyll* 13, the poet achieves such variegation in part through the framing device, far from enjoying only a “slender” connection to the theme and narrative, the frame should prove an indispensable tool for ascertaining the import of the reversal of epic expectations so evident in the body of the poem. Narrative framing provides Theocritus with a chief means of drawing explicit analogies and contrasts between himself, his readers, and his characters. It opens the way for expanding relations of significance beyond the text itself, inviting connection of the imagery and themes within a poem’s dramatic/mimetic core to real world meaning from without and vice versa. As a result, the device serves both to create and to bridge gaps of critical distance between the author and his audience, on the one hand, and the author’s characters, on the other; the introductory frame of *Idyll* 13 serves exactly this double purpose.

The frame opens with two couplets balanced by careful parallelism. In the first, the poet adopts the tone of a *consolatio* and argues that he and his addressee were mistaken in their former perception of isolation as a result of their experiences of Eros (οὐχ ὀμίν τὸν Ἐρώτα μόνοις ἔτεχ’ ὦς ἔδοκεν ἐμες, / Νικία, 1-2). The theme is a stock one. The poet develops it in an unexpected direction, however, by seeking to

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396 So Dover (1971), 179.
397 Gutzwiller (1991), 130, writes of Idyll 6: “That the message of the songs may be related to something outside the poem is first suggested by the word "Απορεί in 2. The vocative is important here as bare name..., for its purpose is to extend outward the analogical relationship established between the characters of the frame and of the songs.... A tiering structure results, moving out from the poem in a line of progressive indefiniteness.” Goldhill, 32, notes that the effects of framing and ironic distance are essentially the same: “In *Idyll* 3, the goatherd’s *kômos* outside a cave, it would have been easy to have introduced the poem with a similar framing narrative [to that in *Idyll* 11], but ‘the poem...is presented as a dramatic monologue from the first’. Nonetheless, it is precisely the implied presence of the sophisticated audience that is essential for the humorous effect of the love-song parody” (quoting Dover (1971), 112).
398 Hunter (1999), 265 *ad loc*.
399 Hunter (1999), 266.
400 Cf. *AP* 12.50.1-4 (Asclepiades):
demonstrate not just that other human beings feel the pangs of erōs, but that a heroic figure usually presented as of divine origin does as well: Heracles. Thus, the poet emphasizes from the start the notion of Eros’ birth, characterizing him in line 2 as being of uncertain, though definitely divine, parentage (ἐπὶ τοῦτο θεῶν ποικα τέκνον ἐγένετο).

An ancient obscurity in the mythological record, the ambiguity of Eros’ parentage forms a frequent topos of Hellenistic poetry, and here allows the poet to share a literary joke with his addressee, whose identity as fellow poet and not doctor, as in Idyll 11, is now seen to influence the opening presentation. In the second couplet, the poet makes his novel approach even more apparent as he refocuses the narrow solidarity created in the first by expanding the referent of the anaphoric οὐχ ἄμιν to include all humanity (οὐχ ἄμιν...πράτοις.../ οἳ θνατοὶ πελόμεσθα τὸ δ’ αὐριον οὐκ ἔσορώμες, 4-5). Just as Eros belongs undifferentiatedly to the class “gods,” now the poet and Nicias are revealed as belonging undifferentiatedly to the class “mortals.” On the surface, the characterization of this latter class as “not looking to tomorrow” seems unrelated to the theme of Eros, meant simply to heighten the burgeoning contrast between humanity and divinity. Corresponding to his new, expanded definition of the “in-group,” though, the poet offers a new conception of erotic desire as well, one that renders the detail of

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tί τὰ δόκρων ταῦτα; τί πάσχεις;
οὐ σὲ μόνον χαλεπὴ Κύπρις ἐλήματο,
οὐδ’ ἐπὶ σοὶ μοῦνῳ κατεθήκατο τόξα καὶ ιοῦς

401 The scholiast (Wendel ad loc.; quoted in Gow (1952: II 232)) writes that Hesiod made him the child of Chaos and Earth; Simonides of Ares and Aphrodite; Acusilaus, of Night and Aether; Alcaeus, of Iris and Zephyr; Sappho, of Earth and Uranus; others, of still others. Plato discusses the problem in Symp. 178b, and Anth. Pal. 5.177 (Meleager) presents a similar Hellenistic exploitation of the motif.

402 Hunter (1999), 266.

403 Hutchinson, 194, n. 86; Hunter (1999), 265 ad loc.

404 So Dover (1971), 182 ad loc.
mortals’ limited vision cogent. Eros, he says, makes “beautiful things seem beautiful”
(tὰ καλὰ...καλὰ
φαίνεται  ἤμεν, 3).

In his song of Polyphemus’ love for the sea-nymph Galateia in
Idyll 6, the cowherd Daphnis attributes to erôs the power even to make un
beautiful things seem beautiful: (Ἡ γὰρ ἔρως / πολλάκις, ὁ Πολύφαγος, τὰ μὴ καλὰ καλὰ πέφανται, 18-19). Taken together, these statements reveal that erotic desire functions principally by
exercising power over human perception by manipulating and deceiving it. Not only
do humans, as opposed to gods, lack prescience of the future, but, in their common
experience of erôs, humans also lack a future-oriented perspective. They lose themselves
in the seeming of love and do not consider later possibilities of loss and heartbreak.

By equating on such a basic level the experience of erôs with the experience of being
human, the poet shrewdly emphasizes perhaps his central point about love in the poem:
that individuals often become consumed by their desire and lose their identity in erotic
relations. The departicularization of the reference in ἄμιν mirrors the emphasis in this
second couplet on subsumption. The poet unites himself and Nicias, who are at a first

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405 It is the parallelism between lines 1 and 3 in form and content that highlights this statement as a
symptom of erotic desire.
406 Cf. Call. Epigram 29.3-4 (Pfeiffer):
καλὸς ὁ παῖς, Ἀχελώος, λίθν καλὸς, εἰ δὲ τις οὐχὶ
φησίν — ἐπισταίμην μοῦ γνος ἔρω τὰ καλά. (quoted in Gow (1952: II 232 ad 1)).
408 In Idyll 6, when the herdsman Damoitas concludes Daphnis’ song of Polyphemus, he picks back up the
image of water as a reflecting surface (εἰς ἀλας δερκομένα, τὸ δὲ γνώ καλὰ κύματα φαίνει, 11; Lawall 68)
to suggest that the Cyclops has fallen victim to just this eventuality in his desire for Galateia:
καὶ γὰρ ἄληθν οὐδ’ εἰδὸς ἐχω κακὸν ὡς με λέγοντι.
Η γὰρ πρῶτον ἔστιν ἑπτῆσθεν, ἦς δὲ γαλάνα,
καὶ καλὰ μὲν τὰ γένεια, καλὰ δὲ μεν ἀ μία κόρα,
ὡς πυρ’ ἐμίν κέκριται, κυττεόντεσθε... (34-37)
As Gutzwiller (1991: 129) observes, “[t]he sound pattern γαλ.-, καλ.-, καλ.- (35-36), together with the fact
that γαλάνα (35) provides one etymology of her name, suggests the presence of Galateia.” By regarding
himself as handsome through his reflection in the sea, Polyphemus in effect beholds himself through his
remove from the poetic narrative, with the reader, who is at a second, establishing for all a common humanity and a shared role as fragile selves de-individualized by their subsumption in *erôs*. In this regard, then, the perception of isolation which the poet seeks to refute belongs to all mortals as distinct from the gods. The repetition of οὐχ ὀμίν, the only spondaic rhythm before πράτοις in line 3, strongly emphasizes this point.\(^{409}\)

In line 5, the poet begins to bridge the distance he has created by holding up Heracles as an *exemplum* and, thus, a member of the same or a similar class as himself, Nicias, and mortals generally (ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἀμφιτρύωνος ὁ χαλκεοκάρδιος νιῶς, 5). Heracles becomes a “similar other” in whom mortal sufferers from love may find strength.\(^{410}\) Accordingly, the poet’s “self-”assertions on behalf of the parties removed from the narrative surface as “other-” assertions about Heracles within the narrative, requiring that he present the hero as essentially human, not divine, and less than heroic for having been subdued by love. For this reason, he introduces the “hero” as “the brazen-hearted son of Amphitryon,” omitting the common tradition of Jovian parentage\(^{411}\) and employing an epithet, which, while epic-sounding\(^{412}\) and reminiscent of the heroic world,\(^{413}\) is in fact a hapax, possibly a Theocritean neologism,\(^{414}\) and associates Heracles with the same metal conspicuously connected in *Idyll* 2 with Simaetha’s vengeful, erotic fury.\(^{415}\) What is more, in *Idyll* 13, χάλκεον also describes the vessel

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\(^{409}\) Hunter (1999: 266 ad 3–4) notices that the meter emphasizes the repetition but does not interpret its thematic significance.

\(^{410}\) Hutchinson, 196: “Heracles, then, who formally exemplifies Theocritus’ and Nicias’ emotion, stands both close to and remote from the frame of the poem and the reader.” See also *idem*, 194, n. 86.


\(^{412}\) Mastronarde, 276; Gutzwiller (1981), 19.


\(^{415}\) Lines 36 and 30.
Hylas carries for water in line 39, in the curiously placed participial phrase
\( \chi\acute{\alpha}l\acute{k}e\nu\nu\, \acute{a}\gamma\mu\omicron\, \acute{e}x\omicron\nu \), which, two lines removed from its nominal argument and coordinate participle \( \omicron\sigma\omicron\nu\omicron \), stands starkly emphatic before the weak, third-foot caesura.\(^{416}\) This is the same bronze vessel in which Hylas was to carry back water for Heracles’ and Telamon’s dinner (\( \acute{\omicron}\delta\omicron\, \acute{e}p\i\dot{\omicron}\delta\omicron\pi\omicron\omicron\, \omicron\sigma\omicron\nu\omicron, / \acute{a}\upsilon\tau\dot{\omicron} \Theta^{'} \ \acute{H}r\alpha\kappa\lambda\dot{i} \ k\acute{a}l \ \acute{\omega}\sigma\tau\epsilon\mu\phi\dot{e} \, \acute{\tau}e\lambda\omega\mu\omicron\nu \omicron, 36-7) and which, in Apollonius’ version,\(^{417}\) proves integral to the plot, insofar as it makes noise when Hylas dips it into the pool and summons the nymphs, rendering its “non-functional” presence in Theocritus all the more conspicuous. Perhaps the point of the epithet, then, beyond being plausibly mock-epic, is to foreshadow the human Heracles’ consumption by unheroic love for Hylas. The “brazen-hearted” Heracles has a “heart for bronze,” or rather, for Hylas, the bearer of bronze.

Line 6 furthers the project of undercutting Heracles’ heroism in two respects. First, the widely recognized clause \( \eta\rho\alpha\tau\omega\, \pi\omega\iota\delta\omicron\zeta \), set off at the end of the line by the bucolic diaeresis, completely deflates the early mention of his famous triumph over the Nemean lion.\(^ {418}\) Secondly, even the notice of this triumph in the line’s first half appears undercut by the poet’s choice of verbs to describe the event: \( \upsilon\epsilon\mu\epsilon\iota\nu\epsilon\nu \). This particular diction ill suits the referent; Pausanias’ \( \kappa\rho\alpha\tau\hat{\eta}\sigma\sigma\alpha\, \tau\omicron\upsilon \ \acute{e}v \ \omicron\nu \ \omicron\nu\acute{e}\mu\dot{e} \ \lambda\acute{e}\omicron\nu\tau\omicron\zeta \omicron\zeta \ (6.5.5) \) seems more apt for representation of a famous heroic act. \( \upsilon\omicron\rho\omicron\acute{m}\epsilon\omicron\nu \), which Homer (\( \text{Iliad} \) 14.488, 16.814) uses with personal direct objects to mean “to await” or “bide” an

\(^{416}\) For an objection to line 38 because of the displacement of \( \acute{e}x\omicron\nu \) in 39 from “\( \Upsilon\alpha\omicron\omicron \) in 36, see Griffiths (1996), 108-9: “[W]e thought the narrative was taking a different direction, only to be jolted back to the boy with the bucket after an interval of two lines.”

\(^{417}\) A. R. Arg. 1.1235-6: he uses the word \( \kappa\acute{a}l\lambda\iota\zeta \) of the vessel; Hunter (1999), 276 ad 39.

\(^{418}\) Mastronarde, 276; Gutzwiller (1981), 19-20.
attack; \(^{419}\) Herodotus (4.149), absolutely of children who do not “survive;” \(^{420}\) Xenophon (\textit{Memorabilia} 2.2.5), with the complementary infinitive πονεῖν to describe wives’ patient submission to daily toil; \(^{421}\) and Soranus, of “suffering from” seasickness, \(^{422}\) reduces Heracles’ role to one of relative passivity. On the surface, the clause means “who \textit{endured} the savage lion,” a marked difference in tone from “conquered” or “slew.” What is more, the lion being a particularly evocative image of doomed desire in Theocritus, \(^{423}\) the symbolic subtext becomes “who endured savage \textit{erôs}” upon which follows immediately, as if epexigetical, “he fell in love with a boy.” Thus, the line achieves a subtle, even covert, foreshadowing of the jarring simile at 62-63, where even the hint of a heroic Heracles is lost completely. \(^{424}\) Therefore, it is Heracles’ fragility because of his consumption by love for Hylas that both betokens and guarantees his status as anti-hero.

As he proceeds through his introduction, the poet directly sketches this fragility with the motif of Heracles’ education of Hylas in lines 8-15, where he develops a growing tension between image and substance. As many commentators have noticed, Theocritus initially presents Hylas’ instruction as a heroic ideal. \(^{425}\) In this model, an

\(^{419}\) LSJ s.v. II.1.

\(^{420}\) LSJ s.v. I.

\(^{421}\) LSJ s.v. II.4; see also Xen. \textit{Mem}. 2.1.3, with direct object πόνον (LSJ s.v. II.2).

\(^{422}\) LSJ s.v. II.10.

\(^{423}\) See Chapter 3, p. 80 and n. 357.

\(^{424}\) Cf. Gutzwiller (1981), 29. Interestingly, line 6, characterizing the unheroic Heracles, features the exact same metrical pattern as line 4, characterizing mortals: sdddd with \textit{kata ton trochaion} caesura and bucolic diaeresis, between which stands the unusual neuter form τὸ δ' ἀγηρίαν in line 4 (usu. fem.: see Gow [1952]: II 233); Hunter [1999], 266) and the lion’s epithet τὸν ἀγηρίον in line 6, with but two letters’ difference between them. An evocation of the effects of \textit{erôs} follows the diaeresis in both lines. These parallels can hardly be accidental and perhaps provide a specific rationale for the uncustomary neuter of line 4 as well as a reason to reject Griffin’s (121) proposal to replace ἄγηριον in 6 with ἀργίον. Hunter ([1999]: 267 \textit{ad} 5-6), by contrast, maintains that ἀγηρίον means to emphasize that Heracles spent much of his heroic life among savage beasts, but was civilized through \textit{erôs} into his role as Hylas’ educator (lines 8-9). Though an interesting, Enkidu-like reading of his character, I think the transmogrification of Heracles in the poem’s latter half does too much violence to this notion to make it tenable here. Love in Theocritus has the opposite of a civilizing effect.

\(^{425}\) Mastronarde, 276-7; Gutzwiller (1981), 20-1; Hunter (1999), 268.
older warrior relates to a younger hopeful as father to son, patterning for the junior man proper heroic behavior (καὶ νῦν πάντ᾽ ἐδίδασκε, πατήρ ὁ σεῖ φίλον νιόν, 8).\(^{426}\) The declaration in line 9 that Heracles himself forms the subject of instruction as a paradigm of noble excellence (ἀγαθός), worthy of song (ἀοίδιμος), fits in perfectly, then. As Hutchinson shrewdly observes, however, ἀοίδιμος occasions in the reader both thought of the epic-heroic Heracles presented on the surface here, but also of the Theocritean Heracles lurking underneath, each equally the subject of song.\(^{427}\) Moreover, the one appearance of this adjective in Homer (Iliad 6.358) occurs where Helen tells Hector that Zeus has beset Paris and herself with an evil lot so as to make them “a subject of song for future men,” hardly an auspicious or heroic precedent.\(^{428}\) That Heracles could envision his educational project for Hylas in a manner so closely bound up with a mistaken conception of his own identity qua hero betokens, like Simaetha’s report of “Delphis’” persuasive speech to her in Idyll 2, the lover’s self-delusion as to his relationship with the beloved.\(^{429}\) After all, ἕρωτο παιδός in line 6 starkly impends over the entire eight lines that describe Hylas’ “education,” pricking awareness as to the fact that this is a pederastic relationship first and foremost, where the roles of father and son obtain only by metaphorical displacement from the etymologically proper domain of natural family relations.\(^{430}\) It is perhaps significant that in Apollonius’ telling, Heracles’ surrogate fathering of Hylas directly results from his slaying the boy’s father Theiodamas

\(^{426}\) See Gutzwiller (1981), 81, n. 5.
\(^{427}\) Hutchinson, 195.
\(^{428}\) Hunter (1999: 269), coincidentally, notes that the scholiast (bT) on the Homeric line writes that with this adjective, the poet subtly glorifies his poem; that is, ancient interpreters understood the word as explicitly self-referential, which lends good weight to Hutchinson’s reading of the Theocritean line.
\(^{429}\) Gutzwiller (1981), 20.
\(^{430}\) Cf. Theognis 1049-50.
“ruthlessly” (νηλειος), thereby destroying Hylas’ natural family.431 Whether or not Theocritus wrote with awareness of the Apollonian version, as Mastronarde observes, the attention his Heracles shows the boy “is by no means disinterested.”432

When the poet picks back up in lines 14-5 on Heracles’ purported motivation for instructing Hylas, he reinforces its delusional character by returning to the idea that Heracles is trying to reproduce himself in the boy, to fashion him “after his own heart” (ως αυτω κατα θυμον ό παις πεποναμενος εη, 14). The participle πεποναμένος even suggests that Heracles views his project as on a par with his heroic Labors.433 By contrast, Hylas’ description as delicate throughout the poem suggests that he is an inappropriate object of such toil. Introduced in line 7 in a manner structurally parallel to the introduction of Heracles in 5 and 6,434 Hylas is characterized by youth and an almost feminine, or effeminate, beauty, denoted by the words χαριεις and πλοκαμις. Elsewhere in the Theocritean corpus, the former term falls from the mouths of Idyll 3’s goatherd and Idyll 11’s Polyphemus to characterize their respective beloved nymphs and from that of Idyll 2’s questionably masculine Delphis of his male athletic competitor, Philinus.435 The latter, which might, in some contexts, denote Hylas’ status as a model ephebe,436 more

431 Arg. 1.1213; Gow (1952: II 233 ad 7); Hunter (1999), 268.
432 Mastronarde, 277.
433 Cf. Mastronarde, 277, n. 4: “…labor [is] implied in the long word πεποναμένος…”; Hunter (1999), 270 ad loc., writes of the word that it is: “…a prosaic word appropriate to the hero of πόνοι.” See also Campbell, 114, n. 10, where he cites a line of P.Oxy. 3723.20 (2nd century AD) which presents the conceit of Heracles’ love for Hylas as a canonical Labor or δόθλον.
434 Gutzwiller (1981), 20; Hunter (1999), 267 ad loc.: like Heracles, he is introduced with genitive modifier (χαριειντος), followed by relative clause defining a characteristic action (τοι…φορεύντος).
435 Idd. 2.115, 3.6, 11.30; see Chapter 3, p. 51 and n. 231.
436 Hunter (1999), 268 ad loc.
commonly designates in Greek usage women’s hair and, so, here emphasizes his femininity. Hence, it is impossible that Hylas “turn out a real man” (ἐς ἄλκοθήνον ἄνδρ’ ἀποβαίνη, 15) except in Heracles’ own imaginings, the homoioarchton in alpha seems to draw attention to the self-reflexivity of the statement. Whereas the phrase αὐτῷ δ’ εὖ ἐλκὼν (15), appropriately explained by a scholiast as a metaphor from yoked oxen, should denote the heroic teacher patterning his pupil’s behavior on his own, in fact, it merely suggests “Hylas’ passive dependence on an overprotective lover.” It is quite true, as Gow notes, that “Hylas at best cannot hope to be ἰσοζυγής, ἰσοφόρος with Heracles,” and that is precisely the point. Heracles, however, cannot grasp this truth, because, like the human lovers of the frame, he cannot see past his own desire.

Theocritus’ reworking of Iliad 21.111 in lines 10-3, with the harsh, jarring shift in tone between the grandiose personification of dawn in line 11 and the homely, but highly suggestive, image of dusk in lines 12-3, underscores the unusual vehemence and closeness of Heracles’ and Hylas’ pederastic relationship, giving further lie to the notion of the boy’s heroic upbringing. Heracles smothers Hylas (χορίς δ’ οὐδέποκ’ ἦς, 10) to such an extent that the boy becomes like the “whimpering chicks” of line 12.

437 Gow (1952: II 233 ad loc.).
438 Mastronarde, 276 and n. 3; Gutzwiller (1981), 20; cf. White, 76-7.
439 Cf. Gutzwiller (1981), 20; Segal (1981), 58: “The poem develops a sharp contrast between these aspirations of Heracles for the lad he loves and the boy’s actual fate.”
440 εἰρήνη δὲ μεταφορικῶς ἀπὸ τῶν βοῶν τῶν ἐκ νέου εἰθισμένων καλὸς ἔλκειν. Gow (1952: II 234-5) argues against this interpretation, mainly because the word ζυγῶν is absent; White (79-80), while dissenting from Gow on precisely how to understand the phrase, nonetheless accepts his arguments against the yoke metaphor. I find neither scholar’s position wholly convincing.
442 Gow (1952: II 235).
443 Gutzwiller (1981), 22 and n. 11; Gow adduces this point as an argument against accepting the yoke metaphor.
444 Dover (1971), 182-3.
445 Valkenaer’s and Gow’s proposals for transposition of lines so as to bring 8-9 and 14-15 closer together (Gow (1952: II 233 ad 8f.) miss this role of 10-3. See Gutzwiller (1981), 21-2.
(όρτάλιχοι μινυροί) who “look to the roost” (ποτὶ κοῖτον ὅρφεν, 12) as their mother, here Heracles, “shakes her wings” (σεισαμένας πτερὰ ματρὸς, 13) to summon them home.447 “The description of hen and chicks...provides an alternative and more valid picture of Heracles’ relationship with Hylas. It is a lover’s possessiveness, not a father’s dedication to his son, which prevents the separation of the pair. Heracles is not in truth behaving as a father-hero, but as a mother-hen.”448 Heracles’ second humanizing introduction in line 20 strengthens this association with mothering by describing the “hero” solely in terms of his own human mother, emphasizing this novel focus with a rare and striking metrical form (ssdds).449 Ἀλκμήνας υἱός Μιδεότιδος ἦρωΐνας. The line inverts the masculinity of Heracles’ first introduction as Ἀμφιτρύώνος...ὑίος (5) and, by applying to Alcmene the epithet “heroine,” recalls the inversion of Heracles himself in line 13.

Unlike Idyll 2, then, Idyll 13 presents in detail two instances of the fragile self, and the parallel yet contrasting depictions of them form an important part of the motif of competing others. The poet develops this motif around the movement in the poem noted above between epic and romantic realms and certain correspondences between the two.450

446 Here, κοῖτον has an undeniably sexual connotation (Gutzwiller (1981), 21).
447 Gow (1952: II 234 ad 13) notes the incongruity of the passage, but fails to identify any thematic connection. Mastronarde, 279-80, by contrast, notes the connection with the theme of epic-reversal, but fails to identify the passage’s significance for Heracles’ and Hylas’ relationship.
448 Gutzwiller (1981), 21. It is worth noting here that, in Idyll 2, when Simaetha depicted herself in the role of a passive beloved in her second use of Sappho fr. 31, she compared herself to whimpering babes calling out to their mother: κνοξεύντας φωνέυντας φίλαν ποτὶ ματέρα τέκνα (109).
449 Hunter (1999), 272 ad loc.
450 Cf. Mastronarde, 275; Gutzwiller (1981), 22; Segal (1981), 56. Mastronarde (285, n. 28) correctly emphasizes the presence of such narrative correspondence, though he reduces it to an overly schematic, and somewhat arbitrary, tripartite grouping of lines, including 16-24, though clearly part of the introduction as Gow recognized in his editing of the text, as the first portion of the central narrative. His schema is as follows: 72-75 are an epilogue (disregarded); 1-4 (didactic proposition) balance 66-71 (proposition proved); 5-15 and 55-65 treat the incongruity of Heracles and Hylas; the central narrative falls into three parts, 16-24, 25-35, 36-54, where the first and third balance one another as depictions of epic and idyllic...
The point of this correspondence, which is both less tidy and richer than Mastronarde saw, is to create a circularity of experience within the poem that embodies and reflects the brutal circularity of the Thecoritean conception of erōs. Thus, the poet places Heracles and Hylas, each set in an environment designed to reflect his own outward nature, in juxtaposition with numerous, competing “others,” who threaten the intense closeness between the pederastic lovers. The fate of each within his respective sphere reflects the nature of the fit between his inner and outer selves. Hylas, who is fragile in every respect, suffers one kind of fate, while Heracles, whose outer assertiveness qua hero covers his inner fragility, experiences quite another. Neither, however, can be called successful or fulfilled.

Lines 16-24, which provide the final focalization for the poet’s narrative by setting it in the context of the Argonautic expedition, present a wider world of public experience that contrasts sharply with the homey and intimate portrait of Heracles’ and Hylas’ private relationship. The presence of overwhelming groups of people is felt first in the phrase πασᾶν ἐκ πολίων (18), from which the Argonauts were chosen. Next, the adjective ἀρφείον which describes Iolcus in line 19 can mean both “wealthy” and “abundant in,” as it does in Idyll 24 (with ἀρφούρας, 108) and the spurious Idyll 25 (with μῆλοις, 119); flowing from the mention of “all the cities” in the previous line, the natural realms, respectively. His point is well taken as to lines 1-4 and 66-71; so too 72-75 as an epilogue. The rest, however, seems indefensible, especially as it disregards the narrative signposting supplied by the author: ἄλλω ὀτὲ in 16 simply transitions to a particular instance (the Argonautic expedition) of Heracles’ and Hylas’ never being apart (Hunter (1999), 271), while the correlatives ἤμοι...ήμοι in 25 and 27, which in Hesiod (cf. Op. 414-20, 486-88, 582-85; Scut. 393-98) “express the proper season for a certain task or natural occurrence” (Gutzwiller (1981), 23 (my italics)), begin the particular narrative of Heracles’ heartbreak. Indeed, AR uses them to introduce his account of the Hylas episode (Arg. 1.1172-8; Hunter (1999), 273 ad 25-8). That Theocritus’ narrative is not so neatly and proportionately balanced as Mastronarde would have it and spends more time treating the romantic than the epic realm is what we would rather expect from such a Hellenistic author.
association is with populousness: in this case, of “heroes” (ἕφεσιν ἀρίστοις). Finally, the epithet εὔεδρον that characterizes the Argo in line 21 has essentially the same meaning as εὐσεβίμος or εὐζυγον and, thus, looks forward to τριακοντάζυγον (‘Ἀργό) in line 74, which the scholiasts note means the ship had sixty oars, an unattestedly large size even for an epic vessel. As an intertextual reference, the participle προλελεγμένοι reinforces the context of populousness and adds a note of multi-ethnicity, since the word appears only once in Homer (Il. 13.689), where it refers to a chosen band of Athenians fighting together with the Boeotians, Ionians, Locrians, Phthians, and Epeians to keep the lone Trojan, Hector, from their ships. It also introduces into the narrative the important notions of choice and preferment, crucial for the motif of competing others. The poet presents the Argonauts, whom he describes in epic terms as the “best ones” (ἁριστῆς, 17), specifically “chosen” (προλελεγμένοι) for some skill or ability each has to offer (ὅν ὀφελός τι, 18), as a tight, internally cohesive group that cleave as closely to Jason (Ἀίσονίδας, οἳ δ’ αὐτῷ ἁριστῆς συνέποντο, 17) as Hylas to Heracles (σὺν δ’ αὐτῷ κατέβαινεν Ὄλας, 21). The importance of this detail stems from the fact that, unlike Apollonius, Theocritus introduces the entire Argonautic endeavor as the pursuit and, hence, desire, of just Jason himself (ἂλλ’ ὀτε τὸ χρύσειον

451 Gow (1952: II 236 ad 21); Hunter (1999), 272.
452 Gow (1952: II 244-5; Hunter (1999), 288; Campbell, 118 and n. 28.
453 Interestingly, at Il. 13.720, in the same battle, the poet describes Hector as “brazen-helmed” (χαλκοκορνιστή), a significant detail in context, for the Locrians, because they lacked “brazen helmets with horse-hair crests” (κορυθας χαλκήρας ἵππωδαςας, 714), stood behind the other warriors and fired arrows at the Trojans unseen. The Trojans in danger of being routed, Polydamas says to Hector: ἀμήχανος ἐστι... (726). Perhaps the inspiration behind Theocritus’ χαλκεοκέρδης (5) is precisely this χαλκοκορνιστής applied to Hector, who, like a typical Theocritean frustrated lover (cf. Id. 1.85; see also 14.52-3), is “helpless,” pitted against an array of competing others. On the term ἀμήχανος, see also Chapter 3, pp. 26-7.
As indicated by the over-determination of this pivotal character, the company and voyage he puts together are strongly epic-heroic in nature, creating an environment within which Heracles and Hylas stand out to different degrees as being not at home. Both enter “into” this heroic realm (ἐξ ὀφνειόν Ἰολκόν, 19; ἐξ Ἀργό, 21), suggesting a point of origin from without. The misapplied epithet ταλαιφρὸς in line 19 underscores the incongruity of Heracles’ presence here, since it is used in earlier epic only of mules and, in Apollonius (4.1062), of a widow. Line 20 refines and relocates Heracles’ displacement to within his own inner being, deriving from his obsessive, mothering love for Hylas, alluded to by the emphasis on his own mother Alcmene. Yet, as the heavy, final word of a spondaic line, ἤρωην emphazizes that Heracles possesses at least some degree of heroism, if of a perverse and diffuse sort. Thus, he finds a place among the Argonauts, attaching to the group as an appendage (ἧκετο χῶ ταλαιφρὸς ἀνήρ, 19). Hylas, on the other hand, finds himself in the Argo only because he is bound closely and intimately to Heracles. His alterity stems from his characterization by passive dependence and essential fragility in all aspects of his being. As we have seen, he can never live up to Heracles’ heroic pretensions for him. In context, the poet’s choice to

454 Cf. AR Arg. 1.1-4: Ἀρχόμενος σέῳ Φοίβῃ, παλαιγενέων κλέα φωτῶν μνήσιμα, αἱ Πόντου κατὰ στόμα καὶ διὰ πέτρας Κυμανέας βοσιλῆς ἐφημοσύνη Πελίαο χρύσειον μετὰ κώκας ἐὕζωγον Ἡλασαν Ἀργό.

455 While Jason’s given name ends line 16, his patronymic begins the very next (Ἰάσων / Αἰσινίδας, 16-7), a combination never used by Apollonius (Hunter (1999), 271). Similarly over-determined is his ship in Theocritus (κοίλαν...Ἀργό, 28): AR refers to the Argo as κοίλη νοῦς (Arg. 1.1328) or just as Ἀργό (Arg. 1.4), but never both (Hunter (1999), 274 ad 27-8).

456 See, for example, II. 23.654; OP. 46.

457 Mastronarde, 283 and n. 24; Gutzwiller (1981), 23. Is there foreshadowing here?
complete Hylas’ entry in line 21 with εὐεδρον ἐς Ἄργῳ and, in so doing, to juxtapose the boy with the ship, rather than flip-flop the line endings and finish with ἐς ὄφνειόν ἵωλκόν as he did his description of Heracles in 19, equally possible from a metrical standpoint, is particularly suggestive. For he proceeds in lines 22-6 to paint the ship as an ideal hero in its own right, relating in advance the story of its journey after the Hylas episode, when it will perform the heroic feat of darting through the clashing rocks and will “benefit mankind by making future navigation safer.” The entire passage arises as a dependent clause from the compound relative ἀτίς, which, more natural with indefinite antecedents, carries here a characterizing force, describing the specific exploits of the vessel as though an expression of its innate character. The aorist indicative forms ἄψατο, διεξάιξε, εἰσέδραμε, and ἔσταν present the actions that flow from that character as a fait accompli. It is as much a forgone conclusion that the Argo will “turn out” to be a hero as that Hylas will not. Gutzwiller writes: “Here is a world in which Heracles can perform his function as hero, but Hylas can only play the role of tag-along.” The boy must vie with the Argonauts for Heracles’ attention, a competition he has apparently already lost.

When the poet narrows his focus a final time in lines 25-31 to set up the narrative of Hylas’ abduction, he continues to exploit the notions of future-vision and Hylas’ displacement in a foreign realm in an effort to foreshadow the boy’s fate. The poet emphasizes in some detail that the Argonauts waited until early summer to set sail from Iolcus (ὁμος ἀντέλλοντι Πελειάδες, 25; τετραμμένου ἐῖαρος ἣδη, 26; τόμοι ναυτιλίας

458 Mastronarde, 283.
459 Smyth § 2496.
μιμνάσκετο, 27). It can be no coincidence that he infuses his verse with a strong Hesiodic flavor precisely at this point, for, on more than one occasion, the Boeotian farmer-poet stresses the point that spring sailing brings considerable risk. Looking ahead to possible consequences, the Argonauts waited for a propitious time to begin their journey and ensure success. In the midst of this notice, however, Theocritus includes the pastoral detail of this being also the time when shepherds turn out the young lambs with their larger flocks and take them to upland pastures for summer grazing (ἐσχατιαὶ δὲ ἄρνα νέον βόσκοντι, 25-6). The word he employs for “upland pastures,” ἐσχατιαί, emphasizes that these lands are marginal areas, far from the farmhouses. In such environments, only the watchful vigilance of the shepherd can protect his tender lambs from wild animals. Thus, while, on the literal level, ἄρνα νέον functions as a collective singular for the actual lambs, it is also possible to see in it a symbol of Hylas the delicate youth, bound by others’ plans for him and lead to a distant frontier land that holds great danger for him, inasmuch as his minders, the heroes, have focused their attention on their voyage (ναυτιλίας μιμνάσκετο θείος ἄωτος / ἥρων, 27-8), not on him. The poet further alludes to the negative consequences for the boy of the Argonauts act of misplaced “remembering” in his description of the spot in the Propontis where the heroes put to anchor (ἐνθὰ Κιανών / αὐλακας εὑρόντι βόες τρίβοντες ἄροτρα, 30-1).

