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A NEW FRAGMENT OF ERATOSTHENES' ERIGONE?

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As a reward for his entertainment of Dionysus, the old man Icarius was given the gift of the vine, previously unknown in Attica, and taught how to plant and tend it. But an importunate goat attacked the vine and gnawed the young shoots; in a rage Icarius killed the goat, tethered its bladder, and made his companions dance round<sup>1</sup> it (thus unwittingly performing the first Tragedy). This is the best known episode in Eratosthenes' elegiac *Erigone*, an ἀμώμητον ποιημάτιον ([Longinus] 33.5),<sup>2</sup> since Hyginus (*Astronomica* 2.4.2) provides a summary which culminates in the quotation of a line from the poem (fr. 22 Powell):

qui [sc. Icarius] cum sevisset vitem et diligentissime administrando floridam facile fecisset, dicitur hircus in vineam se coniecissem et, quae ibi tenerrima folia videret, decerpsisse. quo facto Icarium irato animo tulisse eumque interfecisset, et ex pelle eius utrem fecisset ac ventum plenum praeligasse, et in medium proiecisset suosque sodales circa eum saltare coegisset. itaque Eratosthenes ait: Ἰκαριοῖ·<sup>3</sup> τόθι πρῶτα περὶ τράγον ὠρχήσαντο.

There is a reference<sup>4</sup> to the killing of the goat in Porphyrius, *de Abstinentia* 2.10.1 αἶγα δὲν Ἰκαρίωι τῆς Ἀττικῆς ἔχειρώσαντο πρῶτον, ὅτι ἄμπελον ἀπέθρισεν. Two points suggest that this is more than a general allusion to the legend...<sup>5</sup> (a) the careful specification of the deme, ἐν Ἰκαρίῳ, which might reflect Eratosthenes' locative Ἰκαριοῖ (if correctly recognized in fr. 22 Powell); (b) the form ἀπέθρισεν, which would probably have seemed

<sup>1</sup> or "hop over" suggesting an action for ἀσκωλιασμός (cf. L.Deubner, *Attische Feste* (1932) p.135, F.Solmsen, *TAPA* 78 (1947) p.270).

<sup>2</sup> For discussion of the *Erigone* as a whole, see in particular E.Maass, *Analecta Eratosthenica* (1883) pp.59-138, F.Solmsen, "Eratosthenes' *Erigone*", *TAPA* 78 (1947) pp.252-275, R.Merklebach, "Die *Erigone* des Eratosthenes", in *Miscellanea di Studi Alessandri in memoria di Augusto Rostagni* (1963), pp.469-526, P.M.Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (1972), II p.903 n.202. I find it hard to believe that Virgil did not expect his more learned readers to recall the *Erigone* at *Georgics* 2. 380ff. (even though the goat sacrifice occurs in Varro), with line 384 "mollibus in pratis unctiones saluere per utres" perhaps pointing specifically at Eratosthenes fr. 22 Powell. Solmsen is cautious (p.262 "it is quite possible - although I should not consider it certain - that Virgil reproduces the *Erigone*"). R.A.B.Mynors in his *Commentary on the Georgics* (1990) mentions *Erigone* only once (on line 389), R.F.Thomas (1988) not at all.

<sup>3</sup> I follow Powell in printing Hiller's Ἰκαριοῖ (the locative, recognized by Steph. Byz.) rather than Ἰκάριοι.

<sup>4</sup> which has been noticed often enough (e.g. by Maass, *Analecta Eratosthenica* p.115).

<sup>5</sup> P.J.Parsons (*ZPE* 25 (1977) 43) wrote about allusions to the Molochus legend which make no explicit reference to Callimachus, "So far as our evidence goes, Callimachus invented (or discovered) Molochus; his was the first and only full-scale treatment. In principle, then, all later mentions look back to Callimachus". One cannot quite say the same about Icarius and *Erigone*. Although it seems unlikely that Sophocles' *Erigone* dealt with the daughter of Icarius, Callimachus (fr. 178.3-4 Pf.) was familiar with *Erigone* as daughter of Icarius, and, at least, with her suicide which required expiation. But we can point to no other full treatment of the myth before Nonnus, and there must be a good chance that any unattributed reference to Icarius or *Erigone* goes back ultimately to Eratosthenes' celebrated elegy.

poetical, and may, I think, be an exact quotation from the Erigone. Of course ἀπέθριεν for ἀπέθέριεν is compulsory in both iambic and dactylic verse; we find the contracted form first in Archilochus (222 West, cf. 89.12), later in Euripides (Helen 1188, Orestes 128) and Callimachus (fr. 43.70 Pf. κεῖθι γὰρ ὦ τὰ γονῆς ἀπέθριε μήδε' ἐκεῖνος). I know six other cases from the Hellenistic or Roman Imperial Age where ἀπέθριε(v) stands after the feminine caesura of a hexameter.<sup>6</sup> The picture is not entirely clear, in that LSJ s.v. ἀποθερίζω say of ἀπέθρια "also in late Prose", citing just this instance, to which additions could be made.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless the contracted form is very largely poetical, and Porphyrius' source<sup>8</sup> may have intended thereby to remind his readers of the myth's origins in Eratosthenes' Erigone.

