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Theopompus in the Greek Literary Critics

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theory. A rival claimant for authorship is the misty figure of Cratippus, to whom the editors incline, though they find some difficulty in supposing that so authentic a writer could be so little celebrated, as Cratippus was. After conscientiously perusing the remains, I cannot feel that this objection is invincible. Nevertheless here is a fine field for the investigation of sources.

On the other hand, we would gladly read more, if more there were, of the 'Uncanonical Gospel':

λέγει (ὁ Φαρισαῖος τῷ Σωτῆρι)· Καθαρεύω· ἑλουσάμην γὰρ ἐν τῇ λίμνῃ τοῦ Δαυίδ, καὶ δι' ἑτέρας κλίμακος κατελθὼν δι' ἑτέρας ἀνῆλθον, καὶ λευκὰ ἐνδύματα ἐνέδυσάμην καὶ καθαρὰ, καὶ τότε ἦλθον καὶ προσέβλεψα τούτοις τοῖς ἀγίοις σκεύεσιν. ὁ Σωτὴρ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· Οὐαί, τυφλοὶ μὴ ὁρῶντες. σὺ ἐλούσω τούτοις τοῖς χεομένους

ὑδασιν, ἐν οἷς κύνες καὶ χοῖροι βέβληνται νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας, καὶ νιψάμενος τὸ ἐκτὸς δέρμα ἐσμῆξω, ὅπερ καὶ αἱ πόρνοι καὶ αἱ ἀλλητρίδες μυρίζουσιν καὶ λούουσιν καὶ σμήχουσι καὶ καλλωπίζουσι πρὸς ἐπιθυμίαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων· ἐνδοθεν δὲ ἐκείναι πεπλήρυνται σκορπίων καὶ πάσης κακίας. ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ οἱ μαθηταί μου, οὓς λέγεις μὴ βεβαπτίσθαι, βεβάμμεθα ἐν ὑδασι ζωῆς αἰωνίου κ.τ.λ.

Here we are at least in contact with the warm mind of somebody, with beliefs and purposes. Nor need one be a specialist in the matter to perceive the deeply interesting comparisons which both style and substance by likeness and by unlikeness invite.

But we must make an end, and quit an interesting volume with gratitude all the greater that it includes the hope of favours to come.

A. W. VERRALL.

THEOPOMPUS IN THE GREEK LITERARY CRITICS.

(With special reference to the newly-discovered Greek historian: Grenfell and Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Part V., pp. 110-242.)

THE chief Greek critics who mention Theopompus are Longinus, in the *De Sublimitate*; Demetrius, in the *De Elocutione*; and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in some of his literary essays.

There are two references to Theopompus in the *De Sublimitate*. In c. 31 he is commended for his employment of a homely but effective metaphor: 'In this way, too, that original phrase of Theopompus deserves praise. Owing to the correspondence between word and fact it seems to me to be highly expressive; and yet Caecilius for some unexplained reason finds fault with it. "Philip," says Theopompus, "had a genius for *stomaching* things (*ἀναγκοφαγῆσαι πράγματα*)."' Now a homely expression of this kind is sometimes much more telling than elegant language, for it is understood at once since it is drawn from common life, and the fact that it is familiar makes it only the more convincing. So the words "*stomaching* things" are used most strikingly of a man

who, for the sake of attaining his own ends, patiently and with cheerfulness endures things shameful and vile.' The author then goes on to quote the bold metaphors *καταχορδεύων ἑαυτὸν* and *ἔως ἅπας κατεκρουργήθη* found in Herodotus (vi. 75, vii. 181), and says in conclusion, 'these phrases graze the very edge of vulgarity, but they are saved from vulgarity by their expressiveness.' The other reference to Theopompus is in c. 43, where Herodotus and he are linked together again, but this time as offenders. Both of them are apt, we hear, to mar impressive passages by triviality of expression. In describing a storm and its incidents, Herodotus will use such ill-sounding or undignified phrases as *ξυσσῆς τῆς θαλάσσης*, *ὁ ἄνεμος ἐκοπίασεν*, *τέλος ἀχάριστον* (Herod. vii. 188, 191, viii. 13). And similarly Theopompus in an elaborate word-picture (too long to be reproduced in detail) of the equipment of the Persian army which invaded Egypt, had spoilt the entire effect by the use of some

