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Theocritus, Homer, and the Dioscuri: *Idyll* 22.137–223*

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Χαίρετε, Λήδας τέκνα, και ἡμετέροις κλέος ὕμνοις
ἐσθλὸν ἀεὶ πέμποιτε. φίλοι δέ τε πάντες ἀοιδοί
Τυνδαρίδαις Ἑλένῃ τε καὶ ἄλλοις ἡρώεσσιν,
Ἴλιον οἳ διέπερσαν ἀρήγοντες Μενελάῳ.
ὑμῖν κῦδος, ἄνακτες, ἐμήσατο Χῖος ἀοιδός,
ὑμνήσας Πριάμοιο πόλιν καὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν
Ἰλιάδας τε μάχας Ἀχιλῆά τε πύργον ἀϋτῆς·
ὑμῖν αὖ καὶ ἐγὼ λιγεῶν μειλίγματα Μουσέων,
οἷ' αὐταὶ παρέχουσι καὶ ὡς ἐμὸς οἶκος ὑπάρχει,
τοῖα φέρω. γεράων δὲ θεοῖς κάλλιστον ἀοιδαί.

Farewell, sons of Leda, and send ever noble renown
upon our hymns. All bards are dear to the sons of
Tyndareus, to Helen, and to the other heroes
that aided Menelaus to sack Ilium.
Glory for you, Princes, the bard of Chios fashioned
when he hymned the town of Priam and the ships of the Achaeans,
the battles round Ilium, and Achilles, that tower of strength in fight;
and to you I too bear the soothing strains of the clear-voiced Muses
such as they give me and my own store provides;
and for gods songs are the fairest of honors.
(Theoc. *Id.* 22. 214–23, after Gow)

I.

In his parting address to Castor and Polydeuces at the conclusion of *Idyll* 22, the Theocritean narrator, calling attention to the relationship between his own poetry and Homeric epic,[1] makes a remarkable claim: Homer, he states, glorified the Dioscuri by composing the *Iliad* (218–20).[2] As A. S. F. Gow

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[1]Scholars have often unnecessarily assumed the narrator of this poem to be identical to Theocritus himself; for the importance of distinguishing between them, see Griffiths 364–65. For the programmatic significance of these lines, see Moulton 42–3; Halperin 251–52.

[2]I here agree with Gow's widely accepted view that the aorist participle ὑμνήσας in 218 refers to a contemporaneous, aspectually unmarked action rather than to a temporally anterior

observes, such an assertion is manifestly at odds with the reality of the epic, in which the twins are mentioned only once, and then in hardly an honorific manner:[3] in the *teichoscopia* of book 3, Helen, unable to find her brothers among the Greek warriors arrayed on the Trojan battlefield, speculates that they have either remained at home in Sparta, or else come to Troy, but stayed away intentionally on the present occasion out of shame (236–242); the truth, the Homeric narrator remarks poignantly, is that the twins are already dead, buried in their native Lacedaemon (243–44).

The apparent incongruity between the claim made by the Theocritean narrator and the insignificant part played by the twins in the epic has been variously interpreted by modern scholars. Gow dismisses it as a mark of sloppy if not incompetent composition; others are less hostile. Effe, for example, suggests that here as elsewhere Theocritus ironically and humorously subverts the mythological and literary tradition,[4] while Hutchinson argues that implicit in the final lines of the poem is "an *a fortiori* argument" according to which the honorands—and the reader—are to contrast with the brief mention of Dioscuri in the *Iliad* the extensive treatment they receive in the two long narratives which make up the bulk of the idyll (162 n. 33). In an article devoted to the account of the conflict between the Dioscuri and Apharetiadae which is related in the second of these narratives, F. T. Griffiths offers a different approach to the problem. As has been widely recognized, the narrative, which is addressed exclusively to Castor,[5] is deeply indebted in diction, style, and subject-matter to Homeric epic—and particularly to the

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one; as Gow 407 points out, the narrator's claim would be problematic even if the participle were taken to mean that Homer honored the Dioscuri after composing the *Iliad*: "[t]he only early epic poems known to celebrate them are the 33rd Homeric Hymn of nineteen lines, and the 17th of five, which it is absurd to mention in the same breath as the *Iliad*; and the *Cypria*, of which they were in no sense heroes and which T. seems not to have ascribed to Homer."

[3]Gow, "Twenty-second Idyll," 16 repeats the substance of the observations made in his commentary *ad loc.* Even if White 407–8 is correct in suggesting that καὶ ἄλλοις ἠρώεσσιν in 216 means not "and also the heroes" but (as it might) "and the other heroes," ὑμῖν in 218 must at least include the Dioscuri, since it would be extremely odd if ἄνακτες, with its special cultic relevance for the twins, referred only to the heroes who fought at Troy. Dover's attempt to escape the difficulty by arguing that ἄνακτες (218) and θεοῖς (223) both refer more generally to the gods and heroes of legend as a whole excessively reduces the force of the final line of the poem; cf. Griffiths 363.

[4]Effe 70; the position is rejected by Moulton 43; cf. Zanker 87, who less persuasively argues that the pathos of the Homeric scene extends to the idyll as well.

[5]Theocritus' poem, unusually, devotes individual stories to each of the twins: after an invocation to both, the narrator recounts, in lines 27–134, the story of Pollux' victorious boxing match with Amycus, before turning in line 135 to address Castor. See Gow 383; cf. Moulton 42 with n. 4.

