



# IS HOMER REALLY “ENOUGH”?

Echoes of *h.Hom.* 33 in Theoc. 22

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*Editare, commentare, interpretare. Approcci multiformi al testo letterario*

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Lorenzo Pizzoli, Università degli Studi di Urbino “Carlo Bo”

[l.pizzoli@campus.uniurb.it](mailto:l.pizzoli@campus.uniurb.it)

*General Remarks: The state of scholarly studies*

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- Hellenistic poetry: reuse of earlier material, through allusion and reworkings
  - problem: what are its sources and how are they used?
- Theocritus: studies have focused on his reception of:
  - archaic poetry (EFFE 1978; HUNTER 1996)
  - epic (KURZ 1982)
  - hexametrical genres (FARAONE 2021 )
  - oral poetry (PRETAGOSTINI 1992; SBARDELLA 2016)
- His debt towards the *Homeric Hymns*, however, remains scarcely examined
- cf., on the other hand, similar studies for Callimachus (VAMVOURI-RUFFY 2004; FAULKNER 2010; 2011; 2013; ACOSTA-HUGHES, CUSSET 2013).

## *AIM OF THIS TALK*

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- A new reading of the XXII *Idyll* to the Dioscuri is offered
- The beginning is written with *h.Hom.* 33 to the Dioscuri in mind (GOW 1950; PAGE 1955); HUNTER 1996; SENS 1997).
- The end too, containing a poetic manifesto, shows the influence of the *Homeric Hymns*

## A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

### 1. Hymnic opening

Ὑμνέομεν Λήδας τε καὶ αἰγιόχου Διὸς υἱά, (1)  
Κάστορα καὶ φοβερὸν Πολυδεύκεα πύξ ἐρεθίζειν  
χειρὰς ἐπιζεύξαντα μέσας βοέοισιν ἱμάσιν.  
ὕμνέομεν καὶ δις καὶ τὸ τρίτον ἄρσενά τέκνα  
κούρης Θεστιάδος, Λακεδαιμονίου δὲ ἀδελφούς, (5)  
ἀνθρώπων σωτήρας ἐπὶ ξυροῦ ἤδη ἐόντων,  
ἵππων θ' αἰματόεντα ταρασσομένων καθ' ὁμίλον,  
νηῶν θ' αἰ δύνοντα καὶ οὐρανὸν εἰσανιόντα  
ἄστρον βιαζόμεναι χαλεποῖς ἐνέκυρσαν ἀήταις.  
οἱ δέ σφεν κατὰ πρύμναν αἰείραντες μέγα κύμα (10)  
ἤε καὶ ἐκ πρῶρηθεν ἢ ὀπη θυμὸς ἐκάστω  
εἰς κοίλῃν ἔρριψαν, ἀνέρρηξαν δ' ἄρα τοίχους  
ἀμφοτέρους· κρέμαται δὲ σὺν ἰστίῳ ἄρμενα πάντα  
εἰκῇ ἀποκλασθέντα· πολὺς δ' ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ὄμβρος  
νυκτὸς ἐφερπούσης· παταγεῖ δ' εὐρεῖα θάλασσα (15)  
κοπτομένη πνοιαῖς τε καὶ ἀρρήκτοισι χαλάζαις.  
ἀλλ' ἔμπης ὑμεῖς γε καὶ ἐκ βυθοῦ ἔλκετε νῆας  
αὐτοῖσιν ναύτησιν ὀιομένοις θανέεσθαι.  
αἶψα δ' ἀπολήγουσ' ἄνεμοι, λιπαρὴ δὲ γαλήνη  
ἄμ πέλαγος· νεφέλαι δὲ διέδραμον ἄλλυδις ἄλλαι· (20)  
ἐκ δ' Ἄρκτοι τ' ἐφάνησαν Ὀνῶν τ' ἀνὰ μέσσον ἀμαυρὴ  
Φάτνη, σημαίνουσα τὰ πρὸς πλόον εὐδία πάντα.  
ὦ ἄμφω θνητοῖσι βοηθοί, ὦ φίλοι ἄμφω,  
ἱππῆες κιθαρισταὶ ἀεθλητῆρες αἰδοί,  
Κάστορος ἢ πρώτου Πολυδεύκεος ἄρξομ' αἰεῖδεν; (25)  
ἀμφοτέρους ὕμνέων Πολυδεύκεα πρῶτον αἰίσω.

