A Defense of the Ambrosian Strophic Sequence of Simaetha’s Incantation in Theocritus’ Idyll 2 Φαρμακεύτρια, with Reference to the Superiority of its Textual Witness

BY

Jason Dal Maltsbarger

Submitted to the graduate degree program in Classics and the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master’s of Arts.

Jon Bruss
Chairperson

Committee Members

Tara Welch

Stanley Lombardo

Date defended: July 7, 2010
The Thesis Committee for Jason Dal Maltsbarger certifies that this is the approved Version of the following thesis:

A Defense of the Ambrosian Strophic Sequence of Simaetha’s Incantation in Theocritus’ Idyll 2 Φαρμακεύτρια, with Reference to the Superiority of its Textual Witness

Committee:

Jon Bruss
Chairperson

Tara Welch

Stanley Lombardo

Date approved: July 7, 2010
Page left intentionally blank.
ABSTRACT

In the last century, various scholars have argued that the strophic sequence of Simaetha’s incantation in Theocritus’ Idyll 2 Φαρμακεύτρια should not be determined simply on the basis of the textual witness. Rather, they assert that the sequence of its strophes should be decided on the basis of poetic structure. As a result of this view, subsequent critics have sought to bypass the textual superiority of the Ambrosian sequence of the incantation and to reassert the vulgate or “traditional” reading of the Laurentian sequence, on the grounds that the Ambrosian sequence violates the poetic structure of the incantation and that such structure is best preserved by following the Laurentian sequence.

In this paper, I shall argue the superiority of the Ambrosian sequence, both on the basis of its superior textual witness and on the basis of poetic structure. I shall do this by first examining and critiquing the work of one of the most significant defenses of the Laurentian sequence in the last fifty years, that of Professor Gilbert Lawall in his 1961 article “Simaetha’s Incantation: Structure and Imagery.” I shall argue that Lawall’s arbitrary and excessively detailed structural argument fails to do justice to the text of the incantation and that a better paradigm is the literary idea of psychological realism, as set forth by Anna T. Rist in her 1975 article “The Incantatory Sequence in Theocritus’ Pharmaceutria.” On the basis of my critique of Lawall’s view and my assertion of psychological realism in Simaetha’s incantation I shall argue that the superiority of the Ambrosian textual witness is insurmountable in this debate and that those opponents who seek to discredit it on poetic grounds are fundamentally wrong in their attempt to bypass its textual witness and to reassert the Laurentian sequence simply on the basis of poetic structure.
# Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations vi

I. Introduction 7

II. Text of Theocritus 13

III. History of the Debate 22

IV. The Literary Issue 29

V. Textual Methodology and the Burden of Proof 56

VI. Conclusion 64

Appendix I. Text of P. Ant. (P³) 67

Appendix II. Text of P. Oxy. 3546 68

Appendix III. Plate of P. Oxy. 3546 69

Appendix IV. Complete Greek Text of Theocritus’ Idyll 2 Ψαρχακεύτρια 70

Appendix V. English Translation of Theocritus’ Idyll 2 The Sorceress 76

Bibliography 81
List of Abbreviations

P. Ant. (P^3)  

P. Oxy. 3546  
I. Introduction

The history of manuscript transmission is the history of human error. One well-known example of this is Theocritus’ Idyll 2, also called Φαρμακεύτρια,1 where the original location of lines 28-31 has been a point of scholarly contention since Ahrens compiled the first critical edition of Theocritus.2 Scribes copy texts by hand with the only surety of the text’s purity being their strained attempt at accuracy. The debate surrounds the disputed location of this strophe as it is represented in three famous Theocritus textual families from the 13th century A.D.: the Ambrosian, the Laurentian, and the Vatican.3 While most scholars concede the superiority4 of the Ambrosian textual witness in placing lines 28-31 after line 41, there has been a vocal defense of the “traditional”5 location represented in both the Laurentian and Vatican textual witnesses. Certain scholars have argued in favor of the Laurentian sequence, bypassing or even ignoring the clearly superior textual evidence of the Ambrosian sequence - as though it were of little consequence. They have done this by appealing to alleged poetic and structural problems, which they claim the Ambrosian sequence creates. In doing so, however, they have missed a very

1. The manuscripts preserve various forms of the same title. Most preserve the title in either the singular (Φαρμακεύτρια) or the plural (Φαρμακεύτριαι). The earliest attested forms are found in Serv. Verg. Ecl. 8.1; Ath. Deip. 11.50.29; Eust. Od. 2.82.13; and P. Ant. (P3 in Gow). As Gow 1950 Vol 2: 33 notes, the singular is usually preferred both on the authority of Servius and P. Ant. (P3) but also because Thestylis plays a rather small role in the incantation. See Wendel 1902: 269 for variations on the title as they occur in the manuscripts.
3. See my introduction and discussion of the history and text of the manuscripts in section two.
4. The Ambrosian witness is verified by the discovery of two extremely valuable manuscripts which I shall later discuss at length: the fifth century Antinoë papyrus P. Ant. (P3), published in 1930 by Hunt and Johnson, and the second century papyrus fragment P. Oxy. 3546, discovered at the beginning of the 20th century at the famous Oxyrhynchus site in Egypt and published in 1983.
5. Some critics have expressed uncertainty as to whether the transposed lines are 28-31, or whether lines 33-41 were transposed or possibly omitted in some of the manuscripts (see the note of the Oxyrhynchus editors in appendix two). White conjectures that lines 33-36 were transposed by an ancient reader for the sake of ritual continuity (1979: 28). However, this is unlikely, since no manuscript contains a separation between lines 33-36 and 38-41. It is more likely that a single strophe (28-31) was transposed than a pair of strophes (33-36 and 38-41). Unfortunately, due to the constraints of this present work, I shall not speculate on the reason for the transposition.
6. By the term “traditional” I mean that the majority of these 13th century A.D. codices, which constitute the Laurentian and Vatican recensions, place lines 28-31 in a different location than the single codex K which alone constitutes the Ambrosian recension. This numerical advantage (see diagram on page 19) established the Laurentian and Vatican recensions in many circles as the vulgate or “traditional” strophic sequence of Simaetha’s incantation.
important component of the pro-Ambrosian argument; the superiority of the Ambrosian textual witness places the burden of proof clearly on the supporters of the “traditional” sequence. Until the Laurentian and Vatican textual families attain an equally authoritative textual standing, the Ambrosian sequence is by default the best reading and should be accepted. To put it another way, archeologists must discover papyri that attest the Laurentian sequence and date them to the same period as, or earlier than, the fragments *P. Ant.* (P³) and *P. Oxy.* 3546, which support the Ambrosian sequence. Until this happens, the burden of proof lies with those who would argue against the Ambrosian.

My contention is that the superiority of the Ambrosian textual witness in this case carries far greater weight than transient, literary and rhetorical arguments. This very textual witness gives us concrete evidence of the Ambrosian sequence of Simaetha’s incantation as early as the third century A.D.⁷ Conversely, the Laurentian strophic sequence lacks any concrete textual verification prior to the 13th century A.D., that is, well into the medieval period. While this in itself does not prove the Ambrosian sequence to be the original, it does assert the priority of the Ambrosian sequence and places the burden of proof on those who would seek to supplant it in favor of the Laurentian, or any other sequence.

The literary and rhetorical arguments marshaled by the most significant critics of the Ambrosian sequence in favor of the Laurentian sequence⁸ can be countered with equally viable literary arguments in favor of the Ambrosian. That said, however, even if a literary reading could be presented that was equally viable as the reading presented by the Ambrosian sequence, it

---

⁷ I am referring to the age difference between one of the earliest medieval codices of the Laurentian recension, such as codex G, dated from the 13th century A.D. and *P. Oxy.* 3546 dated from around 200 A.D.

⁸ Some critics have advocated a non-textually attested location of lines 28-31. For example, Lavagnini 1949: 83 has argued that lines 28-31 should be located after line 46. Rist 1975: 109-110 proposes a non-attested location of the strophe after line 51. Since neither of these options have any textual support, I will not address them in this paper.
would still be insufficient to overcome the superior textual witness. That which convinces one scholar may fail to convince another. Laurentian critics fail to demonstrate beyond a reasonable doubt that the Ambrosian sequence clearly violates the poetic or structural harmony of the incantation. The textual witness is simply too substantive to be supplanted by meager, subjective, and elusive literary readings.

In this paper I defend the Ambrosian sequence as the superior reading both on the basis of its textual witness and the literary harmony of its strophic sequence. I do so by answering the objections of one of the most formidable critics to argue in favor of the Laurentian sequence, Gilbert Lawall. Lawall’s proposal fails to convince on the basis of both the textual transmission of Idyll 2 and the literary arguments he presents in favor of the Laurentian sequence.

**Structure**

Some comments on the structure of this paper will be helpful. Section two provides a short survey of the history of the Theocritus text with an introduction and explanation of the textual data. Section three provides a summary of the debate regarding the strophic sequence of Simaetha’s incantation and the original location of lines 28-31. This section, furthermore, provides an introduction to those scholarly arguments that have been pivotal in shaping that debate. Finally, in both of these sections of the paper I provide various charts and graphs as visual aids to assist the readers and to provide them with all that is necessary to follow the debate.

Section four contains both a critique of Lawall’s literary reading and a literary defense of the Ambrosian sequence. While there have been numerous attempts since the Second World War to discredit the Ambrosian sequence of Simaetha’s incantation, the scope of this paper does not

---

10. For other attempts since Lawall’s article, see Rist 1975; White 1979; and Bannert 1988.
permit me to address every published argument of every critic. I would not do so even if I could, since many of the arguments and insights are built upon previous observations of prior scholars. Lawall is rather thorough in his critique of the Ambrosian sequence and has consciously incorporated the most significant observations of the previous generation of anti-Ambrosian critics, such as Colonna and Lavagnini. I therefore focus on Lawall’s critique of the Ambrosian sequence - the most significant critique in the last 50 years, answer all of his objections to the Ambrosian sequence, and in turn critique his perspective. However, to be fair to critics who have written after the publication of his essay in 1961, I supplement his critique with any arguments of theirs that I have considered significant enough to justify a response.

In my view, any examples of poetic disharmony that critics of the Ambrosian sequence cite as reasons for rejection can be resolved if they understand the important literary device called psychological realism, as advanced by Anna T. Rist. Rist proposes that realistic depictions of the minds of Theocritus’ characters may in fact be his “chief interest” as a writer. Theocritus’ primary literary interest is to depict the human mind in all of its complexity. This idea permeates many of his Idylls and is indispensible for a correct understanding of Theocritus’ literary aims. If the traditional criteria of ritual and structure, on which critics have focused, are understood as subordinate to the more important device of psychological realism, then any supposed impediments to the acceptance of the Ambrosian sequence can be disregarded and the Ambrosian sequence will make sense perfectly.

Section five covers the issues of textual authority and the burden of proof, as raised by Lawall and others. The first part addresses the role of textual authority in reconstructing a corrupted text. The second part raises the issue of the burden of proof and argues that it is borne by those who seek to controvert the superior manuscript tradition in favor of an inferior one. The

issue regarding the burden of proof is one that Lawall and others have raised, but which I believe they have failed to understand correctly. Overall, this section’s goal will be to clarify the proper role of textual witnesses in textual criticism and argue that - far from being the spurious reading - the Ambrosian sequence is in fact the starting point and, because of the superiority of its textual witness, must be proven unequivocally corrupt before accepting the Laurentian sequence.

Section six concludes the paper by reasserting the superiority of the Ambrosian textual witness and the view that the Ambrosian reading does not violate the poetic structure of the incantation, but rather offers a realistic portrayal of Simaetha’s psyche. If in fact, the Ambrosian textual witness contains the superior strophic sequence of the incantation, then that sequence will make sense as a literary composition.

Finally, as appendices to this paper, I have provided reproductions of the scholarly publications of the two important papyri, *P. Ant.* (P³) from Antinoë and the Oxyrhynchus fragment *P. Oxy* 3546. As I shall explain in due course, the significance of these two discoveries cannot be overstated - they alone give the Ambrosian sequence the textual authority to be classified as the superior reading. Appendix three provides a plate of *P. Oxy* 3546, so the reader may see an actual photograph of the papyrus fragment. Appendices four and five give the complete Greek text of Theocritus’ Idyll 2 Φαρκακεύτρια and my own translation of it.

Sources

While manuscripts of Theocritus’ poetry are numerous, those that contain Idyll 2 and are of particular importance in determining the original strophic sequence of the incantation are limited. We have approximately 180 manuscripts dating from the 13th to the 16th centuries A.D.
and fragmentary papyri dated from the first to the sixth century A.D. The medieval manuscripts are our most complete editions of Theocritus’ poems, and only certain of those manuscripts contain Idyll 2. All told, only 21 medieval manuscripts and two papyri fragments can be used to establish the text of Theocritus’ Idyll 2. These manuscripts, both codices and papyri, provide the text-critical basis for where lines 28-31 should be placed.

**Methodology**

My argument is based on a presupposition that I believe is both reasonable and sound. This presupposition is that in when dealing with a discrepancy in a manuscript tradition, one should choose the side of the oldest attested reading supported in the manuscript tradition, unless it is a clearly corrupted reading. This is especially the case when one reading is attested by papyri that predate the entire remainder of the manuscript tradition by nearly one-thousand years. If the only evidence available to scholars were the divergent traditions represented in the codices, then one would have to appeal either to the number of manuscripts in either text family or to literary/historical analysis. But regarding the placement of lines 28-31 of Idyll 2, this is clearly not the case. Here two papyri support the Ambrosian reading, which are dated respectively from

---

12. Dover 1971: xvi-xvii. See Gallavotti 1993:7-33 for a complete list of the codices and papyri. Also, see Gow 1950: xxx-lvi for an annotated discussion of the most pertinent manuscripts and papyri fragments and the content of each.

13. See section two for a list of these manuscripts with their dates. See Gow 1950 Vol. 1: lii for a detailed presentation of the contents of each manuscript.

14. White 1979: 22 curtly asserts that the “traditional” sequence of Simaetha’s incantation is assumed by the scholia. It is hard to understand such a comment when the scholia provide no significant help in determining the original location of lines 28-31. A brief examination of the published scholia on Idyll 2 reveals that the scholiast notes are themselves marginal notations written around the text of a particular manuscript. As an edition of the scholia such as Wendel 1902 indicates, each scholium is identified with the particular manuscripts upon which it can be found. If White’s observation is that the traditional published editions of Theocritus’ scholia assume the Laurentian sequence then she fails to understand how scholia work. If, however, her observation is that a particular manuscript preserves the Laurentian sequence and so, following suit, the scholia preserves it as well, then her point is a moot one because the scholia, unless otherwise indicated, will always assume whatever sequence is represented in the manuscript on which they are written. Either way her observation is irrelevant. In the scholia on lines 28-31 and those sections surrounding it there is no mention of any discrepancy in sequence. The absurdity of such a claim must explain her scant mention of it and her speedy passing over of what would be an incredibly formidable argument.

15. See my discussion of the two early papyri, *P. Ant.* (P³) and *P. Oxy* 3546 in section two.
the second and fifth centuries A.D. The implication of such data is no mere hurdle to overcome: we have demonstrable and undeniable evidence of the Ambrosian sequence prior to the 13th century manuscript tradition and none for the Laurentian. While this does not guarantee the legitimacy of the Ambrosian sequence, it definitely establishes it as the older and as a result better reading. It therefore must be proven wrong beyond any reasonable doubt before the Laurentian sequence can be accepted as the superior reading.

My methodology is essentially the same as that of the critics of the Ambrosian sequence save my presupposition of textual authority and my insistence on rendering the respect due to the superior textual tradition. I too examine the reading within its context in the incantation and determine whether there is any literary reason to prefer the Laurentian to the Ambrosian. But regardless of all arguments for and against, it must be stressed at the outset that the Ambrosian sequence is the reading to overcome. If there is no substantial reason to choose the Laurentian over the Ambrosian - that is even if both readings are equally viable - then by default the Ambrosian should be accepted. The innumerable configurations and imaginative creations of literary critics seeking to rearrange Theocritus’ text are no more than speculations. In order to be responsible textual critics, we must function scientifically, on probability and evidence, and not on imagination, artistry, or novel insights.