Iliad. Griffiths (376) suggests succinctly that the "high heroic style" of this episode informs the claim made in the farewell by the narrator: "[h]aving already in the Castor episode depicted the Dioscuri as the Homeric heroes they never were, he now simply asserts that claim baldly, making no effort to decide whether they belong among ἡρώεσσιν (v.216) or θεοῖς (v. 223)."

Closer consideration of the Theocritean account of the Dioscuri's strife with the Apharetiadae provides some support for Griffiths' interpretation, while at the same time indicating that the connection between this narrative and the narrator's incongruous assertion about the prominence of the twins in the epic is yet more complex than he suggests. In the present paper, I will argue that the Theocritean narrative—and in particular the long monologue by Lynceus which comprises more than half of it—is not merely "Homeric" in character, but in fact recalls by theme, structure, and diction a particular scene from the *Iliad*: the duel between Paris and Menelaus in books 3 and 4.[6] Significantly, this battle between Helen's present and former husbands is precisely the occasion in the Homeric epic on which she unsuccessfully searches for her brothers and offers her (mistaken) explanation of their absence. Moreover, although the cause of the Dioscuri's deaths is not explicitly stated by the narrator of the *Iliad*, the engagement with the Apharetiadae, which in all other accounts ends in the death of Castor, is elsewhere directly connected with their failure to make the voyage to Troy: Theocritus' narrative allows both Castor and Polydeuces to survive unscathed the encounter with their cousins and thus eliminates the most probable true cause of their death—and consequently does away with the reason for their absence from the battlefield. In what follows, I will examine these issues more fully, tracing out in detail the complex relationships between the Homeric and Theocritean scenes and finally returning to consider the significance of this reworking of the *Iliad* for the strange view of that poem set forth by the narrator of *Idyll* 22 in his farewell to the twins.

II.

The Theocritean narrative of the violent conflict between the Dioscuri and the Apharetiadae is remarkable in several respects. It is, to begin with, the first surviving literary account to make the dispute arise as a direct consequence of the Dioscuri's abduction of the Leucippides after the girls have already been

[6]Critics have often noticed that the narrative is cast "in the manner of a Homeric duel," but no one to my knowledge has pointed out the specific relationship which it has to this Iliadic scene.

formally betrothed to the Apharetiadae.[7] This version, which is probably not original to Theocritus himself and is possibly even of great antiquity,[8] has, as Gow complains, the unusual effect of placing the Dioscuri at a clear moral disadvantage in a hymn ostensibly designed to praise them: in depriving their own cousins of the girls who have been committed to them, the twins appear unambiguously as the aggressors.[9] At the same time, the account in *Idyll* 22 is unique among treatments of the engagement between the Dioscuri and Apharetiadae in having Castor and Lynceus undertake to settle the matter for both sides by fighting a duel, proposed by Lynceus in the long monologue which occupies more than half of the narrative.[10] Gow (384) observes, not without scorn, that this battle of champions serves the function of providing

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[7]Pindar, apparently following the version told in the *Cypria*, makes the cause of strife the Dioscuri's theft of their cousins' cattle (*Nem.* 10.60 with Σ *ad loc.*; cf. Σ Lycophr. *Alex.* 547 [p. 194 Scheer]); for the version recounted in the *Cypria* see A. Severyns, *Le cycle épique dans l' école d' Aristarque* (Liège 1928) 275–81; Wilamowitz 189–90. Apollodorus (*Bibl.* 3.11.2) reports another, certainly archaic, version, in which the conflict arises over Idas' unjust division of spoils raided in conjunction with the Dioscuri. The story of the abduction of the Leucippides by the Dioscuri is itself certainly archaic, and frequently depicted in the visual arts (see *LIMC* s.v. *Dioskouroi*, nos. 189–210; cf. Paus. 1.18.1, 3.17.3, 3.18.11, 4.31.9); the abduction of the girls and the conflict with the Apharetiadae are juxtaposed on a red-figure lekythos from Apulia of c. 350–40 B. C. (*LIMC* s.v. *Dioskouroi* 203 [cf. 217]), though the two episodes are not otherwise explicitly connected until Theocritus' idyll: for the the armed men who oppose the twins' abduction of the girls on the north frieze of the heroon at Gjölbaschi-Trysa (*LIMC* 208, c. 370 B. C.) see Gow 384 n. 1.

[8]Cf. Σ Pind. *Nem.* 10.60; C. Robert, *Die griechische Heldensage*[4] (Berlin 1920) 317. After Theocritus, the Leucippides appear as the direct cause of the dispute in Ovid *Fast.* 5.699–720, Hygin. *Fab.* 80, and Lact. *Div. Inst.* 1.10.5 (34 Brandt).

[9]Gow 384 (cf. below, 343-46). Other scholars have for the most part agreed that here the Dioscuri are cast in an unfavorable light. It has been variously suggested that this portrayal of them forms part of an ironic subversion of the mythological tradition (Effe 68–71), or as a literary critique of post-Homeric epic (Moulton 43–47; Griffiths 358–63; cf. E. Schwartz, *Charakterköpfe aus der antiken Literatur* [Leipzig 1903] ii 63); for criticism of such interpretations see the ultimately inconclusive discussion by Hutchinson 166–67, who suggests that Idas' disastrous violation of the terms of the truce at the end of the dispute somewhat alters the moral imbalance between the two sides. Zanker 86–7 seeks more generally to mitigate the culpability of the Dioscuri in this episode, but his arguments largely depend on the existence of the lacuna and change of speaker between lines 170 and 171 unnecessarily posited by Wilamowitz (see next note).