We hymn the two sons of Leda and of aegis-bearing Zeus, Castor and Polydeuces, grim to challenge in boxing when he has strapped his palms with the oxhide thongs. Twice we hymn, and a third time, the two brothers born in Lacedaemon to Thestius' daughter, who succour men already on the very brink of disaster, and steeds that panic in the bloody fray, and ships which, defying the constellations that set and rise into the heavens, encounter grievous tempests-blasts that raise a huge wave from astern, or from ahead, or where they will, and cast it into the hold, and breach the bulwarks on either side. And with the sail hangs all the tackle, torn and in disarray, and as the night comes on with heavy storms of rain, the wide sea roars beneath the blows of the blasts and of the iron hail. Yet even so from the very depths do ye recover ships with their crews, that thought to die. And forthwith the winds are stilled and oily calm lies on the deep. The clouds disperse this way and that; the Bears are seen again, and between the Asses the dim Crib, betokening that all is fair for voyaging.

O succourers both of mortals, beloved pair, horsemen and harpers, athletes and singers, shall I with Castor or with Polydeuces first begin my song? Both will I hymn, but sing of Polydeuces first.

(Transl. A. Gow)

## *A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS*

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2. Polydeuces' fight with Amycus (vv. 26-134)
3. Castor's fight with Lynceus (vv. 135-213)
4. Farewell to both Castor and Polydeuces (vv. 214-223)



Ἀμφὶ Διὸς κούρους ἐλικώπιδες ἔσπετε Μοῦσαι (1)  
 Τυνδαρίδας Λήδης καλλισφύρου ἀγλαὰ τέκνα,  
 Κάστορά θ' ἵππόδαμον καὶ ἀμώμητον Πολυδεύκεα,  
 τοὺς ὑπὸ Ταῦγέτου κορυφῇ ὄρεος μέγαλοιο  
 μιχθεῖς ἐν φιλότῃ κελαινεφέϊ Κρονίωνι (5)  
 σωτήρας τέκε παῖδας ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων  
 ὠκυπόρων τε νεῶν, ὅτε τε σπέρχωσιν ἄελλαι  
 χειμέριαι κατὰ πόντον ἀμείλιχον· οἱ δ' ἀπὸ νηῶν  
 εὐχόμενοι καλέουσι Διὸς κούρους μέγαλοιο  
 ἄρνεσσιν λευκοῖσιν ἐπ' ἀκρωτήρια βάντες (10)  
 πρύμνης· τὴν δ' ἄνεμός τε μέγας καὶ κῦμα θαλάσσης  
 θῆκαν ὑποβρυχίην, οἱ δ' ἐξαπίνης ἐφάνησαν  
 ξουθῆσι πτερύγεσσι δι' αἰθέρος αἵξαντες,  
 αὐτίκα δ' ἀργαλέων ἀνέμων κατέπαυσαν ἀέλλας,  
 κύματα δ' ἐστόρεσαν λευκῆς ἁλὸς ἐν πελάγεσσι, (15)  
 ναύταις σήματα καλὰ πόνου σφίσιν· οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες  
 γήθησαν, παύσαντο δ' οἷζυροῖο πόνοιο.  
 Χαίρετε Τυνδαρίδαι ταχέων ἐπιβήτορες ἵππων·  
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ὑμέων καὶ ἄλλης μνήσομ' αἰοιδῆς.

Tell about the Sons of Zeus, O round-eyed Muses – The  
Tindarids, fair-ankled Leda's splendid children, Castor the  
horse-tamer and faultless Polydeuces, whom below the  
 peaks of the great mountain Taygetus, after uniting in love  
 with the dark-cloud so of Kronos, she bore to be saviors  
 of mankind on earth and of swift-faring ships, when winter  
 tempest race over the implacable sea. And the men from  
 their ships invoke the Sons of Great Zeus in prayer, with  
 white lambs, going onto the stern deck, and the strong  
 wind and sea swell overwhelm the ship: suddenly they  
appear, speeding through the air on swift wings, and at  
once they make the fierce squalls cease, and lay the waves  
amid the flats of a clear sea for the sailors,- fair portents to  
their travail; The sailors rejoice at the sight, and their misery  
 and stress are ended. I salute you, Tyndarids, riders on swift  
steeds. And I will take heed both for you and for other  
singing.