II. The Text of Theocritus

Prior to the 19th century, the majority of Theocritus’ manuscripts were collated at different locations by various scholars and published independently.16 Five years after publishing his 1850 Teubner Theocritus, H.L. Ahrens embarked on the ambitious task of producing the first

---

16. See Gow 1950 Vol. 1: xxx-xxxiv for the history of the text before Ahrens and a full list of all publications pertaining to Theocritus during and after these years.
volume of a projected four volume critical text of Theocritus, Bion, Moschus, and fragments.\textsuperscript{17} Ahrens was able to produce only the first two volumes of the set, but the work spurred a century of critical work on the text and poetry of Theocritus. In 1905, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff published his Oxford Classical Text \textit{Bucolici Graeci} and followed it the next year with his monumental work \textit{Die Textgeschichte der griechischen Bukoliker}.	extsuperscript{18} Although both men had worked hard up to this point to consolidate and establish a regular system for the Theocritus text, neither had done much work actually collating manuscripts. Ahrens had collated none. And while Wilamowitz had collated at least two, one of which was the important K codex, his work was limited in scope.\textsuperscript{19} Concerning the task he wrote,

\begin{quote}
Aber was bei der Konstitution der Adnotatio unter den Tisch fällt, ist dem, der die Recensio macht, unentbehrlich, und ich wollte, ich verfügte noch über mehr Kollationen, sowenig ich glaube, dafs mir die bisher bekannten Handschriften etwas helfen würden. Ich selbst habe die italienischen geprüft und die wichtigen kollationiert, wo ich nicht die Zuverlässigkeit der publizierten Kollationen erprobte.
\end{quote}

But what has fallen by the way in the structuring of the annotation is indispensable for whoever is creating the recension, and I wish I still had more collations at hand since I hardly believe that the MSS known heretofore would be of help to me. I myself have examined the Italian manuscripts and have collated the important ones when I did not approve of the reliability of the published collations.\textsuperscript{20}

This lack of firsthand acquaintance with \textit{all} the pertinent manuscripts left the goal of a comprehensive and critical text unfinished. Fresh collations, an extensive \textit{apparatus criticus}, and the inclusion of newly discovered papyri were all factors that necessitated a new edition of Theocritus. Although there was a need for such an edition, the disparate state of the manuscripts and the uncertainty of the outcome made few scholars willing to assume the role of editor.\textsuperscript{21}

Carlo Gallavotti, an Italian scholar who had published multiple papers on the text of Theocritus,
stepped into the lacuna and completed the task in 1946 with the landmark publication of a critical text.\textsuperscript{22}

For the first time since the beginning of Ahrens’ work on a critical text of Theocritus, a scholar was able to boast his first hand collation of nearly all the codices:

\begin{quote}
Hoc igitur novum opus adgredior, qui codices fere omnes meis oculis indagavi...
\end{quote}

I embark upon this new task as one who has seen nearly all of the codices with my own eyes…\textsuperscript{23}

Gallavotti, following the lead of Wendel in his critical text of the scholia of Theocritus, confirmed three recensions of the text: the \textit{Ambrosian}, \textit{Laurentian}, and \textit{Vatican}.\textsuperscript{24} The scholarly acknowledgement of these recensions and their subsequent classification as textual families provided a clear assessment of the scribal variations contained in the manuscripts, bringing order to the previous state of disarray in Theocritus textual studies. The traditional core of Theocritus’ corpus was represented in these three families in various arrangements, with Idyll 2 being in all three.\textsuperscript{25}

As scholars from Ahrens to Gallavotti had previously known, one significant textual variation occurred in the incantation section of Idyll 2. The sole codex representing the Ambrosian textual family, K, contrary to all the other medieval codices, located lines 28-31 after line 42, rather than after line 27. Although this divergent reading of K was vastly outnumbered by the other codices and was considered marginal during Ahrens’ era, it nevertheless garnered the support of Ahrens.\textsuperscript{26}

Shortly thereafter, British scholar and archeologist John Johnson made a significant discovery of papyrus leaves in the ancient Greek city of Antinopolis in Egypt, later known as

\begin{flushleft}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Gow 1950 Vol. 1: xxxiii.
\item Gallavotti 1993: 7.
\item Wendel 1902: vi-xxxv; Gallavotti 1993: 14-21.
\item Ahrens 1902: 8.
\end{enumerate}
\end{flushleft}
Antinoë. One of these, which he called *P. Ant.* (Gow’s P³), was a 16 leaf collection of various poems of Theocritus including portions of Idyll 2 and which was subsequently discovered to support the reading of K in placing lines 28-31 after lines 41. The discovery of *P. Ant.* (P³) in 1905 and its subsequent publication in 1930, changed the scholarly consensus on the placement of these lines. As Ahrens had determined years before, the placement of lines 28-31 after line 41 (the Ambrosian sequence) now became the accepted critical reading.

Additionally, in 1983 a very small papyrus fragment, which was discovered in the early part of the twentieth century at the Oxyrhynchus site in Egypt, was deciphered and published. This small fragment, called *P. Oxy.* 3546, was recognized as the first words of lines 30-31 followed immediately by lines 43-49. This archaeological discovery further confirmed the critical reading of K.

**Plot and Structure of Idyll 2 Φαρκακεύτρια**

The structure of Theocritus’ Idyll 2 is relatively simple. It is composed of an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. The body of the poem is further divided into two parts. The first part contains the Simaetha’s incantation while the second part contains a narrative of the events which led up to the incantation. A basic outline of the poem would look like the following:

---

27. See the debate between Colona 1947; Gallavotti 1948; and Lavagnini 1949 regarding whether the superiority of a textual tradition such as the Ambrosian (comprised of K and *P. Ant.*/P³) should be the sole criteria in deciding textual issues.

28. The editions which I have consulted are the following: Ahrens 1902; Gallavotti 1946 (third revised edition 1993); Latte 1948; Gow 1952; Monteil 1968; Fritz 1970; Dover 1971; and Hopkinson 1988.


30. *P. Ant.* (P³) and *P. Oxy.* 3546 were the two most important archeological discoveries for the text of Theocritus in the 20th century. They were dated to be a full 800 years earlier than the oldest medieval codex.
The plot revolves around a seemingly young woman who has been scorned by her lover and, as a result, casts a spell on him. Simaetha begins the poem with a call for her female slave, Thystylis, to fetch laurel for the spell she is preparing to cast on her young and unfaithful male lover, Delphis. The ensuing incantation displays diverse ritual elements that are used to effect what seems at certain times to be the amorous purpose of drawing Delphis back to herself and at other times the malevolent purpose of causing him harm. Simaetha is a young woman torn between love and hate, still loving the young man she recently held, yet hating him for his infidelity. The incantation (lines 17-63) is made up of quatrains that function as strophes which alternate with a recurring refrain ἴνγξ, ἕλκε τὴν ὑμὸν ποτὶ δῶκα τὸν ἄνδρα (magic wheel draw my man home to me). After Simaetha finishes the incantation and sends Thystylis off to rub magic herbs above Delphis’ doorpost, she finds herself alone and begins to recount the origins of her liaison with Delphis. Here the poem switches from the form of an incantation to a narrative, while the quatrains become pentads alternating with a new refrain φράζεο μεν τὸν ἔρωθ’ ὅθεν ἵκετο, πότνα Σελάνα (tell me mistress Selene, whence came my lover). Her story, filled with the mundane details that characterize urban mimes (a borrowed scarf, the street where Lycon lived, etc.), exhibits the diversity of urban life in the Hellenistic world.31 She hears from her neighboring girlfriends about the upcoming procession to the goddess Artemis and reluctantly agrees to accompany them. There, in the middle of the street, she first encounters Delphis walking along with a friend, straight from the gymnasium. Smitten with instant love,

Simaetha returns home in a daze and wastes away with love in Euripidean fashion.\textsuperscript{32} Seeking an answer to her love-sickness, she scours the neighborhood, probably looking for love-potions from the neighborhood sorceresses. Unable to find any potions, she gives up and sends her slave Thestylis to fetch Delphis. Thestylis promptly returns with the young man, who in turn wastes no time in seducing the naive Simaetha. The relationship quickly becomes sexual and Simaetha, rapt in her love for Delphis, describes the subtleties of lovers and the exhilaration of their climax. Then almost as though she wakened from a dream, she describes how the relationship began to wane and how she had recently heard of Delphis’ infidelities. She concludes with her hope that she can win him back, balanced by the realistic recognition of possible failure and the fearful consequences for Delphis if she does fail.

**Location of Lines 28-31 in the Manuscripts**

Generally speaking, when debating the original location of lines 28-31 and their position in the manuscript tradition, scholars usually refer to the textual readings by two designations: the Laurentian and the Ambrosian.\textsuperscript{33} As mentioned above, the Laurentian sequence of the strophes is that which preserves the vulgate or “traditional” reading of the text, locating lines 28-31 in its normal numerical sequence after line 41. Against this reading is the Ambrosian sequence, which preserves an alternate placement of the strophes, locating lines 28-31 after line 41. Below, I have provided two columns in which I list all manuscripts of Theocritus in our possession that contain

\textsuperscript{32} Cf. Eur. *Hipp.* 198ff. In that passage Phaedra suffers from a similar love induced sickness.

\textsuperscript{33} The codices representing the “traditional” placement of lines 28-31 in numerical order display scribal patterns which scholars have identified and therefore classified as two different textual families: Laurentian and Vatican. While these two textual families are distinct in their own peculiar characteristics, they are nevertheless in agreement regarding the location of lines 28-31. Aware of these differences and for the sake of argument I have chosen henceforth to refer to this group of manuscripts by the single designation of *Laurentian*, meaning by this designation those manuscripts that preserve the “traditional” numerical order of the strophes in Simaetha’s incantation over against the Ambrosian textual family which preserves the alternate order, placing lines 28-31 after 42.
Idyll 2. Additionally, I have provided their respective dates and categorized them by column, according to their placement of lines 28-31.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Laurentian Sequence</th>
<th>Ambrosian Sequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (xiii) S (1280)</td>
<td>K (xiii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (xv-xvi) T (1322)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D (xv) U (xiv)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E (xiv) V (xv)</td>
<td>P. Ant./P³ (c.500)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G (xiii) W (xiv)</td>
<td>P. Oxy. 3546 (200)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H (xiii-xiv) X (xv)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I (xiv) Tr. (xiv)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M (xiii) Med. (c. 1480)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N (xiii-xiv) Ald. (1495)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P (xiii-xiv) Iunt. Cal. (1516)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The incantation proper (lines 17-63) is divided into quatrains which are separated by a refrain (ἵνα, ἐλκε τῷ τήρουν ἐμὸν ποτὶ δῶµα τὸν ἄνδρα). These quatrains therefore function as strophes. Structurally speaking, each strophe, except for lines 38-41, contains a ritual object/offering that Simaetha employs in her magic. I have provided below both the Greek text of the incantation (Text A), followed by a literal translation into English (Text B). Additionally, I have designated each strophe by a lowercase letter and have labeled beside each in parentheses the ritual object/offering depicted in it. In the case of strophe d, where there is no object/offering I have labeled the strophe by the conspicuous silence that Simaetha notes.

Finally, I have rendered lines 28-31 (strophe e) in bold text to aid the reader in locating it within the text of the incantation.

34. In the Laurentian and Vatican recensions, the spurious line 61 (ἐκ θυκῶ δέδεκαι· ὃ δὲ Κευ λόγον οὐδένα ποιεῖ) has been inserted into the text. This line is clearly a textual corruption since neither K nor P. Ant. (P³) contain it. Another reason to doubt its authenticity is the obvious effect it has on the structure of the incantation. That is, it violates the pattern quatrains, as established in the eight previous strophes, by changing the ninth strophe into a pentad.

35. See the full discussion of this in section four. Lawall does not recognize ritual objects/offerings in each and every strophe.


37. For the sake of argument, I have assumed the Ambrosian sequence of the strophes and listed them according to that order. Others, such as Lawall, have done the opposite, assuming the Laurentian sequence.
Text A: Greek

ἀλφά τοι πρᾶτον πυρὶ τάκεται. ἀλλ’ ἐπίπασσε, (Barley)
κηδαίας ἀφθή κούδε σποδόν εἴδομε αὐτάς.
οὕτω τοι καὶ Δέλφις ἐνὶ φλογὶ σάρκ’ ἀκαθύνοι.

ἄλφιτά τοι πρᾶτον πυρὶ τάκεται. ἀλλ’ ἐπίπασσε, (Laurel)
κυψήσας ἀδάκατα καὶ εἶ τί περ ἀσφαλὲ ἄλλο –
Θεστυλί, ταῖ κύνε̋ ἄκκιν ἀνὰ πτόλιν ὠρύονται;

ἄλφιτά τοι πρᾶτον πυρὶ τάκεται. ἀλλ’ ἐπίπασσε, (Husks)
kαὶ πῶλοι Καίνονται ἀν’ ὤρεα καὶ θοαὶ ἵπποι·

ἄλφιτά τοι πρᾶτον πυρὶ τάκεται. ἀλλ’ ἐπίπασσε, (Wax)
καὶ λέγε ταῦτα· 'τὰ ∆έλφιδο ὀστία πάσσω.'

ἄλφιτά τοι πρᾶτον πυρὶ τάκεται. ἀλλ’ ἐπίπασσε, (Stillness)

ἄλφιτά τοι πρᾶτον πυρὶ τάκεται. ἀλλ’ ἐπίπασσε, (Rhombus)

ἄλφιτά τοι πρᾶτον πυρὶ τάκεται. ἀλλ’ ἐπίπασσε, (Libations)

ἄλφιτά τοι πρᾶτον πυρὶ τάκεται. ἀλλ’ ἐπίπασσε, (Cloak)

ἄλφιτά τοι πρᾶτον πυρὶ τάκεται. ἀλλ’ ἐπίπασσε, (Lizard)
Text B: English

Iunx-wheel. Draw my man home to me.

Barley is the first to go into the flames. Sprinkle
Thestyli! You wretch! Where’s your mind?
Am I a joke? Even to you, vile creature?
Sprinkle, and say these words “I sprinkle Delphis’ bones.”
Iunx-wheel. Draw my man home to me.

Delphis has wounded me, and so I burn this laurel for him.
Smoldering it crackles loudly in the flame,
and we do not see even its ash.
Likewise, may Delphis’ flesh be consumed in flames.
Iunx-wheel. Draw my man home to me.

Now I’ll place the husks on, but you, Artemis, can
Move the iron gates of hell, or anything just as strong.
The Goddess is at the crossroads! Quick, clash the bronze.
Iunx-wheel. Draw my man home to me.

Look, the sea is silent. And the winds have stopped.
But the pain in my heart is not silent
I am wholly enflamed for him who has made me a wretch
Rather than a wife, a used maiden.
Iunx-wheel. Draw my man home to me.

Just as I burn this wax with divine help,
So let the Mydian burn with desire, far from his home!
And as this bronze wheel turns with Venus’ aid,
So may it move him back to my door.
Iunx-wheel. Draw my man home to me.

Thrice I pour the wine and thrice I call, Mistress.
Whether a woman lies with him or a man,
May he forget them just like when Theseus, they say
In Dia forgot the fair-haired Ariadne.
Iunx-wheel. Draw my man home to me.

Hippomanes is a plant in Arcadia. And for it all
The colts and swift horses on the mountains are in a frenzy.
So, may I see Delphis even cross my threshold,
Also in a frenzy, straight from the gymnasium!
Iunx-wheel. Draw my man home to me.

This piece of shirt that Delphis left behind,
I shred it now and I cast it in the fierce flame.
Alas painful Cupid, why do you cling to my black blood,
Like a thirsty leech from the marsh.
Iunx-wheel. Draw my man home to me.

Having ground lizard, tomorrow I’ll take him an evil potion.
Thestyli, now take these herbs and smear them
On his door, up above, while it’s still night,
And chant: “I grind the bones of Delphis.”
Iunx-wheel. Draw my man home to me.

Strophe e (lines 28-31) may be located at one of two places in the incantation, depending on the textual family that one follows when determining the sequence of strophes. If one were to follow the Ambrosian sequence as found in K, P. Ant. (P³), and P. Oxy. 3546, then one would
locate it between lines 41 and 43 (strophes d and f). However, if one were to follow the
Laurentian sequence, based on all the remaining medieval codices, one would locate it between
lines 26 and 33 (strophes b and c). 38 Visually, one can understand the difference:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
 a \\
 b \\
 c \\
 d \\
 e & \text{– Laurentian} \\
 f \\
 g \\
 h \\
 i & \text{– Ambrosian}
\end{array}
\]

The misplaced strophe was originally located either in the third strophic position as represented
in the Laurentian sequence, or in the fifth, as represented in the Ambrosian. From here it is
necessary to survey the textual and literary debate regarding the strophic sequence of the
incantation.

III. History of the Debate

In his 1961 article titled “Simaetha’s Incantation: Structure and Imagery,” Lawall argues
against the Ambrosian sequence of Simaetha’s incantation on the grounds of poetic economy. 39
In his view, the textual superiority of the manuscripts K and P. Ant. 40 (the primary manuscripts
behind the Ambrosian sequence) are not sufficient in themselves to establish the Ambrosian
sequence as the original. 41 His contention, following Lavagnini and other critics of the
Ambrosian sequence, was that the incantation as presented in that sequence disrupts the poetic

---

38. Although the refrain is an indispensible part of the incantation, I will not refer to the refrain line
numbers when discussing the location of lines 28-3. I have chosen to neglect them in order to prevent undue
confusion. For a fuller discussion of the significance of the refrain in Theocritus and other Greek poets, see Gow
40. At the time when Lawall’s article first appeared, P. Oxy. 3546 had been discovered but not published.
Since it was published in 1983, all of Lawall’s textual arguments are against K and P. Ant. (P³).
41. See the discussion of textual authority and the burden of proof in section four.
harmony of the passage. Furthermore, Lawall argued that the only reading that preserves such
harmony is the Laurentian sequence of the strophes.

The Textual Issue

Lawall summarizes his interpretation of the textual debate between Gallavotti, Lavagnini,
and Gow (285-287), correctly noting that in the first generation of text critics, Ahrens was the
only one who favored the Ambrosian reading of K, while Wilamowitz preferred the Laurentian,
or majority reading. The next generation of text critics, Gallavotti and Gow, followed Ahrens in
preferring the reading for K for two reasons: the superiority of the Ambrosian textual witness
and the “movement or structure of the ritual in the incantation as a whole.”\footnote{Lawall 1961: 285.}

As Lawall notes, Aristide Colonna was the first to question the relevance of the
superiority of the Ambrosian witness. However, according to Lawall, Colonna’s challenge was
overly impressionistic and required a clearer expression. Just such an expression was found in
the critique of Bruno Lavagnini. Lavagnini’s challenge to Gallavotti was simple: the sole
criterion by which the two divergent readings should be judged is poetic structure, without
regard for issues of textual superiority.\footnote{Lavagnini 1949: 81-83. It is interesting to note that indeed Lavagnini’s “demand” was occasioned by
his own ruthless disregard for the veracity of any textual tradition whatsoever in that he himself later abandoned the
Laurentian sequence in favor of an entirely imaginary one, one with no textual support at all and created entirely
from his own imagination. This position is known by later scholars as the “Modified Ambrosian” view (Rist 1975:
106).} According to Lawall, Lavagnini’s ability to pose such a
challenge was due to Gallavotti’s own concession that a superior textual tradition could be
overridden because of a clear violation of poetic structure. Lawall quotes Gallavotti’s concession
on the issue:

\footnote{Lawall 1961: 285.}

\footnote{Lavagnini 1949: 81-83. It is interesting to note that indeed Lavagnini’s “demand” was occasioned by
his own ruthless disregard for the veracity of any textual tradition whatsoever in that he himself later abandoned the
Laurentian sequence in favor of an entirely imaginary one, one with no textual support at all and created entirely
from his own imagination. This position is known by later scholars as the “Modified Ambrosian” view (Rist 1975:
106).}
...when one shows diplomatically that the false reading is, in turn, metal sounding and good for reasons of logic, or language, or sense, or of poetry.  

Lawall notes, however, that Gallavotti did not believe this to be the case with the Laurentian sequence of Simaetha’s incantation. For Gallavotti, literary arguments in favor of the Laurentian sequence were insufficient to overturn the clearly superior textual witness of the Ambrosian sequence.

