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The Elegies of Theognis

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ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

THE ELEGIES OF THEOGNIS.

The Elegies of Theognis and other Elegies included in the Theognidean Sylloge. A revised text, based on a new collation of the Mutinensis MS., with introduction, commentary, and appendices. By T. HUDSON-WILLIAMS, M.A., Professor of Greek in the University College of North Wales, Bangor. Pp. xv + 262. London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1910.

THE chief value of this book lies in its illustrative commentary and its new collation of the Mutinensis, *A*. The collation is minute, it commands confidence,¹ and it supplies a felt want. Special attention is paid to the strange fact, observed by Jordan, that some busybody has made erasures and substitutions in *A* since Bekker's time. The other MSS., it seems, are quoted according to old collations.

The new evidence about *A*, though it clears up a wilderness of error, does little towards the improvement of the text; and the editor's few conjectures do little more. In 112 *μνήμα δὲ χούσ'* (for *δ' ἔχουσ'*), 'they pile up a memorial [of thanks] to good deeds,' is an unlikely and unhappy metaphor;² and in 235 *οὐδ'*

ἔτι τι cannot easily be got out of the MSS., and is no better than *οὐδὲν ἔτι* in sense. But *μὴ δὴν μ'* in 352, and *πελᾶς* in 1258, are worth considering. The use of brackets is somewhat arbitrary, as in 626 and 1194; and the poem 237-54 is ruined thereby. To prefix an asterisk to one word only³ in some fourteen hundred lines is to give a wrong notion of the trustworthiness of the text. Misjudgment of the character of the inferior MSS. is shown here and there, as in the acceptance of their superfluous *δ'* in 83. They give just such another *δ'*, to patch up the grammar and to make a bad link with the preceding couplet, in 821, where *οἱ κ' . . . ἀτιμάζωσι* should be read.⁴ A more serious instance of the same fault is in 213, where *A*'s *θυμέ* is superseded, without comment, by the vulgar *Κύρνε*, which helps to disguise the difference between 213-8 and 1071-4. On the other hand, the editor is wisely proof against the loose variants of the *testimonia*; and on the whole his choice of readings and other men's conjectures is fairly discreet.

The commentary is defective in argu-

phorically concrete sense, the editor calls *μν. καὶ χάριν* 'hendyadys as 1040': but the Platonic trick of coupling metaphor and fact by a *καί* strikes me as foreign to poetry; and no stretch of 'hendyadys' can cover *ἄστρου καὶ κυνὸς ἀρχομένου* in 1040.

³ *ἄλλης* in 1202, which has been satisfactorily emended.

⁴ Equally superfluous is the *δ'* accepted from Orelli in 937.

¹ Such doubts as have occurred to me are on small points: e.g., has *A* *ψεῦδεα* or *ψευδέα* in 713? Other doubtful accents appear in the notes on 169, 897, 902, 908. The text has a misprint in 785.

² If we follow the MSS., *μνήμα* in the sense of *μνήμη* may perhaps be defended by comparison with *γνώμα*. Giving *μνήμα* a meta-

ment and elucidation; some difficulties are missed altogether, others are only partly solved.¹ But it is very rich in quotations and references illustrating points of diction, combinations of words, and their metrical positions. In such a mass of matter some irrelevancies might be pardoned, but I have noticed very few;² and I might draw attention to many notes³ which say all that need ever be said in defence of the text. But the merits of this painstaking work cannot be represented by a sample: the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

I have dealt the more briefly with the strictly editorial parts of this book because private duty calls me to the author's treatment of the Theognidean Question. Ten years ago I wrote a book called *Studies in Theognis*; and no sooner was it born, and beheld the rays of the sharp sun, than Mr. Hudson-Williams began to heap earth upon its body. He gives it on the whole a fairly Christian burial, so perhaps I ought not to insist too loudly that the book is still alive. I certainly do not mean to defend its character against all aspersions; but, on the other hand, I am not at present inclined to pluck up all its wild oats, or to make its peace with the Higher Criticism against the day when Herculaneum shall give up its dead. Yet since my name, and divers compendia of it,⁴ often appear, and are often latent,

in the present book, something must be said: for

'A man is fettered by the foolishness
He took for wisdom and talked ten years
since.'

It is to be understood that on many points I find myself in cordial agreement with W.'s Introduction,⁵ though they will find little place in the following notes.

