THE LOEB CLASSICAL LIBRARY

EDITED BY

E. CAPPS, PH.D., LL.D. T. E. PAGE, LITT.D. W. H. D. ROUSE, LITT.D.

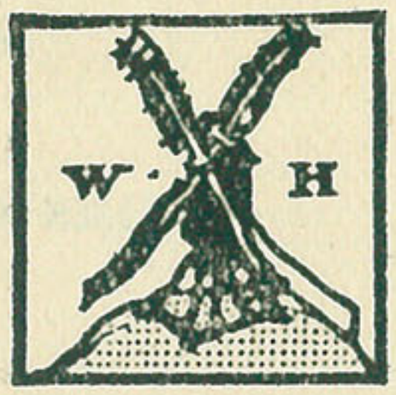
THE GREEK BUCOLIC POETS

THE GREEK BUCOLIC POETS

WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY

J. M. EDMONDS

FELLOW OF JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE



LONDON : WILLIAM HEINEMANN

NEW YORK : G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

MCMXVI

First printed 1912
Reprinted May 1916

215

PREFACE

THE translator wishes to record his indebtedness to many predecessors, from the author of the *Sixe Idillia* to the late Andrew Lang. His thanks are also due, among other friends, to Mr. A. S. F. Gow for allowing him access to the unpublished results of his investigations into the "Bucolic Masquerade" and the Pattern-Poems.

24, HALIFAX ROAD, CAMBRIDGE.
8 *October*, 1912.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	v
INTRODUCTION	ix
BIBLIOGRAPHY	xxvii
INTRODUCTORY POEMS	2
THEOCRITUS I–XXX	5
,, *Inscriptions*	363
BION	383
MOSCHUS	419
Megara	463
The Dead Adonis	477
THE PATTERN-POEMS	485
INDEX OF PROPER NAMES	513

Λύρα δή σοι καὶ κιθάρα λείπεται ὡς κατὰ πόλιν χρήσιμα· καὶ αὖ κατ' ἀγροὺς τοῖς νομεῦσι σῦριγξ ἄν τις εἴη.

PLATO, *Republic* 399 d.

INTRODUCTION

I.—The Life of Theocritus

The external evidence for the life of Theocritus is scanty enough. Beyond a brief statement in Suidas, a casual phrase in Choeroboscus, the epigram Ἄλλος ὁ Χῖος, and a comment upon a passage of Ovid, we have only a few short and not always consistent notes in the commentaries which are contained in the manuscripts. His poems tell us plainly that he was a native of Syracuse, and was familiar also with the districts of Croton and Thurii in Italy, with the island of Cos, with Miletus, and with Alexandria, and that he wrote certain of his works about the twelfth year of Ptolemy Philadelphus. The inscriptions he composed for the statues of Gods and poets connect him, or at least his fame, also with Teos, Paros, Ephesus, and Camirus. The rest—and that means much of the following account—is conjecture.

His parents were Praxagoras and Philinna, both possibly of Coan birth or extraction. His early manhood was spent in the Aegean. He seems to have studied medicine,[1] probably at Samos, under the

[1] In the Argument to XI read *προσδιαλέγεται ὁ Θ. ἰατρῷ Νικίᾳ Μιλησίῳ τὸ γένος, ᾧ* (mss *ὃς, ὁ*) *συμφοιτητὴς γέγονεν Ἐρασιστράτου ἰατρὸς ὢν καὶ αὐτὸς* (mss *ἰατροῦ ὄντος καὶ αὐτοῦ*) : otherwise both *συν-* and *καὶ αὐτ.* are unintelligible.