Dismissing Gallavotti’s primary textual reason for following the Ambrosian sequence, the distinction of black and white magic in the ritual, Lavagnini proceeds to attack Gallavotti’s ultimate conclusion that the differences between the two readings were only slight and mostly due to the individual interpreter. Below is the offending statement by Gallavotti:

Naturalmente, se leggiamo la strofe 5 subito dopo la strof 2, il contrasto fra magia per la vendetta e magia per l’amore sussiste...La differenza di valore poetico nelle due varianti offerte dalla tradizione, mi sembra troppo piccola, perché sul dato positivo offerto dalla critica diplomatica possa avere la prevalenza il nostro gusto e la nostra interpretazione della poesia (Italics Lawall’s).

Of course, if we read strophe 5 immediately after strophe 2, the contrast between magic for a vendetta and magic for love holds fast...the difference in poetic value between the two variants offered by tradition seems to me to be too small, because on the positive fact offered by the diplomatic critic our taste and our interpretation of poetry can prevail.

This perspective proves unconvincing to Lawall, who believes the critic’s job entails the obligation to distinguish between the miniscule differences in strophe position. Lawall’s working assumption is that Theocritus, as an artist, was unable to create a poem that would contain structural ambiguities; each strophe necessarily has one and only one intended location. In
response to Gallavotti, Lawall makes the following assertion regarding the critic’s task. He argues:

This conclusion seems rather weak, for the critic should be able to distinguish in the poetical structure itself obvious and compelling reasons why each strophe must be where it is and nowhere else. Theocritus is too fine a master of composition to have written a poem in which strophes may be shifted in position without impairment of the central poetic effect.47

And so, for Lawall, structural ambiguity is outside the purview of so great a writer as Theocritus.

**Contents of the Spell**

A survey of the incantation with its specific ritual acts is preliminary to any analysis of Lawall’s literary arguments. As Gow notes, the incantation as a composition is “perhaps the most elaborately finished passage in Theocritus” [and as such] “deserves and repays consideration as a whole.”48 The following summary of the incantation highlights both the elements employed in the spell and their apparent objective.

In the incantation section of the poem (lines 17-63), Theocritus has created a work of art within a work of art. The incantation itself seems to be a depiction of sympathetic magic, an ancient ritual which employs common magical formulae, wherein the object of the spell is affected by a symbol used in the ritual itself. Each of the nine strophes of which the incantation is composed functions as an individual unit or verse and each depicts in varied ways physical and verbal elements to accomplish a magic-induced change in a person.49

In strophe a (18-21), Simaetha orders Thestylos to sprinkle barley on the fire as the first element of the spell (ἀλφιτά τοι πρᾶτον πυρὶ τάκεται). At this early stage in the poem, Theocritus infuses a comic element by pitting Simaetha against her bumbling slave woman

---

47. Lawall 1961: 287.
49. See the full discussion in section four.
Thestylis.\(^{50}\) Apparently, Thestylis is not attentive and so receives the command, “Get on with it!” (ἀλλ’). In this way, Simaetha scolds the absent-minded slave who seems to be lagging behind.\(^{51}\) Again Simaetha orders her to sprinkle and chant the words: I sprinkle the bones of Delphis (tà Δέλφιδος ὀστία πάσσω). In strophe \(b\) (23-26), Simaetha performs the next ritual herself by burning laurel leaves on the fire (ἐγὼ δ’ ...δάφναν αἰθω). Burning the laurel, she reveals her motivation for the ritual act: Delphis has caused her pain (Δέλφις ἔΚ’ ἀνίασεν). As will be evident in strophes to come, Simaetha here displays a passionate malevolence and thereby reveals herself to be a young woman straddling the boundaries of wounded love and fatal attraction. The desired result of this particular ritual act is vindictive in that she does not simply wish Delphis bodily harm, but wishes his flesh to be consumed in the same way that the laurel leaves are consumed (οὕτω τοι καὶ Δέλφις ἐνὶ φλογὶ σάρκ’ ἀμαθύνοι).\(^{52}\)

In the third strophe, \(c\) (33-36), there occurs a break in the symmetry of ritual. The element offered here is bran or husks (tà πίτυρα). Beginning what seems to be the first part of the ritual request, Simaetha concedes the ability of the goddess Artemis to move the gates of hell. But unlike the previous strophes, there is no mention of a corollary result from the action. Rather, Simaetha, hearing the barking dogs in town and perceiving what she considers the arrival of the goddess Hecate, is interrupted midway through the ritual. In an attempt to avert any evil consequences brought about through the arrival of the goddess, Simaetha orders Thestylis to sound the bronze.

\(^{50}\) See Gow 1993:33-35 for a discussion of Theocritus’ possible reliance on the Hellenistic poet Sophron for the name *Thestylis* and other elements in Idyll 2. See Wendel 1902: 269-270 for the scholiast’s confirmation of this view.

\(^{51}\) See Dover 1971: 103 on the humorous literary motif of mistreatment slaves.

\(^{52}\) It is worth noting here that if one were to follow the Laurentian sequence then the next strophe in line would be \(e\) (lines 28-31).
The next three strophes are pivotal for interpreting the sequence of the incantation. In strophe d (38-41), Simaetha perceives the ensuing silence of the sea and winds (ἠνίδε σιγῇ μέν πόντος, σιγὼντι δ’ ἄηται) as a sure sign that the goddess has physically arrived. This silence immediately reminds Simaetha of the lack of silence or peace in her own heart (ἁ δ’ ἐκὰ οὐ σιγῇ στέρνων ἐντοσθεν ἀνία) and the fire that has replaced it due to Delphis recently abandoning her.

Perhaps the most bitter aspect of this abandonment is that Delphis has left her alone, refusing to marry her (ἄντι γυναικὸς), thereby taking her chastity (ἔθηκε κακὰν και ἀπάρθενον ἦκεν).

In strophe e (28-31), Simaetha resumes the ritual. But, in a change of poetic structure, Theocritus has Simaetha perform two formulae instead of following the pattern of performing just one formula at a time. She melts the wax (τὸν κῆρον) and spins the bronze wheel (ῥόκβο χάλκεο). The wax’s purpose is to cause Delphis likewise to melt with love (ὥ τάκοιθ’ ἐρωτό Μύνδιο αὐτίκα ∆έλφι), and the purpose of turning the wheel is to turn him back to her (ὥ τῆν δινοῖτο ποθ’ ἁΚετέραισι θύραισι). In this strophe, Theocritus builds a repetitive construction at the beginning of each of the four lines, employing four variant forms of the adverb: ὡς, ὧς, χῶς, and ὧς. The first and the third lines of the strophe introduce the ritual analogy (As I...) and the second and the fourth lines of the strophe complete it (so let...).

Strophe f (43-46) contains a triple libation followed by a customary ritual prayer in triple form (ἐς τρὶς ἀποσπένδω καὶ τρὶς τάδε, πότνια, φωνῶ), so that Delphis forget his new love interest. The triple nature of the libation appropriately corresponds to the triple nature of Hecate, to whom Simaetha is making her petition. However, Theocritus once again includes a humorous twist. As an analogy, Simaetha references the Ariadne myth in which Theseus, having defeated the Minotaur with her aid, forgets Ariadne on the island of Naxos. The humor lies in that
Simaetha fails to see the parallel between her situation with Delphis and that of Theseus and Ariadne. She desires Delphis to forget his new lover, but does not realize that he has actually forgotten her in this way. The analogy has already been fulfilled: just as Theseus had obtained what he needed from Ariadne and subsequently forgot her, likewise Delphis, having obtained his intended goal with Simaetha, has forgotten her.

In the next strophe, g (48-51), Simaetha references the Arcadian plant hippomanes (ἵππομανῆς φυτὸν ἐστὶ παρ’ Ἀρκάσι) and its effect on the colts and horses in the mountains. As these horses become frantic over the hippomanes plant (τῷ δ’ ἔπι πᾶσαι καὶ πῶλοι μαίνονται ἀν’ ὀρεα καὶ θοαὶ ἵπποι), so may she see Delphis frantically return to her home from the wrestling school (ὡς καὶ Δέλφιν ἴδοικ, καὶ ἐδόσει τὸ δῶκαὶ καὶ τόδε δῶται κεφαλαὶ τωσ ἰππαρᾶς ἐκτόσθε παλαίστρας). Technically, Simaetha does not state that she possesses the hippomanes plant, but simply confesses the existence of such a plant.

Strophe h (53-56) portrays a traditional magic method by which one gains power over another by obtaining a possession of the person in question and offering it in the ritual. A piece of cloak that Delphis somehow left behind (τοῦτ’ ἀπὸ τᾶς χλαίνας ἐκράσπεδον ὄλεσε Δέλφις) is now in the hands of Simaetha, who burns it as another ritual object. She bemoans her fate at the hands of Eros and questions why he has treated her so mercilessly, likening him to a eech that drains her blood (αἰαὶ Ἐρως ἀνιαρέ, τί μεν μέλαν ἐκ χροὸς αϊμα ἐμψιν ὡς λιμνάτις ἀπαν ἐκ βδέλλα πέπωκας).

In strophe i (58-62), the final strophe of the incantation, Simaetha begins with a pulverized lizard. As in strophe g with the hippomanes, the lizard here is technically not a part of

---
53. For an example of this kind of magical spell see PGM IV. 449.
the ritual per se, but functions structurally so for Theocritus. She states that in the morning she will send a kind of poisonous potion that she has made from the lizard (σαύραν τοι τρίψασα κακὸν ποτὸν αὖριον οἰσῶ). But presently, while there is still time, she is sending Thestylin with magic herbs to rub over the door mantle of Delphis’ home. She is to do this with the accompanying chant, “I grind the bones of Delphis.” (τὰ Δέλφιδος ὀστία μάσσω). This chant hearkens back to line 21 of the first strophe and so closes the incantation.

IV. The Literary Issue

A. S. F. Gow and the Structure of the Incantation

As the foremost edition of Theocritus’ poetry in the English language, the two volume critical text of A. S. F. Gow is the primary interlocutor with which all recent Theocritus critics interact. According to Gow, the structure of Simaetha’s incantation (lines 18-62) is basically that of act and prayer.⁵⁴ In this model, seeming discrepancies in the balance and symmetry of the incantation are evidence of Theocritus ability to avoid monotony by variation. After noting the parallel categories of act and prayer in the first two strophes of the incantation, Gow writes:

The pattern of magic act plus prayer or statement is given in, quatrains i, ii, vi, and ix, where, as in I, the act is Thestylin’s and not Simaetha’s, and the whole composition is rounded off with a verbal echo—πάσσε καὶ λέγε ταῦτα· τὰ Δέλφιδος ὀστία πάσσω...ὑπὸ Καξὸν καὶ λέγε τὰ Δέλφιδος ὀστία μάσσω. In the remaining five quatrains T. has avoided monotony by ingeniously artistic variations of his theme. In iii and viii the prayer is missing. In iii it may be conjectured: thou who canst move Hell’s adamant, move the stubborn heart of Delphis; in viii, where alone the magic act involves a personal relic of Delphis, the prayer breaks down into a groan. In vii the act is missing but again can easily be inferred; the plant hippomanes is cast on the fire. There remain iv and v. In iv the ritual has slowed down for a moment at the approach of the goddess and there is neither act nor prayer either stated or implied; in compensation, the next quatrain, which is also the central quatrain of the poem, contains two acts and two prayers. And the pattern having been thus broken, the next quatrain reminds us of it in its simplest form.⁵⁵

In Gow’s view, the incantation falls into sets of three strophes. He sees support for this in Theocritus’ fondness for the number, which he uses elsewhere (cf. 6.39, 20.11), and its

---

association with the tri-form goddess Hecate, whom Simaetha is attempting to invoke and who only manifests herself after the third spell is chanted. Structurally speaking, then, strophes a, b, and c are grouped and introduce the spell; strophes d, e, and f form the body of the spell with e functioning as the central strophe of the incantation; and the final three strophes g, h, and i form the end of the spell. For Gow, the structural centrality of strophe e (assuming placement of lines 28-31 after line 41) is a certain confirmation of the Ambrosian sequence as found in K and P.

Ant. (P³). 56 Gow structures the poem in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>PRAYER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Barley burnt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Laurel burnt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Husks burnt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>Wax melted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rhombus whirled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Triple libation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>Fringe of cloak burnt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>τὰ θρόνα kneaded</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACT    PRAYER
a 18-21 Barley burnt I burn Delphis’ bones.
b 23-26 Laurel burnt So may D.s’ flesh perish.
c 33-36 Husks burnt ---
d 38-41 --- ---
e 28-31 (a) Wax melted So may D.’s heart melt.
(b) Rhombus whirled So may D. turn about my door.
f 43-46 Triple libation May D. forget my rivals.
g 48-51 --- May D. come to my house.
h 53-56 Fringe of cloak burnt ---
i 58-62 τὰ θρόνα kneaded I knead the bones of D. 57

For Gow, the ritual acts of the incantation depict ancient sympathetic magic and follow the formula of act and prayer (as x is affected by my act, so may y be affected). Except for strophes e(b), f, and i, all the strophes contain θύη, or offerings intended to accomplish a certain goal, such as drawing back a lover who has strayed. 58 However, particular elements of the spell do seem inconsistent. Some strophes contain prayers to obtain Delphis’ love, such as e(a), e(b), f, g, and possibly c. Others, such as a, b, h, and i, seem to intend Delphis bodily harm. And yet,

56. Gow 1950 Vol. 2: 40 n. 1. White raises an objection to Gow’s considering lines 28-31 as central “merely because they contain two acts rather than one” (White 1979: 25). Rather, she contends that the strophe contains two acts. However, I am not certain that Gow did indeed argue the centrality of the strophe merely on the basis of it containing two acts rather than one. His judgment seems to be multifaceted with this factor being simply one element of his entire argument.

57. Gow 1950 Vol. 2: 40. I have slightly modified Gow’s diagram by replacing his designation of the strophes (lower-case Roman numerals) with my own (a, b, c, etc.).

those sections that seem initially hostile can be explained by Simaetha’s excessive passion. In line 40 she states that she is wholly inflamed for him (ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ τῆνῳ πᾶσα καταίθομαι). Later in line 133, Theocritus himself expounds the depth of human passion through Delphis when he says that love often burns a fiercer flame than Liparaian Hephaistos (Ἔρω̋ δ’ ἄρα καὶ Λιπαραίω πολλάκισ Ἀφαίστοιο σέλας φλογερώτερον αἴθει). This is the cause of Simaetha’s inconsistency. Ultimately, those aspects of Simaetha’s spell that seem hostile are intended to bring Delphis back to her.

**Lawall’s Reading: Structure and Thematic Links**

Like Gow, Lawall sees the structure of the incantation as divided into distinct sections. However, he outlines its structure differently, proposing an alternative pattern in the placement of the nine strophes. Rather than seeing the incantation as broken into three sets of three strophes as in Gow’s reading, Lawall views it as separated into double strophes with an introductory and concluding strophe. This produces one isolated introductory strophe and four pairs with the second strophe of the last pair being the conclusion. Lawall’s diagram is as follows:

17-21 (introductory strophe)

22-26
27-31

32-36
37-41 (central strophe)

42-46
47-51

52-56
57-62 (closing, framing strophe)

---

59. Lawall 1961: 292. Lawall includes the refrain lines in his numbering of the strophes (i.e. he labels strophe a as lines 17-21 instead of 18-21). I have avoided this practice since numbering the refrains provides no benefit for the reader but only adds confusion.
Working from a basic theory of strophic composition, Lawall believes that each strophe is clearly linked with another in the incantation.\textsuperscript{60} Except for the first strophe, \textit{a} (lines 17-21), which functions as the introduction, each strophe is thematically linked to the next in the sequence. This results in four groups of two strophes each.\textsuperscript{61} So strophe \textit{b} (22-26) is linked to \textit{e} (27-31), \textit{c} (32-36) to \textit{d} (38-41), \textit{f} (42-46) to \textit{g} (47-51), and \textit{h} (52-56) to \textit{i} (57-62). The means by which each particular pair is bound together is a common theme. For strophes \textit{b} and \textit{e} the theme is that of erotic imagery; for \textit{c} and \textit{d} it is sound; for \textit{f} and \textit{g} it is the Ariadne myth; and for \textit{h} and \textit{i} it is the bitter reality of Simaetha’s situation.

According to Lawall, the first pair \textit{b} and \textit{e}, is bound thematically by the shared erotic imagery found in the ritual itself. These are the only strophes in which the complete ritual formula of act and prayer are depicted, and these ritual acts and prayers are intended to reawaken passion in Delphis.\textsuperscript{62} Here Theocritus employs the ambiguous language of burning in a twofold sense. Beyond the literal, ritual meaning of burning the bay (\textit{b}) and melting the wax (\textit{e}) there lies an implicit, erotic meaning for Delphis. The fire is real, but it is also the fire of love. The implicit eroticism that is found in \textit{b} becomes literal in \textit{e} where Simaetha prays that Delphis may waste away with love just as the wax melts. In the second ritual act of strophe \textit{e}, the fire imagery is abandoned but the erotic overtone continues as Simaetha spins the rhombus wheel with the help of Aphrodite. According to Lawall, parallel sentence structure between strophes \textit{b} and \textit{e} further confirms their link.

\textsuperscript{60} Despite his concession of its “artificial and mechanical” excesses (283), Lawall seems to see himself as working loosely in the tradition of the strophic responsion school of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. This school of thought interpreted poetic structure according to the strict category of strophic units, seeing Theocritus’ poems as modeled after choral lyric poetry.

\textsuperscript{61} Lawall 191: 288.

\textsuperscript{62} Lawall 191: 288. Later in this section I will discuss the idea. The idea that the ritual formula of \textit{act} and \textit{prayer} is somehow a paradigm by which the entire incantation must be read is explicitly set forth by Gow 1950 Vol. 2: 40. This view is also held by Lawall and plays a significant role in his structural argument.
That which binds the next two strophes c and d (32-36 and 37-41) is the motif of sound. As Simaetha is about to continue the ritual and offers the husks (τὰ πίτυρα), she becomes aware of the barking dogs, which signals the arrival of the goddess. As a result, she forgets the ritual and orders the bronze to be sounded. The ensuing silence of the next strophe is the continuation of this sound motif. Simaetha notices the silence of both sea and winds and so recognizes the presence of the goddess. Confessing the lack of silence in her own heart, she complains before the goddess. This heart wrenching confession then introduces the motif of the next pair of strophes.