462 See Gutzwiller (1981), 23-4 and nn. 16, 17; see also n. 446 above.
466 Hunter (1999), 274.
467 Hunter (1999), 30-1; cf. Columella, Rust. 7.3.26; Theoc., Id. 11.24 φεύγεις δ’ ὀσπὲρ ὃις πολιῶν λύκων ἀθρήσασα; cf. also Id. 4.44-53.
By depicting not a savage, frontier wilderness, but a cultivated land belonging to the Ciani, that is, inhabitants of the city Cius, Theocritus again leaps ahead temporally past the bounds of his limited narrative and describes the locale as it is at the time of his address to Nicias in the frame, not as it was in the remote past of the mythic narrative. The poet presents the actions of the cattle, who “cut broad furrows, wearing down the ploughs,” in the present tense, in sharp contrast to the aorists and imperfects he uses in the surrounding core narrative: ἐθεῖτο (30), πέννοντο (32), στορέσαντο (33). The shore onto which the Argonauts disembark is specifically described as a wild meadow (λειμὼν, 34), not cultivated fields. Line 35 (ἐνθέ εὐ βούτομον ὤζῷ βοτόν τ’ ἐτάμοντο κύπεριον) pointedly contrasts with the anachronistic description of Cius in 30-1: “where” (ἐνθε) cattle now cleave the fields, “from there” (ἐνθεύ) the Argonauts once cut the sharp, “cow-cutting” or “cow-cut” sedge. The poet heightens the contrast of his juxtaposition by “wittily” placing his depiction of the Argonauts coming off the ship κατὰ ζυγά after the description of “ploughing (and hence ‘yoked’) bulls.” Apollonius’ version helps us clarify the temporal sequence, for there, after the Hylas affair has been concluded and the heroes are back upon the sea, then Glaucus prophesies both Heracles’ destiny to perform his labors for Eurystheus and that of the Argonaut Polyphemus, who is the character in that narrative who rushes out in answer to Hylas’ cry, to found a city where Hylas was lost at the mouth of the river Cius, from which the settlement and its people would take

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468 So Gow (1952: II 237
469 Hunter (1999), 274 ad 30-1.
470 βούτομον can be understood either way; Gow (1952: II 238 ad loc.) notes that while the proparoxytone accent suggests a passive meaning, the adjective ὤζῷ suggests active; see also Hunter (1999), 275. Either way, this growth would not remain once actual cattle plow fields for farming as in line 31. The suggestion of an active meaning may even provide for the plant a symbolic value as not only the antithesis of civilization and culture but, indeed, a force inimical to them.
their name.\textsuperscript{472} Inasmuch as the desire to provide an aetiology for the ritual cult of Hylas among the Mysians at Cius motivates Apollonius’ account,\textsuperscript{473} Theocritus’ dramatic cliff-hanger ἐνθα Κιονῶν at the end of line 30 in essence labels the place at the outset as “the land of Hylas lost.”

Proceeding upon such sharp foreshadowing, the scene of the Argonauts’ disembarkation (lines 32-9) in essence undoes the earlier depiction of Hylas’ and Heracles’ intimate relationship (10-3). As Gutzwiller has demonstrated, the overall scene provides a reworking of a set typology from Homeric epic,\textsuperscript{474} within which Hylas can find no place. The poet carefully emphasizes the competing-others motif. The Argonauts come off the ship and begin to prepare their meals κατὰ ζυγα (32), a phrase which, while most likely best explained by the scholiast as a prosaic expression meaning simply “in pairs,” simultaneously evokes the Argo and its thirty rowing benches (τριάκοντα ζυγον, 74) and, thus, emphasizes both the heroes’ large numbers and their exclusivity as a self-contained group.\textsuperscript{475} The poet achieves the same effect with the juxtaposition πολλοὶ δὲ μίαν in the following line.\textsuperscript{476} By noting further the time of day, evening (δειελινοῖ), and the Argonauts’ action of preparing beds (στορέσαντο

\textsuperscript{471} Hunter (1999), 275.
\textsuperscript{472} AR Arg. 1.1321-3, 1345-7. When the Argonauts first land in the area, AR describes the spot simply as “the Cianian land, around Mt. Arganthoneus and the mouths of the Cius” (Arg. 1.1177-8). Its inhabitants are Mysians.
\textsuperscript{473} AR Arg. 1.1344-57; cf. Strabo 12.4.3; Dover (1971), 180; Hunter (1999), 262-3.
\textsuperscript{474} Gutzwiller (1981), 24-5.
\textsuperscript{475} Dover (1971: 185) favors understanding the phrase to mean only “according to rowing benches,” referring it strictly to πένοντο; Gow (1952: II 238) and Hunter (1999: 275) note, however, that to so take the phrase would render line 38 superfluous, favoring instead “in pairs,” without reference to the Argo’s ζυγα. In all probability, however, the ambiguity is intentional; line 38 serves to clear matters up by dashing audience expectation that the phrase refers to rowing benches, which is a natural assumption given the nautical context.
\textsuperscript{476} Gow (1938, 16) notes that “it is odd that, whereas all share one χαμελη, so much stress should be laid on their messing in couples (32, 37),” because he misses this aspect of the poem’s theme. Theocritus must show both that the Argonauts are a large group of individuals and an exclusive collectivity. The image of
χαμεύνων), he recalls the last of the three balanced temporal clauses in 10-3, where the
chicks, analogue of Hylas, look at dusk “toward the bed” (ποτὶ κοῖτον, 12) of their
awaiting mother, analogue of Heracles. Yet, at 37, Theocritus presents as a critical
instance of the Argonauts’ pairing behavior that of Heracles and Telamon “who, as a pair,
always dined together at a single mess,” again employing the juxtaposition
μίαν ἀμφω ἐταίροι in order to emphasize exclusive group solidarity.478

αὐτῷ θ’ Ἡρακλῆι καὶ ἀστεμφεῖ Τελαμώνι
οἱ μίαν ἀμφω ἐταίροι ἀεὶ δαινυντο τράπεζαν.
(38)

Mother-Heracles has his mind on the Argonauts, not Hylas, as the latter goes off (κῴκεθ’,
36) to get water for the dinner of the new heroic coupling. At the same time, with
disproportionate emphasis on what Hunter calls the “‘bucolic’ preparations”479 of this
Homeric disembarkation scene, Theocritus imbues his enchanting rural setting with an
“appeal [which] serves only as a prelude to the enticements that await Hylas when he
visits the habitations of the nymphs.”480 The choice of finite verb in line 39, ἐνόησεν,
echoes μιμνάσχετο in 27 and immediately connects the passage to the nexus.481 Hylas
“noticed” a spring, that is, he apprehended it with his mind (νοῦς); Heracles’ inattention
to him has driven Hylas’ attention elsewhere.482 The abrupt shift of emphasis created

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477 Campbell, 115, n. 13.
478 Griffiths’ (1996: 108-9) desire to excise line 38 as an interpolated gloss, principally for its repetition of
the “many sharing a single’ idea’ points to his failure to appreciate this critical motif at work in the poem.
479 Hunter (1999), 275 ad 32-3.
480 Gutzwiller (1981), 24-5.
481 AR (Arg. 1.1221) uses μετεκίθεν, devoid of any such associations.
482 Campbell, 115, n. 13: noticing the general parallel between the disembarkation scene and lines 12-3, he
writes: “It was precisely at this hour [i.e. evening] that Heracles was inattentive (38 implying no doubt that
he was deep in conversation...with <his associate of long standing> Telamon).”
mid-line by the summary τάχα δὲ highlights the unsentimental swiftness of such changes of heart in the Theocritean conception of bitter erōs (χάλκεον ἄγγος ἔχων. τάχα δὲ κράνων ἐνόησεν). Whereas, at the corresponding point in his narrative (Arg. 1.1207-21), Apollonius indulges in a digression to relate how Hylas became Heracles’ squire. Theocritus here elides any attempt at pathos, leaving only the stark, bare disjunction where once stood an intimate relationship. In this connection, it is highly significant that he describes the galingale (κύπειρον) in line 35 as βαθὸν, “tall” or “thick,”484 the same adjective that describes erōs itself in a rare usage in Idyll 3 (ὁς ὄδεν ὁς ἐμάνῃ, ὁς ἐς βαθὸν ἄλατ’ ἔρωτα, 42).485 The word also appears in Iliad 5.555 modifying the noun ἕλη,486 which provides the etymology of Hylas’ name,487 a not unimportant detail as the narrative to follow shows.488

Theocritus presents Hylas’ encounter at the nymphs’ spring as an inverse parallel to the epic portrayal of the Argonauts in lines 16-35. Now, Hylas finds himself in an

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483 See Hunter (1999), 276.
484 See Gow (1951: II 88 ad Id. 4.51); Hunter (1999), 275.
485 It appears elsewhere only in Nonnus 15.209, for which Theocritus is an important model; Hunter (1999), 124 ad 3.42.
486 Doric ἕλα.
487 See Hunter (1999), 263, 279 ad 47.
488 Indeed, the simile in which the this Iliadic line appears is highly suggestive as a source text for Theocritus’ complex of images to depict destructive erōs. The passage describes the sons of Diocles, Orsilochus and Crethon, whom Aeneas kills, as two lions, raised by their mother in mountain forests, killing men’s cattle and sheep until killed themselves by bronze weapons:

οὔω τὸ γε λέοντε δύω ὃρεος κορυφῆσιν
ἐπρεφέτην ὑπὸ μητρὶ βαθείης τάφρεσιν ὑλῆς·
tὸ μὲν ἄρ’ ἀραράξοντε βόας καὶ ἑμία μήλα
σταθμοὺς ἀνθρόπων κεραζέμετον, ὄρακα καὶ αὐτῷ ἀνδρῶν ἐν παλάμησι κατέκταθεν ὃξεῖ χαλκῷ.

(II. 554-8).
environment congenial to his nature, one reflective even of the etymology of his own name, and he is the contested object of desire for another group of competing others: water-nymphs. When the Nymphs first appear, they are “preparing a dance” (ὑδατί δ’ ἐν μέσσῳ Νύμφαι χορόν ὀρτίζοντο, 43). This seemingly inconspicuous detail foreshadows the role the minor divinities are to play in the scene, for in *Idylls* 1 and 11, images of dancing or playing girls have a special connection to the motif of competing others. Like the Argonauts in lines 18, 33, and 38, the poet presents the Nymphs here as both a variegated group of individuals and a collectivity, first introducing them in line 45 with three individual names and then, in 47-8, replacing those names with the close anaphora πᾶσαι...πασάων, the second instance especially marked by its emphatic initial position and spondaic rhythm. The names themselves highlight the nymphs’ status

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489 Note how ἀγρωστής and ἀγροιώτατης fall across the fifth-sixth foot boundary of two (42, 44) of the only three consecutive spondeiazoentes among the genuine Theocritean idylls; 25.29-31 is the sole other instance within the corpus. See Gow (1952: II 239) for other examples of this phenomenon in hexameter poetry.


491 In *Idyll* 1, Priapus taunts the cowherd Daphnis for lamenting his absence from the dancing girls when he sees how they laugh:

...καὶ τὸ δ’ ἐπεὶ κ’ ἐσορῆς τὰς παρθένος οία γελάντι,

τάκεισιν ὅφθαλμος ὅτι οὐ μετά ταύτις χορεύεις.

(90-1) [The verb τίκειν commonly connotes envy or jealousy in Greek, as in *Idyll* 5.12-3 (ἐτάκειν / βασκαίνων) and Callimachus fr. 1.8, 17 (τήκειν ἔπιστάμενον.../ ἐξείλετε Βασκανίῃς ὀλοκ γένος). See Hopkinson, 93 ad Call. fr. 1.8.] In *Idyll* 11, Polyphemus attempts to console himself for what he perceives as Galateia’s inattention towards him by boasting that many girls bid him play with them at night, all giggling when he pays them attention:

πολλ’ αἰ συμπασίδεν με κόραι τᾶς νύκτα κέλονται,

κιχλίζονται δὲ πᾶσαι, ἐπεὶ κ’ αὐταῖς ὑπακούοσα.

(76-8) In *Idyll* 13, Theocritus indicates that the nymphs’ dance, too, takes place at night with his description of the them as “sleepless” (όκοίμησι, 44; see Gow (1952: II 239 ad 43f.;) Mastronarde, 287; Segal (1981), 54), use for one of them of the name Νόχετα (45; see Mastronarde, 285-6, n. 29; Segal (1981), 54), and description of the water as black (μέλαν ὕδωρ, 49; though Campbell, 115, notes that this also might be a realistic detail, insofar as the pool is situated in a spot “rich in plant life,” hence organic decay, which tints the water black with tannins). The fact that ὀρτίζοντο occupies the final two feet of a spondaic line, which is flanked on either side by two additional such lines, may serve to emphasize the motif.

492 Segal (1981: 56) and Hutchinson, 195, both note only the collectivizing aspect of the depiction and its “rhetorical effect.”
as seducers: Μαλίς, “apple-tree,”\(^{493}\) and Νόχεω, “night lady,”\(^{494}\) both suggest the comastic setting,\(^{495}\) while Εὐνίκα, “easy victory,”\(^{496}\) presupposes the revel’s outcome, and, whereas the Argonauts left behind on the shore are preparing to sleep,\(^{497}\) the nymphs await Hylas wide awake (ἀχοιμητοι, 44). Beyond this literal meaning, the adjective ἀχοιμητοι also resonates interestingly with the description of the two men on the goatherd’s cup in *Idyll* 1, struggling in vain (ἐτόσω μοχθιζόντι, 38)\(^{498}\) over a girl, who, flippantly turning her attention now to the one, now to the other, possibly represents unfulfillable *erōs* itself.\(^{499}\) The men are said to “have bags under their eyes” (κυλοὶδιόντες, 38), as from sleeplessness.\(^{500}\) Theocritus completes his portrait of Hylas’ seduction/abduction with the powerful μὲν...δὲ antithesis of 53-5, the nymphs having replaced Heracles as the boy’s mother figures, soothing his tears as they hold him on their knees.\(^{501}\)

\(^{493}\) Hunter (1999), 278 *ad loc.*; cf. [Id.] 8.79: τῷ μαλίδι μᾶλα.

\(^{494}\) Hunter (1999), 278 *ad 45*; Mastronarde, 285-6, n. 29: translates “she of the night.”

\(^{495}\) Cf. Id. 2.119-20.

\(^{496}\) Mastronarde, 285, n. 29.

\(^{497}\) The apparent problem of the Argonauts preparing what appear to be beds in line 33, then, in 68, taking off in the middle of night, has stymied many commentators: Gow (1938: 16); *idem* (1952: II 238 *ad 33*, 244 *ad 68*; Serrao, 553. Mastronarde (284 and n. 26) and Gutzwiller (1981: 24 and n. 20) both explain that the beds are intended not for sleeping, but for eating and relaxation in this “idyllic” setting. I do not think the vocabulary or details provide any grounds for making a hard and fast distinction. Gutzwiller’s Homeric parallels (n. 20) and Gow’s Apollonian ones seem to cancel each other out. Campbell (116 and n. 15) provides the best, practically-minded explanation, contending that, once darkness falls completely and Hylas fails to return, the Argonauts fear danger and prepare to depart quickly, but are held up until midnight by Heracles’ departure in the meantime.

\(^{498}\) Hunter (1999: 80 *ad 38*), notes how meter reinforces sense here: “The first spondeiazen of the poem completes the scene; the heavy rhythm is mimetic of the men’s wasted labor.”; see Halperin, 178

\(^{499}\) See, for instance, Rist (1978), 24: “...two youths flanking a woman who here represents the perverse eros...”


\(^{501}\) Mastronarde, 287; Segal (1981), 58; Hutchinson, 195.
As many commentators have noticed, there is also present in the nymphs’ portrayal a sinister, unhappy quality,\textsuperscript{502} which makes of their desire for Hylas a competing picture of the same brutal, unsentimental erōs common to all Theocritean, indeed most Hellenistic, depictions of love.\textsuperscript{503} As Segal correctly emphasizes, the very incongruity of the overall scene first alerts the reader to “something awry.”\textsuperscript{504} For example, many take issue with the seeming illogicality of the poet’s detailed botanical inventory of a nocturnal setting.\textsuperscript{505} Ironically, no one notices that Theocritus himself explains the apparent problem in line 45, when he names the nymph “whose look is spring” (ἐκρή θ’ ὀρόσωσα) after the night (Νύχεια); just as the nymphs, actually dark and foreboding creatures, appear to the eye pretty and seductive, so their pool, though glimpsed at night, seems a lovely locus amoenus, lush (χλωρόν, 41) and blooming (θάλλοντο, 42) as if in the spring sunshine.\textsuperscript{506} As we recall from the poem’s frame, the baleful quality of erotic desire resulting in seduction derives from its ability to deceive, to imbue reality with false seeming and, so, entrap the unsuspecting.\textsuperscript{507} The first description of the nymphs’ spring as being “in a low-lying spot” (ἡμένο ἐν χόρφῳ, 40) emphasizes this problem of perspective when taken together with the shepherding metaphor alluded to in lines 25-6 (ἐσχατιλ δέ ἀρνα νέον βόσκονται, τετραμμένον εὖαρος ἡδη) and reactivated with the mention of “spring” in 45. Columella, from whom has comes down

\textsuperscript{502} Mastronarde, 286-7; Gutzwiller (1981), 26; Segal (1981), 54-5, 60; Huner (1999), 278-9.
\textsuperscript{503} As Holtsmark (254) puts it: “…Hellenistic Eros is a rather brutally realistic thing.”
\textsuperscript{504} Segal (1981), 55; he continues: “The beauty of this pleasance is at variance with the circumstances in which it is encountered and the fate which it forebodes.”
\textsuperscript{505} See Mastronarde (288, n. 33), who calls such reading “overly literal-minded” and “picayune,” Gutzwiller (1981: 25 and n. 22), and Segal (1981: 54).
\textsuperscript{506} Hunter (1999), 277 ad 40-2, attempts to explain by arguing that “we here listen to a description by the poet, not an account of what ‘Hylas’ sees,” but I think the text is (deliberately!) far from clear on this point.
\textsuperscript{507} Cf. Simaetha’s depiction of Delphis’ speech in \textit{Idyll} 2, particularly her portrayal of Delphis as wily Odysseus (113) and description of herself as “easily persuaded” (138).
a uniquely detailed prescription for the duties of herdsmen, forbids the shepherd to recline or sit while working, but rather advises that he stand on a lofty vantage-point so as not to be “had” by thief or wild animal.\footnote{Columella Rust. 7.3.26: nec aut recubet, aut considet. Nam nisi procedit, stare debet, quandoquidem custodis officium sublimem celsissimamque oculorum veluti speculam desiderat, ...ne fur, aut bestia hallucinantem pastorem decipiat. See Gutzwiller (1991), 30-1.} Like the striking and novel usage of καθιδρυθέντες in line 28,\footnote{See Gow (1938), 15.} ἡμένῳ here implies precisely the opposite of a lofty vantage, seclusion and interiority, and, hence, bodes ill for Hylas as the new lamb.\footnote{Interestingly, both the young boy in the third of the ecphrastic scenes of the goatherd’s cup in \textit{Id.} 1 and Polyphemus in \textit{Id.} 11, each portrayed as a steward, neglectful of his duties to attend to poetic concerns, sit down, though on some high object (ἐφ’ αἰμασταίσι ϕυλάσσει / ἡμένος, 1.47-8; καθεξόμενος δ’ ἐπὶ πέτρας / ὑψηλὰς, 11.17-8).} Further, as Gutzwiller notes, the site of nymphaic dance is often associated in archaic poetry with sexual arousal and, hence, with violence.\footnote{Gutzwiller (1981), 26-7. Perhaps the use for Hylas of κοῦρος in 46 and 53 instead of παῖς relates to this similarity: the poet refers to Hylas as κοῦρος in those passages which reflect the sexual maturation tale motifs, but switches to παῖς (cf. 49, 55) in specifically erotic sections.} Given the prominence of water in the present passage,\footnote{For which, see Segal (1981), \textit{passim}.} one thinks, too, of similarly doomed scenes of mistaken male intrusion on a goddess and attendants bathing, like the tale of Teiresias in Callimachus’ fifth Hymn on the “Bath of Pallas” or that of Actaeon in Ovid (\textit{Metamorphoses} 3.138-255). Theocritus’ Hylas story also resembles in certain details the opening passage of the \textit{Homeric Hymn to Demeter}, which begins with the innocence of girls at play (παῖζουσαν κοῦρησι σῶν, \textit{H. Cer.} 5), but ends with their being snatched away while reaching for a desired object (cf. \textit{H. Cer.} 15-7 and \textit{Id.} 13.46-9). Finally, the Nymphs first glimpsed in seductive dance are, in the very next line, revealed as “fearful goddesses
for country folk” (δειναὶ θεοὶ ἄγροιῶταις, 44), recalling the Homeric δεινὴ θεός used of powerful and dangerous female figures like Circe and Calypso.514

Thus, Theocritus does not employ the scene of Hylas’ seduction to demonstrate a harmonious or “pastoral” version of love as opposed to a frustrated epic counterpart.515 Rather, he portrays the nymph’s desire and its after-effects as every bit the arduous, vehement passion as Simaetha’s confused feelings for Delphis in *Idyll 2*.516 In line 47, as Hylas reaches out to dip the brazen vessel in their pool, the nymphs “grow upon his hand” (τοὶ δ’ ἐν χερὶ πάσαι ἔφυσαν), an epicism517 which resembles Simaetha’s embittered simile of “grievous Eros” as a marsh-dwelling leech, “grown on” to the surface of her skin and drinking off her dark blood:

\[
\text{αἰαὶ ἔρως ἀνιαρέ, τί μεν μέλαν ἐκ χροὸς αἷμα} \\
\text{ἔμφυς ὡς λιμνᾶτις ἀπαν ἐκ βδέλλα πέπωκας;}
\]

(55-6)

The word ἔφυσαν also picks back up on the similarly emphatic final πεφύκει in 40, casting the image into specific relief. Theocritus, whose account of the Hylas story conspicuously avoids much “psychologizing” of the nymphs as compared to Apollonius’ version,518 may suggest here a “rationalizing” interpretation of the boy’s abduction,519 painting the nymphs as “elemental forces” that grow over and around Hylas until, under

514 Gow (1952: II, 239-40 ad 43f.), Dover (1971: 186 ad 44), and Gutzwiller (1981: 26 and n. 25) all point specifically to the phrase δεινὴ θεός αὐθήσασα used of Circe and Calypso (*Od. 10.136, 11.8, 12.150, 12.449*). Mastronarde (278, n. 9) finds this identification “too specific.” See also Hunter (1999), 278 ad 44.

515 Cf. Mastronarde, 289: “Furthermore, although love spoils the ideal epic world, it is a harmonious element of both the real and the pastoral worlds.”

516 *Cf.* Hutchinson, 196: “The nymphs provide a very subsidiary illustration of love, but warm devotion and fierce passion are to be shown only in the case of Heracles.”

517 LSJ s.v. ἔμφυς II.2; Hunter (1999), 279 ad 47.

518 Segal (1981), 57.

519 Hunter (1999), 279 ad 47.
the water by tale’s end, he is entrapped in and is part of the mysterious locus.\textsuperscript{520} With its absence of third-foot caesura, line 41 provides a vivid word picture of the boy’s literal engrossing in the lush scene “as the plants grow over the normal divisions of the hexameter.”\textsuperscript{521} The assonance in \textit{nu} and end-rhyme in -\textit{ov}, together with double alliteration from τε...τ’ and χελιδόνιον χλωρόν, emphasize the assimilatory aspect of this process, a facet reemphasized in the following lines by the polyptotic play ἄγρωστις...ἄγρωσταις in 42 and 44, the anaphoric Νύμφαι in 43 and 44, and the internal rhyme in \textit{αί} in the second half of 44.\textsuperscript{522} The nymphs themselves suffer similar de-individualization and absorption in their own desire, as their separate names dissolve and coalesce in their reaching out for Hylas into the collective πᾶσαι of line 47, repeated immediately in 48 as an adnominal genitive dependent on ἔρως. Furthermore, as mentioned at the outset, the poet portrays the nymphs’ falling victim to love for Hylas with the same verb (ἐξερήμησεν, 48-49) that Simaetha utilizes in her report of Delphis’ speech in \textit{Idyll 2} (ἐφόβησε’, 137) to relate the deranging affects \textit{erōs} has on, among other things, marriage; by subverting the lasting pederastic union of Heracles and Hylas, who \textit{were} never apart (10), the nymph’s love accomplishes this very destructive feat. Far from connoting the mere “fluttering” of the nymphs’ emotions,\textsuperscript{523} φοβεῖν, here in the intensified form ἐκφοβεῖν, is a standard Homeric term for “routing” an enemy.\textsuperscript{524} Also, the poet’s statement in line 48 that \textit{erōs} for Hylas routed the Nymphs’ “delicate wits”

\textsuperscript{520} Segal (1981), 60.
\textsuperscript{521} Hunter (1999), 277 \textit{ad} 40-2.
\textsuperscript{522} Note also the play on the diphthong -\textit{ot-}.
\textsuperscript{523} \textit{Pace} Mastronarde, 286; Segal (1981), 56.
\textsuperscript{524} \textit{Cf. Il. 15.15, 91.}
(ἀπαλάς φρένας) parallels Simaetha’s in *Idyll* 2 that Eros and Aphrodite carried Delphis’ “hasty thoughts” elsewhere (...ή ρά οί ἄλλαξ / οἰκετ’ ἔχων ὁ τ’ Ἐρως ταχινός φρένας ἀ τ’ Ἀφροδίτα, 6-7), the epithets “delicate” (ἐπαλάς) and “hasty” (ταχινός) both conveying a sense of caprice, whence Mastronarde’s translation of the former as “flighty emotions”525 and Gow’s of the latter as “fickle fancy.”526 Since the ultimate model for both lines is *Iliad* 14.294 (ὡς δ’ ἤδεν ὡς μν Ἐρως πυκνος φρένας ἀμφικάλυψεν), both adjectives derive their true force from implicit contrast to the Homeric πυκνός used of Zeus’ “solid” and “shrewd” divine mind.527 The point of Theocritus’ version of *erôs* is that its victims are not great and powerful gods, but humans or fringe divinities easily depicted as human, like monsters, nymphs, and demi-gods, who are, *a fortiori*, utterly defenseless before *erôs*’ uniquely persuasive power. Since the chief lines in question, 13.48 and 2.7, exhibit remarkably similar metrical structure, with ἐρως marking a trithemimeral caesura, followed immediately by the epithet + φρένας phrase, each stands out as a programmatic statement about *erôs* and its effect on mental and emotional processes. Theocritus conceives *erôs* not as gentle, fluttering emotions, but as brute savagery hidden behind a veneer of gentility and charm. This intertext from *Idyll* 2 gives new pointedness to the description of Hylas departing the Argonautic camp in lines 36 and 39, denoted by the verbal combination κοκεθ’...ἔχων, as well as to the effects Hylas’ disappearance has on Heracles in 55-67. It also informs the simile of Hylas as a shooting

525 Mastronarde, 286.
526 Gow (1953), 10.
527 Hunter (1999: 279 ad 48) notes that ἀμφικάλυψεν has actually replaced ἔξεφόβησεν in most MSS of *Idyll* 13.
star as he tumbles into the water, his “fiery” hair (πυρσός, 50; cf. ξενθός, 36) streaming behind while he falls. For in Idyll 2, just before invoking love’s power to destroy relationships, “Delphis” speaks of it as a flame that burns hotter than Hephaestus on Lipara:

..."Ερως δ’ ἀρα καὶ Λιπαραίω

πολλάκις Ἀφαίστοιο σέλας φλογερότερον αἴθει.

(133-4) Finally, even as Theocritus concludes the abduction scene with an image of Hylas’ complete fragility in the maternal arms of the nymphs, he at once dashes the warm, pleasing tone with the verb παρεψύχοντο (54), which denotes not simply the pleasant “cooling,” hence “soothing,” of inflamed emotions, but, more importantly for Theocritean verse, also the “chill of violent emotions.” Thus, it appears as a sign of Simaetha’s erotic distress in Idyll 2 (πᾶσα μὲν ἐψύχθην, 106) and of the dejection of Theocritus’ Graces in Idyll 16 (ψυχροὶ ἐν γονάτεσσι κάρη μίμνοντι βαλοίσσι, 11). In this sense, the word hints at “the coldness of death which such a subaqueous love might mean for a mortal.”

Lines 55-71 concentrate on the aftermath for Heracles of Hylas’ abduction. The poet has his “hero” break with the heroic world and, like Hylas, depart the shore for the deep wilderness of erotic frenzy (ὁχετο, 56; cf. κῷχεθ’ Ἄλας, 36). Even as line 20 in a way built Heracles’ heroic identity back up following its dashing in 13, moving from the mother image at the line’s beginning out to the epithet ἱρωίνας at its end, so line 55

528 Campbell, 114.
529 Simaetha herself twice compares her love to fire, in lines 40 and 82.
530 Segal (1981), 55.
531 Note the repeated conjunction of “cold” and “knees” in this last.
deconstructs his strange heroism all over again. Beneath the impressive penthemimeral epic epithet Ἀμφιπτρονιόδος which marks his heroic veneer (cf. 5), seethes the cinquesyllabic passive participle ταρασσόμενος denoting his troubled, unheroic emotions. Both of these weighty words, in turn, come crashing down before the tiny prepositional phrase at the root of the disturbance, the emphatic final περὶ παιδί. The phrase immediately recalls the similar ἐπὶ παιδί employed in line 49 to characterize the Nymphs’ emotional perturbation over Hylas, uniting them with Heracles in terms of the object of their desire, yet distinguishing them in terms of their status relative to that object. Like Simaetha “at” Delphis in Idyll 2 (ἐπὶ Δέλφιδι, 22; ἐπὶ τήνφο, 40), the Nymphs take aim “at” (ἐπὶ) Hylas as seducers, prompting Heracles’ concern “for” (περί) the boy. Whereas Hylas’ departure from the shore signals a break in erotic relations (39), Heracles’ represents a vain attempt at preserving them. Thus, the description in lines 58-60 of his calling out for Hylas, who hears and responds but cannot make himself heard because of his “thin” voice, inverts the typical vocabulary of the theme of possible-impossible pursuit:

\[ \tau\iota\varsigma\delta' \acute{\alpha}ρ' \circ \pi\alpha\varsigma\upsilon\acute{\alpha}κουσεν, \acute{\alpha}ραια δ' \acute{\gamma}κετο φων\acute{\alpha} \acute{\epsilon}ξ \acute{\upsilon}δατος, \piαρε\acute{\omega}ν \delta' \acute{\mathrm{μ}}\acute{\alpha}λλα \sigma\chiε\acute{\upsilon}δ\acute{\omega}ν \epsilon\iota\deltaετο π\acute{o}ρρω. \]

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532 Segal (1981), 55.
533 Mastronarde, 277; Gutzwiller (1981), 27.
535 See Dover (1971), 186 ad loc.
536 The strikingly original use of χανδόνευν in line 57 (see Gow (1938: 15); idem (1952: II 242)) may suggest as much (καὶ ῥόσαλον, τὸ οί κιν̄ εχάνδονε δεξιτερά̣ χειρ̄). For, here, the notion of Heracles’ constant exercise of this action with the one item, the club, contrasts with the use of the same verbal root in line 46 to describe the vessel Hylas dips into the nympha’s spring: πολυχαλάπαί̣, “holding much.” With the sexual symbolism of the water, this word play may hint at the fuller version of the myth told in Apollonius’ account, where the nymph takes Hylas for a husband (Arg. 1.1325), symbolizing the boys’ sexual maturation and graduation to heterosexual relations (see Segal (1981), 57-8). At the same time, however, as Mastronarde (285, n. 27) notes, three things are said always to be with Heracles in Theocritus’ version: Hylas (10), Telamon (37), and the club (57), signaling the very conflict in his character that causes Hylas’ departure.
Here, Hylas ironically receives the designation παρεών not because he is currently rejected in favor of another, but due to the disparate nature of his and Heracles’ physical locations, which make the one seem to the other far away. The enjambment of εὖ ύδατος in line 59 emphasizes this discrepancy. The perceptual distortion effected by the physical dislocation causes Heracles to mistake the location of Hylas and, thereby, to overlook him. Now “disturbed, disquieted, agitated” (παρασσόμενος, 55), Heracles stands in sharp contrast to his “unshakable” (ἀστεμωεῖ, 37) former mess-mate Telamon. 537 Line 58, which describes his initial calling out to Hylas, fleshes out the nature of this disjunction with the phrase ὀσὸν βοθὺς ἕρυγε λαμίμος. 538 Since ἐρεύγεσθαι properly means “to belch” or “disgorge,” and λαμίμος is more commonly associated with food than speech, 539 we are here reminded that the impassioned triple cry of 58 emerges from the gullet of a character notorious for his gluttony and bestial appetites, 540 at least one of which was not sated at the board with Telamon. It is also a “deep” gullet, an adjective which, as we have seen, enjoys special, even thematic, connections in Theocritus to wildness and erotic frenzy. 541

537 See Mastronarde, 285, on Telamon.
538 So, perhaps, does line 56, though more subtly, with the unique adverb Μιαωσιστή, which, while on the surface it refers to Heracles’ bow (Gow (1952: II 242 ad loc.; Dover (1971), 187 ad loc.), parallels in form Αἰγυπτιστή in Id. 15.48, in a context where the evocation of foreigners is not flattering. Additionally, throughout the Scythian logos of book 4 (sections 1-144), Herodotus portrays the Scythians as the cultural embodiment of the characteristics of the Homeric Polyphemus, that is, the antithesis of Greek civilization. 539 See Gow (1952: II 243 ad loc.).
540 Cf. Eur. Alc. 753-5; Ar. Av. 567, 1583, Pax 741, V. 60, Ra. 62-3, 549-60; Call. h. 3.159-61.
541 I think its application to Phasis in line 23 demonstrates this point nicely, since the use perplexes Griffiths (1996: 107; cf. Hunter (1999), 272 ad 23-4) to the point of wanting to emend Φάσιν to Πόντον. The Phasis, he argues, is “broad” (cf. AR Arg. 2.401, 1261), but the Black Sea is “indubitably deep.” Yet as signifying less the Colchian river’s physical than its conceptual space in its associations with Medea, paradigmatic image of dangerous, wild alterity, the adjective makes perfect, thematically salient sense.
In his frantic search for Hylas, Heracles appears transmogrified by erôs; instead of the mythic warrior who subdued the lion, he becomes like a flesh-eating lion himself:

\[\text{νεβροῦ φθεξαμένας τις ἐν οὐρεσιν ὁμοφάγος λίς εξ εὐώς ἑσπευσεν ἐτοιμοτάταν ἐπὶ δαίτα· Ἡρακλέης τοιούτος... (62-64)}\]

Though scholars have objected to this simile as inapposite, Theocritus frequently invokes comparisons between his love-wrecked characters and wild beasts from the natural realm to highlight the reckless, amoral, and unsentimental character of the erôs he depicts. For example, in *Idyll* 11, Polyphemus compares Galateia in her rejection of him to a sheep fleeing a gray wolf (*φεῦγεις δ᾽ ὀσπερ ὅις πολιῶν λύκον ἀθήνασαν*, 24), and, in *Idyll* 2, Simaetha wishes Delphis would come for her like a frenzied horse (48-51). *Idyll* 4 even presents the converse: beginning with the reported absence of the cowherd Aegon, the two rustic speakers Battus and Corydon concentrate almost half the poem on characterizing the cows he abandoned as forlorn with precisely the language of fragility which serves in other idylls to mark human and divine victims of erôs: the cattle “long” for Aegon (ταὶ δομάλαλαι...ἀίδε ποθεύντι, 12), just as Heracles is driven

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542 Though line 61 is universally rejected as an interpolation to smooth over the paratactic simile of 62-3, White (86-8) defends it as genuine, and makes the interesting point that the two Homeric similes introduced by ὅς τε λίς ἡγενέως (*Il*. 17.109; 18.318) involve harassed lions not intent on searching out prey, but worried about their own situation, fairly apposite to the Theocritean context.