famous physician Erasistratus, along with the Milesian Nicias to whom he dedicates the *Cyclops* and the *Hylas*. Theocritus is also said to have been a pupil of the Samian poet Asclepiades, whose epigrams we know in the Anthology. He certainly spent some years at Cos, sitting at the feet of the great poet and critic Philitas, who numbered among his pupils Zenodotus the grammarian, Hermesianax the elegist, and the young man who was afterwards Ptolemy II. This happy period of our author's life is almost certainly recalled in a poem written at a later time, the *Harvest-home*. Philitas probably died about the year 283. Ten years later we find Theocritus at Syracuse, seeking the favour of the young officer who in 274 had been elected general-in-chief after the troubles of Pyrrhus' *régime* and was soon to be known as Hiero II. The poem we know as *Charites* or *The Graces* probably appeared as epistle-dedicatory to a collection of poems, *Charites* being really the title of the whole book.[1] Such fancy titles were the fashion of the day. Alexander of Aetolia, for instance, published a collection called *The Muses*; the "nightingales" of Callimachus' famous little poem on Heracleitus are best explained as the name of his old friend's collected poems; and Aratus published a collection actually called by this name, for Helladius[2]

[1] The scholion on ἡμετέρας χάριτας (l. 6) is τὰ οἰκεῖα ποιήματα. The phrase σποράδες ποκὰ in Artemidorus' introductory poem does not, of course, necessarily imply that hitherto each poem of the three authors had existed separately. There were no magazines. [2] ap. Phot. *Bibl.* p 531 *b* 14, cf. 532 *a* 36.

writes "As Aratus says in the first of his Charites," ἐν Χαρίτων πρώτῃ. Whether Theocritus' little book contained any of the extant poems we cannot say. It very possibly contained the *Cyclops* and the *Beloved*, and from the title it may be judged to have comprised no more than three pieces. One biographical point should be noted here; Theocritus was newly come to Syracuse. We gather from the *Charites* that Hiero was by no means the first great man to whom Theocritus had gone for patronage, and it is to be remarked that the poet ascribes the indifference with which he had hitherto been received, not to the disturbed state of the country, but to the commercial spirit of the age. There were no doubt other possible patrons than Hiero in Sicily, but peace and tranquillity had not been known there for many years. The same argument may be used to show that his sojourn in Magna Graecia was not during the decade preceding the publication of the *Charites*. The poem apparently failed like its predecessors; for Theocritus, like his own Aeschinas, was fain to go overseas and seek his fortune at Alexandria.[1]

The voyage to Egypt lay by way of the southern Aegean, and we are credibly informed that he now spent some time at Cos. He doubtless had many old friends to see. It was probably on this voyage that he wrote the *Distaff*, to accompany the gift he was taking from Syracuse to the wife of his old friend

[1] Beloch and others put the *Ptolemy* before the *Charites*; but when the latter was written Hiero cannot have been king. See the introduction to the poem.

Nicias, who was now settled in practice at Miletus. The *Cyclops* is generally regarded as a consolation addressed to the lovesick Nicias. If this is true, it would follow on this placing of the *Distaff* that the *Cyclops* was written before the *Charites*; for it implies that Nicias, to whom it was doubtless sent as a letter, was then unmarried. The probable age of the two friends in 273 points, as we shall see, the same way. If on the other hand we may regard the *Cyclops* as an outpouring of soul on the part of the lovesick Theocritus, the author likening himself, and not Nicias, to Polyphemus, the two lines—all that has been preserved—of Nicias' reply [1] may be interpreted with more point: "Love has, it seems, made you a poet," a compliment upon the first serious piece of work of his friend's that he had seen. This interpretation puts the *Cyclops* long before the *Charites*, independently of the dating of the *Distaff*. In any case, the *Cyclops* is certainly an early poem. The same visit to Nicias may have been the occasion of the eighth epigram, an inscription for the base of the new statue of Asclepius with which the doctor had adorned his consulting-room. We may well imagine that Nicias employed his friend in order to put a little money in his pocket; for his own epigrams in the Anthology show clearly that he could have written an excellent inscription himself.