In the next pair f and g (42-46 and 47-51), the link is that of the Ariadne myth that Simaetha references. Being in the presence of the goddess and having the opportunity to entreat her aid, Simaetha asks that Delphis forget his new love as Theseus had Ariadne. For Lawall this is the beginning of what he describes as an “imaginative vagrancy” which permeates this strophe and the next. This vagrancy is exemplified in her mental wandering into the realm of the mythological. Along these lines Simaetha’s imagination next drifts to the mythical hippomanes plant and how horses rage after it. She asks of the goddess that Delphis might likewise rage back to her doorstep in Bacchant fashion (the reader is supposed to perceive the link with Dionysus role in the Ariadne myth here).

All of this leads to the final motif of the last strophic pair h and i (52-56 and 57-62) which is the bitter reality of an abandoned woman and Love’s part in the whole affair. The last remnant of Delphis that Simaetha possesses, his piece of cloak, she casts into the flames and then complains at how Love (Ἔρως) has clung to her, draining her of her life’s blood. This leads to her plans for the next morning and her final order for Thystylis to rub the magic herbs over Delphis’ doorpost. All in all she expresses little hope of drawing Delphis back in these final strophes. The incantation is then

rounded off and closes with a saying similar to that found in line 21 of strophe \( a \) by Simaetha, “I grind the bones of Delphis” (\( \text{τὰ ∆έλφιδο̋ ὀστία Κάσσω} \)).

**Critique of Lawall’s Outline**

An inductive and straightforward reading of the incantation reveals a kind of artistry that refuses to submit to such a stringent and artificial paradigm as Lawall’s theory of strophic composition. The overall viability of his outline is contingent upon every minute aspect of his theory being accepted. If one part fails, then the entire paradigm is in danger of collapsing. Furthermore, the outline is unable to take into account the dynamic nature of a composition such as Simaetha’s incantation, which often displays idiosyncrasies and inconsistencies. Lawall must take certain anomalies and incongruities within the text and either force them into its own framework or ignore them altogether. Ultimately, his reading becomes self-serving, trying to maintain its own consistency rather than allowing the text dictate the analysis.

The evidence that Lawall gives for his theory of strophic composition in Simaetha’s incantation is thin. While the example he gives of symmetrical strophic patterns in Idyll 10 seems reasonable,\(^6^4\) his alleged thematic links between strophes in the incantation of Idyll 2 fail to convince.\(^6^5\) First, his outline of the incantation is not symmetrical, at least not perfectly so as in lines 24-37 of Idyll 10. The strophic pattern of Idyll 10 that he cites is 1:2:1:2:1, a perfect balance of three single couplets woven in with two double couplets. In contrast, his outline of the incantation has symmetrical problems. Unlike Idyll 10, Simaetha’s incantation does not display perfect symmetry as in Lawall’s model. It has an introduction (17-21), a conclusion (57-62), and pairs of strophes that are linked by common themes. However, the conclusion (57-62) - unlike its corresponding introduction (17-21) - performs **two** functions in the incantation rather than one.

\(^{64}\) Lawall 1961: 283.

\(^{65}\) Rist does not see the significance of such strophic patterns (See quotation on page 44).
This is the result of Lawall’s schematization of the strophes as thematic pairs. One cannot have a symmetrical balance with an odd number of nine strophes when they are paired, unless one regards the central strophe as the only one not paired. And yet, according to Lawall’s outline, it is the first strophe that is introductory and therefore has no pair. The result is that Lawall’s outline of the incantation is not symmetrical. Although this problem is benign in and of itself, it reveals that at the outset of his argument the structure of the incantation is not so neat and symmetrical as he would like to think.

**Lawall’s Thematic Links and Ritual Elements**

Regarding the thematic links between each of his alleged pairs within the body of the incantation, one must ask whether Lawall’s model is, in fact, tenable. He himself admits that such an outline “may at first glance seem arbitrary and unwarranted.” However, Lawall has ingeniously devised a rigid structural schema to place around the text of the incantation, which allows him to construe the evidence in favor of his argument. This schema of thematic links, if accepted, determines one’s interpretation of the content of each strophe and its function within the incantation and, as a result, the structure of the incantation. The sequence of his argument unfolds thus: schema determines strophic content and function, strophic content and function determines structure, and structure determines strophic sequence (Anti-Ambrosian). The necessary conclusion to this argument is that the Ambrosian sequence violates the poetic structure. In truth, however, the only structure that the Ambrosian sequence violates is Lawall’s.

Furthermore, Lawall’s view that the ritual is broken off at the arrival of the goddess in strophe c prevents him from seeing the overall continuity between the strophes of the incantation. As a result, he fails to see its final ritual aesthetic of the whole incantation. Contrary to Lawall’s reading of the incantation - which sees the ritual halted at strophe c - the ritual

---

continues throughout the entire incantation. Every strophe except d (Simaetha’s comment on the silence) has at least one ritual element or notion (e has two) at the beginning of the strophe. Aesthetically, these parallel elements or ideas make the incantation continuous and flowing. Within this basic pattern, Theocritus is then free to vary each strophe to accomplish his realistic portrayal of Simaetha’s mind.

**Strophes b and e**

According to Lawall, the thematic links that bind the first pair of strophes, b and e (22-26 and 27-31), are a combination of proper ritual, sentence structure, and erotic imagery. His justification for the theme of ritual is that these strophes are the only two that contain both the ritual components of act and prayer. This view, however, is doubtful since strophes f and g can be seen as containing similar acts and prayers or requests. Furthermore the additional thematic links of common sentence structure and erotic imagery that he cites for strophes b and e are equally spurious. The reoccurrence of particular forms of the adverb ὡς are supposed to cause the reader to see a common structural bond between the two strophes. And yet, the diagram that he provides to substantiate parallel sentence structure seems hardly convincing as proof:

23 Δέλφις ἐμ’ ἀνίασεν: ἐγὼ δ’ ἐπὶ Δέλφιδι δάφναν
24 άἰθω: χώς αὐτα λακεὶ μέγα καππυρίσσα
25 κηξαπίνας ἄφθη, κοὐδὲ σποδὸν εἴδομε αὐτάς.
26 οὖτω τοι καὶ Δέλφις ἐνὶ φλογὶ σάρκ’ ἀμαθύνοι.

28 ὡς τούτων τὸν κηρόν ἐγὼ σὺν δαίμονι τάκω.
29 ὃς τάκοιθ’ ὑπ’ ἐρωτό τὸ Μύνδιος αὐτίκα Δέλφις.
30 χως δινεῖθ’ ὁ δέμβος ὁ χάλκεος ἐξ ᾿Αφροδίτας.
31 ὃς τήνο δινοῖτο ποθ’ ἁκετέραισι θύραισιν.

67. For a fuller treatment of all possible ritual elements in the incantation see my section on ritual elements (page 45). Lawall’s and White’s view that Simaetha’s rituals cease at the arrival of the goddess in strophe c is deliberately obscure and indicates a lack of familiarity with ancient magic and the ingredients used in it.

68. Rist 1975: 109 calls this argument “elusive.”
What makes strophe \( e \) stand out is the anaphora of \( ὠς \) in the first position of each line. If any connection with strophe \( b \) is to be established on the basis of their similarity, it cannot be the mere appearance of a relatively common word (\( ὠς \)) and the relatively common, but different, word (\( οὐτῶ\)), with the latter falling in the first position in the line, while the prior falls in the second position.

Although the use of the adverbs \( ὠς \) in their variant forms clearly draws attention to strophe \( e \), it is doubtful whether Theocritus intends by this to create an undeniable bond with strophe \( b \). The use of such a conspicuous structure could, as Lawall argues, be intended by Theocritus to be received aurally, but it could equally be used as merely a literary device. Again, one can argue either point effectively, but to exclude the first understanding - that is the literary - in favor of the second - the aural - merely on the grounds that the previous strophe contains a silence, seems a stretch. This interpretation simply cannot be proven and should not be used as such a foundational premise.

Lawall’s final link between these two strophes is their shared erotic imagery. Citing Gow, he argues that the ritual acts serve to re-awaken passion and desire in Delphis.\(^{69}\) And yet, Lawall himself notes an apparent difficulty in the link in that the imagery in strophe \( b \) is merely implied (due to verbal ambiguity) and does not become a literal statement until strophe \( e \) where Simaetha prays that Delphis may waste away with love as the wax melts. The fact that both strophes contain erotic imagery, while true, hardly warrants a thematic link that requires the two to be sequentially positioned. The imagery of the hippomanes plant and its effect on Arcadian horses in strophe \( g \) (48-51) likewise uses erotic imagery and is intended to arouse passion and desire in Delphis. In it Simaetha desires to see Delphis come back to her home in a frenzy just as the

horses do after the hippomanes plant (ὡς καὶ Δέλφιν ἵδομι, καὶ ἐς τόδε δῶμα περάσαι μανομένω ἵκελος). Also, Simaetha similarly uses erotic imagery in strophe d regarding herself and her own passion when she declares that she is wholly enflamed for Delphis (πᾶσα καταίθομαι). The question must be asked why readers should limit their recognition of erotic imagery to strophes b and e when this motif is present in other strophes as well.

**Strophes c and d**

The alleged theme that binds Lawall’s next strophic pair c and d (33-36 and 38-41) is that of sound and the presence of the goddess. Midway into her third ritual act of burning the husks Simaetha is interrupted by the barking of dogs, which signals the arrival of Hecate, and orders the bronze to be sounded. According to Lawall, this sound motif is continued into the next strophe where the conspicuous lack of sound carries the theme. Simaetha notes that the sea and the wind are silent - a further sign of the goddess’ presence. With the goddess in her midst she is then able to make her petition.

While the importance of the silence in strophe d is apparent as a motif of ancient magic, the supposed link to the barking dogs and bronze clash of the previous strophe is less than obvious. The significance of dogs in relation to Hecate can be substantiated in ancient sources. However, the barking dogs hardly function as anything more than a signal to Simaetha that Hecate has drawn near, or possibly a coincidence that Simaetha takes as an indication of Hecate’s arrival. Therefore, the connection between the dogs and silence and their association with Hecate is legitimate. But to create a thematic link between the two strophes in which these occur on the basis of sound - or lack of it - is a stretch.

70. See PGM I. 87 and Gow 1950 Vol. 1: 43. For further examples, see the entry for σιγῆ in Delgado 2001.
71. For silence in magic see Ap. Rhod. 3.1040; Verg. Aen. 6.257; Stat. Theb. 4.429; and PGM IV.1434, 2122, 2810, and 2883.
More important than his alleged theme of sound is Lawall’s assertion, supported by White, that these two strophes, c and d (33-36 and 38-41), must follow strophe e (28-31) as in the Laurentian sequence. According to Lawall, this sequence is supported by the fact that after the goddess has arrived (indicated by the barking dogs in c and the ensuing silence in d), Simaetha immediately pours the triple libation and calls on the goddess as mistress (πότνια) in strophe f. According to this view, if strophe e occurs where the Ambrosian sequence locates it (separating the silence in strophe d from the triple libation and call in f), then the logical sequence would be disrupted. White argues further that because Simaetha is so terrified of the goddess (Simaetha calls her Ἐκάτα δασπλῆτι in line 14) she would not fail to offer an immediate libation to the goddess upon her arrival. She writes:

Instead of appeasing the goddess with a libation, we would have to imagine her calmly going on with her spells to win back Delphis’ love, totally oblivious of the fact that the goddess whom she herself has invoked must be waiting for a libation to be poured to her.

While this argument seems initially persuasive, certain problems surface upon closer inspection of the strophes. First, White seems to make more of Simaetha’s fear than the text allows. There is little doubt that Simaetha is wary of the goddess’ presence since she orders Thestyris to clash the bronze. But to argue that that wariness prevents her from expressing her own concerns in the remainder of the incantation misses several examples to the contrary.

First, the libation is not used by Theocritus as an appeasement for the goddess, but rather as a part of the ritual. Simaetha has already warded off any perceived danger that may accompany Hecate by clashing the bronze. The purpose for the triple libation and call is rather imprecatory. Simaetha uses the libation and call as a means of furthering her own goal of bringing Delphis back by causing him to forget his new lover. The content of the call or prayer

73. White 1979: 27.
follows in the next three lines (44-46): Whether it is a man or a woman that lies beside him may he forget them just as Theseus forgot the fair-haired Ariadne. By pouring the libation she intends to convince Hecate to enact her request.

Second, Simaetha does not disrupt the ritual or cease to express her feelings for fear of the goddess. She remains focused on her own pain. Even when she initially perceives the presence of the goddess in the silence of the sea and waves (ἡνίδε σιγῇ μὲν πόντος, σιγώντι δ' ἀήται), she still finds an opportunity to juxtapose it with the lack of silence in her own heart and further complains that she burns for a man who made her a wretch instead of a wife (ἀ δ' ἐμὰ οὕ σιγῇ στέρνων ἐντοσθὲν ἀνία, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τήρῳ πᾶσα καταίθομαι ὃς με τάλαιναν ἀντὶ γυναίκος ἔθηκε κακὰν καὶ ἀπάρθενον ἡμεν). Also, although the goddess had supposedly arrived by strophe h, she nevertheless offers the piece of Delphis’ clothing on the fire as a part of the ritual (τοῦτ' ἀπὸ τᾶς χλαίνας τὸ κράσπεδον ὤλεσε ∆έλφι) and complains how Love has treated her, draining her black blood like a leech (αἰαὶ Ἔρως ἄνιαρε, τί μεν μέλαν ἐκ χροὸ αἷκα | ἐκφὺ ὡ λινᾶτι ἀπαν ἐκ βδέλλα πέπωκα). If the libation is not apotropaic but rather is intended to persuade Hecate, and if Simaetha does not hesitate to continue with the ritual in strophe h, and furthermore expresses her own pain both in h and in the second half of d, then there is no reason to doubt that she would continue with the ritual of strophe e after the goddess has arrived in d.

Strophes f and g

Lawall pairs the next two strophes of f and g (43-46 and 48-51) together by the theme of the fantastic: the Theseus and Ariadne myth and the mythical hippomanes plant. The Theseus and Ariadne myth and its function in the incantation seem not to proceed any farther than the boundaries of the strophe in which the myth is presented. The main point of the strophe itself is
the libation as a ritual component and Simaetha’s prayer that Delphis forget his new lover.

Simaetha’s humorous, almost childlike naïveté would make such a simple analogy from such a common myth. This is as natural an analogy for Theocritus to employ as any. If Simaetha wants Delphis to forget his lover and seeks an analogy to exemplify it, there is not a better one for her to use than that of the Ariadne myth - especially when performing a libation, a ritual act connected with Bacchus.

Lawall’s cursory treatment of the hippomanes plant fails to do justice to its role as a ritual ingredient in the incantation.74 Hardly dealing with the role of hippomanes in the strophe at all, he attempts simply to establish a connection between the phrase μαίνομενον ἱκέλος (like one in a frenzy) of line 51 with the Theseus and Ariadne analogy of strophe f. As a result, the real point of the analogy is ignored: Simaetha wants Delphis to return to her home in a frenzy, just as the colts and horses are driven mad by the plant.

In Lawall’s view, Simaetha’s mention of hippomanes is merely an expression of her vagrant imagination that wanders from mythological theme to mythological theme. Following Gow’s outline he writes:

While this section begins with a ritual libation, there is no ritual act in the second strophe. Simaetha’s thoughts are no longer completely controlled by the ritual acts immediately before her, and her imagination wanders off to the fabled hippomanes of the Arcadians.75 (Italics are Lawall’s)

For Lawall, it is no more than a literary transition, a fleeting thought on Simaetha’s part. In fact, he implies that Simaetha does not even possess the plant.76 Lawall has little to say about Gow’s interpretation that Simaetha really has the hippomanes, mentioning it only in a footnote.77

---

74. Gow 1950 Vol. 2: 40, 45 shows some ambivalence regarding the role of the hippomanes plant in the incantation. On the one hand he does not list it as a ritual act in his outline (see page 30 above) and keeps his comments on it brief (45). He does, however, assert that the missing act in strophe g can be inferred by the casting of the hippomanes into the fire (40).
75. Lawall 1961: 290.
76. Likewise, Rist 1979: 104 dismisses as incredible the notion that Simaetha would have hippomanes. White 1979: 29 does not list it in her diagram of the incantation.
Strophes h and i

The final theme that Lawall advances, that which in his view binds the last two strophes h and i (53-56 and 58-62) into a pair, is the bitter reality of the situation. In strophe h, Simaetha’s act of burning the piece of clothing that Delphis left, coupled with the apparent malevolence of strophe i, unites the two as an expression of her acceptance of the harsh truth. Delphis has left her and is likely not returning. Love has tricked her and sapped her of her life’s force (μέλαν...αἷμα). Therefore, she burns the last vestige of their relationship, a piece of his clothing, and will send him a poisonous drink in the morning. Then, as her final act, she sends Thestylis with the magical rub to smear over his doorpost.

As with the hippomanes in strophe g, Lawall does not see the items in strophes h and i (the piece of clothing and the lizard) as ritual components. In doing so, he is forced to adopt the illusory theme of bitter reality, a theme that is scattered throughout the incantation - not to mention the entire poem. To isolate and emphasize bitterness here in these two strophes and to ignore its significance in the remaining strophes indicates the need of proof-texts as support for an arbitrary argument. Also, the ambiguity of Simaetha’s intention in strophe i, that is whether it is benign or malevolent, makes it more difficult to support a contingent argument. It is essential to Lawall’s argument that it be read entirely negatively with no expression of a hope of drawing Delphis back. However, if this strophe does in fact allow for a positive interpretation then this

77. Lawall 1961: 290 n. 23.
78. Against Lawall, Gow 1950 Vol. 2: 46 n. 58 and Dover 1971: 99 n. 6 believe it is a love-potion intended to bring Delphis back. Similarly, Rist 1975: 110-11 thinks the κακῶν ποτὸν is a mixture of love-potion and poison that could have either result if the need should arise. Furthermore, Rist thinks that the rub is intended to bring a “localized erotic influence” on Delphis, since the door-posts and parts header (καθ’ ὑπέρτερον) represent the bone structure of the legs and pelvis.
79. Passages where Simaetha vents her bitterness are numerous and scattered throughout the entire poem. For a few examples see lines 5, 9, 19, 40-41.
theme that supposedly binds strophes $h$ and $i$ would be shown to be inadequate and his entire superstructure would collapse.