[10]Most editors in this century, including Gow and Dover, have accepted the view of Wilamowitz 191–93 that a long section of text has been lost between lines 170 and 171, and that lines 171 ff. are spoken by Castor. Wilamowitz' arguments have, however, been persuasively disputed by Griffiths 353–57 and White 404–6 (cf. M. Sanchez-Wildberger, *Theokrit-Interpretationen* [Zürich 1955] 16–17; Hutchinson 164 with n. 135; A. Kurtz, *MH* 48 [1991] 237–47): ὅμαιμος in line 173 does not require that Castor is the speaker, and the variant Λυγκεύς for Κάστωρ in line 175 would have easily been imported into the text, perhaps originally as a gloss on ἐγώ (Griffiths 354).

Castor with an exploit of his own to balance the story of Polydeuces' boxing match with Amycus which is recounted earlier in the idyll. To say this, however, does not ultimately explain the presence of this feature in Theocritus' poem, for other narrative strategies might have served the same function equally well. In fact, I would suggest, the apparently innovative introduction of a duel into the conflict between the Dioscuri and Apharetiadae is to be read in close conjunction with the use of the Leucippides as the object of dispute. In the context of a narrative composed in overtly Homeric style, the combination of these two otherwise extraordinary features has the effect of recalling for the reader the duel between Paris and Menelaus in the *Iliad*, a duel which is likewise fought to determine which of the combatants will have possession of an abducted woman.[11]

The long monologue by Lynceus which occupies the first half of the narrative contains allusions to several different points in the Homeric account of the events which precipitate the duel between Paris and Menelaus. Lynceus' challenge to Castor in the second half of the monologue provides a convenient starting point. He issues his proposal of a duel after criticizing his cousins' aggressive behavior and reporting the contents of pleas made in the past in an effort to settle the matter peacefully. The opening words of Lynceus' challenge seem to be adapted from Paris' offer to fight a duel with Menelaus. Paris makes this offer after being harshly rebuked by Hector, who has spied his brother hastily withdrawing at the approach of Menelaus. Paris' speech in the *Iliad* opens with a long simile in which he compares Hector's heart to an axe:

> Ἕκτορ, ἐπεί με κατ' αἶσαν ἐνείκεσας οὐδ' ὑπὲρ αἶσαν,ᾧ
> αἰεί τοι *κραδίη* πέλεκυς ὥς ἐστιν ἀτειρής
> ὅς τ' εἶσιν διὰ δουρὸς ὑπ' ἀνέρος, ὅς ῥά τε τέχνῃ
> νήϊον ἐκτάμνῃσιν, ὀφέλλει δ' ἀνδρὸς ἐρωήν·
> ὣς σοὶ ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν ἀτάρβητος νόος ἐστίν
>
> Hector, seeing you have scolded me rightly, not beyond measure—
> still, your heart forever is weariless, like an axe-blade
> driven by a man's strength through the timber, one who, well skilled,
> hews a piece for a ship, driven on by the force of a man's strength: such

[11]A referee for this journal points out that the duel between Lynceus and Castor, like that between Paris and Menelaus, is one of *younger* brothers. This fact is emphasized by Lynceus in 176 ὀπλοτέρῳ γεγαῶτε, an expression which, we should note, is playfully modelled on *Il.* 4.324–25, αἰχμὰς δ' αἰχμάσσουσι νεώτεροι, οἵ περ ἐμεῖο / ὀπλότεροι γεγάασι πεποίθασίν τε βίηφιν (cf. *h.H. Dem.* 116 τηλίκαι, ὡς σὺ γὰρ ὧδε, καὶ ὀπλότεραι γεγάασιν), where the aged Nestor, having been told to remain behind the lines with the older men, expatiates on the different roles of the young and old in war: the young fight while the old give counsel.

is the heart in your breast, unshakable.
(*Il.* 3. 59–63, tr. R. Lattimore)

The actual proposal comes four lines later, following an admonition for Hector not to reject the gifts of Aphrodite: νῦν αὖτῷ εἴ μῷ *ἐθέλεις πολεμίζειν* ἠδὲ μάχεσθαι (*Il.* 3.67). Lynceus, for his part, utters a similar protasis, which as in the Iliadic passage immediately follows an assertion about the harshness of the interlocutors (169) and a brief and futile injunction (169–70 ἀλλ' ἔτι καὶ νῦν / πείθεσθ'):

εἰ δ' ὑμῖν *κραδίη πόλεμον ποθεῖ*, αἵματι δὲ χρὴ
νεῖκος ἀναρρήξαντας ὁμοίιον ἔγχεα λοῦσαι (*Id.* 22.171–2)