(Transl. M. West, modified)

## HOW DO THEOC. 22 AND H.HOM. 33 COMPARE?

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The similarities and not in the lexicon, but in:

### 1. the hymnic devices

- ὑμνέομεν (Theoc. 22, 1) vs ὕμναι Μοῦσα (*h.Merc.* 1; *h.Hom.* 9, 1; 14, 2)
- ἄρξομ' αἰεῖδεν (Theoc. 22, 5) vs ἄρχομ' αἰεῖδεν (*h.Cer.* 1; *h.Hom.* 9, 8; 11, 1; 13, 1; 16, 1; 26, 1; 28, 1)
- The use of χαῖρε (χαίρετε Λήδας τέκνα, Theoc. 22, 214)
- Request of fame (ἡμετέροις κλέος ὕμνοις / ἐσθλὸν αἰεὶ πέμπετε): the poet can ask the god to ornate his singing (*h.Hom.* 10, 5; 24, 5), so that he shall win in a rhapsodic recital (*h.Hom.* 6, 19-20), or earn prosperity in life (*h.Cer.* 494; *h.Hom.* 30, 18; 31, 17).
- The narrative is freely constructed; the hymnic elements, however, are faithfully kept

## HOW DO THEOC. 22 AND H.HOM. 33 COMPARE?

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### 2. Structural element and function

- *h.Hom.* 33, 19 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ ὑμέων τε καὶ ἄλλης μνήσομ' αἰοιδῆς > a rhapsodic *prooimion*
- Theoc. 22, 4 ὑμνέομεν καὶ δις καὶ τρίτον
  - after the hymnic opening, two *epyllia* to Castor and Polydeuces singularly (δὶς), and a farewell to both > three songs (τρίτον)
- The hymnic opening at vv. 1-24 is not included in the count: it functions as a *prooimion* > that which precedes (πρό) the song (οἶμη)
- Theocritus seems to imitate, through literature, the performative custom of the rhapsodes

## THE HYPOTHESIS OF A MIMETIC PROOIMION

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- GOW (1950): The hymnic opening (vv. 1-25) was an originally independent poem
- The following verses (26-134) are a response to Apollonius Rhodius (2, 1-97)
- The hymn thus introduces a literary *querelle*: «the criticism is more urban and no less effective» (GOW 1950 p.384)
- The main addressee here, perhaps, is not Apollonius, but Homer> cf. the ending of the *Idyll*

THEOCRITUS AND HOMER. THE ENDING OF THE POEM

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220 ὑμῖν κῦδος, ἄνακτες, ἐμήσατο Χῖος ἀοιδός,  
ὑμνήσας Πριάμοιο πόλιν καὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν  
Ἰλιάδας τε μάχας Ἀχιλῆά τε πύργον αὐτῆς.  
ὑμῖν αὖ καὶ ἐγὼ λιγεῶν μελίσγματα Μουσέων.

Glory for you, Princeps, 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.

(transl. A. Gow)

- In the Homeric *epos*, the Dioscuri have no significant place
- Hom. *Il.* 3, 235 ff.

I know them [the Achaeans] well, could tell you all their names-  
Two only I cannot see, two high commanders,  
Kastor the horse breaker, Polydeukes the skilled boxer,  
Brothers of mine, all born of the same mother.  
Either they didn't come with them from lovely Lakedaimon,  
Or, if they did make the trip in their seagoing vessels,  
They're bit willing now to join these men in combat  
Through fear of all the shame and reproaches leveled at me.  
So she spoke; but them the nurturing earth already  
Held under in Lakedaimon, their native land.

(Transl. P. Green)

## A MATTER OF REFERENCES

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- What does Theocritus mean, saying that «Homer sang the Dioscuri»?
- GOW (1950, p. 407): «the Dioscuri [...] make any reference to the *Iliad* untimely»
- SENS (1997): mythological revisionism > Theocritus corrects Homer
- Perhaps Theocritus had in mind not only the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, but also the Homeric production in a broader sense: the rhapsodic, post-Homeric poetry
- CAMERON (1995) and SBARDELLA (2004): the allusion is to the *Cypria* (cf. *Argumentum* 12 , 21 ff. Bernabé; fr. 8, 15)

## A MATTER OF REFERENCES

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- Are the *Homeric Hymns* also alluded to?
- The opening show influences of the *Homeric Hymns* (cf. *supra*)
- Theocritus might have had access to the *corpus* (though not necessarily the same we read today) > cf. FAULKNER 2011, p. 195, with further bibliography
  - Theoc. 1, 29-31 e 11, 46 ff. seem to be a reworking of *h.Hom.* 7, 40 sgg.
  - Theoc. 17 hechoes *h.Ap.*;
  - Theoc. 24, 1-63 is perhaps inspired by *h.Cer.*

## A MATTER OF REFERENCES

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ὕμῃν κῦδος ἄνακτες ἐμήσατο **Χῖος ἀοιδός** ...  
ὕμῃν αὖ καὶ ἐγὼ **λιγεῶν** μειλίγματα **Μουσέων**...  
... **γεράων** δὲ θεοῖς **κάλλιστον ἀοιδαί**.

