

ON MOSCHUS' *MEGARA*

IN the following pages I shall emend or explain certain passages of the *Epyllion*. For the sake of brevity I shall refer the reader, wherever possible, to the material collected by Breitenstein, whose monograph I have recently reviewed.¹ The *conoscenti* will hardly need to be reminded, for the purposes of my discussion, that the author of *Megara* was, to appropriate Geffcken's words, 'ein doctus poëta, wie alle Alexandriner' (*Leon.*, p. 140), steeped in the knowledge of Homer, Apollonius, and Theocritus (especially *Idyll* 25).

First of all, an emendation.

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θάρσει· οὐ τοιῆσδ' ἐκυρήσαμεν ἐκ θεοῦ αἴσης.

This is the most discussed and tormented line in the poem (cf. Breitenstein pp. 50 f.).² Nobody has understood it because nobody has realized that *τοιός*, in Hellenistic epic, can mean *ἀγαθός* (cf. *C.R.* xiii [1963], p. 154: Pasquali's quotation from Wackernagel's articles corresponds now to the latter's *Kl. Schr.*, pp. 728 and 730). Alcmena says: 'Resign yourself, because we have not obtained an *ἀγαθή* αἴσα from the god' (cf., e.g., Aesch. *Pers.* 910; Alcmena is pointedly referring to Megara's own words in line 7 τί νύ μ' ὦδε κακῇ γονέες τέκον αἴση;).

The scanning *θάρσει οὐ* has been correctly compared by the critics (lately Gallavotti) with Theocr. 25. 275; the meaning of *θάρσει* = 'résigne toi' has been recognized by Legrand (we must add that this meaning, attested in Hellenistic Greek, cf. *CIG* 4463, 5200 b, 9789, is first attested in *Hymn. Hom. Merc.* 301:³ this Homeric rarity the author of *Megara* is, *more Alexandrino*, echoing);⁴ the δέ⁵ in the line is *affirmativum-explicativum* (cf. Rumpel, *Lex.*

¹ T. Breitenstein, *Recherches sur le poème Mégara*, Copenhagen, 1966.

² Line 67 (cf. Breitenstein, p. 51) is sound. Nobody seems to have noticed that ἐφ' ἡμετέροις ἀχέεσσι (for the *sedes* of ἀχέεσσι cf. Ap. Rh. 2. 862, 3. 709) is closely paralleled by ἐφ' ὑμετέροις . . . καμάτοις Ap. Rh. 4. 1432 f.; if we take ἐφ' ὑμετέροις καμάτοις as circumstantial, with Mooney ('in your distress'), we can accept Legrand's interpretation of ἐφ' ἡμετέροις ἀχέεσσι ('au milieu des peines que nous souffrons'); on the other hand, the meaning of ἐφ' ὑμετέροις καμάτοις is probably final (= 'in order to help us to overcome our distress', cf. Oswald, *The Use of Prep. in Ap. Rh.*, p. 181; Haggett, *A Comparison of Apollonius Rhodius with Homer*, p. 45), which meaning would add a fine touch of reproachfulness to Alcmena's words ('he would be a great moaner who would list our troubles in order to help us to overcome them').

³ The imperative *θάρσει* (cf. especially Ellendt, *Lex. Soph.*, s.v. *θαρσέω*; frequent attestations in the Tragedians) is in itself equivalent to *τλήθι φέρειν*, cf. Ap. Rh. 1. 300. It is usually followed by a comforting piece of

news, which will help the person addressed to *φέρειν* his or her present plight, but sometimes *θάρσει* is followed by an unpalatable and unavoidable truth, which the person addressed is exhorted (*θάρσει* is an imperative) to *φέρειν*. The exhortation is ironic in *Hymn. Hom. Merc.* 301 (where Radermacher, ad loc., entirely misses the irony), serious in *Megara* 68 and in the inscriptional attestations indicated above. On consolatory *θάρσει* and *ἐνψύχει* cf. Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs*, Urbana, 1962, pp. 250-4.

⁴ *Ἔρκος ἀλώης*, in line 100 of *Megara*, 'provient de l'Hymne homérique à Hermès' (Breitenstein, p. 87); on the Homeric hymns echoed by Hellenistic poets cf. *Hermes*, 1968, p. 75. Whether such echoes are derived *recta via* from Homer, or from intermediaries now lost, is impossible to say.

⁵ 'Wouldn't it really be better to get rid of δέ altogether, given Theocr. 2. 161, 17. 102, 24. 79, 24. 118? I must say that in writing Greek I would tend to have no connective of any kind if I were beginning a sentence with a demonstrative word immediately after a command' (Professor Dover, private communication).