The similarities between the protases in content and structural context—as well as, for that matter, metrical position and shape—make it plausible to suggest a direct connection between them; the use of κραδίη as the subject of Lynceus' protasis may hearken back to Paris' concern with the hardness of his brother's heart. While necessarily speculative, these suggestions receive some support from the presence of what seems to be another, more complex, reference to Paris' speech. In line 169, Lynceus complains that the Dioscuri remain unmoved by his frequent attempts at dissuading them from pursuing the Leucippides: σφὼ γὰρ ἀκηλήτω καὶ ἀπηνέες. Before Theocritus, the adjective ἀκήλητος occurs only three times, at *Od.* 10.329, Pl. *Phaedr.* 259b1, and Soph. *Trach.* 998.[12] The Homeric line is spoken by Circe as she supplicates Odysseus: σοὶ δέ τις ἐν στήθεσσιν ἀκήλητος νόος ἐστίν. This line, which was athetized by Aristarchus,[13] in turn bears a close—and unique—similarity to Paris' response, at *Il.* 3.63, to criticism from Hector: ὣς σοὶ ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν ἀτάρβητος νόος ἐστίν. Many commentators, including now Alfred Heubeck, have felt that *Od.* 10.329 has been "modelled" directly on *Il.* 3.63. Such a view, whatever its accuracy for the composition of the *Odyssey*, probably represents the attitude of learned Hellenistic readers thoroughly familiar with both texts. The disputed authenticity of the line in antiquity, indeed, would only have served to emphasize its apparent "dependence" on *Il.* 3.63. Aristarchus athetized it on the grounds that it stands in conflict with *Od.* 10.240 (αὐτὰρ

[12]The *TLG* reveals that before Nonnus, who makes relatively frequent use of the adjective (8x), ἀκήλητος occurs in poetry elsewhere only in Damagetus 2.8 P (*A.P.* 7.9.8); in prose it appears principally in discussions of *Od.* 10.329.

[13]Σ H *ad loc.*; cf. A. Ludwich, *Aristarchs homerische Textkritik* (Leipzig 1884) I 583. The authenticity of the line has also been questioned, though unnecessarily, by modern scholars; cf. A. Heubeck in A. Heubeck–A. Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey, Volume II: Books ix–xvi* (Oxford 1989) *ad loc.*

νοῦς ἦν ἔμπεδος ὡς τὸ πάρος περ); its status may already have been an object of scholarly discussion in Theocritus' day. In any case, it is plausible to suggest that for a Hellenistic readership the rare adjective ἀκήλητος at *Id.* 22.169 would have evoked not only the one Homeric line in which the word appears, but also its original "source," which itself occurs in a parallel context and expresses a virtually identical sentiment: Paris in *Il.* 3.63, like Lynceus in *Id.* 22.169, is making an assertion about his interlocutor's fierceness immediately before he proposes a duel.

Cumulatively, the evidence is suggestive, for while neither the phrase κραδίη πόλεμον ποθεῖ nor the adjective ἀκηλήτω is conclusive in and of itself, the presence, within three consecutive lines, of two potential allusions to Paris' speech seems unlikely to be coincidental: the combined effect of these expressions is to recall Paris' response to Hector at *Il.* 3.59 ff. Other passages in Lynceus' monologue lead the reader to subsequent points in the preliminaries to the Homeric duel. Rather than establishing a simple correspondence between Lynceus (and his brother) and Menelaus, the monologue instead joins together allusions to several different speeches delivered in the first half of *Iliad* 3. As has been recently observed, for instance, Lynceus' concern about limiting the suffering for both sides (176–80) is generally reminiscent of the concern which Menelaus expresses at *Il.* 3.98–100 in accepting his rival's challenge.[14]

More interesting, however, is the association of Lynceus and Menelaus implicit in lines 152–53:

> ἦ μὴν πολλάκις ὔμμιν ἐνώπιον ἀμφοτέροισιν
> αὐτὸς ἐγὼ τάδ' ἔειπα καὶ *οὐ πολύμυθος ἐών περ.*

The adjective πολύμυθος is, like ἀκήλητος, not commonly found in poetry, appearing before the Hellenistic period only at Pind. *Pyth.* 9.79 (ἀρεταὶ δ' αἰεὶ μεγάλαι πολύμυθοι) and in two Homeric passages. The Theocritean line, in fact, bears a close relationship to both of these last two. Syntactically, it is suggestive of *Od.* 2.200: οὔτ' οὖν Τηλέμαχον, μάλα *περ πολύμυθον ἐόντα.* These words are spoken by Eurymachus in the Ithacan assembly as he pokes fun at Telemachus' vain complaints about the suitors and their improper behavior: the suitors, Eurymachus says, will never give up their μνηστὺς ἀργαλέη, since they are not afraid of anyone—certainly not Telemachus, for all his speechifying. The Odyssean passage is thus thematically relevant to the

[14]Zanker 86, who does not take account of the arguments of Griffiths and White in assuming that the speaker of lines 171 ff. is Castor (see above, n. 10).

context in Theocritus' poem, where Lynceus is reporting his own futile attempts to convince the Dioscuri that it is improper for them to pursue the Leucippides (154–5 οὐχ οὕτω, φίλοι ἄνδρες, ἀριστήεσσιν ἔοικε / μνηστεύειν ἀλόχους αἷς νυμφίοι ἤδη ἑτοῖμοι) and that they should seek brides among any number of other women (156–64; note 161 ὀπυιέμεν)—possibilities which Eurymachus in the *Odyssey* goes on explicitly to reject in similar terms (cf. 206–7 οὐδὲ μετ' ἄλλας / ἐρχόμεθ', ἃς ἐπιεικὲς ὀπυιέμεν ἑκάστῳ).[15] Lynceus' reported speech is thus implicitly linked to Telemachus' criticism of the suitors, and at one level, his assertion that he is in fact not a man of many words might be understood, against the background of the Odyssean passage in which the adjective πολύμυθος occurs, as a 'response' to Eurymachus' sarcastic description Telemachus in *Od.* 2.