543 See Mastronarde, 278 and n. 6; Gutzwiller (1981), 28 and n. 27.

544 Such erôs is itself likened to wild beasts, as we have seen with Simaetha’s leech simile (55-6) and the image of the lioness at the Artemisian parade (67-8) in *Idyll* 2, as well as the assertion of the singer in *Idyll* 3 that Eros “suckled the breast of a lioness” (15-6).

545 Isenberg and Konstan, 311, see a related comparison of lover with predatory animal in the final threat of the singer in *Id*. 3 to lie down and allow himself to be devoured by wolves (53-54). They write: “The wolves will eat the poet, who had earlier wished to be a bee (*melissa*), but it is Amaryllis who will taste his death, as honey (*meli*). Thus, by play on etymology and connotation, the poem forges the link between love and death, transforming the beloved into a devouring wolf.” This same passage, then, also demonstrates the cyclical nature of violent erôs, for here it is the beloved who devours the lover through her rejection of him!

546 See Lawall, 43-5.
about with “longing” for Hylas in *Idyll* 13 (παίδα ποθῶν δεδόνητο, 65); the deserted heifers are “wretched” as a result of their yearning for the absent Aegon (δειλαίως, τὸ δὲ κάλλος ἐτάκετο, 82-83); they no longer wish to eat (οὐκέτι λῶντι νέμεσθαι, 14) and waste away (λεπτόζμαν χῶ ταῦρος ὁ πυρρίχος, 20; τήνας μὲν δὴ μοι τὰς πόρτιος αὐτὰ λέλειπται / τῶστία. μὴ πρῶκας σιτίζεται ὤσπερ ὤ τέττιξ; (15-16), just as Simaetha in *Idyll* 2 (...αὐτὰ δὲ λοιπὰ / ὅστι’ ἔτ’ ἢς καὶ δέρμα, 89-90) and Polyphemus in *Idyll* 11 (καὶ ταῦτ’ ἀμαρ ἐπ’ ἀμαρ ὑρεῦσα μὲ λεπτύνοντας, 69); and, finally, when Corydon’s bovine charges wander off, Battus calls them “ruined” (τὰ δύσσοια, 45), the same adjective Idyll 3’s goatherd invokes to describe his own erotic suffering (ὦμοι ἔγων, τί πάθω, τί ὅ δύσσοος, 24). Correspondingly, Aegon, who is said to rival Heracles in force and might (φαντὶ νῦν Ἡρακλῆι βίην καὶ κάρτος ἐρίσδειν, 8), becomes something of a brute, complete with a beastly appetite reminiscent of Heracles’ own (Αἴγων ὁγδώκοντα μόνος κατεδαίσατο μάζας, 34) and a mountain wrestling match with a wild bull (τηνεὶ καὶ τὸν ταῦρον ἀπ’ ὀφεῖς ὄγε πιάξας / τὰς ὀπλᾶς, 35-6).

In all of these cases, the poet presents really less the portrait of individual characters than that of an emotional complex: the “madness” of erotic desire that brings about inversions in proper order and reversals of normal roles, duties, or functions. This is the same phenomenon whereby Polyphemus in *Idyll* 11, the near converse of Heracles...
in 13, becomes a sensitive Hellenistic lover, singing verse (ἀείδων, 13) and even boasting of his musical ability (συρίσδεν δ’ ὡς οὖτις ἐπίσταμαι ὅδε Κυκλόπων, 38), on which the poetic narrator compliments him by asserting that, through his singing, he was able to discover the remedy for lovesickness not easy to find. Heracles’ desire consumes him just as the Nymphs’ does them. Through the simile, he becomes the fervor of emotions which are common to all distraught lovers; his experience becomes an instance of “their” experience. This is the reason for the “irregular” construction in line 66, where a general or gnomic comment about lovers prefaces a particular statement of Heracles’ travails (σχέτλιοι οἱ φιλέοντες, ἀλλόμενος ὡς ἐμόγησεν). It is also for this reason that Heracles may serve as an exemplum in the introductory frame. The lion simile clinches the argument and provides a segue to the final picture of Heracles as the quintessential unfulfilled lover.

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550 ἐφεῦ οὗ ῥάθινον ἔστι...
551 ἀλλὰ τὸ φάρμακον ἔπει, καθεξίμανος δ’ ἔπι πέτρας
552 οὐκ ἐστὶν ὡς πάντων ὁρών ἄείθε τοιαῦτα.

See Spofford, 28.

552 I think the meaning of σχέτλιοι has been slightly misinterpreted in line 66, resulting in a tendency to neglect the fact that Heracles must remain a sympathetic character to function as he does in the frame. Mastronarde (278 and n. 8) and Gutzwiller (1981: 28 and n. 30) are surely correct to note the double edge this word derives from the discrepancy between its Homeric and post-Homeric usages, such that it may mean both “wretched” and “cruel.” And Gow’s note (1952: II 243 ad loc.) that a scholiast on Iliad 18.13 defines the word as ὁ ἐστὶν κακῶν αἰτίας, ὁ τλῆμαν, prompting the conclusion that it signifies Theocritus’ “perhaps deliberately laying on Heracles the blame he escapes in Apollonius,” is also fine, so long as one understands that this fault of Heracles is presented as resulting from the mania of erôs, not some inherent flaw in his own character. Sympathy cannot really be at issue here, for the frame has established a firm analogy between the poet/addressee/all humankind and Heracles on the basis of common erotic experience. If the poet is unsympathetic to Heracles, he must also be unsympathetic to his addressee and himself as well. Mastronarde’s comment (278, n. 8) that the word “expresses sympathy for lovers in general, but at the same time condemnation of Heracles” simply makes no sense.
553 Cf. Gutzwiller (1981), 28: “I believe that scholars have failed to see how cleverly this simile effects a shift from Heracles the hero to Heracles the distraught lover.”
In this sense, Heracles’ portrayal in this section of the poem is somewhat over-determined, as was that of Jason and the Argonauts earlier. First, as Gutzwiller correctly observes, the use of the term εὐνή for the lion’s lair (ἐξ εὐνόης, 63) and of the adjective ἐτοιμοτάταν (63) for its meal, the fawn, suggesting both Hylas’ helplessness and dependence as well as his sexual ripeness, enhance the “erotic suggestiveness” of the overall scene.\textsuperscript{554} ἐτοιμοτάταν further hearkens back to the seductive Nymph named Εὐνίκα (45). Next, in his madness from cruel erōs (μαινόμενος· χαλεπῶς γὰρ ἔσω θεός ἠπαρ ἀμφίσεν, 71),\textsuperscript{555} Heracles, like Simaetha at the festival of Artemis, suffers a loss of mental focus and comes to consider all of Jason’s affairs as “secondary” to his all-consuming personal plight (τὰ δ’ Ἰάσωνος ὑστερα πάντ’ ἦς, 67). Neglect of proper or customary roles or duties constitutes a common trait of Theocritus’ fragile, distraught lovers. As a result of the “proper madness” with which \textit{Idyll} 11’s Polyphemus feels love, for instance, he too comes to “reckon everything mere by-works”:

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ηρατο δ’ οὐ μάλοις οὐδὲ ρόδῳ οὐδὲ κικύννοις,
ἀλλ’ ὀρθοίς μονίαις, ἀγεῖτο δὲ πάντα πάρεργα.
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(10-11)

His sheep must come home from the pasture on their own:

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πολλάκι ταὶ διες ποτὶ τωῦλιον αὔτας ἀπῆνθον
χλωρᾶς ἐκ βοτάνας....
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(12-13)

The cryptic use in line 80 of the verb of shepherding (Οὕτω τοι Πολυφαμος ἔποιμαινεν


\textsuperscript{555} Note the rationalizing, psychologizing interpretation inherent in the word order ἔσω θεός ἠπαρ.
τὸν ἔρωτα) seems to imply “that Polyphemus is doing to his love what he is not doing to his sheep....”

Similarly, so as to serenade Amaryllis, the goatherd in Idyll 3 must leave his goats in the care of Tityrus, while, in Idyll 4, Aegon’s feelings of erōs for “evil victory” (τὸ κακὸς ἡράσσασθε νίκας, 27) occasion a desertion of his herds too. Third, as Hunter notes, Heracles’ crazed search and wandering assimilate him to the role of ἀ κόρα from Idyll 1, scouring all the springs and groves in search of Daphnis (ἀ δέ τὸ κόρα / πάσας ἀνὰ κράνας, πάντ’ ἄλσεα ποσσὶ φορεῖται -- / ζάτεισ’, 82-85), the sharp enjambment of the participle ζάτεισ’ at the beginning of line 85 all the more conspicuous because it follows the reiteration of the refrain in 84, placing heavy emphasis on the futility of her action. Like the verbal adjective that describes her, the singer leaves the girl hanging in the balance, perpetually pursuing with no resolution, no further syntax to complete her search. What is more, to describe the girl’s distraught wandering, the poet ascribes to her feet the agency for her motion (ποσσὶ φορεῖται, 83), just as, in Idyll 13, he narrates that Heracles “went wherever his feet lead” (ὁ δ’ ὁ πόδες ἀγον ἔχόρει, 70). In this context, the notice in line 64 that Heracles’ erotically charged search ranges over mountains and copses (ἐν οὐρεσὶν, 62; οὐρεα καὶ δρυμοῦς, 67), where, as we have seen, dangers await the heedless, becomes thematically salient. For

556 Goldhill, 33.
557 ...ταὶ δὲ μοι αἴγες
βόσκονται κατ’ ὅρας, καὶ ὁ Τίτυρος αὐτὰς ἔλαυνει.
Τίτυρ’, ἐμίν τὸ καλὸν περιλήπνεο, βόσκε τὰς αἴγας,
καὶ ποτὶ τὰν κράναν ἄγε, Τίτυρε.
558 Hunter (1999), 284 ad 13.64-71.
559 In truth, the transitive participle has its direct object, the Doric accusative τῷ, in line 82, but by the time we reach line 85’s ζάτεισ’, the extraordinary hyperaton has all but obliterated that syntactic connection. The goatherd listening on has by now been diverted by the intervening refrain, such that the enjambment must hit harshly indeed. This is the only line in the first poem carried over a repetition of the refrain, and
the poet writes that Heracles’ quest takes place specifically among “untraversable” or “untraversed” – in other words, sharp – thorns (‘Ἡρακλέης τοιοῦτος ἐν ἀτρίπτοισιν ἀκάνθαις), amid which “he was taking in a large territory” (πολὺν δ’ ἐπελόμβανε χῶρον, 65), suggesting huge, bounding, and careless, steps. In Idyll 4, following Battus’ declaration of fondness for the dead Amaryllis at lines 38-40, there ensues a “dramatic interruption” caused by the straying of the cattle Corydon is keeping for Aegon. In the midst of this section, Battus suddenly complains of having a thorn stuck in his bare foot:

\[
\text{θάρσαι μ', ὁ Κορύδων, ποττῷ Διός· ἀ γὰρ ἀκανθα ἄρμοι μ' ὂδὲ ἐπάταιζ' ὑπὸ τὸ σφυρόν. (50-1)}
\]

Before his interlocutor can advise him not to walk on the mountain barefoot, for thorns and brambles grow long there (56-7), Battus marvels: ὅσσίχον ἐστὶ τὸ τόμμα, καὶ ἀλίκον ἄνδρα δαμασδεῖ (55). As Gutzwiller observes: “Battus’ comment...has a gnomic air...,” one augmented by the entirely dactylic, hence jingle-like, character of the line which expresses it. And while Corydon’s advice immediately following would seem to deflate the statement’s special status, drawing it back into the mimetic background of the poem, its placement at the dramatic break brought on by the

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the only other idyll similarly characterized by a refrain (Idyll 2), has but one line carried over the refrain boundary, 106, which features no enjambment.  

560 Lawall, 47, notes that the fact of Battus’ lamenting a lost Amaryllis, together with the repetition of the phrase ὁ χαρίσσεσ’ ‘Ἀμαρυλλί used by the goatherd of Id. 3 (6), “prompt an appealing hypothesis that Battus is the unnamed goatherd of the earlier poem.”

561 ὁ χαρίσσεσ’ ‘Ἀμαρυλλί, μόνας σέθεν οὔδε θανοῖςας λασσεύμεθ’· ὅσον αἴτης ἐμίν φιλαί, ὅσον ἀπεσής, αἰαὶ τὸ σκληρῷ μᾶλα δαιμόνος ὃς με λελόγχη.

562 Gutzwiller (1991), 149.

563 ibid., 152.

564 In addition, the kata ton trochaion caesura breaks the line into two sense units, neatly encompassing the antithesis of the paradox it presents.
wandering cows clearly foregrounds its significance. Lawall proposes that the thorn functions symbolically in the poem as “a kind of rustic counterpart to Eros’ shaft,” and, to be sure, resonances between the language of Battus’ statements concerning the thorn and the descriptions of frustrated erotic desire so prevalent in Theocritus’ poetry do suggest a palpable link between the two. For example, directly following his disclosure of the thorn to Corydon, Battus further remarks: ως δε βαθεία / τάτρακτυλλίδες ἐντί (51-52), applying to the thistles precisely the adjective Theocritus commonly deploys in connection with wild erōs. Moreover, in Idyll 6, Daphnis likens the coquettish behavior of Galateia toward Polyphemus to the thistledown covering a thorn (ἀ δε καὶ αὐτόθε τοι διαθρόπτεται· ως ἀπ’ ἀκάνθος / ταὶ καπναριὰ χαίται..., 15-6), which, here because of the heat of the summer sun, is “dry” or “parched” (καπναριαί), the same term Idyll 2’s despondent Simaetha applies to her erotic suffering, described in line 85 as some “drying” sickness (τις καπνρά νόσος). Battus even admits that his physical ailment stemmed from inattention to what he was doing; when he was stuck by the thorn, he says, he was “gaping” after one of Corydon’s errant heifers (κακῶς ἀ πόρτις θλοίτο / εἰς ταύταν ἐτύπην χασμεύμενος, 4.52-53), a remark Lawall reads as subtly erotic. That Theocritean imitators interpreted Battus’ statement as pertaining to the works of erōs would seem to receive good support from the final line of the spurious Idyll 19, where a personified Eros, in speaking of a bee that has just stung him as he was robbing its hive

565 Lawall, 49; Gutzwiller (1991), 152, rejects this interpretation on the grounds that “the poem’s erotic theme is not as ‘embracing’ as Lawall would have us believe.” While I think, with Lawall, that there is more to the image than Gutzwiller seems willing to make, I hope that my analysis may serve to bridge somewhat the gap in these two scholars’ positions.

566 I.e. the second half of line 16: τὸ καλὸν θέρος ἄνίκα φρύγει.

567 Lawall, 48-9.
of honey, remarks with irony: ὃς τυτθὸς μὲν ἕεις τὰ δὲ τραύματα ἀλίκα ποιεῖς (8).\(^{568}\)
Theocritus’ near contemporary, the poet Posidippus of Pella, also connects the image of thorns with the workings of desire, describing a personified Desire using a bed of thorns as a torture device for the poet:

τὸν Μουσών τέττιγα Πόθος δήσας ἐπ’ ἀκάνθαις,
κομιζεῖν έθέλει πῦρ ὑπὸ πλευρὰ βαλὼν....

(1-2)\(^{569}\)

Here, too, the image of fire supplements that of the thorns, suggesting perhaps a common association among Hellenistic poets between the prick of a thorn, scorch of fire, and the pain of unfulfillable erōs. Thus, on at least one level, Battus’ thorn pricks can be read as a physical symbol of the emotional pain and distress brought about by frustrated erotic desire.\(^{570}\) Heracles’ thoughtless rampage through “untrodden thorns” likewise possesses both a physical and an emotional dimension.\(^{571}\)

Finally, Heracles’ neglect of his duties toward the Argo and her crew due to his love for Hylas provokes from the other Argonauts mockery, which, ironically, leaves the anti-hero and exemplar of shared susceptibility to erōs completely isolated by the poem’s end:

‘Ἡρακλέην δ’ ἤρωες ἐκερτόμεουν λιποναύταν,
oùνεκεν ἤρωησε τριακοντάζιγον Ἀργώ....

(73-74)

The obvious word play ἤρωες...ἤρωησε emphasizes the former solidarity but present factiousness between the protagonist and his shipmates, a disparity in roles brought about

\(^{568}\) Lawall, 49.
\(^{569}\) Anth. Pal. 12.98 (=3074-7 Gow and Page; 137 Austin and Bastianini); Hunter (1999), 284.
\(^{570}\) One wonders whether the remark of the Cyclops in Idyll 11 that he will tell his mother that his feet throb (τῶς πόδας ὁμοστέρως μὲν / σφῶσδειν, 70-1) in order to make her feel some of his emotional pain as a result of his erotic distress might not reflect this same motif.
\(^{571}\) Hunter (1999), 284 ad 64-71.
by Heracles’ neglect of his Argonautic duty.\textsuperscript{572} Now Heracles, son of the mortals
Amphitryon (5, 55) and Alcmene (20), contrasts sharply with the “demigods” who await
him on board the Argo (ἡμίθεοι.../ Ἡρωκλῆς μένοντες, 69-70), the same “godlike” band
of heroes who, in lines 27-8, “remembered” their sailing as spring turned to summer
(νοιτιλίως μιμνάσκετο θεῖος ἀσωτος / ἡρώων).\textsuperscript{573} The only other appearance of the verb
κερτομείν in the Theocritean corpus, in the remark of \textit{Idyll} 1’s goatherd to the singer
Thyrsis that he will not “mock” him (κοὕτι το κερτομέω, 62) for singing the woes of
Daphnis, followed immediately by the reference to Hades “which causes forgetfulness”
(ἐκλελάθοντα, 63), such that Thyrsis will not be able to “keep” or “guard” his song there
(φυλάξεις, 63), reactivates in the present context the associations of forgetfulness and
neglect of duty in connection with herding. Given the importance in Theocritus, as we
have seen, of the “possible-impossible pursuit” theme, the fact that Heracles’ fellow
Argonauts, whom he has neglected in favor of his erotic quest for Hylas, are described as
tῶν παρεόντων (68) at exactly the moment when they are waiting for the hero who has
forsaken them is highly significant.\textsuperscript{574} Even the form of Heracles’ name in 73, with the
very rare accusative ending in -κλέην,\textsuperscript{575} sets the character apart. I believe this last

\textsuperscript{572} Cf. Gow (1952: \textit{Il ad loc.}): “The assonance...can hardly be accidental, but it is difficult to see what
purpose it serves;” Mastronarde, 287, n. 32: “The contrast between ‘heroes’ and ‘desert’ is plainly another
case of verbal tension between the ideal of the hero and the unheroic hero in love;” Gutzwiller (1981), 29:
“Surely the sound repetitions in ἱρως...ἱρώησε (73-74) are significant. Is this the poet etymologizing, or
do the Argonauts taunt Heracles with displaying his heroism by desertion?”; Hunter (1999), 288 \textit{ad 74}:
“The word-play...seems to mock Heracles, just as the Argonauts did.”

\textsuperscript{573} Campbell, 117. Griffiths’ (1996: 105) preference for the variant ἡμίθεοι, “young men,” over ἡμίθεοι in
69 shows his failure to appreciate the precise nature and thematic significance of this contrast.

\textsuperscript{574} Again, commentators miss the significance: Griffiths (1996), 105 writes frankly: “And what does
tῶν παρεόντων mean?”; Hunter (1999), 286, notes that the phrase is “singularly weak; it may be gloss or a
makeweight for an already defective line.” To the contrary, the phrase is singularly strong and pointed.

\textsuperscript{575} For the form, see Gow (1952: \textit{Il ad loc.}); Dover (1971), 188 \textit{ad loc.}; Hunter (1999), 287 \textit{ad loc.}.
portion of the narrative sheds light on the “difficult”\textsuperscript{576} epithet ‘\textit{Aργείω}’ for Hylas back in line 49. Campbell has suggested a connection with Alcaeus fr. 283.3-4 (Voigt), where the same adjective refers to “Argive Helen” viewed as a Simaetha-like erotic aggressor:

\begin{verbatim}
κ’ ‘\textit{Αλένας} ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτήσει
θύμον ‘\textit{Αργείας}, Τροίῳ δ’ ἐπ’ ἄν[δρι]
ἐκμάνεισα...
\end{verbatim}

Since no known genealogy of Hylas makes him Argive,\textsuperscript{578} ‘\textit{Ἀργείη} Ἐλένη is probably a safe bet as an intertextual reference. Yet possibly a better source text is to be found in the same Iliadic passage whence derives the Homeric hapax \textit{ἀοίδιμος}, already closely associated with Heracles in line 9. When Helen finishes speaking to Hector in \textit{Iliad} 6, attempting to smooth over the immediately preceding war of words between him and the cowardly Alexander, the great Trojan warrior responds:

\begin{verbatim}
μὴ με κάθις’, Ἐλένη, φιλέουσά περ· οὐδὲ με πείσεις·
ηδὴ γάρ μοι θυμός ἐπέσυναι ὅφρ’ ἐπαμύνω
Τρώεσσ’, οἱ μὲγ’ ἐμεῖο ποθὴν ἀπεόντος ἔχουσιν.
\end{verbatim}

(360-2)

All of the necessary elements are present in the passage: an anti-heroic man scorned for dereliction of duty because he is with the object of his desire, the act of sitting down as symbolic of neglect of obligation, discourse about warrior values and heroism, the desire of fighting men for their strong fellow (\textit{ποθὴν}), and the language of impossible pursuit (\textit{ἀπεόντος}). And just as Hector will not be mollified by Helen’s gentle urging to comfort and relaxation and, thereby, abandon his innate heroism, so there can be no \textit{return} to heroism for the innately \textit{unheroic} Heracles of \textit{Idyll} 13.

\textsuperscript{576} Hunter (1999), 279 \textit{ad} 49.
\textsuperscript{577} Campbell, 114, n. 7; Hunter (1999), 280.
\textsuperscript{578} Gow (1952: II), 241 \textit{ad loc.}; Dover (1971), 186 \textit{ad loc}.
While Wilamowitz, Mastronarde, and Hutchinson all interpret the final line
(\(\pi\varepsilon\zeta\delta'\) \(\varepsilon\zeta\) \(\Κ\omicron\lambda\chi\omicron\omicron\varsigma\) \(\tau\epsilon\) \(\kappa\omicron\iota\lambda\ \alpha\varsigma\epsilon\nu\nu\) \(\iota\kappa\epsilon\tau\omega\ \Phi\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\nu\), 75) as a restoration of Heracles’ heroic
status,\(^{579}\) such readings depend on accepting that, in the words of Hutchinson, “[t]he
ending [of the poem] undoes the argument which the poet had seemed to be enforcing in
accordance with his address to Nicias....”\(^{580}\) Yet what sense would it make to set up so
elaborate and careful an introductory frame only later to completely contradict its central
message, that Heracles, as a mere mortal, also once succumbed to destructive erôs? Indeed, the only precedent for believing Theocritus capable of such illogicality, and the
one Hutchinson explicitly cites, that of Idyll 11, where Polyphemus’ singing seems to
constitute both symptom of and cure for his erotic mania, the next chapter will show is no
precedent at all when rightly situated in the context of the thematic nexus under
examination. Gutzwiller is surely right to see in the final line of Idyll 13 a further
evidence of Heracles’ less than fully heroic stature. The position of the initial adverb
emphasizes the ignoble manner of his arrival at Phasis, not the simple, let alone “heroic,”
fact that he got there.\(^{581}\) The word looks back to \(\lambda\iota\pi\o\omicron\nu\alpha\omicron\omicron\tau\omicron\alpha\nu\) at the end of 73,\(^{582}\) a
serious charge and offense under Athenian law.\(^{583}\) The line’s purpose, like the closing
verses of Idyll 11 (\(\Pi\omicron\lambda\omicron\uvarphi\varphi\omicron\omicron\varsigma\ \epsilon\pi\omicron\omega\iota\mu\omicron\alpha\iota\nu\epsilon\nu\ \tau\omicron\nu\ \epsilon\varrho\omega\tau\alpha\ / \mu\omicron\upsilon\upsilon\iota\varsigma\iota\delta\omicron\varsigma\nu\), \(\rho\acute{o}\omicron\ \delta\epsilon\ \delta\iota\acute{\iota}\gamma\)' , 80-1)
and line 164 of Idyll 2 (\(\epsilon\gamma\omega\ \delta'\) \(\omicron\iota\sigma\omicron\ \tau\omicron\nu\ \epsilon\mu\omicron\nu\ \pi\omicron\theta\omicron\nu\ \upsilon\omicron\sigma\pi\omicron\epsilon\rho\ \upsilon\pi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\omicron\nu\)), is to emphasize
that Heracles eventually managed his erotic frustration and loss as best he could. The
prosaic quality of the adverb \(\pi\varepsilon\zeta\delta\), to which Griffiths objects to the point of wanting to

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\(^{579}\) Wilamowitz (1906), 177; Mastronarde, 287-8 and n. 33; Hutchinson, 194.

\(^{580}\) Hutchinson, 194.

\(^{581}\) Gutzwiller (1981), 83, n. 35; pace Mastronarde, 288, n. 33.

\(^{582}\) Gow (1952: II), 245 \(ad\ loc\).

\(^{583}\) Dover (1971), 188 \(ad\ loc\); cf. Aesch., Ag. 212-3.
delete the entire line, entirely fits the character of the action it describes. Heracles does not go to Phasis to rejoin friends, for the poet specifically dubs the land “inhospitable” (ἀξενοῦ, 75). Nor does he “sit down” again within the ship (καθιδρυθέντες ἐς Ἀργώ, 28), retaking his place in the heroic realm. Rather he rouses himself to his feet just as Hector bids Alexander do in Iliad 6, and he makes do, still ultimately suffering both within and without. Neat final resolution is not a feature of Theocritus’ nexus. Additionally, it would destroy Heracles’ value as the exemplary model the poet sets him up to be in the frame, a feature of the poem rendered all the more important since, as we have seen, Theocritus there relates to his interlocutor as a fellow poet, raising the possibility that his remarks aim not just at the subject of love but poetry as well.

At the conclusion of his depiction of Hylas’ abduction, the poet returns to his principal exemplum, Heracles, via an elaborate and puzzling simile for Hylas in lines 49-52. At the height of the nymphs’ emotion as Hylas tumbles into the water to his death, Theocritus deflates the moment with a jarring and typically Hellenistic shift from the sublime to the mundane, likening the falling youth to a shooting star and connecting that image to the practical detail of sailors treating such meteorological phenomena as signs of good sailing wind:

...κατηριπε δ’ ἐς μέλαν ὑδώρ
ἀθρόος, ὡς ὀτε πυρσος ἀπ’ ὑφραντον ἠριπεν ἁστήρ
ἀθρόος ἐν πόντῳ, ναύτας δέ τις εἶπεν ἑταίροις
’κουφότερ’, ὦ παιδες, ποιεῖσθ’ ὀπλα· πλευστικὸς σοῦρος’.
(49-52)

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586 Cf. Ov. Met. 4.121-4, where Pyramus’ blood spurring high in the air is compared to water gushing from a faulty lead pipe.
The simile, while it does eventually shift focus back to “the situation in the mortal world from which Hylas is cut off,”[^587] does not do so completely, for we stay with Hylas and the Nymphs for two more lines before turning in explicit contrast (cf. μὲν, 53...δὲ, 55) to Heracles’ reaction. Therefore, the passage must have some relevance to both contexts.[^588]

The scholiast’s explanation of the sailor’s words as εὐλυτα καὶ εὔτρεπὴ ποιεῖτε τὰ ἰστία (“make the sails easily loosed and easily turned”) emphasizes the notion of quick reaction and accommodation to the exigencies of the changeable wind. A scholium on Aratus’ similar advice that sailors heed the warnings of the sky[^589] comments likewise:

λέγει δὲ κοῦφα πρὸς τὸ ὑποχαλάσαι τοῖς τοῦ ἀρμένου ποσὶ καὶ μὴ φιλονεικεῖν ἐναντίοις πνεύμασι (“he says ‘light’ with a view to the act of creating a little slack in the ropes holding the sail and not fighting against opposing winds”).[^590] In the late third century BC (c. 235 BC), the Cynic philosopher Teles preserved in his diatribe On Self-Sufficiency (Περὶ αὐταρκείας) advice from the popular, eclectic thinker Bion of Borysthenes (c. 335-c. 245 BC) on the subject of coping with adversity, which suggests that comparisons to the behavior of sailors may have constituted something of a Hellenistic commonplace for the notion of adaptability to circumstances:

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διὸ δὲ δεῖ μὴ τὰ πράγματα πειρᾶσθαι μετατιθέναι, ἀλλὰ αὐτὸν παρασκευάζειν πρὸς ταῦτα πως ἔχοντα, ὥπερ ποιοῦσιν οἱ ναυτικοὶ· οὐ γὰρ τοὺς ἀνέμους καὶ τὴν θάλατταν πειρῶνται
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[^587]: Segal (1981), 55. Perhaps this constitutes the poet’s way of explaining the problem of having his Argonauts set sail at midnight rather than stay the night on shore? See Hunter (1999), 281.
[^588]: Gow (1952: II 242) objects that the simile “does not seem very appropriate.” Mastronarde, 281 n. 16, accounts for it as having “thematic purpose,” because he takes the theme to be the incongruity between epic and “pastoral.”
[^589]: οἱ δὲ εἰ μὲν κε πίθωνται ἐναυσίμα σημαίνοντι αἰνά τε κοῦφα τε πάντα καὶ ἄρτια ποιήσωνται αὐτίκ’ ἐλαφρότερος πέλεται πόνος.

(Phaen. 420)
[^590]: Gow (1952: II 241-2).
As Gutzwiller and Mugatroyd have shown, this same metaphor as applied to relations of erôs reached a highly developed state in the Hellenistic period, where the storm/calm dichotomy came to betoken the contrast between unbridled desire and moderate self-restraint. Thus, the larger point of the contrast between Hylas’ passivity among the mothering Nymphs and Heracles’ strong adverse reaction may be the futility of it all. Heracles’ actions produce no positive change in circumstances, but rather merely return him to the point whence he began, among the Argonauts without Hylas, with a concomitant lessening of the respect and standing he previously enjoyed. Here is a message with obvious application to the poem’s frame and, more importantly, to Theocritus’ self-conception as poet. Heracles attempted to play epic hero in a time and place that rendered such behavior a burlesque of epic rather than the real thing. Theocritus the poet urges his fellow poet Nicias against making the same mistake. In the end, it is Hylas, emblematic of epyllion and the new, Callimachean style of poetry, who was catasterized and, thus, immortalized precisely for his superlative beauty (οὕτω μὲν

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591 Hense, 10. “Wherefore, one should not attempt to change things, but to prepare himself for them as they are, just as sailors do: for they do not attempt to change the winds and the sea, but they prepare themselves to be able to engage with them. Clear weather, calm: they proceed with oars. Wind with the ship: they raise the rigging. Headwind: they furl the sails, or change them.” On the unique difficulties of this last word, see O’Neil, 11 and 75, n. 17.

592 Gutzwiller (1992), 199-202, esp. 201; Mugatroyd, 14-18, esp. 16. It is interesting to note that a key piece of the evidence adduced by both scholars in connection with the storm/calm contrast comes from Cercidas, “a third-century versifier of Cynic sentiments...” (Gutzwiller [1992], 201; emphasis mine).
κάλλιστος Ὁλας μακάρων ἀριθμεῖται, 72). One thinks of the conclusion of
Posidippus’ epigram where Desire tortures the poet, seeking to silence him with fire, the
final two lines of which read:

| ή δὲ πρὶν ἐν βύβλοις πεπονημένη ἄλλα θερίζει
| ψυχὴ ἀνιηρῶ δαίμονι μεμφομένη. |

(3-4) The soul of the Hellenistic poet, previously exercised on study of the monuments of
preceding literature, now exacts its revenge upon erōs by writing of its destructive power,
presumably in poems quite similar to *Idyll* 13.