Theocr., s.v., I, 1, and, for Moschus, *Eranos* 1966, pp. 25 f.): it corresponds to the Homeric–Apollonian ἐπεί (Hom. *Od.* 22. 372; Ap. Rh. 2. 421) which Legrand wanted to restore in Megara's line, and occupies in the line the third place (cf., e.g., οὐκ ἔγνω δέ *Theocr.* 20. 34; on this 'late position after a negative' cf. Denniston², p. 186, 5). We shall in conclusion read:

θάρσει· οὐ τοίης δ' ἐκυρήσαμεν ἐκ θεοῦ αἴσης

(for τοίης δέ cf. Hom. *Il.* 6. 146, where certain manuscripts erroneously spell τοιῆδε, thereby creating, as is the case with the *Megara* line, a pseudo-occurrence of the pronoun τοιόσδε; for ἐκυρήσαμεν, cf. *Theocr.* 17. 6 and 3. 51: Apollonius used ἔκυρσαν 1. 854 and κύρσειε 2. 980).¹ The gentlest of interventions (i.e. separating τοίης δέ), supported by Hellenistic usage, thus restores the text.

Now to several trivializations, which can easily be unmasked, provided we keep present to our mind the techniques of Hellenistic epic *Sprachgebrauch*.

36 f. νῦν δ' οἱ μὲν Θήβην κουροτρόφον ἐνναίουσιν,
 Ἀολίου πεδίου βαθείαν βῶλον ἀροῦντες.

κουροτρόφον *WTr* (cf., e.g., Gow's apparatus), ἵπποτρόφον *cett*.

The reading ἵπποτρόφον, as Breitenstein candidly admits, is 'tout à fait banale' (p. 48); knowing the dislike the Alexandrians had for trivial epithets (cf. Bühler, *Eur.*, p. 145, for βαθυπλόκαμος used by Moschus in avoidance of 'das triviale εὐπλόκαμος') one should think twice before accepting ἵπποτρόφον; and yet all the modern editors and critics adopt it, following Wilamowitz, who did not even bother to mention κουροτρόφον in his apparatus. The only exception amongst modern editors is Meineke, who clearly saw that ἵπποτρόφον was *lectio facilior*, and therefore accepted the *lectio difficilior* κουροτρόφον into his text.

Analysed in the light of Hellenistic epic technique, the *lectio difficilior* reveals itself as the correct one. Of course the author is alluding to 'le terrain fertile de la Béotie' (Breitenstein, p. 48, n. 72), as is clear from βαθείαν βῶλον ἀροῦντες,² but this reason should not compel us to make a bee-line for ἵπποτρόφον. The fact is that Homer's κουροτρόφος (an epithet of places) was explained by the ancients (cf. Ebeling, *Lex. Hom.*, s.v., espec. *EM* 529, 50 ff.) precisely as 'fertile', 'not sterile', like a nursing γυνή (cf. γυνὴ νεοτόκος καὶ κουροτρόφος, Aret. *C.A.* 2. 2 quoted in LSJ, s.v.), or fertile διὰ τὴν ὑγρότητα (i.e. like the μαζός providing the food for the κοῦρος).³ The author of *Megara* is pointedly using the epithet κουροτρόφος in the 'Homeric' sense, with reference to a place (Boeotia): this stylistic feature was lost on the ancient copyists (and, for that matter, on the modern critics!) so that the banal ἵπποτρόφον, more easily comprehensible in its application to a place, came into being.⁴

¹ The wording in Megara θάρσει· οὐ τοίης δέ κτλ. may well be a formal echo of Hom. *Il.* 15. 254 θάρσει νῦν· τοίον κτλ. Cf. also *Od.* 4. 825 f.; τοίον in *Il.* 15. 254 may have been taken to mean ἀγαθόν, in which case the echo would be not merely formal.

² The participial form ἀροῦντες, suspected by Hermann and Meineke (the latter wanted to doricize it into ἀρεῦντες), is defended (cf. also *Or. Sib.* 5. 505 ἀροῦσθαι, same *sedes*, and Hes. ἀροῦν *Erg.* 429 alongside ἀρώμεναι *Erg.* 22) by such participles as δηοῦντες Ap. Rh. 1.

614 (alongside δηιόωντες iv. 489): cf. Rzach, *Gramm. St. zu Ap. Rh.*, p. 588, where it must be added that such forms were evidently felt as 'Ionisms', cf. ἀροῦντες Herod. 4. 19.

³ Cf. the Callimachean joke νησάων εὐρειπάων (*Hymn* 4. 66), which I have explained in *Rhein. Mus.* 1967, p. 53; for the μαζός (*Hymn* 4. 274, cf. 275 f., νησάων . . . κουροτρόφος), cf. Kuiper, *Stud. Callim.* i, pp. 177 f.