At the same time, however, the resonances of Lynceus' claim that he is οὐ πολύμυθος extend in a different direction, for the reader will also recall the only passage in the Homeric corpus where anyone is explicitly described as such. This is *Il.* 3.213–15, where Antenor contrasts the manners in which Menelaus and Odysseus spoke when they came to Troy in an attempt to win back Helen (206 σεῦ ἕνεκ' ἀγγελίης):

> ἦ τοι μὲν Μενέλαος ἐπιτροχάδην ἀγόρευε,
> παῦρα μὲν ἀλλὰ μάλα λιγέως, ἐπεὶ *οὐ πολύμυθος*
> οὐδ' ἀφαμαρτοεπής.
>
> Menelaus indeed spoke rapidly, in few words
> but exceedingly lucid, since he was no long speaker
> nor one who wasted his words... (tr. R. Lattimore)

This passage too has a striking contextual relevance to Lynceus' monologue. Antenor makes his remarks in the course of the *teichoscopia*, as Helen and the Trojan elders survey the enemy forces on the occasion of Paris' duel with Menelaus. Significantly, he refers to an event from the past, the embassy of Menelaus and Odysseus to Troy. This mission, which is only briefly mentioned in the *Iliad*, seems to have been recounted more fully in the *Cypria*, and is the subject of a dithyramb by Bacchylides, who has Menelaus deliver a speech imploring the Trojans to behave justly and thus avoid divine punishment (fr. 15.50–64 S–M). Antenor, who is concerned only to compare the two Greek

[15]The elegant catalogue of cities with potential brides for the Dioscuri which Lynceus proceeds to report in lines 156–61 is, as Gow noted, distantly reminiscent of *Od.* 21.250–2 (Eurymachus) or of *Il.* 9.395–96 (Achilles). In the first of these passages, Eurymachus, having failed the test of the bow, comments on the existence of other women whom it is possible to marry.

ambassadors, does not specify the contents of the μῦθοι καὶ μήδεα which they wove for the Trojans, but clearly we are to think of attempts to persuade them to give up Helen. In Theocritus, Lynceus speaks of the many former occasions on which he attempted to dissuade the Dioscuri from pursuing the Leucippides. Thus in both cases, the aggrieved man, who is described (or describes himself) as οὐ πολύμυθος, has at some point preceding the present duel sought to persuade his rival to give up the woman or women in dispute. The parallelism between the two passages is striking and unlikely to be coincidental.

As commentators on *Id.* 22 have pointed out, no other source provides any evidence for the period of discussion mentioned by Lynceus, and it may well be a Theocritean innovation designed to create a parallelism between Lynceus' monologue and the events recounted in *Iliad* 3. Certainly it establishes an implicit connection between the plea related in lines 154–66 and the speech or speeches delivered by Menelaus on his mission to Troy. Thus the adjective πολύμυθος is heavily freighted with significance in Lynceus' monologue, for, as we have seen, in both of the Homeric passages in which the word occurs it is used in connection with a futile attempt to end improper behavior concerning a woman. Both contexts are recalled: the contents of the opening lines of Lynceus' plea are generally reminiscent of the debate in the Ithacan assembly; the surrounding context runs parallel to that of *Iliad* 3. In the *Iliad*, of course, Antenor, who has different concerns, does not report the contents of any speech which Menelaus made on his embassy. Lynceus' entreaty, recounted in full detail, thus represents an expansion of the Iliadic model: Theocritus here engages in the typically Alexandrian practice of elaborating that which in the Homeric tradition is left undeveloped.

We have so far seen within Lynceus' monologue connections to several different passages in the Homeric account of the preliminaries to the duel in the *Iliad*: Paris' proposal, Menelaus' acceptance of his challenge, and Antenor's description of the way in which Menelaus spoke on his embassy to Troy. As is to be expected, the monologue reworks language from other Homeric contexts as well, but the lexical and situational allusions to the duel in *Iliad* 3, when taken together, produce a particularly marked effect. Understood in this context, the opening lines of the monologue acquire special interest. In both poems, criticism of improper behavior involving women who have already been formally betrothed or married to others immediately precedes the proposals of the duels. The contents of these criticisms, however, are so strikingly different that it is reasonable, in light of the other points of contact between the two episodes, to suggest that the Theocritean passage should be read as a direct inversion of a Homeric antecedent. Paris' offer to fight with

Menelaus in the *Iliad*, on the one hand, is provoked by Hector's rebuke of his unmartial and cowardly interest in amatory matters (38–57). After witnessing his brother's cowardly retreat from Menelaus, who has just sprung from his chariot (29) in delight at the sight of his hated rival, Hector hurls his famous reproach:

> Δύσπαρι, εἶδος ἄριστε, γυναιμανές, ἠπεροπευτά,
> αἴθ' ὄφελες ἄγονός τ' ἔμεναι ἄγαμός τ' ἀπολέσθαι (39–40)