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594 *AP*. 12.98 (=3074-7 Gow and Page; 137 Austin and Bastianini); Hunter (1999), 284.
Chapter Five: The Fragile/Assertive Self in Propriae Personae: Theocritus in Idylls 16 and 28

As with Theocritus’ bucolic works, the ostensible form of Idyll 16, that of a Hellenistic patronage poem, has long inhibited full appreciation of the work’s numerous complexities and true Theocritean character. Many scholars have contented themselves with attempts to force the piece into a traditional mold: that of a “begging song” (Bettelgedicht) or standard encomium, or even an imitation of Pindaric epinician. As a result, the work tends to be passed over summarily in larger treatments of Hellenistic poetry, being of interest principally for its historical value. Symonds even appears to wish to banish the poem from the Theocritean oeuvre altogether, writing: “The panegyrics of Hiero and Ptolemy are among his worst poems—mere pinchbeck when compared with the pure gold of the Idylls proper.” Gow, who, until recently, had provided the piece with its only exhaustive commentary to date, likewise does not sufficiently see past the myopic view of Id. 16 qua patronage poem. For instance, in his introductory remarks, Gow writes: “Nevertheless the poem as a whole is strikingly and unexpectedly successful and makes not only the court poetry of Callimachus but T[heocritus’]... own Idyll 17 sound frigid and sycophantic.” Gow’s primary focus remains on how Id. 16 differs from other Hellenistic patronage poetry rather than on seeking reasons for this variance within the poem itself. Even the more recent

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595 Gutzwiller(1983), 212); Gow (1952: II), 305.
596 See Gutzwiller (1983), 212 and n. 2 for a good bibliography of such positions. The most recent treatment of the poem in the encomiastic mold is that of Griffiths (1979 b), especially 9-50.
597 Kuiper, 385; Legrande, 38, 95; Clapp, 310-16, at least observes much in Idyll 16 “that is absolutely un-Pindaric.”
598 For an excellent brief bibliography of this situation of general neglect, see Austin, 1, n. 1.
599 Symonds, 472.
commentary submitted by Lara Aho as her doctoral dissertation at the University of Iowa focuses principally on the ways in which “Idyll 16 centers on the value of celebratory poetry.”

In her view, Id. 16 represents Theocritus’ ethical diatribe, lamenting a day and age when the honorable ideal of egalitarian guest-friendship or xenia cemented through gift-giving is no longer respected.

A key part of the problem posed by the poem lies in its double title. While it is widely admitted that the titles in Theocritean manuscripts likely do not go back to the author’s autograph, they are nonetheless ancient, and the disjunctive designation of Id. 16, Χάρτιες Η Άρως, neatly embodies a central difficulty facing any would-be reader or interpreter of the poem. The work contains at its heart a structural and thematic disconnect between its treatment of patronage, on the one hand, and discussion of poets and poetry, on the other. Austin appears to be the first scholar who significantly problematizes that portion of the poem dealing with poetic practice, concentrating on the ways in which Theocritus misuses the conventions of Pindaric encomium while redirecting attention to another archaic lyric model for the poet: Simonides. In the course of his discussion, Austin makes a strong case that Idyll 16 contributes much to our understanding of the debates current among Alexandrian poets of the third century over the nature and practice of poetry in the Hellenistic period. In the end, however, Austin

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601 Gow (1952: II), 305. On this comment and its significance for Gow’s general approach to the poem, see also Gutzwiller (1983), 214.
603 Aho, vi, 5, 8-9, 43-9, et passim.
604 Gow (1952: I ixix-lxxi; II 307); Gutzwiller (1983: 213 and n. 5).
605 See, inter alios, Gow (1952: II 305); Kühn, 15, 19-20; Austin, 2, where he applies to this disconnect the rather too heavy term “schism,” 17; Gutzwiller (1983: 213-14).
606 Austin, 3 et passim; Gutzwiller (1983), 214, n. 7; Gow (1952: II), 307.
607 Austin, 2, 20.
overcompensates for the historicizing imbalance in prior scholarship by treating the poetic side of Theocritus’ argument alone: he fails to integrate his observations as to Theocritus’ poetic proclamations into the author’s choice to couch his statements in the encomiastic or celebratory mode. For Austin, the work turns out an encomium “virtually abandoned” in favor of a “consolatio of the poet.”

Gutzwiller redresses the one-sidedness of Austin’s approach by arguing that the encomiastic mode proves the perfect locus for a discussion of poetic practice and principle in a post-Alexander age when open flattery in hymn and epic was in vogue in the courtly poetic circles of Hellenistic monarchs. At a time characterized by the proliferation of both poets and regal splendor, the relationship between poetry and patronage was falling under increasingly intense scrutiny. That Theocritus should, therefore, “create out of encomiastic convention an autobiographical tone through which the poet may express concerns [about poetry] that differ from those of the patron” would seem entirely natural. Idyll 16 thus becomes, in large part, a meditation on the Hellenistic poet’s relationship with and place in Hellenistic society.

609 Austin, 18.
610 Gutzwiller (1983), 214-16.
611 Gutzwiller (1983), 236.
612 Aho argues strongly against the view that “Theocritus and his contemporaries were uncertain and cautious about how, or whether, to play the ‘game’ of patronage, that is, the ‘game’ of writing encomiastic poetry in return for payment and other forms of compensation (38).” For Aho, Theocritus presents a “consistent attitude toward praise and reward (43)” that “takes for granted that there is a mutually beneficial relationship between a poet and the subject of his praise poetry...(8).” See also her discussion of previous scholarly opinions on the subject in n. 33, p. 43. As will have been seen from earlier chapters, I find the certitude and traditionalism imputed to Theocritus’ views quite out of keeping with the poet’s fraught self-representations. Also, Aho’s assumption that the ancient model of ritualized guest friendship functioned identically for Hellenistic poets as for those of an earlier age (“...to no lesser degree in the 3rd century BC than in the 5th..., 45) appears to ignore the very real socio-political changes that characterized the Hellenistic period, which we surveyed in chapter one. To be sure, as Aho observes, the “idioms of ritualized friendship (e.g. the imagery of ‘journeying’ to someone’s home for a ‘hospitable reception,’ the ‘benefactions’ and ‘gifts’ that occur between poet and subject, as well as the ‘grace’ that informs their relationship) (45)” remained essentially the same, though the realities underlying them were drastically altered. As in the case of epigram, to which Aho resorts for evidence to bolster her view (47), Theocritus
In this chapter, I shall build upon insights gleaned from the work of both Austin and Gutzwiller, examining the ways in which Theocritus applies various elements from the thematic nexus to his explicit discussion in Idyll 16 of poetry and the Hellenistic poet’s concern for patronage and wider, more public recognition of his work. My aim throughout will be to demonstrate how the poet achieves linkage between the terms of his erotic and poetic discourses, using each to enlighten and deepen the significance of the other. Examination of this topic will both further clarify the logical cohesion of Idyll 16, as well as help to resolve the thorny issue alluded to at the end of the previous chapter of the relationship between the Cyclops Polyphemus’ poetry and his desire in Idyll 11, a problem that has confounded the lion’s share of the poem’s commentators over the years. Consideration of the relationship between Idylls 16 and 11 will additionally lead to a discussion of Idyll 28, which will further aid in elucidating interpretive problems of the other two poems. We open, of course, with discussion of Idyll 16.

As we have seen, one of the chief ways in which Theocritus invites his readership to seek below the surface of his verse some deeper meaning of more universal application is to introduce into his text a crucial dislocation or misplacement, such as urban sentiments in a rustic setting, godlike heroes in roles of human suffering, or churlish, suburban women in the seat of Alexandrian wealth and power. On this criterion, Idyll 16 must offer much more than meets the eye. That it is not a standard patronage poem, like Idyll 17, for example, becomes immediately clear to the alert reader. The latter poem mentions its laudandus, Ptolemy II, as soon as the third line and prepares the way for his mention as early as the initial invocation of Zeus (Ἀτός), a mythic parallel for the lauded...
patron which immediately classes the poem with traditional encomium.\textsuperscript{613} \textit{Idyll} 16, on the other hand, does not name its \textit{laudandus} for the first time until line 80, and when he does finally get around to discussing Hiero of Syracuse, the poet makes no reference to the tyrant’s birth, nobility, largesse, or military glory, “all the standard topics found in the \textit{Encomium to Ptolemy}.”\textsuperscript{614} Indeed, the poem expends its first seventy lines on the topics of the \textit{Charites}, writing poetry, and the proper use of wealth. Only following line 70 does the \textit{Idyll} make the transition to the “encomium proper,”\textsuperscript{615} thereby occasioning its double title: Χέριτες ἡ Ἱέρων. Yet, even at this latter point in the poem’s progress, one cannot help but remember the poet’s pessimistic rhetorical questions beginning at line 5 (Τίς γὰρ τῶν ὑπόσων γλαυκὰν ναίουσιν ὑπ’ ἀω / ἡμετέρας Χάριτας πετάσας υποδεξεται οἶκῳ / ἄσπασίως, οὐδ’ αὕθις ἀδωρήτους ἀποπέμψει; (5-7); τίς τὸν νῦν τοιόσδε; τίς εὖ εἰπόντα φιλήσει; (13)), ending in the aporetic οὐκ οἶδ’ of line 14. It is as though Theocritus were declaring here that no one cares about his poetry, or even about poetry at all.\textsuperscript{616} Men no longer eagerly strive to be praised for their noble deeds (14-15), he continues; rather, they are bested by greed (νενίκηνται δ’ ὑπὸ κερδέον, 15).

Framed in such a way, Theocritus’ petition for patronage actually serves not so much to link the poet and his \textit{laudandus} in terms of common excellence—the latter of grand exploits, the former of poetic legerdemain—but to set them in opposition.\textsuperscript{617} This contrast is heightened by the poet’s adduction in lines 34-39 of the \textit{exempla} of Simonides’ Thessalian patrons, the Aleuads and the Scopads, whom anecdotal and

\textsuperscript{613} Gutzwiller (1983), 217-8.
\textsuperscript{614} Gutzwiller (1983), 231; Austin, 4.
\textsuperscript{615} Gutzwiller (1983), 231.
\textsuperscript{616} Austin, 3-4.
\textsuperscript{617} Austin, 17; Gutzwiller (1983: 222-23), who compares \textit{Idyll} 16 to 506 PMG to demonstrate that, in this, Theocritus actually misuses the conventions even of Simonides.
mythic tradition remembered as rude boors, hostile to the arts. The latter were even said to have refused payment to Simonides for his laudatory verses, tempting fate with the Dioskouroi in the process. As a result, the roof of their home collapsed, killing the family, while Simonides escaped unscathed. The Scopads’ infelicitous mention in Idyll 16 might prompt one, with Austin, to speculate whether the poem contains “a hint of warning...perhaps even a veiled threat.” Next, there is the reference to Simonides himself in line 44, which, given that Simonides is remembered in certain traditions as a “mercenary” or “cynical opportunist” who wrote for hire, sounds another note of dissonance in juxtaposition to the poet’s satire in lines 16-21 of the miserly money-lover who will not pay for good poetry. Finally, Theocritus follows with the equally infelicitous list of characters from the Odyssey, Eumaeus, Philoetius, and Laertes (ll. 54b-56)—a swineherd, a neatherd, and a feeble old man, suitable for glorifying no one, least of all a Hellenistic king. Thus, Theocritus and his would-be patron emerge in the poem separated by a gap of interest and sensibility the poet despairs of ever bridging, prompting the question, Why bother to write the poem to begin with? These and other

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618 Austin, 7-9 and n. 10. See also Gow (1952: II ad loc.).
619 Cicero, De orat. 2.352; Quintilian, Inst. orat. 11.2.12; Callimachus apud Suda, s.v. Σιμωνίδης.
620 Austin, 9.
621 On the intentionality of this allusion, see Austin, 11.
622 Austin 9-10; Hunter (1996), 100; Aho 39-40.
624 Gutzwiller (1983), 227; Griffiths (1979), 31. Payne (121-22) notes that in the Homeric contexts from which these characters are drawn (Od. 15.403-84; 20.185, 254; 14.22, 121; 15.351, 389; 16.36; 17.184), they are seen as being either the sons of a king or “leaders of men,” such that “[t]heir humble dress conceals a nobility acknowledged only in Homer’s narrative” (122), and their mention in Idyll 16 fits the encomiastic bill entirely. This solution, while certainly ingenious, fails to convince fully. I would counter that the trio is shown in Homer as slaves or enfeebled, and it is on this basis that they are strange comparanda for kings. Moreover, it is principally as more homely, pastoral figures that this trio is contextualized in Idyll 16, though the tension between their disparate roles in Theocritus and Homer is well taken and fits nicely both with the thesis developed by Gutzwiller (1983) and my own. Precisely because one must seek below the narrative surface of Id. 16 and reach deeply back into the Homeric intertext to uncover the figures’ nobility, they cannot be said to function as traditional exempla for traditional encomium. Their appearance here is something akin to the poet’s evocation of Hiero’s military exploits in
significant elements of estrangement that appear throughout the text impel one to regard the poem as comprising two equal parts emblematized by the two halves of its compound title and, thus, to read the poem simultaneously on two different levels.\textsuperscript{625}

As Gutzwiller has shown, while Theocritus utilizes the poem’s prooemium (1-4) to distance himself from the traditional Muses, in the next eight lines, he asserts a special affinity with the Charites, who, in turn, come to represent his own poems.\textsuperscript{626} It is for this reason, so the scholiast claims, that the poet designates them in line 6 as “ours”:\textsuperscript{627} 

\begin{quote}
\text{"\ι\με\τέ\ρας \Χάριτας τὰ \οίκεία \ποιήματα".}
\end{quote}

However, from the vivid personification of the Charites-poiēmata in lines 5-12, it becomes clear that they stand in metonymic relation to Theocritus himself as well. Their bare feet and cold knees (γυμνοὶς ποσσίν, 8; ψυχροῖς ἐν γονάτεσσι, 11) betoken the poet’s poverty; their dejected position within the coffer (11) reflects their master’s grief and sorrow.\textsuperscript{628} Thus, the initial characterization of the Charites in terms of fragility becomes symbolic of the poet’s own fragile self.\textsuperscript{629}

The first significant link to the thematic nexus comes in that very description of the Charites in line 8 as having bare feet, coupled with the fact that they have recently been traveling abroad, as the final oǐκαδ’ ἵκασι of that same line and the corresponding

\begin{quote}
the latter section of the poem only in terms of the idyllic peace to follow. The poet approaches conventional encomium but in a most unconventional way.\textsuperscript{625} Gutzwiller (1983), 213.\textsuperscript{626} Gutzwiller (1983), 218-22.\textsuperscript{627} Wendel, \textit{ad} 6, 326; Gutzwiller (1983), 221.\textsuperscript{628} Gutzwiller (1983: 222); Gow (1952: II \textit{ad} 10ff.).\textsuperscript{629} Pace Aho, 9-12, who, in her “prosopography of the Graces and the Muses (9),” discusses the figures solely as goddesses who accompany the dedicated poet and then join together with the Muses in singing praise when a poet’s songs have found a host and friend (11). For Aho, the Charites betoken the poet’s view of his own capability (11), while his statement in lines 101-2 that he is among the number whom the Muses love evidences that “he appears to affirm, and place his own works...squarely within, the literary traditions of Greek encomion as well as epic poetry, particularly because of the capacity of both kinds of poetry to bring fame to men (12).”
\end{quote}
\(\alpha\lambda\theta\iota\nu\ \bar{o}\delta\bar{o}n\ \bar{\eta}\lambda\theta\omicron\) in 9 make absolutely explicit. With his poems as proxy, Theocritus has been committing precisely the same error against which the rustic simpleton Korydon advises Battus in *Idyll 4* (56): travelling abroad barefoot. And the implication is that, like Battus, the poet has been wounded in the process. Thus the poet describes the *Charites* in lines 10-11 as cowering pitifully inside their coffer. The rationale for the poems’ (and Theocritus’) woe flows from the characterization of the road in line 9 as \(\alpha\lambda\theta\iota\nu\) (“in vain”), as well as from the description of the *Charites* in line 12 as \(\alpha\pi\rho\alpha\kappa\tau\omicron\) (“unsuccessful”): Theocritus’ would-be patrons have apparently rejected him by rejecting his poems. While the *Charites*’ anger (\(\sigma\kappa\nu\xi\omicron\omicron\mu\omicron\nu\alpha\omicron\), 8) and mockery of the poet (\(\mu\epsilon\ \tau\omega\theta\zeta\omicron\omicron\omicron\alpha\omicron\iota\sigma\alpha\iota\), 9) do indeed represent his own self-reproach, as Gutzwiller claims,\(^{630}\) in terms of the thematic nexus, they also function as mockery of the fragile self from without. The relationship between the poet and his poems is not one of strict identity but metonymy. The *Charites* represent an *extension* of Theocritus’ fragile self, but are not the actual self. The *Charites*’ “shrinking” or “timid” (\(\omicron\kappa\nu\eta\rho\alpha\iota\), 10) stance within the chest symbolizes both Theocritus’ reaction to the experience of rejection, as well as to the reproach of his *Charites*, that is, to his own self-criticism. The poet is thus seen to harbor ambiguous or ambivalent feelings toward his own creations.

The imagined rejection in line 20 from a straw-man patron underscores the poet’s ambivalence to his craft: \(\tau\zeta\ \delta\epsilon\ \kappa\epsilon\nu\ \acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omicron\ \acute{\alpha}k\omicron\omega\omicron\sigma\alpha\iota;\ \acute{\alpha}l\i\zeta\ \pi\acute{\alpha}n\tau\tau\epsilon\sigma\sigma\iota\nu\ "\mathrm{Om}hro\varsigma.\) Since the statement is fictive, it must reflect either the poet’s own misgivings about his profession or a complaint he has often heard or imagines being lodged—or both. Of course, a complaint repeatedly endured quickly *becomes* a personal misgiving or “sore-

\(^{630}\) Gutzwiller (1983), 222.
spot.” Here the learned Hellenistic poet feels his anxiety of influence in the face of the
tradition of Greek literature. It is tempting to see some of the bitterness with which the
poet bears this abuse in the predominant correspondence of ictus and accent in the line’s
first half. At the same time, the mention of “another” (ἀλλας), as in “another poet,”
imports into the poem the motif of competing others: how can Hellenistic poets, who are
themselves ἀλλας vis-à-vis the imposing literary canon of the past, compete with the
greatness of former poets? How can Theocritus, one ἀλλας among many, compete
against others of his kind who would adopt a more conventional, and possibly more
patron-pleasing poetic mode?

The gulf between these two literary poles comes out clearly in the Idyll’s first
twelve lines. Properly contextualized, Theocritus’ designation of the Charites as “ours,”
that is “his own,” assumes a special significance over and against the rejected Muses of
the prooemium. As Gutzwiller successfully argues, the prooemium’s series of cryptic
propositions functions first and foremost as Theocritus’ declaration about poetry. The
first two lines refer to the historical tradition of Greek verse, establishing the “traditional
relationship” of the Muses to poets, on the one hand, and that of both to the epic themes
of classical poetry, on the other. The following pair of lines evince his preference for
humbler themes, which do not fall within the purview of the Muses. The transition in
verbal mood from indicative (μέλει, 1; ἀείδοντι, 3) to hortatory subjunctive (ἀείδομεν,
4) underscores this reading. In the initial sections of his poem, then, Theocritus “declares

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632 As Gutzwiller (1983), 227, and Griffiths (1979 b), 31, before her point out, the poet’s listing of
mythological exempla at 48-57, including the Lycians, Priam’s sons, and Cycnus, reinforces this perception
of his chosen subject matter: all of these “heroes” were losers. Furthermore, these allusions are followed
immediately by references to Eumaeus the swineherd (54-55) and Philoetius the cowherd (55).
a poetic program.” He encodes its substance in the oppositions Μοίσατι versus Χάριτες and θεοί/κλέα ἀνδρῶν versus βροτοί: Theocritean poetry explores “mortal” themes in “graceful” verse. Yet, if the role of traditional encomia is to hymn the laudandum as superlative, extolling his κλέος in the mortal sphere by comparison to that of the gods and demigods in the immortal one, then by rejecting the Muses to whom singing the κλέος of superlative men is a chief concern (2), Theocritus assumes a difficult position. How can he accomplish any sort of encomium apart from the Muses, since, as he himself acknowledges, it is from the Muses that κλέος comes to men (Ἐκ Μοισᾶν ἀγαθῶν κλέος ἐρχεται ἀνθρώποισι, 16.58)?

At 68-70, the poet demonstrates his awareness of the danger inherent in his position:

διζημαι δ’ ὅτινι θνητῶν κεχαρισμένος ἔθω
σὺν Μοίσασις· χαλεπάς γὰρ ὅδοι τελέθουσιν ἀοιδοῖς
κουράον ἀπάνευθε Διὸς μέγα βουλεύοντος.

The mention here again of roads and travel picks back up on the speaker’s initial depiction of his fragile Charites as wounded and angry, with their bare feet and bowed

634 In its discussion of “charm” (αἱ χάριτες), §§ 128-162, the Hellenistic critical work On Style lists as examples of subject matter that is inherently “charming” (αἱ... ἐν τοῖς πράγμασι χάριτες, § 132): νυμφαίοι κήποι, ὑμέναιοι, ἔρωτες, ὥλη ἢ Σαπφοῦς ποίησις,” topics prevalent in the Theocritean corpus. Pseudo-Demetrius also makes frequent reference to the mimes of Sophron in his discussion of “charm”: in §§ 128, 147, 151, 156, 162.
635 Cf. Idyll 17:
 Ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχόμεθα...
 ἀθανάτων τὸν ἅριστον...
 ἀνδρῶν δ’ αὐ Ἡπόλεμαιоς ἐνὶ πρῶτοις λεγέσθω
 καὶ πύματος καὶ μέσσος· ὁ γὰρ προφερέστατος ἀνδρῶν.
...
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ Ἡπόλεμαιον ἐπιστάμενος καλὰ εἰπεῖν
 ὑμνήσαμι· ὑμνοὶ δὲ καὶ ἀθανάτων γέρας αὐτῶν (1-8).
See Gutzwiller (1983), 218 and n. 24; Griffiths (1979), 72-3.
636 Note the close association in this line too of κλέος with the adjective ἀγαθός, suggesting that ἀγαθὸν
heads, their journey having been “in vain.” Now, though, it is the poet himself who contemplates leaving home. Yet, without the Muses—that is, the traditional encomiastic subject matter they embody—the roads are difficult for poets.\footnote{Gutzwiller (1983), 230. Notice in the quote above that the Muses are not named outright, but rather appear strictly in relation to their father, Zeus, himself specifically invoked as “planning greatly” or “of great resolve.” The emphasis falls squarely on Zeus’ power to affect the lives of mortals for good or, as in this case, bad.} At this point, the full implications of the Charites’ initial opprobrium (9) become clear: like Heracles’ fellow Argonauts in Idyll 13, Theocritus’ Charites mock him for dereliction of his duty to mount a traditional encomium in traditional encomiastic terms. It is because of this failure or refusal of the poet that the Charites, his poems, have come back “unsuccessful” (12). In these lines, immediately preceding his direct invocation of Hiero, Theocritus attempts to bridge the gap between his personal poetic preferences for the low and the exigencies of the real-life struggle for patronage by modifying his initial stance of total rejection of the Muses. His poetry will still bear the unmistakable stamp of “charm” (κεχορισμένος, 68), but it will travel in the company of the Muses (σὺν Μοίσαξ, 69).\footnote{Gutzwiller (1983), 230-1.}

The sharp enjambment of this last spondaic phrase and its reiteration in the initial κουράων of the next line, identical in spondaic metrical value, emphasizes the newly perceived necessity for the Theocritean Charites of the Muses’ company and may even suggest something of the poet’s frustration or exasperation at the admission. For, as Theocritus spends much of his time in the poem making clear (14-67), he disdains patrons who “are conquered by [their love of] profit” (νενίκηται δ’ ύπό κερδέων, 15; cf. φιλοκερδείξ βεβλαμμένον, 63), as well as poets who praise such men for profit. From this motif comes his play on
the anecdote of Simonides’ two coffers recounted in the *scholia*.\(^{639}\) Indeed, as Gutzwiller notes, one is tempted to see in the *adynaton* of washing a mud brick (62), with its suggestion that the clear water (\(\deltaι\alpha\varepsilonι\delta\varepsilonι\)) used for the cleansing itself becomes muddy (\(\theta\omega\lambdaερ\rho\alpha\nu\)), the message that poets who attempt to whitewash such greedy patrons (*i.e.* \(\theta\omega\lambdaερ\rho\alpha\ \pi\lambda\ι\nu\theta\omicron\zeta\)) with high-flown praise (*i.e.* \(\omicron\delta\omega\rho \ \deltaι\alpha\varepsilonι\delta\eta\zeta\)) become themselves tainted thereby.\(^{640}\) Perhaps the humorous anecdotes about Simonides and the Scopads found in Cicero and Quintilian reflect something of that poet’s troubled relationships to such avaricious patrons, whence Theocritus’ choice to use him in *Id.* 16. At any rate, Theocritus rejects this scene (\(\chiαιρέτω\, 64\varepsilon\.\)), just as, in lines 16-17, he spurns every man who, “having his hand inside his purse-fold, looks where he might get some money”,\(^{641}\) (\(\pi\alpha\zeta\ \delta\.\ \upsilon\delta\ \κόλπου\ \chiε\ιρας\ \xi\chi\omicron\ \pi\omicron\theta\varepsilon\nu\ \oi\sigma\sigma\tau\alpha\i\ \upsilon\theta\omicron\epsilon\i\ / \\acute{\alpha}ρ\gamma\upsilon\nu\omicron\). This last line recalls the third vignette of the goatherd’s ivy cup in *Idyll* 1 and its oblivious little boy joyously engrossed in his project of weaving. Several commentators have thought to read this image as an analogue to the Hellenistic or pastoral poet.\(^{642}\) The devious fox which threatens the boy by having its eye on his wallet (\(\epsilon\pi\i\ \pi\omicron\rho\omicron\), 49) might betoken the predatory dangers of greed as relates to poetry, both greedy patrons and greedy, eager-to-please poets. Theocritus’ imagined patron, then, resembles the predatory wolf or fox, threatening harm to the joyfully heedless poet through his lust for money. The harm he threatens consists of the power of censorship he may assert through the patronage system over poets like Theocritus, who are committed to some notion of

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\(^{639}\) Wendel, *arg.*., 325-6; Gow (1952: II *ad* 10ff.); Austin, 11 and nn. 18-19; Gutzwiller (1983), 221.

\(^{640}\) Gutzwiller (1983), 229.

\(^{641}\) Gow (1953), 63 (Gow’s translation)

\(^{642}\) Halperin, 181; Walker, 37; Hunter, *ad* 1.52, 83-4.
ars gratia artis\textsuperscript{643} as embodied in the ivy-cup’s third scene. Such poets reject traditional, grand themes in favor of humbler matter expressed with charm—the χάριτες of Pseudo-Demetrius.\textsuperscript{644} Unless they mingle some of the grander, Muse-inspired style with their charm, however, would-be patrons will pass them over in favor of more traditional encomia bought and paid for, as the experience of Theocritus’ spurned Charites can attest.\textsuperscript{645}

Of this fact, the poet affirms his final, painful awareness in lines 101-2, invoking in a direct way the motif of competing others: εἰς μὲν ἐγὼ, πολλοὺς δὲ Διὸς φιλέοντι καὶ ἄλλους / θυγατέρες. In a sense, no more poignant expression of the fragility of self before the impersonal bustle of a large and diverse urban world exits in the Theocritean corpus, certainly none more seemingly ingenuous or more frank and sincere. The crushing weight of its simple honesty resembles Simaetha’s apparent moment of anagnorisis in Idyll 2: ἔστι δ’ ἀλαθῆς (154).\textsuperscript{646} In this statement, “curiously violative of encomiastic rhetoric,”\textsuperscript{647} Theocritus recedes into a crowd of other would-be encomiasts, thereby, ironically enough, praising Hiero nicely. Yet it is precisely the fact of the

\textsuperscript{643} Griffin, (1992), 198-9; Hunter, ad 1.52, 84: “[W]e are close here to an ancient expression of ‘art for art’s sake.’”; cf. Gutzwiller (1983), 236: “This is not quite art for art’s sake, but in a poem that concerns both poetry and praise it suggests that poetry has first place.”\textsuperscript{644} Pace Austin, 5: “This is far from being the consoling philosophy of art for art’s sake, for Theocritus has categorically excluded such a view of poetry.” Because he does not properly grasp the complex nature of the relationship between Theocritus’ Charites and the Muses (see, for instance, p. 6), Austin tends to regard the poet’s statements about poetry as being almost entirely nihilistic, writing, near the end of his article, that the speaker’s concern is “[n]ot what kind of poetry, but why poetry at all?” (20). Yet, with his pronounced bucolic element embedded within his “praise” of Hiero, surely the poet is talking about the type of poetry, too. Gow (1952: II ad 107ff.) also finds it difficult to discern a precise relationship between the Muses and Charites, writing: “The exact meaning of these lines [i.e. 107-09], and the difference in such a context between Muses and Graces, are hard to discern and were perhaps not meant to be analysed.” This position, too, seems overly defeatist and nihilistic.\textsuperscript{645} See n. 634.

\textsuperscript{646} Gutzwiller (1983), 230-1: “Before, he was sending out the Charites alone, and the result was failure. Now the poet seems willing to make certain compromises to win the patronage of Hiero.”\textsuperscript{647} See Segal (1973), 39; \textit{idem} (1984), 203; Lawall, 33. I do not absolutely rule out the possibility that the underlying tone is ironic.
statement’s dislocation from the point of the view of traditional encomium that renders it liable to suspicion as having less to do with the poet’s purported aim of encomium and more to do with his covert aim, announced at the poem’s outset, to discuss his novel poetic stance. Similar in import is the poet’s catalogue of the humble characters from the Odyssey in lines 54-56 and of the mythic losers from the Cypria and Iliad in lines 48-49: they primarily betray “Theocritus’ own interest in the bucolic and the humble.”

Moreover, right on the heals of this curious “smothering” of the poet’s individuality, comes Idyll 16’s principal voice of self-assertiveness—admittedly among the most oblique and ambiguous in the Theocritean oeuvre—in the form of the invocation in line 104 of the Charites as Ἐτεόκλειοι. This unusual adjective suggests in etymology the meaning “bringers of true fame.” As Gutzwiller discusses, Eteocles was given in tradition as either the fonder of the cult of the Charites at Orchomenos or the father of the Charites themselves. Rist stresses the mortal parentage of the Charites over and against the divine parentage of the Muses in this part of the tradition. As a self-assertion, the remark would seem to declare, in a most indirect manner, that the encomiast “who comes with the grace and charm of the Charites will write poetry most likely to be preserved. It is a powerful argument for Hiero to pick Theocritus out of the mass, but its abstruseness suggests that the poet is less concerned with its effect on Hiero than with his own resolve to hold fast to the Charites.” It is this note of fraught resolution that rings out in the poet’s determination in line 106 no longer to canvass for a

648 Gutzwiller (1983), 227; pace Payne, 121-22 (see n. 624 above).
650 Gutzwiller (1983), 235. See also Gow (1952: II ad loc.).
651 See also Aho, ad 104-5, pp. 245-6.
652 Rist, 146-7.
patron but to wait until called (ἀκλητος μὲν ἐγὼε μένοιμι κεν). Herein lies Austin’s basis for reading the *Idyll* as a self-*consolatio* of the poet.654 Gutzwiller observes: “What κεχάρισμένος (68) timidly suggested becomes the clear bold conclusion to the poem. Any encomium Theocritus may compose will have the special qualities of the Charites....”655 Yet, as can be clearly seen from other Theocritean works, most apparent final declarations of self-assertion in the *Idylls* which invoke the thematic nexus prove, on closer inspection, to be problematic in some way.

Finding the poet, in the second half of his final declaration, issuing himself the same exhortation to “have courage” (θαρσήσας, 107) that concluded the frequent mentions of the menacing crowds in *Idyll* 15 and Battus’ bewailing of this thorn-pricked foot in *Idyll* 4, especially in the context of a reprise of the travel motif from the beginning of the poem (ἐς δὲ καλεύντων...τοιμ’ ἄν, 106-107), should perhaps give pause to any attempts to see in the *Idyll’s* ending an unshaken confidence or unquestioned hope.656 Indeed, the apostrophe to the *Charites* in line 108 (καλλείψω δ’ οὐδ’ ὢμε), with its switch in verbal mood from potential optative to future indicative, conveying, in a conditional setting such as is implied here, a sense of strong emotion, even threat,657 brings back into focus the notion of abandonment or rejection, an important facet of the thematic nexus. Furthermore, when the poet explains his impassioned declaration by asserting rhetorically that the *Charites* are the most “beloved” or “desirable” thing men have, he again calls up the idea of rejection through his imagining of life “apart from the

654 Austin, 18.
655 Gutzwiller (1983), 236; see also Gow (1952: II ad 68).
656 Pace Aho, 249, who reads the participle here as connoting the rather positive meaning “having been put at ease in my mind with respect to the reception I will receive.” This interpretation well misses the mark and ignores the evidence of this term’s use in other genuine idylls.
657 See Smyth, § 2328, 525.
Charites” (Χαρίτων...ἀπάνενθεν, 108-9). He even employs the same relatively rare adjective (ἀγαπατόν, 108) with which Gorgo bids farewell to Adonis at the end of Idyll 15 (χαίρε, Ἀδων ἀγαπατέ, 149), as if in the role of Aphrodite, mourning her dead lover. These final verbal echoes suggest of Theocritus’ interactions with his preferred poetic style the somewhat volatile character of the relationships marked by frustrated erotic desire so well drawn in other Idylls. Thus the final return to the optative mood in line 109 (ἀεὶ Χαρίτεςσίν ἀμ’ εἴην), while in context a tacit acknowledgement of the still uncertain prospect of patronage, might simultaneously betoken an ambivalent stance to the poet’s chosen professional path.