The *Love of Cynisca*, with its hint of autobiography

[1] ἦν ἄρ' ἀληθὲς τοῦτο, Θεόκριτε· οἱ γὰρ Ἔρωτες | πολλοὺς ποιητὰς ἐδίδαξαν τοὺς πρὶν ἀμούσους.

and its friendly flattery of Philadelphus, was in all probability written about this time. There is no doubt as to the approximate dates of the *Ptolemy* and the *Women at the Adonis Festival*. They must both have been written at Alexandria between the king's marriage with his sister Arsinoë—this took place sometime between 278 and 273—and her death in 270. The *Ptolemy* cannot be much later than 273; for it is clear that the Syrian war was in its early days, and this began in 274.

At this point it becomes necessary to discuss a question of great importance not only to the biographer of Theocritus but to the historian of the Pastoral. Does the *Harvest-home* deal with real persons? The scene of the poem is Cos. We have the characters Simichidas and Lycidas and the dumb characters Eucritus and Amyntas; the two songs mention in connexion with one or other of these persons Ageanax, Tityrus, Aratus, Aristis, Philinus, and two unnamed shepherds of Acharnae and Lycopè; in another part of the poem—though these are not necessarily to be reckoned as friends of the others—we have Philitas, and Sicelidas of Samos. Of these, Philitas certainly, and Aratus possibly, are the well-known poets; Philinus may or may not be the Coan Philinus who won at Olympia in 264 and 260 and who is probably the Philinus of the *Spell*; Aristis is a clip-form of some compound like Aristodamus; Amyntas is also called Amyntichus. The Tityrus, to whom, in the guise of a goatherd,

Theocritus dedicates the *Serenade*, is almost certainly a real person, and as certainly, Tityrus was not his real name; Tityrus here may or may not be the same person. Sicelidas, on external grounds, is certainly to be identified with the poet Asclepiades; it is to be noted that he is called Sicelidas elsewhere than in Theocritus; but he and Philitas are in a sense outside this discussion. Lastly, Amyntas bears a royal name. We know Ptolemy Philadelphus to have been taught by Philitas; and though his father was reputed the son of Lagus, the Macedonians were proud to believe him to be actually the son of Philip of Macedon, whose father was Amyntas. It is generally thought that Philitas went to Philadelphus; but in view both of the climate of Egypt and of the great probability that from 301 Cos was a vassal either of Ptolemy I or of his son-in-law Lysimachus, it is at least as likely that Philadelphus went to Philitas. Cos, moreover, was Philadelphus' birth-place.[1]

If these were the only facts before us, sufficient evidence would be still to seek; for there is unfortunately some doubt as to the identity of Aratus. But there are other considerations which, taken with these, bring us near to certainty. If Lycidas is not a real person, why does the poet insist upon his characteristic laugh, and emphasise the

[1] It is worth noting here that Vergil in his *Bucolics* uses the royal Macedonian name Iollas. Did Theocritus in a lost poem use this for some great Macedonian of the family of Antipater?

excellence of his pastoral get-up? If Aristis is not a real person, why is he so carefully described, and what business has he in the poem? It is Aratus' love, not Aristis' knowledge of it, that is important to the narrative. Lastly, there is the tradition of the scholia that the narrator is either Theocritus or one of his friends, of which alternatives the former is far the more probable. The conclusion we must come to is that we are dealing throughout with real persons, some of whom have their ordinary names and others not. This does not mean, of course, that the "other-names" were invented for the occasion by the poet. Rather should they be considered pet-names by which these persons were known to their friends. There can be no certain identification.

A further question arises. Whence did Theocritus derive the notion of staging himself and his friends as herdsmen? The answer is not far to seek. First, the Greek mind associated poetry directly with music; and secondly, Greek herdsmen were then, as they are still, players and singers. The poets of his day, some of whom dealt like him with country life, would naturally appear, to a country-loving poet like Theocritus, the literary counterparts, so to speak, of the herdsmen, and their poetry in some sense the art-form of the herdsman's folk-music. It is not perhaps without ulterior motive that Lycidas the poet-goatherd is made to claim fellowship with Comatas the goatherd-poet. The accident that combined this staging with the use of pet-names in

this poem, is responsible, through Vergil's imitations, for the modern notion of the Pastoral.