⁴ For a discussion on the suitability of ἵπποτρόφος to Thebes cf. Breitenstein, p. 48,

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καρτερόν οἰνοπέδοιο πονεύμενος ἔρκος ἄλωής.

οἰνοπέδοιο *WTr*, οἰνοφόροιο *cett*.

οἰνοπέδοιο is patently the *lectio difficilior*, preferred by Meineke, but obliterated by Wilamowitz (who does not even mention it in his apparatus), whom all the subsequent editors and critics follow. The fact is that the etymologically difficult Homeric adjective οἰνόπεδος (cf. Lobeck, *Paral.*, p. 376, also Eust., pp. 776. 61 and 1409. 58) was considered as synonymous with οἰνοφόρος (cf. *schol.* on *Od.* 1. 193, = γῆς οἰνοφόρου, and Hesychius οἰνοπέδοιο· οἰνοφόρου); the author of *Megara*, together with Opp., *Cyn.* 4. 331, is alluding precisely to this meaning. Once more, *WTr* have preserved the untrivialized, original reading, whereas the rest of the manuscripts have accepted the trivialized variant (in this case, οἰνοφόροιο).

114 f.

ὄντε καὶ οὐκ ἐθέλοντα δηῖσατο γῆρας ἀτερπές

καππεσέειν, κτλ.

δηῖσατο *WTr*, βιήσατο *cett*.

Once again *WTr* preserve the *lectio difficilior*: no critic has recognized this, indeed Wilamowitz does not even mention δηῖσατο in his apparatus! The form δηῖσατο is evidently the original reading: it fits the context admirably from the metrical, morphological, semantic, and literary points of view, and should be restored to the text. First of all, the metrical factor. The scanning δηῖσατο is supported by Anyte, *A.P.* 6. 123. 2 (on which cf. Gow–Page ad loc. = 665, who refer to the fuller discussion by Gow on Theocr. 17. 98, and especially Baale, *Studia in Anytes* . . . *reliquias*, Diss. Amsterdam, 1903, pp. 97 f.). The two passages corroborate each other¹ in showing that Alexandrian epic writers (on Anyte ‘*epicae poeseos peritissima*’ cf. Baale, op. cit., p. 98) measured the η in δηῖος, etc., as capable of being short, very probably on the basis of grammarians’ theories applied to Homer’s text.² The replacement of the metrically unorthodox δηῖσατο by the metrically conventional βιήσατο was, of course, a typical case of metrical trivialization, as we shall note later.

Now to the morphological and semantic points of view. As is already known, from δηῖς (on this word cf. Thes., s.v.; δηῖον occurs in line 109 of *Megara*) the Alexandrians coined δηῖω (so Ap. Rh. 3. 1374; on δηῖσαντες postulated by Wackernagel, which is now confirmed by δηῖσατο in *Megara*, cf. Ardzizoni on Ap. Rh. 3. 1374); the author of *Megara* has clearly coined his δηῖσατο on the Homeric model δηρίσαντο³ (*Od.* 8. 76: on δηῖς = δηῖς, cf. *EM* 266. 34–41, also discussing δηρίω, etc.). In *Megara*’s line, δηῖσατο means ἐπολέμησεν (cf. Hesych. δηῖν· πολεμεῖν, ‘to fight someone, jdn. bekämpfen, attack, molest, impede someone’ (cf. ἀδήϊος, of persons = ‘unfought against, unharmed, unimpeded’ in Ap. Rh. 4. 647). The sense is ‘but Old Age fought against his efforts, impeded him in spite

where it must be added that ἱπποτροφία implies fertility of the soil, cf. Plut. *Mor.* 49 c ἀρούραισι πυροφόροις, Diosc. 4. 15 πῶαν χλωρὰν ἱπποτροφοῦσι.

¹ For a similar case (two attestations of ἀνέη supporting each other) cf. *C.Q.* n.s. xvii (1967), p. 89.

² Herodianus (quoted by Baale, op. cit., p. 98) quotes the form δέϊος alongside δῆϊος, δῆϊος: ‘the explanation may be that at least at Athens from early s. IV the diphthongs εῖ and ηῖ were pronounced alike,

as constant confusion in inscriptions shows, and this may well have become general in the Greek world by the end of s. IV. From this it might result that the diphthongs εῖ and ηῖ would also be treated as interchangeable’ (Professor Dover, private communication).