petty words. After quoting this passage, the critic remarks that Theopompus here

'runs off from the more elevated to the more lowly, whereas he should, on the contrary, have risen higher and higher. With his wonderful description of the whole outfit he mixes bags and condiments and sacks, and conveys the impression of a confectioner's shop! For just as if, in the case of those very adornments, between the golden vessels and the jewelled mixing-bowls and the silver-plate and the pavilions of pure gold and the goblets, a man had actually brought and set in the midst paltry bags and sacks, the proceeding would have been offensive to the eye, so do such words when introduced out of season constitute deformities and as it were blots on the diction. He might have described the scene in broad outline just as he says that hills blocked their way, and with regard to the preparations generally have spoken of "waggons and camels and the multitude of beasts of burden carrying everything that ministers to the luxury and enjoyment of the table," or have used some such expression as "piles of all manner of grain and things which conduce preeminently to good cookery and comfort of body," or if he must necessarily put it in so uncompromising a way, he might have said that "all the dainties of cooks and caterers were there."' "

According to Cicero and Suidas, Isocrates said of his two pupils Theopompus and Ephorus that the former needed the curb, the latter the spur. The author of the *De Sublimitate* is familiar (ii. 2) with this antithesis; and though he does not himself use it in connexion with Theopompus and Ephorus, he doubtless knew that it had been so used.

The references made to Theopompus in Demetrius, *De Elocutione*, are all of a disparaging nature. Theopompus is evidently regarded by him as a forcible-feeble or feeble-forcible (διὸ καὶ δεινοὺς τινὰς φασιν, ὥσπερ καὶ Θεόπομπον, δεινὰ οὐ δεινῶς λέγοντας, *De Elocutione*, § 75). It is hinted that it is his sensational topics that give him an appearance of vigour: 'Theopompus, for instance, in a certain passage describes the flute-girls in the Peiraeus, the stews, and the sailors who pipe and sing and dance; and through employing all this strong language he seems to be forcible, although his style is really feeble (§ 240).' In § 247 his forced antitheses are condemned, 'We should avoid antitheses and exact parallelisms of words in the period, since in place of force they render the style laboured and

often flat. Theopompus, for example, when inveighing against the intimates of Philip, enfeebled his invective by the following antithesis: "men-slayers in nature, they were men-harlots in life." The hearer, having his attention fixed on this elaboration, or rather affectation, forgets to be angry,' or (as we are told in § 27, where the same passage is quoted) 'indignation needs no art; in such invectives the words should be simple and, in a manner, impromptu.' In § 250 Demosthenes is censured for the same fault as Theopompus, 'Excessive antithesis, already condemned in the case of Theopompus, is out of place in Demosthenes also, as in the following passage, "You were initiating, I was initiated; you taught, I attended classes; you took minor parts in the theatre, I was a spectator; you broke down, I hissed (*De Cor.* § 265)." The elaborate parallelism of clauses produces the impression of false artifice; of trifling, rather than of honest indignation.'

In Greek critics other than Longinus, Demetrius and Dionysius, the only important references to Theopompus are, I think, to be found in Hermogenes and Theon. Hermogenes (π. ιδ. ii. 6) remarks that the Greeks did not regard the writings of Theopompus, Ephorus, Hellanicus and Philistus, as furnishing models of style in the same degree as those of Thucydides, Herodotus, Hecataeus and Xenophon. Theon (προγνμν. iv. 18) complains of the lengthy digressions in the *Φιλιππικαὶ ἱστορίαι* of Theopompus: δύο γάρ που, καὶ τρεῖς, καὶ πλείους ἱστορίας ὅλας κατὰ παρέκβασιν εὐρίσκομεν, ἐν αἷς οὐχ ὅπως Φιλίππου, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ Μακεδόνας τινὲς ὀνομά ἐστιν. Earlier (i. 4) he points out how variously one and the same idea has been conveyed by Thucydides, Theopompus and Demosthenes. *Thucydides*: φθόνος γὰρ τοῖς ζῶσι πρὸς τὸ ἀντίπαλον, τὸ δὲ μὴ ἐμποδῶν ἀνανταγωνίστῳ εὐνοίᾳ τετίμηται. *Theopompus*: ἐπίσταμαι γὰρ ὅτι τοὺς μὲν ζῶντας πολλοὶ μετὰ δυσμενείας ἐξετάζουσι, τοῖς δὲ τετελευτηκόσι διὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἐτῶν ἐπανιάσι τοὺς φθόνους. *Demosthenes*: τίς γὰρ οὐκ οἶδε τῶν πάντων ὅτι τοῖς μὲν ζῶσιν ἅπασιν ὑπεστί τις ἢ πλείων ἢ ἐλάττων φθόνος, τοὺς τεθνεώτας δὲ οὐδὲ τῶν ἐχθρῶν οὐδεὶς ἔτι μισεῖ; Theon seems to prefer Theopompus to Xenophon, and not (like Hermogenes) Xenophon to