We are now in a position to appreciate how inappropriate is the solution proposed to the difficulty of line 107, where the poet transfers the epithet “ours” (ἀμετέρωσιν) from its proper referent, the Charites in line 6, to the Muses. If we take the “Muses” in this latter passage to represent Theocritus’ poetry, while the Charites in the final lines are seen as goddesses, it would appear as though the poet has made a clear choice and rests content. Yet such an arbitrary reading permits us to skirt what is a fundamental and purposeful ambiguity in the poem. Idyll 16 presents many acts of rejection, many fragile selves that turn in upon each another. The poet rejects the Muses in favor of the Charites; prospective patrons reject the Charites in favor of other forms of praise; the patrons reject Theocritus in favor of other praise-poets; other poets, by implication, possibly reject the Charites in favor of other poetic modes. Indeed, taken together with the poet’s self-criticism for not writing the type of poetry that would win him patronage, it is hard not to hear in the Charites’ mockery of Theocritus for sending them out on a

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659 Gutzwiller (1983), 236.
useless journey (9) an echo of the Muses’ angry expression of their rejection by the poet. If there is a revelation in the poem, it is surely that the poet must make his peace with both the Charites and the Muses if he is truly to succeed. The phrasal repetitions in lines 69-70 and 108-09 involving the word ἀπάνευθε underscore this necessary connection by imagining the disastrous consequences if both requirements of the poetic equation are not met. Without the Muses, roads—presumably to royal courts of patronage—become difficult for poets (69-70); without the Charites, nothing could be lovely for mankind (108-9). Therefore, though the poet converts his feelings of anger and frustration in the face of rejection into “the tone of the blame poet in satirizing the miser clutching his money under his cloak and in listing the selfish excuses he has received (16-21),” he must also adopt such a tone towards himself for selfishly not writing the type of poems that would please such misers. That he does precisely this is evidenced in his straw-man’s choice of fatuous proverbs to anchor his case: ἀπωτέρω ἦ γόνυ κνάμα, “farther than the knee is the shin,” or, as Gow glosses, “charity begins at home.” The scholia to this passage note interestingly that the wording of the actual proverb is the inverse of Thoecritus’ formation: πορρωτέρω κνήμη γόνατος. The meaning is essentially the same, but Theocritus has chosen to front, and thereby emphasize, distance or alienation and the word knee, a fact which immediately recalls the poet’s pitiful description of his forlorn Charites, resting their impoverished heads on cold knees (11). Theocritus is not being charitable to himself or his artistic creations: in

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659 Rist, 146-7; Griffiths (1979), 44; Gow (1952: II ad 107ff.).
660 Cf. line 58: ἔκ Μοισίου ἄγηθον κλέος ἔρχεται ἄνθρωποι: 68-70: δι' ᾧμαι δ' ὄτινι... ἐλθεῖ / σὺν Μοίσας ἵ... χαλεπαί γὰρ ὁδὸι... / κοιράνων ἀπάνευθε.
661 Gutzwiller (1983), 223.
failing to write what will be pleasing to the average would-be patron, he not only wastes his own time, but that of his poems themselves as well. One thinks of Socrates’ critique of writing in the *Phaedrus*, where written works are presented as children who, when mistreated by their readership, run home to their parent: πλημμελομένος δὲ καὶ οὗκ ἐν δίκη λοιδορθεῖς τοῦ πατρὸς αἰεὶ δεῖται βοήθοι (275e3-4). Theocritus is not merely remiss in personal profligacy, but is actually cruel to his intellectual offspring at the same time. This cyclical turning throughout the poem, like Simaetha’s *iynx*, prompts a question with regards to Austin’s designation of the poem as self-*consolatio*: is poetry itself not the very reason its author needs solace in the first place? A similar circularity has long haunted interpretation of *Idyll* 11. A brief digression in that direction may serve to shore up our arguments thus far.

Ever since Gow first raised it as a critical problem, numerous commentators have been perplexed by an apparent paradox in *Idyll* 11. The metaphor established in the poem’s first three lines for singing poetry as a *pharmakon* for love (Οὐδὲν ποττὸν ἔρωτα πεφύκει φάρμακαν ἄλλο / ... / ἡ τὰ Πιερίδες, 1, 3) appears to lead, by poem’s end, to the contradictory conclusion that song is both the symptom and cure of Polyemus’ ills. Gow found grave fault with this implication, contending that, as it stands, the poem’s argument simply “falls to pieces.” He further suggested that if one were to omit lines 1-7, 17-18, and 80-81, nothing in the poem would “provoke suspicion.” On the basis of Gow’s authoritative criticism, many have sought to provide a solution to what has ever since been perceived as a cardinal difficulty of the text: from Cataudella’s

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662 Gow (1952: II *ad* 18), 310, with other ancient parallels.
663 Gow (1952: II *ad* 11.13), 211.
emendation of line 13’s ἀεὶδῶν to ἀεὶ λῶν,\textsuperscript{665} to the various arguments for catharsis of one kind or another mounted by Erbse,\textsuperscript{666} Dover,\textsuperscript{667} Holtsmark,\textsuperscript{668} Hopkinson,\textsuperscript{669} Barigazzi\textsuperscript{670} and Hutchinson.\textsuperscript{671} It little comforts that the most sophisticated and convincing answer, that proposed by Goldhill, concludes merely:

> It is...increasingly hard to specify the relation between poetry and desire in...[the] text. The language of the frame...seems to offer...a sustained doubleness, a sustained uncertainty whether poetry is the symptom and fostering of love as well as the means of its cure. Moreover, it is a doubleness which the love-song itself, with its parodic picture of the love-sick Polyphemus, inevitably fails to resolve.\textsuperscript{672}

The poem’s frame, Goldhill determines, “fractures the certain determination of meaning” in the work.\textsuperscript{673} But does it?

> If ambivalence to the craft and practice of poetry is precisely the notion the poet is trying to evoke, exactly the same kind of ambivalence so intricately and carefully constructed throughout \textit{Idyll} 16, then the putative fog surrounding this passage dissipates considerably. “...[Φ]όρμαξον,” Goldhill writes tellingly, “is not a word whose positive meaning can be straightforwardly assumed. A good drug, then, or a poison?”\textsuperscript{674} In light of our preceding discussion of \textit{Idyll} 16, I think we can both dispose of the supposed problem of poem 11 vis-à-vis its frame and somewhat vindicate Goldhill’s reticence as to

\textsuperscript{664} Gow (1952: II ad 13), 211. As Goldhill notes (33), Gow is not actually arguing here for the deletion of these lines, which together constitute one seventh of the whole poem.

\textsuperscript{665} Cataudella, 473-8.

\textsuperscript{666} Erbse, 234.

\textsuperscript{667} Dover (1971), 174.

\textsuperscript{668} Holtsmark, 258-9.

\textsuperscript{669} Hopkinson, 149-50.

\textsuperscript{670} Barigazzi, 179-88.

\textsuperscript{671} Hutchinson, 179 and n. 58.

\textsuperscript{672} Goldhill, 34.

\textsuperscript{673} Goldhill., 35.

\textsuperscript{674} Goldhill., 34; cf. Hunter (1999), 221.
Theocritus' use of the medical metaphor. Poetry, it would appear, is both poison and antidote.

Like *Idyll* 13 with which it is closely related, 11 presents the authorial voice in *proppria persona* in the form of an epistle of sorts addressed to his friend, the doctor and fellow poet Nicias (11.5-6). Within this address, even as he attempts to establish the ironic distance requisite for the poem’s humor, referring to the Cyclops as ώρχαῖος (8), that is, “former, original” (*i.e.* the Homeric version), Theocritus nevertheless urges an identification between himself and his character Polyphemus that transcends his mere desire to portray the originally inhuman character as capable of entirely human, and hence identifiable, emotions. In fact, he first introduces the character as ὁ παρ’ ὅμιν (7), that is, the one from back home, “a fellow Sicilian.” Next, in lines 13 (ἀείδεων) and 18 (ἀείδε), he reveals that the character is a poet as well. Theocritus even compliments Polyphemus’ alleged poetic acumen by asserting that through singing his love for Galateia (13), the Cyclops was able to find the remedy for erôs that is not easily found (εὑρεῖν δ’ οὐ ρᾴδιον ἔστι.../ ἀλλὰ τὸ φάρμακον εὑρε, καθεξόμενος δ’ ἐπὶ πέτρας / ὑψηλὰς ἐς πόντον ὅρων ἀείδε τοιοῦτα 4, 16-17). In this way, Theocritus “makes explicit the analogue between the poet (himself and Nicias and therefore all poets) and the Cyclops.”

In point of fact, as Hunter has noted, the establishment of this analogue begins as soon as the poem’s first line. The apocope of the preposition ποτί in line 1 (πὸτ τον

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675 Gutzwiller (1991), 107 and n. 16.
676 Gutzwiller (1991), 114.
678 Spofford, 28.
ēρωτα), together with the anomalous form πεφόκει, combining a perfect stem with a present ending, marks the narrator’s speech from the first as West Greek and of a lower register, such as one might expect from a Sicilian churl, or rather a churlish Sicilian Cyclops.\(^{680}\) The first line continues with a violation of Naeke’s Law, which forbids a word break following a fourth foot spondee. This feature was felt in Hellenistic poetic circles to be characteristic of a baser, more pedestrian mode of speech, hence its appearance on average once every nine verses in the banter of the housewives in *Idyll* 15.\(^{681}\) What is striking about *Id.* 11, though, is that its impression of metrical “roughness” runs seamlessly through both frame and inner song. Theocritus and his character speak one and the same language. If, with Hunter, one can conclude of the over-determined low register of Theocritus’ choice of language that it is “stylistically programmatic,”\(^{682}\) then that program pervades the entirety of the work, establishing both the frame and the body of the poem as a locus for self-referential discussion of poets and poetry. But what kind of poets? And what kind of poetry?

On closer inspection, the preface to *Idyll* 11 proves more complicated still, for it does not simply appeal to similarities between the character and humans in terms of poetry, but in terms of medicine as well. Spofford writes: “The style [of the introduction] is a graceful form of friendly address, touching lightly on the professional capacity of both men to know the remedy for love, one as a poet, the other as a physician and poet as well.”\(^{683}\) The imbalance in Spofford’s phrasing—“one as a poet, the other as a physician

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\(^{680}\) Hunter (1999), 224-25, *ad* 11.1

\(^{681}\) Hunter (2003), 68, Callimachus scrupulously avoided this type of metrical license. See Hunter (1999), 19-21.

\(^{682}\) Hunter (1999), 218-19: “The strong identification between the poetic voice and that of the Cyclops, who was ‘one of us’ (line 7), establishes Polyphemos as an aetiological paradigm for all subsequent (*Sicilian*) lovers and poets” (emphasis mine). Cf. *idem*, 225, *ad* 11.1.

\(^{683}\) Spofford, 23.
and poet as well”—hints at the problem for our understanding of the passage. Strictly speaking, what should a poet know about curing sickness? If, as Gow and others, myself included, seem to think, one purpose of the poem is to present an argument that poetry in some sense assuages or cures the pangs of love, then Theocritus has chosen to begin by assuming the very conclusion he sets out to demonstrate. Notice the first two lines, with their rhetorically strong anaphora of clause- or phrase-initial negatives (Οὐδὲν ... /
...οὐτ’...οὐτ’...) and direct address to Nikias, the doctor. Here we have an emphatically definitive statement on medicine enunciated not by Nicias the doctor, nor even by Polyphemus, who found the cure for love as a doctor might, but by Theocritus (ἐμῖν δοκεῖ), who, at this stage in the poem’s development, has no connection to medicine whatsoever. He even lards his speech with the technical-sounding terms ἔρυθροστον and ἐπίπραστον which seem to suggest he knows something of how medicinal cures are customarily administered. From the very first line, Theocritus arrogates to himself the role of attendant physician, presuming to offer the real doctor medical advice. The actual proof of the assertion implicit in this rhetorical move does not finally appear until line 7, introduced by the particle γοῦν, which commonly serves to set off statements of “partial proof.” With this choice of particle, Theocritus apparently acknowledges the slight circularity of his reasoning: poetry is the best cure for love because one poet, at least, used it and “did as well as possible” (ῥᾴστε ἔδωκε). Not only is this argument circular, it is also unnecessary, unless we assume some difference between Nicias, on the one hand, and

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685 Denniston, 451-3; Hunter (1999), 226, ad 11.7.
686 Denniston, 452.
Polyphemus and Theocritus, on the other. Being both poet and doctor, Nicias should already know most of what there is to know about the interface between poetry and medicine, unless, of course, Theocritus adds in his address something novel about either field. Not being a doctor himself, it would be hard to imagine he could have some new medical insight to offer. On the poetic side, though, he might have quite a bit to add. Without this supposition, the whole poem becomes simply an instance of one poet “preaching to the crowd,” so to speak.¼ That this is not the case, can be glimpsed in the fact that, while Theocritus’ analogue between himself, Nicias, and Polyphemus is not completely flattering to the humans involved, it is especially unflattering to doctors.

The key to the wedge Theocritus drives between poets and the medical profession turns out to lie in the relatively unassuming adjective ράδιος. In line 7, Polyphemus, the barbaric monster of Homeric epic, is said to have done “most easily” (ράστα) what the speaker asserts in line 4 is “not easy” (οὐ ράδιον εστί), namely to find the cure for love (lines 1, 17). Of course, Nicias ought to know, since he is a doctor (γινώσκειν δ’ οἶμαι το καλός ιατρόν ἐόντα, 5), but something in the repetition of the same adjective in differing degrees implies a surprise for the addressee. As Gow and Hopkinson note, the phrase ράστα διόγ in line 7 may possibly contain “some medical colour,” since ράσων is used in medical contexts of a patient’s going “easier” or getting “better.”½ By using in line 7 the superlative form of line 4’s ράδιον, the poet here establishes an opposition between Nicias and Polyphemus. The Cyclops did not simply get better, he did the best

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687 Notice Hunter’s summation of the introductory verses: “T. adduces a local example to strengthen his case: ‘you [Nicias] are a doctor and know this [that singing is the best pharmakon for love], whereas I know it because of the example of my countryman (1991, 226-27, ad 11.7).’” This reading would turn the idyll into simply a humorous tale told by one poet to another.

688 Gow (1952) II 210, ad 11.7; Hopkinson, 151 ad 11.7; LSJ s.v. ράδιος II.2.
that could be done, and in the absence of a physician. This contrast is further heightened by the implicit disjunction in line 4 between the initial, enjambed phrase γίνετ’ ἐπ’ ἀνθρώπους and the following εὑρεῖν δ’. Not only did Nicias, or another of his profession, not aid the Cyclops in finding his cure, but presumably Nicias—or any other human for that matter—would not find the Cyclops’ cure. Thus, if, as Hunter writes of this passage, “[t]he apparent paradox of using the Cyclops to illustrate a truth of ‘human’ life is one of the ways in which the difference between poet and Cyclops is broken down,” it is also one of the ways in which the difference between doctor and Cyclops is built up. As if to confirm this reading, several editors have seen in the poem’s final line (ρὴσον δὲ διὰ γ’ ἐι χρυσὸν ἔδωκεν) a teasingly deprecatory joke about the medical profession. Polyphemus managed “more easily than if he had given out gold,” that is, better than if he had gone and paid a doctor like Nicias. The reappearance of the comparative form ρήσον clinches the argument: the same adjective with medical overtones occurs three times in the poem, once in each degree, on every occasion forging distance between Theocritus’ Cyclops and Nicias to the latter’s detriment.

Hand in hand with this cleavage between Nicias and Polyphemus comes a similar rift between the poem’s two humans, as made clear in line 7 by the phrase ὁ παῖς ὁμίν, “our” Cyclops. Theocritus here closely aligns himself with Polyphemus as fellow countrymen over and against Nicias, who is cast in the role of foreigner. As revealed in Idyll 28.3-4 and Epigram 8.1-3, Nicias is from Miletus, on the opposite side of the Mediterranean. This fact makes of the Idyll a kind of epistolary memo between

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689 Hopkinson, 151, ad 11.7 ῥᾶνστα: “There is a contrast with ὃ ῥῆςιον in line 4.”
690 Hunter (1999), 226, ad 11.4.
colleagues, one apprising the other of an important local case study. Part of the humor, beyond Theocritus’ seizing the role of a physician, lies in the fact that the true topic of the case study is not medicine, but the medicinal properties of poetry.

The first explicit mention of poetry within the text comes in line 3: ἡ ταλΠερίδες· κοῦφον δὲ τί τοῦτο κολι ἄδυ (3). One of two explicit mentions of the Muses in the poem, this line differs from the second, in line 6, in naming the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne with the relatively grander term connected with their mountainous place of birth, thereby sounding a correspondingly grandiose note. The term’s strong enjambment only heightens the lofty feel. This tone of grandeur is immediately undercut, however, by the contradictory word that follows: κοῦφον, a term suggestive of the thematic nexus, on the one hand, and Hellenistic poetic ideals, on the other. The word implies opposition to the “heaviness” of erotic love and stands not far off from Callimachus’ notion of the Μοῦσα λεπτωλή from the prologue to Aetia. The line thus reads like a parsing of the very idea of poetry, gliding from a grand invocation of the concept in epic terms to a subtle refinement of what it actually means to the speaker, as if to say “The Piereans: that is, something light and sweet.” The second mention of Muses, and hence poetry, occurs in explicit connection with Nicias (και τοίς ἐννέα δηπεφιλημένον ἐξοχα Μοίσαις, 6), where the daughters of Zeus, now named outright in a relatively straightforward way, are said to love the doctor “exceedingly.” Of the term ἐξοχα in Idyll 7.14, Gow writes: “[N]ormally and regularly this adv[erb] involves a term of comparison expressed or implied, and means praeceteris rather than maxime...，“

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693 Hunter (1999), 225, ad 11.3.
though at 11.6 this distinction is not perhaps (in view of Nicias’ modest poetical attainments) to be pressed.”\(^{696}\) If Nicias were in fact so outstandingly accomplished a poet, why would Theocritus assume with him the didactic tone sounded in the poem’s first lines, presuming to teach Nicias something about the poetry he knows so well, indeed above all others? It seems, rather, the description of Nicias’ poetic prowess in line 6 offers something of a “teasing exaggeration,” perhaps like the relatively overblown phrase Χαρίτων ἰμεροφόνων ἱερὸν φαιτόν from *Idyll* 28 (7).\(^{697}\) The fact that, in 11.6, Nicias is not beloved simply of the Muses generally, but of all nine specifically (καὶ ταῖς ἐννέα) seems to further underscore the exaggeration.\(^{698}\) The very next line, with its invocation of the Cyclops “from back home” (ὁ παρ’ ὁμίν), then sets Polyphemus and Theocritus apart from this depiction of Nicias, expressly on the level of geography, but implicitly also on the level of sentiment and tone. To see exactly how, we need only look to the depiction of the Cyclops’ manner of loving. In a line that recalls with its anaphoric negatives the first lines of the poem, Polyphemus is said to have loved “not with apples, nor roses, nor locks of hair,” but with “correct manias” (ἦρατο δ’ οὗ μάλλοις οὐδὲ ρόδῳ οὐδὲ κικύννωις, ἕλλ’ ὀρθοῖς μανίασι, 10-11). Whatever else the term ὀρθός might connote here,\(^{699}\) the word means “correct,” or, as Gow glosses it, “true or genuine.”\(^{700}\) When we note that apples and roses, and perhaps, to a lesser degree,
locks of hair, constituted love tokens of the day,701 there is the hint in line 11’s sharply enjambed initial phrase of the way one should love or rather write about one’s love, just as there was the hint in the similarly phrased lines 2 and 3 as to how one should practice medicine. The final clue in this connection comes from the metrical particulars of line 10, with the epsilon of οὐδὲ lengthened in arsis before ῥόδῳ and the final syllable of that latter word shortened by correption, both features imitative of epic.702 Again the poet puts distance between the older, epic Polyphemus and his own depiction of the Cyclops’ youth. He rejects traditional meter together with what are perhaps traditional symbols of love in favor of the “correct” madness.

I find it telling that Theocritus mentions the neglectfulness aspect of the thematic nexus in the second half of line 11, for it is precisely here that poet-cum-character have made their choice of poetic modes. That the decision falls in favor of a form of mania simply again betokens the ambivalent attitude both have to the stance, or rather their more or less uncomfortable anxiety with regards to the choice. What is interesting is that, as lines 12-13 make clear, the decision has implications only for the poet in question; the world at large, as seen through the behavior of his sheep, continues on unaffected. Hunter writes: “The sheep act as they have always acted...; their daily routine is not disturbed by erotic passion.”703 It is not, though, so much the case that the sheep’s daily routine is unperturbed by the Cyclops’ passion as by his dereliction of his duty towards them (ἄγεῖτο δὲ πάντα πάρεργα, 11). Thus again what is at stake in *Idyll* 11’s introduction is a poet’s inner reality, his self-definition as poet. The external world figures only insofar as it is neglected in favor of the poet’s internal struggle.

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701 Hopkinson, 151, *ad* 11.10; Hunter (1999), 227. On the hair, see Gow (1952: II 211).
It should not now be too difficult to see how poetic song could be not only both symptom and cure, but even part-cause, of the pangs of frustrated desire. Smitten by desire, the poet chooses to sing in what, from his frame of reference, is the correct way.\textsuperscript{704} This choice puts him in a position to manage things rather easily, with no real catastrophes befalling him. However, it also places him in a position to be mocked, for, as seen above, the poem’s introduction creates ironic distance between humans outside of the Cyclops’ song and the beast himself. From the vantage point of us as readers, Polyphemus’ \emph{paraklausithyron} is laughable in its contrasts between high poetry and bestial poet, Homeric precedent and Hellenistic reversal, and impassioned naiveté and world-weary cynicism. One further aspect of this parody, though, has gone completely unnoticed in the scholarship and is, perhaps, the most important part. If Theocritus “is hardly, yet is, comparable to the Cyclops,”\textsuperscript{705} “like the Cyclops in ways he chooses to show us,”\textsuperscript{706} then the mockery of his character implicit in the idyll’s arrangement constitutes a self-mockery as well, in much the same manner as that of his \emph{Charites} at the beginning of \emph{Id.} 16. Theocritus creates a situation in \emph{Idyll} 11 in which he appears as naive as his character, Polyphemus, who fails to see that the laughter of the girls in line 78 (κιξάλιζοντι δὲ πᾶσας, ἐπεὶ κ’ αὐταῖς ὑπακούσω) betokens their mockery of him. In standing beside Nicias while holding up Polyphemus as “a local example to strengthen his case,”\textsuperscript{707} Theocritus accomplishes no such strengthening. In fact, in assuming the tone of a doctor while addressing a real practitioner of the medical profession, the poet

\textsuperscript{703} Cf. Hunter (1999), 228, \textit{ad} 11.12
\textsuperscript{704} Hunter (1999), 220: “Stylistically, Polyphemos found a song which suited him, a song which may be viewed as an aesthetic triumph for a Cyclops rather than as laughably pedestrian.”
\textsuperscript{705} Spofford, 26.
\textsuperscript{706} Gutzwiller (1991), 114.
\textsuperscript{707} Hunter (1999), 226, \textit{ad} 11.7.
appears somewhat buffoonish. Thus again we glimpse the fact that, if read as coherent argument for the purpose of convincing someone of a point of view, the poem fails at worst, or at best produces unacceptably contradictory meanings. If read as a statement of poetic principle at variance with that of his addressee, on the other hand, the work makes some real sense, especially in light of the themes comprising the thematic nexus.

Theocritus and Nicias are both poets, though they come from different geographical and intellectual milieus. Theocritus lays out his position on poetry and notes that while it may make him appear ridiculous in the eyes of certain others, like Nicias perhaps, it suits him personally. At the same, though, this variance of practice and the mockery of others, including the poet’s own self-mockery, constitute a real sore-spot. The love of poetry and almost romantic attachment to a particular philosophy of poetry provide the problem, symptoms, and the means of eventual “cure,” if we understand pharmakon to denote more palliative than panacea. Thus, at the end of Idyll 16, we find the poet praying always to remain with his Charites, even though the road is difficult without the prestige of patronage guaranteed by the Muses. At least, with the Charites, the poet will never be separated from what is “loveable for men” (ἀγαπατών ἀνθρώποις).\(^{708}\)

A question remains as to the nature of the rupture between Theocritus’ and Nicias’ understandings of poetic practice. Eight extant epigrams bear attributions to a “Nicias” (HE 2755-86), apparently the same figure included in Meleager’s Garland (AP 4.1.19-20 = HE 3944-5).\(^{709}\) Unfortunately, these poems tell us little of their author’s theory of poetry, being largely “dedications and inscriptions of rural places in the idyllic

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\(^{708}\) Again, cf. the remark in Idyll 15: χαῖρε, Ἄδων ἀγαπατέ, 149.
manner." One might assume that it involved a choice of type of poetry, though such may not be so, since, in *Idyll* 28, Theocritus refers to Nicias specifically as the “sacred offspring of the sweet-voiced *Charites* (Χαρίτων ἱμεροφώνων ὕερον φυτόν, 7). If Nicias represents a different kind of poetry, then his mention in connection with the Theocritean *Charites* is confusing in exactly the same way as the use of the adjective “ours” (άμετέρασιν, 107) to characterize the Muses at the end of *Idyll* 16. There appears to be a muddling of *Muses* and *Charites* here again. Luckily, *Idyll* 28 features a play on the word χάρις quite similar to that in 16, which not only helps explain the apparent confusion in line 7, but does so along lines surprisingly similar to the equivocating use of “our” in *Idyll* 16.

As Gutzwiller has discussed at length, the term χάρις in *Idyll* 16 serves the double purpose of describing Theocritus’ poetry as well as evincing his stance of poverty. The term accomplishes this purpose through its resonance with an anecdote of Simonides in which the older lyric poet supposedly kept two chests: one for χάριτες, or “thank-yous”, he had received from potential patrons and one for the money he truly desired from them. At the end of *Idyll* 28, the word occurs in reference to the poem Theocritus has written to accompany the gift of a distaff for Theugenis, the wife of Nicias: ἡ μεγάλα χάρις / δόρῳ σύν ὀλίγῳ (24-5). Gow finds the sense of χάρις here “hard to determine” and “elusive,” noting that it may refer to the Theocritus’ affection for Theugenis, Theugenis’ gratitude for Theocritus’ gift of the poem, or some quality of

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709 Hunter (1999), 215.
710 Mackail, 315.
711 Gutzwiller (1983), 221-22; Aho, 40-1.
grace inherent in the gift. Finding in all of these meanings an awkward fit between wording and context, Gow concludes aporetically: “in fact a sentiment appropriate both to the speaker and to T. himself is hardly to be extracted from the words.” If, however, we connect χάρις in 28 with its use in 16, the problems somewhat resolve themselves. But first, we must establish that Idyll 28, like 11 and 16, comprises, in fact, a substantial statement from the poet as to his own, and others’, poetic practice.

That Idyll 28 may have much to say with regards to Theocritus’ views of poetry has gone almost entirely overlooked in the scholarly literature. Gutzwiller suggests that the poem could have served as the introduction to a section of Ionic poems within a Theocritean poetry book, with its metaphorical progress of a Doric poet to the “geographical/literary realm associated with the great lyric poets of the past, especially Sappho,” thereby signaling Theocritus’ debt to Erinna, “whose Distaff demonstrated how to adapt epic hexameter to personal themes” as Theocritus does. She proceeds to note the appropriateness as metaphor of the “specifically feminine activity of weaving, itself an emblem of poetic composition” but goes no further in her analysis. Hopkinson finds a few parallels in the poem between Theocritus’ poetic art and the distaff he is bringing Theugenis, noting, for example, that the adjective πολυμόχθω in line eight applies equally to the poet’s “precious, highly wrought and exotic” Distaff as well as to the contemplated labors of lines 10-11 which Nicias’ wife will accomplish with the physical distaff the poem accompanies.

712 Gow (1952: II 503, ad 28.24f.).
713 Gutzwiller (2007), 186.
715 Hopkinson, 174, ad 28.10; 176.
The poetic distaff will celebrate both its recipient’s industry and its donor’s love. The idyll, however, has much more to offer on this account.

Though Gow offered the censure that “the donor should not, as his last word, stress the beauty of his gift,” one has to admit that, for better or worse, this is precisely what Theocritus is doing by the end of Id. 28. As a partial parallel, we might point to the conclusion of 16, where the poet bids his not-yet patron a premature farewell, proclaiming instead his unwavering loyalty to his Charites. Almost as if anticipating such criticism as Gow’s, however, Theocritus contrives at 28.24-5 to place the praise in the mouth of a nameless other through the common poetic device of the “someone might say” motif. He does this almost immediately following mention, in line 22, that possession of the distaff he is sending Theugenis will make her “famed for her distaff among fellow women” of Miletus. The “humorous epicizing coinage” recalls Homeric phrases like εὐαλάκατος Ἀχαιοί, suggesting that now Theugenis will attain such renown in the sphere of women as epic heroes did in that of men. In this way, while concluding his poem, Theocritus invokes the aspect of the thematic nexus touching on competing others and traditional styles of poetry, signaling in an unambiguous manner that his dedicatory poem likely has more to do with poetry than meets the eye.

716 Hopkinson, 175, ad 28.23.
717 Gow (1952: II 503, ad 28.24f.).
718 Hopkinson, 175, ad 28.24-5.
719 Hopkinson, 175, ad 28.22.
To begin with, the poetry of the Hellenistic period exhibits a strong interest in a connection between weaving and composing poetry. Apart from *Idyll* 28, Theocritus makes the connection explicit in *Idyll* 24, where he describes how the Achaean women will sing of Alcmene as they weave at days’ end (πολλαὶ Ἀχαιότων μαλακῶν περὶ γούνατι νῆμα / χεὶρι κατατρίψουσιν ἀκρέσπερον ἀείδοισοι, 76-7). We find a similar reference, though perhaps more implied, in *Idyll* 18 (32-7), where the poet praises his laudanda Helen via an elaborate tricolon crescens whose first two parts relate to her prowess in weaving, while the capstone third references her singing acumen. Finally, and least direct of all, Theocritus has his two Doric housewives in *Idyll* 15 note with admiration the fine quality of the weaving in a palace tapestry, exclaiming how much work must have gone into its production and lifelike scenes. The culminating conclusion reached by the women as to how clever humankind must be (σοφὸν τι χρήμ’ ἄνθρωπος, 83b) has obvious universal import for human artistic representation in general, especially as the pair continue to praise the statue of Adonis in the following lines (84-6).

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720 NB: here and in what follows, I deliberately subsume under the rubric “weaving” all relevant points of manufacture from manually twisting the wool in one’s lap to spinning to weaving. For these processes similarly combined in poetry, see Antipater of Sidon 4 G-P = *AP* 6.160 and Leonidas of Tarentum 72 G-P = *AP* 7.726.

721 οὐδὲ τις ἐκ ταλάρῳ πανισθεῖται ἔργα τοιαύτα,
οὐδ’ ἐνι δαιδαλέῳ πυκνώτερον ἄτριον ἵστῳ
κερκίδι συμπλέξισθαι μικρῶν ἔταμ’ ἐκ κελεόντων.
οὐ μᾶν οὐδὲ λύραν τις ἐπίσταται ὁδε κροτήσαι
’Αρτεμιν ἀείδουσα καὶ εὐρύστερνον ’Αθάναν
ὡς ’Ελένα....

722 πότιν ’Αθαναία, ποιεῖ σφ’ ἐπόνασαν ἔριθοι, / ποιεῖ ξωογράφοι τάκριβεα γράμματ’ ἐγραφαν, / ὡς ἔτοιμ’ ἐστάκαντι καὶ ὡς ἔτοιμ’ ἐνδιδεῦτι, / ἐμψυχ’, οὐκ ἐνυφαντά. (15.80-83a).
In the field of epigram, perhaps the most influential Greek epigrammatist,\(^{723}\) Leonidas of Tarentum—whose *floruit* appears best dated to the early second quarter of the third century BC, though he may have been writing epigrams as early as 300\(^{724}\)—features in “one of his most admired poems”\(^{725}\) an image similar to that presented in *Idyll* 24.76-7. In his epitaph for a deceased weaver named Platthis \(72\text{G-P} = AP\ 7.726\), Leonidas celebrates how the woman would sing to her distaff and spindle, though standing on the doorstep of old age (καὶ τι πρὸς ἠλακάτην καὶ τὸν συνέριθον ἄτρακτον / ἡμισεν πολιοῦ γῆραος ἄργαθυρος, 72.3-4 G-P). The end of Platthis’ life resembles the end of the day for the Greek women of *Idyll* 24; even the poem’s first word is “evening” (Ἐσπέριον, 72.1 G-P). Elsewhere, Leonidas writes of three sisters dedicating their shuttle, “songstress of the loom” (κερκίδα, τὰν ἱστῶν μολπάτιδα, 41.5 G-P = AP 6.288) to the goddess Athena. More developed descriptions of shuttles as implements of song appear in later authors, such as Antipater of Sidon\(^{726}\) (4.1-2 G-P = AP 6.160;\(^{727}\) 5.5 G-P = AP 6.174;\(^{728}\) 43.1 G-P = AP 6.47\(^{729}\)), Archias—possibly Liciunius Archias of Antioch, perhaps the client defended by Cicero in *Pro Archia* and a known

\(^{723}\) Gutzwiller (1998), 88, 93.

\(^{724}\) On controversies surrounding Leonidas’ dates, see Gutzwiller (1998) 88-9; Gow (1958), 113-23; Gow-Page (1965) II 308.

\(^{725}\) Gutzwiller (1998), 93.

\(^{726}\) For dating, see Gutzwiller (1998), 15 n. 1, 236 n. 20; Gow-Page (1965) II 31-2. The poems under consideration are noted by Gow-Page (1965: II 36-7) as “in the manner of” and “an imitation of” Leonidas, respectively.

\(^{727}\) Κερκίδα τῶν ὁρθρίνης χελιδωνίδων ἠμα φωνῆ
μελπομένου, ἵστων Παλλάδος ἄλκυόνα,

\(^{728}\) κερκίδα δ’ εὐποίητον, ἀηδόνα τὰν ἐν ἔριθοις

\(^{729}\) Κερκίδα τὴν φιλαοίδοιαν....
composer of variations on epigrams by Antipater and others\textsuperscript{730}—(μελεδήμονα κερκίδα, 8.5 G-P = AP 6.39), and Philip of Thessalonica\textsuperscript{731} (κερκίδας ὁρθρολόλοισι χελιδόσιν εἰκελοφόνονος, 22.1 G-P = AP 6.247).

