



generic way and chronologically listing the modifications made to the *editio princeps* as well as a commentary. This refers to the establishment of the text and includes explanations of the restitutions; interpretations or new hypotheses provided by H.; historical, institutional, topographical and prosopographical information provided by the document, such as the date of the inscription considering the comparison of historical, prosopographical, linguistic and palaeographical data.

The catalogue is followed by three appendices. Appendix I distinguishes and chronologically arranges 26 groups of inscriptions following the style of engraving and the shape of the letters. Appendix II contains an index of persons. Appendix III comprises a complete index of place and ethnic names, gods, festivals, months, Thasian institutions and institutions of other cities and Rome as well as Greek words. The volume ends with the concordance tables, a complete list of literary and epigraphic sources, a rich bibliography, the credits for the illustrations and the table of contents.

Throughout the volume H. demonstrates his profound knowledge of classical Greek archaeology and history as well as epigraphy. The volume, so rich in detail and precision, constitutes an excellent piece of scholarly work, which contributes to greater understanding of the structure of society and culture in Thasos. This volume of extraordinary quality is highly recommended for its usefulness: it highlights the historical and the epigraphic evidence of Thasian inscriptions as well as the use of these inscriptions for a particular interpretation of the past. This book deserves a wide readership among both historians and literary scholars.

*University of Johannesburg* HÉLÈNE PERDICOYIANNI-PALÉOLOGOU  
[hperdicpal@gmail.com](mailto:hperdicpal@gmail.com)

## THEOCRITUS AND SPACE

THALMANN (W. G.) *Theocritus. Space, Absence, and Desire*. Pp. xxii + 232. New York: Oxford University Press, 2023. Cased, £54, US\$83. ISBN: 978-0-19-763655-8.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X23002512

Thirty-one *Idylls* make up the poetic corpus of Theocritus of Cos (third century BCE). Of these, only twenty-three can be securely attributed to him. Questions about the origins and meaning of the term ‘idyll’ or the implications of the term ‘bucolic’ in Theocritus have claimed scholarly interest in modern times. Apart from these, restoring a sense of coherence in his corpus has been a long-standing *desideratum*. Typically, scholars arrange Theocritus’ *Idylls* in mimes, which are further divided into bucolic (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7) and urban (2, 14, 15), encomia (16, 17), mythological poems (11, 13, 18, 22, 24, 26), erotic poems in non-Doric dialects or lyric metres (Ionic: 12, Aeolic 28–31) and *Idyll* 10, which is close to mimes but does not easily fall into one of these categories. Mixing criteria of content, dialect and rhetorical function, this scheme offers convenience rather than theoretical rigour. It also obscures the fact that categories often overlap with mythological poems or even mimes also serving encomiastic purposes.

Fascinated by this diversity (p. xi), T. proposes a new theoretical apparatus that will allow readers to appreciate the unity behind the differences. Following the theoretical

model he applied in his study of Apollonius' *Argonautica* (*Apollonius of Rhodes: Spaces of Hellenism* [2011]), T. employs the concept of space to appreciate the common elements in Theocritus' poems. Since Theocritus does not provide a broad linear narrative like that of Apollonius' epic, this endeavour presents challenges further exacerbated by the avoidance in most *Idylls* of any specific location or setting. In response to these, T. considers space in Theocritus not only as fictional, but also as relational. In other words, Theocritus eschews comprehensive descriptions of space. Instead, he leaves it to readers to reconstruct space in a piecemeal fashion through the impressions of specific characters. The first two chapters reflect the usual grouping of Theocritus' *Idylls* into bucolic and urban mimes (Chapter 1), and mythological and encomiastic poems (Chapter 2). Chapter 3 treats absence and presence as part of (erotic) desire, while Chapter 4 considers the margins of the bucolic world. An introductory chapter sets out the theoretical underpinnings of T.'s study, while the conclusion conveniently summarises the findings and contextualises them against recent trends in scholarship.

Chapter 1 defines the bucolic space as a self-contained fictionalised world in which real-world issues (e.g. economy, social status) do not concern the author or the reader. The setting for the action is the mountain or the hill. A series of contrasts (sea vs land, wild land vs cultivated land, herding vs leisurely singing) allows the bucolic space to be defined. *Idyll 7* focuses on fluidity of identities and characters being out of place as reflecting the condition of Theocritus' readers. Modifying the usual biographical readings, T. associates both main characters with Theocritus: a city dweller writing about herdsmen (Simichidas), using his imagination to convey a sense of authenticity (Lycidas). The theme of journey also shapes *Idyll 15*. T.'s discussion focuses on lines 126–7, which present the bucolic world as part of a wider chain of production under the aegis of the Ptolemaic empire.