If ἀπέθριε(v) is a quotation for the Erigone, the possibility arises that fate has been unusually kind to us in preserving the very next line (fr. 26 Powell<sup>9</sup>):

μόσχους καὶ χλωρὰς κλήματος ἐκφυάδας

"Young shoots<sup>10</sup> and fresh green leaves of the vine" sound like a toothsome meal for a goat, and χλωρὰς κλήματος ἐκφυάδας would correspond excellently to "tenerrima folia" in Hyginus (above), just as "decerpsisse" might represent ἀπέθριε(v). So, with all due reserve, I suggest that we may be able to recover the outlines of a single elegiac couplet from the Erigone:

ἀπέθριε(v) - ∪ ∪ - -  
μόσχους καὶ χλωρὰς κλήματος ἐκφυάδας

One could go a little further, and extract from Porphyrius' ἄμπελον a balancing epithet for μόσχους which would be not unwelcome:<sup>11</sup>

⟨ἄμπελόεντας⟩ ἀπέθριε(v) - ∪ ∪ - -  
μόσχους καὶ χλωρὰς κλήματος ἐκφυάδας

<sup>6</sup> Anth.Pal. 4.1.17 (Meleager), 7.204.5 (Agathias) 14.120.2 Metrodorus); Nonnus, Dionysiaca 22.188, 32.140, 48.96. In Et.Mag. p.319.25-7 Gaisford ἔθριε· παρὰ τὸ θερίζω, κατὰ εὐγκοπὴν θρίζω· καὶ ἀποθερίζω καὶ ἀπέθριεν, the final word might reflect Call. fr. 43.70 (see Pfeiffer's quotations ad loc from Et.Gen. s.v. ἔθριεν).

<sup>7</sup> The Thesaurus Graecae Linguae s.v. ἀποθερίζω cites Aelian, N.A. 2.10 (= Hippiatrica 10.1.8) ἀποθερίσαντες τῆς ἵππου τὴν χαίτην, adding examples from Procopius and Nicetas with -θριξα.

<sup>8</sup> I say "Porphyrius' source" because it appears doubtful whether Porphyrius himself was interested in Hellenistic poetry. I once asked a specialist on Porphyrius whether the resemblance between de Antro Nymphaeum 33 (Porph. Opuscula Selecta p.79.1-2 Nauck) ἐν ταῖς..ἰκετηρίαις τὰς τῆς ἑλαίας θαλείας προτείνουσιν and Callimachus fr. 194.79-80 τεῦ γὰρ τὸ φύλλον οἱ ικέται προτείνουσι; / τὸ τῆς ἑλαίας was likely to be more than coincidence. He replied that he was not aware of any significant debt to the Hellenistic poets.

<sup>9</sup> referred to the goat by Bergk, who is followed by Powell and e.g. Solmsen (TAPA 78 (1947) 260 n.35).

<sup>10</sup> The Schol. Dioscoridis to which we owe the fragment explain μόσχον ὃντι τοῦ κλάδον ἡ βλαστόν. In Iliad 11.105 μόσχοις λύγοισι, μόσχοις may either be a noun in apposition to λύγοισι, or be used as an adjective (the Schol., Erbse vol. III, p.146, comment ταῖς νέαις καὶ ἀπαλαῖς λύγοις καὶ βλαστήμασι).

<sup>11</sup> Note Nicander, Alex. 142-3 ἄμπελόεντα...καυλέα.../χλωρά.

There might conceivably be more of Eratosthenes in the words of Porphyrius. If the couplet which I have outlined stood near fr. 22 Powell, ἐν Ἰκαρίῳ could (as suggested above) reflect the locative Ἰκαριοῦ. Of course ἔχειρώσαντο fits a hexameter immediately before or immediately after the feminine caesura, and might be on a level with ὥρχήσαντο (fr. 22). One can also imagine a possible anaphoric relationship between Porphyrius' πρῶτον and πρῶτα in fr. 22. Eratosthenes, with his strong philosophical interests,<sup>12</sup> might well be concerned to point out that this was the *first* sacrifice of a goat, which hitherto had grazed safely in a vegetarian world; the motif of ideal vegetarianism recurs in the hospitality story of Silius Italicus' Falernus (Punica 7.182-3 "nulloque cruore / polluta...mensa"), which has with good reason been thought to owe much to Eratosthenes' Ergone,<sup>13</sup> and in Nonnus' account of Brongus entertaining Dionysus (Dion. 17.62 εἰλαπίνην ἐλάχειον ὀναιμάκτοιο τραπέζης) which belongs to the same tradition. But the possibilities raised in this paragraph seem fainter than the one involving ὀπέθριεν.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Cf Solmsen in TAPA 1947 (see note 1 above) and also in TAPA 73 (1942) 192-213 (on the Hermes).

<sup>13</sup> Cf G.Procacci, RFIC 42 (1914), 441-8 and my edition of Callimachus' Hecale (1990) pp.345-8.

<sup>14</sup> χειρόω is equally at home on prose and poetry, and Porphyrius too is concerned on his own account to establish that this was the *first* sacrifice of a goat (he continues βοῦν δὲ Δίομος ἔφαξε πρῶτος...).

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