To be sure, this association of weaving with song was no new, Hellenistic invention. Among his numerous depictions of women weaving, Homer includes four in which the weavers simultaneously sing songs.\textsuperscript{732} In Nemean 4.44, Pindar uses the actual verb for weaving, ύφαίνειν, to describe his act of poetic composition: ἐξύφαινε, γλυκεὶα, καὶ τὸδ’ αὐτίκα, φόρμιγξ, “Weave out, sweet phorminx, this [song], too, at once.”\textsuperscript{733} Fr. 179 (Snell) offers a similar depiction of the encomiast’s job: ύφαίνω δ’ Ἀμυθαονίδοισιν ποικίλον ἀνδήμα, “I weave for the sons of Amythaon a many-colored crown.” In Nemean 4.9\textsuperscript{734} and Olympian 6.86-7,\textsuperscript{735} Pindar deploys related metaphors using the verb πλέκειν. As Snyder argues, this manner of usage may stem, in part, from Homer’s use of the verb ύφαίνειν in metaphorical contexts as a description of intellectual processes\textsuperscript{736} and, in part, from a folk etymology that derived ὑμνος from ύφαίνειν.\textsuperscript{737}

Yet another impetus behind it would also seem to stem from the outward physical similarity between ancient Greek looms and lyres. Both objects had two posts or arms

\textsuperscript{730} Gutzwiller (1998), 231-2 and n. 8; Gow-Page (1965) II 432-35; Law, 225-43.

\textsuperscript{731} Impossible to date, though Gow-Page (1965) II 36, note that the poem in question imitates Antipater of Sidon. In their later volume, (1968) II 328, Gow-Page state that the work is a copy of Archias.

\textsuperscript{732} Calypso with her golden shuttle (Od. 5.59-62); Circe and her great design (Od. 10.220-23; 10.226-28; 10.254-55). See also Gow-Page (1965) II 375-76, ad Leonidas of Tarentum 72.4 [2414].

\textsuperscript{733} See Snyder, 195, for discussion of this and the other Pindaric passages mentioned here.

\textsuperscript{734} αἰχματαῖσι πλέκουν ποικίλον ὑμνον

\textsuperscript{735} στήματα πλέκων

\textsuperscript{736} Snyder, 194. For list of passages in Homer where this usage occurs, see ibid. n. 4. Odysseus and his wiles are a frequent target of such verbiage.

\textsuperscript{737} Snyder, 194 and n. 6.
and a crossbar, from which stretched strands of the warp or strings, held in place by a weight at bottom, in the case of a loom, or a fastener to the sound board for a lyre. As can be glimpsed in the numerous epigrams adduced above, comparison of the shuttle (κερκίς) to a plektrum provides a further point of analoguey between weaving and poetic performance. The two objects not only resemble one another in Attic vase paintings, but their method of use and capacity for producing sound were similar. So Aristophanes can speak of the “practicing of the singer-shuttle” (κερκίδος ὀντόθε μελέτας, Ra. 1316), even as Euripides mentions the “shuttle’s songs” (κερκίδος ὑμνοίς, Hec. 363). Indeed, use of the related verb κρέσκευν in a “derived musical sense” possibly appears as early as Sappho, where, in the poorly preserved fr. 99 L-P, we can discern the phrase χορδασι...κρεκην in line 6. That the verb simultaneously maintained clear associations with weaving for Sappho can clearly be seen in the phrase κρέκην τὸν ἕστον from fr. 102 L-P. For Aristophanes, who applies the verb to the playing of a wind instrument, the αὐλός, in Av. 682, this more literal sense can hardly have held much import. Hellenistic epigram attests to the verb’s increasing metaphoricalization. Anyte employs it in the phrase κρέκεις δόνακη (19.2 G-P = AP 231), speaking of a statue

738 Snyder, 195.
739 Gow-Page (1965), II 36 (ad Antipater of Sidon 4.1f. [182f.]), 38 (ad idem 5.6 [195]); Snyder, 194-95. Snyder argues that in Pol. 1253 b 37, Aristotle alludes to this fact, writing, “If shuttles wove of their own accord and plektra played lyres all by themselves, craftsmen would not need assistants and masters would not need slave.” See also, Dover (1993), 355, ad Ar Ra. 1315-16.
740 Snyder, 194.
741 See Snyder, 195.
742 Cf. Gow-Page (1965) II 38, ad Antipater of Sidon 5.6 [195]. It is interesting to note that, in this passage, the poet complains of being unable to concentrate on weaving as a result of her amorous preoccupations. Turning to song while distracted from one’s proper task makes the passage run rather parallel to the trope, so prevalent in Theocritus, of shepherds neglecting their flocks in order to sing, often of lost or impossible love.
743 Both Snyder (194 n. 7) and Gow-Page (1965: II 101, ad Anyte 29.1 [739]) note that the verb is properly used of stringed instruments only.
of Pan playing his flute.\textsuperscript{744} Theocritus seems to equivocate in his use of the word in the fifth epigram (πακτίδ’ ἀειράμενος / ἀρξεύμιαί τι κρέσειν, 5.2-3 (= G-P 21)), since πηκτίς can refer both to a Lydian stringed instrument rumored to have been brought to Greece by Sappho and to Pan’s pipes.\textsuperscript{745} Meleager produces an echo in 29 G-P (= AP 5.139): πηκτίδι μέλπεις / Ζηνοφίλα, να Ἰλαν’, ἀδῶ κρέσεις τι μέλος (2).

Perhaps the most important ancient precedent for \textit{Id}. 28’s combination of weaving-imagery and poetry comes from Bacchylides (\textit{Ode} 5.9-14):\textsuperscript{746}

ei σὺν Χαρίτεσσι βαθυζώνοις ύφανας
ύμνον ἀπὸ ζαθέας
νάσου ξένος υμετέραν
πέμπεν ἐς κλεινὸν πόλιν
χρυσάμπυκος Ὑφρανίας κλει-
-νὸς θεράπων.

Celebrating the fifth-century ruler of Syracuse homonymous with \textit{Idyll} 16’s purported laudandus,\textsuperscript{747} Bacchylides here envisions his encomium as a woven garment (ὑφάνας / ὕμνον) sent by him as guest-friend (ξένος) from his home on the island of Ceos (ἀπὸ... / νάσου.../ πέμπεν) to Hiero’s celebrated city (ἐς κλεινὸν πόλιν). What is more, the passage begins with an invocation of the \textit{Charites} and ends with the author’s self-revelation qua poet in the high-flown phrase “servant of the gold-banded Urania” (χρυσάμπυκος Ὑφρανίας κλεινὸς θεράπων). In \textit{Idyll} 28, Theocritus likewise refers to himself as a guest-friend (23) traveling from his island homeland—in an ironic reversal, now on Sicily—(ἀμμετέρας...ἀπὸ χθόνος. / .../ νάσω Τρινακρίας, 16, 18) to the home

\textsuperscript{744} For the early dates of Anyte, see Gutzwiller (1998), 54 n. 22; Gow-Page (1965) II 90.

\textsuperscript{745} LSJ πηκτίς 1, 2 sv.; Gow (1952) II 536, \textit{ad} Theocritus 5.2 [3493] (cross referenced \textit{ad} Meleager 29.1f. [4146f.]) remarks: “probably only a verse-equivalent for λύρον.”

\textsuperscript{746} Cairns (1976), 301 also mentions Bacch. \textit{Epinician} 5 in connection with \textit{Idyll} 28, though he adduces it incorrectly as \textit{Epinician} 4 and connects it with \textit{Idyll} 28 for reasons unrelated to mine here.
of a guest-friend (6) in the “famed city of Neleus” (πόλιν ἐς Νήλεος ὀγλαύν, 3). He
brings with him a physical gift connected to weaving, the distaff, as well as a poem, the
Idyll itself, which celebrates the recipient of the gift. Moreover, his friend and fellow
poet Nicias is expressly identified in connection with the Charites (7). It is clearly
impossible to prove Theocritus definitely had Bacchylides in mind while writing Idyll 28,
and yet the similarities are striking.748 Cairns certainly believed Ode 5 may have played
some role in the literary background of Idyll 28, as he discusses it briefly in his article on
Idyll 28.749 But whereas Cairns analyzes Theocritus’ poem as purely an interesting
example of a developed anathematikon, I think we have to do here with something rather
more complex.

The first clue as to the poem’s possible complications lies in the disconnect
between its alleged intent and the specific manner in which Hellenistic poets developed
the metaphorical connection of poetry to weaving. Cairns is undoubtedly right in noting
that Idyll 28 presents an elaborated form of the traditionally shorter verse type of
anathematikon,750 yet unlike most of the anathematika which Cairns adduces that are
addressed to human beings, the gift-situation of Idyll 28 appears strange.751 Crinagoras 3
G-P (= AP 6.227) features the poet presenting a fancy pen to Proclus as a birthday gift for
his “lately acquired good-learning” (ἀρτισκεῖ...ἐυμαθή, line 6 [1786]). In 5 G-P (= AP
6.261), the same author presents his friend with a bronze oil-flask from India on the
occasion of the birthday of the friend’s son. In 6 G-P (= AP 6.345), Crinagoras is again

747 Cairns (1976), 303.
748 Platt (64) apparently finds it possible that Theocritus consciously looked to Bacchylides 20 (= dith. 6) in
writing the opening of Idyll 18. A reference to Bacchylides may also be implied in lines 46-7 and, perhaps,
50 of Id. 28 (Aho, 12, 183-4).
749 Cairns (1976), 301-04.
presenting a birthday present, consisting this time of roses that bloomed mid-winter given to a woman soon to be married. Quite similar is Antiphilus 2 G-P (= AP 252), where the poet is able to offer a pretty lady a fresh, unblemished quince even though it is wintertime. Finally, a series of epigrams by Antipater of Thessalonica (43-5 G-P = AP 6.241, 541, 249) present a helmet, a pair of drinking cups, and a candle at Saturnalia to Lucius Calpurnius Piso Frugi, who waged successful military campaigns in Macedonia and Thrace before dying in AD 32. All of these poems are relatively late works, and none of them raises much suspicion about the propriety of gift in relation to recipient: the tokens seem appropriate. The only possible exception is Crinagoras 3 G-P, where one might find a fine-quality, silver pen too extravagant a gift for a boy who has only recently learned to write. We could, however, simply conclude with Gow-Page that the child in question belonged to high society. Possibly a similar exception appears in Crinagoras 4 G-P (= AP 6.229), where the poet presents Lucius with an elaborately carved toothpick dyed purple, similar in character, perhaps, to the silver toothpick mentioned in Petronius 33 as belonging to the nouveau riche freedman Trimalchio. One might imagine that a recipient of such a gift who exhibits true taste and class would not be so gauche as to actually put it to its purported use, and the poem may hint at as much in the phrase οἷα δὲ δαντός / δορον, which suggests that the gift is merely a reminder to Lucius of a

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750 Cairns (1976), 292-95, 297-300. I hesitate to follow Cairns in applying to anathematika the term “genre.”
751 Cairns (1976), 305 n. 2 provides the list of these poems.
754 So G-P (1968) II 214, ad 2 [1782] understand the reference in εὐμοθίη.
755 G-P (1968) II, 214, ad 1 [1781].
pleasant meal spent in the poet’s company. By comparison to these poems, the contrast between Theocritus’ gift and Theugenis seems incongruous.

On the surface of things, Theocritus appears clearly to intend that the recipient of his distaff put it to good use: from the discussion in lines 10-11 of what products Theugenis will weave with it, to the emphasis in lines 14-15 upon Theugenis’ industry, to the final Homeric echo in line 22, where the poet imagines her renown among the fellow women of Miletus for the wonderful distaff. As a result, we are evidently forced to conclude, with Hopkinson, that, at the heart of the *Idyll’s* occasion, lies a wealthy matron who actually herself performs the basic domestic chore of weaving:

...[Theugenis’] husband is presumably a man of considerable means; but this makes no difference to the role of his wife. In Greek society at all periods a woman’s sphere was the management of the household...; and wives of the wealthiest husbands were expected to direct and assist their maids in the production of clothes for the family. We should beware, therefore, of assuming that the archaic form of this poem reflects a domestic arrangement outmoded at the time it was written.

Our argument, then, would take its evidence for the contention that Theugenis, and presumably other women of similar status, practiced weaving from a straightforward reading of Theocritus’ poem. In much the same way, Rostovtzeff took lines 26-37 of *Idyll 15* as evidence that Greek women and their slaves in the Hellenistic world manufactured daily clothing for their households. The passage in question features the housewife Praxinoa upbraiding her slave Eunoa for leaving the spinning lying about where pests can burrow into the wool and make homes for themselves (26-8). The passage continues with Praxinoa’s guest, Gorgo, admiring her hostess’ dress and asking

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757 Cf. the translation given in G-P (1968) I, 201: “...a sort of souvenir from our feast.”
758 Hopkinson, 172.
759 Rostovtzeff, 1227.
how much the fabric for it cost (35). As Pomeroy notes, however, the problem with Rostovtzeff’s line of argument—and, by extension, Hopkinson’s as well—is his reliance on the text of the poem alone.\textsuperscript{760} A Hellenistic marriage contract from Cerceosiris clearly obligates the husband to provide clothing, presumably by offering the money to purchase it, for his wife (\textit{P. Tebt. I} 104),\textsuperscript{761} while the Zenon archive bears witness to something of a cottage industry of women, and even men, employed in other jobs, yet using their spare time to spin and weave wool.\textsuperscript{762} One major social advance over previous epochs that occurred during the Hellenistic period was the widespread availability of ready-made cloth and clothing for sale.\textsuperscript{763} Unlike the women of Classical Athens, Hellenistic matrons were not obliged to spend days working wool, as evidenced in the grave stela of Nico, an urban woman of Alexandria from around 250 BC. The woman is depicted in precisely the same seated posture as women working wool on stelae from Classical Athens, only her maid is handing her a lyre with which to occupy her otherwise empty hands, not a distaff.\textsuperscript{764} In fact, it appears that Hellenistic women of status did not customarily weave, and if they did not perform the tasks of weaving, how much the less could they be expected to have engaged in spinning. Even in \textit{Idyll} 15, the arch-bourgeois Praxinoa’s clothing came from store-bought fabric (lines 36-7): it was her slave, Eunoa, who did what spinning was done in the household (27). Yet it is precisely an implement of spinning which Theocritus bestows upon Nicias’ wife, implying that she will be personally involved in every stage of clothing manufacture.

\textsuperscript{760} Pomeroy, 165.
\textsuperscript{761} Pomeroy, 165.
\textsuperscript{762} Pomeroy, 168-9.
\textsuperscript{763} Pomeroy, 164-5.
\textsuperscript{764} Pomeroy, 165-7.
What is more, when invoking the metaphorical connection between weaving and poetry, Hellenistic poets tend to concentrate their attention on the very real, low status of actual weavers within Greek society. This practice stands quite at odds with the references in Pindar, Bacchylides, or even our extant Sappho. Nossis 3 G-P (= AP 6.265) constitutes something of an exception, dealing as it does with a textile offering to Hera woven by “Theophilis daughter of Cleoche together with her noble daughter,” the upper-class poet Nossis herself. Leonidas 40 G-P (= AP 6.286) may provide a second exception, insofar as it involves the dedication of an embroidered garment to the goddess Artemis. Yet the focus of this latter poem, as seen in its final “punch line” (τὴν τριπλήντον ἔριν, “the result of three people laboring in rivalry”), lies squarely on the labor and contention of the three weavers involved. Callimachus, too, writes of the dedication of woven clothing to a goddess, Hera, in a fragment from Aetia (fr. 66. 2-6 Pfeiffer), concentrating in the extant text on part of a ritual undertaken by girls chosen for the honor. The wider point both Callimachus and Leonidas appear to be making, albeit somewhat obliquely, is that it was an honor bestowed upon commoners to be chosen to weave garments for divine dedications.

These same commoners are the ones who turn up numerous times in the sixth book of the Greek Anthology, in poems that feature dedications of woven objects and

765 González Galván, 113-16.
768 οὔτε μὲν Ἡρας / ἀγρόν ὑφαινόμεναι τῇς μέμηλε πάτος / στήναι [πά]ρ κανόνεσσι πάρος θέμις ἢ τεὸν ὕδωρ / κάκις κεφάλις ἰρόν πέτρον ἐφεζομένας / χένασθαι. See González Galván, 114. Callimachus is likely dealing here with the role of the fountain Amymone in the cult of Hera at Argos.
769 Cf. González Galván, 114-5: “...al honor que supone confeccionar la ropa de una diosa.”
weaving implements by women of lower social rank, particularly in their old age.\(^{770}\) In the majority of these instances, the writers concentrate on weaving as a task involving much hard labor that nonetheless provides only a very meager living.\(^{771}\) These poems emphasize the contrast between the weavers’ crushing poverty and concomitant low station in life and their careful, even beautiful, craftsmanship. In Leonidas’ epitaph for Platthis (72 G-P = AP 7.726), for instance, the structurally-similar second lines of the first and last couplets read: ή γηρύς πενίην Πλατθίς ομονομένη / ... / ή καλά καὶ καλῶς Πλατθίς υφηναμένη, 2, 10). Juxtaposed to the reference to Platthis’ singing “with the Charites” in line 6 is that in lines 7 and 8 to her “wrinkled on wrinkled knee, laboriously twisting with her hand lovely thread for the loom.”\(^{772}\) Implicit is the poet’s wonder at the humble circumstances that produced such beauty. The three sisters of epigram 41 G-P (= AP 6.288) are likewise clearly industrious (αἱ φιλαεργόταται, 2), yet nevertheless poor (πενιχροί, 7), offering what little they have in hopes of procuring from the goddess the blessings of increased food-stores.\(^{773}\) Poem 22 G-P (= AP 6.247) by Philip of Thessalonica features a similar theme.\(^{774}\) Even the sisters of Leonidas’ epigram 42 G-P (= AP 6.289) are said to be dedicating their weaving tackle to Athena upon retirement from the “toils and labor” (παωσάμενοι κομάτων, 8) of their arduous profession. In


\(^{771}\) Gutzwiller (1998), 93; González Galván, 114; Tarán, 113.

\(^{772}\) κεῖνον Ἀθηναίης σὺν Χάρισιν δόλιον, ἡ ῥυκὴ ῥυκοῦ περὶ γούνατος ἄκριν ἵστῳ χειρὶ στραγγύλουσα ἵμερόσεσα κρόκην (5-7).

\(^{773}\) ἐξ ὀλίγων ὀλίγαν μοῦραν ἀπαρχόμεθα. τὸν χέρας οἰέν, Ἀθάνα, ἐπιπλῆσαιο μὲν ἵσως θεῖς δ’ εὐστπύως ἐξ ὀλιγηστιών (8-10).

\(^{774}\) σοι, φιλέριθε κόρη Παλλαντιάς, ἢ βαθύγηρος Λίσιόνη πενίς δόρων ἀνεκρέμασεν (7-8).
likening Medea’s internal struggle in *Argonautica* 3 to the physical difficulties of a life spent weaving, Apollonius invokes an even more negative view of weaving:

\[
\omega\varsigma\ \delta\epsilon\ \gamma\nu\nu\eta\ \mu\alpha\lambda\epsilon\rho\omicron\\varphi\ \pi\epsilon\iota \kappa\acute{\alpha}\sigma\phi\epsilon\alpha\chi\varepsilon\upsilon\alpha\tau\omicron\ \delta\alpha\lambda\omega\ \chi\epsilon\rnu\nu\pi\tau\iota\varsigma,\ \tilde{\eta}\iota\pi\epsilon\rho\sigma\rho\iota\nu\iota\nu\ \tau\alpha\lambda\alpha\sigma\sigma\acute{\iota}a\ \epsilon\rho\gamma\alpha\ \mu\acute{e}m\acute{e}l\acute{e}v,
\]
\[
\omega\varsigma\ \kappa\epsilon\nu\ \iota\pi\omega\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\iota\nu\ \nu\acute{o}k\tau\omicron\ \sigma\acute{e}l\acute{a}c\varepsilon\ \epsilon\nu\tau\acute{u}\nu\iota\iota\omicron,\ \\
\alpha\gamma\chi\iota\ \mu\acute{a}l\acute{\iota}\ \epsilon\varrho\omicron\omicron\epsilon\nu\eta\cdot\ (291-94).^{775}
\]

For Antipater of Sidon, too, women weavers are synonymous with industry, whence his echo in poem 4 G-P (= AP 6.160) of the adjective φιλοεργός, recalling Leonidas’ use of it in 41 G-P (= AP 6.288), lines 7 and 2 respectively.\(^{776}\) In poem 5 G-P (= AP 6.174), however, he develops a new element in Hellenistic literary depictions of weavers. The poem’s final couplet turns from the notion of female weavers’ complaint of poverty to that of their proud acceptance of the modest-but-honorable lifestyle working with their hands provides:\(^{777}\)

\[
\zeta\omega\epsilon\iota\nu\ \gamma\acute{a}r\ \delta\iota\chi\alpha\ \pi\alpha\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \omicron\nu\epsilon\iota\acute{\iota}d\acute{e}o\varsigma\ \epsilon'i\ell\epsilon\theta\acute{\iota}\ \epsilon\acute{k}\acute{o}\acute{a}t\acute{a},
\]
\[
\xi\epsilon\iota\nu\epsilon,\ \tau\omicron\ \acute{e}k\chi\epsilon\iomicron\omicron\omicron\ \acute{a}r\nu\nu\mu\acute{e}n\acute{a} \beta\acute{i}o\tau\omicron\ (7-8).
\]

The twin themes of the respectability of the weaver’s trade and the honorability of her poverty find humorous expression in another of Antipater’s epigrams, 43 G-P (= AP 6.47), which deals with a weaver who, out of frustration with her lot in life, turns instead to prostitution. As the poem makes clear, the source of the weaver’s complaint is poverty: θέτο Βιττώ / ἄνθεμα, λιμηρῆς ἀρμενον ἑργασίης (1-2). Much of the humor in the work derives from pitting Athena, patron goddess of weaving, against Aphrodite, as in the poem’s final couplet: ἀρνεύμα τὰ σὰ δῶρα, τὰ δ’ ἔμπαλι Κύπριδος ἑργων /

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775 See González Galván, 115.
776 For Leonidas’ influence on Antipater here, see G-P (1965) II 37, *ad* 41.7 [188]; González Galván 118.
777 G-P (1965) II 38, *ad* 5.7f. [196 f.]; Tarán, 115, n. 2; González Galván, 118.
Anonymous 38 G-P (= AP 6.48) features the same reference to Bitto’s poverty (λιμηρῆς ἀρμενον ἑργασίης, 2) and toil (μόχθους καὶ στυγερᾶς φροντίδας ἰστοπόνων, 4), as well as a similar dichotomy between Athena and Aphrodite (εἶπε δ’ Ἀθηναίη, τῶν Κύπριδος ἀψωμαι ἑργῶν, 5). A longer form of this motif appears in a poem by the shadowy figure Nicarchus (2 G-P = AP 6.285), about whom next to nothing is known, though Gow-Page and Tarán agree in designating him as Hellenistic. The opposition between Athena and Aphrodite is established in the work’s initial couplets: Ἡ πρὶν Ἀθηναίη... / ...

Nicaretē... / Κύπριδι (1-3). Nicarete then describes the weaving implements she devotes as “the starving works of wretched women,” (κακῶν λιμηρᾶ γυναικῶν / ἑργα, 5-6), and, in a reversal of Antipater 5.7-8 where the women “chose” the honorable poverty of weaving as “a life free from all reproach,” she chooses “garlands and the lyre and to spend a pleasant life along with revels” (7-8) as a hetaera and devotee of Aphrodite. The crux of these poems is the conflict between noble poverty and the easy life, as emblematized by the goddesses Athena and Aphrodite respectively. Anonymous 39 G-P (= AP 6.283) confirms this reading by presenting an inverse case: a woman, presumably a former prostitute, once bragged of her wealthy lovers but has now been reduced to the poverty of weaving, such that Athena can be said to have declared victory over Aphrodite: μίσθων νῦν σπαθίοις πενιχροῖς πηνύσματα κρούει. / ὄψε γ’ Ἀθηναίη

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779 Gow-Page (1965) II 425-6; Tarán, 116. Tarán argues that this epigram provided the ultimate model for all five surviving weaver-to-hetaera poems, which, in addition to those already discussed, include Anonymous 39 G-P (= AP 6.283) and Anonymous 40 G-P (= AP 6.284).
Finally, Anonymous 40 G-P (= AP 6.284) presents in extreme abbreviated form the *hetaera* Philaenion who need not herself practice weaving or spinning, since Cypris—that is, her profession as prostitute—procures garments for her: κόλπους τὴν φαϊῆν εἰργάσατο χλανίδα. / αὐτὴ Κύπρις ἔριθος, ἐὑκλωστὸν δὲ γυναικῶν / νήμα καὶ ἡλακάτην ἀργὸς ἔχοι τάλαρος (2-4). The double-entendre in εἰργάσατο makes plain that Philaenion’s activity of purchasing a garment with the proceeds from sleeping with her clients is the moneyed analogue of a weaver’s actually spinning and then weaving a garment. With sufficient income, a Hellenistic woman is freed to turn away from spinning and weaving and, instead, purchase her clothing or, at the very least, purchase the fine fabric from which to sew it herself.

Returning to *Idyll* 28, then, we find ourselves mired in initial *aporia* on two counts: first, as to why Theocritus would choose to give Theugenis a humble gift she is likely never to use; and second, as to why the poet chooses to further identify the city of Theugenis’ and Nicias’ residence with the additional information contained in line 4 as to the existence there of a shrine to Aphrodite. Of that putative shrine, Hopkinson writes: “...it is not clear why Theocritus has chosen to mention it here,” and Gow concludes decisively: “...the reference to a temple of Aphrodite at Miletus has no seeming relevance here, and accords somewhat ill with the mention of Athena.... In so personal a poem however it may well have some significance now beyond conjecture.” Further complicating matters is the curious prepositional phrase κολάμω χλῶρον ὑπ’

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780 Gow-Page (1965) II 580, *ad loc.*; Tarán, 129.
781 Hopkinson, 174 *ad loc.*
782 Gow (1952) II 498 *ad loc.*
\(\dot{\alpha}p\dot{\alpha}\lambda\omega\) (line 4), which is both largely unparalleled in its case usage\(^{783}\) and semantically curious in applying to the temple itself an attribute more proper to the temple precincts, being perhaps situated in a marshy area thick with green reeds.\(^{784}\) The solution I propose here involves connecting the dots, so to speak.

We have seen from the weaver-turned-prostitute epigrams that the juxtaposition of Athena to Aphrodite may serve to embody a debate between the lifestyles of honorable poverty and easy wealth. Checking this schema against the facts of *Idyll* 28 shows that it fits rather well, assuming Theocritus’ stance of poverty from *Idyll* 16 holds true for 28 as well. The first two lines of the poem associate Athena with the distaff, as its ultimate, mythological source, expressed in genitive case. Line three then personifies the object somewhat, making it the fellow traveler (\(\dot{\alpha}m\mu\mu\nu\dot{\mu}m\dot{\alpha}\rho\tau\eta\)) of the poor poet, Theocritus. In this way, Athena becomes the source of distaff’s existence and utility; Theocritus, the source of its conveyance to Theugenis. By contrast, line 4 associates Aphrodite, via her shrine, with the city of Nicias and Theugenis, Miletus, and, by extension, with Nicias and his wife themselves. The security of the connection between Theocritus, the distaff, and Athena, for one, and Nicias, Theugenis, and Aphrodite, for another, is strengthened in lines 8-9, where the poet again declares himself and the distaff to be traveling companions (καὶ σὲ... / ...\(\dot{\alpha}p\dot{\alpha}\sigma\sigma\omicron\omicron\epsilon\nu\)). Here, the word δόρον reappears with adnominal genitive, only this time that genitive is Νικιά\(\alpha\zeta\), “belonging to Nicias,” an identification which seemingly contradicts the phrase Πλαύκα\(\zeta\)...δόρον Ἄθάνα\(\zeta\) from line 1. However, this identification is quickly undercut by the following corrective in the form of the prepositional phrase εἰς ὁ\(\lambda\dot{\omicron}\chi\omega\dot{\chi}ρ\rho\alpha\zeta\). By exchanging genitive modifiers with the

\(^{783}\) Gow (1952) II 497 ad loc.
same noun, Theocritus reenacts on the page the actual gift-giving situation that underlies his poem. The distaff that is, in origin, the gift of Athena to all women becomes via the intermediary of Theocritus himself the property of Nicias, or rather of his wife. The two tripartite alliances the poet has established receive still greater strength from the third occurrence in the poem of the idea that Theocritus and the distaff are traveling companions, in the context surrounding line 16 (ἐβολλόμαν / ὁπασσαί σε δόμοις).

In lines 15-16, the poet speaks as if reassuring the distaff, saying he would not be willing to accompany it to the home of a “slothful” or “indolent” woman (οὐ γὰρ... ἀχίρας οὐδ’...ἀέργῳ). This reassurance comes immediately following his declaration in line 14 that Theugenis is “diligent in completing her work,” ἀνυσίεργος. Both ἀχίρας and ἀνυσίεργος are exceedingly rare words in extant Greek literature, a fact which renders both terms conspicuous in context. That his declaration in line 14 hangs off the adynaton in 12-13 of shearing sheep twice in the same year to provide enough raw wool for Theugenis’ spinning, renders ἀνυσίεργος all the more conspicuous. Why should the poet so over-determine his discussion of industry, as if to hint at the opposite meaning precisely by overemphasizing its converse? As Hopkinson notes, Theocritus’ concern to some extent looks back to line 8, where he notes the extreme effort and toil required to fashion the distaff to begin with (σὲ τὰν ἐλέφαντος πολυμόχθῳ γεγενημέναν). The passage also looks forward to the participial phrase that concludes line 16 (ἀμμετέρας

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784 Gow (1952) II 497 ad loc.; Hopkinson, 174 ad loc.
785 See Gow (1952) II 501 ad loc.; Hopkinson, 175 ad loc.
786 Hopkinson, 175, ad 14.
 Españay  όπος  χθόνος), as if with causal force. As the central choriamb, set off to either side by caesurae, ὑμετέρας bears the clear emphasis of the line, an emphasis it then casts forward to χθόνος on which it is grammatically dependent. Theocritus has made sure not to send his distaff to the home of one apt to waste its elaborate craftsmanship on desuetude because it comes from his homeland.

In the two lines that follow, he takes the time to explain to the distaff its roots in Sicily, as one might explain to a child her family and geographic history. In his lesson, the poet sounds an essentializing, even jingoistic note, referring to Corinth and Sicily by the most ancient designations possible: Ephyra and Trinacria, the latter meaning literally “three promontoried” and being suggestive of majestic height and formidable fortification. The Corinthian foundation, Syracuse, becomes, in the almost unparalleled epithet νάσος Τρινακρίας μύελον, “the marrow of the Trinacrian isle.” Concluding with the epic-sounding phrase “city of men of renown” (ἄνδρων δοκίμων πόλιν, 18), Theocritus proceeds naturally to his mention in line 21 that the distaff will colonize Miletus. Having earlier spoken explicitly of Neleus (line 3), the legendary founder of Miletus, he now invokes Archias of Corinth (lines 17-18) who colonized Syracuse. He expressly commands his gift, the distaff—and by extension the poem which accompanies it and which it, in turn, metonymically betokens—to “dwell in Miletus” (οἰκήσεις κατὰ Μίλλατον), using with tmesis a verb whose precise meaning is “to settle in, colonize.” The message seems clear: Theocritus is bidding his poetry to set up shop in Nicias’ hometown, implying that it would be bringing something theretofore lacking in that

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787 On causal participles and context, see Smyth §§ 2064, 2069.
788 Gow (1952) II 502 ad loc.; Hopkinson, 175 ad loc.
environment. Apart from their respective points of origin, though, what else could
distinguish Theocritus and Nicias but their views on poetry?

Given the polar roles of Athena and Aphrodite in the poem, it is ironic that Cairns
should remark that the invocation of Athena in line 1 might possibly hint at an occasion
for the poem involving a well-known cult of that goddess at Miletus referred to in
Herodotus 1.19, a cult in which, he speculates, Theogenis may have played the role of
priestess.790 Taken together with the fact that Idyll 28 employs the language of
colonization in referring to Miletus and Theocritus’ own native Syracuse, the poet’s
association of Miletus with Aphrodite and himself with Athena begins to look doubly
suspicious. Why would Theocritus hope, in line 21,791 that his distaff, gift of Athena,
would settle in Miletus as if to colonize it, when Miletus already enjoyed strong
associations with Athena? The second part of the equation established in the poem’s first
four lines perhaps offers something of an answer.