³ Cf. also Theocr. 25. 82, 22. 70. The author of *Megara* may, of course, have been one of those who spelt with -σσ- the aorists and futures of the type in question, cf. Legrand’s apparatus.

of his efforts, so that he fell to the ground'; *καππεσέειν* is of course a consecutive infinitive (cf. *C.Q.*, 1967, p. 92, n. 5). Personified *Γῆρας* was an old enemy of Heracles: the hero had defeated him (cf. Roscher, s.v. *Personifikation*, cols. 2083–5); for metaphorical struggles with *Γῆρας* cf., e.g., Pind. *Ol.* 8. 71 *Γῆραος ἀντίπαλον*; for the wording in the line *γῆρας ἀτερπές* cf. Hom. *Il.* 19. 354 *λιμὸς ἀτερπῆς γούναθ' ἔκοιτο*. The semantic trivialization of *δηῖσατο* into *βιῆσατο* was inevitable, as is shown by such *associations d'idées* as Hom. *Il.* 13. 572, οὐκ ἐθέλοντα βίῃ κτλ.: semantic trivialization coincides, in this case, with metrical trivialization.¹

63 ff.

. . . πῶς ἄμμ' ἐθέλεις ὀροθυνέμεν ἄμφω,
κῆδε' ἄλαστα λέγουσα; τὰδ' οὐ νῦν πρῶτα κέκλωνται.

κέκλωνται *WTr*, κέκλωνται *cett.*

The form *κέκλωνται*, preserved by *WTr*, is, once again, the correct reading. Alcmena says 'these misfortunes (i.e. the misfortunes you are crying over) have not been spun to us just now', with which we must understand *ἀλλὰ πάλαι*, cf. Soph. *Phil.* 965 f. *ἐμοὶ μὲν οἶκτος δεινὸς ἐμπέπτωκέ τις / τοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς οὐ νῦν πρῶτον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάλαι*. In both cases, *οὐ νῦν πρῶτον* (*πρῶτα*) with reference to a perfect means *οὐ νεωστί* (cf. Jebb and Schneidewin–Nauck on Soph., loc. cit.), 'nicht erst jetzt' (cf. Passow⁵, s.v. *πρότερος*, iii. 2, e, with its usual accuracy); Alcmena implies, that is, that Megara should long have ceased her lamentations. The banal *κέκλωνται* is a trivialization prompted by the desire to eliminate not so much the violation of the *schema atticum*² as the presence of the difficult form *κέκλωνται*. The latter is a Hellenistically formed perfect 3rd pers. plur. from *κλώθω*:³ for the ending *-νται* attached to a consonantic stem in dental cf. Schwyzler, *Gr. Gr.* i, p. 671, where Apollonius' *ἐρήρεινται*, *ἡρήρειντο* are indicated.⁴

The trivialization⁵ *κέκλωνται* is not only banal but, in the perfect tense, illogical, because we should expect *κλαίονται* 'are being bewailed now', as in fact Megara is doing.

From the above it would appear that it might be worth one's while to revise, in the light of Hellenistic epic usage, the text of the *epyllia* as established by Wilamowitz. In particular, *WTr* deserve, as I hope to have demonstrated, closer investigation.

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¹ The substitution of the metrically orthodox *βιῆσατο* eliminated from the line of Megara the rare Hellenistic metrical feature represented by the scanning *δη* in *δηῖσατο*.

² The *schema atticum* is violated by the author of Megara also in line 56: cf. Breitenstein, op. cit., p. 76. To eliminate it in line 63, it would have sufficed to write *κέκλωσται*.

³ For *κλώθω* 'spin' cf. LSJ, s.v. 2, Kaibel, *Epigr.*, *Index*, s.v.; also Thes., s.v.: perfect passive forms not unusual in the sense 'quae fato destinantur'.

⁴ Cf. also KB ii, p. 425, s.v. *ερείδω*. The parallelism (*-νται* attached to dental stems in *δ* and *θ*, *ερείδω* and *κλώθω*) is obvious: whether the author of Megara was directly inspired by his model Apollonius, or whether both poets are independently employing

a Hellenistic morphological feature, cannot be decided. The endings *-αται*, *-ατο* tended to be felt in Alexandrian epic as singular, cf. KB ii, p. 78, 8 with *Anmerkung*.

⁵ Textual critics should always be on the alert against trivialization of Hellenistic morphological rarities: Apollonius' *ἐξαγείσα* (4. 1686) is trivialized in one MS. into *ἐξαγείσα* (cf. *C.Q.*, 1967, p. 97, n. 2): it is, in reality, a beautiful specimen of Ionism (cf. Hippocrates' *ἐξαγείς*, quoted in KB i, p. 346); the imperative *ἀπαγον* in *A.P.* 5. 53 (52). 4 is, as I have shown (*Eranos*, 1967, p. 41), a Hellenistic form, and the same is the case with *ἀποδοαμένην* in *A.P.* 5. 191. 4; Callimachus' *νησάων* is, of course, a grammatical joke (*Rhein. Mus.*, loc. cit.).