The Achaean forces, he suggests, must be laughing at Paris οὕνεκα καλὸν / εἶδος ἔπ', ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔστι βίη φρεσὶν οὐδέ τις ἀλκή (44–5). In Hector's eyes, such cowardly behavior as his brother has just displayed hardly befits the man who has seduced and led away the wife of a mighty warrior:

> ἦ τοιόσδε ἐὼν ἐν ποντοπόροισι νέεσσι
> πόντον ἐπιπλώσας, ἑτάρους ἐρίηρας ἀγείρας,
> μιχθεὶς ἀλλοδαποῖσι γυναῖκ' εὐειδέ' ἀνῆγες
> ἐξ ἀπίης γαίης, νυὸν ἀνδρῶν αἰχμητάων,
> πατρί τε σῷ μέγα πῆμα πόλῃ τε παντί τε δήμῳ,
> δυσμενέσιν μὲν χάρμα, κατηφείην δὲ σοὶ αὐτῷ
>
> Were you like this that time when in sea-wandering vessels
> assembling oarsmen to help you you sailed over the water,
> and mixed with the outlanders, and carried away a fair woman
> from a remote land, whose lord's kin were spearmen and fighters,
> to your father a big sorrow, and your city, and all your people,
> to yourself a thing shameful but bringing joy to the enemy?
> (46–51, tr. R. Lattimore)

Nor will Paris' charms provide any protection in actual battle: οὐκ ἄν τοι χραίσμῃ κίθαρις τά τε δῶρ' Ἀφροδίτης / ἥ τε κόμη τό τε εἶδος, ὅτ' ἐν κονίῃσι μιγείης (54–5).

In *Idyll* 22, on the other hand, Lynceus' challenge to Castor immediately follows his own criticism of the Dioscuri's appropriation of the Leucippides. In the opening lines of his rebuke of his cousins, made after both pairs of brothers have leapt from their chariots in suitably Homeric fashion, he expresses his surprise at the aggressive fashion in which the Dioscuri meet the armed response of their rivals:

> δαιμόνιοι, τί μάχης ἰμείρετε; πῶς δ' ἐπὶ νύμφαις
> ἀλλοτρίαις χαλεποί, γυμναὶ δ' ἐν χερσὶ μάχαιραι; (145–46)

At first glance, Lynceus' amazement at the Dioscuri's willingness actually to fight over the girls is itself somewhat incongruous: after all, the Apharetiadae

have just been pursuing them in full armor (Griffiths 355–56; Dover 247). His great surprise, however, is more readily comprehensible when understood against the background of Hector's censure of Paris. Here, I would suggest, the narrative inverts, in a manner typical of Alexandrian poetry, Hector's criticism of Paris and the martial ethos of his Homeric model:[16] whereas Hector chides his brother for shirking battle, the Dioscuri, in Lynceus' eyes, are overly aggressive in seeking it.

A similar inversion is perhaps to be found at the end of the actual fighting. The narrator's description of the battle, which begins almost immediately after the conclusion of the monologue, elegantly reworks language from throughout the Homeric corpus, without specifically recalling the duel in *Iliad* 3.[17] The combat is fought fiercely, first with spears and then with swords, until Castor finally manages to sever his opponent's fingers; Lynceus drops his weapon and attempts to flee, but Castor, pursuing swiftly, slays him with a thrust of his sword. Herein lies an obvious difference between the Theocritean narrative and its Homeric counterpart. Both Paris and Lynceus are incapacitated by their rivals; in the *Iliad*, however, Aphrodite intercedes and snatches her favorite away from the field of battle, while Theocritus' Lynceus is mercilessly—and unnecessarily—disemboweled by Castor (cf. Griffiths 357).

Another point of contact between the two episodes, this time in the opening lines of the idyll, sheds light on the murder of Lynceus and provides support for seeing it against the backdrop of Paris' survival of his own defeat. Theocritus' poem begins with an invocation to the twins in their capacity as saviors of men in mortal peril (6), of horses in the panic of battle (7), and of ships that founder at sea. The last member of this tricolon is expanded into a description of just such a ship (8–16), culminating in a short address to the twins themselves: ἀλλ' ἔμπης ὑμεῖς γε καὶ ἐκ βυθοῦ ἕλκετε νῆας / αὐτοῖσιν ναύτῃσιν *οἴομένοις θανέεσθαι* (17–18). The literary ancestry of the final phrase links the sailors rescued by the Dioscuri with Paris in the *Iliad* and, consequently, endows the subsequent slaying of Lynceus by Castor with special point. In poetry before Theocritus, such a collocation of the participle of οἴομαι and the future infinitive of θνῄσκω is to be found only in three

[16]For Theocritean inversion of Homeric models see, e.g. the study of *Idyll* 7 by G. Giangrande, *AC* 37 (1968) 491–533; cf. Halperin 217–9.