If we examine more carefully the introduction to Idyll 28, we notice that the
opposition established between Theocritus, Syracuse, the distaff, and Athena, on the one
hand, and Nicias/Theogenis, Miletus, the reedy temple precinct, and Aphrodite, on the
other, places the word ἀλακάτα in line 1 in direct relation to καλάμω in line 4. This
connection would be rather insignificant, but for a particular convergence of ancient
terminology and semantics precisely where the terms ἡλακάτη, κάλαμος, and a third
word, δόναξ, intersect. Hesychius explicitly links all three in glossing κάλαμος as

789 LSJ s.v. κατοικέω, κατοικίζω; Hopkinson, 172.
790 Cairns, 300. To be sure, there may also have existed at Miletus a cult of Aphrodite; Posidippus (AP
12.131) mentions the city together with Cyprus and Cythera as being connected with the goddess (Gow
791 Note the aorist subjunctive form οἰκήσης.
In Aeschylus, Fr. 8, we find the similar usage of the compound adjective πολυλάκατα as an attribute of ποταμών, meaning “very reedy rivers.” Ηλιακάτη by itself may also signify a reed. The Homeric Hymn to Hermes (47) fleshes out the literal connection between κάλαμος and δόναξ with the phrase δόνακας καλάμων, suggesting something like “reed stalks,” though both terms may be used interchangeably to denote the limed reeds or poles used by fowlers in antiquity to catch birds and cicadas. Both words likewise serve to refer to fishing poles. Most interesting of all, however, both δόναξ and κάλαμος may also mean “reed pipe” or the bridge of a lyre. Κάλαμος enjoys a further connection to poetry and song-craft insofar as it also denotes a reed pen, such as occurs in a list of scribal implements in Phanias’ epigram 3 G-P (=AP 6.295). Δόναξ bears this same meaning in a strikingly similar context in an epigram of Philip (11 G-P = AP 6.62) not far removed in time from Phanias. From the midst of this tangle of converging meaning, we can wrest a general observation. The impetus behind the vast overlap in connotation and denotation between the terms κάλαμος and δόναξ likely lies, as in the case of

792 Gow (1952) II 496 ad loc.
793 LSJ II 1. sv.
795 Κάλαμος first in Aristotle PA 693a23; in the Hellenistic period, in Dioscorides 8 G-P (=AP 12.42) and “Theocritus” 21.43. Some attribute this latter work to Leonidas, though Gow argues against it (1952 II 369-70). Δόναξ in Leonidas 52 G-P (=AP 6.4) with many imitators (see Gow-Page (1965) II 360); later in Apollonides 21 G-P (=AP 7.702).
796 The former, at Anyte 19 G-P (=AP 231), quoted above, and Alcaeus 20 G-P (=AP I 226); the latter at Pindar O. 10(11).84 and N. 5.38 and Euripides El. 702 and IT. 1126.
797 Such is the most likely meaning of δόνακας καλάμων in the Hymn to Hermes (Shelmerdine, 97 ad loc.) and appears also in Aristophanes Ra. 232.
798 LSJ II 5. sv.
799 On the temporal relationship between the two poems, see Gow-Page (1965) II 467. For Phanias as imitator of, hence later than, Leonidas, see ibid., p. 464.
shuttle/plectrum and loom/lyre, in the physical similarity of the various objects to the
original, literal referents of the words: reed or stalk. As Hesychius’ gloss of ἢλακάτη
and Aeschylus’ use of the adjective πολυηλάκατος in Fr. 8 make clear, the same, basic
physical similarity obtains for distaffs as well. Indeed, in its most humble form, a distaff
need have been little more than a simple reed. One could reason that this basic
association, coupled with the strong interest of the time in the humble, intimate, and
particular, helps to account for the evident fascination among Hellenistic poets,
epigrammatists in particular, with weavers, fowlers, and fishermen. Not only do
practitioners of each of these lowly professions wield objects physically and semantically
similar to the reed pen, but each, in his own way, reenacts through patience, diligence,
and dedication to craft the struggle of the poet who has assumed for himself the mantle of
humility and poverty. As a result, we ought to be able to find the word ἢλακάτη in
contexts where there is at least the secondary connotation of writing—that is, reed pens—as well. Idyll 28 provides just such a context.

First, not only does the poem’s introduction precisely balance ἢλακάτη against
κάλαμος, but, as noted previously, Theocritus uses forms involving the verbal root φίλ to
establish a direct, unambiguous connection between himself as poet and the distaff
conceived of through Theugenis’ future interactions with it. The physical distaff is
“wool-loving” (φιλέριθ’, 1) and destined as a gift for Theugenis, who “loves as many
things as sensible people love” (φιλέει δ’ ὀσο οὐαφρονες, 14), and who will think of

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800 A probative test of this notion, at least in relation to the category of fowler, is the fact that AP 9.373
refers to that activity as the “wanton sport of shepherds” (see Borthwick, 110), connecting it directly to a
widely acknowledged analogue of the Greek poet prior to and during the Hellenistic period. For the history
of the poet-as-shepherd concept, see Gutzwiller (1991), 23-79. On fishermen and poverty, see Gutzwiller
(1998), 94 and n. 116; on the industry and craft of fishermen, ibid., 95-6.
her “poet-loving friend” (τὸ φίλοιδο…ξένο, 23) whenever she gazes upon his humble gift. Through a slight equivocation between the poem, The Distaff, and the physical distaff which the poem treats, Theocritus humorously converts his work into a kind of parsing of the very idea of the similarity between distaffs and pens. Both distaffs, each in its own way, will remind Theugenis of Theocritus the poet.

Next, if the mention in line 4 of the temple to Aphrodite seems puzzling and out of place, Theocritus’ decision to further describe that temple as “green” must only deepen our confusion. Taken at face value, apparently the only noteworthy feature of the temple of Aphrodite so important to “Neileus’ City” that it requires an entire line of poetry to invoke as a more detailed descriptor of Miletus are its green and reedy precincts. Yet if we agree with Gow that Theocritus’ vocabulary is “rich and full of associations,” we cannot simply take this passage at face value. The adjective “green,” χλωρός, has clear and independent, if later, associations with the poet Nicias. In the introduction to his Garland, Meleager famously refers to the poet and his work as “green mint,” χλοερόν τε σίσυμβρον (1 G-P = AP 4.1, 19). While many, like Gow, have found “little specific appropriateness to the author” in the phrase, the possibility exists that the association of at least the color dates from earlier tradition. The fact that, in Idyll 28, what makes the Milesian temple to Aphrodite green in the first place are the reeds (καλάμω…ὑπ’ ἀπάλω) might lend a certain credence to this idea, linking the principal tool of a poet, κάλαμος, to the green precincts of the temple that is especially evocative.

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801 Gow (1952) II 369.
802 Gow-Page (1965) II 428.
Theocritus invokes Miletus, then, not in terms of some anomalous temple to Aphrodite per se, but in relation to the well-to-do poet for whose wife he has ostensibly written the poem in the first place. Miletus is the city of Aphrodite—that is, the wealthy couple—as well as the “green” pen of Nicias. He underscores this double association in line 7 by reusing the word “sacred/sanctuary” in a more Atticized form (Χαρίτων ἴμεροφόνων ἱερον φύτον) and applying it as a descriptor to Nicias himself. Nicias’ further designation as a “shoot” or “growth” immediately recalls the flourishing reeds of Aphrodite’s precinct as well. As in his introduction to Idyll 11, Theocritus utilizes the opening lines of poem 28 to encode a neat set of oppositions between himself and Nicias, turning simultaneously on socioeconomic and aesthetic principles. Notice that if the physical distaff iconically and semantically recalls a reed pen, it is only once Theugenis receives the gift and poem accompanying it that she can be said to be εὐαλάκατος, despite the fact that her husband, a poet, is a sacred shoot of the Graces and the pair dwell in a city known for Nicias’ flourishing, “green” poetry.

Through his choice of the adjective ἀπαλάς to describe the reeds, Theocritus activates a long series of poetic reminiscences having to do with erôs and its disastrous effects. As discussed in the previous chapter, this same descriptor is applied to the heart and mind of Hylas at Idyll 13.48 just as he is being overcome by the Nymphs in a vivid and violent personification of the destructive force of erôs. Plato uses the adjective of erôs itself in Symposium (195d), a passage that bears a striking connection to Idyll 28.4. In 195b-d, Agathon contradicts the traditional Greek myths and declares that

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803 It should also be noted that the term χλωρός also occurs repeatedly in Theocritus’ evocations of the special kind of loci amoeni where his human characters meet and interact with the world of the bucolic. So the term also appears in Id. 13.41 and 7.9 where, in both cases, it marks the entry of the human character (Hylas and Simichidas, respectively) into the quasi-mythic/divine realm of pastoral analoguey.

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Eros is the youngest of all the gods, attributing the trait of “tenderness” (ἀπαλότης) to the youthful deity. In his disquisition on Eros’ daintiness, Agathon humorously inverts an image from Iliad 19.92-3, where a rueful Agamemnon describes Ate, embodiment of personal ruin, treading lightly on the heads of men with her “tender feet” (ἀπαλοὶ πόδες, 92) in stalking them. So light is her tread, in fact, that her victims never feel her baleful approach. Agathon applies the Homeric image a fortiori to Eros, claiming the god is so delicate, he cannot even tread upon so hard a body-part as the human head, but rather “walks and dwells in the softest parts” of men and gods: “in their dispositions and hearts” (οὐ γὰρ ἐπὶ γῆς βαίνει οὐδὲ ἐπὶ κρανίων, ἀ ἐστιν οὐ πάνυ μαλακά, ἀλλὰ ἐν τοῖς μαλακωτάτοις τῶν ὄντων καὶ βαίνει καὶ οἴκει. ἐν γὰρ ἤθεσι καὶ ψυχαῖς θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων τὴν οἴκησιν ἵδρυται, 195e2-5). Much of the humor in Agathon’s speech stems from his apparent misapprehension of the Homeric intertext; his speech is pure encomium. Yet, by juxtaposing his idiosyncratic portrait of Eros to the Homeric image of Ate, Agathon renders inevitable comparison between the two. Indeed, the Homeric context is itself not devoid of reference to erôs, since, after invoking the image of dainty-footed Ate, Agamemnon proceeds to recount how even Zeus himself was tricked once, when jealous Hera conceived to have his son by Alcmene, Heracles, subjected in servitude to Eurystheus (19.95-133). This latter passage renders Theocritus’ use of ἀπαλός in Idyll 13 all the more charged with meaning, since his poem, too, aims to depict Heracles, a (semi)divine being, as subject to the same destructive emotional forces as wrack human beings from time to time. And the frustration of Zeus’ plans for

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894 Cf. Id. 7.44, referring to Simichidas/Theocritus.
Heracles in *Iliad* 19 mirrors that of Heracles’ for Hylas in *Idyll* 13. Together, the Homeric and Platonic passages comprise a single, complex intertext necessary to unpack the poetic associations surrounding the adjective ἀπαλός in *Idyll* 13. The recurrence of this same term in *Idyll* 28, in the context of a reference to Aphrodite, reactivates these associations and provides further proof that in invoking the temple of Aphrodite at Miletus, Theocritus simultaneously invokes the literary world he and his friend Nicias inhabit. It also associates the mention of Nicias and his writing with the complex and tangled emotions provoked in erotic relationships, suggesting that the speaker who so associates the doctor and his hometown with “tender reeds” views them with the volatile character of a lover, in a fraught way.

A further evidence of tension in Theocritus’ view of Nicias in *Idyll* 28 stems, ironically, from another previously insoluble textual difficulty to which I shall propose a solution here: Theocritus’ use of the adjective ὑδάτινος in line 11. In discussing the sorts of garments Theugenis will make with the aid of her new distaff, the poet juxtaposes “manly robes,” (ἀνδρείας πέπλοις, 10) with “such flowing stuffs as women wear,” (οἵα γυναικεῖς φορέωσι’ ὑδάτινα βράκη, 11). As Gow notes, “[i]t is perhaps not a mere coincidence” that Nicias employs a formation with different extension of the same root in writing of a woman’s veil in epigram 3 G-P (=AP 6.270): κρήδεμνα καὶ ὑδατόεσσα καλύπτρα (line 1). The usage recurs in poetry in Callimachus (fr. 547), where it refers to a web of thread (ὑδάτινον καίρωμα) and Antipater of Sidon 61 G-P (=AP 9.567), where it describes a woman’s rippling arms (ὑδατίνους φορέουσα βραχίονας), suggesting the

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805 Recall the discourse in lines 8-9 concerning Heracles’ heroic instruction of Hylas.
806 Gow’s translation (1953: 111).
metaphorical application of the adjective in the sense of “flowing” or “fluid” enjoyed very specific, literary connections.  

Moreover, in creating the opposition πέλαοι-βράκη, Theocritus appears to use the term βράκος for the first and only time in extant Greek literature with the meaning of fine garments. As both commentators note, the word is more customary of rags or tattered garments, as at Sappho fr. 57.3. While Hesychius glosses the term as ἰμάτιον πολυτελές, it is perhaps not surprising that he also provides the gloss κάλαμος. This latter meaning finds support in Theocritus’ application of the adjective ύδατινος: the “flowing/rippling garments” are simultaneously “watery reeds,” as if to recall the tender, green reeds of the marshy precincts of Aphrodite’s temple in line 4. And notice how the tension between the more common, negative meaning of βράκος as lowly garment and Theocritus’ apparent redemption of it in line 11 accords well with the Athena-Aphrodite opposition discussed previously. It is instructive to note that in the aforementioned fragment of Sappho, whose meter and dialect Theocritus mimics in Idyll 28, the βράκεα belong to a rustic bumpkin (ἀγροϊώτις, 1), who enchants the mind of someone, presumably a would-be lover of the speaker (Θέλῃ νόον, 1) and who is apparently so shameless she does not even know to pull the hem of her “rags” down so as to cover her ankles (οὐκ ἐπισταμένα τὰ βράκε· ἐλκην ἐπί τῶν σφύρων, 3). The first,

807 Gow (1952) II 501 ad loc.
808 It should be noted, however, that Gow (1952: II 501 ad Theocritus 28.10f.) additionally adduces P. Oxy. 265.3, a dowry note from the first century AD, in which ύδατινη refers to a robe of some sort: the passage may indicate a currency of expression beyond strictly literary contexts. At any rate, compared to the other evidence, this passage is very late and may simply betoken the common debasement through cliché of once high-flown literary metaphor, as is not unknown in our own language from time to time.
809 Gow (1952: II 501 ad loc.): “...T. is alone in using it of fine stuffs....”; Hopkinson, 174 ad loc.: “Here (uniquely?) of fine clothing....”
810 cf. LSJ βράκος II s.v.
direct invocation of Theugenis’ name in *Idyll* 28 occurs two lines after the discussion of βράκη, in 13, where the poet applies to her a standard epic epithet of feminine beauty, “well-ankled” (ἐνυσφόρω), in a relatively pastoral context, speaking of “the mothers of the lambs [being] shorn of their soft fleeces in the pastures” (δίς γὰρ μάτερες ἀρνῶν μαλάκοις ἐν βοτάνας πόκοις/πέξαιντ’ αὐτοτέτει, 12-3). The heroic epithet and bucolic setting call up yet again the Athena-Aphrodite dichotomy, especially when read in the light of the Sapphic intertext. There is perhaps a tension between Sappho’s rustic in rags (βράκεω) with shamelessly exposed ankles and “well-ankled” Theugenis weaving fine women’s garments (βράκη). Even the non-Lesbian plural formation makes the word appear rather “gussied up.”

The correlated pairing πέπλοι-βράκη also seems to encode, or at least encompass, a second major opposition in *Idyll* 28: that between male and female. Whether fine garment or not, βράκος is at least secure in the Greek lexicon in its associations with women’s clothing. Πέπλος, on the other hand, only rarely refers to men’s garments, and especially denotes the embroidered robe carried in procession during the Panathenaea. That the πέπλος is not proper for a man’s garment, especially a fine man’s garment, is hinted in the poetry of Theocritus itself. In *Idyll* 7, the quintessential goatherd (αἰπόλῳ ἐξοχ’ ἐφκεῖ, 14), Lycidas, appears wearing one (ἐμφί δὲ οἱ στήθεοι γέρων ἐσφίγγετο πέπλος, 17), being additionally described in terms strikingly reminiscent of Polyphemus in *Id.* 11. Like the Cyclops who has “one hairy brow across [his] entire

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811 That is: Theocritus signals his departure from Sapphic norms by choosing to contract his plural form (βράκη) in a way Gow characterizes as “alien to the dialect of the Lesbian poets” (1952: II 501 ad loc.).
812 LSJ II 3 sv. Pace Gow (1952) II 136, ad 7.17, who notes that the word is “applicable to any garment.”
forehead” (λασία μὲν ὀφρὺς ἐπὶ παντὶ μετόπῃ, 31), who “seems to be terribly hirsute” (δοκεῖο λασιώτερος ἤμεν, 50), and who boasts of his boundless stores of cheese (τυρός δ’ οὐ λείπει μ’, 36), Lycidas wears the skin “of a shaggy, thick-haired goat” on his shoulders, “reeking of fresh rennet,” presumably from cheese-making (ἐκ μὲν γὰρ λασίου δασύτριχος εἶχε τράγωνον / κνακόν δέρμ’ ὁμοίσι νέας ταμίσιοι ποτόσδον, 15-6). Like Polyphemus who has “one overarching eye and a nose that sits broad upon [his] lip” (εἰς δ’ ὀφθαλμὸς ὑπεστὶ, πλατεία δὲ ρίς ἐπὶ χείλει, 33), Lycidas has a “smiling eye, and laughter on [his] lips” (οὕμοισι μειδίῳντι, γέλως δὲ οἱ έχετο χέιλευς, 20). Far from the fine men’s garments the bourgeois housewife of Idyll 28 is supposed to sew, the πέπλος in Idyll 7 seems essentially the same as the rustic βράκεα of Sappho fr. 57. Intriguingly, πέπλοι for men appear also in Euripides Cyclops 301, where Odysseus, in arguing with the Cyclops and Silenus, recalls a law among mortals to the effect that shipwreck victims are to be offered hospitality and πέπλοι. Here again, the context would seem to suggest that the garments are mere stopgap measures of necessity, not proper masculine attire. Yet Theocritus applies to his πέπλοι in Idyll 28 precisely the epic-sounding epithet “manly” (Ἀνδρείοις πέπλοις, 10), again as if in an over-determined effort to rehabilitate a previously baser meaning. In his apparent misuse of the terms πέπλοι-βράκη, Theocritus recalls his use in Idyll 16 of a means of encomium that is “curiously violative of encomiastic rhetoric.” So industrious a weaver as Theugenis is said to be would presumably not waste time making πέπλοι for men or βράκη for

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813 Gow (1940), 49, n. 3 argues that τάμισοσι, defined by Lidell and Scott q.v. as “rennet” is technically “curdled milk from the stomach, in which the coagulant enzyme is still active.” For simplicity’s sake in translating, I stay with “rennet” here.
women, assuming the apparently traditional definitions of these terms in earlier Greek 
literature. Indeed, one could regard both categories of garment as defined in previous 
tradition as representative of a failure of correct clothing for their respective genders, the 
product perhaps of an inexperienced or incompetent weaver.815

One could also regard as violative of encomiastic mores the mock epic tone 
which, as we have seen, runs throughout the poem. By invoking Nicias’ wife with the 
epic compound ἐνσφόρῳ and simultaneously applying to the sheep the equally epicizing 
phrase816 μάτερες ἀρνῶν (12), Theocritus undercuts his compliment before he has even 
made it. By juxtaposing the adynaton of lines 12-13 with his overemphasis of 
Theugenis’ industry in the entire section from 10 to 15, Theocritus appears to be creating 
a caricature of an anathematikon, humorous and playful in tone and content. Indeed, in 
associating women and the womanly pursuit of weaving with epic, Theocritus achieves 
something of a reversal of gender values in the work: by the poem’s end, he in effect 
makes the women of Miletus epic poets, as it is they who will dub Theugenis 
εὐαλακτος. More than likely, too, it is these same women whom Theocritus has in 
mind to speak the poem’s final epigrammatic ἐπος (24-5), following so closely as those 
lines do on line 22.817 As seen in our discussion of the literary history behind the poetry-
weaving connection, women as weavers relate not to grand, epic poetry, but to the more 
homely and intimate, Hellenistic sort.

815 We must also admit the possibility that Theocritus is here alluding to scholarly debates about the 
meaning of rare words.
816 Hopkinson, 174 ad loc.
817 Cf. Gow (1952: II 503, ad loc.): “The masculine [form ἤδων] is general.... But it is the women of 22 
who will most often see, and be most likely to comment on, the distaff.”
This last detail is particularly instructive insofar as it is not Theugenis, but her husband, who is the poet with whom Theocritus relates as fellow poet. If, as I have argued above, the phrase ὑδάτινα βράκη encodes the “hidden” meaning of “watery reeds,” recalling the phrase καλάμω χλώρον ὑπ’ ἀπάλω from line 4, itself seemingly tying in with Meleager’s characterization of Nicias’ verse as “green mint,” then Theocritus would seem to suggest that Theugenis, not Nicias, will wield the reed-like distaff in poetic craft. Indeed, we recall that so much is the point of the weaving metaphor to begin with. Going back all the way to Homer, women are depicted as singing song to accompany their weaving labors, making them de facto poets.

At the same time, *Idyll 28* employs a more traditional system of gender references whereby women appear in the work as either connected to or managed by men. To begin with, the poet invokes both Nicias and Theugenis by name twice each, though the husband comes first (7, 9), his wife trailing behind (13, 23). Moreover, the first occurrence of Nicias’ name is strongly enjambed in a way his wife’s never is. Indeed, Theugenis’ first appearance in the work is in the synecdoche Νικιάς εἰς ἀλόχω χέρρας (9), a phrase which appraises her simultaneously in relation to her domestic utility (χέρρας) and her role as sexual partner or “bedfellow” (ἀλόχω). From the first, she exists in the poem both literally and figuratively as an appendage. Of course, the former of these roles is prepared earlier, in line 2, where the gift of Athena Theocritus brings Theugenis is expressly said to be intended for women who see to their household’s prosperity (γυναιξίν νός ὀίκωφελίας οἴσιν ἐπάβολος). In addition, he states as the direct motive for this exchange not first and foremost the aid of Theugenis, but rather his desire to reactivate or otherwise solidify his relationship with his male friend Nicias.
(ὅπως ξέννον ἔμοι τέρψω, ἵππω κάντιφιληθέω, / Νικίαν, 6-7). The purpose of giving
the distaff exists as a grammatical and logical appendage to that of seeing Nicias
(καὶ σὲ τὰν ἐλέφαντος πολυμόχθῳ γεγενημένον / δόρον Νικίάς εἰς
ἀλόχῳ χέρας ὀπάσσομεν, 8-9), and it is only to Theocritus and his intended male host
that the term “guest friend” or ξένος is applied (ξέννον ἔμοι, 6; τὸ φιλαοίδῳ...ξένω, 23).

As with the section in lines 16-8, mentioned above, Theocritus’ treatment of his
relationship to the distaff in this introductory segment of the poem begins to approximate
that of a father with his daughter whom he is giving away in marriage. Given the fact
that Theocritus’ fourth-century antecedent, the Distaff of Erinna, dwelt at length on a
young maiden’s mourning the marriage of her childhood girlfriend, Baucis, this
correspondence is not entirely unexpected. Contextualized in this way, the brief
invocation of the flourishing, green precincts of Aphrodite’s temple in Miletus in line 4
might simultaneously betoken youthful, flourishing romantic love, such as a maiden
might hope for from a future husband. Theocritus reprises the theme of the distaff’s
marriage in lines 18-19, where the words ἄνδρον and ἄνερος fall either on the outer
boundary of the central choriamb—as in the case of the former—or completely within
it—as in the latter—emphasizing both and graphically reenacting on the page the
situation of men mediating the exchange of women, as through marriage. From the
city of men of renown to the house of a man skilled in medicine, the distaff will ever
remain, like the woman who wields it, within the purview of men. This situation

819 Cf. Pomeroy, 89: “In marriage contracts, women were objects to be exchanged between men.”
resembles the traditional Greek legal institution of the *kyrios* or guardian, required to manage Greek women in all legal transactions, especially marriage.\(^{820}\)

In connection with the image of the distaff as a young maiden, Theocritus revisits in *Idyll 28* the aspect of his thematic nexus having to do with travel and its dangers, especially for delicate things. We have already mentioned that Theocritus explicitly names the distaff his travel companion on three occasions throughout the poem (lines 3, 9, 16). What we have not concentrated on, however, is the way in which this discourse of travel ties in with the Theocritean fragile self and with the poet's apparently simultaneous desire to associate himself with both traditionally male and female behaviors.

With the distaff's first steps into the wider world of men in line 3, the poet echoes his call in *Idylls* 16 (107), 15 (73), and 4 (41) to “take courage” (\(\Theta \epsilon ρσει\)) and accompany him to the city of Neileus. Two lines later, the poet echoes his concern from *Idyll 13.51-2* for smooth sailing, this time making direct prayer to Zeus: \(\tau ν\iota\iota\delta\epsilon\ \gamma\\dot{\alpha}\rho\ \pi\lambda\omicron\nu\ \epsilon\upsilon\\acute{\alpha}ν\epsilon\mu\omicron\ \alpha\iota\iota\tau\acute{\iota}με\theta\alpha\ \pi\dot{\alpha}\\omicron\ \Delta\acute{i}\omicron\omicron\) (5). While the sentiments may be standard in such a poem, the real implications are clear: the ancient journey from Sicily all the way to Miletus was not free from difficulty. Additionally, as we saw in the previous chapter, in the Hellenistic period it may well have been the case that comparisons to sailors and sailing in different types of weather served as metaphors for one’s mental state.\(^{821}\) Thus, the hopes here for favorable sailing winds might function simultaneously on a figurative level, betokening the personified distaff’s hoped-for calm acceptance of her impending union. At one and the same time, it may betoken the speaker’s misgivings about the

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\(^{820}\) Pomeroy, 89-90. On the institution of *kyrios*, see Harrison, 109-11; Just, 26-7; Sealey, 25-6.  
\(^{821}\) See chapter 4, pp. 128-9 and n. 585.
acceptance of his visit, traveling, as he is, not at the behest of Nicias, his host, but his own.

Beginning in line 15, one again senses danger, though of a less physical sort, as the poet-cum-father starts to dwell on the type of home to which he is sending his daughter-distaff. Amid the strength of his nationalistic evocation of Sicily, Theocritus’ reference to Syracuse as the island’s “marrow” (μύελον, 18) conjures images of toothsome delicacy,\(^{822}\) and hence hidden treasure, soft-spot, even fragility. The word seems equally appropriate to the city and the distaff that hails from it. It is instructive that the poet should choose to ensconce such delicacy amid the fervor of these lines, for its precisely where we are weakest and most vulnerable that we defend ourselves most vigorously, even savagely. The term falls entirely within the “protected” inner-choriamb, immediately juxtaposed to the martial quality of the brief peroration ἄνδρων δοκίμων πόλιν. As we have seen, this dichotomy lies at the heart of the Theocritean fragile-assertive self. In his prologue to the Aetia, Callimachus employs the image of the “three-cornered island” (τριγλώχιν ὄλοοο νῆσος, 36) in complaining that old age weighs upon him as heavily as Sicily upon the giant Enceladus, who waged war against the gods and was punished by Zeus by being buried under the island. By invoking Sicily as “three-promontoried,” Theocritus may, at one and the same time, refer to the island in both positive and negative terms, suggesting it is both historically grand and a place of imprisonment for the rustic and backward or, perhaps even more tellingly, those who have chosen to take on the gods.

\(^{822}\) Hopkinson, 175 ad loc.
Once the poet transitions to the distaff’s future life and home, he similarly juxtaposes the delicate image of marrow to that of the world of men, this time with more threatening results. In explaining to the distaff the sort of man in whose home it will be living, Theocritus begins innocuously enough with the relative clause ὅς πόλλ’ ἔδαθη σόφα at the end of line 19. The words even recall in sound, order, and arrangement the slightly Homeric clause φιλέει δ’ ὤσσα σαώφρονες at the end of line 14, deployed as a positive trait of Theugenis and a prime piece of her praise on the poet’s lips. The poet immediately undercuts his reassuringly positive tone, however, with the succeeding line: ἀνθρώποις νόσοις φάρμακα λύγραίς ἀπαλάλκεμεν (20). From the impersonal tone and heavy, spondaic rhythm of the first word, the line sounds a jarring note. The next three words heighten the sense of gloom, with the noun-adjective pair νόσοις...λύγραίς encompassing, as if to overwhelm, the central term φάρμακα. A slight positive tone reappears at the end of the line in the infinitive ἀπαλάλκεμεν which, in chiastic fashion, ties in with the dative of advantage ἀνθρώποις at the beginning and flows grammatically from the rather positive term σόφα at the end of the previous line.

Interestingly, one of the few other instances of the verb ἀπαλάλκε in Greek literature occurs in Pindar Olympian 8.85, where the direct object is again sickness, and the context is explicitly that of a prayer directed at Zeus: ὃξείας δὲ νόσους ἀπαλάλκοι. If the distaff must inhabit a house with a man who deals in baneful disease, at least he will be one who has learned how to ward off such diseases from human beings, or so it is hoped.824

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823 LSJ 1, 2, 3 sv.
824 Pace Aho, 249-50, who writes of Id. 28.3 and the word θέρσεσσα, “It is not so much that the distaff is expected to have need of physical courage when approaching the poet’s guest-friend (pace Gow, who
With his mention of Miletus in line 21, the poet again softens his tone. Here, the city appears as ἑρόνναν, “lovely,” an adjective whose roots hearken back to the verb ἑρωμαι, denoting especially erotic love, a sentiment much in keeping with the temple of Aphrodite from line 4. Recalling the Athena-Aphrodite dichotomy from the poem’s beginning, the term marks Miletus as a city associated with wealth and luxury. At the same time, Theocritus returns in ring fashion to contemplate his gift and its effects on the recipient,825 squarely emphasizing the topic of friendship. He now reenters the world of women. In this final instance, however, the feminine realm is an entirely mortal one: replacing the goddesses Athena and Aphrodite, we find Theugenis herself and the Milesian δαματίδες who will marvel at her gift. Echoing this shift from the divine to the mortal, the grandiloquent “gift of gray-eyed Athena” from line 1 has been reduced in the poem’s final meiosis to a “small gift” (δόφρος σὺν ὀλίγῳ) in line 25. Inversely proportional to the contraction of the distaff’s stature, however, is the widening of its human recipient’s fame as a result of its presence. The gift of Athena to women will avail Theugenis, though not exactly in the way suggested in the opening lines. It will win her reputation, ratified by the validation of other women, who presumably know how to recognize a fine distaff and, thus, might be taken to betoken precisely the kind of women invoked in line 2: those who know the art of keeping up a home and the craft of spinning and weaving. In having this band of nameless Milesian women pronounce upon the quality, utility, and even sentimentality of the distaff, Theocritus draws a sharp contrast between them and the gift’s recipient. As an especially renowned and prominent woman translates, ‘attend without fear’), but rather that the poet is inspiring the distaff with confidence in the warm, χάριτι-filled reception it will receive, owing to his guest-friendship with Nikias.”

825 Hopkinson, 175 ad 28.25.
of Miletus, Theugenis remains aloof: as aloof as epic heroes from the bards who tell their tales. It is the contrast between her elevated stature and the simple nature of the gift that makes the poem’s final line so personal and touching. We have already seen how words involving the root φιλ serve to provide a certain linkage between Theocritus, the gift-giver, and Theugenis, the recipient. They also serve to mark aspects of the poem indicative of the homely or low: first, the distaff itself (φιλέπιθ’, 1); next Theugenis’ love of the “practical” (φιλέπέι...σαφόφρονες, 14); and finally Theocritus the poet (φιλαοίδω, 23). He uses these instances to entrench or renew his stance of simplicity and poverty, linking himself to the Athena side of the lifestyle-debate with Aphrodite. The final, third-party ἔπος, which Gow finds so troubling, functions similarly.

As Gow notes, though with some disapproval, Od. 6.208 and 14.58 (δόσις δ’ ὀλίγη τε φίλη τε) are often cited as parallels to the final passage of Idyll 28.826 Gow argues that this Homeric clause is “different in color” from the idea expressed in Idyll 28 and prefers to cite ὀλίγην δόσιν ὀλλ’ ἀπὸ θυμοῦ / πλεῖόνος (5-6) and βαίον ἀπ’ οὐκ ὀλίγης φρενός (5) from Crinagoras 3 G-P (=AP 6.227) and 4 G-P (=AP 6.229) respectively, both anathematika with human recipients. As discussed above, in epigram 3 G-P, the poet presents a youth recently schooled in letters with a silver pen and, in 4 G-P, bestows a purple toothpick upon a friend and frequent dinner-guest. In neither work does the poet assume the mantle of poverty; rather, to judge from the extravagant and flamboyant materials of which the simple gifts he presents are made, one must conclude both giver and recipient belong to the same, higher echelons of society.

826 Gow (1952) II, 503 ad 24f.
Moreover, dating from a period so far removed from Theocritus’ own lifetime, Crinagoras does not prove entirely useful as a parallel to *Idyll* 28.

Closer in sentiment to Theocritus, but still in the realm of late epigram, we find in Zonas—a poet impossible to date precisely but who is most likely synonymous with the Diodorus Zonas of Sardis mentioned by Strabo— the dedication of a poor farmer to Demeter, concluding: ἐκ μικρῶν ὀλίγηστα· πέπατο γὰρ οὐ μέγα τοῦτο / κληρίον ἐν λυπρῇ τῇ δε γεωλοφή (2 G-P (=AP 6.98), 5-6). Closer still, Apollonides, who flourished near the end of the first century BC, finishes off his dedication of from indigent farmer to an unnamed deity with the couplet: εἴη δ’ ἐξ ὀλίγων ὀλίγη γάρις· εἰ δὲ διδοιής / πλείονα, καὶ πολλῶν, δοῦμον, ἀπαρξόμεθα (2 G-P (=AP 6.238), 5-6).

Though both of these relatively late poems feature dedications to a god, each more closely approximates the situation of *Idyll* 28 in focusing on the unequal status and wealth of the dedicator and dedicatee. Each poem features the notion of patronage, and the latter passage is especially relevant as it employs the term χάρις in precisely the Theocritean, and, before him, Simonidean, double sense. The word vacillates in meaning between an ennobled sense of gratitude and the crasser notion of physical wealth: if the farmer had more actual goods from which to give, his gratitude (and dedication) would be greater. Indeed, one could easily mount the argument that, owing to the fact that these lines conclude their respective poems and thus form a “punch line” of sorts, the baser sense of χάρις is inevitably seen to be primary, at least from the standpoint of the poems’ speakers. The emotional tension in each work stems from fact that the dedications are nonetheless made: that piety, however grudging, can exist amid such poverty.
More or less from Thecritis’ own day, Leonidas 41 G-P (=AP 6.288), the dedication of three impoverished weavers to Athena, provides perhaps the model for this “commonplace” motif. The work finishes with the statement that the sisters have dedicated what little they could from what little they have along with the prayer that from their lack of sustenance Athena might magically provide sustenance: πενιχραί / ἐξ ολίγων ολίγαν μοῖραν ἀπαρχόμεθα. / τῶν χέρας αἰέν, Ἀθήνα, ἑπιπλήσαιο μὲν ἴσως / θείης δ’ ἔσιπτοις ἐξ ολίγησιπτῶν (7-10). A similar expression comes from a likely imitator of Leonidas, Agis 1 G-P (=AP 6.152): ἔργων ἐξ ολίγων ολίγην δόσιν· ἦν δὲ τι μεῖζον / δωρήσῃ, τίσει τῶνδε πολυπλάσια (5-6). Again, the size of the gifts is small, in direct proportion to that of the giver’s income, even though the giver’s desire is to be able to give more. Again, too, the desire to give more could result from either noble or base motives—or both simultaneously—for all of these epigrams have to do not with altruism, but rather with benefaction or patronage, as do Idylls 28 and 16.