Glory for you, Princeps, the bard of Chios fashioned...  
and to you I too bear the soothing strains of the clear-voiced Muses...  
...and for gods songs are the fairest meed.  
(Transl. A. Gow)

- *H.Ap.* 172: τυφλὸς **ἀνὴρ**, **οἴκει δὲ Χίῳ** ἔνι
- *h.Hom.* 17, 1 (to The Dioscuri): Κάστορα καὶ Πολυδεύκε' αἰείσειο, **Μοῦσα λίγεια**
- *h.Hom.* 9, 7; 14, 6: χαῖρε δ' ἀοιδῇ
- *Contra:* GOW (1950) and SENS (1997)

## A PIECE OF LITERARY IRONY?

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Theoc. 7, 43-48:

‘τάν τοι’, ἔφα, ἑκὸν ἄνδρα δωρύττομαι, οὐνεκεν ἐσσί  
πᾶν ἐπ’ ἀλαθείᾳ πεπλασμένον ἐκ Διὸς ἔρνος.  
ὥς μοι καὶ τέκτων μέγ’ ἀπέχθεται ὅστις ἐρευνῇ (45)  
ἴσον ὄρευς κορυφᾷ τελέσαι δόμον Ὀρομέδοντος,  
καὶ Μοισᾶν ὄρνιχες ὅσοι ποτὶ Χίον ἀοιδόν  
ἀντία κοκκύζοντες ἐτώσια μοχθίζοντι.’

“I will give thee my stick, for thou art a sapling whom Zeus has fashioned all for truth. For much **I hate** the builder who seeks to raise his house as high as the peak of mount Oromedon, and much **those cocks of the Muses who lose their toil with crowning against the bard of Chios.**”

(Transl. Gow)

- Who are «Cocks of the Muses»?
- The reference is perhaps to the rhapsodes (SBARDELLA 2005)
- The real heir of Homer would then be Theocritus himself

## SOME FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

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- The *Idyll* is a *Ringkomposition*, like many others (PRETAGOSTINI, 1984)
- It begins refering the *Homeric Hymns* > a literary precedent is established
- It ends refering the *Homeric Hymns*
- This time, however, the model is surpassed:
- vv. 220 ff.: «to you I too bear the soothing strains of the clear-voiced Muses such as they give me **and my own store provides**» (οἷ' αὐταὶ παρέχουσι καὶ ὥς ἐμὸς οἶκος ὑπάρχει, / τοῖα φέρω;

## THEOCRITUS' HOMER

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- Theoc. 16, 14 ff.

οὐκ οἶδ'· οὐ γὰρ ἔτ' ἄνδρες ἐπ' ἔργμασιν ὥς πάρος ἐσθλοῖς  
αἰνεῖσθαι σπεύδοντι, νενίκηνται δ' ὑπὸ κερδέων. (15)

[...]

τίς δέ κεν ἄλλου ἀκούσαι; ἄλλῃς πάντεσσιν Ὅμηρος. (20)

No more, as erstwhile, are men eager to win praise for glorious deeds, but are enslaved by gain. [...]. “And who would listen to another? **Homer is enough for all**”

(Transl. A. Gow)

τίς δ' ἂν ἀριστῆας Λυκίων ποτέ, τίς κομόωντας  
Πριαμίδας ἢ θῆλυν ἀπὸ χροιᾶς Κύκνον ἔγνω,  
εἰ μὴ φυλόπιδας προτέρων ὕμνησαν ἀοιδοί; (50)  
οὐδ' Ὀδυσσεὺς ἑκατόν τε καὶ εἴκοσι μῆνας ἀλαθείς  
πάντας ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους, Αἶδαν τ' εἰς ἔσχατον ἐλθὼν  
ζῶός, καὶ σπήλυγγα φυγῶν ὀλοοῖο Κύκλωπος,  
[...]

εἰ μὴ σφεας ὦνασαν Ἰάονος ἀνδρὸς ἀοιδαί.

Who would have known ever the chieftains of the Lycians, or Priam's long-haired sons, or Cycnus, maidenlike of skin, if poets had not sung the battle cries of men of old? Never had Odysseus won lasting fame, who wandered six score months through all the word, and came alive to the farthest Hades, and escaped from the cave of the baleful Cyclops [...] had not the minstrelsy of an Ionian man profited them.

(Transl. A. Gow, modified)

## THE LITERARY OPERATION OF THEOCRITUS

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- Genres: hymnic and epic > tradition
- Theme: Dioscuri > innovation
- The result is a commentary on poetic legacy and innovation:
- Theoc. *Ep.* 27, 1 (= *AP* 9, 434, 1)

Ἄλλος ὁ Χῖος, ἐγὼ δὲ Θεόκριτος ὃς τάδ' ἔγραψα

The Chian is another, but it is I, Theocritus, the author of these works

(Transl. Gow, modified)