The Testimonia.—The clouds of misinterpretation on which Sitzler and his like projected their Ur-Theognides are by now dispelled; though W., I think, still overworks the passage of Isocrates, unduly narrowing the scope of the phrase τὴν Θεόγνιδος ποίησιν. On the passages of Xenophon, Dio, Athenaeus, Cyril, Suidas, he is sound enough. The passage of the *Meno*⁶ proves to him the existence early in the fourth century of a book of poems attributed to Theognis, 'and this,' he says, 'is perhaps all that it does prove.' So far, good.

The 'Alien' Poems.—Failing ancient evidence for alien authorship, W. is chary of ascriptions, though he reports a guess here and there in his notes. But he follows the scholars who ascribe 467-96, 667-82, and 1345-50, to Euenus of Paros. He acknowledges (p. 34) that 'the mere fact that Th. 472 was read among the poems of Euenus does not in itself entitle him to the whole elegy in which it occurs'; but he thinks that 'several other considerations point in

¹ E.g. 127, 287-8, 309-12, 513, 669, 806, 884, 1219, 1247. 428: the 'parallel' between a living man heaping together a bed of leaves and a dead man piling earth over his own corpse—a difficult feat—is not 'exact.' 843: a good counsellor would advise a man to leave a drinking-bout, not 'when he sees things upside down,' but rather earlier. 1133-4: καταπαύσμεν is of course aor. subj., not fut. ind.

² On 3: some of the examples of the form 'first, last, midst' are not to the point, and it is not the fact that 'there is no special reference to Ptolemy in the middle' of Theocr. 17: Pt. comes next to Zeus in the prelude and the epilogue, and he is the theme and substance of the middle of the poem.—A note on the relation between 239 and *Iliad* x. 217 is badly wanted.—On 903 and 905 (p. 260): ἀναλώσει in Plato *Rep.* 591E is verb, not noun (the error is perhaps borrowed from Stephanus-Dindorf or Ast); and the note on καριδεῖν wants further thought.

³ See, e.g., 4, 11, 115, 175.

⁴ Which encourage me to shorten 'Professor Hudson-Williams' to 'W.'

⁵ E.g., the poems are not arranged by catchwords; they contain many complete poems, of one couplet or more; they are not a school-book or a *Commersbuch*; the pastime of labelling pieces with the names of Callinus, Chilon, and the like, is full of risk; metrical and linguistic tests have failed.

⁶ He discusses anew the question ἐν ποίοις ἔπεισιν; and the answer is ἐν τοῖς ἐλεγείοις οὐ λέγει κ.τ.λ., and thinks that the question may refer not to metre but to matter. Then why does the answer bring in a term of metre? Or, again, he thinks that ἐν π. ἔπ. may mean no more than 'Where?' Then what does ἐν τ. ἐλ. add to οὐ? In order to make the question relevant, he makes the answer irrelevant. The interpretation of ὀλίγον μεταβάς which he follows may be right, but he does not commend it by asking, 'Would Socrates at one and the same moment refer to the poem as showing "a slight change of standpoint" and "a direct self-contradiction"?' How many words to a moment? Forty or fifty words intervene.

the same direction.' They are scarcely a quorum. All three poems are addressed to Simonides: but no Simonides to whom the Parian poet should have addressed them is known. W. appeals also to *Μήλιος πόντος* in the riddling poem 667-82: but no sea called Melian is known, and the maps do not incline us to think that the Parians would have so called 'the sea near Melos';¹ so that the riddle is still unsolved.²

Where a piece of the Theognidea has striking resemblances to a piece handed down under another name elsewhere, W. accepts the other poet's authorship in every case; indeed I fear I have impelled him to deny to Theognis even 153-4, which most ejectors had spared in deference to Clement of Alexandria. I had maintained that in each of these cases Theognis altered and appropriated the older poet's lines. This cannot be proved independently in every case taken apart. For six³ of these ten doublets textual variation and popular misquotation might account at a pinch, but for the other four⁴ they will not; and when the character of the four has been decided, then, and then only, can we judge of the six. What does W. make of the four?

He does not explain exactly how he accounts for the difference between 1003-6 and their Tyrtaean counterpart; but he gives the purpose of one of the changes which distinguish 227-32 from their Solonian counterpart: a line of Solon's 'was replaced by 230 to avoid holding the gods responsible.' This change, then, it seems, was not accidental but intentional. On 585-90 he is more explicit (p. 46). '585-90 are found in Solon. Here, besides a few insignificant changes in the wording, there are two important variations which cannot be due to chance and which give quite a new turn to the main idea. . . . There is no doubt that these changes were intentional, and made as a protest to "justify the ways of God to man." . . .