One issue of fundamental importance remains. Lawall’s exegesis of the incantation suffers due to the presupposition of a highly structured framework, which leads to the creation of a rigid outline and an arbitrary schema and the development of an indefensibly tendentious reading. The problem with rigid outlines such as Lawall’s is that they fundamentally do not allow for the kind of variation that Theocritus incorporates into this poem. Lawall himself admits that each of Theocritus’ poems must be studied individually when determining such things as the structure of strophes. He writes:

As noted at the beginning of this study, Bucaeus’ song of Idyll 10 employs pairs of couplets, and the Cyclops’ song of Idyll 11 exhibits a circular composition. Theocritus’ use of these techniques in his various poems is *never rigid or canon* as the “strophic responsion” theorists would have us believe, but the poet displays instead great flexibility in fusing structure with matter and matter with structure according to the needs of each individual poem. Therefore, few generalizations may be made about his technique of strophic composition, a phenomenon which must rather be studied as it occurs in each separate poem.80 (Italics mine)

As he has conceded here, one must allow each individual poem of Theocritus to set the course for its own structural analysis. One cannot responsibly import a structure from another of his poems and superimpose it upon the incantation of Idyll 2. Lawall’s repeated assertion that the incantation is a “consistent, clear, and logically developed structure”81 is evidence of his fundamental adherence to the failed strophic responsion school of thought furthermore indicates the necessity of this presupposition for the success of his argument.

As I have shown at the beginning of this section, Lawall had set out to show Gallavotti wrong regarding the sufficiency of literary arguments to overturn the Ambrosian reading. And yet the overly tendentious and excessively structured nature of his outline makes his defense of

---

the Laurentian sequence even harder to accept. Rist has succinctly and accurately summarized Lawall’s failed attempt against the background of the textual debate surrounding the incantation:

Lawall is motivated throughout by the aim to provide a numerically symmetrical arrangement of stanzas round a central stanza d – a form of what he calls “strophic responsion” (25). To this there is a ready objection—that other critics before Lawall have had this same devotion to symmetry; indeed it may have been one of the motives influencing Lavagnini’s unknown “correttore” (correction); for it is not to be denied that the suspended action of stanza d creates an arresting contrast, fitting it for the role of central stanza in any schema which is to be purely artificial, as distinct from artistic or poetic, in the root sense of that word. Lawall’s findings of comparable “strophic responsion” in the songs within Idylls X and XI remain similarly unconvincing (26). Such a flimsily-based construction can hardly fulfill the conditions of that superior “valore poetico” (poetic value) which, in the judgment of Gallavotti, might justify the following of an inferior textual tradition.82

Indeed, the power of the incantation as a composition is found in its combination of psychological realism and variegated ritual.83 Such recognition makes allowance for the particular ritual anomalies found therein and ultimately provides a literary justification of the Ambrosian sequence on poetic grounds.

**Theocritus’ Psychological Realism and Variegated Ritual**

A much more reliable and easily defensible view of Simaetha’s incantation is to view the entire composition as a loosely catenation of rituals that follows the basic pattern of act and prayer, but whose structure is subservient to Theocritus’ psychological realism. If in fact Theocritus’ main literary interest is portraying Simaetha’s state of mind, with all of the mental and emotional idiosyncrasies contained therein, then the inconsistencies and anomalies that appear in the incantation make sense, and there is no need to develop and maintain an elaborate structural paradigm that does not do justice to the text of the poem. As a result, the ritual elements contained in the strophes of the incantation will not have to be forced to fit such a

---

83. I define variegated ritual as a depiction of magic and ritual by Theocritus that does not strive to be necessarily accurate in every detail. To some extent all scholars have recognized Theocritus complicated depiction of ritual in Idyll 2. However, they tend to recognize the inconsistencies of the incantation only when they cannot fit them into the rubric of their own hermeneutical systems. I think it is simply easier to concede this point initially and proceed from it, rather than having to cite exceptions to one’s system.
paradigm, but can be recognized as variegated according to Theocritus’ desire to display the human psyche.

**Ritual Elements**

Lawall views the poem as initially composed of proper rituals (strophes b and e), followed shortly by an interruption in the ritual due to the arrival of the goddess (strophes c and d). Soon the incantation devolves into an “imaginative vagrancy” where Simaetha slips into the realm of fantasy (strophes f and g) and finally ends with a return to the bitterness of reality (strophes h and i). The result of this reading is that he does not see anything as a ritual element (Gow’s θύη) after strophe c (33-36).

Lawall’s reasoning for this is not wholly unjustified, for the incantation refuses to follow a strict structure regardless of how one reads it. Simply put, the strophes that indisputably contain ritual symbols are a (barley), b (laurel), c (husks), and e (wax and rhombus). If one believes that the ritual is broken off at the barking of the dogs (strophe c), then one would argue that strophe e should be placed as the third strophe, resulting in four continuous strophes with ritual objects: a, b, e (c in the Laurentian sequence), and c (d in the Laurentian sequence). Or, giving the sequence according to the ritual symbols, the list appear as:

- barley (ἄλφιτά) (18-21)
- laurel (δάφναν) (23-26)
- wax (τὸν κηρὸν) and bronze wheel (ῥόμβος ὁ χάλκεος) (28-31)
- husks (τὰ πίτυρα) (33-36)

---

84. Lawall 1961: 284 admits that beyond the basic structure of the incantation (strophes a and i enclosing the composition), the pattern of the incantation is less obvious.

85. Again, my designation of lines 28-31 as strophe e is due to my assumption of the Ambrosian sequence; Lawall, if he had labeled the strophes alphabetically, would label it as c because in the Laurentian sequence it is the third strophe.

86. For different views on the identity of the iunx/rhombus wheel, and whether there is a difference between the two, see Gow 1934; Segal 1973; Faraone 1993; White 1979: 30-35; and Teijeiro 1999:74-75.
Upon closer examination, however, Lawall’s model fails in two respects: First, he does not recognize the ritual nature of several of the elements within the incantation. And by extension, he does not look beyond their immediate and internal function within the magic spell to see their literary or compositional function beyond.

First, Lawall relies on Gow’s view that the barley, laurel, wax, and husks all function merely as symbols. Gow himself holds this view because of his prior assumption that the incantation follows the basic pattern of act and prayer, with the prayer being \textit{as x is affected by my act, so may y be affected}. This assumption allows Lawall to categorize these four elements as the only true ritual acts in the entire incantation, and which are discontinued at the arrival of the goddess. He writes, “While line 33 suggests a continuation of the ritual acts and prayers contained in the previous two strophes, the appearance of the goddess breaks off the ritual.”

But the legitimacy of using this model of act and prayer as a strict paradigm for the whole incantation is questionable because it rarely occurs in this pure form anywhere in the entire incantation. In fact most of the strophes do not contain an overt expression of this formula. If it did, then out of the nine strophes of the incantation, the formula should occur in theory nine times. But in fact, it only occurs two and a half times in the nine strophes of the incantation. The only two strophes in which the strict formula of act and prayer occurs are \textit{b} and \textit{e}. Also, strophe \textit{a}, which sets the pattern for the whole incantation, does not even contain the formula. Instead, Theocritus draws attention to Simaetha’s humorous situation with the absent-minded slave Thystylis \textit{and} the closing chant in line 21, “I grind the bones of Delphis.” Beyond this, the formula is used partially in strophe \textit{g} where only the second half is included: “so may I see Delphis come to my home.” Even if one allows for Theocritus’ tendency to vary his structure,

\footnotesize{87. Lawall 1961: 289.}
the rare occurrence of the strict formula of act and prayer actually argues against its use as a paradigm for the whole incantation.

Second, Lawall’s argument fails to account for the varied and amalgamated nature of Theocritus’ magic in the incantation. If the particular elements that Simaetha uses in her spell are examined against similar rituals in the magical papyri, it becomes obvious that Theocritus’ depiction of ritual is syncretistic rather than historical. Evidence of this ritual syncretism is his amalgamation of two traditionally separate forms of magic: drawing and binding spells. As Faraone notes, various parts of Simaetha’s spell, particularly the burning rites, are paralleled in the ancient Greek drawing spell, while other parts evidence Theocritus’ knowledge of the traditional Greek binding spell. Theocritus has combined these two forms of ancient magic within Simaetha’s single incantation. The recognition of the hybrid nature of Simaetha’s spell accounts for the anomalies and difficulties which previous generations of critics had observed but for which they had offered various answers. For example, Roussel views the difficulties as a literary failure on Theocritus’ part, arguing that he had indiscreetly assembled an unrealistic magical spell:

Ici nous prenons Théocrite en défaut: il a eu le tort de mêler indiscrètement des sortilèges qui ne vont pas ensemble.

Here we recognize that Theocritus has failed: it was wrong to mix spells indiscreetly that do not go together.

Graf likewise recognizes that Theocritus’ depiction of ritual magic is somewhat unconvincing.

---

88. For a brief history of ancient drawing magic see Faraone 1999: 133-146. For an introduction to ancient binding magic see Collins 2008: 64-103.
90. For explanations of these difficulties in Theocritus’ depiction of magic in Simaetha’s incantation on the basis of black and white magic, see Gallavotti 1948: 208-209 and Roussel 1932: 363-364.
91. Roussel 1932: 363.
The various ritual objects/offering employed by Theocritus established the overall artificiality of the magic in Simaetha’s incantation. However, this indicates that Theocritus’ ultimate purpose is literary effect and not strict accuracy.

All of the constituent parts of the spell are used in a variety of different ways within ancient magic, as evidenced in the Magical papyri. For example, barley, laurel, husks, are the kinds of ingredients that would be used in magical spells to conjure up Hecate for both benign and malevolent purposes. The spell recorded in *PGM IV* 2573 portrays a concoction made up of these and other similar ingredients:

```
ἐπάναγκος λόγος γ’. ἡ δεῖνα σου θύει, 
θεά, δεινῶν τι θυμίασμα: αἰγός τε 
ποικίλης στέαρ καὶ αίμα καὶ μυσαγμα. 
ιχώρα παρθένου νεκρᾶς καὶ καρδίαν 
ἀώρου καὶ οὐσίαν νεκροῦ κυνός καὶ ἔΚβρυον γυναικὸν καὶ λεπτὰ πί-
tυρα τῶν πυρῶν καὶ λύκατα ὀξύμηντα, ἄλα, στέαρ ἑλάφου νεκρᾶς 
σχῖνον <τε> μυρσίνην τε, δάφνην ἀτέ-
φρον, ἀλῆτα καὶ καρκίνοιο ψηλᾶς, 
σφάγον, μόβα, πυρῆνα τε καὶ κρόμ-
μπον τὸ μόνον, σκόρδου τε, σύκων ἀλῆτον, κόπρου κυνοκεφάλιον 
κρόκον τε κρόκω τοῦ Κόνου, σκόρδο 
τε καὶ κρόκω κόπρον κυνοκεφάλοι 
ῶν θείως νεᾶς...
```

This is the 3rd coercive spell:

“*She, NN, is burning for you, / Goddess, some dreadful incense And a dappled goat’s fat, blood and filth, The menstrual flow of a virgin Dead, heart of one untimely dead, The magical material Of dead dog, woman’s embryo, Fine-ground wheat husks, /sour refuse, Salt, fat of dead doe, and mastic, And myrtle, dark bay, barley, crab claws, sage, rose, fruit pits and A single onion, /garlic, Fig meal, a dog-faced baboon’s dung, And egg of a young ibis.*

93. This translation is taken from Dieter-Betz 1986.
In this magical spell, barley, laurel (bay), and husks are all used - along with other kinds of ritual ingredients - as a means of obtaining the aid of the goddess Hecate. While the immediate context of this spell is uncertain, it nevertheless appears within the broader context of the multifunctional attraction spell of *PGM* IV. 2441-2621. The multifunctional nature of this spell is established by the author’s admission that it both “attracts the uncontrollable” but also “inflicts sickness excellently and destroys powerfully.” Theocritus’ use of barley, laurel, and husks in Simaetha’s spell further indicates that he is borrowing directly from the magical tradition and incorporating these objects/offerings in a similar way into his own incantation.

Similarly wax, the iunx/rhombus wheel, lizards, and personal objects have various uses throughout the magical tradition. Wax can be used as a symbol but also as an image for the person on whom the spell is being cast. The iunx/rhombus wheel was used as an aphrodisiac, and when spun, would draw a lover. Lizards were used in numerous ways, some of which were as ingredients in potions. Personal objects, including hair, could be used as an extension of a person for the purpose of controlling him or her.

Regarding the triple libation and call, Theocritus employs both in the spell as a means of securing the assistance of Hecate. As noted above, the libation is not an apotropaic devise intended to ward off evil, but rather an enticement for the goddess to answer Simaetha’s call and to fulfill her request. In addition to this surface level function, they also follow the ritual pattern of *all* of the elements and so function in a parallel way to them. That is, in the same manner that

---

94. This is one form of the reconstructed Hymn 19 (the second version is found immediately after it in *PGM* IV. 2643-74).
95. *PGM* IV. 2441-2444.
96. Gow 1950 Vol. 2: 44. See also *PGM* IV. 2943, where wax is molded into the figure of a dog and then used in the place of the person.
99. For hair see *PGM* xiv.1063 and 1182. For an undisclosed personal object see *PGM* IV. 449.
all the other ritual elements are highlighted at the beginning of each strophe and therefore set the
tone of their respective strophes, so the triple libation and call set the literary tone for strophe f.

Although libation and call are not in and of themselves ritual objects, they nevertheless
function so in the incantation, replacing objects. Again, this is variation on Theocritus’ part. Just
as he can employ the act and prayer formula in certain strophes (b and c) and then immediately
discontinue it in strophe d, so he can begin most of the strophes with a ritual object, but then
substitute the triple libation and prayer for one of these ritual objects.

Although Theocritus defines hippomanes as a plant (φυτόν), its exact nature is varied in
the ancient literature. As a part of her spell, Simaetha most likely uses the hippomanes plant as
one of the ingredients in the rub that Thestylis will smear on Delphis’ doorframe in lines 59-60
(τὰ θρόνα ταῦθ’ ὑπόΚαξον τᾶ̋ τῆ̋ν χλῆ̋ καθ’ ὑπέρτερον). Aristotle described it both as the
discharge of a mare in heat (Hist. an. 572a.21), and as the skin or membrane from a newly born
foal (Hist. an. 577a.9). Despite the various identifications, its value as a love charm is uniformly
attested in ancient writers. Following in this tradition, later poets depicted its use in magic. Propertius describes how a procurress would use hippomanes for just such an occasion:

quippe et, Collinas ad fossam moverit herbas,
stantia currenti diluerentur aqua:
audax cantatae leges imponere lunae
et sua nocturno fallere terga lupu,
posset ut intentos astu caecare maritos,
cornicum immeritas eruit ungue genas;
consuluitque striges nostro de sanguine, et in me
hippomanes fetae semina legit equae.

100. Dioscorides 2.173 associates hippomanes with the caper (κάππαρι̋), while Pseudo-Disc. 4.80
identifies it with poisoned cakes that are given to dogs (ἀπόκυνον).
101. See Theophr. H.P. 9.15.6; Ael. NA 3.17.10, 14.18.5; and Paus. 5.27.3.
And truly, if she brought Collinian herbs to the ditch,
the strong would melt to flowing water.
She dared to establish laws for the melodious moon,
and to conceal herself as a nocturnal wolf,
so she could blind watchful husbands with her craft,
and extract with her nails the guiltless eyes of crows,
and consulted owls regarding my blood, and for me
procured the discharge of a pregnant mare. (4.5.11-18)

While Lawall may fail to see its ritual significance, the position of the hippomanes plant within strophe g, along with its literary tradition as a magical ingredient, suggests that Theocritus is using it just as he had the previous ritual objects/offerrings of the incantation (barley of a, laurel of b, husks of c, wax/rhombus of e, libation and call of f). This observation suggests that it should be taken seriously as a ritual component, or at least indicates that it should be taken more seriously than Lawall does. Theocritus has inserted a magical element into the composition when he includes hippomanes. His literary purpose for hippomanes, as with all of the ritual elements, is ultimately aesthetic. Whether hippomanes is real or mythological is irrelevant. The point is Simaetha thinks that it is real and uses it as a part of the ritual.

**R ritual and Realism**

Some of these ritual offerings are herbal (barley, laurel, and husks) or living ingredients (lizard), some are symbolic (wax, rhombus, and garment), and some even mythical (hippomanes). Furthermore, Theocritus scatters all of these ritual elements indiscriminately throughout the incantation with the ritual pattern being incomplete at most points due to Simaetha’s wandering mind. At points, Simaetha burns ingredients for what appears to be some kind of magical rub or paste (barley, laurel, husks, and lizard in strophes a, b, c, and i). She thrice calls on the goddess, pouring a triple libation in strophe f. Even after the goddess has supposedly arrived, Simaetha continues with ritual elements (wax and rhombus in e, the hippomanes in g, and the garment in h). And scattered throughout the spell is Simaetha’s unrelenting pain from having been betrayed. In the midst of a serious magical incantation she confesses her deepest
heartache and her equally limitless vengeance. We are not, in fact, warranted to read Simaetha’s incantation as the work of an expert sorceress, but rather as the work of an amateur, a mere neophyte.

Lawall and White miss Theocritus’ literary aim in the incantation. Rather than portraying a realistic incantation on which a critic may rely to order the sequence of strophes, Theocritus’ has showcased the volatile psyche of a scorned young lover. On this Ogden writes:

The highly literary nature of this touching portrait of a girl’s insecurity is self-evident. It almost certainly does not set out to “document” a particular, complete, and unified magical rite as practiced. Rather, it appears to weave together a series of different love-magic practices that would seldom have been employed all together. The plethora of magical methods used and Simaetha’s apparent confidence in the issuing of instructions to her slave-girl Thestylis give the impression that she is an accomplished witch, but she sees herself as no more than an amateur and consults greater professionals.  

The amalgamated nature of the incantation indicates that Theocritus was less interested in realistically depicting ancient magic and more interested in realistically portraying a young woman’s unstable mind. Simaetha is not psychologically stable. She is wounded and hostile. And yet, she is still clearly in love with Delphis. In light of this fact, she can hardly be expected to follow the protocol of magic. She cannot even focus on the task at hand without being interrupted either by her bumbling slave or her own wandering mind.

Furthermore, the magic depicted in the incantation can hardly be used as a basis for determining strophic sequence since that magic is so artificial and badly executed. As Teijeiro has argued, she (Simaetha) lacks confidence in her spells.  

