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AGAIN THE TATTOO ELEGY

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 101 (1994) 4–7

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S.R.Slings, *ZPE* 98 (1993) 29 informs us that the publication by M.Huys, in *Papyri Bruxellenses* 11 22 (Brussels, 1991) of another portion of the Sorbonne papyrus part of which was published by M.Papathomopoulos in *Recherches de Papyrologie* 2 (Paris, 1962) 99-111 'refutes a conjecture of Lloyd-Jones, namely that this poem is the work of Phanocles'. He may have been misled by Huys, who (p. 79) wrote of me 'Il avait reconnu que le poème était proche des fragments préservés d'Alexandre d'Étolie, de Phanoclès et d'Hermésianax, mais optait pour Phanoclès comme auteur le plus plausible'. That may seem to imply that I conjectured Phanocles to have been the author; but though I compared the author's style and vocabulary with those of the fragments of Phanocles, I did not conclude that that author was Phanocles, as anyone who reads with a moderate degree of care the article to which Slings refers (J.W.B.Barns and H.Lloyd-Jones, *SIFC* 35 (1963), 205-227 = Lloyd-Jones, *Academic Papers* II (1990), 196-215; the Sorbonne fragment is reprinted as *SH* 970) will notice.

As my action in comparing it with Phanocles might suggest, I took the poem to be the work of a competent writer, assigning it to the first half of the third century; the late Sir Denys Page, *PCPS* 198 (1972) 63-4 concurred in this judgment. So does Huys, who had the advantage of having the first column before him, in his generally very sound commentary; he cautiously canvasses the notion that Hermesianax may be the author, pointing out that the story of Heracles' killing of the centaur Eurytion, contained in the first column of the papyrus which is part of the Brussels fragment, is known to have been told that writer (see fr. 9 Powell). These views have brought upon Huys and myself the disapproval of Slings, who ranges himself beside the first editor of the Sorbonne fragment in taking a low view of the quality of the poem, which he ascribes (p. 35) to 'an anonymous amateur, not untalented but sometimes clumsy, from the third or early second century B.C.'

We must be grateful to Slings for his painstaking examination of the treatment by various authors of vowels before mute and liquid, but we must not forget that in the case of some of those authors we have too little material to be sure we can generalise about their practice.¹ Still, as he himself remarks the Tattoo Elegy is a small sample, and when he writes (p. 32) that the presence in it of two cases of mute and liquid making position at the beginning of a word 'in itself is enough to disqualify Hermesianax as the author', I cannot go along with him. Neither am I convinced that the Tattoo Elegy's limited use of what Slings calls 'parallel word-end' (see pp.33-4) proves that 'it cannot be the work of

¹ When Slings wrote (pp. 31-2) that Simonides 'has no cases of initial mute and liquid at all (other than after long vowel or consonant, where position is not an issue)', did he know P.Oxy. 3965, which has proved that P.Oxy. 2327 also contains elegiac poetry of Simonides?

Hermesianax or any of the major elegists of the century (except Alexander Aetolus, who is relatively eccentric in the matter of mute and liquid as well). The truth is that the Homeric affinities of the poem's style and prosody strengthen the view that it belongs to the first half of the third century. But we cannot be too positive, since the poet may have been a late survivor of an earlier manner.

Apart from one line we have nothing of Hermesianax but the 98 lines of the famous elegy about the lady friends of poets, and we can hardly feel certain that the author always wrote in the extremely mannered style in which those verses are composed. The same poet might vary his practice according to his subject-matter and the mode in which he treated it; Slings himself reminds us that in the fifteenth idyll of Theocritus the treatment of vowels preceding mute and liquid in the Adonis song (100-44) differs from that found in the rest of the poem. When Slings objects that when Pausanias refers to an ἐλεγείον ἐκ Εὐρυτίωνα by Hermesianax, he cannot have meant this poem, in which there is only an incidental allusion to Eurytion, he fails to allow for the obvious possibility that Pausanias has expressed himself with a certain vagueness. Again, when he complains that there is no mention in the poem of Dexamenos or of the small town of Olenos, he forgets that the two successive hexameters in ll. 7-8 of col. i show that there is a lacuna after l.7, just at the point where Dexamenos and his kingdom might have been mentioned.² Huys' conjecture that Hermesianax is the author falls a good deal short of certainty, but it was worth drawing attention to the possibility, and it must be borne in mind.

Finally, Slings offers a few stylistic observations to support his view of the poem's low quality. At ii 6 Tantalus is said to have been punished ἀξυνέτου γλώσσης χάριν, and in ii 11 f. he is said not to have escaped the penalty for having gratified his foolish tongue, γλώσσει δοὺς χάριν ἀξυνέτωι. While acknowledging that this is 'a Hellenistic trick', Slings complains that it is 'poor poetry': the reader, he adds, 'is not teased, but very likely to be irritated'. This is a subjective judgment, and one that not everyone will endorse; repetition is commonly used to obtain an effect of solemnity, the strong emphasis on Tantalus' foolish tongue is telling, and the phrase that is repeated is all the more striking for its reminder of the tenth line of Euripides' *Orestes* (ἀκόλαστον ἔχε γλῶσσαν, αἰσχίτην νόσον).