[17]In his displeasure with the entire narrative, Gow pronounces the duel "largely a pastiche from the *Iliad*, which can have cost T[heocritus], familiar as he was with Homer, but little pains" (383); see, however, the more favorable assessment of Hutchinson 165–66.

passages of Homer.[18] Odysseus uses it in his address to his κραδίη at *Od.* 20.21 (ὄφρα σε μῆτις / ἐξάγαγ' ἐξ ἄντροιο *ὀϊόμενον θανέεσθαι*), and, at the end of *Iliad* 15, Ajax is said to withdraw from the Trojan onslaught ὀϊόμενος θανέεσθαι (728). Thematically closer to the Theocritean passage is *Iliad* 4.12, where the expression is also applied to a man saved unexpectedly by divine intervention. Zeus, teasing Hera for allowing Aphrodite to intercede on Paris' behalf, remarks: καὶ νῦν ἐξέσαωσεν *ὀϊόμενον θανέεσθαι* (12). That the narrator of *Idyll* 22 describes the sailors rescued by the Dioscuri in precisely the terms used by Zeus of Paris at the conclusion of his duel with Menelaus lends particular irony to Castor's killing of Lynceus later in the poem. It is, indeed, a critical commonplace that the twins' behavior in the Castor episode strangely disappoints the expectation, firmly established in the first half of the poem (and, in general, by the hymnic form), that they will act virtuously. The cruelty of Castor's disemboweling of Lynceus is reinforced by the implicit contrast with Aphrodite's rescue of her favorite, an act with which the Dioscuri's salvation of sailors is connected in the opening invocation. The inversion is pointed: while Paris in the *Iliad* is saved by precisely the sort of divine assistance for which the Dioscuri are praised in the opening lines of the idyll, his counterpart at the conclusion of the Castor episode is savagely slain.

Nor, in the end, is the Apharetiadae's misfortune restricted to Lynceus, in spite of his good intentions in proposing the single combat with Castor, for, as in all versions of the episode, his brother also perishes in the dispute. The manner of Idas' demise, indeed, constitutes a final point of contact with the Homeric scene. In both Theocritus and Homer the duels conclude with a violation of the terms of the truce established at the outset, and in each case the victor is saved from harm by divine intervention. Idas' attempt to avenge his brother's death, for which he is struck down with a thunderbolt from Zeus,[19] mirrors Pandarus' attempt to shoot Menelaus, who has just been declared victorious by default, at *Il.* 4.105–40.[20] In the *Iliad*, Athena averts the arrow, which merely grazes Menelaus' skin, and while Pandarus, unlike Lynceus, is

[18]Otherwise only at Xen. *HG* 5.2.6 and, after Theocritus, in passages derivative of Homer (Galen, Eustathius, Porphyry).

[19]Theocritus seems to have in mind Pindar's account at *Nem.* 10.67–72 (cf. esp. *Nem.* 10.71–2 and *Id.* 22.210–212).

[20]There are of course differences in the two situations: in the *Iliad*, Pandarus is prompted to shoot by Athena, disguised as Antenor, while in Theocritus Idas' inherent violence leads him to desecrate his father's tomb and violate the terms of the agreement; in the one case, the violation results in the resumption of all-out war, in the other it allows the conflict to come to an end. Such differences do not seem to me, however, to militate against the interpretation proposed here.

not immediately punished for his violation of the oath, Agamemnon makes it clear that retribution from Zeus awaits the Trojans in the end (160–68).

III.

The preceding discussion suggests that significant connections exist between the Castor episode and the Homeric duel between Paris and Menelaus, and in particular between Lynceus' monologue and speeches delivered in the first half of *Iliad* 3. Remarkably, the battle of champions in *Iliad* 3 and 4 is also precisely the episode in which the twins are mentioned, very briefly, and in which, inasmuch as their mortal lives are already finished, they are notable merely for their absence. Helen's futile search for her brothers, after all, forms the climax of her survey of the Greek forces during the armistice called for the duel. We have here, I would suggest, a case of playful literary revisionism. The Homeric narrator, in correcting Helen's mistaken interpretation of her brothers' absence from the plain of Troy, is hardly concerned to report the cause of their ill fate; nonetheless, the Hellenistic reader of the *Iliad* would naturally have understood their failure to appear among the Greek forces arrayed for the duel as a direct result of the conflict with Idas and Lynceus.[21] The hostilities between the Dioscuri and Apharetiadae, after all, represent the standard occasion for the termination of the twins' continuous life among men—and for their apotheosis as well:[22] Castor is slain in all other accounts of the episode,[23] and his demise provides the motivation for the concession, won from Zeus by Polydeuces, that the twins should reside on alternate days in Olympus and in Hades. In the *Cypria*, at any rate, Castor's death at the hands of the Apharetiadae seems to have provided

[21]On the Homeric passage in general see A. Parry, *YCS* 20 (1966) 197 ff. In the *Iliad*, of course, the narrator, concerned to avoid any suggestion that either of the Dioscuri are of divine parentage, does not distinguish between the fate of Castor and that of Pollux. The Hellenistic reader, however, will presumably have read this passage against the similarly-phrased treatment of the twins' death at *Od.* 11.300–305, where the pair are said to alternate in Hades between life and death.

[22]There are, to be sure, other versions of Castor's death. Several late sources (Avien. *Arat.* 373–75, Σ German. *Arat.* 147 [p.127 Br], Hygin. *poet. Astr.* 2.22) report that he was killed in a battle between Lacedaemonians and Athenians. At Eur. *Hel.* 142 Teucer reports two variant accounts: some say that the twins have become stars (cf. *Tro.* 1001), others that they have killed themself for Helen's sake (σφαγαῖς ἀδελφῆς οὕνεκ' ἐκπνεῦσαι βίον); the latter is presumably a Euripidean innovation (cf. A. M. Dale, *Euripides: Helen* [Oxford 1967] *ad loc.*) The existence of these versions, however, does not diminish the oddity of Castor's survival in the fight with the Apharetiadae.