Theopompus: ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἱστορίας καὶ ὅλους λόγους ἀλλήλοις ἀντιπαραβάλλειν, σκοποῦντὰ τὸ ἄμεινον ἐξεργασμένον οἷον Δημοσθένους μὲν πρὸς τοὺς Ὑπερίδου, Θεοπόμπου δὲ τὰς Ἑλληνικὰς ἱστορίας πρὸς τὰς Ξενοφώντος (ii. 9).

Dionysius of Halicarnassus refers to Theopompus in the preface to his history, as well as in his critical writings. Speaking of his own guiding principles, he says: . . . οὐτε διαβολὰς καθ' ἑτέρων ἐγκωκῶς ποιέσθαι συγγραφέων, ὥσπερ Ἀναξίλαος καὶ Θεόπομπος ἐν τοῖς προοιμίοις τῶν ἱστοριῶν ἐποίησαν (*Antiqq. Rom.* i. 1): a censure which is confirmed, so far as Theopompus is concerned, from other sources. In the *De Compositione* (c. 23) he gives a short list of writers who have excelled in the elegant style of composition (word-arrangement) and includes in it 'among tragic poets, Euripides alone; among historians, none exactly but Ephorus and Theopompus more than most; among orators, Isocrates.' But it is in the last chapter of his letter to Gnaeus Pompeius Geminus that Dionysius expresses himself most fully with regard to Theopompus' characteristics. The passage is so important that it deserves to be quoted at length:

'Theopompus of Chios was the most celebrated of all the disciples of Isocrates. He composed many panegyrics and many deliberative speeches, as well as the *Chian Letters* and some noteworthy treatises. As a student of history he deserves praise on several grounds. His historical subjects are both good, one of them embracing the conclusion of the Peloponnesian War, the other the career of Philip. The arrangement of his matter is also good, being in both works lucid and easy to follow. Especially admirable are the care and industry which mark his historical writing, for it is clear, even if he had said nothing to that effect, that he prepared himself most fully for his task, and incurred heavy expense in the collection of his material. Moreover, he was an eyewitness of many events, and came in contact with many leading men and generals of his day, whether popular leaders or more cultivated persons. All this he did in order to improve his history. For he did not (as some do) consider the recording of his researches as a pastime, but as the one thing needful in life. The trouble he took may be inferred from the comprehensiveness of his work. He has related the foundation of nations, described the establishment of cities, portrayed royal lives and peculiar habits, and incorporated in his work everything wonderful or strange found on any land or sea. Nor must it be supposed that this merely serves to entertain the

reader. It is not so. Such particulars are, it may in general be said, of the utmost utility.

'In fine, who will not admit that it is necessary for the votaries of philosophical rhetoric to study the various customs both of foreigners and of Greeks, to hear about various laws and forms of government, the lives of men and their actions, their ends and their fortunes? For such votaries he has provided material in all plenty, not divorced from the events narrated, but in close connexion with them. All these qualities of the historian are worthy of admiration. The same may be said of the philosophical reflections scattered throughout his history, for he has many fine observations on justice, piety, and the rest of the virtues. There remains his crowning and characteristic quality, one which is found developed with equal care and effect in no other writer, whether of the older or the younger generation. And what is this quality? It is the gift of seeing and stating in each case not only what is obvious to the multitude, but of examining even the hidden motives of actions and actors, and the feelings of the soul (things not easily discerned by the crowd), and of laying bare all the mysteries of seeming virtue and undiscovered vice. Indeed, I can well believe that the fabled examination, before the judges in the other world, of souls in Hades when separated from the body is of the same searching kind as that which is conducted by means of the writings of Theopompus. In consequence he was thought malicious on the ground that, where criticism of eminent persons was necessary, he added unnecessary details; while in truth he acted like surgeons who cut and cauterize the morbid parts of the system, carrying their operation far down and yet in no way assailing the healthy and normal organs. Such is an account of the way in which Theopompus deals with his subject-matter.