This poem has suffered from its popularity and has been changed to suit the problem it discusses.' In the commentary we read, 'a popular revision of lines composed by Solon. . . . A later moralist distorted the original.' Here, then, six lines of Solon have been used by a later writer, who has kept the framework of the original poem and many of its words, has given quite a new turn to the main idea, and has produced a new-old poem formally complete.

Lastly, in 933-8, the second and third couplets are based on six lines of Tyrtaeus, which they shorten and strengthen; but the first couplet is totally different from the couplet which precedes these six lines in Tyrtaeus, and this difference alters the whole bearing of the poem: the rewards which Tyrtaeus had promised to patriotic valour are transferred to *ἀρετή καὶ κάλλος*. W. (p. 45) does not like the new poem, objecting that it gives 'a grotesquely exaggerated account' of the respect paid to the man 'who has both virtue and beauty': but when he translates *ἀρετή* by 'virtue' he begs a question. I had rendered it 'excellence,' and W. himself in another place and for another purpose (in the note on 129) makes the word mean 'mental and corporal excellence.' *ἀρετή* (thus understood) and *κάλλος* were a very strong pair in the land of Pindar and Alcibiades.

The conjunction of 933-4 with 935-8 is not my doing; it is found in the texts of Bekker, Welcker, Ziegler, Sitzler, Bergk, Hiller-Crusius; and it would not be questioned if I had not drawn from the poem a logical consequence.⁵ Now, *οἱ χωρίζοντες* have a choice of evils.

(1) Like Welcker, they may assign to Tyrtaeus not 935-8 only but 933-8. Then they must be asked to explain the relation between this poem and the lines to which Tyrtaeus is sole claimant. Did he himself put a new headpiece on some lines of his own? Did he himself shorten and strengthen the part common to the old poem and the new? Then

¹ This suggestion is Hartung's, I think; it was adopted by Blass.

² The evidence given in the note on 1345 (cf. p. 58) perhaps points to a poet earlier than Euenus.

³ 153-4, 315-8, 719-28, 793-6, 1017-22, 1253-4.

⁴ 227-32, 585-94, 933-8, 1003-6.

⁵ Prof. H. W. Smyth (*C.R.* 1903, p. 353) raises the strange objections that 933-4 'destroy the force' of Tyrtaeus' lines, 'and leave *μὴν* in 935 without definite reference.' *μὴν* refers most definitely to the subject of 934.

he used the very mode of self-amendment which I ascribe to Theognis.

(2) Like Reitzenstein, they may assign 933-8 to an imitator of Tyrtaeus. Who was this imitator, and what was he at? A poet? Then here is a poet using the very procedure which I ascribe to Theognis in dealing with another poet's work. A schoolmaster or 'moralist'? An odd one, if he thought fit to transfer the rewards of 935-8 from patriotic valour to 'excellence' and beauty, or even to virtue and beauty.

(3) Like W. (p. 233), they may see in 935-8 a different version of the Tyrtaean lines, appended 'as a commentary on the first element in 933'; that is to say, on ἀρετή, but not on κάλλος, nor on both. Was this one-eyed commentator himself the abridger and strengthener of the lines of Tyrtaeus? If so, it is odd that a man so good at revision should be so bad at a gloss. If not, the origin of the shorter version of the lines still needs to be explained.

However that may be, W. acknowledges three examples of pieces intentionally changed or distorted by a later hand: but he will not have it that the hand was a poet's, for he thinks such pettifogging plagiarism unworthy of a poet, or of an honest man.¹ 'What is a Poet?' asked one of our own Poets. The answer is not simple, nor is it the same in every age. Literary honesty, too, is not a thing fixed by rigid and immutable laws. This is not the first time that harm has been done by applying to ancient literature our modern notions of originality and copyright. The fallacy has often been pointed out, but as often recurs. I might quote many warnings, but on the present occasion a single witness may suffice. It is W. himself. 'We should not forget,' he says elsewhere (p. 31), 'that these early poets frequently imitated and appropriated the thoughts, expressions, and even the general framework of the elegies written by their predecessors or contemporaries.' Good: καὶ ἡμεῖς μάρτυρα ἔχομεν, Γυλιελμίδην, πολίτην τῶν ἐν Γαλατία Βαγγορέων.²

¹ See especially p. 47, n.

² 1197-1202 are addressed to Cyrnus under the name Πολυπαίδης, and therefore (by W.'s criterion) they are by Theognis: yet 'these

In support of my view of these loans, I drew attention to 769-72, where it is written that the servant and spokesman of the Muses must not hoard his wit, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν μῶσθαι, τὰ δὲ δεικνύναι, ἄλλα δὲ ποιεῖν.

