

Theocritus 17.2 Once Again

*Ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχώμεσθα καὶ ἐς Δία λήγετε Μοῖσαι,
ἀθανάτων τὸν ἄριστον, ἐπὴν ᾗ αἰδῶμεν αἰοιδᾶς...*

Gow on Theocritus 17. 1 ff proves that ἀθανάτων τὸν ἄριστον is in apposition to Δία, and cannot be the object of αἰδῶμεν. The manuscripts give αἰδῶμεν and αἰδῶμεν. The correction to ἄδῶμεν is easy enough, and the unmetrical αἰδῶμεν perhaps arose from the following word (ἀει-: αἰοι-)¹). Gow rejected the vulgate ἄδῶμεν because he thought it would have to take τὸν ἄριστον as its object²), but failed to consider the possibility that the object might follow ἄδῶμεν. I thought of αἰοιδᾶς, a conjecture that I have since found to have been proposed by J. A. Hartung. The dative with ἄδῶμεν would not be impossible, but an accusative with this verb is the usual construction in Theocritus: Cf. [9]. 28–29: ᾠδάν / τάν (ᾠδᾶς / τᾶς: P_Q²W) ποκ' ἐγὼ τήνοισι ... αἴεσα νομεῦσι [8]. 34: ... ἄσε μέλος /; 18. 7: αἴειδον δ' ἅμα πᾶσαι ἐς ἐν μέλος ἐγκροτέουσαι / ποσσι περιπλέκτοισι³). I therefore conclude that Hartung's ἄδῶμεν αἰοιδᾶς is the most reasonable solution to this

1) See Gow *ad loc.*

2) CQ 13 (1919) 22, note 1.

3) For ἄδ- (beside αἰειδ-) in Theocritus cf. also 1. 148; 14. 30. LSJ and Gow take μέλος in 18. 7 with ἐς ἐν. I understand ἐς as idiomatic with ἐγκροτέουσαι (Cf. Ar. *Ran.* 372 ff), and ἐς ἐν as elliptical for ἐς ἐν πέδον or the like (Cf. 22. 27; Ap. Rh. 4, 1195). The hyperbaton of μέλος with αἴειδον is not difficult, and hyperbata in Theocritus are frequent (see Gow on *Epiqr.* 21, 1). The construction (without hyperbaton) is paralleled at 11. 18; Cf. [8]. 55–56. Dancers do not strike a *song* with their feet, they strike the ground, or “dance a dance” (Cf. Ar. *Ran.* 330 ff, where, to be sure, χορεύειν is in apposition to τιμάν).

uncertain passage, and that attention should again be called to his conjecture in view of the universal neglect it has received from all recent editors⁴).

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