[23]In most versions Castor is killed immediately, usually by Idas, though occasionally by Lynceus (Ovid *Fast.* 5.709–10); only in Hygin. *Fab.* 80 does Castor achieve even a transitory success: there, he manages to slay Lynceus, but is himself killed immediately by Idas.

the motivation for their failure to participate in the Trojan campaign (Bethe 1114), and in Lycophron's *Alexandra* Cassandra presents the twins' fate in the dispute as a gift (albeit small) to the Trojans, who are thus spared facing them as opponents on the battlefield: καὶ τῶν (*sc.* Castor and Polydeuces) μὲν ἡμῖν εὐνάσει δαίμων δόρυ, / βαιόν τι μῆχαρ ἐν κακοῖς δωρούμενος (567–68; cf. 535–43). It is thus of special significance that the account of the episode in *Idyll* 22, designed as it is to remind us of the very passage from the *Iliad* in which the twins are mentioned as already buried, is also the first and only version of the strife in which both of the twins, with Zeus's assistance, manage to survive unscathed. The narrator of the idyll makes the Homeric duel from which the Dioscuri are so conspicuously absent the model for his own account of the episode in which their life on earth traditionally comes to an end; then, by allowing both of the twins to escape the conflict alive, he eliminates what, in the *Iliad*, is the implicit reason for their inability to participate in the expedition to Troy in the first place.

This manipulation of the literary and mythological tradition continues in, and is reinforced by, the farewell address to the twins. In lines 216–17, the narrator includes the Dioscuri among the heroes who sacked Troy ἀρήγοντες Μενελάῳ. This expression, as Gow notes in his commentary, recalls *Il.* 4.7 δοιαὶ μὲν Μενελάῳ ἀρηγόνες εἰσὶ θεάων, spoken by Zeus in reference to the duel with Paris.[24] The inclusion of the twins among the Homeric heroes in these terms, the striking assertion that Homer glorified the twins by composing the *Iliad*, and even, perhaps, the explicit reference to Helen in line 216 serve to direct the reader to the one passage of the epic in which they are in fact mentioned, and thus underscore the literary conceit in the account of the dispute with the Apharetiadae. Conversely, the narrator's strange view of the Dioscuri's place in the *Iliad* is, as Griffiths observes, itself colored by the immediately preceding narrative. Having already presented the Dioscuri not merely as "the Homeric heroes they never were" but also as major participants in a scene precisely parallel to the episode from which they are so strikingly absent in the *Iliad*, and having allowed both of them to survive the episode in which they are normally killed, the narrator speaks in his farewell to the twins as though they had in fact made the voyage to Troy—as heroes, for if they have not perished in the dispute with the Apharetiadae, neither have they been apotheosized as a result of that episode: while they are ultimately treated

[24] I owe this point to one of the journal's referees.

explicitly as gods (223), the Castor narrative leaves the manner of their apotheosis unexplained.[25]

There is a lighthearted irony inherent in the idyll's revision of literary history. Theocritus will have fully expected his readership to recall the circumstances in which the twins are briefly mentioned in the *Iliad*, and, as Hutchinson suggests, to reflect on the differences between Homer's treatment of them and his own. Not only has the narrator of the idyll, unlike the narrator of the *Iliad*, treated the twins at length, but, more specifically, has in the Castor narrative bestowed on them a new status as Homeric heroes. At the same time, as has frequently been observed, the moral status of the Dioscuri's traditionally "Homeric" behavior in the Castor narrative is at least potentially problematic. In the preceding discussion, I have suggested that the account of the Dioscuri's dispute with the Apharetiadae both recalls the duel between Paris and Menelaus and inverts the martial ethos embodied at the opening of that scene by Hector. Lynceus, like Paris, the proposer of the duel in Homer, is more a lover than a fighter (cf. Griffiths 356), and if he is a naive buffoon, he also wins our sympathy in a way that Paris perhaps does not. If such considerations are correct, the inversion reinforces the view that the second half of the poem undercuts the idyll's pretentions of being a traditional hymn of praise, pretentions which are upheld in the first half of the poem. That a Hellenistic poet should play with the expectations established by his chosen form hardly surprises, and *Idyll* 22 is a consummately Alexandrian poem: Theocritus' own contribution to the Dioscuri, the final lines of the epilogue suggest, consists of λιγεῶν μειλίγματα Μουσέων and is drawn from his own distinctive poetic store (ὡς ἐμὸς οἶκος ὑπάρχει)—that is to say, it is poetry which possesses all the learning, refinement, and wit which are the hallmarks of "Callimachean" λεπτότης.[26]

[25]Against this background, their inclusion among those who sacked Ilium ἀρήγοντες Μενελάῳ has special point: in the *Iliad*, the reader will remember, the Μενελάῳ ἀρηγόνες mentioned by Zeus at *Il.*4.7, to which Theocritus alludes in 217, are not heroes but goddesses.

[26]For the programmatic significance of the adjective λιγύς and its derivates, cf. especially the famous proem of the *Aetia*, where Callimachus notes that his own "slender" poetry is written for those who prefer the λιγὺς ἦχος of the cicada to the braying of asses (Call. fr. 1.29–30 Pf.); cf. above, n. 1.

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