Quoting a parallel from *Ecclesiastes*, I held that μῶσθαι and δεικνύναι must mean parts of the poet's office which differ from ποιεῖν. The suggestion has not been barren.³ But the best that W. can make of the words is this: "Search for new truths, point out to men truths already known, practise others in his own life" (or possibly "make up into poetry"). Neither of his alternatives can be entertained. On the second, the line gives a distinction without a perceptible difference; on the first, the poet, in baddish Greek, invites the charge of not preaching all that he practises, that is to say, of hoarding some of his wit, the very fault which he has condemned.

The foundations of my theory, then, remain unshaken. They are the witness of Clement of Alexandria as to 153, the antitheses in 771, and the four passages which resemble passages of Solon or Tyrtaeus but with important or essential differences such as to give them a character of their own. The four passages prove that the procedure which I suppose was used by some person or persons at some time or times; the antitheses in 771 seem to show that somebody at some time recognised some such procedure as part of the poet's province; the statement of Clement attests (I do not mean 'proves') that this procedure was used in one instance by Theognis; and the occurrence of these passages in our MSS. under the name of Theognis gives evidence (I do not mean 'proof') about them all.

Parody.—Welcker found many 'parodies' in our text, W. finds but few. He calls 1161-2 a ludicrous travesty of

lines are evidently modelled on Hes. *W.D.* 488 *sqq.*, with a clear attempt at differentiation.' So Theognis is at it again.

³ See T. W. Allen in *C.R.* 1905, p. 389; O. Immisch in *Neue Jahrbücher*, xiii. 1904, p. 236, who concludes: 'Die Hauptsache ist in jedem Falle, dass der Dichter das wirkliche ποιεῖν, also die *Eigenschöpfung* im engeren Sinne nur für einen Teil dessen, was er gibt in Anspruch nimmt.'

409-10. Wherein lies the travesty? Not in the choice of words (for *δίδως* does not mean 'hand your cash over'); not in the sentiment, unless we are to laugh at *hoc habeo quodcumque dedi* and at what Mayor called 'the noble words' of Martial, V. 42, 7-8; but in the grammar. 'The writer . . . probably regarded the bad grammar as an addition to the joke perpetrated at the expense of a moralist he learned to hate in school.' A judicious investigation of Greek MSS. and their variants would enrich Greek literature with many such jokes; in point of fact, too many. No: the two couplets have a common part, like 301-2 and 1353-6,¹ but the one is not a travesty of the other.

Again, 578 seems to W. 'to have been introduced for the sake of burlesquing a well-known line which may have been composed by Theognis.' This *well-known* line is also *unknown*. Until it turns up, W.'s suspicion is gratuitous.

The 'Repetitions.'—Some of the so-called repetitions W. tries to explain by textual errors, in others he sees intentional change. It is easy, though inaccurate, to call 1109-14 an 'abridgement' of 53-60, and to speak of 'childish variations' (pp. 49, 50): but who was this child, and why was he at such pains? Not a thief, it seems, since he retained the address to Cynus. Then who, and when, and why? Against the view that these doublets may have come from different citations of the same passages, my objection still holds: often as the Theognidea are cited in ancient authors, not one of these doublets is quoted in both forms, whereas passages which are quoted in widely different forms appear only once in our text. In criticising my views of the 'repetitions' W. says little of the variations of meaning and context which I pointed out, but enlarges on the variations of wording, which he taxes with childishness, laziness, and unimaginativeness. If self-plagiarism is all these things, then Euripides was a sluggard, Demosthenes a dullard, and Empedocles a babe.

¹ '1353=301,' says W. (p. 252); but it is not so. What does he mean when he says (p. 62) that 301 'hardly makes sense'?

Fragments.—'An elegy may often be a mere fragment,' says W. (p. 4); and again (p. 73) he speaks of 'the disconnected appearance of some elegies that irresistibly remind us of the poems that make up "the complete fragments" of lost poets in collections like Bergk's *Poetae Lyrici* or the *Fragmenta Comicorum*; in both cases we have bits of poetry that were found as detached quotations in ancient writers.' Later on (p. 188) he is more cautious: 'it cannot be denied that a few fragments have forced their way into our book.' This wavering of opinion is reflected in the text, which is not very good at deciding where one poem ends and another begins. What author would have quoted such scraps as 1101-2 and 1278 *a, b*, dull relative sentences with no main clause? I have shown that these couplets are to be combined with the next. Again, 413-4 are feeble, 1083-4 are meaningless, without their neighbours; 783-8 are a valuable addition to 773-82; 877-8 supply an address to 879-84, and remove a difficulty in 884 which W. ignores. In these cases W. seems to have adopted conventional divisions based on principles which he does not altogether, or always, accept.