'In style he most resembles Isocrates. His diction is pure, familiar, and clear; it is elevated, grand, and full of stateliness; it is formed according to the middle *harmony*, having a pleasant and easy flow. It differs from that of Isocrates in pungency and energy in some passages, when our author gives free play to his emotions, and particularly when he taxes states or commanders with evil counsels and unjust actions. In such criticisms he abounds, and he falls not one whit behind the intensity of Demosthenes, as may be seen from many other writings and from his *Chian Letters*, in composing which he has obeyed his native instincts. If in the passages on which he has bestowed the greatest pains, he had paid less attention to the blending of vowels, the measured cadence of periods, and the uniformity of constructions, he would have far surpassed himself on the side of literary expression.¹

'He is also guilty of errors in the sphere of subject-matter, and particularly in regard to his digressions, some of which are neither necessary nor opportune, but childish in the extreme. An instance is the story of the Silenus who appeared in Macedonia, and that of the sea-fight between the serpent and the galley,

¹ Cp. Dionys. Hal. *De Comp. Verb.* c. 19 ad f.

and not a few other things of the kind (Dionysius Halic. *Ep. ad Pompeium*, c. 6).¹

With this estimate of Theopompus the shorter sketch found in the epitomised *De Imitatione* (ii. 3) is in essential agreement. And what is more important, Dionysius' general view as expressed in the Letter to Pompeius seems to accord well enough with the more scattered notices already quoted from other literary critics. He admits defects, and defects of the same kind as those on which the other critics dwell: for instance, digressions and forced antitheses, the latter being covered by the ὁμοειδεῖα τῶν σχηματισμῶν of Dionysius (*ad Pomp.* c. 6) and finding an illustration in Demetrius *De Eloc.* § 247 (as quoted above). But, on the whole, he sees in Theopompus an eloquent writer, well fitted to inspire the students of a cultured rhetoric. In fact, he is himself inspired to so much eloquence in the course of his encomium that he excites, as was remarked before the recent discovery was announced, real regret for the loss of so highly praised an author. For the judgment of these Greek critics is usually found to be right, if due account be taken of the point of view they happen to occupy at the moment. Longinus' estimate of Bacchylides was confirmed when the new poems were published by Dr. Kenyon. And the sound literary discrimination of Dionysius has been generally acknowledged. The treatise *De Compositione Verborum*, for example, will be seen to be a most competent piece of work by all readers who remember (1) that its primary subject is the composition, or arrangement, of words, and not composition in some wider sense; and (2) that it is intended chiefly for the use of students of rhetoric. To take a small and rather technical point first: does not Dionysius' suggestion (*De Comp. Verb.* c. 4) for re-arranging a sentence from Herodotus after the manner of Thucydides show a real sense of style? In larger matters, too, he is equally sound. In this same treatise he speaks of the 'old-world and wayward beauty' of Thucydides (ἀρχαϊκὸν τι καὶ αὐθαδὲς κάλλος, c. 22); and Homer he describes as 'the poet above all others many-voiced' (πολυφωνότατος πάντων τῶν ποιητῶν, c. 16). Here, also, he has preserved

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for us Sappho's *Ode to Aphrodite*, Simonides' *Danae*, and a dithyramb of Pindar, while from Homer he quotes just those lines which to all succeeding students, no less than to himself, have seemed best to show that a great poetical genius could also be a cunning literary craftsman. His enthusiasms are clearly sane enthusiasms. And where, as in his essays on the Attic Orators, he is on what is specially his own ground, his excellence as a critic is even more conspicuous, being less obscured by his rather disconcerting habit of applying rhetorical canons to historians and philosophers. Though the plain style is not his ideal style, he is just to Lysias, and praises his purity of expression, his gift of characterisation, his unfailing propriety, his vividness and inimitable charm. Like the author of the *De Sublimitate*, he is liberal in his tastes; and unlike his contemporary Caecilius, he would not allow words such as ἀναγκοφαγήσαι to spoil his enjoyment of Theopompus. He is fair also to Isocrates, though recognising his limitations,—his excessive regard for smoothness of style, his tameness, and his verbosity. What he admires particularly in him is his essential nobility of aim. 'The strongest exhortations to virtue are to be found in the speeches of Isocrates. I maintain that those who would learn the secret of patriotism, not in part only but in its fulness, should have this orator at their fingers' ends. . . . He proclaims (in one of his speeches) that it is not a large fleet of warships, nor Greeks governed by force, that make a country great, but righteous aims and the succour of the weak (Dionys. Hal. *De Isocr.* cc. 4, 7).'