Gow felt the phrase δόσις δ’ ολίγη τε φίλη τε from Odyssey 6.208 and 14.58 was dissimilar in color from the conclusion of Idyll 28 principally because the former passages deal with the Greek notion of hospitality or ζευκία. In Book 6, the phrase occurs when Nausicaa receives Odysseus kindly; in Book 14 when Eumaeus, the self-same swineherd mentioned in Idyll 16, welcomes him. As we have seen above, however, Idyll 28 makes much of the ideas of friendship and hospitality. Both of the Homeric passages in fact connect quite well with the substance of Idyll 28, for, as the passages from

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827 Gow-Page (1968) II, 264.
829 Gow-Page (1968) II, 149, ad Apollonides 2 G-P, 5-6 [1135-6].
830 Gow-Page (1965) II, 5.
Odyssey make clear, hospitality is a form of patronage at the most basic level: the bestowal of physical comfort in exchange solely for gratitude or χάρις. This same truth emerges from the anecdotes of Simonides and the Scopads found in Cicero and Quintilian. In *Idyll* 28, Theocritus develops this notion in connection with his journey to see Nicias and bestow his gift.

Theocritus makes much in the poem of the discourse of dangerous travel and himself and the distaff as traveling companions. He uses forms of the root φιλ to focus and sharpen this discourse, as he associates himself and the distaff, the traveling companions, and the distaff’s intended recipient, Theugenis, all with the act of φιλεῖν.

On the other hand, to Nicias, Theocritus’ guest-friend and host or ξενοδόκος whom he is primarily journeying to see (cf. v. 6), the poet attributes merely the possibility of φιλεῖν and that only in response to Theocritus’ initial performance of the verb’s action. He writes: ὃπως ξέννον ἕμον τέρψομ’ ἴδων κἀντιφιληístico (6). Theocritus expects friendship. Yet expressed as it is in a subjunctive purpose clause and prefaced with the preposition ἄντι, the act is not guaranteed. For this reason, Theocritus has instructed his delicate travel-mate to “take heart” (θέρσεισ’, 3), remember she hails from “a city of men of renown” (ἀνδρῶν δοκίμων πόλιν, 18), and settle in Miletus as in a colony (οἰκῆσεις κατὰ Μίλλατον, 21). Again Theocritus has produced a rupture of gender roles for the purpose of aligning himself, a man, with the feminine art of weaving as a metaphor simultaneously of the poetic and the impoverished life. And the mere possibility that he and his gift may not find a welcome reception immediately recalls the image of

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831 As noted above, this epigram is also one that features the dedication by a fowler of his rods and tackle, using the phrase ἵζευταις...καλάμοις of the former.
Theocritus’ forlorn *Charites* at the beginning of *Idyll* 16. Like his *Charites*, Theocritus might be traveling the road in vain (ἀλλήθην ὁδὸν, 16.9).

For Theocritus, travel, guest-friendship, and patronage are all linked concepts. We can see this quite clearly by the end of *Idyll* 28, when the nameless observer, almost as some anonymous wayfarer passing by a dedicatory inscription in epigram, sees the distaff—either the physical object or the poem accompanying it or both—and pronounces that “great χάρις came with a small gift, and all things from friends are honored gifts (πάντα δὲ τίματα τὰ παρ’ φίλων).” The gift of one weary traveler to his hosts reminds other, future travelers of the ideal of friendship.\(^{832}\) This conclusion may simultaneously hide a joking allusion to money in much the same way as the end of *Idyll* 11, with friendship and poetry trumping financial gain.

We see the same conjunction of the ideas and words for friendship, hospitality, and honor in *Idyll* 16 from which we embarked at the outset of this chapter. Brief analysis of the context of these passages will help further elucidate Theocritus’ conflation of friendship, patronage, and hospitality and its meaning for his conception of poets and poetry. In line 13 he presents his vision of the ideal patron, returning to the linkage between patronage and simple hospitality: τίς τῶν νῦν τοιόσοδε; τίς εὖ εἰπόντα φιλήσει; He further clarifies this definition in lines 64-66:

\[
χαρέτω ὡς τοῖς τοῖς, ἀνήριθμος δὲ οἱ εἴη \\
ἄργυρος, αἰεὶ δὲ πλεόνων ἔχου ἴμερος αὐτόν. \\
αὐτῶρ ἐγὼ τιμήν τε καὶ ἄνθρώπων φιλότητα \\
pολλὰν ἴμιών τε καὶ ὑπον πρόσθεν ἐλοίμαν. \\
δίξημαι δ’ ὑτινὶ θνατῶν κεχαρισμένος ἔλθω
\]

\(^{832}\) Note the conscious ambiguity of the identity of the speaker(s) of the final *epos*: while context suggests it to be the women of Miletus, there is a broader sense of its being no one in particular, or rather anybody who, as the reader, happens upon the text of poem and is moved by its sentiment.
Gow finds great defect in this passage, failing to see a connection between the theme of miserliness with mention of great wealth in mules and horses, on the one hand, and the commendation of friendship, on the other.\textsuperscript{833} When viewed from the context of the thematic nexus, however, the passage makes good sense. The poet’s pastoral analogues, like Polyphemus and Lycidas, are predominantly goat, sheep, or cattle herders; their animals are largely unsuitable for being ridden—itself an image of exploitation—and may all be milked—a sign of generosity and hospitality.\textsuperscript{834} Hospitality or friendship and patronage are inextricably linked in the poet’s mind. What the ending to \textit{Idyll} 28 casts into sharp relief is that, in seeking patronage, Theocritus desires principally one who will “love” the true poet. Theocritus seeks a situation in the world hospitable, or even friendly, to his own concerns; he seems to want less a specific form of patronage from a specific patron than merely a way to fit in. The poet wrestles here less with the reluctance of would-be patrons to subsidize poetry other than outright encomium or even the boorishness of wealthy men than with the poet’s own choice to pursue the life of a poet of his ilk. Out of this insoluble problem flows the overwhelming sense of \textit{aporia} and inconclusiveness in this and other \textit{Idylls}.

So it is that Theocritus’ “pastoral analogue”\textsuperscript{835} in \textit{Idyll} 11’s Polyphemus functions essentially as an embodiment of the idea that poetry constitutes both the ailment \textit{and} its

\textsuperscript{833} Gow (1952) II, 318-19.

\textsuperscript{834} Strictly speaking, of course, mares could be milked too, but were not customarily in the Greek world. Indeed, Herodotus’ disquisition on the Scythian habit of milking mares (4.2) demonstrates the low cultural esteem in which the Greeks held the practice. That Herodotus writes of mare-milking in context with the Scythians’ total dependence on their horses for transport and their strange blinding of slaves who constantly churned the mares’ milk, all but proves the point. From this perspective, owning vast numbers of horses can be seen not only as indicative of wealth, but of wealth coupled with a lack of couth, which is precisely Theocritus’ intended meaning in the passage above.

\textsuperscript{835} Gutzwiller (1991), 114.
means of cure. It ails him, first, insofar as a certain emotional turmoil or mania
(ὁρθοδοξίας μανίας 11.11a) is what provides his poetic side with its inspiration, the
“necessary transport for artistic creation.” Indeed, as Gutzwiller notes, the tradition
going back all the way to Hesiod whereby “inspiring deities had a...right to admonish and
upbraid,” suggests that poetry and inner struggle necessarily go hand in hand: hence
the Charites’ mockery of Theocritus in Idyll 16 and the pathetic recognition of his
meager means at the end of Idyll 28. Poetry also ails the poetic Cyclops—and, by
extension, all, similar Hellenistic poets—in that it goads him into a neglectfulness of
other concerns (ἀγεῖτο δὲ πάντα πάρεργα 11.11b). In practical terms, one thinks of the
intense hours of lucubration which poets must endure for their craft, especially
bookish, Hellenistic poets. Moreover, this very “madness,” with its concomitant
neglectfulness of normal duties, an image which gives rise to the pastoral analogue to
begin with, also occasions a certain physical or material wasting away, such as that
which Simaetha recalls in herself (2.89-90) and Battus criticizes in Korydon’s proxy-
cattle (4.15-16). In the prologue to his Aetia, Callimachus compares himself to a cicada,
“whose sustenance is only the dew from the air,” while Aelian and Athenaeus both make much of the slight physique of Theocritus’ forebear Philetas of Cos, the latter

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837 Gutzwiller (1983), 222.
838 νετοδιώσοντες (1.38)?
839 Gutzwiller (1991), 34: “It is this paradox – the poet is like the herdsman who watches and even more like the herdsman who fails to watch – that lies behind the Muses’ reproach to Hesiod.”
840 Gutzwiller (1983), 216; Hunter (1999), ad 4.15-16, 134-35, notes that cicadas were notorious for their lack of physical strength; cf. Iliad 3.151-52.
842 9.401 d-e.
even attributing that scholar-poet’s death to his studies and their late-night vigils.\textsuperscript{843} In 
\textit{Idyll} 11, we see an admittedly humorous echo of this phenomenon in the Cyclops’ repeated concerns for the possible unsatisfactory nature of his appearance and physical makeup (31-33, 50). A further corollary to this idea of material wasting is the almost boastful claim to poverty among many Hellenistic poets, including notably Callimachus\textsuperscript{844} and Theocritus,\textsuperscript{845} who, as we have seen, draws attention to this aspect indirectly through his metonymic \textit{Charites} and slight means when it comes to bestowing gifts. \textit{Idyll} 11’s Polyphemus may be seen in lines 34-37 staking a similar claim, albeit through the humorous irony of actually \textit{denying} poverty while in fact being quite impoverished by Greek standards.\textsuperscript{846} Finally, poetry further ails the poet inasmuch as he feels deeply the anxiety of influence typical of Hellenistic poets. “Who would want to hear another?” Theocritus asks in \textit{Idyll} 16, “Homer is enough for all (20).” As the somewhat buffoonish Polyphemus puts it: “I know how to play the syrinx like \textit{nobody} [else] here among the Cyclops, singing you, my dear sweet-apple, together with myself often at some ungodly hour of the night (38-40).”\textsuperscript{847}

\textsuperscript{843} Cf. Socrates’ tale of the cicada from \textit{Phaedrus} (259a-d), who, as humans, were the first audience of the Muses until, captivated by their song, they forgot their own lives and even neglected to feed themselves, such that they died and were transformed into singing insects. See Payne, 127-28.

\textsuperscript{844} Capovilla, 202-9; Gutzwiller (1983), 215 and n. 13.

\textsuperscript{845} Stark, 371-72; Gutzwiller (1983), 216-17. For a strong, less credible version of this view of T., see Cairns, 20-21.

\textsuperscript{846} Cf. Gutzwiller (1991) 111: “In Polyphemus’ description of his idyllic existence (34-41), we are reminded at every turn that these are pleasures fit only for a monster. The great quantity of milk and cheese he obtains from his thousand herds of cattle is not just wealth of a rustic kind but also bounty necessary to satisfy his enormous appetites.” In this connection, it is interesting to note that at 11.54-55, when Polyphemus wishes his mother had born him with gills, these two ideas—his physical inappropriateness and his primitive wealth—combine to suggest that he “just would not fit in” with proper, truly wealthy, society. Cf. Spofford, 25: “Implicit is a contrast between a cultured society like Theocritus’ where money is the normal means of exchange and a more primitive one like Polyphemus’ where a person’s possessions are all his wealth. ...[R]ural wealth cannot help but seem poor compared to urban, despite (and partly because of) Theocritus’ emphasis on emotion as the main point of similarity between the two worlds.”

\textsuperscript{847} Note again, the Cyclops presents the trope in reverse. Not, too, the implicit humor in line 38’s οὔτες (Hunter (1999), 234 \textit{ad} 38), anticipating the later joke at 79. For more on this humor, see chapter 2, p. 28.
At the same time, poetry as Theocritus has conceived it heals the poet’s illness by, on the one hand, providing him a suitable outlet for his considerable conflicting passions (11.80: ἐποίμαινεν τὸν ἔρωτα) and permitting him to distance himself from the enormity of Homer’s shadow by rejecting the traditional Muses and their world of classical epic, embracing instead the Charites with topics such as nymphs (Idylls 3, 11, 13), wedding songs (Idyll 18), loves (all of the Idylls under consideration), the poetry of Sappho (Idyll 2), and mimes like Sophron’s (Idylls 2, 15), all posited by the author of On Style as examples of “charm,” χαράτες. It is this conviction which sets Theocritus apart from the “very many” whom the daughters of Zeus love (16.101-102), and presumably, too, Polyphemus from his fellow Cyclopes.

Thus Hutchinson is wrong on two counts. As we saw near the end of the previous chapter, his claim that Idyll 13’s ending contradicts the equation made in its initial frame of Heracles with “everyman” becomes untenable when viewed in the light of the thematic nexus under examination. Constant undercutting and “sustained doubleness”\(^849\) form a necessary part of any assertiveness born of felt fragility. In making his argument, however, Hutchinson adduces as a parallel Idyll 11, stating: “Somewhat as in 11, the poem [13] eventually subverts the ostensible purpose of the poet, linked with his own voice. In other words, we should think not of philosophy but of play with the reader....”\(^850\) Yet Idyll 11, like 16 and, to some extent, 28, deals precisely with philosophy: poetic self-philosophy. And if, as Austin and Gutzwiller argue,\(^851\) we are to place the poem among Theocritus’ earlier works, then it may well set the tone for the

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\(^{848}\) See n. 634 above.

\(^{849}\) Goldhill, 34.

\(^{850}\) Hutchinson, 194.
poetic debates of the ensuing Hellenistic era, posing a “fundamental question for the period” and anticipating much of Callimachus’ and Apollonius Rhodius’ criticism.

That poetic philosophy is precisely a principal theme of *Idyll* 11, we see most clearly in the fact that the poem’s Polyphemus remains alone in the realm of the poem’s narrative while singing on the beach, constituting both performer and audience. Everything about his performance is self-referential. Note, for example, how much time Polyphemus spends speaking not of his ostensible eromene, but of himself. While descriptions of his invocanda occupy only lines 19-30, the remainder of his song from lines 31 to 79 dwells either on the Cyclops himself (physical form, living arrangements, wealth, talents, shortcomings) or his wish-fulfillment scenarios vis-à-vis the object of his passion. While this emphasis on the excluded lover and his plight might be typical for what is, in essence, a form of paraklausithyron, it will hardly flatter the nymph he is seeking to entice or himself for so ineptly wooing her. Austin glimpses an equivalent situation in 16. He notes:

“...[T]he poet and the laudandus are not so much linked together as set in opposition. Despairing of the search for a generous patron and for recognition from others, the poet affects to find self-recognition a satisfactory substitute. The poetic self is not as in Pindar a foil for the laudandus but a substitute for the laudandus. The poetic self becomes the real subject of the poem.”

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851 Austin, 1, 19 and n. 29; Gutzwiller (1983), 216, 238. As Austin notes, earlier scholars who have offered this assessment include Gerke (270, 606), Fritzsche (7), Bücheler (55).

852 Austin, 20: note, however, that I differ from Austin as to what “the fundamental question” is. See n. 643 above. See also Gutzwiller (1983), 238, whose Appendix (237-8) attempts to show via structural analysis of *Id.* 16 side by side with Callimachus’ Prologue to the *Aetia* that latter author was directly influenced by Theocritus.

853 For an interesting study of the hymnal form of this invocation, see Holtsmark, 254.

854 Hunter (1999), 229 ad 19-79, divides the poem into “…four unequal sections, each introduced by an address to Galatea or a self-address: 19-29 (his love), 30-53 (what he can offer), 54-71 (their total separation), 72-79 (resolution).” Interesting for us, the first two begin by addressing the nymph, the last with self-addresses, revealing the singer arriving at his true emphasis.

855 Hunter (1999), 229 ad 19-79.

856 Austin, 17.
The only caveat to add here is that the poet is not simply praising himself. As we have noted, he also subjects himself to a fair amount of abuse. He is likewise not, strictly speaking, “left a solitary figure at the end,” any more than Polyphemus in 11 can be said to be completely alone. One neglected but necessary component in the thematic nexus so clearly in evidence in these poems is the presence, real or implied, of both competing others and the elusive love. More precisely: keeping in mind the metonymic relation between poet and poetry, we might say that at the end of their respective poems, both “characters” have their poetry. Further, the Theocritean conception of poetry requires others: others to love, others to seek, others with whom to compete. It is doubtless for this reason that, as we saw above, Austin can conclude of Idyll 16: “This is far from being the consoling philosophy of art for art’s sake...”, while Gutzwiller observes: “This is not quite art for art’s sake, but in a poem that concerns both poetry and praise it suggests that poetry has first place.” Theocritus and his mythic analogue Polyphemus have a found a solution of sorts, but it is not entirely satisfactory, in the same way that Heracles’ solution in Idyll 13 proved unsatisfactory: he arrived at Colchis, but only after being hurt, on foot, and humbled.

At the end of Idyll 16, Theocritus, like his character Polyphemus, makes a stand more for negative than for positive reasons. He will bear up and go with the Muses (θαρσήσας Μοίσαι σὺν ἁμετέραισιν ἵοιμ’ ἄν, 107) because the roads are tough without them (κουράων ἄπανευθε, 70); he will stay with the Charites, because what could be pleasant for humankind without them (Χαρίτων...ἀπάνευθεν, 108-109). Idyll

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857 Cf. Austin, 18: “...[T]he poet is left a solitary figure at the end.”
858 Austin, 5.
859 Gutzwiller (1983), 236.
11’s Polyphemus “shepherded” his love because it, at least, proved easier than paying out money (ῥαῖον δὲ διὰ γὰρ ἦ ἡ χρυσὸν ἔδωκεν, 81 (cf. 7)). And with this last quote, in context undoubtedly a witty joke about the medical profession, we have an interesting foreshadowing of the problematic discourse about money at the heart of *Idyll* 16, with a poet accepting the somewhat fraught value of poetry over and above the relatively more fraught value of money.

*Idylls* 11, 16, and 28 all tend toward the same basic conclusion: a preference for poetry and friendship over the formal relations of money and patronage. Theocritus uses his detailed and intricate proems to encode neat sets of oppositions between the inner world of his poetry and the inhospitable outer world into which he sends it. Often ostensibly setting his characters up for observation and derision by other human addressees, Theocritus only proves his inability to stand apart from his works, sacrificing solidarity with would-be patrons and even friends. Yet, the poet’s aloof stance is not a brave or secure one; rather it remains replete with self-doubt and inner-reproach.

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Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to demonstrate the possibility and validity of a more unified view of the genuine Theocritean oeuvre through examination of a network of related themes and images running throughout many, if not all, of Theocritus’ poems and centering on the figure of a fragile/assertive self. The constituent elements of this “thematic nexus,” as I have dubbed it, are: frustrated desire and forgetfulness of quotidian tasks; the presence of competing others; travel and the dangers of arriving uninvited; mockery of the self from without; and, of course, the centrality of a threatened self who struggles to turn weakness into an ambiguous sort of assertion.

I have argued that this nexus reflects as well as constructs a certain crise d’identité of the Hellenistic period, characterized by the increasing impersonalism of large urban centers with displaced, migrant populations, competing for self-definition in artificially heterogeneous environments. In both mimetic and analogueical contexts, Theocritus uses this framework to explore his concerns as a poet in such a world, speaking either through the mouths of his numerous fictional characters or, especially in the cases of Idylls 16 and 28, in propria persona.

As has been pointed out several times, this approach possesses the unique advantage of offering solutions to numerous, previously unresolved textual difficulties throughout the Theocritean corpus. In general, it allows us to see more clearly why so many of Theocritus’ poems risk absurdity in their logic and arguments in favor of a very realistic depiction of the “sustained doubleness,” to use Goldhill’s phrase,\(^{861}\) that haunts both daunted lovers and frustrated poets. It also offers a promising vantage from which
to investigate perhaps the most debated quagmire in the Theocritean oeuvre: the characters of Lycidas and Simichidas in *Idyll 7*. A brief examination of this problem will serve to demonstrate additional possibilities implicit in my approach, as well as to conclude our discussion over all.

*Idyll 7* offers as its first-person narrative voice a persona named Simichidas, who cannot, therefore, be assumed simply to represent the authorial voice. He does, however, possess such significant traits in common with Theocritus that an identification between the two seems all but assured: for example, both are urban figures \((\varepsilon\iota\rho\pi\omicron\omicron\varepsilon\ \varepsilon\kappa\ \pi\omicron\alpha\lambda\omicron\omicron\zeta\), 2); both move in high social circles \((2-6)\); both have associations with the island of Cos \((1, 5, 6-9)\); and, finally, both are poets \((\kappa\iota\mu\varepsilon\ \lambda\acute{\epsilon} \gamma\omicron\nu\omicron\tau\iota\ / \pi\acute{\alpha} \nu\tau\epsilon\zeta\ \acute{\alpha} \omicron\iota\delta\omicron\ \acute{\alpha} \rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\omicron\), 37-38). Furthermore, we do not in fact learn that the narrator is not Theocritus until line 21, when the similarly enigmatic character Lycidas addresses Simichidas directly. As Bowie writes: “It appears, then, that Simichidas both is and is not Theocritus, and that his name Simichidas has been deliberately held back to allow the presumption to develop that the narrator is Theocritus himself.” As a result of this tension, once the narrator is first named, a certain amount of cognitive dissonance results in the mind of the learned reader, such that he constantly suspects Simichidas’ viewpoints to represent in some palpable way those of the author, and his suspicion is likely renewed with every subsequent mention of the unexpected name. What is more, we have no third-person “omniscient” narrative voice or further frame from the aloof perspective of

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861 Goldhill, 34.
862 Gutzwiller (1991), 114, n. 48; Bowie, 67-68.
863 For more similarities than space allows here, see Bowie, 68.
864 Bowie, 68.
865 Goldhill, 35-41, feels that this tacit identification is increasingly called into question as the poem progresses.
which to view the scene that unfolds between Simichidas and his interlocutor. Rather, every first-person view represents that of one of the participants,\textsuperscript{866} such that it becomes increasingly hard not to attribute, or at least not to want to attribute, to the author much of what Simichidas says. Moreover, whereas most idylls which feature framing do so in such a way as to establish a link between the author, who stands inside the frame but \textit{outside} the narrative of the poem, and a character \textit{within} the narrative who becomes in some sense the author’s analogue, Idyll 7’s confusion of authorial voice with that of the characters results in the peculiarity that its framing persona, the poet, meets and interacts in the narrative with his own analogue.\textsuperscript{867} Thus even the views of Lycidas fall under suspicion of being attributable to Theocritus himself. Yet, because of the poem’s jumbled set of discursive levels, we can never be sure. As Goldhill observes: “There is...a considerable difficulty in determining a secure frame of reference in...the poem: the interplay of metaphorical and mythical language seems deliberately to problematize the development of a single, unified level of enunciation.”\textsuperscript{868}

In the previous chapter,\textsuperscript{869} we saw that Lycidas cuts the quintessential figure of a rustic goatherd in dress and even smell.\textsuperscript{870} Though his appearance in the poem has been characterized by many as theophanic,\textsuperscript{871} he seems more directly analogueous to \textit{Idyll} 11’s Polyphemus. The fact that Lycidas likewise appears in the body of what is constituted a frame-narrative only heightens this similarity, so too the fact that the narrator similarly acknowledges his poetic prowess (27-29). His own poetic pronouncements (43-48) and

\textsuperscript{866} Goldhill, 35.
\textsuperscript{867} Gutzwiller (1991), 160-1. Cf. Payne, 19-20, 114-45, who likens Theocritus’ treatment of Lycidas to the modern poet Fernando Pessoa, who creates alternative personas, or “heteronyms,” with whom he interacts fictively in his various poems to discuss poetry and poetic technique.
\textsuperscript{868} Goldhill, 40.
\textsuperscript{869} See above, p. 189.
\textsuperscript{870} Cf. ll. 13-4: οὐδὲ κὴ τὶς νῦν / ἡγαίοίσεν ἰδὼν ἐπεί οἰαπόλῳ ἔξοξα ἔφοιεi.
song (52-89) clinch the identification. In all these ways, Lycidas would appear cast in the role of a buffoon, like Polyphemus: a rustic simpleton posturing as a big-time poet and even challenging the narrator, Simichidas, who himself is at least poet enough to have ostensibly composed the overarching tale that confronts the reader of *Idyll 7*.

Yet Lycidas appears throughout the poem with a kind of smug, bemused superiority. Lycidas smiles without trembling, with a grinning eye and laughter on his lip (19-20; cf. 128). He mocks Simichidas in much the same way as Theocritus’ poems do their author at the beginning of *Id.* 16, rebuking him for travelling at an inauspicious time of day (21-23) as an uninvited guest to a dinner (24).

Line 26’s humorous evocation of the “song” of the rocks in his path as Simichidas’ boots stumble against them (πᾶσα λίθος πταιούσα ποτ’ ἀρβυλίδεσσιν ἀείδει) would seem to suggest the goatherd’s denigration of his interlocutor’s poetic art as well as his manners: as if to say that only by stumbling around ineptly in a manner that is both *akairos* and *aklētos* is Simichidas able make song at all.

For his part, Simichidas affects an air of modesty that is likely none too genuine, noting that he is deliberately trying to draw the rustic out (42) into a competition of like songs (βουκολιασδόμεσθα, 36). Though Simichidas notes that, like Lycidas, he composed his songs while shepherding (51, 92), he otherwise appears in the poem as an urbanite (cf. εἰρπομες ἐκ πόλις, 2). He observes that the goatherd is

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871 See, for example, Williams, 137-45; Payne, 120-21.
872 Aho, 66-7; Segal (1981), 172.
873 Cf. Gow (1952): II, 139 ad 26, who observes that the term ἀρβυλίς, the less common variant of ἀρβύλη, is used in Euripides *Or.* 140 of women’s boots: “...there is no doubt some faint mockery in the reference to Simichidas’s boots.”
875 Cf. Segal (1981), 172: “[T]here is a trace of amused surprise, verging on the rustic’s condescension for the city-dweller....” See also Gow (1952): II, 129.
famed among fellow herders and reapers (28-29), yet his own reputation, he asserts somewhat rashly, has ascended to the throne of Zeus (93). Even as he modestly maintains his inability to best the likes of Asclepiades of Samos and Philetas, christening himself a frog to their grasshopper (39-41), Simichidas nonetheless admits that he vies with them, however imperfectly (ἐρίσω, 41).

Simichidas further characterizes himself as “not some credulous type” (ἐγὼ δὲ τις οὐ ταχυπετής, 38), despite the fact that “everyone” calls him the “best of singers” (κῆμε λέγοντι / πάντες ἣσοιδον ἄριστον, 37-38). In so doing, he recalls the lovelorn Simaetha of Idyll 2, who was “quickly persuaded” (ταχυπετής, 138) of Delphis’ wheedling words of love. Yet, by dubbing himself as well a “dry/clear mouth of the Muses” (καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ Μοισᾶν καπυρὸν στόμα, 37), Simichidas appears to acknowledge that he, too, understands the deceptive qualities of poetry and words, like those the very Delphis used to ignite in Simaetha her “parching sickness” (καπυρὰ νόσος, 2.85) to begin with. Simichidas, then, is both like the duped and the duping lover, modest and bashful even as he is brash and pretentious, a type of both hungry predator and naive prey.877

When Lycidas seemingly compliments his interlocutor, then, calling him “a sprig of Zeus fashioned all for truth” (πᾶν ἐπ’ ἀλαθείας πεπλασμένον ἐκ Διὸς ἐρνος, 44), we can detect a double edge. The line clearly means a reference to the Muses, mention of whom in Idyll 16 on at least three occasions involves the genitive Διὸς (1-3; 69-70; 101-876

876 Many have seen in this boast a reference to Theocritus’ favor with Ptolemy Philadelphus. See Gow (1952), 155 ad loc. 7.93; Payne, 128.
878 ibid., 170.
2). The passage thus closely recalls Hesiod’s famous encounter with the Muses in *Theogony* (25ff.) and the goddesses’ enigmatic statement: ἵδεις ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἑτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα (27).879 The reference simultaneously casts doubt on both Simichidas’ veracity and Lycidas’ sincerity, for, as Segal notes, the words ὀλήθεια and πλάττειν are often antithetical in Greek.880 When Lycidas continues in lines 45-48, his observation would appear to carry something of a warning as well as a general commentary on the poetic craft of the day:

ός μοι καὶ τέκτων μέγ’ ἀπέχθεται ὡστὶς ἔρευνή
ἵσον ὄρευς κορυφὴ τελέσαι δόμον Ὄμοιοδοντος,
καὶ Μοισᾶν ὄρνιχες ὡσαι ποτὶ Χίων ἀοιδόν
ἀντία κοκκύζοντες ἐτώσια μοχθίζοντι (45-48).

Whether or not we take seriously Hunter’s suggestion that “κοκκύζοντες suggests that these poets are cockerels, a notoriously aggressive and self-important bird,” such that “the pretension of the poets is marked by the colloquial ὄρνις ‘cock’ (LSJ s.v. III) alongside the grand Μοισᾶν,”881 the passage clearly takes a dim view of poets who seek real competition with Homer through their choice of epic themes. With its direct verbal reflection of *Idyll* 1’s first cup-scene, the passage further invokes the *locus classicus*, if you will, within the Theocritean corpus of the motif of competing others and, thereby, recalls Timon of Phlius’ satire of the Museum scholars as squabbling birds in Ptolemy’s zoo.

Simichidas attempts a meiosis of his aspiration even as seeks to draw out the rustic Lycidas and best him in poetic competition. Lycidas compliments Simichidas for

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879 See Goldhill, 36; Gutzwiller (1991), 166. Many have also viewed in Lycidas’ gift to Simichidas of his staff a type of the Muses’ investiture of Hesiod: see, for example, Payne, 117 and 131.
880 Segal (1981), 170; LSJ s.v., V.
his candor even as he chastises him for the thin veiling of his ambition by frankly agreeing that it is dangerous to strive with the greats. Each man enjoys a reputation as poet after his own kind, and each appears to agree broadly as to the sort of poetry one should sing. Yet there appears a rift between the two as each gently mocks, and is mocked by, the other. Both Lycidas and Simichidas display at once fragility and strength. The rustic striving at artful words with the city-dweller; the urbanite sparring in verse with the bumpkin: each appears both at home and out of place, secure in his domain and yet preposterously defensive against a harmless interloper. One thinks of the conflict in Idyll 15 between the Doric housewives and the “other stranger” who criticizes them for their chatter and broad, Doric pronunciations (ll. 87-93). It is a civil conflict that is waged between Simichidas and Lycidas who, now more than ever, seem to represent two sides of the poet’s own self, or perhaps the same poet at two different stages in his development or career.

In light of the discussion from the previous chapter of Idyll 28, we can now see how the situation in Idyll 7 offers a close comparison: two individuals, who otherwise agree in sentiment, stand somehow apart in a kind of poetic contest, the chief difference between them being the one’s stance of rustic simplicity and poverty, the other’s acknowledged wealth and urban sophistication. The same strange superiority assumed by a speaker who simultaneously appears disparaged for his lack of couth inhabits the remarks of both Theocritus (Idyll 28) and Lycidas (Idyll 7). The same sense of dandy refinement and widely recognized, if overblown, poetic acumen accrue to the portrayals of both Simichidas and Nicias. Even the wording of the final scene of investiture in Idyll

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881 Hunter, *ad. 7.47-8*, 165.
7 recalls Theocritus’ own words to his distaff, destined as a gift for his friend’s wife:

Lycidas “made his goatherd’s staff accompany [Simichidas] as a companion and gift of xenia from the Muses” (ο δὲ μοι τὸ λαγοβόλον, ἀδύ γελάσσας / ὡς πάρος, ἐκ Μοισάν ξεινήμον ὀπασέν ἤμεν, 128-29). When Simichidas later takes Polyphemus and Heracles “as imaginative equivalents for his own experience,” we think of Theocritus, who held up these same two mythical figures as exemplars for Nicias in Idylls 11 and 13. We notice, too, that the same impropriety attends the poetic lecturing of an unpublished goatherd toward an author whose works have reached the ears of Ptolemy Philadelphus as does the medical disquisition of Theocritus, a poet, directed toward the physician, Nicias, in Idyll 11.

Theocritus is a subtle, even playful, poet who employs the figure of the fragile/assertive self as lens through which to examine the overarching poetic dilemma of his day: namely, how to distinguish oneself amid such a crowd of poets as are lampooned in Timon of Phlius’ clever epigram. To do so, one must adopt a novel poetic stance. For Theocritus, this is the Charites, who, as Pindar relates, add to poetry its “gentle, soothing” qualities (μείλιχα). Thus, though “many poets are dear to Tyndareus’ sons, to Helen, and to the heroes of Troy” (Idyll 22.215-17), and “the Chian singer” offers his audience κῦδος (22.218), Theocritus brings but “soothing offerings of the clear-voiced Muses” (λιγεων μειλίμαστα Μουσέων, 22.221). From his source spring perhaps the opening line of the epigram preserved in the Palatine Anthology with the title

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882 Note how line 49’s ἄλλα ἢ ἄρξωμεθ’ ἀνεκδάς from Lycidas’ mouth echoes line 36’s βουκολικασδόμεθα from Simichidas’.
883 Payne, 117.
884 See n. 876 above.
885 Olympian 1.30; Gutzwiller (1983), 220.
τοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς ἑαυτὸν ὅτι Θεόκριτος Σωφρονίσκος ἦν—a lemma which might just as well have served to mark the argument of *Idyll 7*: "Ἄλλος ὁ Χῖος· ἐγὼ δὲ Θεόκριτος." 887

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