White also admits that Simaetha is “naive” and “dabbles in magic without having any real competence or experience.” Simaetha is depicted as a novice when she admits to searching for the assistance of another when she first wanted to gain Delphis’ favor through magic:

---

103. Ogden 2009: 111.
καὶ ἐ̋ τίνο̋ οὐκ ἐπέρασα,
η̂ ποια̂ γλυ̂ πον γραία̂ δόμων ἀτιν ε̐ ράδε̐ν:
ἀλλ’ ἦ̋ οὐδὲν ἐλαφρόν...

...and to whose house did I not go.
Or what house of an old sorceress did I neglect?
But I found nothing....

Again, in lines 161-62 she admits that she has acquired “fierce spells” from an Assyrian witch:

τοῖά οἱ ἐν κίστᾳ κακὰ φάρΚακα φαΚὶ φυλάσσειν,
Ἀσσυρίω, δέσποινα, παρὰ ξείνοιο Καθοῖσα.

I have such wicked charms, locked away in a drawer,
Which I learned, goddess, from an Assyrian Witch.

In all probability she is a young woman, one who has too easily given up her heart in exchange
for the transient love of a fickle young man.\footnote{106 See Ogden 2009: 11 for a discussion on Simaetha’s identity within the ancient Hellenistic world. He argues that due to her use of the male \textit{eros} magic of seduction Simaetha is most likely a courtesan. I, however, agree with Teijeiro 1999: 77 who argues that this theory is unlikely due to her statement in line 41 that she lost her chastity without becoming a bride (\textit{ἀντὶ γυναικὸ̋ ἔθηκε κακὰν καὶ ἀπάρθενον ἦμεν}).}

The significance of this point cannot be
minimized. Anti-Ambrosian critics such as Lawall and White cannot reasonably make structural
judgments on the basis of ancient magical protocol. Since Theocritus depicts Simaetha as an
inexperienced dabbler in magic, there is, therefore, no basis for assuming that either her method
of invoking the goddess, or her implementation of magical ritual are realistic portrayals. If this is
so, then structural outlines of the incantation must be more reasonable than Lawall’s and must
accord with the psychological realism that Theocritus depicts.

The structure of the incantation is so basic (four line strophes divided by a recurring
refrain and demarcated by individual rituals) that it is unable to sustain such a complex structural
theory as Lawall’s. Theocritus is utilizing elements from the magical tradition, but doing so in a
variegated fashion. He chooses interesting ritual elements from the magical tradition to include
in Simaetha’s spell, but does not do so in a realistic way. He sets up structural expectations only
to violate them. He establishes patterns only to vary them. The conclusion one arrives at is that
Theocritus’ main concern is not a faithful representation of magic nor a slavish adherence to strophic structure, but a realistic depiction of Simaetha’s mind. Instead of presenting a rigid pattern, constrained by themes or sentence structure, Theocritus instead uses this very simple structure as a framework on which to display the real beauty of his literary art: a realistic depiction of Simaetha’s psyche.

**Simaetha’s Realism**

Rather than depicting a realistic ritual, Theocritus has developed an amalgamated literary construct for the purpose of poetic flare. Herein lies the genius of Theocritus’ poetry. However masterfully structured and symmetrical his language may be, it is, nevertheless, subordinate to his realistic depiction of his characters. Theocritus’ primary interest is not the configuration of words on a page, but the realistic depiction of human lives as expressed through the idiosyncrasies of their minds.

The aforementioned variations are evidences of Theocritus’ psychological realism. His ability to convey the realistic nuances of a human mind through particular variations in thought, intellectual inconsistencies, and human flaws is important for a correct understanding of the strophic sequence in particular and the incantation as a whole. Examples of this appear in various characters in Theocritus’ poems. For example, in Idyll 11 Theocritus takes the savage person of Polyphemus as he is depicted in Homer and attributes unlikely traits such as tenderness, humor, and romanticism. 107 Theocritus knows well how to portray the realistic idiosyncrasies of the mind in all their aspects. His poetry sets forth these aspects of the psyche unapologetically, highlighting the variation and messiness of the mind’s canvas.

---

107. See especially Polyphemus’ mention of his own mother in line 29 (ὦς ἔμα σίν Ματρὶ), his self-conscious acknowledgement of his unattractive, shaggy eyebrow in line 31 (Ἀσία ὀφρὺ), and his willingness to learn to swim for the sake of Galatea in line 60 (ἵν αύτίκα νείν γε μαθήσαι).
Those who seek to make the traditional categories of poetic structure the primary criteria in determining the sequence of strophes in Simaetha’s incantation often fail to understand how Theocritus’ powerful psychological realism affects issues of poetic structure. Rist notes this failure in Lawall, justifiably ascribing it to his desire to see his own rigid order in the incantation’s structure. Regarding Lawall’s outline Rist writes, “It may be questioned whether this is not all a little too ordered for Simaetha’s state of mind as depicted by a poet of Theocritus’ psychological realism, which is already better exemplified in the confusion of her motives...”108 What Lawall sees as structural flaws in the Ambrosian sequence are really flaws of his own creation. Understanding the significance of psychological realism in Theocritus, defendants of the Ambrosian sequence can easily view these alleged flaws as Theocritus’ desire to create a realistic representation of the human psyche.

More Human than Human

The main point of the incantation and the Idyll as a whole is the dynamic portrayal of a young scorned lover who is too naive to know how to handle this level of rejection. Simaetha’s magic is sloppy, yet interesting; the passion is raw, yet the sentiments are sublime. Contrary to Lawall’s interpretation, structure is not the centerpiece of the poem. The centerpiece of the poem is Simaetha herself, in all of her complexity. This makes Idyll 2 a perfect example of the urban mime, a poem that is about nothing really, just everything: Love, hate, youth, experience, lack of experience, magic or the feigned depiction of magic, revenge, jaded love posing as revenge.109 Simaetha is no more of a witch or sorceress than Delphis is a sincere lover.110 Simaetha is inept at magic, has no magic spell of her own and searches door to door to find some. She has to

109. See Fowler 1989:69-78 for similar examples of the mundane and grotesque in the mimes of Herodas.
110. Unfortunately, the history of the poem’s traditional titles (see footnote 2) does not provide any help in ascertaining motives for the transposition of lines 28-31.
borrow herbs from a Syrian witch, boasts like a child, is culturally isolated and relies on her small network of neighbors, most of whom are women of a dubitable and questionable class. These women work together, gossip together, play together, borrow one another’s objects, spur their friends on to love, and assist them when scorned, whether by information or by spells.

Idyll 2 is a Hellenistic poem about women and their mundane lives, particularly a young love-stricken girl, Simaetha. As a burlesque poem, it displays Simaetha in all of her psychological complexity. The reader is transported to a distant Hellenistic city and catches a glimpse of the life of an eccentric young woman who displays emotions with which all can sympathize. She loves and hates Delphis. She yearns to recover him but also, at times, to destroy him. She resorts to obscure magical spells whose uses and goals she varies according to her shifting feelings. Various ordinary men and women whom Simaetha sees on a day by day basis are mentioned: Thestylos her slave-girl, Timagaetus the gym-keeper, Anaxo the flower girl, and Anaxo’s father, Eubulus, Theumarida the Thracian nurse, Clearista from whom Simaetha borrowed a scarf, Lycon on whose street Simaetha first saw Delphis, Delphis’ friend Eudammipus, the neighbor women whose magic she first sought, and Philista and Melixo’s gossiping mother. This poem is at once shocking, humorous, vulgar, and touching. Simaetha provides a perfect character whereby Theocritus may explore and depict the burlesque and realistic world that because so popular during the Hellenistic period.111

V. Textual Methodology and the Burden of Proof

An initial misunderstanding of the role of textual authority and the burden of proof in a debate regarding restoration of the original text will inevitably alter the way that the debate proceeds and will result in the advancement of much irrelevant and unhelpful scholarship. Occasionally, the transmission of an ancient text is so plagued by textual difficulties that there is

no other recourse than to rely heavily - if not exclusively - on the text’s internal structure in order to establish its original form.\(^\text{112}\) In this method, due to the discrepancies between manuscripts, the original form of the text can only be ascertained through an in-depth literary analysis of the poem’s structure and internal harmony. In such a situation, the disagreement, debate, and criticism of a scholarly community help to ensure accountability and to prevent excessive speculation. And yet, while certain ancient texts require this method of reconstructing the original shape of the text,\(^\text{113}\) most do not. Furthermore, engaging in such a method when not absolutely necessary results in mere conjecture.

In respect to Idyll 2, however, the employment of literary speculation divorced from the authority of superior textual witness has been the primary means by which several scholars have attempted to controvert a better reading, such as the Ambrosian sequence of Simaetha’s incantation, and either reestablish an inferior one, like the Laurentian sequence, or -even worse- to propose some sort of artificial sequence with no textual attestation at all. Often this method is attempted merely on the basis of internal criteria, such as poetic structure, with little or no consideration given to the authority of a textual tradition. Although these attempts generally have failed to convince scholars editing new editions of Theocritus’ text,\(^\text{114}\) they have, nevertheless, continued to propagate a line of dissent. Some have defended the Ambrosian sequence on literary grounds from an assumed neutral position.\(^\text{115}\) This kind of defense ultimately neglects significance of the textual argument. Here the defendants of the Ambrosian sequence have the strength of the superior textual witness on their side. Rather than arguing from a neutral position,

\(^{112}\) See the unpublished paper of Paul Allen Miller presented at the 2010 American Philological Association, titled “What is a Propertian Poem?” In this paper he discusses literary criticism’s role in establishing a corrupted text. Even in a text as corrupted as Propertius, Miller still questions excessive and speculative literary theories.

\(^{113}\) See Heyworth 2007a and 2007b regarding the difficulty of establishing the text of Propertius.

\(^{114}\) Dover 1969; Fritz 1970; Beckby 1975; and Hopkinson 1988 all follow the Ambrosian strophic sequence, while only Monteil 1968 adopts the Laurentian sequence.

defendants of the Ambrosian sequence must assert their position of authority and demand that critics accept the Ambrosian sequence on textual grounds.

Opponents of the Ambrosian sequence have two important weaknesses. First, they fail to recognize the significance of the independent attestation provided codex K by P. Ant. (P³) and P. Oxy. 3546. 116 This independence is, in fact, the most important issue in the whole debate and ultimately the most devastating to their cause. Second, they fail to understand when and where the witness of a superior textual tradition can be overturned by an argument from poetic structure.117

Both of these failures are misunderstandings of the scientific nature of textual criticism. In this realm, scholars are required to examine concrete evidence and propose theories according to probability and not possibility. In the case of Simaetha’s incantation, any number of theories could be proposed as to the sequence of the incantation text, with varying degrees of probability and tenability.118 These, however, cannot be entertained simply because they are theoretically possible, but must be examined as to whether they are in fact probable. Ultimately, it is an issue of the burden of proof. It clearly does not rest on those who have the stronger textual tradition, but on those that want to support a reading that has no independent attestation, no papyrological support, and no witness prior to the 13th century - that is, the critics of the Ambrosian sequence. What anti-Ambrosian critics must prove is that the Ambrosian sequence is so destructive to the poetic structure that the incantation is utterly unintelligible in the Ambrosian sequence.

116. To be fair, Lawall, Rist, and White all wrote their articles before 1982 when P. Oxy. 3546 was published and were not aware of its existence.
117. See Millar’s “What is a Propertian Poem?” See also Heyworth 2007a and 2007b.
118. As I noted in footnote nine, both Lavagnini 1949 and Rist 1975 have proposed purely conjectural emendations that have no textual attestation whatsoever.
**Gow’s Stemma and Independent Attestation**

To fully understand and appreciate the textual authority of the Ambrosian sequence, one must examine Gow’s stemma of the various recensions of Theocritus’ manuscripts. As noted above, prior scholars had classified the various textual patterns of each manuscript according to the three major recensions of the Ambrosian (K), the Laurentian, and the Vatican.\(^{119}\) Prior to the discovery of any relevant papyri, scholars were able to determine in these three recensions a single line of descent through apparent corruptions in the text.\(^{120}\) Despite its significant differences from the other recensions of Vatican and Laurentian, K had descended from the same common ancestor. Later, after the discovery of *P. Ant.* (P\(^3\)), scholars were able to confirm this with an independent witness. However, scholars determined by particular corruptions in the text that *P. Ant.* (P\(^3\)) itself had descended from a separate line. As a result, scholars were no longer restricted by a limited species of recensions, but had two conspicuous and independent lines of descent. Gow’s stemma *codicum*\(^{121}\) provides a helpful visual:

\[\alpha
\]

\[\beta
\]

\[P. \text{ Ant.} \ (P^3)
\]

\[K
\]

\[Vat.
\]

\[Laur.
\]

\(^{119}\) See footnote 25.

\(^{120}\) See Gow 1950 Vol. 1: li-liiv.

\(^{121}\) Gow 1950 Vol. 1: liii. I have modified Gow’s stemma slightly by adding the universally accepted designation of *P. Ant.* to his designation (P\(^3\)).
The autograph (α), which is now lost, generated both P. Ant. (P³) and another manuscript (β), which in turn generated what would eventually become the three interrelated yet distinct recensions of the Ambrosian (K), the Laurentian, and the Vatican. The significance of this reconstruction for the strophic sequence of Idyll 2 cannot be denied. What we have here is an independent attestation of K’s reading of the strophic sequence. Because β was the source for all three recensions, and because one of the three (K) diverges from the other two (the Laurentian and Vatican), then either K introduced a corruption and the Laurentian codices and the Vatican codices preserved the original, or the Laurentian and Vatican codices introduced the corruption and K preserved the original. Until the discovery and publication of P. Ant. (P³), the task of determining the corrupted recension was obviously much more complicated. Literary arguments, along with the analysis of minute tendencies in the manuscripts, were the only means of reconstructing the original reading.\textsuperscript{122}

However, with the discovery and publication of P. Ant. (P³), scholars were able to determine which of the recensions preserved the original reading. Because P. Ant. (P³) was determined to originate from a separate line of descent from the autograph (α), it provided an independent witness to K’s reading. The logical conclusion from such evidence is that the corruption originated somewhere between β and the Laurentian and Vatican recensions. If the stemma accurately represents the relationship of the manuscripts to the original, then there is no way to dispute the evidence: the Ambrosian strophic sequence is the authoritative reading.\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{122} An example of such tendencies in manuscripts that help scholars isolate recensions is K’s confusion of the letters α, δ, and λ in 15.68 and 72 (Gow 1950 Vol. 1: xxxix).

\textsuperscript{123} To my knowledge, no one since Gow has addressed this issue from the perspective of the textual evidence or has challenged his stemma codicum; all arguments regarding the sequence of Simaetha’s strophe in recent years have been solely from a literary perspective.
Lawall’s Attack on K

Discrediting the Ambrosian reading is of paramount importance for Lawall. A significant portion of his article focuses on the unquestioned authority of the Ambrosian textual witness by previous scholars of Theocritus’ poetry. He approvingly cites Lavagnini’s demand that the question of the strophe’s placement should be determined on the basis of poetic structure and not on the “admitted superiority of one family of manuscripts over the other.” Taking codex K as his primary target, Lawall admits trying to prove that Gallavotti was wrong when he denied that the Ambrosian sequence should be rejected on poetic grounds. In his view, his literary analysis, if successful, will add one more reason to reject the multiple textual errors of K. He writes:

If I am right that K has misplaced this strophe, this will add another example to the list of errors introduced by K at points where all the other MSS. agree on the right reading.

He cites the list of errors contained in K, as given in Gallavotti’s edition of Theocritus. These errors are those in which K stands alone against all manuscripts, even significant papyri. However, upon a close inspection of those errors, one finds that this claim is far less formidable than it appears. Here is what Gallavotti wrote regarding errors in his text of Theocritus:

At errores interdum unus ipse singulares retinuit, Ex. gr. contra codices omnes et Po (P. Oxy. 2064) in VII 90 ἀναπαύσατο, contra codices et Po (P. Ant.) in 2 3 φίλα, 4 τάλας, 65 ἐκ τήνω δ’ ἄρξω, in XV 11 Δίχωνα, 42 παιδα, 68 δημώ, 143 νέου, ne multa commemorem, quibus papyri nullum auxilium ad rem diiudicandam afferunt, quae K contra libros omnes manifeste errata retinuit.

But meanwhile (codex K) itself alone retains singular errors, e.g. against all the codices and P. Oxy. 2064 at VII. 90 ἀναπαύσατο, against the codices and P. Ant. at 2.3 φίλα, 4 τάλας, 65 ἐκ τήνω δ’ ἄρξω, at XV.11 Δίχωνα, 42 παιδα, 68 δημώ, 143 νέου, to keep in mind certain clear errors that K retains against all manuscripts, for which the papyri provide no aid in deciding the issue.

First, the number of these errors is quite small considering the size of K. In total, there are only eight errors and of those eight only three occur in Idyll 2. Moreover, when one compares

125. Lawall 1961: 288 n. 17
these errors to the reconstructed text, it becomes apparent that these errors are mostly of spelling or form and, except for the error at 2.65 (ἐκ τῆνω δ’ ἄρξω ἀρξείον), all are individual words.

Furthermore, the three errors that occur in Idyll 2 (line 3 φίλα in contrast to φίλον, line 4 τάλας in contrast to τάλαν, \(^{127}\) and line 65 ἐκ τῆνω δ’ ἄρξω ἀρξείον in contrast to ἐκ τίνος ἀρξείον) are points where K disagrees with P. Ant. (P\(^3\)), the papyrus that proves K’s textual authority.\(^{128}\) That is, citing P. Ant. (P\(^3\)) to discredit K’s authority is futile effort since P. Ant. (P\(^3\)) gives K its authority on the strophic sequence of Idyll 2. Such insignificant errors are hardly comparable to the entire misplacement of a strophe. “The multiple errors of codex K” that Lawall cites are actually nothing like his caricature of them and are not remotely similar to the misplacement of a strophe.