It is similar qualities in Isocrates' pupil Theopompus that call out the warm admiration of Dionysius. He sees that, like his master, Theopompus has weaknesses of his own. But he finds in him an excellent model for students of the higher rhetoric, whether he be regarded as a moralist or as an orator. Do the new discoveries make a similar impression on the modern reader?

That Theopompus was a severe critic of contemporary morals is attested not only by Dionysius but by Polybius (viii. 11, 12), Lucian (*de conscr. hist.* 59), Plutarch

(*Demosth.* 13), and others. Sometimes he has been thought altogether too severe, but it must not be forgotten that he lived in an age of national decline, when a true Greek might well feel plain-speaking to be a duty.¹ In any case the fact remains that he was a stern moralist. This impression, however, would not naturally be conveyed by the new discoveries, considerable though they are in amount. The unknown author proves himself able to analyse political motive with care and insight, but he does not assume the rôle of a moralist. He rarely blames or praises; he allows his facts to tell their own story. Dionysius, on the contrary, has manifestly before him in Theopompus a preacher of righteousness who probed deep into human vice and forestalled on earth the searching judgments of another world.

Nor can it be said that the new discoveries reveal the orator more clearly than the moralist. That Theopompus had much of the orator about him we know not only from Dionysius but from other authorities. Quintilian, for instance, says: 'Theopompus his proximus ut in historia praedictis minor, ita oratori magis similis, ut qui, antequam est ad hoc opus sollicitatus, diu fuerit orator (*Inst. Or.* x. 1, 74).' And Cicero: 'horum (Philisti et Thucydidis) concisis sententiis, interdum etiam non satis apertis cum brevitate tum nimio acumine, officit Theopompus elatione atque altitudine orationis suae (*Brut.* 17, 66).' Some (not all) of the undisputed fragments, also, convey the impression not only of oratorical fire but of rhetorical artifice, e.g. τί γὰρ τῶν αἰσχροῶν ἢ δεινῶν αὐτοῖς οὐ προσῆν; ἢ τί τῶν καλῶν καὶ σπουδαίων οὐκ ἀπῆν;² But the new discoveries (with their apparently deliberate avoidance of speeches where speeches might well have been introduced) do not seem to present us with an accomplished rhetorician, still less with an eloquent orator. They are not in the least likely to have made upon Dionysius the very definite impression which we know Theopompus to have made upon him.

¹ Cp. the fragments in Demetr. *De Eloc.* 240, Athen. vi. 254, Pollux, iii. 58.

² Cp. Gorgias, τί γὰρ ἀπῆν τοῖς ἀνδράσι τοῖς αἰσχροῖς, ὧν δεῖ ἀνδράσι προσεῖναι; τί δὲ καὶ προσῆν, ὧν οὐ δεῖ προσεῖναι;

Failing thus to find, in the Oxyrhynchus volume, the kind of writing suggested by Dionysius' eulogy, we may fall back upon the theory that Theopompus (notwithstanding the story about his need of the curb) composed somewhat tamely in his younger days, and in particular was able to suppress his individuality (and even his vanity) when completing another's work. In modern times there are many well-known cases of marked variations in one and the same author's style. There is a great difference between Carlyle when writing in the *Edinburgh Review* and Carlyle when composing his later works. And in classical antiquity such variations might be expected to be even wider, since style was then more deliberately acquired and cultivated. In the first book of Thucydides there is a passage (the story of Cylon, chapters 126-138) which is written with such alluring clearness that a scholiast exclaims 'here the lion smiled.' Nevertheless, no one (so far as I am aware) has questioned the authenticity of the passage on the ground that it is not gnarled and crabbed like many portions of Thucydides, with regard to whose history Dionysius has remarked that 'only a select few are capable of comprehending the whole of Thucydides, and not even they without occasional help in the way of grammatical explanations (*Dionys. Halic. De Thucyd.* c. 51).'

Such considerations as these must certainly be allowed all due weight. Still, the real difficulty remains. It is not a question of mere tricks of style or literary veneer. The *personality* underlying Dionysius' description of Theopompus' style seems quite distinct from that which suggests itself to a reader of the Oxyrhynchus fragments: the two writers seem men of *different characters*. Grenfell and Hunt are fully alive to this aspect of the problem, and they have discussed the whole question with conspicuous fairness and breadth. But a review of the evidence found in Dionysius and elsewhere may perhaps suggest the maintenance of even greater reserve than they have shown when expounding the view that Theopompus may be the author of the new historical fragments.

W. RHYS ROBERTS.