At ii 4 the poet applies to the stone of Tantalus the Homeric description of the stone of Sisyphus (*Od.* 11,598 μέγαν καὶ ἀναιδέα λαῶν). When Huys speaks of 'une subtilité érudite digne de la grande littérature de cette période', he is going a little too far, but there is surely no harm in the poet's use of the Homeric phrase. Callimachus, Slings tells us, would

² Huys (p.78) had dealt with this difficulty by suggesting that Pausanias might have got his information from a handbook, in which other sources beside Hermesianax were utilised. He cites the view of A.Kalkmann, *Pausanias der Perieget* (1886) that much of Pausanias' mythological material came not directly from the poets but from mythological handbooks. Kalkmann exaggerated a good deal, as has been pointed out by Christian Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece* (1985), p.167.

have thought this beneath himself; but this poet was not writing in the manner of Callimachus.

Finally Slings strongly objects to what he assumes to be 'a very clumsy attempt at coining a new word', the application to Meleager of the word θηρέτατος. The poet has joined, he complains (p. 35), the superlative suffix -έτατος to the stem θηρ-, unaware that the result means 'the wildest beast'. Slings seems not to have noticed that I suggested in *Barns*' and my article (217-208) that the word is formed on the analogy of ὀρέτερος, ἀγρότερος. These are words, as Wackernagel, *Vorlesungen über Syntax* ii 65 puts it, 'die nicht eine Steigerung des Begriffs des Grundwortes ausdrücken, sondern Adjektive der Ortslage nach Art von πρότερος sind'; only since the ending -ερος is commonest in comparatives, the poet, or whoever first coined the word, has allowed himself to give to a word of this type a suffix that is not comparative, but a superlative. Very likely the coiner of the compound connected ἀγροτέρα as an epithet of Artemis with ἄγρα rather than with ἀγρός: on the semantic field to which the words ἄγρα and θήρα belong, see P.Chantraine, *Etudes sur le vocabulaire grec* (1956) 40-82 and in particular p.19 and p.54. The word obviously means 'the best at hunting', as the context shows.

I append a few notes on the first column.

L. 8:]κ...τοτε μνηστεύετο κούρην. Huys should not have mentioned W.Luppe's unfortunate supplement ὅτε βίαιος ἄ]κλητός τε: the feebleness of the sense is accentuated by the lack of a caesura. G.O.Hutchinson, *Cl.Rev.* 42 (1992, 484) has pointed out that 'ὅτε, unlike ὅς τε, could be postponed'. Incidentally Luppe, being aware, as Huys assures us, that the second syllable of Ixion's name is long, should not have considered the notion that l.6 might have started with Ἰξίονος.

Ll.16-19:

]ει μέσσον δ' εἰς κτήθος ἔρειπεν
καὶ κεν ἴδοις φυλακῆ]ν ἀνέρος οὐδεμίαν
ἀλλ' ἄλιόν οἱ] ἔθηκε βέλκος Τριτωνίς Ἀθήνη
]του φειδομένη μὲγ' ἄλως.

17 suppl. Parsons (ap.Huys) 18 suppl. Hutchinson, l.c.

Huyd in collaboration with J.M.Bremer, *ZPE* 92 (1992, 118-20) objects that Parsons' supplement in l.17 is too long for the space. They suggest ἐλπίζων ἀλκῆ]ν, which they interpret to mean that 'the Centaur is convinced that by means of the tripod he can keep Heracles at a safe distance; he "does not expect/fear any help of a man"'. As I measure the space in Huys' excellent photograph, Parsons' supplement is not too long, and in style and sense it is immeasurably superior.

In l.19 Huys has suggested that one might supplement βιό]του or ἀύ]τοῦ, but offers nothing for the beginning of the line. If I had to suggest a supplement, I should conjecture that the poet wrote ἀνδρὸς τηλυγέ]του. Pierre Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, s.v., rejects the explanations of τηλύγετος as meaning 'born far away' or

'after whom no more were born'. He rightly follows Manu Leumann, *Homerische Wörter* 214, n.8, who points out that the one meaning that suits every occurrence of the word is 'dear, tenderly loved, pampered', mentioning that K.F.W.Schmidt, *Glotta* 19 (1931) 282f. connected the word with τᾶλις. A place where this sense would be particularly apt would be the first line of Simias' *Apollo* (fr.1 Fränkel and Powell): Τηλυγέτων δ'ἀφνειὸν Ὑπερβορέων ἀνὰ δῆμον. Apollo is likelier to call the Hyperboreans his 'favourites' than that he is to call them 'soft' or 'unwarlike', as Fränkel thought (*De Simia Rhodio*, Diss. Göttingen, 1915, p.16).

Here are two remarks on col. ii.

L.11 ἀξυνέτωι, and not ἀξυνέτως, is surely what the poet wrote; cf. l.6.

L.14 ὑπερθ' is greatly superior to the other suggestions mentioned by Huys (p.33).

Wellesley, Massachusetts

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