Anna Rist, poet, scholar, and translator of Theocritus, and hardly a defendant of the Ambrosian sequence, summarizes Lawall’s position nicely in her article on the sequence of the incantation. She writes, “Lawall’s position, in fact, lacks ‘manuscript authority’, and ... his ‘grounds of poetic economy’ are exceedingly thin.”\(^{129}\)

**Burden of Proof**

Here it is necessary to address Lawall’s claims regarding who bears the burden of proof in the debate over the strophic sequence of the incantation. He writes:

> If a critic wishes to change the “traditional” order of the lines in any of Theocritus’ poems, the full burden of responsibility lies with that critic to prove conclusively (not merely on the basis of manuscript authority, but also on the grounds of poetic economy) that such an order of lines and only such an order is acceptable.\(^{130}\) (Italics mine)

First, Lawall bases his argument on the illegitimate and outdated assumption that the “traditional” reading still somehow carries authority that must be conclusively disproven. This is not the case and has not been for quite some time. Any authority that the “traditional” sequence

---

127. Gow 1966 follows K here and retains τάλας.
128. See Hunt and Johnson 1930: 37.
had in prior generations was taken away long ago with the discovery and publication of *P. Ant.* (P³). 131 The fact that the Laurentian and Vatican recensions have 20 codices supporting their reading, versus the one codex that supports the Ambrosian reading, is irrelevant. The sole determining factor is that all twenty of those codices have been judged to be derivative and related to one another in a single line of descent. One could have one hundred such codices and it would still make no difference. All that the 20 codices indicate is that scribes preserved more copies of their reading.

Second, as shown in Gow’s stemma, K’s strophic sequence is independently attested. This fact argues strongly for the superiority of the Ambrosian reading. In addition to this, we now have further corroboration of this reading in the second century fragment *P. Oxy.* 3546. The Laurentian and Vatican recensions do not come close to this level of textual legitimacy. If solid, demonstrable evidence counts for anything in the debate, then the textual witness proves conclusively that the Ambrosian strophic sequence is the older reading and, as such, is superior.

Lawall, utilizing Gallavotti’s caveat, argues that the “full” burden of proof falls on those who would change the “traditional” order, not simply on textual grounds, but on grounds of textual harmony as well. 132 However, Gallavotti’s concession does not create a neutral playing field, rather, it merely concedes that it is theoretically possible for an inferior textual witness to overcome a superior one. The point is that in order for the weaker textual tradition of the Laurentian sequence to be adopted rather than the stronger textual tradition of the Ambrosian sequence, a demonstration of poetic disharmony has to be clearly shown. While it is theoretically possible that the Laurentian strophic sequence is the original, it is highly unlikely based on the

---

131. Note that one of the early and seminal critics of Theocritus, H. L. Ahrens, disagreed with Wilamowitz and adopted the sequence of K (the Ambrosian) long before *P. Ant.* (P³) was discovered. So, even at an early stage of the textual debate scholars questioned the “tradition” sequence.
textual evidence. One cannot rely on mere theoretical possibilities in establishing textual readings. If, as we have seen, the literary arguments presented by Lawall and others are insufficient to prove that the Laurentian sequence clearly preserves the best poetic structure and that conversely the Ambrosian sequence does irreparable harm to that structure, then it seems Gallavotti’s caveat does not apply to this textual problem. In other words, the original concession by which Gallavotti opened the floodgates - that is, that an inferior textual witness can overcome a superior if that superior witness clearly violates the poetic structure of the text - cannot be argued in the case of Simaetha’s incantation. If this is the case, then the only recourse left to the scholar is to confirm the Ambrosian sequence of the incantation.

Finally, the result of the evidence shows that, as those who would argue against the superior textual tradition, proponents of the “traditional” sequence of Simaetha’s incantation (The Laurentian and Vatican recensions) bear the burden of proof. They are advocating the adoption of the inferior textual reading that is not attested in any recensions outside of its own line of descent. Due to the independent corroboration of its strophic sequence by P. Ant. (P3) and P. Oxy. 3546, the Ambrosian strophic sequence, as represented in codex K, is by default the superior reading, and must be shown conclusively to violate the poetic structure of the incantation. Lawall has not done this.

VI. Conclusion

The superiority of the Ambrosian strophic sequence of Simaetha’s incantation in Theocritus Idyll 2 is based on the earliest attested reading as found in the papyri fragments P. Ant. (P3) and P. Oxy. 3546. These papyri, dated respectively from the 2nd and 6th centuries A.D., support the reading of the sole surviving member of the Ambrosian textual recension, the medieval codex K. Therefore, the earliest attestation of the Ambrosian strophic sequence
predates the earliest of the Laurentian by around a thousand years. The authority of such a
textual witness provides scholars with a concrete and reliable basis for establishing the
Ambrosian strophic sequence as the original in Simaetha’s incantation.

Gilbert Lawall’s attempt to discredit the Ambrosian textual witness and reassert the
Laurentian fails to convince. First, his attempt to bypass the textual argument in favor of literary
arguments is fundamentally unsound. The textual evidence in favor of the Ambrosian strophic
sequence is too strong to be overcome by transient literary arguments based on alleged structure.
Second, the basis of his literary attack on the Ambrosian sequence - that it violates the poetic
structure of the incantation - is artificial. Lawall imposes on the incantation an overly detailed
and tendentious outline, one that fails to do justice to the idiosyncrasies in the text. A better way
of reading the text is through the idea of psychological realism and variegated ritual. As I have
argued, Theocritus’ primary literary interest is the realistic portrayal of Simaetha’s mind, and so
he subordinates issues of structure to this end.

Finally, the superiority of the Ambrosian textual recension is established on the fact that
the papyrus *P. Ant. (P3)*, combined with the codex K, provides independent attestation to the
Ambrosian strophic sequence, whereas the Laurentian strophic sequence, based on the
Laurentian and Vatican recensions, is derived from a common ancestor. This evidence indicates
that the Ambrosian strophic sequence is closer to the original sequence as found in the archetype
or autograph. The burden of proof lies on those who would seek to overturn such a strong textual
witness. Heretofore, literary arguments have been unable to overturn this textual witness. Until
papyri are discovered that date from the same time as *P. Ant. (P3)* and *P. Oxy. 3546* then the
preference for the Ambrosian strophic sequence stands.
Appendices
Appendix I. Text of P. Ant. (P3)

38 TWO THEOCRITUS PAPYRI

κινησαί| αδακνατα και ει τι περ ασφαλες αλλο.

35 Θεστυλι τακ κιλας αμμα|υλι| ανα ποταλ ωρονται [ εις(εις)|δ(ης) εν νυκτι βασταζονσι]
α θεος εν τριεσει| το χαλκεον ως ταχος αχη [ το κωδαιων]
υιγες ελκε τυ| τηνου εμον ποτι δωμα του ανδρα[
ηυδε| σειγυ μην ποντο]σι σειωντι δ αηται [ ] . ζει
α δ εμαι|ου σιγη στερνουν εντοσθεν αει [ ]
40 ποσ ηπι τη|νω ποσα καταιθομαι ός με ταλαιναι [ ]
και γ
αυτι| γυανακος εθηκε και και απαρθενοι [η|μεν] αυτος γ(α)ρ διεγορευσ(εν)

27 υιγες ελκε τυ| τηνου εμον ποτι δωμα [το]ν ανδρα
ως τοιηην τον κηρου εγω συν δαιμιουν τακω
ως τακςιτ’ υπ ερωτος ο Μυντους αυτεκα Δελφης[
αιπο τη Μυντου
30 χωσ δεινεθ’ ιοδε ρομβος ο χαλκεος εξ Αφροδitas
τ

31 |ως τηνος δεινοθες υπεμετηρηθα δυραςι
42 υιγες ελκε τυ| τηνου εμον ποτι δωμα [το]ν ανδρα
ετρις| αποσπεθουν και εκει ταδε ποτιτια φωνου
ειτε γνη τηνω παςκεκληται ειτε και ανηρ [ ] εκεινος ειτε γυνακος

45 | τοσον εχει| λαθα[ζ | | ] οσον ποκα Θεσεα φαντι | εις(εις) πλιοδος εραται
και εν Δαια| λεβαθμεν ευπλαικαιμει Αριανας
|υιγες ελκε [τυ| τηνου εμον ποτι δωμα του ανδρα |
α.[...]υσσα (εστιν ?) ακαθαρσια 
|ιππομαεας φωτον εστι| παρ Αρκαση τω δ’ επι πασαι [ ...]η προλαβη ο επιποθουκο(λος)
και πουλοι μαιονουν αν ωρεα και θοα ιπποι[ | και | μεσαρια την ακαθαρσιαν

50 |ως και Δελφης ιδομαι και ει τοτε δωμα περαλακ[και |
|μαινομειων ικελο| της πυροπασε ποτασ 
|υιγες ελκε τυ| τηνου εμον ποτι δωμα του ανδρ[ |
|ιοτα απο τας χαλαινας το κραστεδον ωλεσε Δελφης |
γ
ου[τ]| υεν τιλλουσα κατ ιερω εν πυρι βαλλω

55 αιαη Ερως αναρε τι μεν μελαν εκ χροος αιμα
γ α
γ α υιγες ο λεμαντις απαν έκ βδελλα πεπωκου
... ( ) 58 σαυραν τοι τριψια κακον ποτον αυριον αισω 
τριοςκολλησιου

60 τοι τηνο ϕιδιας καθαπετεραν δι ετη και νυν
ψιθυριζουσα
62 και λεγ’ επιτρυζουσα τα Δελφιδος ος στησι ταιω
υιγες ελκε τυ| τηνου εμον ποτι δωμα του ανδρα
η μοια εουσα
υνν δε [ε] μοσα [ενεα] εοισα ποθεν τον ερωτα δακρυσω
65 εκ τυνος αρξωμαι τις μοι κακον αγαγε τουτο
Appendix II. Text of *P. Oxy* 3546

3546. THEOCRITUS, *Idyll* ii 30-2, 43-9

A scrap with line beginnings; the back is blank. The hand is a good example of the early Biblical Uncial, to be compared with *IV 661* (Roberts, *GLH* 16a), but smaller. No lectional signs, except the paragraphi which set off the refrain above and below.

The scribe proceeds direct from II 32 (= 42) to 43; it cannot be proved whether he displaced 33-42, or simply omitted them. Pap. 3 and K have the same order, with 33-42 transposed between 27 (=42) and 28; Gow accepts it as correct. If 3546 offered the same transposition, it adds to the evidence that we are dealing with a substantive ancient variant, not with individual lapses.

\[\text{ii 30} \chi\omega\epsilon\]
\[\text{31 } \omega\epsilon \tau\eta\nu\omega\epsilon\]
\[\text{32 } \iota\upsilon\gamma\xi \epsilon\lambda\kappa\epsilon\]
\[\text{43 } \epsilon\epsilon \tau\rho\iota\epsilon\]
\[\epsilon\iota\tau\epsilon\]
\[\text{45 } \epsilon\upsilon\]
\[\iota\upsilon\gamma\xi \epsilon\lambda\kappa\epsilon\]
\[\iota\pi\pi\omicron\alpha\nu\epsilon\epsilon\]
\[\kappa\alpha\iota \pi\omega\lambda\iota\iota\]

31 την ως so K: κεινος WANS.
32 =42, 43ff.: so Pap. 3 K: cett. have the order indicated by the standard line-numbering. The refrain makes parablepsy (and so omissions and displacements) easy; cf. 3545.
Appendix III. Plate of *P. Oxy* 3546
Appendix IV. Greek Text of Theocritus Idyll 2 Φαρμακεύτρια

THEOKRITOT ΦΑΡΜΑΚΕΥΤΡΙΑ

Πα μοι ταί δάφναι: φέρε, Θεστυλ. πα δε τα φίλτρα: στέψου ταν κελέβαν φουκικώ φios αντιν. 5
ως των εμοι βαριν ευτα φίλου καταδήσομαι ανδρα.
os μοι δωδεκατιος αφ' ω ταλας ουδε ποθικει,
oυδε εγνω πότερου τεθνακαμε η ζοι ειμεις.
ουδε θυρας άραξεν άνάρσιος. η ρα οι αλλα,
ωχετ εχον ο τε.'Ερως ταχυνας φρένας α τ' Αφροδιτα.
βασειμα ποτι ταν Τιμαγητου παλαιστραν
αύριον, ως νυν ίδω, και μεμψομαι οια με ποιει.
νυν δε νυν έκ θυεων καταδήσομαι. αλλα, Σελανα,
φαινε καλον τιν γαρ ποταεσσομαι άσυχα, δαιμον,
tα χθονια θ' Έκατα, ταν και σκυλακες τρομεοντι
ερχομενα νεκυων ανα τ' ήρια και μελαν αιμα.
χαιρ', Έκατα δασπλητι, και εσ τελος αρμιν οπαδει,
φαρμακα ταυτ' έρδους σερεινα μπητε τι Κιρκας
μπητε τι Μηδειας μπητε ξανθας Περιμηδας.

ινες, έλκε τυ τηνου εμοι ποτι δωμα τον ανδρα.

αλφιτα τοι πρατουν πυρι τακεται. αλλε' ειταπασσε,
Θεστυλ. δειλαια, πα τας φρενας εκπεποτασαι:
η ρα γε θην, μυσαρα, και τιν επιχαραμα τετυγμαι;
πασσ' αμα και λεγε ταυτα. τα Δελφιδος οστια πάσσω. 20

ινες, έλκε τυ τηνου εμοι ποτι δωμα τον ανδρα.

Δελφις εμι ανιασεν. εγω δι επι Δελφιδι δαφναν
αιων χως αυτα λακει μεγα καππυρισασα
κηξατίνας αφθη κοιδε σποδον ειδομε αυτας.
ουτο τοι και Δελφις ενι φλογι σαρκ' αμαθυνοι.

ινες, έλκε τυ τηνου εμοι ποτι δωμα τον ανδρα. 25

Gow 1966: 9-16.
νῦν θυσῶ τὰ πίτυρα. τῷ δ’, Ἀρτεμι, καὶ τὸν ἐν Ἀίδα
κινήσαι αἄδαματα καὶ εἰ τί περ ἄσφαλες ἄλλο –
Θεστυλι, ταὶ κύνε̋ ἄΚΚιν ἀνὰ πτόλιν ὄρνουται:
ἀ θεός ἐν τριόδοσιν· τὸ χαλκέον ὄς τάχος ἅρει.

Ἰυγξ, ἔλκε τῷ τήνον ἐμῶν ποτὶ δῶμα τὸν ἀνδρα.

ἡμίδε σιγῇ μὲν πόντος, σιγώντι δ’ ἄνα.
ἀ δ’ ἐμά οὐ σιγῆ στέρνων ἐντοσθεν ἀνία,
ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ τήνο πάσα καταίθομαι ὡς με τάλαων
ἀντὶ γυναικός ἔθηκε κακάν καὶ ἀπάρθενον ἔμεν.

Ἰυγξ, ἔλκε τῷ τήνον ἐμῶν ποτὶ δῶμα τὸν ἀνδρα.

ὡς τοῦτον τὸν κηρὸν ἐγὼ σὺν δαίκον τάκω,
ὡς τάκοιοι’ ὡπ’ ἐρωτος ὁ Μύνδιος αὐτικά Δέλφης.
χὸς δινεθ’ ὅδε ῥόβος ὁ χάλκεος ἐξ Ἀφροδίτας,
ὡς τήνο δυνοῖτο ποθ’ ἄμετέραιι θύραις.

Ἰυγξ, ἔλκε τῷ τήνον ἐμῶν ποτὶ δῶμα τὸν ἀνδρα.

ἐς τρῖς ἀποσπένδω καὶ τρῖς τάδε, πότνια, φωνώ
εἰτε γυνὰ τήνο παρακέκλιται εἰτε καὶ ἀνήρ,
τόσον ἐχει λάθας δόζου ποκά Θησέα φαντί
ἐν Δία λασθήμευ εὐπλοκάμω Λαρίάνως.

Ἰυγξ, ἔλκε τῷ τήνον ἐμῶν ποτὶ δῶμα τὸν ἀνδρα.

ἰππομᾶνεις φυτὼν ἐστὶ παρ’ Ἀρκάσι, τῷ δ’ ἐπὶ πᾶσαι
καὶ πῶλοι μαίνονται ἀν’ ὄρεα καὶ θοαὶ ἰπτος
ὡς καὶ Δέλφων ἤδοιμι, καὶ ἐς τόδε δῶμα περάσαι
μακομένω ἴκελος λιπαράς ἐκτοσθε παλαίστρας.

Ἰυγξ, ἔλκε τῷ τήνον ἐμῶν ποτὶ δῶμα τὸν ἀνδρα.

τοῦτ’ ἀπὸ τὰς χλαίνας τὸ κράσπεδον ἐνεσε Δέλφης,
ὡγω νῦν τιλλοισα κατ’ ἀγρίω ἐν πυρί βάλλω.
αἰαι Ἔρωος ἄνιαρε, τί μετ’ ἡμῶν ἐκ χροὸς ἀμα
ἐμφύς ὡς λιματίς ἀπαν ἐκ βδέλλα πέπωκας;
ἵνα, ἐλκε τῷ τῆςν εὐμν ποτὶ δῶμαι τὸν ἀνδρὰ.

σαῦραν τοι τρίψασα κακὸν ποτὶ δῶκε τὸν ἀνδρὰ.

Θεσυλι, νῦν ἐλκε τῷ ἐκὸν τῷ θρόνῳ θαῦτ’ ὑπόμαζον
tας τῆνω φλιᾶς καθ’ ὑπέρτερον ὡς ἔτι καὶ νῦς.
[ἐκ θυμῷ δέδεμαι ὡς με λέγον οὐδένα ποιεῖ]
καὶ λέγ’ ἐπιτρύζοισα ‘τὰ Δέλφιδος ὅστια μάσσω.’

ἵνα, ἐλκε τῷ τῆςν εὐμν ποτὶ δῶμαι τὸν ἀνδρὰ.

Νῦν δὴ μῶι εὐσα πόθεν τὸν ἔρωτα δικρύσω;
ἐκ τίνος ἀρξώμαι; τίς μοι κακὸν ἄγαγε τούτο;
ἡχ’ ἀ τῳβούλου καναφόρος ἀμμον Ἀναξίῳ
ἀλσος ἐς Άρτέμιδος. τὰ δὴ τόκα πολλὰ μὲν ἄλλα
θηρία πομμεύουσε περίσταδον, ἐν δὲ λέαινα.

φράζεό μεν τοῦ ἔρωθ’ ὀθέν ἱκετό, πότινα Σελάνα.

καὶ μ’ ἀ Θεουμαρίδα Θρῆσσα τροφός, ἀ μακαρίτις,
ἀγχίθυρος οἰοίσα κατεύξατο καὶ λιτάνευσε
ταν πομπὰν ἁθάσασθαι· ἐγὼ δὲ οἱ ἁ κακάλοιτο ἀμράτεων
βύσιος καλὸν σφοισια χιτῶνα
κάμψευσε κατεύξατο καὶ λιτάνευσε
τὰν πομπὰν θάσασθαι· ἐγὼ δὲ οἱ ἁ κακάλοιτο ἀμράτεων

φράζεό μεν τοῦ ἔρωθ’ ὀθέν ἱκετό, πότινα Σελάνα.