The Preface.—I hold, with others, that the 'seal' which Theognis set on his poems was the announcement of his name at the beginning of his book. W. thinks that such a seal could have served no purpose. How so? If a man put forward as his own a poem of Theognis, could not captious critics have pointed to its presence in the book which Theognis had sealed? That he arranged some at least of his poems in the form of a book, W. believes (pp. 72, 76).

W., with others, makes *Kύπρε* the seal, but he does not think the lack of *Kύπρε* proof of another poet's hand. Yet, if Theognis used this tedious device seventy times or so, he must have set up a presumption that none was genuine without the label. By insuring his copyright in this casual way, he stood to lose as much as he could gain. This seal would not avail against theft, since *Kύπρε* could easily have been removed; nor against forgery, since anyone who wished to ape Theognis could introduce

this handy vocative into his verses, as a poet has done in recent times.

The Date of Theognis.—Here I will confine myself to the evidence of the lines which mention the Medes. 773-82 were written from the standpoint of Megara, and W. allows (p. 10) that they 'may well have been composed by Theognis'; but he refers them to 'the dread of a Persian invasion in 545 B.C.' What is the evidence for such a dread? Sparta's cool message to Cyrus betokens concern for the Greeks of Asia, but unconcern for herself.¹ Besides this incident, W. (p. 9) refers only to a sentence in Herodotus' description of Marathon (vi. 112): *τέως δὲ ἦν τοῖσι Ἕλλησι καὶ τὸ οὐνομα τὸ Μήδων φόβος ἀκούσαι*. Quoted apart, this sentence may suggest widespread fear of Persian ambition and aggression; but in its context it refers to military prestige, a different thing. But, rate as high as we will the fears of the mainland in 545 B.C., they still fall far short of the tone of 773-82, which show present peril to Megara itself, and must belong at the earliest to 490 B.C. Either, then, the poem is by some other Megarian, or Theognis lived on into the Persian wars.

The Origin of the Sylloge.—W. holds (p. 72) that the first book 'includes several collections of varying length supplemented by a number of separate elegies drawn from many different sources.' This creed is better than some rival forms of orthodoxy, but it comes to grief as soon as it is applied in detail. 'The first portion 1-252,' we read, 'is a well-arranged compilation complete in itself' (p. 72); 'it is not unlikely that we have in 1-26 the beginning of a collection published by Theognis himself,' and '237-52 probably formed the epilogue to his book' (p. 76). But it happens that 252, so far from ending a

book, does not even end a poem. 'V. 253-4 Welcker, cui assensus est Herwerden, non recte separavit a praegressis,' says Bergk. These two lines are in structure² and in purport an integral part of the poem 237-54; the sting of the poem is in its tail. W. dubs them 'a clumsy interpolation,' and fancies that the length of the description of the fame which Theognis has bestowed on Cyrnus, and its enthusiastic tone, 'make it very unlikely that it is merely a preparation for the tag at the end.' On the contrary, the very brevity of the *παρὰ προσδοκίαν* is all to the good. What would be thought of a critic who should strike off the last four lines of Horace's second Epode because they were too brief for the sarcastic turn, or the praises of country life which precede them too enthusiastic and too long? Anyone who will compare the Greek poem with the Latin will find the analogy exact. But, whereas 237-52 might be the epilogue to a book published by Theognis, 237-54 will not serve this purpose:³ so the last couplet must go, at all costs.

The Theognidean Question has been tackled by many young men in a hurry, myself and others. I do not know whether W. might have claimed indulgence on this score for the pamphlet which he wrote in 1903; but better things were to be hoped of his years of second thoughts. However, this is a praise-worthy and useful book. *Valeat; quid enim dicam 'propitius sit'?*

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July, 1911.

² With what does the *σοὶ μὲν ἐγὼ* of 237 correspond if not with the *αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ παρὰ σεῦ* of 253? But this should be an easy question for one who can translate 19-20 thus (p. 51): 'I on the one hand seal my poems, they on the other will not get lost.'

³ At least, not in 1910. In 1903 W.'s 'separate and well-arranged collection' *did* end, oddly enough, at 254, but it has shrunk a little in these seven years.

¹ Cf. E. Meyer, *Gesch. d. Alt.* ii. § 473: 'ein positives Eingreifen der Perser in die Verhältnisse am aegaeischen Meer war noch nicht möglich (before 525 B.C.).'