Let us now return to the life of Theocritus. If, as is generally believed, the *Harvest-home* is autobiographical, it was written after the author had won some measure of fame—he makes himself say that he is "no match *yet awhile* for the excellent Sicelidas"—, and the passage about the "strutting cocks of the Muses' yard" is a reference to Apollonius of Rhodes and his famous controversy with Callimachus, Theocritus declaring his allegiance to the latter, who maintained that the long epic poem was out of date. This controversy in all probability began upon the publication of the first edition of Apollonius' *Argonautica*. The date of this is unfortunately disputed, but it can hardly have been earlier than 260. A further shred of biography may perhaps be derived from a consideration of the story of Comatas in relation to the cruel death of Sotades.[1] This brave outspoken poet denounced Ptolemy's incestuous marriage, and was thrown into prison. After languishing there for a long time he made good his escape, but falling eventually into the hands of an admiral of the Egyptian fleet, was shut up in a leaden vessel and drowned in the sea. This strange method of execution calls for some explanation. One is tempted to think that Sotades was a friend of Theocritus—he was a writer of love-poems of the type of XII, XXIX, and XXX—, and that after his friend

[1] Plut. *de Puer. Educ.* 15, Athen. 14. 621.

had been some years in prison Theocritus wrote the *Harvest-home*, hinting that Sotades had suffered long enough, and sheltering himself under a reminder of his own early acquaintance with the king and a declaration of his allegiance to the great court-poet Callimachus. On the unfortunate man's escape, we may imagine, the story of the frustration of the mythical king's cruel purpose became directly applicable to the situation; the phrase *κακαῖσιν ἀτασθαλίαισιν ἄνακτος* was now genuine censure and the particle *θήν* real sarcasm; and when the admiral sent word of the recapture, Ptolemy with a grim irony ordered that the modern Comatas should be shut up in a modern chest and put beyond reach of the assistance of the bees. Here again we can arrive at no date. All we know is that Sotades' offence must have been committed about 275 and that he lay a long time in prison.

We do not know for certain where Theocritus spent the rest of his life. Perhaps after the protest of the *Harvest-home* and its tragic sequel he found it prudent to retire from Alexandria. But whether he now left Egypt or not, it is more than probable that he spent some time during his later years in Cos. There was close intercourse during this period between Cos and Alexandria, and if he did not make the island his home, he may well have paid long summer visits there. Besides the *Harvest-home*, there are two certainly Coan poems, the *Thyrsis* and the *Spell*, and these would seem to belong rather to this

than to an earlier period. Apart altogether from the question of actual impersonation, it is impossible to resist the conclusion that when speaking of the Sicilian Thyrsis and the song he sang at Cos, Theocritus had himself at the back of his mind, and that when he wrote of Thyrsis' victory over the Libyan, he was thinking of some contest of his own—perhaps one of the Dionysiac contests mentioned in the *Ptolemy*—with Callimachus of Cyrenè. And it can hardly be a mere coincidence that in the *Spell* Theocritus makes the athlete boast of having "outrun the fair Philinus," and that a Coan named Philinus won at Olympia in 264 and 260; it is only reasonable to suppose that Theocritus wrote these words when Philinus' name was on every Coan lip.

Except that in XXX the poet speaks of the first appearance of grey hairs upon his head, and that in the *Beloved* the comparison of the maid to the thrice-wed wife, which could not fail to offend the thrice-wed Arsinoë, must have been written before the author's sojourn at Alexandria, there is nothing to indicate to what period of his life the remaining poems belong.

The list of Theocritus' works given by Suidas tells us that we possess by no means all of the works once ascribed to him. His *Bucolic Poems*, ἔπη or δράματα βουκολικὰ were in the time of Suidas, or rather of the writers upon whom he drew, his chief title to fame. Of the *Epigrams* or *Inscriptions* we have some, if not all, known as his in antiquity. The *Hymns* are now