T.'s salutary remarks on *Idylls 13* and *22* in Chapter 2 warn against viewing Theocritus as just opposing epic values, and rather propose seeing the *Idylls* as extending these values to suggest continuities between epic and bucolic heroes. Both poems pass over the major incidents of the Argo's outward journey, thus laying the emphasis on the episodes Theocritus treats. Taking *Idylls 16* and *17* as a couplet allows us to see fulfilled in Ptolemy II's rule all the wishes Theocritus voices in the praise of Hieron II. A wider theme in T.'s discussion that recurs in his reading of *Idyll 4* in Chapter 4 is that Sicily is seen as a foil to thriving Alexandria.

Chapter 3 argues that the desire for something absent guides Theocritus' love poems and is expressed in spatial terms. As T. reminds us, fully realised love never occurs in bucolic poetry. Desire is the source of bucolic song. The spatial reading of desire is prominent in T.'s analysis of *Idyll 3*, but not in those of *Idyll 1*, *7* and *6*, which follow a rather metapoetic orientation. According to this approach, the position of readers towards Theocritus' poems is reflected in the scenarios that the characters play out in his *Idylls*. Chapter 4 approaches the issue of the bucolic space from the outside. In their insistence on hard work, *Idylls 21* and *10* contrast the realities of life with the leisurely approach necessary for bucolic singing. *Idyll 4* stages the decline of the bucolic world: Aegon has left for the Olympic games, Amaryllis is dead, while Corydon and Battus cannot produce good songs. This reading is perhaps too pessimistic and influenced by the historical context not mentioned in the poem.

Since space is inherent in most literary constructions of fictional worlds, it does not provide a unifying factor but rather a convenient angle from which to approach Theocritus, as T.'s compelling readings of *Idylls 5*, *7*, *15* and *3* demonstrate. But even so, T. helps move the discussion in a different direction. Do we really need to seek coherence and unity? After all, Theocritus' contemporary Callimachus prioritised variety, and Theocritus offers ample evidence of this kind, ranging from the structure of *Idyll 22* to his treatment of Daphnis' story in *Idylls 1* and *7*. Aware of the possibilities for cross-reading, Theocritus

teases his readers with reusing the same names (e.g. Comatas, Amaryllis, Tityrus). Should we take this as evidence of continuity or not? T. shows that sometimes this technique can offer interesting perspectives (p. 125). If they do not derive from Theocritus himself, several of the pairs (especially 5–6, 14–15, 16–17) on which T. bases his arguments reflect the attempt of an editor-reader to condition the production of meaning by placing particular poems close to each other. As a result, readers need to strike a balance between reading poems autonomously or in sequence.

It is debatable, though, whether such connections provide a safe foundation for some of the generalisations attempted. The avoidance of labour in the bucolic *Idylls* makes it very difficult to see a Ptolemaic background in all of them. At best, it remains an unacknowledged potentiality. To say that the story of Hylas relates to Ptolemaic self-representation because Ptolemy II was an *erōtikos* man (*Idyll* 14.62) is pushing allegorical reading to the limits. Unlike the Amycus episode in *Idyll* 22, it is very difficult to assign *Idylls* 13 or 24 to the narrative of acculturative Greek expansion. Although mobility and interethnic relations are prominent in the urban mimes and some of the mythological poems, it is hard to accept Lycidas' lack of belonging (or Simichidas' for that matter) as representative of the migrant position of Theocritus' contemporary readers. But these represent possibilities that do not detract from the quality of the individual readings.

Space does not feature equally in the various discussions included in the monograph. Readers follow its inflection from concrete spatial readings to the metaphorical imaging of encomiastic and mythological space. Since desire is normally for something absent, there is a spatial dimension to it. The same can be said of the juxtaposition of genres (e.g. victory or work songs) or activities (e.g. sports, fishing or harvesting) that cannot be combined with bucolic leisure. However, not all poems employ spatial terms to articulate desire (as does *Idyll* 10, for instance) or delineate boundaries (e.g. *Idyll* 21 avoids spatial references). In the end, four elements clearly emerge to build connections between Theocritus' poems (p. 154): concern about the production of poetry; interplay between presence and absence in the context of desire; structural relations; and presence of bucolic elements in non-bucolic poems.

T. has authored an elegant and sensitive study that repays close engagement. It is a necessary read for anyone seriously interested in the study of Theocritus.

Trinity College, Oxford

ALEXANDROS KAMPAKOGLOU  
alexandros.kampakoglou@trinity.ox.ac.uk

## POLYBIUS AND LEADERSHIP

MILTSIOS (N.) *Leadership and Leaders in Polybius. (Trends in Classics Supplementary Volume 145.)* Pp. xvi + 176. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2023. Cased, £91, €99.95, US\$109.99. ISBN: 978-3-11-123947-7.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X23002834

Recent decades have witnessed a remarkable surge of interest in Polybius, particularly with regard to his literary qualities and sophistication as a writer (some examples of this trend are: C. Champion's *Cultural Politics in Polybius's Histories* [2004], B. McGing's *Polybius*