ἡδ’ ἐσα μέσαν κατ’ ἀμαξιτὸν, ἀ τὰ Λύκωνοι,
εἶδον Δέλφιν ὅμοι τε καὶ Ἐιδάμπηπον ἴοντας·
tοῖς δ’ ἐξαιθήρεα μὲν ἐλειχρύσου γενείας,
στήθεα δὲ στήλβοτα πολὺ πλέον ἦ τῷ, Σελάνα,
ὡς ἀπὸ γομμασίοι δισθὰν πόνου ἄρτι λιπόντων.

φράζεό μεν τοῦ ἔρωθ’ ὀθέν ἱκετό, πότινα Σελάνα.

χῶς ἰδον, ὡς ἐμάνην, ὡς μοι πρὶ θυμὸς ἀφθῇ
δειλαίας, τὸ δὲ κάλλος ἑτάκετο. ὁυκέτι πομπὰς
τήνας ἐφρασάμαν, ὡδ’ ὡς πάλιν οἴκαδ’ ἀπῆθουν
ἔγνων, ἀλλὰ μὲ τις κατιρὰ νόσος ἐξεσάλαξεν,
κεῖμαν δ’ ἐν κλιτήρι δέκ’ ἁματα καὶ δέκα νύκτας.
φράζεό μεν τὸν ἐρωθ’ ὅθεν ἴκετο, πότνα Σελάνα.

καὶ μεν χρῶς μὲν ὁμοίως ἐγίνετο πολλάκι θάψῳ, ἐρευνὸ δ’ ἐκ κεφαλᾶς πάσαι τρίχες, αὐτὰ δὲ λοιπὰ ὁστὶ’ ἐτ’ ἤς καὶ δέρμα. καὶ ἐς τίνος οὐκ ἔπέρασα, ἦ ποιας ἔλισσον γραίας δόμου ἀτὶς ἐπάδευε; ἄλλ’ ἦς οὐδὲν ἔλαιφρον, ο δὲ χρόνος ἀνυτο φεύγων.

φράζεό μεν τὸν ἐρωθ’ ὅθεν ἴκετο, πότνα Σελάνα.

χούτω τὰ δώλα τὸν ἀλαθέα μῦθον ἐλεξά·
‘εἰ δ’ ἄγε, Θεστυλι, μοι χαλεπῶς νόσω εὑρέ τι μάχος. πάσαν ἔχει με τάλαιναν ὁ Μύνδιος· ἀλλὰ μολοῦσα τήρησον ποτὶ τῶν Τιμαγήτου παλαίστραν· τηνεὶ γὰρ φοιτῇ, τηνεὶ δὲ οὐ καθῆσαι.

φράζεό μεν τὸν ἐρωθ’ ὅθεν ἴκετο, πότνα Σελάνα.

κηπεί κά νιν ἐόντα Κάθῃ Ὅνο, ἅσυχα νεῦσον,
κείφ’ ὅτι “Σικαίθα το καλεῖ”, καὶ ὑφαγέο τεἰδε.’ ὃς ἐφάμαν’ ἄ δ’ ἦπθε καὶ ἁγαγε τὸν λιπαρόχρων εἰς ἐμὰ δώματα Δέλφιν· ἐγὼ δὲ νῦν ὡς ἐνόησα ἄρτι θύρα ὑπὲρ οὐδὸν ἀμειβόμενον ποδὶ κούφῳ –

φράζεό μεν τὸν ἐρωθ’ ὅθεν ἴκετο, πότνα Σελάνα –

πάσα μὲν ἐν ὕβρις χίονος πλέουν, ἐκ δὲ μετώπω ἰδρῶς μὲν κοχύδεσκεν ἵππον νοτίαισιν ἐέρσαις, οὐδὲ τι φωνήσαι δυνάμαι, οὐδ’ ὡς σοῦ ἐν ὑπνῷ κινεῖται φωνεῖται φίλῳ ποτὶ ματέρα τέκνα· ἀλλ’ ἐπάγην δαγῦδι καλὸν χρόα πάντοθεν ἵσα.

φράζεό μεν τὸν ἐρωθ’ ὅθεν ἴκετο, πότνα Σελάνα.

καὶ μ’ ἐσιδῶν ὡστοργος ἐπὶ χθονὸς ὡμματα πάξας ἐξετ’ ἐπὶ κλιντήρι καὶ ἑκόμενος φάτο μῦθον ἦ’ ὅ μ’ ἔν. Σιμαίθα, τόσον ἔφθασας, ὁς οὖν ἐγὼ θην πρῶτον ποκα τὸν χαρίεντα τράχων ἐφάθασα Φιλίνον, ἐς τὸ τεὸν καλέσασα τόδε στέγος ἥ’ με παρῆμεν.
φράζεό μεν τὸν ἔρωθ’ ὃθεν ἵκετο, πότνα Σελάνα.

ήθουν γάρ κεν ἐγώ, ναὶ τὸν γλυκὸν ἠθοῦν “Ερωτα, ἡ τρίτος ἢ τέταρτος ἐὼν φίλος αὐτίκα νυκτός, μᾶλα μὲν ἐν κόλποις Διωνύσοιο φυλάσσων, κρατὶ δ’ ἔχων λεύκαν. Ἦρακλεώς ἴερον ἔρνα, πάντοθι πορφυρέασι περὶ ζώστραισι ἐλικτάν.

φράζεό μεν τὸν ἔρωθ’ ὃθεν ἵκετο, πότνα Σελάνα.

καὶ κ’, εἰ μὲν μ’ ἐδέχεσθε, τάδ’ ἤδυ γίνα (καὶ γὰρ ἐλαφρὸς καὶ καλὸς πάντες μετ’ ἤθεοις καλεύειν), εὐδόν τ’, εἰ κε μόνον τὸ καλὸν στόμα τείς ἐφιλήσας: εἰ δ’ ἂλλα μ’, ὅθεν καὶ ἄλλα, καὶ ἄλλα, ἤθεος, πάντως καὶ πελέκεις καὶ λαμπάδες ἠθοῦ ἐφ’ ὑμέας.

φράζεό μεν τὸν ἔρωθ’ ὃθεν ἵκετο, πότνα Σελάνα.

νῦν δὲ χάριν μὲν ἐφαν τὰ Κύπριδι πρόοτον ὑφείλειν, καὶ μετὰ τῶν Κύπριν τὸ με δευτέρα ἐκ πυρὸς ἐκεῖν, ὃ γίνα, ἐσκαλέσας τῇ πόλεμῳ τοῦτο μέλαβον αὐτοῦ ἡμῖν βλέπεσθε: “Ερωτε δ’ ἀρα καὶ Λυταρίων πολλάκις Ἀφαίστου σέλας φλογερώτερον αἴδει.

φράζεό μεν τὸν ἔρωθ’ ὃθεν ἵκετο, πότνα Σελάνα.

σὺν δὲ κακαῖς μανίαις καὶ παρθένον ἐκ θαλάμῳ καὶ νύμφαν ἐφόβησ’ ἐπὶ σέμηνα σερβά λυποίσαν ἄνερος’ ὃς δ’ μὲν εἰπεν’ ἐγὼ δὲ νῦν ἀ ταγχυτεχνῆς χειρός ἐφαγαμένα μαλακῶς ἐκλίν’ ἐπὶ λέκτρων’ καὶ ταύχ χρώς ἐπὶ χρωτί πεπαινετο, καὶ τὰ πρόσωπα θερμότερ’ ἤ’ ἠ πρόσθε, καὶ ἐγιθυρίσδομες ἀδύ.

ὡς καὶ τοι μὴ μακρὰ φίλα θρυλέοις Σελάνα, ἐπαύχθη τὰ μέγιστα, καὶ ἐπὶ πάθον ἤθομες ἀμφω, κοῦτε τι τήν έμι ἀνεμέμβατο μέσφα τὸ γ’ ἐγχέ, οὔτ’ ἐγώ αὐτ’ τῆν. ἀλλ’ ἦνθε μοι ἀ τε Φιλίστας μᾶττρ τάς ἁμὰς αυλητρίδας ο’ τε Μελιξους σάμερου, ἀνίκα πέρ τε φιλόν ἔπραξεν ἔραχον ἵππου ἀ’ τάν ῥοδόεσαν ἀν’ ἡκαενόι φεροῦσαι, κεῖτε μοι ἀλλα τε πολλά καὶ ἄρα Δέλφις ἐραται.
κείτε νῦν αὕτε γυναικὸς ἔχει πόθος εἴτε καὶ ἄνδρός,
οὐκ ἐφατ' ἄτρεκές ἴδμεν, ἀτὰρ τόσον' αἰὲν Ἐρωτός
ἀκράτω ἔπεχείτο καὶ ἐς τέλος ὄχετο φεύγων,
καὶ φάτο οἱ στεφάνοισι τὰ δώματα τήνα πυκαξεῖν.
ταυτά μοι ἄ ξείνα μυθήσατο, ἔστι δ' ἀλαθής.
ἡ γάρ μου καὶ τρίς καὶ τετράκις ἀλλοκ' ἐφοίτη,
καὶ παρ' ἐμίν ἐτίθει τὰν Δωρίδα πολλάκις ὀλπαν·
vύν ἐς τε δωδεκαταίος ἀφ' ὅτε νῦν οὐδὲ ποτείδον.
ἡ ρ' οὐκ ἄλλο τι τερπνὸν ἔχει, ἀμῶν δὲ λέλασται;
vύν μὲν τοῖς φίλτροις καταδόσομαι· αἱ δ' ἐτί κά με
λυπή, τὰν Αίδαο πύλαν, ναι Μοίρας, ἀράξει·
τοιά οἱ ἐν κίστᾳ κακὰ φάρΜακα φαίνει φυλάσσειν,
Ἀσσυρίω, δέσποινα, παρὰ ξείνοιο μαθοίσα.
ἀλλά τὰν μὲν χαίροισα ποτ' ὦκεανὸν τρέπε πώλως,
pότιον· ἐγὼ δ' οἰσώ τὸν ἐμὸν πόθον ὄσπερ υπέσταν.
χαίρε, Σελαναία λιπαρόθροισ, χαίρετε δ' ἄλλοι
ἀστέρες, εὐκάλιοι κατ' ἀντυγα Νυκτὸς ὑπαδοί.
Appendix V. English Translation of Theocritus Idyll 2 The Sorceress

Where’s my laurel? Get it, Thestylis. And the love charms?
Wreathe the cup with blood-red flowers,  
To bind my man, the one I still hold dear.
It’s been twelve days since I’ve seen his face. The prick!
If I’m dead or alive, he doesn’t seem to care.  
He used to pound my door with lusty zeal.
But now he wants another, spurred by Venus and her son. 
I’ll confront him at Timagetus’ gym tomorrow.
When I see him... I’ll tell him what he did to me!
For now I’ll hex him with fire! Selene,  
Shine brightly! And you, infernal Hecate,
You Goddess, I’ll call on quietly. Even
Puppies cringe when you fly over gore-smeared graves.
Welcome, frightful Hecate, and take part in my plan!
Make my drugs as strong as those of Circe, 
Those of Medea, and those of blond Perimede.

Magic wheel, you draw my man home to me.

Barley is the first to go into the flames. Sprinkle
Thestylis! You wretch! Where’s your mind?
Am I some kind of joke? Even to you, y’ bitch?
Sprinkle and say, “I sprinkle the bones of Delphis.”

Magic wheel, you draw my man home to me.

Delphis broke my heart, and so I burn this bay for him.
And as it pops aloud in fire, burns up,
And right away not even ash we see. 
Likewise, let Delphis’ flesh be consumed in flames.

Magic wheel, you draw my man home to me.

Now I’ll place on the husks, but you, Artemis, can
Move the gates of hell, or anything just as strong.
Thestylis... listen! The dogs are howling in the streets!
The goddess at the crossroads! Quick, clash the cymbals.

Magic wheel, you draw my man home to me.

Look, the sea is still. And the winds have stopped.
But my heart - the pain in my heart - the pain in my chest
Won’t cease. I’m burning, enflamed for a man 
That left me used, a whore. No bride - just whore.
Magic wheel, you draw my man home to me.

Just as I burn this wax with divine help,  28
So let Delphis, far from home in Myndus, burn!  29
And as this bronze wheel turns with Venus’ aid,  30
So let it turn him back again, bound for my door.  31

Magic wheel, you draw my man home to me.

Thrice I pour the wine and thrice I call, Mistress.
If it’s a she who lies with Delphis ...or a he,
No matter! Let his memory of them fade, as  45
Theseus did with fair-haired Ariadne, they say.

Magic wheel, you draw my man home to me.

Of Arcadian land comes forth Hippomanes-herb,
Which swift colts and horses on mountainside pursue.
Likewise, may my eyes see Delphis, hot and bothered,  50
Beating down my door, straight from the gym!

Magic wheel, you draw my man home to me.

This piece of shirt that Delphis left behind,
I shred it now and cast it in the flame.
Cupid, you heartless master, why do you bleed me dry,  55
As a marshy leech after my black-blooded veins?

Magic wheel, you draw my man home to me.

Tomorrow I’ll take him a sick brew, spiked with ground newt.
These styles, take these herbs and daub his doorpost.
Quickly, while it’s still dark outside, and chant  60
These very words: “I grind the bones of Delphis.”

Magic wheel, you draw my man home to me.

Now that I’m alone, whence shall I lament my love?
Whence shall I begin? Who brought me this wickedness?
’T’was our Anaxo, Eubulus’ girl, who went to Diana’s  65
Grove as a basket-maid in the parade, escorting
Many votives, beasts, and a lioness.

Speak, Mistress Moon, from where my lover came.
And Theumarida’s Thracian nurse, who’s now deceased, who used to live next door; she begged and pleaded that I would see the show. So I, hopeless, went with her. I wore that little dress and wrapped it with the soft pashmina I borrowed from Clearista.

Speak, Mistress Moon, from where my lover came.

Already I was at the middle of Lycon’s street when I saw Delphis and Eudamippus walking by. They were scruffy and blond, two golden boys. Their chests were dark and glistened in the sun, Selene. Come straight from a quick workout at the gym.

Speak, Mistress Moon, from where my lover came.

When I saw him - I lost it, flushed and hot, disgusting, I lost all grace. No longer did I care about the show. And how I made it home again? I don’t know. But I, scorched with a fever, began to shake and laid ten days and nights in bed.

Speak, Mistress Moon, from where my lover came.

My flesh became sallow; my hair fell out in clumps. Little was left of me but skin and bones. What threshold did I not cross? Or what old gypsy’s door did I not solicit for help? I found nothing. And time was slipping away.

Speak, Mistress Moon, from where my lover came.

So to my slave-girl I spoke the whole truth, “Thestylis, get me some cure for my disease. That Myndian holds me entirely at his mercy. Go to Timagaetus’ gym and snoop around, since that’s where he hangs out; that’s his favorite spot.

Speak, Mistress Moon, from where my lover came.

When you know he’s all alone, signal him with a nod. Say ‘Simaetha’s calling you.’ and lead him here.” That’s what I told her. So she left and brought the golden boy, Delphis, back to my place. The moment I saw him at the door, he crossed the threshold eagerly.
Speak, Mistress Moon, from where my lover came.

First, my whole body was frozen like ice, then sweat
Began to pour like a heavy morning rain.
I couldn’t speak, not a word, just like a little child,
Whimpering and crying for mommy in her sleep.
And my soft skin turned stiff like a wax doll’s.

Speak, Mistress Moon, from where my lover came.

As he saw me, the heartless bastard stared at the ground.
Then he sat down on my bed and began his speech.
“You just barely beat me to it, Simaetha,
Calling me to your house. Just like earlier I beat
My boy Philinus, when I took him in a dead sprint.

Speak, Mistress Moon, from where my lover came.

I would a’ come – by sweet Cupid - I would have,
Maybe with three or four friends even, right at dusk.
Armed with the apples of Bacchus, and wreathed
With a crown of white laurel, Hercules’ sacred
Plant, and wrapped with crimson colored ribbons.

Speak, Mistress Moon, from where my lover came.

If you’d a’ let me in – it would’ a’ been sweet. I’m no slouch
You know - when it comes to skills and looks – so say my boys.
And if I could only kiss your sweet mouth, I’d a’ passed out.
But if you’d a’ turned me down and locked me out,
I’d a’ ripped your door from the hinges just to get at you.

Speak, Mistress Moon, from where my lover came.

To Venus I’m indebted first...and then to you, Miss.
Second only to her, for snatching me from the
Flames, and calling me to your place, smoldering with love.
It’s true. Cupid will burn a fiercer flame
Than even Vulcan can on Liparaeus’ isle.

Speak, Mistress Moon, from where my lover came.

It’s Cupid that drives a virgin, crazy and afraid,
From her honeymoon suite, or a nymphet from her man’s
Warm bed.” So he spoke, and I, easy prey, bought it.
I took his hand and leaned him back on the soft sheets. And
In no time, with skin against skin, our bodies grew hot. We whispered to each other and our faces passed the heat.
So as not to bore you with endless chatter, I’ll tell you
The climax: We both came to our intended goal.
And until yesterday, he had no reason to find fault
With me; nor I with him. But just today, the mother
Of Philista, our pipe-girl, and Melixo, came with news.
Like the colts of rosy Dawn, lifting her from the Ocean
And ascending the sky, so she told me many things;
How Delphis was in love with another. She spoke
Of his desire for some woman, or maybe even
Some man. She didn’t know which. She said he’d frequently
Pour a libation of straight wine to Cupid.
And finally he rushed off, saying he’d wreath the door.
This is the gossip she reported and I know it’s true.
Cause he used to swing by three or four times a day.
So often that he’d leave his Dorian lotion here.
But now it’s been twelve days since I’ve laid eyes on him.
There’s no other reason than he’s forgotten me
And found another lay. So now I’ll get him
With my love potions. But if he keeps avoiding me,
By god, his ass will be knocking on heaven’s door!
I swear! I have drugs so fierce, locked away in a drawer,
Just for him, spells I learned, goddess, from an Assyrian
Witch. But you, blessed Mistress, drive your team back home.
And I’ll endure my misery as usual.
Farewell, bright-throned Moon goddess! Farewell, stars of heaven,
Who now follow the trail of carefree Eventide!
Bibliography


